

# Parish matters

News from Wychavon District Council for Town & Parish Councils



May 2015

**Welcome** to the latest issue of Parish Matters. In this edition we have plenty of positive community news, including our new promises for the coming year, an update on broadband availability in Worcestershire, news of our Rural Communities Programme and even an article on pesky peeling posters! I hope you enjoy reading this issue and please feel free to use these articles in your own parish newsletters.

**Jack Hegarty - managing director**

## **New year, new promises**

With the start of a new financial year on 1 April, there came a new set of promises to deliver as part of our four year strategy, which takes us up to April 2016. Seven of our promises continue from last year, but there are 16 brand new ones. New promises under strong economy include building a new Evesham Fire Station and Waitrose store, offering businesses additional financial support for up to 20 new apprenticeships and delivering more affordable homes. Strong environment promises include providing help for households with installing solid wall insulation, a programme of targeted street cleaning to address litter hotspots in towns and weed growth on rural roads, and introducing new recycling facilities at recycling centres. Under our strong communities priority, promises include launching a social lettings agency, introducing a business and rural crime programme, improving our planning website and promoting key services – like waste and recycling – at 15 community events across the district this summer. Go to [www.wychavon.gov.uk/promises](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/promises) to see a full list of promises for the year.

## **Ageing well in Wychavon?**

Did you know that isolation and loneliness can have as big an impact on the health and well-being of older people as other factors such as smoking? That was the key message delivered as part of our second Partners Together event in March, which looked at the issues facing the district's growing population of over 65 year-olds and examined ways of tackling them collectively. During the event some of the issues highlighted for tackling included the lack of smaller properties suitable for people living alone in villages, access to transport in rural areas, and ensuring adequate activities for older people were being provided and promoted.

We heard some interesting [research](#) from the nearby Cotswold district into the scale and extent of loneliness and isolation in their over 65s. In our own district, it is estimated up to 2,500 people over 65 are socially isolated and living on their own and that represents challenges to both health and social care services as

well as other service providers. Currently 22 per cent of people living in the district are aged over 65 and that is set to rise to more than 26 per cent by 2021. We watched a [film](#) about growing older in Wychavon and heard how our own [Rural Communities Programme](#) (see below) is working with parish councils to help to support older people who may be socially isolated. You can view the event write up [here](#). The twice-yearly Partners Together events bring together public, private and voluntary sector organisations to explore our response to key issues and challenges affecting the Wychavon district.

## **Rural Communities Programme**

The past three months have seen rapid developments in the Rural Communities Programme. Having identified our 13 priority wards, initial meetings with parish councils have taken place. The parishes have responded very positively to the Rural Communities Programme, identifying community contacts (connectors) and agreeing to hold our community folders and take part in our new Rural Health Check. This means that we currently have 13 community connectors working with us on the project with more coming on board all the time.

Another major development has been the launch of the Rural Communities website ([www.wychavon.gov.uk/rural](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/rural)). This micro site has been developed as a way for community groups and parish councils to share and access local best practice and find out more about their own communities. The health check takes people through an assessment of their own community, looking at its strengths and weaknesses and then pointing towards some local best practice to help strengthen the communities. If you would like to run through the village health check yourself, please click [here](#).

A working group consisting of key community contacts from a range of villages has been established as a project sounding board and a test bed to trial new ideas. The group is very informal and meets every couple of months and provides us with invaluable feedback about the project.

Most recently our new door knock programme has been launched, enabling us to refer vulnerable residents to key services and helping us to identify key local projects at community level that we can help to support.

For further information about the Rural Communities Programme please contact David Manning on 01386 565478 or email [david.manning@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:david.manning@wychavon.gov.uk).

### **New Homes Bonus**

We're still getting a steady stream of New Homes Bonus (NHB) proposals from you. Unfortunately, we've had to return several proposals recently because they were very difficult to read and/or because local communities haven't been consulted about how they would like to see New Homes Bonus spent in their area. To help you get your forms right first time please make sure you type and email them to us rather than sending in handwritten forms. The latest version of the proposal form is on our [website](#). Before you prepare a proposal, we expect you to inform your local community about how much NHB is available for your area and to invite their views on how it is spent. You may put forward ideas about how it could be spent, but you also need to invite other suggestions. This could be done by holding a public event, notices in parish magazines, posters placed in prominent places or leaflets through the door. It is up to you how you do this, but the important thing is that residents are aware we have allocated funding to your area and that they be given an opportunity to have a say about how it is spent. For allocations of over £10,000 and over we will expect a greater level of consultation.

