

Witton Gilbert Parish Council News

wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com

SACRISTON LANE ALLOTMENTS

After almost a year waiting with baited breath for the legal process to run its course, the Parish Council have finally been successful in purchasing the Sacriston Lane Allotments, securing the future of this very important asset on behalf of current and future generations of gardeners in Witton Gilbert.

As a reminder the Parish Council formally leased the land off the Lambton Estates until Lambton's decided to sell the land via a bidding process, with the Parish Council itself putting in an unsuccessful bid. Subsequently the Council were served with a "Notice to Quit" on the allotments by the new owner to expire on the 12th November 2020. This would have meant the end of 110 years of continuous occupation of the site as allotments.

The Parish Council were not willing to give up so easily and after attempts to initiate discussions with the new owner were unsuccessful, they began discussions with



Chairman Dan Lynch signs documentation for purchase of the Sacriston Lane Allotments on behalf of the Parish Council with Deputy Clerk George Thompson looking on. © DC Rider

officers of Durham County Council to explore the possibility of gaining a Compulsory Purchase order for the land. Durham County Council resolved, at a Cabinet Meeting held in October 2020 to support the Parish Council in its efforts to

acquire the site, by agreeing to initiate a Compulsory Purchase Order of the allotment land on behalf of the Parish Council. By the time the County Council were in a position to serve the relevant papers it was becoming extremely close to

Allotments Special Edition



Members and Officers of the Parish Council, County Councillor Bev Coult, David Banks of the Northern Counties Allotments Association and Allotment Holders celebrate saving the allotments on 23rd October 2021 © DC Rider

the 12th November deadline and the tenants were already starting to remove property in anticipation of having to vacate their allotments. To everyone's relief following a conversation between the local MP's office and the owners of the allotments they had a change of heart and decided to withdraw the Notice to Quit and also to sell the land to the Parish Council on reasonable terms.

Many people have been involved in this endeavour to save the allotments including the current Deputy Clerk George Thompson who's final year as Clerk was dominated by the considerable amount of work that went into making this happen, Parish Clerk David Rider, Former and current Parish Councillors played a part including Councillor Geoff Brown who put in a lot of leg work on the project, both County Councillors Arnold Simpson and Beverley Coult who

provided some funding and strong support behind the scenes in the Parish Council's effort to persuade the Cabinet of Durham County Council to agree to the CPO.

The Council are also indebted to Clare Cuskin and Andrew Holtham of Durham County Council who assisted greatly in navigating the Parish Council through the Compulsory Purchase Order process attending many remote meetings with officers and members of the Parish Council, to Robert Jauneika of H and H Land and Estates for his invaluable and ongoing help, and to Nick Rippin, assistant to MP Mary Foy who was instrumental in obtaining the agreement of the now former owners.

Finally, a big thank you to all of our other supporters and advisers who helped to secure the future of our popular allotments.

Editor's note

The Parish Council held an event on 23rd October to celebrate the acquisition of the Sacriston Lane Allotments (See above photograph).

WITTON GILBERT PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meetings and Contact Details

Current members of Witton Gilbert Parish Council are as follows: -

Daniel Lynch	07837278471
Neil Liddle	07950440265
Arnold Simpson	3712161
Lynne Hope	0790418423
Geoff Brown	07540500073
Lisa Watts	07592527174
Claire Simmons	07736936918
Kristi Johnson	07758334238

Parish Council meetings are normally held on the second Monday of the month in the Witton Gilbert Community Centre at 6.30 pm. Anyone attending the meetings are currently being asked to consider wearing face

coverings and to social distance in line with current government advice on Covid 19.

Members of the public wishing to attend a meeting may do so but must leave during confidential parts of the agenda. Residents may be given an opportunity to speak but this will be restricted to 15 minutes in total and is at the Chairman's discretion.

Agendas are published on the notice boards at McColl's, at the top of Newton Street, at Briar Lea and on the Parish Council website and minutes are available on the website.

