

Withyham Parish Council

Autumn 2023 - 17th Issue



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR THANK YOU WITYHAM PARISH!

It all began with a letter from the Cabinet Office to inform me that I was to be recommended to His Majesty the King, for the honour of Medal of the Order of the British Empire in the 2023 New Years Honours List. I naturally assumed this was a scam and rang the given telephone number to check – but it was true!

How had this come about? It seems, I had been secretly nominated for consideration by the King and a number of people had written in support of the nomination for my work in the community. Thank you to all those involved in this top secret operation, I had no idea at all. To be chosen by the King out of so many applications was both a shock and an incredible Honour. Wow – what an accolade. Many events in the process followed, culminating in attending a Royal

Garden party in the week leading up to the Kings Coronation, with both the King, Queen Consort Camilla and other senior royals in attendance. The gardens of Buckingham Palace are magnificent and it was wonderful to be able to meet other honour recipients and hear their stories. This was later followed by my Investiture in the grand surroundings of Lewes Town Hall. I felt so proud that my family and friends could witness this investiture and celebrate with me.

Did you know, the British Empire Medal (BEM) was established 4 June 1917 by King George V? It is awarded for a 'hands on service to the local community' for voluntary work and innovative service that has made a difference.

I would also like to thank Lord Abergavenny for his citation, which was very detailed and personal and the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex for bestowing my medal. But above all I thank the team in the parish office for their support, and my lovely husband and family for their years of encouragement. Working with all of you in the community and the kind words from colleagues who nominated me, have meant so much. So many others in our parish deserve this recognition which makes me feel even more appreciative.

Diana Kelly BEM



START OF A NEW PARISH PLAN

We are beginning to start work on our next Parish Plan which we hope to consult on at our next Annual Parish Assembly. This will be building on the successes of our previous two plans which have shaped the Parish Council and guided its direction. You can find our existing plan on our website, do get in touch if you have ideas to contribute. We look forward to your input at the Parish Assembly! **IT IS YOUR PLAN**

SUCCESSSES FROM THE PARISH PLAN

We wrote our first Parish Plan in 2016 to give us objectives that could be shared amongst both councillors and with the community, and evaluated. We wanted a guide to enable us to reflect the needs of residents of Withyham Parish and ensure that we maintain the character of the community whilst embracing change.

What a very tall order but our evaluation of our achievements has given us evidence that we are:

- Promoting diversity, extending our work with different groups and reflecting the needs of all residents.
- Supporting initiatives to protect the environment.
- Involving residents in community projects.
- Ensuring that the parish is resilient and able to respond effectively.
- Addressing and working with partners to resolve highways and transport issues.
- Working with residents and WDC on matters related to housing and planning.
- Protecting assets in the community such as open spaces; AONB; Groombridge Post Office and significant landmarks of value to residents
- Working with the police and residents to reduce levels of crime.
- Encouraging people to visit the parish and enjoy, with us, the beautiful villages, hamlets, and open spaces in our countryside which in turn can bring economic benefits to local businesses.

COMMUNITY DIARY

The Community Diary on our website is now overflowing with events for you to enjoy. It has proven a great resource for residents in finding things to do and for organisers in avoiding clashing events!

Have a look on our website and if you have an event please add it!



GRANTS

We were delighted to give the Dorset Anglers Club a grant for equipment to monitor the quality of the water of the Eridge Stream and the River Grom.

We also provided a grant to Wild Groombridge to purchase Bird Boxes from Men's Sheds. For more information see www.wildgroombridge.org

During May we saw the Parish and District elections arrive. Withyham Parish Council was not required to hold an election as the number of nominations did not require one.

We would like to introduce you to your Withyham Parish Councillors. Some are new to the role, some returning to fulfil another term. All working together for the benefit of our community.