Year five allocations are now on our website, please click [here](#) to see what might be available to your parish in the future. You may recall that the decision to suspend future tranches of NHB payments is because one of the major political parties has indicated that it intends to scrap NHB with immediate effect if it gets into government. If we don't receive NHB from the government, we can't pass it on to parish and town councils. We will update you on that as soon as we know. If you have any questions or need help putting together a New Homes Bonus proposal please contact Tracy Perkins on 01386 565517 or email [tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk). You can find all of the New Homes Bonus information we refer to above at [www.wychavon.gov.uk/newhomesbonus](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/newhomesbonus).

### **Strong Communities event**

The new date for the Strong Communities event is 9 June 2015 from 6pm to 8.15pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore. The event will include a presentation on community renewable energy, an update on the New Homes Bonus and information about the Rural Communities Programme. There will also be an opportunity to hear from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Ambassador. More details will be sent out shortly, but in the mean time if you would like to attend please let Tracy Perkins know on 01386 565517 or email [tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk).

### **Broadband**

The rollout of superfast broadband continues apace and ahead of schedule. Total 'premises passed', a key indicator of progress in the Superfast Worcestershire programme, is at 23,000. Throughout Wychavon, people will be noticing new green cabinets appearing in the vicinity of the long-standing existing cabinet. These new cabinets are connected to the fibre network and give a boost to the existing copper line that carries the service to the house or business premises. As each new

cabinet is enabled, so more and more people have access to superfast broadband. For information on the rollout, the new 'Superfast Extension' programme, and whether your cabinet is due to be upgraded soon, please go [www.superfastworcestershire.com](http://www.superfastworcestershire.com). Alternatively, feel free to call Chris Brooks, our regeneration manager, on 01386 565343 or email him at [chris.brooks@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:chris.brooks@wychavon.gov.uk). One key and fundamental point about superfast broadband – you don't get it automatically just because your cabinet has been upgraded. You do have to contact your Internet Service Provider to obtain a new contract.

### **Leader Programme**

The new Leader programme, a European fund for rural areas, has just announced that the new allocation for the 2015 to 2020 programmes will be £1.96 million. The programme will focus on growing the economies of rural communities by enabling local people to identify and implement solutions to local problems. The priority areas are:

- Support for and the development of micro and small enterprises, including farm diversifications.
- Support for and the development of agricultural and horticultural businesses.
- Support for and the development of forestry businesses.
- Developing local distinctiveness.
- Enhancing, restoring and upgrading community, cultural and natural heritage.
- Improving access to employment and training, with a particular focus on young people.
- Linking businesses with local communities and supporting essential rural services.

The first call for bids will be in June 2016. For more information you can contact Jane Dobson, our economic development officer, who sits on the Local Action Group. This is the body that oversees the programme. Jane can be contacted on 01386 565286 or by emailing [jane.dobson@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:jane.dobson@wychavon.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can read more on the Worcestershire Leader website [here](#), or type in this short link: <http://tinyurl.com/o33gbqr>.

### **Arts in the community**

Shindig is Worcestershire's rural touring performing arts scheme that has been running for over nine years. It is a partnership project with all the other districts, the Arts Council and Worcestershire County Council, and Live and Local run the programme. It has two seasons, autumn and spring, and offers a range of music, dance and drama performances from highly skilled professional artists with performances taking place in community buildings such as village halls. If you would like more information on the programme, to find out what performances are currently playing or to find out how you can get a performance in your parish, visit [www.shindig.org.uk](http://www.shindig.org.uk) or contact Live and Local at [john@liveandlocal.org.uk](mailto:john@liveandlocal.org.uk).

