

Westbourne Parish Council Newsletter

| Winter 2021



Westbourne
Parish Council

www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk



Unsustainable development proposed for Long Copse Lane

A new development of 210 houses is being considered for land north of Long Copse Lane in Emsworth. The Parish Council has sent an objection to Havant Borough Council and is urging residents in Westbourne to also send their comments to the planning authority.

Cllr Richard Hitchcock, Chair of the Parish Council, said: "We consider the development to be an unsustainable extension of northern Emsworth into an area of open countryside, far away from an established centre with associated amenities and facilities, including public transport. Havant Borough Council should increase density in other more sustainable areas first to meet its housing allocations before even considering this site.

"We're concerned about increased traffic along the rural and narrow road of Long Copse Lane, which is unsuitable for any more vehicles and would greatly affect those that live nearby. Pedestrians, cyclists and the many horse riders that use the lane would be vulnerable due to poor visibility, lack of footpaths and limited space available for vehicles to pass. Services in Emsworth are two miles away so, as there is no availability of public transport, car journeys will be the only way to get around. The developer has underestimated the attractiveness of Westbourne, which would be seen as the primary location for shopping, schooling, pubs and restaurants, yet no new infrastructure is planned to support our village. Our roads are congested, parking is already difficult and services are stretched.

"The new development would have an impact on the local environment and River Ems, which we've worked hard to protect through the creation of a Wildlife Corridor which runs close to the site. There would be a loss of habitat for wildlife and 12 species of bats, including one of the largest colonies of rare Bechstein's bats in the country. There's insufficient capacity at Thornham Waste Water Treatment Works to deal with the new housing, which could lead to more pollution in Chichester Harbour."

To make a comment on the planning application:

Go to planningpublicaccess.havant.gov.uk and search for APP/21/00893 or for 'Long Copse Lane'. Enter your views in Comment.

Or write to Adrian Ellis, East Hampshire District Council, Penns Place, Petersfield, GU31 4EX. Email: adrian.ellis@easthants.gov.uk

- An extra 500+ vehicles per day, including light and heavy goods vehicles.
- It is far from local services and public transport so the only way to travel is by car, adding pressure to local roads.
- Traffic going to Westbourne and beyond would use Long Copse Lane which is unsuitable for any more traffic.
- There are no plans to improve parking and traffic flow in Westbourne, yet it is the nearest centre for convenience shopping, pubs and restaurants.
- It would forever change the character of the Lane, devastating the local environment, wildlife habitats and flora.
- Pressure on Havant Borough Council to meet Government housing targets is the only reason the site is being considered.

New community verge to support biodiversity

The Parish Council has taken part in West Sussex County Council's nature-friendly community road verge scheme by identifying the large grass verge on the corner of Whitechimney Row and Old Farm Lane as a suitable location for attracting pollinators. By making the verge wilder, we hope to increase biodiversity so that our local environment works better for us all.

Rather than cutting the grass five times per year, it will be cut just once in the autumn. This year, Greening Westbourne took on the task of raking and disposing of the grass cuttings. The objective is to lower the fertility of the soil, enabling wildflowers to out-compete the grass. After a few years, the wildflowers should look more abundant and fewer cuts will also give native species the chance to grow. For a while, the verges may look a little straggly, but this is a long-term project and they will improve with time, and with the help of the local community who will monitor their progress.

The Parish Council has awarded Greening Westbourne a Community Chest Grant to restore the hedge and tree line between the grass verge and the neighbouring field. This will improve the appearance of the area and will provide important connectivity for wildlife.

Parish Council finances

As readers are most probably aware, all parish councillors are volunteers and receive no remuneration. Why do we do it, you may ask? Different councillors may give slightly different answers to that question but what we all share is a concern for the community in which we live and a belief that being a councillor is one way of making a difference.



The Council does need funds to carry out its work and this is raised via the precept, which is essentially the Council's budget calculated as a relatively small percentage of Council Tax. This is the time of year when the Council budget is set for 2022/23 and, as always, there is a healthy debate regarding the level of service to be provided and the financial contribution that can be expected from the people of Westbourne. Whilst we do what we can to keep our ear to the ground, we do need you to let us know exactly what it is you expect from your Council and you can keep yourselves informed by visiting our website, Facebook page and/or attending our regular monthly meetings.



