

# Witton

# Gilbert

Issue 51  
January 2018

## Parish Council News

### HAPPY NEW YEAR

All the Members of Witton Gilbert Parish Council and the Clerk would like to wish residents a very happy, prosperous and harmonious 2018

### Witton Gilbert Village Centre

Our new village centre was short-listed in Durham County Environment Awards and on Thursday 23rd November we attended the award presentation at the Radisson Hotel in Durham. Our nomination was in the 'Places and Spaces' category. The winners were a sensory garden in Bishop Auckland. Although we did not win we were highly recommended and we should all be proud of the wonderful transformation from a redundant car park into an attractive space which enhances our village and can be used and enjoyed by all ages.



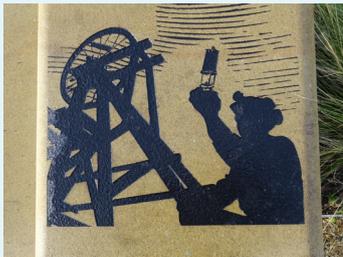
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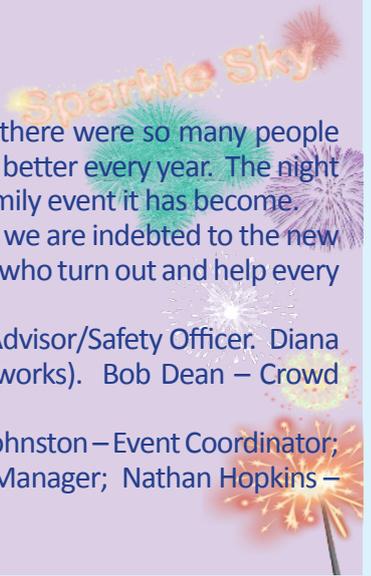
### Neighbourhood Plan

THE PARISH COUNCIL has completed work on preparing a Draft Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation begins at 6pm on Monday 15th January and ends at 6pm on Tuesday 27th February. Please note: Drop-in sessions will be held in the Village Hall (Cooper Hall) on Thursday 16th January 18.00 to 19.30 and Saturday 20th January 9.30am to 11.00am. Everyone Welcome!

### 'They Layed Down Their Lives...'

Every November the United Kingdom falls silent in remembrance of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation. Witton Gilbert Remembrance Service was once again well attended, the prayers led by Rev Canon Caroline Dick with Chester-le-Street Youth Brass Band providing the music. It has become evident that more of our younger generation are being encouraged and willing to attend the service, laying their wreath and wearing their poppies with pride. As memories of the First and Second World Wars perhaps fade a little, it bodes well that the next generation become aware of the futility of war and we pray that the leaders of all nations are guided in their decisions by wisdom and thoughts of peace.

# Witton Gilbert Bonfire



Last year's Bonfire Night was our most successful one yet! We ordered extra food but there were so many people there that we ran out of hot-dogs quite quickly. The quality of the fireworks seems to get better every year. The night wouldn't be what it is without you lot who contrive to make it the fabulous successful family event it has become. It was the final year for the team who have organised and run it for the past 25 years and we are indebted to the new team who worked in partnership with us this year. I would like to thank our 20 volunteers who turn out and help every year. However I would particularly like to thank the following people who take a lead role in each team; Graham Nevard – Bonfire Manager, David Wilcox – Technical Advisor/Safety Officer. Diana Dixon and Jennifer Wilcox – Kitchen Managers, Gregor Jack – Incendiary Officer (fireworks). Bob Dean – Crowd Control. Thank you so much guys....we could not have asked for a better team. I would also like to introduce the new team who gave us so much support this year. Kristi Johnston – Event Coordinator; Jeff Johnston – Safety Officer; Dave Ambridge – Technical Advisor; Jon Ayres – Kitchen Manager; Nathan Hopkins – Bonfire Manager; Steve Smith – Incendiary Officer.  
LONG LIVE WITTON BONFIRE!!

