

Gretton Village

NEWSLETTER

December 2023

Green Light for Play Equipment

The Gretton Village Association is very pleased to announce that funding to update the Play Equipment has been secured. The funding by the Enover Community Trust enables the project to move forward and we hope to start work in the Spring. We would like to thank everybody who has been involved to date through the engagement sessions. (For more on this story see page 2).



An artists impression of potential new equipment for Gretton Playing Field



Walk for the Park

Saturday 19th November saw 63 participants brave the wet and muddy conditions to raise funds for the Playing Field improvements. The first group left the Village Hall at 6am and completed 30 miles, many completed 10 miles, and the families completed a 2 mile circuit. Everyone completed the day safely, although there were a few blisters and sore legs the following day.

Over 400 miles were covered and cakes, bar, BBQ and Bouncy Castle brought the day to a lovely conclusion. Many thanks to everybody who took part or supported, and a special thanks to Martins Meats who provided the meat for the BBQ. At the time of writing around £4,500 had been donated.

(More images from the Walk on Page 2)



Gretton Primary School



Gretton Tower Trust



Green Light for Play Equipment

Continued from Page 1

The Play Equipment is an important part of the plans to enhance the Village Hall and Playing Field. The other key packages are as follows:

- Parking - The lack of parking at the Village Hall is an impediment to utilization. Schemes have been developed to extend the current space but are currently on hold due to the high costs of acquiring a relatively small number of additional spaces. Alternative schemes to rearrange the current footprint are now being assessed.
- Access Paths and landscaping - An improved entrance and access around the Playing Field will enable more year round use. Currently wheeled users struggle to access when wet and school use is limited. A perimeter track, planting and access to the stream are envisaged. An application for significant funding was unsuccessful and the way forward is currently being assessed.

Walk for the Park



David, Rob, Charlie and Tristan who completed 30 miles

Gretton Parish Council News

It's Winter already, welcome to another edition of the Gretton Village Newsletter.

We've changed the format a little, and it will be available through your door and on-line via the website. Still produced by the Parish Council, it aims to represent the whole of the village.

It's been another good year in Gretton, with improvements to the village environment and some great social initiatives and events, which the Council has been pleased to support. As we look forward, GPC will continue to do our best to drive village improvements, along the following key themes:

- Improving the Gretton environment - keeping it Rural, Greener and Safe.
- Addressing traffic, pedestrian and parking concerns.
- Improving communications.
- Supporting the maintenance and improvements to the hall and playing field

We will be setting our budget in January, and it is planned to manage our limited expenditure, so that the level of 'Precept' (Gretton's part of the Council Tax), stays aligned to Tewkesbury's. After paying our non-discretionary costs, we will have some limited funds for projects in 2024, so do come forward with your ideas, please.

Gretton Parish Council News

We have a Vacancy

We said goodbye and a huge thank you to John Hurley earlier this year as he stepped down from Gretton Parish Council after 8 years of service.

Whilst John's knowledge and passion will be missed it does mean we have an open vacancy for a volunteer to join the team. It is an opportunity for anyone who would like to make a difference and help keep Gretton a great place to live. We meet every two months, and no previous experience is necessary - just some enthusiasm.

Please take a look at our website and meeting minutes to see what we get up to, and get in touch via the contacts on the back page of the Newsletter.



John Hurley (left) signing off from Gretton Parish Council duty, with current Chair Geoff Hanson.

Planning

We make a particular effort to stay engaged with Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) Planning to ensure we are informed about the impact of the increased pressure to build homes. Where possible and appropriate, we try to be proactive and positive in our approach. A particular concern is that TBC has lost planning approval appeals to developers (recently at Gotherington and Alderton). TBC did not want development, but because it could not demonstrate that it had a 5-year housing land supply, the developer's legal team were able to argue the case for development. Much to TBC's frustration and expense and a major concern for the villages impacted.

TBC is now trying to address this situation - it has issued an Interim Housing Position Statement, and has initiated a new Joint Strategic Plan - but this is a long process which is unlikely to produce a useful plan until 2026.

