

# Witton Gilbert Parish Council News

[wgpcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wgpcnewsletter@gmail.com)

## A BOOST FOR THE BREATHING SPACE CHARITY

Recently Breathing Space were fortunate to be awarded £1000 from the Masonic Charitable Foundation. The Foundation thankfully responded to our request for funding which we desperately need to keep our Project Coordinator in her role. Our local charity is playing a big part in helping those in Witton Gilbert and the surrounding area who suffer from mental and physical difficulties by providing courses and activities to help in their return to good health and wellbeing.

These sessions are organised and overseen by our part-time Officer and her role is vital to our Project. We run courses, activities and events from our base at St. Michael's and All Angels Church often involving the local nature reserve at Witton Dene. If you would like to know more about Breathing Space call into St Michael's Church in Witton Gilbert or take a look at [www.breathingspace.org.uk](http://www.breathingspace.org.uk)

### Men's Shed 'shed'!!

One of the activities of Breathing Space is Men's Shed on Monday morning. This is where we help support



Hard at work building the Shed

a group of men to work together. Currently we have a group of volunteers from Free the Way, a charity in Seaham which helps people with addiction problems. The men work mainly in the Dene restoring footpaths and other conservation work under supervision and guidance from Gillie (Breathing Space Project Coordinator) and Course Leaders, with help from Volunteers. They needed a bigger storage area so they designed and built their very own shed which is situated on the south side of the church. Most dog-walkers will have seen the results of the group's efforts in the Dene, but if you haven't, take a walk through and admire the two meadows and footpaths! We'd like to



**MEN'S SHED 'SHED'**  
..almost finished!!

say thank you to all concerned, but especially to Denis Daggett (Chair of Friends of Witton Dene and most recent Trustee to join the Board of Breathing Space) for his key role in procuring the materials and helping to build the shed for Men's Shed. Thank You.

## 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. Before the meeting members of the public 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 Cowen	3719461
Anthony V. Harries	3710988
Amanda Hillary	3718239
Jon Reynolds	3718691
Louise Murphy	3711564

The Parish Clerk can be contacted on 01913711808, 07984027243 or by email at [wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com)

## COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

### **Arnold Simpson**

As you may already know Mike McGaun recently resigned as County Councillor for Esh and Witton Gilbert due to work commitments. I have worked closely with Mike since we

were elected, he has worked hard for local people and I will miss working with him. I would like to thank Mike on behalf of everyone for all of the hard work he has put in since we were elected and wish him all the best for the future. Replacing Mike will be Beverley Coult who lives in Langley Park. I look forward to working closely with Bev.

A number of residents have expressed concern to us over the increase in heavy lorry traffic going through Witton Gilbert. Unfortunately the County Council are unable to take any action over this as the road is classed as a B road and therefore cannot be subject to weight restrictions.

Following on from our previous report we continue to work towards improving bus services and further provision of traffic calming measures. Funding has been allocated for the traffic calming (Chicanes and Dragons Teeth) and we hope to see construction begin in the next couple of months.

People may have noticed that a number of dog poo bins have been replaced with standard litter bins by the County Council. I would like to clarify that these replacement bins may be used for both normal litter and the dog poo bags that would have been placed in the old dog poo bins.

### **Bev Coult**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the past

weeks. All of the hard work and your votes resulted in me being elected as Mike McGaun's replacement as County Councillor for Esh and Witton Ward.

I am very excited to be working alongside Arnie Simpson and look forward to the opportunity of meeting with you all over the coming months. People have already shared some of their concerns with me, particularly around speeding, littering and dog fouling, both Arnie and I will be working hard to try and address these issues and see what action can be taken. I cannot promise to answer every question straight away or resolve every query to your complete satisfaction, however I will promise to do my very best for you.

Arnie and I intend to hold informal sessions at Cooper Hall every other month, these sessions will provide opportunities for you to pop in at your convenience and have a chat, let us know what is going well, what could be done better and hopefully together we may be able to find solutions to any concerns and share positive news.

I will ensure that I visit Witton Gilbert as much as possible, the 'ward' I am elected into covers a large area from Witton out as far as East and West Butsfield, so please bear with me, if I cannot get back to you straight away. You have my assurance that I will respond to your enquiry/call as soon as possible.

Contact details for myself and Arnie are below:

Arnie Simpson 03000 268674  
or 07984 862127.  
[arnold.simpson@durham.gov.uk](mailto:arnold.simpson@durham.gov.uk)

Bev Coult 03000 268675 or  
07771840947  
[bev.coult@durham.gov.uk](mailto:bev.coult@durham.gov.uk)

Please feel free to ring, email or catch us while we are out and about in the villages.

