

Withyham Parish Council - Bulletin 4



Welcome to our fourth bulletin. What a strange year it has been so far! We wanted to keep you up to date with the steps we are taking to ensure the future of Groombridge Post Office. All quite challenging but we are getting there. Also read about the successes and initiatives undertaken by residents, associations and churches during the first lockdown. These have helped develop further support and initiatives for the new lockdown and beyond. Please do make use of them if you need to. We are frustrated that unfortunately the Parish Office must be closed again, but fear not the Clerks can still be contacted by phone and email.



POST OFFICE

Update

We asked you if you wanted us to save the Post Office in Groombridge and you overwhelmingly said Yes! Over the past couple of months we have been busy working with our current Postmistress, and with Post Office Ltd to secure its future. Our vision for Groombridge Post Office is to build on its strengths as a thriving, welcoming hub that puts the community at the centre of what it does.

Progress

In order to make the community's wish to save the Post Office come true we have made our application to Post Office Ltd and hope to be signing a contract soon. We are delighted that our offer to buy the building, from which the Post Office operates, has been accepted.

Staffing

We are striving to retain your wonderful Post Office counter staff, as they bring so much knowledge and experience. They have been very supportive in working closely with us on the transition.

Volunteers

We are so excited to start working with the volunteers who came forward from our survey. Without them there would be no retail side of the Post Office. There is still time to contact us if you would like to be involved. Volunteers will need to donate some time regularly each week to staff the retail business. We hope that you will find a friendly, rewarding environment where you will know that your involvement is keeping the Post Office going for the community.



Next Steps

There are a number of major hurdles for Withyham Parish Council to overcome, which we are working hard to achieve. Once we have a contract in place with Post Office Limited, we will be able to proceed with using a Public Works Loan to purchase the existing Post Office building. We will then let out the residential part of the building to subsidise the costs of the purchase.

Retail

We will continue to offer quality products on the retail business of the Post Office. We aim to increase the ranges on offer for local residents, including locally sourced items, whilst also complementing other local businesses. All of the profits from this will help the business thrive and reduce the need for subsidy from Council Tax.

Precept Effect

Initially we expect the impact of the Post Office annual costs to increase Council tax by £13.20 per Band D Property per year (25p per week). We hope that through the retail side, we will be able to attract more customers and therefore reduce the effect on the Precept.

WITHYHAM PARISH COUNCIL PARISH PLAN 2020-2024

We are delighted to share with you the beginnings of our new Parish Plan with this bulletin. We would welcome your views by completing the questionnaire at the end of the Plan.

Our current plan "Forward for 5" will be coming to an end this year. Looking back we have achieved so much and want to carry on the momentum. It is important to us, as your Parish Council, that we work for you to meet your needs. Please do respond to the consultation questions as your views are so important. Survey closes on 14th December 2020.

Since the coronavirus lockdown, Withyham Parish Council has been holding its meetings remotely via Zoom. Please refer to our website www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk for agendas to meetings, and contact the Clerks if you would like to comment on any agenda items. The Parish Office can be contacted for the duration of Lockdown by phone or email only.

Withyham Parish Council, The Old Station, Station Road, Groombridge TN3 9RD.

Tel: 01892 864557 * Email: clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk * Website: www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Coronavirus Winter Help



During the first Lockdown many of our residents were supported by their neighbours and local volunteers with shopping, prescription collection or a friendly chat.

The volunteers have shared how much they enjoyed supporting their neighbours, meeting new people and having a sense of purpose during this time. The pandemic has brought our communities closer together and made them stronger. But it doesn't stop now!

We know that Winter can be a difficult season for many of us, with the nights drawing in and the weather becoming colder. Please do ask for help if you need it. As we now go into our second national lockdown people are here to help. Details of where to find help are below.

Withyham Parish Council is working with local groups and volunteers across the parish to continue to support our residents needs and match them up with volunteers who are really happy to help.

Please do get in touch with your local support group or Withyham Parish Council.

Still happy to help with

- * Shopping
- * Prescriptions
- * A hot meal
- * A friendly Phone Call



**SMALL ACTS,
WHEN MULTIPLIED BY
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE,
CAN TRANSFORM
THE WORLD.**

-Howard Zinn

**Know somebody
who might be
spending Christmas
alone?**

Christmas can be a lonely time of the year for some at the best of times. Your local community is here to help. Please do get in touch with your local group or the Clerks.

Withyham and Blackham

Residents needing help with food and prescriptions can be put in touch with local volunteers by contacting the Parish Council. Tuesday to Friday Email: administration@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk or call 01892 864557

GROOMBRIDGE COMMUNITY

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Contact: 07711 286776/01892 860227 or email: groombridgecommunity@gmail.com

St John's residents are able to link in with the group 'Supporting Crowborough':

Email: crowborough2020@outlook.com



**Tel: 01892 317151
Mon- Fri 8am-4pm**

(answerphone available for out of hours)

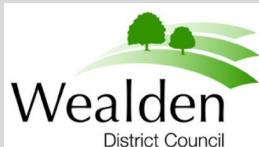
**Your Wealden
community
hub is here!**

Your Community Hub is also continuing to operate. This is a partnership between the voluntary sector, health service, East Sussex County and Wealden District Council. They will listen to people's needs and put them in touch with the group or person best placed to help locally. Call them on 01323 443322.

What is fuel poverty?

Fuel poverty results from a combination of factors; low household income, unaffordable energy prices, and the poor heating and insulation standards of the housing stock. Fuel poverty now affects around 4 million UK households.

Fuel Poverty levels in Wealden are rated as high and with winter and the cold weather fast approaching, the following information could be of use www.nea.org.uk – National Energy Action (NEA) is the national charity which aims to eradicate fuel poverty and campaigns for greater investment in energy efficiency to help those who are poor and vulnerable.



Green Home Grant Scheme

The Wealden District Council Green Homes Grant (GHG) scheme is currently providing vouchers to help pay for the cost of installing energy saving measures. The scheme is split into two parts:

- The General scheme is open to owner-occupiers and landlords. Vouchers worth up to £5000 are available. Applicants will need to contribute 33% towards the cost.
- The Low-income scheme is open to owner-occupiers on certain qualifying benefits. Vouchers worth up to £10,000 are available. Applicants do not need to contribute towards the cost.

Participants who obtain vouchers and improve the energy efficiency of their properties should also see savings on their energy bills. Act now to avoid missing out as the works have to be completed by the 31st March 2021.

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