

# Westbourne Parish Council Newsletter

| Winter 2022



Westbourne  
Parish Council

[www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)



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## Saving the River Ems

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The Parish Council continues to push for action to save the River Ems, which almost totally dried up this summer.

The river is one of very few chalk streams in the world. It suffers from low flow (or no flow at all) much more than it used to, and is now at crisis point.

Portsmouth Water takes so much water from the Ems's underground sources that the river can't cope in dry periods. This year large stretches had no water at all, and others were reduced to a trickle.

We're working with Friends of the Ems (FotE), part of Greening Westbourne, to campaign for changes that would restore the river to health and allow wildlife such as kingfishers and water voles to thrive.

Our local MP, Gillian Keegan, has joined the campaign, along with our district and county councillors.

At the height of the drought last summer, the Parish Council and Greening Westbourne called on Portsmouth Water to impose a hosepipe ban. This demand hit the headlines in local and regional media, including Portsmouth's daily paper The News, BBC TV's South Today, BBC Radio Sussex and Wave 105. It also prompted a demand from Gillian Keegan for immediate government action.

Portsmouth Water said conditions for a hosepipe ban had not been reached.

We believe there must be a better balance struck between the amount of water supplied to our homes and workplaces, and the needs of the natural environment.

You can help keep pressure on Portsmouth Water, the Environment Agency and the government to reduce the amount of water taken from the river's sources, so it can be saved.

If you want to help, you can get involved by signing up as a supporter of the Friends of the Ems. Just email [greeningwestbourne@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:greeningwestbourne@hotmail.co.uk) and say you would like to join FotE.

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## Volunteer to keep Westbourne safer

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Health and safety regulations are ever more present in our lives. Some would argue that many are little more than overcautious annoyances, until their lives are saved by one of them.

Driving a motor vehicle is one of the most dangerous things you can do, and unsurprisingly comes with its own set of health and safety measures: seat belts, MOTs, drink driving. Most of us take these seriously; probably would, even if they didn't come with significant penalties for transgression.

Then there are speed limits, one of the more vital of all safety regulations. Yet speed remains a contributing factor in nearly half of all road accidents that result in death or serious injury. Despite this carnage, many people view speeding as a victimless crime. What other potentially lethal activity can you think of where otherwise law-abiding members of the public will actually warn potential offenders of police presence designed to catch them? Or where perfectly legal digital technology systems help you avoid being caught by other digital technology systems?

The danger of speeding is not confined to high speeds. On the contrary a full two-thirds of all crashes in which people are killed or injured happen on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less. And unsurprisingly a large majority of deaths and serious casualties to pedestrians and cyclists occur in built-up areas.

Built-up areas like Westbourne. Geography dictates that Westbourne suffers quite a volume of through traffic. We have to live with that. But at least we should expect the traffic to pass through the village at a sensible speed. Safety is obviously the primary reason, but air pollution and noise are also minimised by slower speeds.

The Community Speedwatch programme, coordinated by the Parish Council together with the Sussex Police, was set up to encourage drivers to stick to the well-signed 30 and 20 mph speed limits. But it is desperately short of volunteers, without whom it just cannot continue to function.

We are looking for residents who would prefer to see vehicles travelling within the limits - prefer to see risk to children minimised, prefer to breathe cleaner air, prefer that their parked cars are not so liable to dents and scratches, prefer to be able to enjoy a conversation in the street. Volunteers' presence at strategic points in the village has been shown to calm the traffic, and perhaps to encourage drivers to think about their speed. The speed of passing vehicles is recorded with a handheld radar gun. Details of any that exceed a certain threshold are passed to Sussex Police, who send a letter to the offending owners to remind them that Westbourne has speed limits, and it would be much appreciated if they were observed.

It's not taxing work: sessions last an hour and are cancelled if it's raining. You can volunteer for sessions as often as you like, when you like. If you are interested you can find more at [communityspeedwatch.org](https://communityspeedwatch.org). If you'd like to volunteer - remember, there's never any commitment - please email [clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk) who will explain the process of signing up. Westbourne needs you!

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### Grants for local initiatives

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Local community groups and organisations are invited to apply for a Parish Council grant to support a specific purpose, project or initiative that would benefit residents or the Parish. The policy, application form and details of who we've supported before are available at [www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](https://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)

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### Warm spaces

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We're working with local organisations, including those in Emsworth, to put together a list of warm spaces that residents can gather for free in a warm, safe, welcoming place over the colder winter months. A poster with the list of venues can be found at [www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](https://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk) and in the noticeboards in The Square, Westbourne.

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## Restricting HGVs travelling through Westbourne

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We'd like to thank the 366 residents who have signed our petition to restrict HGVs travelling through the narrow roads of Westbourne. We've been able to use this as evidence to show support for the scheme in discussions with West Sussex County Council.