In the meantime, Gretton has some significant developments that have recently been approved:

- The Royal Oak has approval for 6 Shepherds Huts and an accommodation block
- 5 houses are being built on land behind Manor Farmhouse
- Bishops Cleeve based developer, Centaur are building 6 houses on the Gotherington Road

In the case of the Centaur and Manor Farm developments, the Council and residents are pleased to have worked with the developer on significant improvements to the plans, including improved flooding provisions, a better layout and some smaller houses.

Details of these and other Gretton planning applications can be found on the Gretton Parish Council website

Village Environment Updates

Litter & Dog Waste Bins

Two open type litter bins have been replaced by closed, combined litter and dog waste bins, with a third added by the bus shelter. These are UBICO's preferred style as they don't fill up with water,

Additionally, the dog waste bin that was located on the Village Green has been relocated to the bottom of Duglynch Lane, which has de-cluttered the green a little.



Gretton Parish Council News

Litter Pick

A litter pick was organized earlier this year to clear rubbish from the roadside and ditches along the approaches to the village. As the images show, a considerable volume of litter was collected including an impressive number of car hubcaps.

With littering being an ongoing problem, we aim to conduct at least two picks a year, so look out for a repeat exercise towards the end of Winter.



Bulb Planting

About 200 narcissi bulbs have been planted in clumps throughout the village with the kind assistance of two parishioners, thank you Simon and Harold. They are a mixture of Camelot, a large late flowering variety, and King Alfred Select, a long lasting heritage variety.

War Memorial

The War Memorial has been tidied and replanted in preparation for Remembrance Day. Many thanks to Chris Vickery and her team.

Roads

By the time this is published, we should have a re-surfaced road between Gretton and Winchcombe - thank goodness! It's been a long time coming and has certainly required a great deal of lobbying from both Gretton and Winchcombe councils. Sadly, despite continued requests, we will not be getting a footpath. Apparently, the road-width (and available funds) do not allow for one.

Speedwatch

Our community Speedwatch continues and has proven to be an effective deterrent to speeding in the Village. The team really appreciates the increased compliance with speed limits and the cheery waves! The team work closely with the Police and so far the Police have been in contact with over 200 motorists who have been recorded at excess speed. Despite the good work we still see half of all motorists exceeding the speed limit and approaching 10% who are at a prosecutable level.

The Speedwatch team always need additional volunteers so if you would like to get involved, please contact Mark Oliver.



Gretton Parish Council News



Cotswold Voluntary Wardens

It's been a busy period for the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. Vegetation growth due to the warm, wet weather has meant a lot of path clearance work to keep our rights of way open and also a number of stiles have needed repair or replacement.

A major achievement has been the work to improve drainage and the surface of Greenway Lane path. This is a key route for walkers, tourists and children en route to the Forest School. Thanks to the Gloucestershire County Council Rights of Way Team.

Mark Oliver is the Gretton Parish Warden so please let him know of any issues with paths in the village.



Communications

In line with our desire to improve communications and ensure that Village News is publicized effectively we have updated the Gretton Parish Council website, and established a Facebook page and WhatsApp group. We are increasingly using these resources to share cross-Gretton news and information, in addition to the traditional noticeboards in the village. The various links, including that for the Village Hall Association are listed below:

www.grettonpc.weebly.com

www.sites.google.com/site/grettonvillagehall/

Facebook Page: 'Gretton Village Notices'

WhatsApp Group: Gretton Help Force



If you have any issues and or require help with access please contact Mark Oliver.

It has been a few years since our last questionnaire, and time for an update. We're considering a new questionnaire in early 2024. It's the Council's opportunity to listen and yours to speak-out, so please do take part.

Gretton Village Association News

The Gretton Village Association (GVA) continues to serve the needs of the community. We recently held our AGM, which was an opportunity to review the achievements this year and it is great to see that activity is now back to pre-pandemic levels:

- Dance, Pilates, Yoga and Tai Chi classes are doing well
- Hall rental is popular with 30 private functions.
- A new PA/Sound System and Projector has been purchased and a Table Tennis table is on order.
- The Gretton Village Notices Facebook page has been launched and has over 130 followers.
- £636 was donated to Winston's Wish, £4,500 grant funding has been secured (excluding the Play Equipment grant), £1,818 donations have been received and over £3,000 raised through fund raising.