## Cheaper fuel for heating

For more information on the SeSaME (Sedgeberrow Sustainable Manageable Energy) oil buying group – and to find out how you can become a member...even if you're not in the village of Sedgeberrow, call 01386 881863 or email [energy@sesame.me.uk](mailto:energy@sesame.me.uk).

## SeSaME Oil Buying Club

### Last Five Months Competitive Tenders

Order Deadline	No of Orders	Total of Oil Orders	Price per litre plus Vat	Saving per Litre	Total Club Saving
Nov 24th	19	12,750 litres	43.95ppl	2.50 pence	£510
Dec 8th	15	10,450 litres	40.00ppl	4.95 pence	£517
Jan 12th	20	14,200 litres	34.40ppl	5.55 pence	£788
Feb 9th	34	28,650 litres	36.75ppl	5.48 pence	£1568
Mar 9th	24	15,550 litres	35.50ppl	5.13 pence	£797

As more members register and order through the Club, not just in our village of Sedgeberrow, but in Ashton under Hill, Beckford, Hinton, Dumbleton, Aston Somerville and Wormington, the more highly competitive will be our buying power and the greater the potential savings.

**Club members have saved £5000 since October 2014**

**Next order deadline dates (by 23.00 hrs)**

**Monday 13th April. Monday 11th May.**

**Sunday 14th June. Sunday 12th July**

These are the cut-off dates by which you need to order and delivery will normally follow after the next week-end, once the best value provider has been identified (500 litres are still the minimum order)

Don't delay, **PLEASE REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to become a member and place an order at: <http://sesame.oilbuyingclub.com>

Once done your registration lasts for ever. **Membership now 113.**

**No Computer? There is a way.** Please ring Mike at 01386 881863



Phone 01386 881863.  
Mobile: 07949200207.  
Email: [energy@sesame.me.uk](mailto:energy@sesame.me.uk)  
Website: [www.sesame.me.uk](http://www.sesame.me.uk)

## Care and Repair Worcestershire

Care and Repair are the Home Improvement Agency for the county, a not for profit organisation and part of the Fortis Living Group. They provide practical help to people adapting, modernising and repairing their homes as their needs change, and they project manage the works, using local approved contractors. The completed works enable homeowners, private and social tenants to continue living safely in their own homes. They also work in partnership with the local councils, occupational therapy teams, various charities and support agencies to ensure customers receive the best advice available. For more information go to [www.careandrepairworcestershire.co.uk](http://www.careandrepairworcestershire.co.uk).

## Affordable housing – a guide for parish councils

The updated version of the joint Rural Services Network (RSN) and Rural Housing Alliance practical guide – [Affordable Rural Housing – A Guide for Parish Councils](#) – is now available to download from the Rural Services Network website – [www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk) (search in their publications section if you can't use the link above). Previous versions of the guide have proved invaluable in explaining to parish councils how they can get much needed affordable homes built in the places they want. The RSN represents the interests of rural service providers and their rural communities in England, and its website has plenty of other interesting information and best practice case studies on its pages.

## Pesky peeling posters



Fly posters attached to road signs are a nuisance and they can cause a hazard by distracting motorists. Left to build up they make the place look unsightly and can become litter. In fact, in law flyposting is a littering offence even before they blow off and decorate the lane. We clean them off any lampposts or road signs as part of our normal cleansing activity as street furniture is generally our responsibility.

It all sounds so easy; well it would be apart from the fact that the posters remain the property of the people who put them up. That means if we think they have any value we have to keep them and offer them back to them. Not the missing pet ones, but any large signs and banners. Some organisations also have special dispensation to put them up. This applies to circuses for historical reasons and to charity events or school open days. In Wychavon, provided they are put up no more than four weeks before the event and taken down no more than two weeks afterwards, we are required to tolerate them. Where they have value we can take them down but have to write to the owners to say come and pick them up or we will dispose of them. Alternatively we can write to them and ask them to take them down themselves or face a fixed penalty fine of £75 if they don't. As for picking them up when we take them down, this rarely happens. In both cases we have to give them two weeks to comply so it's a case of which approach we think will be most effective.

