

# Westbourne Parish Council Newsletter

| Winter 2024



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## Richard Hitchcock

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It is with great sadness we write about the passing of Cllr Richard Hitchcock, Chairman of Westbourne Parish Council, on Monday 19 August 2024.

Richard was a long-standing member of the Parish Council and had been a parish councillor for over 20 years, taking on the role of Chairman in 2015. Richard brought much experience, having served as a parish councillor in his previous home of Norwich and through his career in higher education.

Richard was passionate about Westbourne and worked tirelessly on behalf of the local community. As Chairman, he represented the Parish at many local meetings including the Bourne's Forum, Chichester District Association of Local Councils, West Sussex Association of Local Councils and Chichester District Council Planning Committee. Richard brought his enthusiasm and energy to the role of Chairman and led many community meetings with a confident and engaging manner, and his customary sense of humour.

Richard was always willing to help others and often worked with residents and other professional bodies to resolve various local issues, offering his support at every opportunity. Richard had a leading role in Greening Westbourne, the Community Orchard at Hampshire Farm Meadows, Ems Valley Memorial Arboretum, Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and Westbourne Community Trust. Richard was a good friend and mentor to many, a great lover of cider, and enjoyed singing with the Village Voices and acting in local drama productions.

Cllr Nigel Ricketts, who was elected as Chair of the Parish Council in September, said: "Richard worked hard to support the interests of Westbourne and he was involved in many local organisations, offering his time and help with a wide range of community projects. He was a committed chairman who worked on Parish matters to the very end. He was always enthusiastic and willing to help, worked well with all people, and will be missed by many".

Clare Kennett, Clerk to the Parish Council, said: "I've worked with Richard for the last ten years since I started working for the Council and he offered me a lot of help and support in my role. The news of Richard's passing came as a shock to us all as we hoped that he was getting better. The Council has received lots of lovely tributes and we are grateful to have received them. Our sincere condolences go to his family and friends, and our thoughts are with them at this sad time".

A small private funeral was held on 10 September and a Celebration of Richard's Life was held at Westbourne Church on 28 October, followed by a reception at Mill Meadows Farm, with over 200 people in attendance.

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## Development of 12 affordable social rent houses at Mill Road

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On Friday 18 October, Westbourne Community Trust celebrated the start of its project to provide 12 affordable social rent homes for local people in Westbourne. Over 25 people from partner organisations and advisers for the scheme attended the site to officially mark the start of the construction. Jess Brown Fuller MP and Councillor Clare Apel, Chair of Chichester District Council, spoke of their support for the project and made a 'ceremonial start' to the work.

The new homes will be available for local people who cannot afford to rent or buy on the open market. The scheme is expected to be completed in October 2025.

The project at Mill Road is the result of six years of hard work by a dedicated group of local volunteers who wanted to tackle the affordable housing problem that affects Westbourne and many similar villages in the South of England.

Frank Campbell, Chair of Westbourne Community Trust, said: "Young people who cannot afford housing locally often have no choice but to leave their home village to find cheaper accommodation, or they continue to live with their parents as young adults or to 'sofa surf' with friends. This causes lots of social and financial problems and in the long-term it affects the sustainability of the local community and the local economy.

"This project is a great example of how consultation with the community can deliver much needed affordable housing, as well as a range of additional benefits to improve the quality of life in the community. The new houses will be retained permanently for social rent and will not be subject to 'right to buy'. This will ensure that they will continue to be available for local people for many generations".

Westbourne Parish Council is a key partner of the project and its Chair, Cllr Nigel Ricketts, said: "Westbourne has an urgent need for more affordable housing, particularly for one and two bedroom properties as shown by a recent housing needs survey. There are many other benefits as the Trust will be making significant investments in new recreation and playground facilities for local children and families, as well as improving parking in Mill Road for existing residents."

A temporary access road has been created from Foxbury Lane that has been generously agreed by an adjoining landowner, which avoids construction traffic being routed through the village.



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## Community benefits

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The scheme has been subject to full consultation with the local community and many additional community benefits have been incorporated.