New Community Speedwatch coordinator



The Parish Council would like to thank Kevan Pegley for recently taking on the role of coordinator for Westbourne's Community Speedwatch Group.

Kevan said: "To discourage drivers from exceeding the well-flagged speed limits, Community Speedwatch was launched back in 2018. Residents turn out for an hour at a time in groups of three, stationed at pre-determined spots around the village. You may have seen us, dressed in hi-vis jackets, armed with a small speed gun, pen and pad. We record the speed of passing vehicles, together with the data needed to identify them. Details of any that exceed a certain threshold are passed to Sussex Police who send a letter of discouragement to the offending owner. Team members generally agree, however, that what is important is their road-side presence, which does tend to slow drivers down.

"Since the start of the operation, there have been 74 sessions and 1,348 vehicles have been reported for speeding. The highest speed recorded in the 20mph limit area was 37mph; and in the 30 limit 57mph! There are currently 16 volunteers, though some of the original group from 2018 are still turning out today, and new blood is always most welcome. It's not taxing work, sessions are usually cancelled if it's raining, and you can volunteer for sessions as often as you like, when you like".

If you'd like to take part, more information is available at www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk or email clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk

We have a Neighbourhood Plan – so what?

In 2013, the Parish Council decided to create a neighbourhood plan - an initiative linked to the 2011 Localism Act which empowers local communities to take responsibility for the development of planning policy for their neighbourhood.

A Plan is written by local people and adopted by the local planning authority to help decide planning applications. It enables the community to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built and have their say on what those new buildings should look like.

It took the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group longer than anticipated to achieve its objective but, in July, Westbourne residents lent their overwhelming support to the Plan in a local referendum. In September, Chichester District Council adopted the Plan and it became an integral part of planning law.

What does this all mean in practical terms? The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on local planning applications and, until now, it has relied upon standard planning rules and regulations, none of which are specific to the Parish. Having a Plan means we are now able to protect areas that the people of Westbourne do not want to see developed. Relevant sections from the Plan are already being cited in comments made by the Parish Council. In other words, our hard work is beginning to pay off!

No plan, of course, lasts for ever, and a review will need to start within the next 18 months. This time, we would not be starting with a blank sheet and the work would not be as arduous. We are looking for volunteers who have a commitment to Westbourne and wish to avail themselves of a realistic opportunity to ensure that it develops in the way we want. Please get in touch if you are interested and would like further information.



Public art ideas wanted

Chichester District Council has awarded Westbourne just over £5k for an item of public art following the development at The Shire on North Street. Please let us know if you have any ideas of what the public art could be - possibly linked to the history of Westbourne - and where it could be situated. The deadline for the project is next summer.

Newly elected parish councillors

We would like to welcome Jane Gould and Kim Franks who were co-opted to the Parish Council in October. Jane, who works for a national charity, and Kim, who is a project manager, are residents in Westbourne and bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise. We'd like to thank them for joining us and helping us to achieve the very best for the Parish.



Affordable housing project at Mill Road

Westbourne Community Trust is working hard to deliver its affordable housing project on the land to the rear of 30 to 56 Mill Road. Chichester District Council has confirmed that it now has all the necessary information and a final decision on the planning application, that was submitted in April 2020, is expected shortly. A legal agreement is being finalised between the Council and the Trust that will be attached to the planning permission. Arrangements are being made to transfer the land from the District Council to the ownership of the Trust.

New community bus

We're looking for volunteer drivers, for half a day per week, for a new bus serving the Bourne area. Free training provided. Email clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk to find out more.

Volunteers needed for Westbourne Magazine

Would you like to be involved in producing Westbourne's Magazine which has existed for over 150 years? Westbourne Magazine is looking for people with a working knowledge of Word and/or Publisher to edit and compile articles into the magazine format. The work can be done at any time to suit you over a 10-day period every other month. They also need someone to report occasionally on the monthly Parish Council meeting or produce a cover picture – if you can help, or would like to know more, please contact westbournemagazine@gmail.com

New facilities at the Common

A new picnic bench, two new benches and a welcome board have been installed at the Common on Monk's Hill with funding from Chichester District Council.

Contact the Parish Council

Email: clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk Call: 07775 654483

Write to: Westbourne Parish Council, PO Box 143,
Emsworth, PO10 9DX

Go to: www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk