



## The Nightingale Times Autumn 2020 Edition

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### Message from the Chair



Well, we are now well into Autumn and Christmas is already starting to feature in the shops, although it's increasingly likely that it will be somewhat different and more low key this year.

The good news is that during the Covid lock-down and since its easing, the new Hatches Farm Sports Ground car park redesign was completed apart from the final job of planting some new trees and completing the seeding of the banks which will be happening very soon. The original car park only allowed for around thirty-six vehicles but can now safely accommodate eighty-five. It is now also available for parents of Wellow School to use when dropping off and collecting their children each day. To make this a safer option, we have also incorporated a new pedestrian gate at the bottom end of the car park nearer to the school. I have been liaising with the Schools Safety Officer to determine what measures are necessary to highlight the crossing area and the Headteacher will be communicating with parents to ask them to make use of the new parking facilities at Hatches Farm rather than parking along the verges and roadsides outside of the school.

The tennis floodlights have now been installed and the Tennis Club have paid for all of the courts to be resurfaced which has made a real difference to the look of them and has further enhanced the overall facility. The new petanque terrain is proving to be very popular and is being used regularly by residents.

The Wellow Neighbourhood Plan continues to progress steadily and, on behalf of all the Councillors, I would like to thank Mike Freeman who is chairing the group and every member of the team for their dedication to this project. It is a hugely complex undertaking not made any easier by recent proposed planning policy changes, but will be vital to Wellow's future.

Sharon and Karen continue to work tirelessly in the Parish Office and although the Office isn't currently open to the public due to the Coronavirus situation, they and all Councillors are available to answer any questions or queries you may have either by phone or e-mail – contact details are on all the Parish notice boards and on the Wellow Parish website.



**Hatches Farm Sports Ground Car Park**



**Petanque terrain**

### Wellow Primary School -

#### Governor Vacancy

The school are looking to fill their Governor vacancy from within the Wellow community. Governors have an important legal role in running our school. You don't need any experience of Education, but you do need to be committed to spending time in our school (post COVID), attending several evening meetings and participating fully in the Governor role. There is far more to tell you, so if you would like more details please could you contact, Roger Savage (Chairman of the Governors) [roger@choice-plants.co.uk](mailto:roger@choice-plants.co.uk)



## **FOOTPATH FOLIAGE**

Recently there have been several comments made by Wellow residents regarding the condition of some of the boundary hedges in the village. Most people do, of course, keep theirs trimmed & under control but in some cases they have become so overgrown with foliage, brambles etc., the neighbouring pavements / footpaths have become much narrower making them at best unpleasant to use for fear of catching clothing or getting scratched, and at worst unsafe forcing folk to use the road. This is obviously not a good situation especially for those using mobility scooters and families with young children, buggies etc.

So, as Autumn is now with us, the growing season is coming to an end and any hedge-nesting birds have safely flown, may we politely ask, if your property borders a pathway which has become overgrown, to please give it an 'end of season' cut back to allow it to be used safely by anyone out & about - whether they are shopping, taking exercise or just enjoying the seasonal colours in the sunshine (when we have it, that is!)

## **WELLOW WAYS - update**

Just in case any of you were wondering what happened to our planned 'Wellow Ways' footpath event - unfortunately for several reasons including the sadly ongoing Covid 19 restrictions, we have had to postpone it until next Spring when hopefully the situation will have improved for us all. We will of course keep you posted with details nearer the time.



## **Footpaths**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Hampshire County Council had to abandon their priority footpath maintenance scheme this year. However, the Parish Council stepped in and Councillors cut back the summer vegetation growth on several paths. Local residents also kindly attended to other footpaths including Path 16, Romsey Road to Hackleys Lane, where in addition to grass cutting a fallen tree was rapidly removed, thanks to whoever was responsible.

The stile on Footpath 17 at the Merrytree Close entrance was becoming a danger due to rotting timbers. As it served no useful purpose and replacement would have been a far too costly option it has been removed.

Footpath 22, Foxes Lane to Scallows Lane remains closed because of the danger posed by the condition of the boardwalk. Hampshire County Council has the repair/replacement of the boardwalk in their programme and hopefully the work will be undertaken before too long.

## **Wellow Common**

The pulling of ragwort continued throughout the summer although the amount growing was significantly down on last year. The bracken at the northern end of the Common was control sprayed to keep its growth in check and ensure it does not encroach further into the open Common.

Residents who use the Monkey Jump car park will have been all too aware of the condition of the track leading from the A36. The potholes were increasing in number and getting deeper so much so that the Parish Council arranged for the levelling and compacting of the track and the digging of drainage channels into the neighbouring ditch.

The emergency vehicle access gate at the Plantation Road car park was damaged beyond repair presumably by a vehicle reversing into it. Replacement was the only alternative. The Parish Council employed local craftsman Phil Jeffs of Worthy Plants who made and installed a new gate.