The recreation ground at Mill Road will be improved with landscaping and new play equipment to replace the existing outdated equipment. A new access gate will be provided into the park from the local primary school so that it can use the new facilities, and a jogging track will be created to allow the school to undertake its 'measured mile' runs to improve the health and fitness of its pupils. The renovated recreation ground will be gifted to the Parish Council who will maintain it for the benefit of the local community.

In addition, a new storage building will be provided for the adjoining Allotment Association and the Parish Council. New residents' parking space will be provided in Mill Road to ease congestion and deal with a lack of off-street parking.

A rewilding and tree planting scheme will be undertaken on a farm within the village to offset the nitrate emissions that the development will generate. A range of nature conservation measures are incorporated into the design of the houses and the re-landscaping of the park to encourage biodiversity.

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### Registering your interest

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All of the homes will be two storeys, with 6 x 1 bed, 4 x 2 bed and 2 x 3 bed properties. Those interested in registering for the accommodation should go to [www.westbournecommunitytrust.org](http://www.westbournecommunitytrust.org) where you can become a member of the Trust and register your interest for one of the properties.

More information about the scheme and about Westbourne Community Trust can be found at [www.westbournecommunitytrust.org](http://www.westbournecommunitytrust.org)



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### Closure of Mill Road recreation ground

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The Council has regrettably made the decision to fully close the recreation ground at Mill Road for safety reasons while building work is underway following vandalism which took place on Saturday 9 November.

A group of youths broke into building site and removed items which they then set alight in the multi-use games area. The large fire has severely damaged the surface making the equipment unsafe to use. The Council was in the process of repairing the structure and this is a set back to the renovation of the playground.

The Council has also received reports of anti-social behaviour and damage at the allotment site and urges residents to report all issues to the police, no matter how small, so that they have an accurate picture of incidents and can deploy resources to prevent further issues.

In an emergency call 999 and non-emergency incidents can be reported by calling 101 or at [ww.sussex.police.uk](http://ww.sussex.police.uk).



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## Road improvements in Aldsworth

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West Sussex County Council has made improvements to Emsworth Common Road in Aldsworth after the Parish Council and local residents campaigned for better road safety. The speed limit has been reduced to 30mph with new signage and road markings, the road has been resurfaced, overgrowing vegetation has been cleared and there are new verge markers. The scheme is intended to help reduce the risk of road traffic collisions at the bridge where the lanes are narrow due to the tight bends.

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## Vacancies

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We are looking for four new councillors to fill vacancies on the Parish Council. If you would like to get involved in doing something for your community, please contact [clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk). We are in need of people to help achieve more for the Parish with village projects, community events and looking after the two recreation grounds and community assets. Councillors make a huge difference to the Parish and you would work with a range of people. No experience is required and training is available.

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## Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan

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In July 2021, the Westbourne electorate voted in favour of the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan, which has since offered the Parish protection from unwanted development. The time has now come to review the Plan to ensure it keeps up-to-date with changes in local and national legislation and a Steering Group formed of a range of local residents has been set up to agree updates and new policy.

Chichester District Council's revised Local Plan has been submitted to the examiner for external review. The government has allocated the development of 575 new houses in the District over the next 15 years, with Westbourne having 30 allocated to it. The review of the Neighbourhood Plan will mean the new allocation is appropriately considered so that new housing is planned. The Plan also includes policies on the environment, improving community facilities, creating a balanced community and protecting heritage assets, green spaces and the natural environment.

You can find out more at [www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)

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## Heritage Street Lights

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The Parish Council has agreed to go ahead with upgrading the four street lights on the junction with Whitechimney Row and East Street to heritage-style lamps with warm white bulbs to match the conservation area.

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## New street names

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Two new street names have been agreed for the new development off Monk's Hill in Westbourne. These are Rule Road and Randall Way and named after local residents who did a lot for the local community.

**Find out more information**  
visit [www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)  
email [clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk)  
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**Westbourne**  
Parish Council