## ....Fun for all at Christmas!



Now that the festive season has ended and the New Year just begun all the Committee of our Village Hall Association would like to wish you a Happy and Healthy 2018. WOW! ...what a busy festive season we have had. December started with our annual children's Christmas Party on Sat 2nd Dec where we entertained 50 children and their families. All present were treated to Captain Raggy Beard who had all of the audience partaking in his stories and games. The excited children then took tea and were thrilled to see Santa Claus had arrived to deliver an early gift for each of them. Santa watched the Hamper raffle before leading the party-goers along to the new village square. The children gathered around the Christmas tree and were handed



some 'magic dust'. After singing some festive tunes they then threw the dust onto the tree and were amazed to see it explode into a mass of colourful lights.....truly magical!

Many groups using the Hall held festive celebrations. Womens Institute held their Annual Christmas Musical Evening where Stephen Berry got the night off to a wonderful festive start with a selection of Carols and popular Christmas standards. The main event however was Durham Miners Association Brass Band who have, in various guises, been entertaining us for over twenty years.

Starting at 7pm and finishing at 9.30pm with a glass of ginger wine, a mince pie and shortbread, a wonderful evening of entertainment was had by all.

The Bridge Club, Craft Clubs and Sugarcraft all had their own Christmas Teas. Active Theatre and Dancing School hosted festive parties and the Watermelon fitness gang even worked out in 'Christmas Attire'

The season ended with the Playgroup party on Friday 22nd Dec when Santa returned to our Village once more. Please remember to follow us on Facebook where all our classes are published and events promoted, and if you have any ideas for the Community Centre please call in and let us know. We would love to welcome new members.

## Beautiful Wreaths

On Sat 9th December from 10am until noon St Michael's Church hosted their annual Wreath Making Day and the church was a busy hive of creative people who enjoy putting their own Christmas wreath together. Alongside the adults, as they weaved holly and ivy intermingled with baubles and ribbons, we held a session for the children, hosted by Pat Bainbridge and helpers, where the kids made their own Christmas tree decorations with all natural materials from our woodland and graveyard. Refreshments were served throughout and donations were given towards Breathing Space.



# BREATHING SPACE CHARITY - 'Improving Health & Wellbeing'

It has been another exciting year for Breathing Space, albeit a nail-biting one, when it looked at one stage as if we would not have enough money to continue employing our brilliant Project Co-ordinator Gillie Boggon, BUT....thanks to the efforts of Brenda Gilmore and Penny Minney we have secured funding for another year.

During 2017 our activities included:

**MENS SHED** – an activity involving men working in the Dene and around the graveyard, laying footpaths, maintaining and improving the fabric. The workforce is a mix of volunteers and men from a project in Seaham called 'Free the Way'. The sessions are held on Mondays from 10am. **MORE VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE MADE WELCOME.**

**GET ACTIVE** – this is a weekly session of armchair exercises and short talks on health advice for people with less mobility, and is held in the Methodist Church on Wednesday afternoons 1pm – 3pm. Refreshments included.

**MINDFULNESS WALKS** – these guided walks take around 50 mins at a gentle meditative pace helping participants to remain in the present with feelings and emotions and reduce stress and anxiety. The walks take place around the location of the church and are currently on the last Friday of each month.

**INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS** – these courses run for 6 weeks and are available by **BOOKING ONLY.**

**WALK 4 LIFE** – these walks take place every Friday leaving St Michaels at 10am and are around 3-4 miles in the countryside around our village. The walks are Leader run and no booking necessary.

**FOLK SINGING** sessions with Benny Graham, one of the Pitman Poets, were held on Friday afternoons and will continue subject to funding availability.