The AGM also confirmed the committee for 2023/2024 as follows; Mark Oliver (Chair), Kirsty Lightowler (Treasurer), Hayley Brookes (Secretary), Kathy Tweedie (Bookings), Harold Bailey, Sue Hughes, Treasa Cahill, David Tweedie (Social), Alix Scott (FoGS) and Fiona Williams (Christ Church).

We are always looking for help. If you want to get involved please contact contact us.

Please contact Mark Oliver for all general issues on 07801 716148 or via email at markp.oliver@btinternet.com or Kathy Tweedie for all Hall booking enquiries on 07968 711590 or via email at gvabookings@gmail.com

*Note that residents can hire the hall at reduced rates!

You can stay up to date on activities at the Village Hall via our website <https://sites.google.com/site/grettonvillagehall/>

Community Support

Many in Gretton value the sense of community. We are also aware of the cost of living crisis and also social isolation for those who live alone. The Gretton Hub was established to provide a regular session where hot food, conversation and activities were available and enable the community to come together. The Hub has opened 15 times and has been a great success.

With the support of Tewkesbury Bough Council the Hub will continue through the winter months with openings on a Sunday for breakfast and also a Thursday afternoon for afternoon tea. Please come along!



Gretton Hub

eat - drink - chat - play

With the support of Tewkesbury Borough Council's Warm Spaces Community Fund the GVA is pleased to confirm the Winter dates for the Hub in the Village Hall.

We offer free food and refreshments for all in a warm friendly environment. A book swap and table tennis are now available. Opening dates are as follows:

Sundays 10.00 – 12.30 for hot breakfast, cake, tea and coffee:

12th Nov (after Remembrance Service),

10th Dec

14th Jan

11th Feb

10th Mar

Christmas Eve for festive refreshments 5.00pm – 7.00pm

Thursdays 2.00 – 4.30 for afternoon tea, scones and cake

23rd Nov

14th Dec

18th Jan

22nd Feb

If you have any questions, please get in touch at
gvabookings@gmail.com





Coronation Celebrations

May seems a long time ago but the Village marked the Coronation of King Charles III in true Gretton style. Preceding Coronation day the Village was decorated with bunting, a community flower display was hosted in Christ Church together with a display of school "Royalty" artwork.

On the Sunday the day commenced with a Church Service to mark the Coronation and then the school children paraded through the village to the Hall where a family picnic started the afternoons activities. Bouncy Castles, children's activities, refreshments and dancing continued well into the evening.

Apple Rock

For Apple Rock this year we introduced the Scarecrow display. Nearly 20 properties displayed a scarecrow with some very innovative ideas on display.

The weather on the day of Apple Rock was once again kind and a great day was had with around 250 people enjoying the apple pressing, Morris Dancers, children's stalls, music, drinks and the Mashers playing in the evening.



Message from Gretton Primary School

What an amazing first term as Headteacher for this wonderful school. It has been an honour, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the village for the support.

As a local lad from Tewkesbury, it is a pleasure to be part of the village and the area that I know so well. The school has been busy taking part in Apple Rock, building scarecrows and making use of the beautiful village hall facilities. It has been lovely to see so many volunteer readers from the village, but it is not just readers we need. If you have a particular skill that you feel could benefit the children or would like to come and talk at an assembly about an interest, please do get in touch at head@gretton.gloucs.sch.uk



As always, the children are a wonderful representation of the village and the positivity they bring to every day is a joy, they love using the Forest School areas and getting outside for walks and runs in our beautiful surroundings.

We have also been very excited about the regular links we have made with the Gretton Church community, with visits from Reverend Penny and Mr. Carter every other week as well as holding our Harvest Festival celebrations in the church.

In school I am starting to look back over the history of this wonderful building and we will be celebrating it through our website and a display in school later in the school year.

