

Withyham Parish Council Spring 2022 - 16th Issue



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Hello everybody, we are so pleased to be able to produce this 16th edition of our newsletter as it indicates a return to normality for the Parish Council after two years of highs and lows.

In spite of all the constraints of COVID we have:

- Saved Groombridge Post Office. **Keep supporting it please!**
- Established a very successful 'Shop on the Corner' **which is already reducing the Parish Council subsidy!**
- Resumed the monthly walk of the Amblers. **Thank you leaders.**
- Started up The Community Café **Thank you, WI, for bravely putting on the first one this year!**
- Kept footpaths open thanks to the Rights of Way Team.
- Stepped up our collaboration with the Jubilee Playground Group to refurbish the Groombridge Playground - **a fantastic team effort to raise money at various events! With more to come.**

At the same time, other essential parish work continues, such as the consideration of planning applications, maintaining parish assets; and the day-to-day running of the Parish Council.

I am so pleased that we now have a full complement of 13 councillors who are keen to be involved in making a difference to the welfare of the parish, to increasing the opportunities to thrive in St Johns, Blackham, Withyham, Balls Green and Groombridge, and to underwriting exciting projects.

Let's celebrate our achievements in honour of the Queen's 70 years of dedicated service on June 4th with a picnic on the Recreational Ground at Groombridge.

We all deserve to have fun together after the lockdowns we've experienced.

Look out for details of this and much more at our Annual Parish Assembly on May 28th 2022.

Jubilee Playground Groombridge

Following a public consultation which showed overwhelming support from residents, the Parish Council has applied for a Public Works Loan for £50,000 to support the project. This is in addition to the £13,000 in grants that have been awarded to the project to date.

The Jubilee Playground Group have been making great strides towards their fundraising target, already secured over £3,000 in donations.

Our wonderful new playground is closer than ever before!

Keep an eye out for lots of fundraising activities.



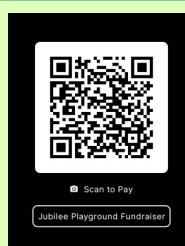
The Vision



After much consultation and consideration, the designs for the Jubilee Playground have been unveiled. The response from residents to the design and fundraising has been amazing!

How to Donate

Donating couldn't be simpler. Scan the QR code here with a smart phone and follow the instructions. Or alternatively you can visit the fundraising page at <https://bit.ly/3DZsyCm>



Fundraising Success

The first Groombridge Garage Sale was a stand-out success with over £400 raised, and our stall at the May fair was inundated with support!



Get Involved

Would you like future generations to know you played a vital part in fundraising for the Jubilee Playground?

Donations for plaques can be made via our fundraising page.



Jubilee Playground Events and Fundraising

Come and find out more:

28th May Annual Parish Assembly

4th June Jubilee Picnic on the Recreation Ground

Have an idea for a fundraiser? Get in touch!

Fundraising

£50,000 Public Works Loan applied for

£26,000 Pledged by Withyham Parish Council

£11,445 from Grants including the National Lottery

Over £3,500 from fundraising and events



Follow us on Facebook for all the latest on fundraising progress at <https://www.facebook.com/groombridgeplaygroundrenewal>



Annual Parish Assembly 28th May from 10am - 12.30pm



The planning of this years Annual Parish Assembly has felt like a return to normality.

As our annual showcase event, it has been difficult not having one for the last

two years. So this year we will be back bigger and better!

We will be joined by local groups, clubs and societies showcasing what they have to offer residents. Who knows, you may discover a love for Bowls or join the local WI!



We will also have the ever popular Community Café, which will be run by your very own Parish Councillors! Come along and have a chat with those who represent you in the Parish. We want you, as our residents, to know that your voices are important to us.

It will also be an opportunity to try some of the home-baked goods that will be on offer and catch up with neighbours over a tea or freshly brewed coffee.

You are kindly invited to bake us a cake for the extended Community Café run by the Parish Council at this event. We know what amazing bakers you are!



Our blue light heroes will also be in attendance. Your local PCSOs will be at hand to discuss any concerns.



We will again be welcoming the Crowborough First Responders who have kindly agreed to run some first aid demonstrations.

Groombridge Jubilee Picnic - Saturday 4th June 2022

The Parish Council would like to invite residents to come together on Groombridge Recreation Ground on 4th June from 11am for a celebratory Community Jubilee Picnic.



Bring your picnic blankets and hampers and join in the celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's 70 Years on the Throne.

The WI will be on hand to provide refreshments and the Village Hall is kindly providing its toilet facilities.

Residents are welcome to bring gazebos if they can be securely anchored. **We hope to see you there!**

Blackham residents are also arranging a gathering on Teasley Mead Recreation Ground on Thursday 2nd June from 3pm until 5.30pm for their local community.