**ARTS, CREATIVE WRITING AND PHOTOGRAPHY** – all sessions that were run on Wednesdays during 2017.

**WOODLAND WONDERS** - this is a very popular activity which occurs during school holidays in the Churchyard. Primary School children enjoy fun and games based on a Forest School ethos. These sessions are run by Pat Bainbridge, our qualified Forest School teacher and must be pre-booked. Watch out for details

**'EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE'** – in conjunction with St Cuthbert's Hospice we ran a course (fortnightly) on Thursday mornings 10am-1200 (for six sessions) which provided participants with steps when planning for their death. The sessions covered, Wills, Power of Attorney, Funerals and Organ donation....all sounds gruesome but the information was given in a light-hearted (sometimes humorous) fashion by a very qualified leader and everyone present enjoyed it and had questions they wanted answering. Discretion was given when requested. Everyone left with a booklet which covered the whole series.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED ANOTHER 6 SESSIONS OF 'EVERYTHING IN IT'S PLACE' WILL BE HELD IN SPRING 2018**

Breathing Space is managed by 7 Trustees, 1 Project Officer and about 10 volunteers and we would like to engage more with people from our village, so if anyone has any ideas that they think are worth pursuing please do get in touch on [breathingspacedurham@gmail.com](mailto:breathingspacedurham@gmail.com) or phone **01913711387**.

## Snippets from the Surgery

Hello to you all.

I hope this finds you all well. There are three key points I'd like to share with you this time:

- It is not too late for your flu vaccine! If you are eligible for the flu vaccine and have yet had one, please contact the surgery.
- Dr Elspeth Aspinall will be leaving the surgery at the end of January: her family are re-locating back to Scotland. We wish them all well.
- Please see this information about a new 'drop in' session starting up, in the surgery.

Would you like to pop in for a tea or coffee, and to meet other members of our community?

If so please come along to our weekly drop in session, each Friday afternoon 1.00 pm 2.30 pm.

Venue: big room on the lower ground floor (accessed at the rear of the building via the car park)

Our first session will be Friday 12th January 2018 at 1.00 pm

In the New Year we would like to arrange activities to promote healthy lifestyles, so please come along for more information and have a chat.

Regards, Martin

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in association with CHAD & WITTON GILBERT Club  
**BOXERCISE**  
Starting Saturday 15th July  
3-4pm U16s/Family  
Suitable for ages 6-16  
Sat 15th is FREE. Sessions will normally be £1.50  
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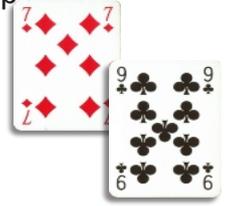
## C.H.A.D. ....our local children's charity



Over the festive season C.H.A.D. held two events in Witton Club to raise funds for our local hospital children's ward and local children's groups in Witton Gilbert. The 'bands night' and 'fun and games' day raised £4765 in total.

A cheque was given to Treetops Ward for £2000 to help buy an ECG unit. Some of the funds will go to help our Village Playgroup and the kids Drama Group and some towards a FREE Easter Family Day in 2018.

It also gives a kick-start to raising the £3000 needed to buy Treetops a high flow oxygen system this year.



## Walk yourself to fitness in 2018

There's two walking groups operating in our village, one which takes place on a Tuesday – 10am from the Community Centre, and which is re-commencing on Tuesday 16th January, and one which takes place on a Friday – 10am from St Michael's Church which re-commences on Friday 5th January 2018. Both groups are led by qualified walk leaders and all range between 3 – 4 miles. The walks are local and even take in some photographic views from the peripheral of our countryside village. All walks are taken at a manageable pace to suit all capabilities. Come along and join us wearing suitable footwear/clothing and a small bottle of water.

### PARISH NOTICEBOARD

*Witton Gilbert Parish Council have drawn up a schedule of works and will be looking to appoint a suitable contractor who will be ready to start work at the beginning of March to do litter-picking, grass-cutting and maintain the new village square. Litter-picking will be carried out weekly whilst other jobs will be seasonal. The Parish Council currently cut the grass at 'Remembrance Walk' in the graveyard and the Allotments. Work in the village square will involve general cleaning, weeding and pruning.*

### Your Parish Councillors

Neil Liddle (Chair)	07950440265
Fraser Reynolds (Vice Chair)	3711198
Arnie Simpson	3712161
Paul Guy	3710455
Lynne Michelle Cowan	3719461
Anthony V. Harries	3710988
Amanda Hillary	3718239
Maria Waller	3718365
Jon Reynolds	3718691
Lynne Rowland (Clerk)	01388 249178



Tell us what you think.....

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