Removing them can become a bit of a relentless task and while we don't really want to be stern with the local pantomime (oh no we don't), we do have to treat everyone the same and so take them all down on a regular basis (oh yes we do). If it gets out of control we will respond to a particular problem or complaint. If you want to advertise an event with a poster then please be reasonable and remember that what's important to you might just be another distraction to everyone else. Avoid road junctions, make sure you take them down afterwards and don't be surprised if we remove them. We do try to be reasonable, and while we hope Jess had a happy 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and that Sooty found his way home, we do need to keep things under control.

If you are plagued by posters or simply want more information, contact Mark Edwards, our waste management officer, on 01386 565245 or email [mark.edwards@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:mark.edwards@wychavon.gov.uk).

## Community Recognition Awards

In February we held our second Community Recognition Awards and this year the event took place at Peopleton Village Hall. Every year the awards are held to give people a chance to nominate those people in their community who they feel go the extra mile for those around them. It is a chance to thank them for all their efforts and hard work in the community. The awards were split into eight different categories and this year the winners included the Number 8 Volunteer Team from Pershore in the Community Group Award, the Friends of Jubilee Gardens from Evesham for the Community Project Award, as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award for Sylvia and Arthur Whittaker from Droitwich. If you'd like to know more about the awards you can contact Hannah Peacop on 01386 565497, email [hannah.peacop@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.peacop@wychavon.gov.uk) or go to [www.wychavon.gov.uk/communitydevelopment](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/communitydevelopment).



## Bulky waste collections

If you have a bulky waste item that you no longer want then we have the safest solution to help you dispose of it – the right way. We have our own contractor who can provide a bulky waste collection service that is £19 for the collection of up to two items. It is perfect for residents that have an old and unwanted fridge, mattress, radiator or washing machine to get rid of – to see the full list of typical items collected or to get more information residents can call FCC Environment on 01386 760145 between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, or go to [www.wychavon.gov.uk/bulkywaste](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/bulkywaste).

If the condition of the bulky item (or items) no longer wanted is good, residents could consider contacting one of the [re-use organisations](#) in the district, which are normally charities. Go to [www.lets-wasteless.com](http://www.lets-wasteless.com) and click on the re-use link. Here, residents can select the item they'd like to give to be re-used and their location, and a list of local organisations will be displayed.

Another good option for residents is [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org), which is a network of non-profit groups and people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. It's also free to dispose of bulky items at any of Worcestershire's [Household Recycling Centres](#) – go to [www.lets-wasteless.com](http://www.lets-wasteless.com) and click on the recycling centres. If residents have any questions about bulky waste collections and recycling they can always contact Wychavon on 01386 565018.

## Litter picks

We know that people take great pride in where they live so it's worth knowing that our litter-picking kits are available for individuals or groups to use any day of the year whatever the season. We've always found that litter picks are a great way to encourage communities to come together – in fact we have a number of parishes and groups that already organise regular litter picks – and we're very grateful for the way they support the work we already do in keeping our towns, villages, parks and business areas free from litter. Each litter-picking kit consists of a litter pick stick, a hi-vis vest and a pair of gloves. Litter pickers also get a number of blue plastic litter pick bags – the colour distinguishes them from other rubbish to help ensure it is not mistaken for fly-tipping or littering. Any groups, parishes, businesses or individuals that want to organise a litter picking event should contact our Client Services team on 01386 565018 or email [client.services@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:client.services@wychavon.gov.uk).

## A bin for all seasons

# WYCHAVON

*A bin for all seasons*

**A bin for all your compostable garden waste**

**Only £44\* a year for fortnightly collections, that's less than £1 per week!**

**Limited availability**  
There are some geographical limitations  
\* Payment by Direct Debit



To enquire about getting a bin (there are some geographical limitations), call 01386 565005 or go to [www.wychavon.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/gardenwaste).

## And finally...

You are welcome to reproduce any of these articles for your own parish newsletters or magazines.

 **WYCHAVON**  
**DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
*good services, good value*

**Parish Matters is edited by Spencer Winnett.** Contact him with your feedback on 01386 565585 or by emailing [spencer.winnett@wychavon.gov.uk](mailto:spencer.winnett@wychavon.gov.uk).