

Witton Gilbert Parish Council News

wgpcnewsletter@gmail.com

NEWS ON THE SACRISTON LANE ALLOTMENTS

In September 2018 Langley Estates who are agents for the Earl of Durham put up for sale 18 plots of land around Witton Gilbert including the Sacriston Lane Allotments (next to the School) currently leased to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reported in the last issue of this newsletter that they had been unsuccessful in their bid to buy the allotments. Their bid of £10060 was based on the recommendation of a professional valuer who advised that the site was agricultural land, with limited development potential.

In light of this development the Council made an effort to contact the new owners to discuss future arrangements without success.

The Parish Council have now received 12 MONTHS NOTICE TO QUIT from the new owners. This has come as a shock to both the Council and the 48 allotment holders.

The allotment site was acquired from Lord Lambton in 1909 following the 1908 Allotment Act. For 110 years local people have enjoyed



The allotment site on Sacriston Lane © D. C. Rider

this popular amenity which continues to welcome new members, provide healthy exercise, fresh, local food and friendship for generations of Witton Gilbert residents. The importance of the allotments is reflected in the designation of the site, as "Community Green Space" within the Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Plan.

The 48 allotment plots bring people together from a mixture of ages and backgrounds. Some are new to growing and benefit from the advice of older members of the community; others have lovingly tended their plots for decades. They share an appreciation of fresh produce and the sense of

community and wellbeing that the allotments provide.

The Parish Council have taken legal advice and have appointed a solicitor to act on their behalf in an effort to save the allotments for future generations. They have the full backing of the allotment holders. Working together we are determined not to give up this important community facility without a fight. WATCH THIS SPACE.....

Editor Mr. D. C. Rider
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**The closing date for articles
for the next edition is Friday
October 25th 2019**

WITTON GILBERT PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council meetings are held on the second Monday of the month in the Witton Gilbert Community Centre at 6 pm.

Members of the public wishing to attend may do so but must leave during confidential parts of the agenda. Residents attending the meeting may be given an opportunity to speak but this will be restricted to 15 minutes and is at the Chairman's discretion. Agendas and Minutes are posted on the notice boards at McColls, at the top of Newton Street, at Briar Lea and on the Parish Council website.

Your Parish Councillors are as follows:

Fraser Reynolds (Chair)	3711198
Neil Liddle (Vice Chair)	07950440265
Arnold Simpson	3712161
Paul Guy	3710455
Lynne Michelle Cowan	3719461
Geoff Brown	07540500073
Amanda Hillary	3718239
Louise Murphy	3711564

The Parish Clerk can be contacted on 01913711808, 07984027243 or by email at wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Hello everyone, we just wanted to keep you updated with what we are both involved in.

We have been busy working alongside several residents

from Rose Lea regarding issues with speeding through this area. Sadly, some vehicles are travelling in a dangerous manner, with little consideration for the safety of children and residents. With the support of Michelle McIntosh DCC and Maxine Stubbs Durham Constabulary we will arrange to monitor this area for a period of time once the summer break has ended. If applicable, we will seek to put in some traffic calming measures in order to try and alleviate the problem. The vast majority of drivers are careful and travel at appropriate speeds, but sadly a minority are not and we need to address this.

We are fighting to get the gullies cleaned out more regularly; they are not cleaned out enough and too many drains are totally blocked, have weeds growing out of them or are filled with rubbish. In order to avoid potential future problems with flooding we need to have the current schedule amended to a more frequent one.

Unfortunately, the dragon teeth markers which are due to be put on Sacriston bank, still haven't been completed. We will continue to press this matter with DCC to ensure that the work is completed as a matter of urgency.

If any local sports, social or environmental groups, are in need of funding, please get in touch and we will see if we can help; recently we have supported Witton Gilbert FC. It is important that children and adults have as many

opportunities as possible to participate in local activities.

We regularly attend the Parish meetings and work alongside members to address concerns raised. We will be holding another 'surgery' session in September/October, a date will be confirmed ASAP. Please pop along if you have time, we would love to hear from you.

If you need to contact us prior to the surgery, then you can email

bev.coult@durham.gov.uk or arnold.simpson@durham.gov.uk. If you prefer to ring our details are 03000268675 Bev or 03000268674 Arnie.

SNIPPETS FROM THE SURGERY

I hope all are well. Just a couple of quick notices at this time:-

1. Flu season is nearly upon us once more

As with last year, there are two separate vaccinations: one for **over 18s / under 65s 'at risk' patients and one for the over 65s.**

At the time of writing this piece, the first delivery

- Of the over 18s / under 65s 'at risk' vaccine is **not until the week ending the 11th October**: we are sorry about this, but this is the date the manufacturer has given us.
- Of the over 65s vaccine is **not until the week ending the 27th September.**

2. People who should have a flu jab

The injected flu vaccine is offered free of charge on the NHS to people who are at risk. This is to ensure they are protected against catching flu and developing serious complications.

