



The Nightingale Times

Spring 2023 Edition

Parish Office, Village Hall, Buttons Lane West Wellow, SO51 6BR
<https://www.wellowparish.org.uk/>
clerk@wellowparish.org.uk
01794 323275

Message from the out-going Chair - Councillor Mike Jones

This year has been another eventful one – I can certainly say it has been a case of ‘never a dull moment’! We started the year with our Clerk, Sharon on long term sick leave which led to her making the decision to retire. In the meantime, Karen did a sterling job to keep things running until we were able to recruit a replacement Clerk, Josie. Some of the highlights of what we have achieved included blossom tree planting and installation of the Queen’s Jubilee bench.

I would like to thank the following for their hard work and contributions during the past year: -

Firstly, my fellow Parish Councillors, who I will remind everyone, are all unpaid volunteers. Their hard work, enthusiasm and all the time they give up for our many varied tasks and issues we deal with certainly makes all the difference when trying to the best for Wellow.

Thanks, must especially go to the Councillors who have chosen not to continue as part of the Parish Council, namely Gaye and Ed Chesterton-Kay, Richard Millard, Richard Light and Mike Simpson. Your valued input and hard work will certainly be missed. I would also like to welcome the new Councillors Adam Overton - Hore and Julian Pease. Four other Councillors will be appointed by co-option.

I would also like to say thank you to our Borough Councillors, Gordon Bailey and Nick Adams-King, who is also our Hampshire County Councillor. We certainly appreciate their input and expertise.

Finally, I would like to say that after serving on the Parish Council for nearly nine years, most of which have been quite eventful, the rough, the smooth and of course Lockdown, nevertheless I have greatly enjoyed my time as a Councillor. However, I have now decided to stand down. With a bit of luck, I may now be able to cross off some of the many items on a long ‘to do’ list.

It just remains for me to wish the new Council all the very best in the future.



Coronation Picnic

The village picnic to celebrate the King’s Coronation was a great success and the weather was beautiful on the Sunday compared to the other days of the bank holiday.

Everyone had fun at what was planned to be a low-key event. The cricket pavilion was able to reopen after extensive works had to be carried out due to damage caused from the flooding during the winter.

Throughout the day, there was background music with impromptu karaoke, BBQ, alcoholic and soft drinks served at the bar.



Footpaths and Wellow Ways

Our village footpaths have, as always, been very well used this last year and have tolerated all extremes of weather, from baking hot sun to becoming complete quagmires! Ongoing maintenance has once again been carried out by Councillors, volunteers and our Lengthsman. This included the clearance of overhanging branches and general growth on Footpath 22 (Foxes Ln to Scallows Ln), foliage trimming on Footpath 18 (Romsey Rd to Buttons Lane) and also a general cut-back along the short Footpath that leads to Rixs' Bridge at the Ford.

Last September we held our 'Wellow Ways' event which invited anyone interested to walk the Footpaths, armed with secateurs to trim back any unwanted or wayward growth. As a result of this, it was discovered that Footpath 8, on Broadwoods Lane, which is one of our lesser used paths, had become massively overgrown. As this was well beyond even the sharpest secateurs, we arranged for our Lengthsman to clear the path to make it passable once more. Our thanks must go of course to all the volunteers who helped us that day.



More recently on Footpath 22, some of the steps leading up to the path had collapsed but were swiftly repaired and are fit for purpose again. Unfortunately, the recurring problem of rotting planks along the boardwalk is a current issue and repairs are due to be carried out by HCC hopefully sometime soon. Sadly, this area is rather like the Forth Bridge!



A few weeks ago, a group of Councillors and a couple of willing volunteers cleared a large volume of leaves, debris and unwanted growth along the path and ditch of Footpath 17. In total we estimated that the equivalent of just under 60 large garden bags were cleared and responsibly disposed of. There are still a couple of areas which need attention but hopefully these can be addressed in due course.

Finally, as you may have noticed, there are signs on the entrances to Footpath 24 (which runs from Romsey Road to Foxes Lane). They have been put there by Balfour Beatty, the company who are due to start powerline refurbishment in our area. The works will involve the overhead wiring and pylon situated midway along the Footpath and is part of the improvement and replacement works to the power network between the substation at Nursling, Southampton and Mannington in Dorset. For safety reasons the Footpath will be closed for the duration of works along that location, but presumably exact dates will be released nearer the time. Although the notices run from 29th May to 19th June and later 19th August to 11th September, the footpaths (24 and 16) will only be closed when work is being undertaken by the National Grid.

Wellow Common SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)



Wellow Parish Council owns and is responsible for the management of Wellow Common which is part of the New Forest National Park and a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The land was deeded to the Parish in the 1880's for the use and benefit of all Parishioners. A detailed Management Plan covering the years 2010 to 2019 was approved by Natural England and the grant we receive from them is approximately £18,000 per annum to implement it.