Chairman

Cllr Di Kelly BEM



Vice Chairman

Cllr Robert Gordon-James



Cllr Nick Anderson



Cllr Alan Gaukroger



Cllr Deviani Parekh-Jones



Cllr Jill Pardey



Cllr Judi Tuke



Cllr Beth Rhodes



Cllr Andrew Fane



Cllr Linsey Winter



Cllr Penny Lawne



2 x Vacancies. Mardens Hill & Groombridge

New Councillor Penny Lawne

"I wanted to give something back and thought this would be my way of making a contribution to the Parish. Being part of the Parish Council helps me feel more involved locally, have a better understanding of how the Parish Council works, and be able to contribute towards it. I enjoy listening to and meeting fellow parishioners face to face around the village and at local events, and through the Parish Council affairs, to really be able to represent the people in our community."

New Councillor Judi Tuke

"My favourite bit about being a Councillor is feeling I am working with a group of like minded people who care deeply about the area we live."

I run the Speed Watch Group for the Parish Council and am passionate about Road Safety. I enjoy having the ability to help make decisions that enable and protect a caring and vibrant community. The job can be challenging but very rewarding"

Hopefully you are already familiar with some of our staff and volunteers, but we would like to introduce you to the whole team.



Debbie Siddle
The Clerk* & RFO



Natalie Brett
Assistant Clerk



Stephanie Chapman
Community Engagement



Alex Chenchik
Parish Maintenance



Barry Agutter
Volunteer Highways Coordinator

**The role of The Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support. The Clerk is the Professional Officer of the Council.*

WORKING FOR YOU

Our Committees

Agendas for all our meetings are on our website and in the notice boards at the Parish Office. We welcome members of the public to our meetings and there is a 10-minute opportunity at the beginning of our meetings for members of the public to speak on an agenda item. We are always delighted to see residents in attendance. The full calendar of dates for meetings can be found on our website: www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Council Meetings

Full Council meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month (except in August). Discussions and decisions are made on agenda items at these meetings and they are the driving force behind the actions of the Council.

Planning Committee

Did you know that Withyham Parish Council is a Planning Consultee for applications within our boundary? We would always recommend submitting your comments to Wealden District Council who are the Planning Authority, but do feel free to also come along to our meetings to share your views.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee administers all financial, health and safety and non-staff related contractual matters arising within the Council. These meetings also guide the actions of the Council.

Rights of Way Committee

This is an Advisory Committee tasked with monitoring the Rights of Way within our Parish in order to keep them open and accessible to all whilst liaising with East Sussex County Council Rights of Way team.

Climate & Ecological Advisory Group (CEAG)

Our newly formed Climate & Ecological Advisory Group look at the actions from the Parish Plan in combination with the results for the Parish from carbon calculating tools, to see what next steps can be recommended to Council.

The group is made up of Councillors and residents, and we have a few vacancies left, so if you would like to be part of the group or find out a bit more about what's happening contact the Parish Office.

Speed Watch

Our Councillor led Speed Watch Group is very active, but they would love to increase their numbers! If you are able to give 1-2 hours a month please contact the Parish Office. *Let's Educate Drivers Together*



WINTER RESILIENCE. BE PREPARED!

It always pays to be prepared for winter. There are some simple steps you can take to prepare yourself, your family, community, home or business.

You can do this by keeping informed, being ready at home, on the road and at work, and thinking of others in your community.

Consider having:

- a stock of non-perishable, easily prepared food that doesn't need cooking.
- some bottled water
- enough warm clothes – lots of thinner layers are best - and bedding.
- LED torches or LED camping lanterns and spare batteries – much safer than candles.
- an old-fashioned plug-in, landline phone and a list of family members' landline numbers if they still have them.
- your car winter road ready and carry an emergency kit.

Keep a note of helpful contact numbers to hand such as:

- Water Company
- Electric and Gas Company
- Telephone provider
- Doctor and Pharmacy

If you are classed as vulnerable make sure you are registered with each of the above so you can receive priority in an emergency.

There are further contacts on the last page.

Withyham Parish Council Climate and Ecology Advisory Group's focus is on addressing, and where possible, responding to environmental and ecological concerns within the Parish.



The Impact Community Carbon Calculator Tool was used to create a detailed carbon calculator result for the whole Parish as a starting point. The report is available to view on the Parish Council website.

An important part of the group's aims is making informed recommendations to the Parish Council on environmental policies and practices that can benefit the community. Recently, Council supported the recommendation to purchase a handheld thermal imaging camera. This can be used by residents to carry out their own survey to indicate areas of heat loss in their homes. Contact the Parish Office to register your interest in borrowing this!