The flu vaccine is routinely given on the NHS to:

- **adults 65 and over**
You're eligible for the flu vaccine this year (2019-2020) if you'll be aged 65 or over on 31 March 2020. That is, you were born on or before 31 March 1955. So if you're currently 64 but will be 65 on 31 March 2020, you do qualify.
- people with **certain medical conditions** (including children in at-risk groups from 6 months of age)
- pregnant women
- people who are very overweight
- people living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility
- children aged 2 and 3 on 31 August 2019
- children in primary school (given via school nurse)
- frontline health or social care workers.

If you are unsure of anything flu related, the best thing to do is to contact the surgery.

3. The practice patient participation group.

We have a growing band of dedicated patients who meet to hear about latest developments to the NHS

locally, and how his affects the practice, and to offer advice, guidance and thoughts/ideas from a patient point of view. The next two meetings are September 11th and November 13th (both Wednesdays), starting at 2.00 pm, here in the surgery, for approximately 1¼ - 1½ hours. More new members are always welcome.

Please do contact me if there is anything you think I can help with.

Regards, Martin

WITTON DENE NEWS

Volunteers attached to the Breathing Space Project and especially men attending the weekly Men's Shed at St Michael and All Angels Church continue to maintain and embellish the attractiveness of our beautiful Witton Dene.

The latest addition is the installation of a rustic seat embracing the theme of the 'Small Pilgrim Places' mandate "pause-ponder-

reflect-slow down". It is hoped passers-by, visitors, walkers will take advantage of the seat to do exactly that. The seat is constructed from ancient timbers reclaimed from charred baulks of Dunston Staithes which was built in 1893. The Parish Council funded the construction of the seat via grants earmarked for the Men's Shed. The Men's Shed group (seen in the photograph below) dug out the foundations, cemented it in and varnished the seat and it now sits proud, hopefully lasting another 100 years in its new form. Readers will be interested to learn that the seat was constructed for the Breathing Space Project by Sacriston Social Enterprises, a new addition to the local communities, which provides opportunities to disadvantaged persons teaching them woodworking skills and enhancing employment prospects. It is known as The Woodshed and has new dwellings within the Old Co-Op Buildings in Sacriston. The Director



Men's Shed group with the new seat

Nathan Hopkins welcomes visitors to his premises for enquiries, purchase of items/materials, or simply to browse the displays of furniture on offer all made from reclaimed timber. Any profits from sales is reinvested back into this non-profit enterprise.

Breathing Space in conjunction with Friends of Witton Dene are currently in the process of trying to raise funds for further additions to the Dene. Under discussion is the provision of an interpretation board to stand next to the seat explaining how coals were conveyed from the adjacent Durham coalfields via the now disused railway lines to Consett Iron works and beyond. Possibly some of our local coal was transported over these very timbers at Dunston Staithes. Within a one-mile radius of The Dene there were Collieries at Langley Park, Bearpark, Ushaw Moor and Sacriston. Across the road from the Dene, at Clink Bank' a drift mine operated. Perhaps the older residents will remember all these local industries, but the younger and future generations may now get a brief history of the mining heritage which existed beneath our very feet. Any memories are welcomed and may be used in the final preparation of the interpretation board. Contributions can be collated via the Project Officer Gillie Boggon on 07508471522 or 01913711387 or email breathingspacedurham@gmail.com

A HUGE BOOST FOR BREATHING SPACE

Breathing Space, our village's unique Health and Wellbeing Charity, has had a huge boost from The Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme to the tune of £79,193. This grant will see our Project Coordinator, Gillie Boggon, who manages the project, secured in her role for the next 3 years... plus... activity funding for the first two years of the grant.

The Trustees are thankful and overwhelmed to have been granted this hard fought for cash boost to keep Breathing Space alive well into the future. To be recognised as a worthy recipient of this award has proved the value of the work we do for those who seek a 'breathing space' in their lives and ultimately improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Among the activities to take place in and around St Michael and All Angels Church are Men's Shed, a Monday morning session carrying out light work in Witton Dene (everyone welcome); Get Active, gentle seated exercise for people going through rehabilitation; Mindfulness walks and Courses to help people to live in the moment, Walk for Life, a gentle paced walk (Circ. 3-4 miles) around the countryside; Creative Writing; Folk singing; and children's forest school.

Why not look us up on www.breathingspace.org.uk

or pop in and see us at St Michael's church.

WITTON GILBERT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Witton Gilbert Community Centre has many activities going on throughout the week with something to suit all of the family. Weekly activities include:-

Monday Play Group, Pilates, Art Class, Ladies Bowls, Tai Chi, Woman's Institute meetings and an I.T. Class.

Tuesday Play Group, Weight Watchers, Coffee Morning, Walking Group, Card & Craft, Bridge Club, Sugar Craft, Zumba.

Wednesday Play Group, Card & Craft, Zumba, Morris Dancers.

Thursday Play Group, Flower Arrangers, Active Theatre, Dog Craft, R.S.P.C.A.

Friday Play Group, Dancing Classes.

Saturday and Sunday Yoga, Ladies Chanting, Gong Bath and on Sunday Zumba.

Also on a weekend we take bookings for such as Children's parties, Celebrations, Conferences and other similar activities when there is a room available.

For further information telephone 01913712161 or 07982862127.