Thank you again for all of your support!

Adam Sallis, Headteacher



News from Christ Church

The village church of Christ Church is part of the parish of Winchcombe.



We had a lovely Harvest Festival at Christ Church, which was beautifully decorated by our Flower Fairies. This is one of the lovely arrangements which adorned the church. The school held their Harvest Festival service on the Monday, and along with their donations to the North Cotswold Food Bank to add to ours, we contributed 49kg of foodstuffs and toiletries.

In conjunction with the village celebrations of Apple Rock, and as part of the wonderful display of scarecrows, you may have noticed the vicar and his dog welcoming visitors to the church! Many thanks to the imaginative member of our congregation for this effort.

A look forward to what's happening in Christ Church and the Parish of Winchcombe:

Advent and Christmas are a very special time for people of all ages, and at Christ Church we warmly invite you to join us as we celebrate Christmas. On Saturday 23rd at 2pm we will have a special service to build and bless the nativity scene (Crib Service) and on Christmas Eve there will be Community Carols in the churchyard at 4pm.



News from Christ Church - continued

Additionally, in the wider parish you might be interested in one or more of the following in December at **St Peter's, Winchcombe**:

Sunday 3rd December at 5pm - Advent Carol Services

Monday 18th December at 6:30pm - Blue Christmas (recognizing that for some Christmas is not all joy and happiness)

Sunday 24th December at 11:30pm - Christmas Eve Midnight Mass

Monday 25th December at 10:30am - Christmas Day Family Communion

Full details can be found on our website: www.winchcombeparish.org.uk or telephone 01242 468650.

Regular services at Christ Church are held at 10:00am as follows:

Second Sunday of the month - Morning Worship

Fourth Sunday of the month - Holy Communion

We look forward to seeing you at one of the many village events over the festive period, and from all of us at Christ Church we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Revd Capt David Penny - Priest-in-Charge 01242 468650

Susan Fleck - Deputy Church Warden 07976 295710

Gretton Tower Trust

Gretton Tower Trust has achieved its initial objectives. The Tower has been restored, access to the Tower has been improved and made safe, and historical information materials have been installed in the Tower. The grounds are being well used by visitors and village organizations. We have decided on light touch maintenance of the ancient monument, selective mowing to encourage the native wildflowers present and keeping the walls from further deterioration but in their present condition.

1 Gretton old Church Tower

The Tower is all that remains now of St Philip's Chapel. The Plans of Winchbury were founded in the 11th century although it may have Saxon origin. The site is adjacent to an ancient stone wall, suggesting even earlier pagan significance.

In the 13th century a Chapel of Ease was built here, thereby becoming the central focus of the village. This chapel was extended in the mid 15th century with the addition of a tower paid for by Ralph Boteler, Lord Buckley. Several other dwellings (now listed) were also built at this time implying a period of relative prosperity.

The bell hung within this tower was inscribed 'Ave Maria Gratia Plena Domine Tuncus' (translated as 'Hail Mary, Full Of Grace, The Lord Is With Thee') and is thought to have been struck in about 1400. Several of the letters are reversed or upside down implying a certain degree of ignorance or carelessness on the part of the mason. A recent discovery whilst excavating a driveway in the grounds of a modern house opposite the tower, has been a small circular pit and channel stonework thought to be the setting pit for the bell.

An important occasion for the villagers occurred in 1779 when John Wesley was expected to preach at the Chapel of Ease. This became even more memorable when the local vicar at the time had second thoughts about allowing such a prominent but controversial figure to speak within the church itself. At the last minute he changed his mind and John Wesley was forced to speak to the gathering in a local orchard instead.

2

The Tower remained the property of the Parish of Winchcombe until 2020. It endured a long period of neglect with sporadic piecemeal repairs, not always suitable or sympathetic to the structure.

However the romantic beauty of its setting amidst thatched cottages attracted many photographers and painters in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The importance of the site was recognized after the second world war when the remains of the old Church was designated as an ancient monument. It is very unlikely that the stone in the present walls were actually the walls of the Church. That stone was most likely sold or stolen when the Church was dismantled and a wall erected with reusing stone.

