

## **News from Wolston Parish Council – October 2017**

People who regularly attend Parish Council meetings could be forgiven for feeling a sense of frustration, or that they are taking part in a version of "Groundhog Day" - where the same topics are addressed month after month, with often little or no tangible evidence of progress. However, it is always gratifying when Councillors can report when things have moved forward or even been resolved.

As users of the Recreation Ground on Dyer's Lane will be aware, there has been a spate of malicious vandalism aimed at the new play and recreational health gym equipment resulting in one of the swings having to be removed. As reported last month several quotations for a digital CCTV system were awaited so that a decision could be taken on which company to engage. It was pleasing that the Councillors had three quotations from which to choose, at the September meeting, and that the specification includes some night vision capability. There is no other option to employ since securing the site is not possible because of the access currently available from Dyer's Lane, Brook Street, and the Baptist Cemetery. You will all realise that money spent repairing the vandalised equipment is money that can't be used elsewhere. Can we ask that if you see anyone damaging the equipment that you report it to the Police, the Community Safety Wardens, or the Parish Council Clerk or Chairman? On a happier note, I recently saw a young family who had expended some energy - some getting fit using the outdoor gym equipment and the younger member enjoying the new play equipment, they were tidying up litter and "feeding" the "bear" bin what they had picked up. I know that we often have dog walkers who clear up litter they find on the park as well, so a big thank you to those people who care enough to do so.

A question recently asked was about who is actually responsible for clearing the brook which runs through the village? This is addressed by guidance on the Environment Agency website, but briefly under common law the responsibility for maintaining the flow in any watercourse rests with the "riparian" owner - that is the owner of land or property adjacent to a river or other watercourse. This means that when the Environment Agency can't justify work, they will look to the riparian owner to do the work. If your land boundary is next to the watercourse it is assumed that you own the land up to the centre of the watercourse, unless it is owned by someone else. If a watercourse runs alongside your garden wall you should check your property deeds to see if the wall marks your boundary or the watercourse marks the boundary. When decisions have to be taken on work which residents want done then consideration has to be given not only to the physical impact of not doing it, or arranging for it to be done, but also to who will pick up the cost.

A resident who has lived in the village for 83 years raised concerns about the failure of the Parish Council's contractors to clear the grass cuttings from the footpaths when they have cut the verges. The Clerk had contacted the contractors' manager and reported the shortcomings and had also sent a copy of a photograph showing the dreadful state in which the pavement had been left. The resident was thanked for raising the issue and given assurances that action would be taken to ensure there would be improvements to the service being delivered.

The Wolston Youth Project is now in its sixth year of operation. The Parish Council decided to run a Youth Project staffed with qualified youth workers, following the closure of the Youth Club, run by Warwickshire County Council, in the last round of cuts to their Youth Services. The Youth Project has seen an increase in the younger membership with Year 6s from Wolston St Margaret's attending. The Youth Project provides a range of activities such as pool, table tennis, laptops with internet access to enable young people to use social media as well as complete schoolwork, table top activities such as arts and crafts and traditional games such as scrabble, etc. Cake and biscuit decoration has been very popular over this year and there is also football on the all-weather pitch. Over the next 12 months the staff team will continue to work to provide an environment where the young people feel safe, with the emphasis on building relationships, enhancing their social skills and supporting their transition to adulthood and on to become valued members of the community of Wolston village.

The Wolston Youth Project has been the recipient of an exceptionally kind and generous donation, thanks to the Open Gardens Committee which has included the Wolston Youth Project in the list of recipients of money raised on the Gardens Walkabout in 2017. Their support is very much appreciated, especially since the Youth Project had previously received a donation from the Open Gardens Committee 2 years ago, following the last Gardens Walkabout in 2015.

Thanks to Roger Ingles and Francis Smiton for coming to talk to the parish councillors about the work being planned on the Allotment Gardens 12 acre site located between Stretton Road and Warwick Road. The site, owned by the Wilcox Trust and leased to Wolston Parish Council is tenanted by Wolston and Brandon Allotment and Gardens Association members who do an excellent job of maintaining the site and identifying areas for improvement. We congratulate them for the projects they have instigated to make sure that the best use is made of the land so that currently unusable areas and vacant plots can be brought back into use quickly. They are also planting trees in a memorial orchard and repairing and strengthening hedgerows. We hope that the village will support their fundraising events and wish them every success in their efforts.

Tim Harvey-Smith, Chairman - Wolston Parish Council