

CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL – FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER INSERT

At the time of writing, we are in lockdown again. Just a few pointers. The Parish Centre is closed for public access except for those who need to take a meal from the Freezer of Love. This is situated just inside the front door so there should be no need for contact with Council employees or other members of the public.

If you are isolating/shielding we can assist with collection/delivery of prescriptions or small grocery items. Contact details are below.

Playgrounds are open for walking and childrens' play equipment but the gym equipment in France Lynch Pleasure Ground is out of bounds. Chris, our Groundsman, sanitises all touching points of play equipment weekly. Before going to the playgrounds, please wash hands and of course on return, please do the same. If the playground is busy, it is safer to return later.

Current guidelines state that you can only exercise outdoors with members of your household or members of your support bubble or one other person once a day. If you are out jogging please be considerate and leave sufficient room for pedestrians to access footpaths. We have received concerns that people are congregating around benches; please remember the social distancing rules and stay 2 metres apart. And finally, please take your used masks home or deposit in litter bins around the Parish; there are too many lying on footpaths, in gardens.

Now to other business

Verges – this is top of our complaints list. Due to wet weather, verges are saturated and vehicles parking on the verges are leaving deep ruts. Repeated parking on others, have reduced the verge to mud. Perpetrators most probably don't read this newsletter but if you are a culprit, please park more considerately. One verge that was very damaged prior to Christmas has almost recovered so given time and dry weather, they will all return to their normal state eventually.

Precept – we have agreed the funding we require from Stroud District Council for the 2021/22 year. This amounts to £171,015, a 2.68% increase over last year. In monetary terms it is an increase of £2.25 per annum. The largest increases have been due to the ash dieback disease where there is a need to increase our tree reserve by £12,000 to cover the cost of felling a vast number of ash trees. We have also increased the Community Youth Services reserve by £12,000 to assist with Frith Youth Centre's survival during this challenging time.

Dog Fouling – this regular item has unfortunately been exacerbated by the lockdowns. More people are exercising with their dogs and it appears many are not clearing up after their pets. Again, it may not be readers of this newsletter but if you witness anyone not picking up, you can report them anonymously to our dog warden, Josie Oak by contacting her on 01453 754490.

Ash dieback – as a result of this chronic fungal disease, our Arborcultuist carried out an assessment of the ash trees in the Parish's part of Frithwood and the Valley Copse. In total there are 53 trees in Frithwood and 27 in the Valley Copse that have

to be felled as soon as possible. We have contracted a forestry company to carry out the work and they are applying for a felling license. Unfortunately, this is only the first stage and it is more than likely that further ash trees will need to be felled before the end of the year. We are investigating replacements and we are hoping we can get some whips/trees from Gloucestershire Highways free of charge.

By the time this newsletter comes out some of you will have noticed our Arboriculturist carrying out work to trees in other areas at the end of January. One of those trees is an ash tree at Frithwood Cemetery that needs to be felled and there are several trees in Bussage Pleasure Ground that need minor work apart from an oak that requires a crown reduction. Some trees in Gerald's Way need felling as they were planted too close together and others need work. In addition, an ash and a sycamore need to be felled near to Fourways Crossroads in preparation for our Gateway installation. Our Arboriculturist will also be carrying out this work. So, if you witness all this activity, please be aware that we only fell or carry out work to trees where it is absolutely necessary.

Footpath lockdown and footpath success - You won't be surprised to know the work of the Footpath Volunteers has been suspended during lockdown 3. We'll resume when it is allowed and safe to do so. However, there is footpath good news. Two years ago, the Parish Council initiated an application for the path running parallel to Ashley Drive/Velhurst Drive from Bussage Playing Field towards Manor Village to become a Public Right of Way (PRoW). At the beginning of December, the Gloucestershire County Council Commons and Rights of Way Committee approved the application, agreeing it was an earlier mistake that led to the path not being on the definitive map as a PRoW. The path will now have the same legal status as any other PRoW – meaning it can't be lost as a public footpath. There is one final step to be taken to complete the process, lockdown permitting, which should be a formality. The 'Order' approving the path as a PRoW has to be advertised for six weeks to allow objections or representations to be lodged. Thanks are due to all those who submitted evidence of use of the path or who provided evidence of historical use or ownership.

Why Not Join a Council Meeting?

All our council meetings are open to the public and are currently held via Zoom. If you would like to join us, please let the Clerk know and an invitation will be sent to you. You can see the full schedule of forthcoming meetings on our website.

Our contact details are: Tel: 01453 887204. Email: info@chalford-glos.gov.uk. Web site: www.chalford-glos.gov.uk or follow us on Facebook