The pandemic has resulted in a significant increase in the number of visitors to the Common with the Plantation Road car park being particularly well utilised. Unfortunately the rubbish bin has been unable to cope on several occasions and instead of taking their litter home visitors have simply dumped it next to the bin. This thoughtless action has endangered the lives of the horses and donkeys that graze the Common. Local residents have cleared the excess rubbish but they shouldn't need to do so. If the bin is full please take your litter home.







## Contact your Councillors

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Your Council website provides information on everything we do, including Councillor details, dates of meetings, agendas, minutes, finance, Parish Council policies, local organisations' details, current events and much more. In printed form, this Newsletter is intended to complement the website

<https://www.wellowparish.org.uk/>

## Wildlife Corridor in our Village

We are most fortunate to live alongside both the New Forest National Park which is one of Europe's most sensitive ecological areas and a wetland of international importance, and the River Blackwater Wildlife Corridor.

The River Blackwater emanates from the New Forest and flows into the River Test. Along the Blackwater in Wellow, we have parliaments of owls and six types of bat, including the rare Barbastelle bat. Parts of our village come under the Mottisfont Bat Protection Zone.

Returning this year to village skies, a pair of rare goshawks have been spotted, as well as red kites. For many years, buzzards have been seen flying above Wellow, sometimes a family of five can be viewed near to the Blackwater.

For a while now the Blackwater has provided a habitat for otters and some were recently observed crossing Woodington Road. A local farmer has built two large ponds and is now swamped with flocks of geese moving in, as well as the otters.

The health of the river is vital as invertebrate levels on the River Test are now at an all-time low. This affects salmon breeding on the Test, sea trout in the Blackwater and all other water life. With nitrate neutral issues and the climate emergencies declared by both Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council we, in Wellow, should look after the River Blackwater Wildlife Corridor.

In addition to the wildlife previously mentioned, local fisheries have reported sightings of voles, moles, kingfishers, many types of deer, badgers, swans and ducks.

As wildlife adapts to encroachment, we are pleased to note that on the CPV premises in Woodington Road, the pipe plastic company has planted over 4,000 new trees and placed bat boxes on the side of the new warehouse.

We can all contribute to the health and presence of wildlife in our village by placing bird and bat boxes in suitable locations and installing new ponds.





# Sports News

## All systems go at Wellow Tennis Club

Wellow Tennis Club's exciting developments have continued with the opening of two new floodlit courts. At the same time all four courts and the junior practice court have been repainted. The club's playing facilities now match or better those available at many larger clubs in the area. The LED floodlights are of exceptional quality and not at all obtrusive. These developments have been funded in part by the club along with a significant and valuable contribution from Wellow Parish Council and a welcome loan from the LTA.

Earlier this summer the club announced a partnership with Premier Tennis Hampshire and this has led the club to launch several coaching initiatives for adults of all standards and juniors. Interest is growing in these sessions which has led the club to introduce two new cardio tennis sessions. All the coaching sessions are open to members and non-members.

Despite the pandemic issues the club saw a significant growth in membership over the summer with numbers now close to a hundred – the highest for many years. Use of the pay and play facility offered by the club to non-members quadrupled over the summer.

Commenting on the recent developments the club's founder John Moret said: "35 years ago, when I first arrived in Wellow, Hatches Farm was an untended farmer's field. Now it hosts some great sporting facilities for all Wellow residents.

It was always a personal ambition to see a floodlit tennis facility as this is the only way to provide all year round tennis and crucially to attract high quality coaching which is all important for the club's development and the growth of the junior programmes. That all of this has been achieved at such a challenging time is a credit to the club and several of its members including the retiring chairman Paul Feeney who oversaw the recent projects. The support of the Parish Council and the LTA has also been vital in seeing the dream come true.

The floodlights really are top quality and I feel sure that members and non-members are going to enjoy the increase to the playing season that the floodlights will provide. In these difficult times extending leisure and sporting facilities for all ages is so important."

In October after a prolonged layoff of 8 months the Club commenced a new winter season of over 50 matches spread across seven different teams between October and the end of February 2021. Sadly, with the introduction of the lockdown restrictions all club activity has had to cease. Hopefully some tennis activity including the coaching and club play will resume in December. All matches and club sessions are played in a covid secure fashion consistent with the latest government and LTA guidelines.

Prior to lockdown the league tennis had injected even more energy into Wellow's expanding tennis programme with internal singles and doubles ladders and coaching sessions from Premier Tennis on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays Hampshire for adults and juniors. The new floodlights have proved a huge success – as can be seen in the photo - with fully booked Club sessions on a Friday night and plenty of other play during the week.

## Hatches Farm Sports Ground car park refurbishment



Wellow Parish Council are proud to unveil another large project completed, whereby the car park at Hatches Farm Sports Ground was transformed by local contractors Clive Dibden and Ray Shergold. The Parish Council would like to give thanks to all of those who took part in this fantastic transformation, which can hopefully now take the pressure off the road and parking situation outside Wellow school.

The car park size has been increased, the banks graded, drainage put in, new access gate installed nearer to the school and a petanque pitch created, which has been taken on by the Tennis club. Wellow Parish Council urge those of you driving to the school to use this fantastic facility and try to keep the road and verges clear.