

Parish Council News

Witton Gilbert Neighbourhood Plan

The second public consultation took place at Cooper Hall on 30th May principally looking at transport, heritage and environmental issues. Approximately 65 people attended and we would like to thank all those who came along and shared their views.

There was quite a lot of support for a community energy forum and this is certainly an avenue we want to pursue.

Heritage and conservation of the village is important to people and also the need to balance conservation with growth.

All comments so far have been recorded and all will be taken into consideration during the next stages.



The Neighbourhood Plan process is long and involved and we must follow government guidelines when making decisions. The public consultation sessions held so far are by no means the final involvement of the community.

Please do not think you have missed an opportunity to have your views heard. You can contact us at any time. As stated before we are all volunteers and residents, not professional policy makers. Suggestions and ideas from residents are always welcome, and we would appreciate any help.



Web Page

Community involvement is the key to success for the Neighbourhood Plan and clear community channels are essential. With this in mind we will be creating a bespoke web page where you can find information relating to the Plan, how you can become involved and where you can leave your comments. The site will be updated regularly so you will know how the Plan is progressing.

What Next?

The Neighbourhood Plan Group will study all the comments and suggestions put forward and we hope to produce a single document which will represent the first Draft Plan Proposals. Residents will be consulted again before we progress to a draft submission.

The Group meet at 9:30am on Thursdays at Cooper Hall and anyone who would like to come along and help us is welcome.

If you have any comments to make or questions to ask, please contact us.

Contact details:

Should you have any queries, comments or wish to assist the Group please contact the Parish Council at wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com or contact George Thompson on 0191 3711808

All change at the White Tun

Most people in the village are now aware that the White Tun pub has closed and RS McColl are preparing to take it over and convert it into a shop. The White Tun was opened in 1968 and despite early success it has struggled for many years like many other pubs.

RS McColl or the 'paper shop' as we know it locally has outgrown the current premises particularly since the Post Office transferred there. Many residents feel that this is a positive move and the Parish Council are in talks with McColls about creating some community space around the building. The Tun enjoyed its most successful period under the stewardship



of Arthur Bridgen, a jovial, friendly cockney who always made patrons welcome and gave willingly to village events and good causes.



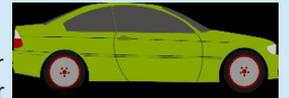
The 'papershop' (RS McColl) was purpose built by the Dixon family in the 1960's. They previously ran a newsagents in a tin hut next to the old Co-op building on the Front Street. They passed the business on to Mr. and Mrs. Emmerson who sold it to Sunderland Echo before it moved into the hands of the current owners.

A much larger general dealers in the centre of the village will be most welcome, both for those who find parking difficult and for those without transport who can't easily get to the larger supermarkets.

It will also tidy up what most residents consider to be an eyesore at the village centre.

Car Parking 'Crisis' At Cooper Hall!

Witton Gilbert Village Hall Association are experiencing an ever-growing problem at the Centre due to too many cars vying for space on the car park. When the Community Centre was built over 40 years ago there was nowhere near the volume of car ownership that we have today and because of the increasing popularity of the Centre for use, by local and visiting groups, this has now become a major problem.



Drivers continue to park in front of the main entrance and down the middle, which would have serious consequences if the emergency services needed access. Indeed, a few years ago a referee collapsed and died during a football match taking place on the playing field when an ambulance crew were obstructed. The committee are looking into ways to resolve this problem but in the meantime they are urging residents to walk or car-share to the Centre. A little 'give and take' all round would be appreciated.

Witton Gilbert Methodist Church

The monthly coffee mornings are now at 10am – 11.30am on the Wednesdays after the second Monday each month.

There is a 'bring and buy' sale and home-made cakes for sale. The mornings are proving an excellent meeting point for old and new friends in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

Do come along, you are all most welcome, and you're sure to see a friendly face.

Sacrison Surgery

You may all be aware that the government has pulled the funding for our Saturday morning opening, which was very popular for those patients who worked. However, we are now offering Monday to Friday 7:30am starts and keeping the Monday evening 8:00pm which we hope will help. You can book and appointment 28 days in advance. The government is also requesting that every patient has a named GP. This does not mean that you can only see that doctor, you can still make an appointment with any other doctors in our practice. Should you wish to know your named GP, please ask at reception.

Witton Gilbert W.I

This has been a busy time for the W.I. Four of our members had work chosen from the 100 Shades of Green display which was held at Kiplin Hall to celebrate 100 years of the N.F.W.I. We also made a banner and took part in the celebration parade at Beamish Museum. There have been theatre visits, trip to the Mighty Wurlitzer at Howden-le-Wear, work-shops, quiz nights and meals out, as well as many other activities. Forth-coming meetings include a talk by Rachel Grocke from Oriental Museum on July 13th and on September 14th Under Water Treasures with Gary Bankhead.

Further theatre visits are arranged. Meetings are held at Cooper Hall at 7pm on the second Monday of each month and a welcome awaits there for visitors.



Neighbourhood Wardens Report

Our Neighbourhood Wardens work to improve the quality of life for the residents by reducing levels of Anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. Their job also includes dealing with environmental problems, promoting community involvement and social inclusion.

Regular patrols are carried out throughout the county, dealing with, and reporting on, any issues they may encounter or have reported to them.

They also have powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crime, including dog-fouling, littering, abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, fly-posting and graffiti.

They also collect stray dogs reported by members of the public. Dangerous dogs are dealt with directly by the police.