The grant, issued under the Higher Level Stewardship Agreement, was EU funded but since Brexit, Natural England has continued to sponsor the payment. An application for the grant for 2023/24 has been made to Natural England but the decision is awaited.

In line with national guidance, the ground bird nesting season was extended to the end of August when the signs around the common were taken down. Forestry England worked hard throughout the bird nesting season, (March to August), in the National Park by erecting signs, engaging with walkers both with and without dogs and closing car parks close to known nesting sites. This resulted in the sighting of lapwing chicks and curlew eggs in various locations. Adhering to the directions given on the Parish signs does make a difference and may save our endangered bird species.

Following completion of the water main replacement by South West Water the track leading from Corner Cottage to the Monkey Jump view point was left accessible to vehicles. South West Water agreed to fund the installation of a gate to prevent unauthorised vehicle access and instructed their contractor Hydro-Tech to make the necessary arrangements. However, it was necessary for the Parish Council to obtain approval from Natural England before the work could go ahead. Approval was forthcoming and the gate was supplied and erected by a local contractor. The ground is recovering well following removal of the temporary roadway and within the fenced off access sites. This fencing is due to be removed later this year.

The gorse is in full bloom at this time of year and looks superb. However, unless it is controlled it would spread and take over completely. An area of very dense growth at Monkey Jump was identified as needing thinning and following consultation with Natural England it was cleared in February 2023.

Regrettably there has been fly tipping on the Common. However, the debris was removed by the Parish Council and taken to the Bunny Lane dump at no cost to the residents of the Parish.

Joyriders were filmed driving over the Common. Investigation revealed that the ditch south of the Plantation Road car park had eroded over time and was no longer a barrier to vehicles in places. The Council arranged for the ditch to be re-dug earlier this year.



Grants

Each year, the Parish Council sets aside a small budget to award grants to local organisations who operate in support of Parish residents. During 2022/2023 the Parish Council awarded grants to Wellow & Plaitford Cricket Club to help towards the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, Wellow Men's Shed, Wellow Youth Club, Wellow Lunch Club and Victim Support.

See the website for the Parish Council's grant funding policy and application form. Alternatively, contact the Clerk.

Wellow Help Group - Lunch Club Coronation Lunch 8th May 2023

The Lunch Club volunteers agreed back in February 2023 that it would be a good idea to put on a Coronation Lunch for their lovely elderly members and their friends and families in Wellow. Some of their members remembered our Queen's Coronation back in 1953, when they were children and young adults. One of their members, now 89 years' old, brought in a newspaper dated 4th June 1953, which her mother had given her, showing pictures of that day.

With the help of the grant of £149.00 from Test Valley Borough Council, and donations from members' guests, they were able to provide a really good lunch enjoyed by everyone. It really captured the spirit of our new King and his Coronation.

They decorated the hall in a red, white and blue Coronation theme, with balloons, flags and flowers.



Starting off with a toast to King Charles III and singing the National Anthem, the lunch consisted of melon to start, followed by Coronation chicken, potatoes and salad, strawberries, blueberries and cream. Teas and coffees were accompanied by Coronation cupcakes.

One of their volunteers provided music with sing along sheets, so they all had a good sing-song to finish off.

Everyone went home smiling. Subsequently, they have had several calls thanking the wonderful volunteers and Lesley Weldon, the Lunch Club organiser for such an enjoyable and happy occasion.



Contact your Councillors

Adam Overton - Hore, 07971 468 847, email address to be advised

Christopher Craig, 07788 113 544, cllrccraig@wellowparish.org.uk

Sue Jones, 01794 322079, cllrsjones@wellowparish.org.uk

Charles Payne, 07504 573 803, cllrccpayne@wellowparish.org.uk

Julian Pease, 07971 129 600, email address to be advised

Sue Thomas, 07799 264 061, cllrthomas@wellowparish.org.uk

Genni Tuson, 07557 104 131, cllrgtuson@wellowparish.org.uk



WELLOW & PLAITFORD CRICKET CLUB

Another really good year of cricket at the recreation ground, saw the men's 1st team win the league winning every game going unbeaten through the season which was a great achievement.



The Junior section at the club continues to thrive with strong numbers being coached in the all-stars programme through the season and the under 9's having a great first season only losing two games and reaching the semi-finals of the NFJCA cup.

The under 11's continued their development having a good season and the under 13's won the league having a fantastic season where they also went unbeaten. It has been great to see the continued development of the junior cricket at the club, with 6 of our juniors being selected for the Hampshire pathway county/regional performance centres.

The WPCC ladies and girls' softball team (W10) enjoyed a really fun and full summer and winter season over the last year (often fuelled by cake, strawberries and Prosecco!)

In September 2022, nine of the ladies team hopped over to the Isle of Wight to embark on our first ever mini tour, spending a fun weekend in Ventnor and playing (and winning!) matches against Ventnor and Arreton. Following some indoor training at the end of last year, they joined the Gang Warily Indoor Softball League at the beginning of 2023, playing matches on five evenings over three months.

