

NEWSLETTER – MAY 2020

Due to the current circumstances in which we find ourselves, most of our news revolves around Coronavirus.

The most important message we want to send is **THANK YOU** to all those lovely residents of Chalford who have been helping the housebound with the collection of prescriptions and shopping and in one case, mowing the lawn! We are really grateful to you all.

Bonfires, music and more – due to the lovely weather, we have received a number of complaints about householders being a bit overzealous with bonfires in their gardens and windows open with loud music playing. At this time, when many people are dealing with unfamiliar, stressful and sometimes frightening circumstances, could we please request that everyone considers the impact of their actions on their neighbours. While this might seem like an opportunity to prune the garden, please don't burn the waste as that could create additional problems for people already potentially dealing with breathing difficulties. Similarly, opening your windows and playing music at high volumes might make you feel better, but it will just make everyone else's life less tolerable. Please, think about other people, be kind and keep your activities reasonable.

Play Equipment – although our playing fields are still open, the play equipment is not available for use. This is to prevent the spread of any infection. The new play equipment, due to be installed in France Lynch Pleasure Ground, has been deferred once again. We would anticipate installation will be when it is safe to use equipment without fear of spreading infection.

It has been noted that many children are out in groups. We know it's difficult but if possible, please keep reminding your youngsters of the minimum distance rule that the Government is advising, that being 2 metres.

Dog fouling – the lovely weather and the need to get out of the house for a short time to exercise, has resulted in an increase in dog fouling. We are aware that readers of this newsletter are not necessarily the perpetrators. However, if you witness a fouling incident, please report it to us with details of the dog/dog owner and we will pass the information on to our SDC Dog Warden.

Footpaths and coronavirus - Things are changing so fast with coronavirus that what's written here in the second week of April may be out of date by the time you read it, but here goes. There are two messages.

1. Our delightful but sometimes narrow footpaths - We all know it is vital to keep 2 metres away from others to slow the spread of covid 19 as we get our daily exercise. However, this isn't possible on our narrower paths. There are three ways to deal with this: (i) Check before you walk on a narrow path that your way out is clear before you start; (ii) if this isn't possible and you meet someone coming the other way, go back until you can pass safely; or (iii) keep to wider paths or roads.

2. Landowners must not close Public Rights of Way - On 3 April, the government issued advice on PROW to landowners via Defra and the National Farmers' Union. In summary it is:

- (i) Owners/occupiers should not unlawfully obstruct or restrict the rights of way.
- (ii) Where large numbers of people are using such routes, landowners may consider tying gates open if it is safe to do so, so that walkers do not need to touch the gate;

(iii) Landowners can temporarily display polite notices that encourage users to respect local residents and workers by following social distancing guidelines and consider using alternative routes that do not pass through gardens, farmyards or schools. (Defra/NFU approved notices are available – contact the Parish Office. These notices have no legal force.)

Council Meetings – although we are not physically holding meetings, councillors are still communicating and making decisions on issues as a group. If you have any concerns, please email us and let us know and we will consider them and agree the way forward.

And finally, we want all our parishioners to get through this difficult period in our lives unscathed so please keep safe and heed government advice. Take care all.

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