Community engagement is one of the corner stones of this working group, creating projects to benefit the community. In addition they will also be highlighting the work of, and partnering with, existing groups in the community who are addressing climate and nature issues.

If you would like to be involved, have a project to suggest or are part of a group that would like to partner on a project please contact the Parish Office.



JUBILEE PLAYGROUND

We have loved seeing how popular the Playground is with children and adults alike. Plaques and benches will be coming in the next few months so keep an eye out!



TEASLEY MEAD BLACKHAM

Following a consultation of local residents it was agreed by Council to provide a piece of play equipment at Teasley Mead.

Thank you to those who volunteered to be involved in this project. Watch this space!



Are you on Facebook? We have our own Facebook page, which, alongside our website, contains useful information on your parish. Have a look, we always welcome your comments.

www.facebook.co.uk/WithyhamParishCouncil

www.withyhamparishcouncil.org.uk

New Address!



Have you just moved into the Parish? We would love to send you a welcome card with helpful information. Get in touch!

MY WEALDEN

Have you signed up for this free service offered by Wealden District Council? With many services on offer such as notice of planning applications near you and details of bin collections it's a great resource. Fine out more at my.wealden.gov.uk



Wealden District Council also held elections in May and your elected representatives are:



Cllr Rachel Millward
Hartfield



Cllr Jessika Hulbert
Withyham

YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Diana Kelly BEM
Chairman
Cllr Robert Gordon-James
Vice Chair



WARDS

Groombridge (including Withyham/Blackham)

Cllr Nick Anderson
Cllr Andrew Fane
Cllr Robert Gordon-James
Cllr Diana Kelly BEM
Cllr Penny Lawne
Cllr Deviani Parekh-Jones
Cllr Beth Rhodes
Cllr Judi Tuke
Cllr Linsey Winter
Cllr Vacancy

Mardens Hill

Cllr Alan Gaukroger
Cllr Jill Pardey
Cllr Vacancy

Withyham PC is supported by:

Debbie Siddle - The Clerk
Natalie Brett - Assistant Clerk
Stephanie Chapman - Community Engagement Coordinator

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
cllr.georgia.taylor@eastsussex.gov.uk

Wealden District

Withyham - Cllr Jessika Hulbert
cllr.jessika.hulbert@wealden.gov.uk

Hartfield - 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, Diana Kelly BEM, Debbie Siddle.



Wealden District Council (WDC) is responsible for the provision of:

- Planning and Building Control
- Council Tax, Council Tax Benefit and Business Rates
- Environmental Health
- Leisure Services
- Business and Tourism Support
- Housing and Housing Benefit
- Elections
- Land Charges
- Waste Collection and Recycling
- Car Parking

Contact details:

Tel: 01323 443333

East Sussex County Council



East Sussex County Council is

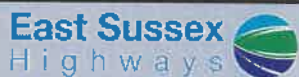
based in Lewes and is responsible for the following services:

- Education
- Libraries
- Trading Standards
- Transport and Traffic Safety
- Adult Social Care
- Waste Disposal
- Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Traffic Safety
- Oversight of the East Sussex Highways contract

Contact details:

Tel: 0345 6080190

www.eastsussex.gov.uk



East Sussex Highways delivers highways maintenance and improvement schemes on behalf of East Sussex County Council. These include:

- Repair and maintenance of most roads and pavements in East Sussex
- Provision and maintenance of traffic lights, streetlights, road signs, bridges & other structures
- Maintenance of road drainage systems, gullies and ditches
- Maintenance of roadside verges, hedges & trees

If you see a problem on the road
Please report it!



Contact/Reporting details:

Tel: 0345 60 80 193

Cut out and keep - Useful reporting details

- East Sussex Highways – Telephone: 0345 6080193
Email: customer@eastsussexhighways.com or online www.eastsussexhighways.com
- 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

Council meetings are held on the second Monday of every month except August at The Old Station. Please check agendas for times. Agendas and minutes can be found on our website or by contacting the Parish Office