Many thanks again for electing me as your County Councillor.

**ST. MICHAEL'S SAYS  
'THANK YOU' TO THE  
PARISH COUNCIL**

The congregation at St Michael's know only too well that the heating system in the church was condemned last year and we have gone right through the winter using a myriad of small heaters to try and reduce our 'shivering'.



St Michael's Church,  
Witton Gilbert

We are currently discussing with Heating Engineers what type of system will best serve the church before applying to the Diocese for a Faculty.

St Michael's will have to fund the new system and

subsequent redecoration themselves, the cost of which could be around £20,000, but we are extremely grateful to Witton Gilbert Parish Council who kindly responded to our request for help and who have kick-started our fundraising by granting us £5000! If you would like to help with our fundraising please contact the churchwarden David Wilcox on **0191 3710529**.

**CANON ALAN  
PATERSON**

Former Witton Gilbert resident Alan Paterson was installed as an Honorary Canon in a service held at Newcastle Cathedral on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Alan was born in North Shields and grew up in County Durham. His father Ken was landlord at the Travellers Rest for several years and Alan attended Fyndoune Comprehensive School.

For over 25 years he was a Franciscan Brother spending most of his time living and working on housing estates in Glasgow and Birmingham, working with mainly young people. Leaving the Franciscans he became a member of the Company of Mission Priests and is under vows in the Single Consecrated Life.

Alan has been Vicar of Cowgate, Newcastle Upon Tyne for over 8 years and recently also became Priest in charge of Newbiggen Hall and he has encouraged

vocations and supported other clergy through spiritual direction in less formal ways. Alan is committed to Estate Ministry and chairs the Estates and Urban Task Group as well being involved in a national project looking at evangelism.

Over the years Alan has returned to the village many times and likes to look up his friends from the church and he likes socialising with his former school chums and childhood friends.

Many congratulations Alan from everybody in Witton Gilbert.

**SNIPPETS FROM  
SACRISTON SURGERY**

Hello to you all.

I hope all are well. Just a few quick items to make you all aware of:

- The prescription telephone line is now only open Monday to Friday 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm.
- The Friday afternoon group is looking at ways to support Sacriston Front Street becoming dementia-friendly aware. Come along for a tea or coffee to find out more at 1 pm on a Friday, big meeting room on the lower ground floor.
- There is an exercise class at 1.45 pm each Friday, provided by "Keep Moving CIC". This is a local organisation and charges apply. Come along, again

in the big meeting room on the lower ground floor.

- Gillie from Breathing Spaces is doing a mindfulness session each Tuesday 10 am for 1 hour. Come to reception.
- We always welcome new members to the practice patient group. Contact Martin, the Business Manager, via the surgery if you are interested.
- Thinking of going abroad over the summer then you need to ensure you have the correct travel vaccinations. Contact the surgery for advice and guidance.

### CHAD FUNDED DEFIBRILLATOR FOR WITTON GILBERT

2019 celebrates 25 years of fundraising for Witton Gilbert's very own charity 'CHAD' (Children's Hopes and Dreams). We raise funds by holding various social events throughout the year such as charity football matches, poker tournaments, darts and dominoes knockouts and horse racing days. Over the years we have donated money to Treetops Ward at UHND for them to purchase medical equipment and we have also donated to Witton Gilbert Drama Group, Witton Gilbert Playgroup and other good causes.

We wanted to give something back to thank local people for their continued support.

We have invested in an AED (Automated External

Defibrillator) that is located on the outside wall of McColls shop. This device uses voice commands and goes into details of what to do next in the event of a cardiac arrest.



The new Defibrillator funded by CHAD located on the outside wall of McColls shop

We hope to arrange some training sessions for the new equipment with NEAS (North East Ambulance Service) in the near future but nothing has been finalised as yet.

In the meantime see <https://youtu.be/xMYkAbKDLQ4> for a demonstration of the defibrillator in use.

### WITTON GILBERT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Witton Gilbert Community Centre will shortly be getting a bit of a facelift in the form of a new public notice board on the outside of the building and we are planning on having the windows etched with the words Witton Gilbert Village Hall Association.

We continue to run all of our usual events as follows:-

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

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

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

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

**Friday** Play Group, Sewing Group, Dancing Classes.

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

For further information telephone 01913712161 or 07982862127.

### PARISH NOTICEBOARD

#### ***Pact Meetings***

PACT meeting dates for the next couple of months are on the 26<sup>th</sup> April and 24<sup>th</sup> May at 6pm in the Community Centre.

**Editor Mr. D. C. Rider**  
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**The closing date for articles for the next edition is Friday July 12<sup>th</sup> 2019**