Queens Green Canopy

We were delighted to take part in the Queens Green Canopy with the planting of a walnut tree near the Parish Office.

In celebrating The Queen's Jubilee with the planting of trees, the nation will create a greener UK and a legacy which will benefit future generations.



Office Opening Hours.

The Parish Office is open for enquiries:

Monday 12.00 – 3.00pm
Tuesday 9.30 – 12.00
Wednesday 9.30 – 12.00*
Thursday 9.30 – 12.00
Friday 9.30 – 12.00

*During School Holidays the Parish Office will be closed on Wednesdays.



Gas Lamp Pole

In a further celebration of the Jubilee an historic gas lamp pole will be erected on Station Road. This was donated to the Parish Council to be preserved and enjoyed by future generations.

Cut out and keep - Useful reporting details

- East Sussex Highways – Telephone: 0345 6080193 Email: customer@eastsussexhighways.com or Online www.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem
- Operation Crackdown (anti-social driving) – www.operationcrackdown.org
- Wealden District Council - Telephone 01323 443322 Email: info@wealden.gov.uk or Online www.wealden.gov.uk
- East Sussex County Council - Telephone 0345 608 0190
- Community Warden - Telephone 07734392141 or Email clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Council meetings are held on the second Monday of every month except August at 7.30pm at The Old Station and Zoom

Amblers

The Amblers have been walking, and are enjoying being out and about in the Spring sunshine.

The 28th May will be a circular walk around the unique and inspiring countryside from Hartfield.

We have regular walkers, as well as walkers who join us now and then. Everyone is welcome, it's for all abilities. All you need is suitable footwear and a couple of hours to spend being out in the countryside.

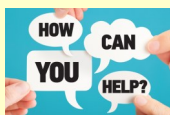
Come and make some new friends!



Get Involved

If you want to be a part of any of these or future volunteer projects, then email the Parish Office or fill in the Volunteers Form on the Parish Council website.

Come and be a part of the Volunteer Community!



Speed Watch is a community-based initiative.

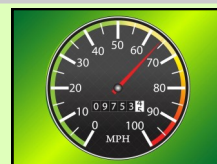
It involves groups of between two and four members of the community. They are trained in the operation of a Radar Speed Gun and will position themselves in places which have been risk assessed by the police.



The scheme aims to:

- Increase drivers' perception of the risks from speeding and encourage them to slow down;
- Reduce collisions and the severity of injuries on local roads;
- Improve the quality of life for local communities.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, help the community and gain new skills. Many volunteers enjoy the role and find it both rewarding and sociable. If you would be interested in coming along to a session to find out more get in touch!



Community Café

The Community Café is back in full swing, with the first Café in two years hosted by the brilliant WI in March – a wonderful way to move into Spring!

The Café is a fantastic event for local groups to raise awareness and funds for themselves, or for their chosen charities. It is a lovely way to bring the community together.

The next Community Café will be part of Withyham Parish Council's Annual Parish Assembly on 28th May. We would also welcome donations of cakes and other tasty morsels.

If you know of a local group who would like to benefit from running a Community Café, please contact the Parish Office.



Preserving the Parish

The Pond at Park Corner is a beautiful spot for wildlife and people. We have a willing team of volunteers who will be helping to maximise the benefits of this site, whilst minimising the impact on the wildlife that already enjoys the Pond.

Making this an area for all to enjoy.

We will be enhancing the area to encourage biodiversity, as well as creating a peaceful place for everyone to enjoy.

Footpath volunteers

The Footpath Volunteers are working away clearing footpaths, and keeping the countryside accessible for all the rovers in the Parish! Their first project was a section of Footpath 57B, which was cleared of a mass of vegetation to allow walkers to pass. We will have more events soon. Keep an eye on our Volunteers page on the Website and be a part of the team!

Some recent clearance work done by our wonderful Footpath Volunteers



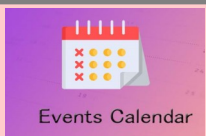
Community Events Diary

Did you know that the Parish Council Website has a diary section devoted to all the wonderful things going on in our community?

It's easy and free to add your event, just follow the link below and "submit an event"

<https://www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk/community-information/whats-on/>

We hope this will prevent clashes of events and become an invaluable resource



The Shop on the Corner

Are you community-minded and have a spare morning or afternoon a week?

The Shop on the Corner is always looking for volunteers at Groombridge Post Office. Pop in to the Post Office for more information.