If you have any issues to report contact: www.durham.gov.uk/neighbourhoodwardens

Eastern Gateway

In 1996 when the by-pass was constructed to relieve the volume of heavy traffic through our village, a commemorative brick-built structure housing a plaque was placed at the eastern gateway to Witton Gilbert and the inauguration ceremony was led by Gerry Steinberg MP and the late Councillor Don Ross. Due to the dilapidated appearance of the structure in the present day it was deemed by members of the Witton Gilbert Residents Group to have it removed and Witton Gilbert Parish Council will meet the cost of this. The Group are still in discussion regarding plans for enhancing that area. The plaque has now been refurbished and re-located at the entrance to the bridge and this was attended to by Mr. Albert Lamb, a member of the group.



Never Too Young To Learn!

Our Community PCSO Deborah Sadler-Watson has been working with the children in our Primary School telling them about the Junior Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, touching on issues around dog-fouling, anti-social behaviour and Outdoor Play Code, to help them become good citizens.

They had discussions on The Do's and Don'ts of playing near your home, respecting property and people within your community, safeguarding trees and woodland and never dropping litter.

The children from Year 5 asked us to publish this open letter to dog-owners:

Dear dog owners of Witton Gilbert,

We are writing to you because of the intensifying dog fouling problem in our environment. As I am a member of the junior neighbourhood watch, it concerns me a lot and Class 5 want to do something about it. We are annoyed with the amount, especially when it is near our school.

The young children, who walk in and out every day, accidentally walk in it and tread it through our school. The teachers have to frantically scrub dog's dirt off shoes and the caretaker has to clean the mats. Some parents are now outraged at the amount of dog poo there is and we are disgusted by the smell. It is the law to pick up poo. So if you don't pick up, it is classified as a crime. The fine is round about £80 but if you are taken to court it is £1,000! There are dog poo bins right next to our school. Every time you go out for a walk, please always take plastic bags. You could also bring a poop scoop if it is hard to pick up. Also, if your dog runs off please follow it, because not seeing it poo is no excuse according to the law.

Every year children suffer from something called toxocariasis. Yes, that's a disease you get from dog poo! The effects are lung problems or, to jump to extremes, blindness. It's not nice for young children to be running around in dog poo. So scoop that poop!

Dog owners of Witton Gilbert please hear our plea. Even if you have no bags on you, please ask someone to give you one. Near our school, there are two dog bins to put it in. Once you have read this letter we hope you will help to keep our environment free from dog poo, and remember to pick up.

Yours sincerely

A hopeful member of class 5

Breathing Space Project At St Michael's Body....Mind....and Spirit

Read on to hear about two very successful health and wellbeing activities running at Breathing Space enhanced by the proximity and ambience of the nature reserve Witton Dene.....

Mens Shed

Breathing Space involves the church in partnership with Changing Lives, an organisation that works with homeless people. Through the collaboration, a chance to work on the church's nearby nature reserve. Joe Turner, 60 lost his home when the housing-benefit changes came in. He now lives at Changing Lives accommodation. Joe says, "When I became homeless I could not take it in. I had worked as a landscape gardener for 25 years and suddenly I had no home. I went first to the Salvation Army for help then to Changing Lives. I started working at the church in February 2014. Being involved in this work has made such a big difference to my life. It has given me confidence after what happened to me."



Sensing the Seasons

This activity offers an opportunity to get away from it all for the morning!! Sensing the Seasons walk combines beauty of the environment with physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Mindfulness is a really useful tool to support the development of positive health and wellbeing. The monthly Sensing the Seasons sessions take place in Witton Dene on first Friday of the month and use the mindfulness techniques to enable the participant to be aware of themselves in the present and to allow judgemental thoughts and negative emotions to flow through.

nb There will be no walk in August

Next session - 4th September

Meet at St Michael's at 10am

Witton Gilbert Nursery News.....

Our nursery continues to provide outstanding opportunities for all our children. The outside Forest School area is well used for exploring and extending the learning environment. The children have been involved in creating a 'We are going on a bear hunt' trail, finding the areas linked to this ever popular story. We even managed to make a snowstorm in June! The children have also participated in other exciting things including a visit from Crazy Creatures, Wheels Day, Teddy Bears picnic, Sports afternoon and a trip to Souter Lighthouse. They even joined reception in building their own lighthouse. We raised £33 for the RNIB by wearing dots and celebrated National Storytelling week, joined the school in a den building day and just had so much fun! Fun! Fun!!



We would like to take this opportunity to wish all the children leaving us in the summer to join their reception classes... good luck!, and welcome our returning children and all our new starters.

To place your child's name on our waiting list in the academic year they turn 2 years old, for entry after their 3rd birthday, please email details to: l.markwell100@durhamlearning.net

Parish Notice Board

Witton Gilbert Parish Council have 2 allotment sites, one on Sacriston Lane, next to the school with 31 full size plots and one on Newton Street with 3 full size plots.

The Parish Council let allotment gardens at half the size of full plots.

Applications for these half plots should be made in writing or email to Parish Council and if successful applicants will be added to the waiting list.

Currently at the 22nd June 2015 there are 5 people on the waiting list.

Your Parish Councillors

Arnie Simpson (Chair)	3712161
Paul Guy (Vice Chair)	3710455
Lynne Michelle Cowan	3719461
Fraser Reynolds	3711198
Anthony V. Harries	3710988
Amanda Hillary	3718239
Neil Liddle	3710339
Maria Waller	3718365
Alexander Woodmass	3710732
Geo.Thompson (Clerk)	3711808



Tell us what you think.....

Name:..... Address:.....

Tel:..... Email:.....