Cllr Andrew Kerry-Bedell, County Councillor for Westbourne, has been supporting the Parish Council in progressing the HGV restriction and we have submitted a traffic regulation order to the County Council. If it is approved, circular signs to restrict HGVs over 7.5 tonnes, except for access, will be placed at the entrances to the village to prevent unwanted through-traffic. If you've not already signed the petition, please add your name at [www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)

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## Addressing long-standing road issues in Aldsworth

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The Parish Council has been urging the County Council for many years to make improvements to Emsworth Common Road in Aldsworth. We've been successful in reducing the speed limit to 40mph but much more still needs to be done to improve the situation for local residents, pedestrians, horse riders and other road users.

Cllr Nigel Ricketts, said: "After a number of traffic collisions which caused a lot of damage to the bridge, the County Council installed temporary traffic lights. It's made an amazing change to those living in Aldsworth by adding to their safety and peace without racing vehicles at every opportunity. We think the bridge cannot take two vehicles safely and we're asking the County Council to install the lights permanently. They're considering a safety scheme for the road, and we will push for as many improvements as possible, but it could be years before it gets better."

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## Energy and cost-efficient street lights

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The Parish Council has agreed to upgrade its 30 street lights to LED bulbs this winter to make them more energy efficient to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions. To cut bills further, we've joined the County Council's PFI scheme for street light electricity which will see our energy costs reduced again by a third.

Following a consultation with residents, the Council has agreed to install heritage-style lamps on the four street lights on Whitechimney Row so they are in keeping with the conservation area.

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## Help with cost of living pressures

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Chichester District Council provides support to local residents and businesses, from help with finances and bills, to help with health and wellbeing and housing. Find out more at [www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyou](http://www.chichester.gov.uk/supportingyou)

West Sussex County Council offers information and advice through its libraries, where you can also get internet access and take part in events and activities. Help towards food and fuel costs can be found through its Community Hub. More information is available at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/costofliving)

The County Council is urging residents not to miss out on funding to make homes more energy efficient to help with rising energy bills. Find out more about energy efficient measures, such as insulation, solar panels and air source heat pumps for eligible households at [www.warmerhomes.org.uk/programme](http://www.warmerhomes.org.uk/programme)



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## Be scam aware

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Residents are advised to be careful of scams and fraudsters exploiting people in times of need. Protect yourself and do your research, look out for spelling and grammatical errors, never reveal personal or financial data, don't open email attachments or click on links, and have up-to-date antivirus software. You can check if a website is legitimate at [www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite](http://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite)

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## Travel for free on the local community bus

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Residents are encouraged to make the most of free local travel on the recently launched Bourne Community Bus, which provides a local service connecting Westbourne, Emsworth, Southbourne, Thorney and Nutbourne. The service runs every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8.30am to 4pm, with stops in Westbourne at The Square, the Cricketers Pub and Homefield Road. Find out more at [www.bournebus.co.uk](http://www.bournebus.co.uk)

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## Land behind the Parish Hall

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The Parish Council has been in discussion with other village organisations and residents about buying the land behind the Parish Hall in Westbourne. There is a large village pond and it could be used by the local community for recreation and offer a space for parking to help village businesses, amongst many other possible uses.

We have submitted an expression of interest and, at the time of going to press, we are waiting to hear from the agent. If an offer is progressed, we will carry out a full consultation.



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## Stand as a parish councillor

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The next local elections are due to take place on 4 May 2023 when all nine seats on the Parish Council will be up for grabs! If you'd like to make a difference to the place where you live, or would like to change how things are done, why not stand for election?

You can find out more about being a parish councillor by attending a Full Council meeting, held every second Thursday of the month at 7.15pm at The Meeting Place or by emailing the Parish Clerk at [clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk). Briefing sessions about being a parish councillor will also be held online by our local county association in the new year.

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## Setting the 2023/24 Precept

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We've started to plan our 2023/24 budget which will inform the Precept, collected through Council Tax by the District Council next year. We understand the financial pressures faced by many and we will do our best to strike the right balance between covering rising costs, delivering services and projects for the Parish while keeping the Precept as low as possible.

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## A lasting tribute to the Queen

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We will be planting a tree in memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the Common on Monk's Hill this autumn. This will complement the hedgerow pack of over 400 saplings that we received from the Queen's Green Canopy scheme as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which will also be planted at the Common.

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## Contact the Parish Council

[clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@westbourne-pc.gov.uk)      07775 654483  
Westbourne Parish Council, PO Box 143,  
Emsworth, PO10 9DX  
[www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk](http://www.westbourne-pc.gov.uk)