The year ahead will see the introduction of a second border league team supporting the continued growth of men's cricket at the club. They are looking to grow the girls and ladies sections at the cricket club, focusing on creating a fun all-inclusive environment where friendly and competitive cricket can thrive. Very few of the ladies team had ever played cricket before so no experience is necessary. To find out more about the ladies cricket please email Rowena at rjmassam@hotmail.com. If you are interested in junior boys or girls cricket then please contact Simon at unwinsimon@hotmail.com and come along for the upcoming season

WELLOW YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB (WYFC) – 2022/2023 Season

Wellow YFC numbers have continued to increase which is great news. They have continued to keep subscription at a very low/affordable level to ensure that anyone who wants to play local grassroots football can.

This season they have over 100 registered players which contain a mixture of both boys and girls of various ages local to the village and surrounding areas. The registered players currently form nine teams which play in the Eastleigh & District Mini Soccer League (U7's to U10's) and the Southampton & District Tyro League (U11's to U15's) with home games for the older age groups being played at Hatches Farm Playing Fields situated in the centre of the village.



The club has also continued to provide free football training throughout the year at Hatches Farm on a Saturday morning for players of all ages and abilities to enjoy. This continues to be a real success and with the number of Reception and Year 1 players currently attending training they will have enough players to register at least one U7's team for the 2023/2024 season.

Next season, the club will be looking to register at least 11 teams across the age groups due to the numbers they now have at the club and attending training. With that comes the requirement for extra volunteers/managers to help run and coach the teams on game days so please if anyone has any time to offer assistance, then please contact the club via their social media links. In addition, anyone local to the village that would like their sons and daughters to start playing youth football in a warm and welcoming environment then please contact the Club or perhaps just turn up on a Saturday morning and see what you think.



WELLOW PETANQUE

The "Wellow Magic Petanque" group is meeting regularly on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, weather permitting. There's about 20 people who are in contact with the group and who receive a weekly invite to play. There's usually 4-6 people available to play but they have had up to 10 on occasion.

The Terrain is not currently up to competition standards but, having taken a straw poll of current players, there is no aspiration for entering any of the regional leagues. If that were to be the case it would need two more rinks and facilities (including floodlights) for evening play for an extended season.

They have had fierce, friendly and fun contests on the Terrain over the last two years showing that Petanque in the village has been a great success and a valuable addition. If you are new to the sport or would like to play, get in contact with the group. Boules can be provided.

WELLOW TENNIS CLUB

Regular readers of the Romsey Advertiser will have seen many reports on the activities of Wellow Tennis Club during the last 12 months. Those reports have tended to focus on the club's competitive activities in various leagues throughout Hampshire and Wiltshire but there's also been commentary on the various social and internal club competitions which are of equal importance to our members.

At the club's last AGM in November 2022, Gordon Taylor was elected as the club's seventh chair and in a subsequent message to the club's members he said "We must remain a club where all members are able to share their love of tennis as their primary leisure activity - irrespective of playing level or whether they enjoy social mix-in tennis or playing competitive tennis at the high level our teams compete."



Indeed that has been the secret of the club's success since 1987 when it was founded.

During 2022 the club's paid up membership exceeded 100 for the first time and it continues to grow. New links were forged with the local school through Premier Tennis who provide a range of coaching services to the club not just for members but for young and old of all abilities whether beginners or with previous tennis experience.

The junior coaching programme has proved successful alongside other coaching initiatives such as cardio tennis which is a regular feature of the programme. Premier Tennis, in conjunction with the LTA, are also hoping to start a "youth start" programme for youngsters aged 4-11 who are new to tennis. More details will be available via the club website.

The club has entered 13 different teams in various leagues for the coming summer. During the winter season 2022/23 the club ran 11 teams and three of those teams won promotion to higher divisions. The club continues to punch well above its weight regularly playing and beating much larger clubs and local rivals.

In September 2020 after a long wait for planning approval the club was able to install floodlights on two of its four courts with the support of the Parish Council. Unfortunately, the timing of the floodlight installation could not have been worse as a result of the pandemic and the restrictions imposed which included closing the club for several weeks. It has only been during the last winter that the floodlights have really come into their own and have extended playing and coaching time.

This summer the club will continue to run its very popular regular club sessions which will be supplemented by a number of social events including monthly barbecues. It will also be running its own internal tournaments with a finals day planned for September. It is also hoping to run an Open Day in conjunction with Premier Tennis with the possibility of one or two well known tennis players attending and playing an exhibition match.

The club genuinely welcomes new members of all ages and all abilities. The website <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/WellowTennisClub> provides more information and news on the current and past activities including contact details. Non-members are able to book the court at Hatches farm - including the use of the floodlit courts - via the clubs website.