Later, in 1812, a Methodist chapel opened. The Sunday School which was based there became very popular partly due to the outings that were organized. It closed in 1962 and was converted into a house in 1974.

The arrival of Mrs Emma Dent at Buckley castle in 1856 brought about influential changes in Gretton. Her philanthropic approach gave rise to the establishment of a school in 1862 and the building of a new church at the western edge of the village in 1864. The bell that hung in the tower was eventually transferred to the new church where that was erected as a line of continuity between the old and the new.

After this the Chapel of Ease fell into disuse and was eventually dismantled. The picture below which shows the church in its derelict state is attributed to Emma Dent.

This Tower is all that remains now of the former church. It was Grade II Listed in 1969, and its historic Listed Building number is 1014514.

The tower, situated at the end of the church, was dismantled C13 or C14. It was a small, square, stone tower, built of local stone, and was used as a bell tower. The tower was built on a small, square, stone base, and was used as a bell tower. The tower was built on a small, square, stone base, and was used as a bell tower.

Officially Gretton Tower is now a Scheduled Monument of a Grade II Listed Building and is a Scheduled Monument.

The Future

We need to plan for the longer term future of the Tower. In doing this we will consult with those organizations who have nominated representatives to the Tower Trust (The Parish Council, Village Association, Parochial Church Council) and more widely with the village which donated so generously towards the restoration.

Christmas Lights

We will once again be illuminating the Tower for the Christmas Eve Advent Calendar event – look out for something even better than last year. Everyone is of course welcome.

John Hurley

Left: Historical information installed at Gretton Tower

Contact your Parish Council team



Geoff Hanson - Chair
01242 603848
geoff@grettonpc-glos.org.uk



Mark Oliver - Vice Chair
01242 604251
mark@grettonpc-glos.org.uk



Richard Green
01242 602272
dick@grettonpc-glos.org.uk



David Butcher
07506 671631
david@grettonpc-glos.org.uk



Councillor Vacancy
Could this be you?

What We Do

Our main purpose is to represent the views of all residents within the parish of Gretton. Some of our other roles are:

- To assist in the running of local services
- To decide how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver these services
- To influence and shape the long term development policy for the parish. To consider planning applications
- To work to bring about improvements through local projects, working in partnerships with other parishes and agencies

Council Meetings

We meet every second Wednesday of alternate months in the village hall at 7.00 pm. Please come along and see what we are about. We can only address your issues if we are aware of them. The website is also available for you to raise issues through the contact form.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 10th January at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall.

Dates for your diary

December 2023

All Month
Friday 1st, 7:00pm
Sunday 3rd, 5pm
Saturday 9th 7:00pm - 9:00 pm
Sunday 10th, 10:00am - 12:30pm
Thursday 14th, 2:00pm - 4:30 pm
Sunday 24th, 4:00 pm
Sunday 24th, 5:00pm - 8:00pm

Advent Windows, throughout the Village
Quiz Night, Village Hall
Advent Carol Service, Christ Church
Octavo Concert, Christ Church
Gretton Hub, Village Hall
Gretton Hub, Village Hall
Community Carols, Christ Church
Christmas Refreshments, Village Hall

January 2024

Wednesday 10th, 7:00pm
Sunday 14th, 10:00am - 12:30pm
Thursday 18th, 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Parish Council Meeting, Village Hall
Gretton Hub, Village Hall
Gretton Hub, Village Hall

February 2024

Sunday 11th, 10:00am - 12:30pm
Thursday 22nd, 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Gretton Hub, Village Hall
Gretton Hub, Village Hall

An **Octavo** Christmas

Christ Church Gretton

Saturday 9th December 7.00pm

**In their 10th birthday year Octavo
return with a programme of
beautiful A Cappella vocal
Christmas music**

Tickets £12 (includes interval
refreshment) from Keelings
Newsagents, Coventry Building
Society, St Peter's Centre, Sue Fleck
07976 295710 and Gwyneth Cocks
01242 604639



Proceeds for the benefit of Christ Church Gretton