FRIDAY CAFÉ DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Tea, coffee and cake will be served in the first half an hour and time to chat, followed by fun and memory provoking or craft activity for the next hour

Kings' Hall Withyham
2nd Friday of the Month (from March)
Between 10:30 - 12:00
Please contact Julie Ruse if you would like to attend on 07584 013763

Grants

Our grants scheme is open again for 2022. So far we have supported three applications from:

- St Michaels School
- Withyham and All Saints Church Blackham
- Groombridge Preschool

If you would be interested in applying for a grant please see our website for details and an application form.



Are you on Facebook? We have our own Facebook page, which, alongside our newly updated website, contains useful information on your parish. Have a look; we always welcome your comments.
www.facebook.co.uk/WithyhamParishCouncil www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Hybrid Council Meetings

Following the use of virtual meetings during Covid, the Parish Council is continuing to offer the facility to join Parish Council meetings virtually by hosting Hybrid Meetings.

Whilst Parish Councillors must be physically present for Council meetings, residents are welcome to join in person or virtually.

"We have found in the last two years that many more people joined our meetings when we held them virtually as it gives much more flexibility. We want to encourage the community to attend meetings and it seems fitting to offer this facility on a permanent basis." Cllr Di Kelly - Chairman Withyham Parish Council



New Councillor

We are delighted that Cllr Jennie Paulson-Ellis has joined the Parish Council, with previous experience as both a Borough and Parish Councillor. We are very pleased to welcome Jennie in her new role.



Post Office

We did it! Thank you to all those who have been involved in the saving of the Post Office. The Official Opening was so well attended and it was great to see our Local Paralympian (and previous Post Office Saturday boy) Will Bayley do the honours.

The running of the Post Office and Shop on the Corner is now under the management of Withyham Parish Community Interest Company (WPCIC). The involvement of the Parish Council now moves to receiving a yearly report from WPCIC and providing a subsidy grant once a year.

The Postmistress role has also been passed from our Clerk Debbie to another member of the Post Office team, Sam. In addition, Sam has also taken on the management of the Shop on the Corner and its Volunteers.

The Volunteers at the Shop on the Corner have been nothing short of amazing. Without them this Community Shop could not function and we are very thankful to them.

Finally we were delighted to hear that the Post Office has been given a special award for the most Special Deliveries Christmas 2021.



Phoenix House

As part of the process to save the Post Office, the Parish Council purchased the property in which the Post Office is housed.

This includes a three-bedroom maisonette, which the Parish Council is in the process of modernising ready to be let out. This is a key part of the funding of the project, with the rental paying back the Public Works Loan taken out to save the Post Office.

If you would like to register your interest in the rental of this property please contact our agents Martin & Co, on 01732 602602.



Overdevelopment in Wealden

A representative from Withyham Parish Council has attended a meeting of other Parish Councils to discuss and look at ways forward in response to the housing numbers that have been allocated to Wealden by Government.

Whilst this is early days more information will be made available, as it develops, through the WPC Planning Committee Minutes.



YOUR PARISH COUNCIL



Cllr Diana Kelly *Chairman*
Cllr Paul Watkins *Vice Chair*

WARDS

Groombridge (including Withyham/Blackham)

Cllr Nick Anderson
Cllr Gwen Butcher
Cllr Andrew Fane
Cllr Robert Gordon-James
Cllr Diana Kelly
Cllr Keith Obbard
Cllr Chris Pope
Cllr Jennie Paulson-Ellis
Cllr Paul Watkins
Cllr Linsey Winter

Mardens Hill

Cllr Alan Gaukroger
Cllr Jill Pardey
Cllr Marcus Tarling

Withyham PC is supported by:

Debbie Siddle - The Clerk
Natalie Brett - Assistant Clerk
Stephanie Chapman - Administrator
Tel: 01892 864557
clerk@withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

**On our website you can also find
copies of our Agendas,
Minutes of Council Meetings and
Community News updates.**

www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

COUNTY / DISTRICT COUNCILLOR CONTACTS:

East Sussex County
Cllr Georgia Taylor
Tel: 07510 074255
cllr.georgia.taylor@eastsussex.gov.uk

Wealden District Cllr Keith Obbard
Tel: 07941 578427
cllr.keith.obbard@wealden.gov.uk

Wealden District Cllr Rachel Millward
cllr.rachel.millward@wealden.gov.uk

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS

East Sussex County Council

www.eastsussex.gov.uk
Tel 0345 6080190
www.eastsussexhighways.com
*For queries about roads & paths,
potholes, street lighting,
flooded roads.*

Wealden District Council

www.wealden.gov.uk
Tel 01323 443333
*For queries about planning, recycling,
waste, and environmental issues.*

Editorial Team: Natalie Brett,
Stephanie Chapman, Beth Harwood,
Diana Kelly, Debbie Siddle.

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A Councillor will be at the monthly Saturday Community Cafes to discuss any topics or ideas.