The Parish Clerk can be contacted by Mobile phone on 07587568095 or by email on

wittongilbertparishcouncil@gmail.com

The Deputy Parish Clerk can be contacted on 01913711808, or by mobile phone at 07984027243 or by email at wgassistantclerk@gmail.com

Family Fun Day

On Saturday the 4th September the Parish Council organised a family fun day which took place on the football field behind the Community Centre.

It was thought that it would be a good way for all members of the

family both young and old to have an enjoyable day out before the school holidays were over and as the village transitions out of the Covid lockdown restrictions.

A large number of people were present thoroughly enjoying themselves on the attractions and nobody went hungry as there were vendors providing refreshments.



One of a number of vendors providing refreshments

The Community Centre was open for the day so that people could use the bathroom facilities.

It was not just local residents having a good time who benefitted from the Fun Day as £580 was raised for the local CHAD charity via a raffle held on the day.



The football field as it was on the Fun Day

The Fun Day was so successful that it's likely to take place again next year with the Parish Council setting up an organising committee consisting of Councillors and members of the public for this and similar events in the coming years.

2021 Bonfire night Firework Display

This year's Bonfire Night firework display will take place on the 6th November on Clink Bank Field. Unfortunately, due to the health and safety requirements that we need to meet in relation to our insurance cover, this year's event will be a fireworks display only there will not be a bonfire. We understand that this will be disappointing for many, and we are especially disappointed in not being able to work with Witton Gilbert school who always do such a great job of providing a guy for the bonfire. We are working on ways to make the bonfire possible for future events.

We also need volunteers for the night of the event! Without volunteers the event wouldn't be possible so if you can help out that would be great!

If you have any questions or concerns, or are interested in volunteering on the night, please contact Kristi at wittonbonfire@gmail.com.

See you on the 6th!

CHAD

Chad has again had a very busy year in 2021 with its fund-raising activities.

Some of the money raised was spent helping Treetops buy much needed equipment and helping the school with the outside garden area.

In addition we bought easter eggs and other items and dressed as Easter bunnies whilst delivering the eggs to youngsters living in the village. We also bought Easter eggs and cuddly toys for a local women's refuge to distribute to the children staying there.

We organised a village day that included a pantomime horse race at the football field.



CHAD Pantomime Horse Race

We funded coaching sessions by Durham Football Club on the football field on the four Wednesdays in August. Between 6 and 7pm we held sessions for 6 to 10 year olds then from 7 to 8 pm 10 to 14 year olds.

On October 30th at Witton Gilbert club we're having the CHAD Halloween party disco, 6pm till 10pm, children for free adults £2.

On Saturday December 18th between 2 and 5pm we are organising a Christmas party at the club, that will include a disco, karaoke, magician, face painter and a balloon artist, all free to children in the village.

On Tuesday 28th December we have a couple of bands on at the club, between 6 and 11.30pm.

Finally, we have horse racing in the club on New Years Day from 11 am. All money raised will go to help Treetops buy oxygen monitors and a mobile observation unit.

WITTON GILBERT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Witton Gilbert Community Centre has many activities going on including: -

Monday Play Group, Pilates, Ladies Bowls, Tai Chi, I.T. Classes. Karate and Woman's Institute meetings.

Tuesday Play Group, Weight Watchers, Coffee Morning, Walking Group, Card & Chat, Bridge Club and Zumba.

Wednesday Play Group, Zumba, Breathing Space, Morris Dancers and Upcycling (every other week).

Thursday Play Group and Active Theatre.

Friday Play Group and Dancing Classes.

Saturday and Sunday Karate on Saturday morning and on Sunday Zumba.

For further information on these or to make a booking telephone 01913712161 or 07982862127.

CHRISTMAS TREE

The Parish Council are planning on having a permanently planted Christmas tree in place for Christmas 2022. The Council will be discussing what type of tree to have and would like the opinion of local residents to help them make a decision. The available choices are Holly, Common Holly, Scots Pine, Western Red Cedar, Field Maple and Nordman Fur. If you have an opinion on this please contact the Parish Clerk or a Parish Councillor.

Editor Mr. D. C. Rider
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The closing date for articles for the next edition is Friday February 18th 2022.

Please provide any articles in Microsoft Word format with photographs sent separately at no less than 300 dpi resolution