

# Congresbury Chronicle

News and views from  
around the village

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## Snippets from your Ward Councillor

The consultation on the future of **Weston General Hospital** is ongoing till 24<sup>th</sup> May. The proposal is that A&E

should be open with consultant led emergency care from 8. am to 10 pm and overnight GP service having the possibility of direct admission to the hospital. Critical care would be downgraded from 'level 3' (intensive care) to 'level 2 (high dependency), resulting in complex surgery cases moving to other hospitals. The hospital aims to be a 'centre of excellence' for elderly and frail patients and to perform a greater volume of operations which are not highly complex. North Somerset Council has not agreed these changes and has written to the Secretary of State to express cross-party support for 24/7 A&E services to be retained. You can respond to the consultation at: <https://bnssghealthiertogether.org.uk/healthyweston/>

North Somerset Council joined a growing number of other councils in the UK and abroad by unanimously passing a motion to recognise a **Climate Emergency** and the need to take active steps to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. I was pleased to propose the motion together with Cllr. Mike Bell. The challenge for each of us individually, for local government and national governments is to make the hard choices which ensure that global warming does not exceed 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. At the current rate, we are heading for more than double that rise by the end of the century. Young people are demanding urgent action to give them a future on our planet.

This is my last contribution to the Congresbury Chronicle as your councillor. Thank you for all your support over the past 16 years. The positive achievements in our village could not have been possible without a hard working parish council and so many volunteers giving their time and energy to a wide range of community initiatives.

Cllr Tom Leimdorfer  
01934 830435; [leimdorfer@care4free.net](mailto:leimdorfer@care4free.net)

## Make a Change by Joining Congresbury Parish Council

A number of experienced Parish Councillors are not standing for re-election in May. Over the years they have made significant contributions to the work of the Parish Council improving and maintaining village facilities and services.

The future success of the Parish Council and the work that it does is dependent on new volunteers coming forward to become Councillors. The next local elections are on 2 May 2019. Interested applicants must submit their nominations to the Town Hall in W-s-M by 3 April 2019.

The current Chair of the Parish Council, Di Hassan, will not be standing for re-election. During her tenure as Chair the Parish Council has been involved in appeals against a number of large housing developments and undertaken a number of initiatives including the Neighbourhood Development Plan, Blooming Congresbury and the Community Library. She has stated that she has enjoyed her time as a Parish Councillor over the past 10 years and found the role very rewarding.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor or have any questions please contact me at [clerk@congresbury-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@congresbury-pc.gov.uk). General information on the work of a Parish Councillor can be found on [www.nalc.gov.uk/elections](http://www.nalc.gov.uk/elections)

Liz Greaves - Clerk to Parish Council

## Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on 15 May at 7:30 pm in the Old School Rooms.

The meeting will debate current concerns, celebrate local activities and provide an opportunity for villagers to come together and engage in a dialogue with the Council in an informal setting. It is **not** a meeting of the Parish Council.

Traditionally the agenda is set and chaired by the Chair of the Parish Council. Members of the public can submit items for discussion but these need to be submitted to the Parish Clerk nine days before the date of the meeting.

The final agenda will be available on the Parish Council website and the notice boards.

Liz Greaves - Clerk to Parish Council

# National Grid Hinkley Connection Project Update

In May 2019, Western Power Distribution (WPD) will begin the second phase of its upgrade to Churchill substation on Stock Lane, which is part of a National Grid's multi-million pound investment to link new sources of power in the area to homes and businesses, including Hinkley Point C in Somerset.

Work continues on installing new electrical equipment within the substation. WPD and its contractors will now modify the overhead line that passes to the east of the substation. This work will include the installation of 220 metres of underground cable and a new pylon to join the cable to the existing overhead wires. Work is expected to be complete by the end of 2019.

For more information, please visit the project website [hinkleyconnection.co.uk/churchill](http://hinkleyconnection.co.uk/churchill), or get in touch with National Grid's Community Relations Team on 0800 377 7347 or email [hinkleyconnection@nationalgrid.co.uk](mailto:hinkleyconnection@nationalgrid.co.uk).

Community Relations Team  
National Grid Hinkley Connection Project



## Love Congresbury Dates for your Diary

### Saturday 27 April

St Andrew's Church is holding a Plant and Cake Sale at the Church from 10am – 12 noon to raise money for bibles for school leavers.

From 2pm onwards a number of village groups are joining Love Congresbury on the Millennium Green to put on a Teddy Bears Picnic which will include a Duck Race on the River Yeo plus a number of other activities for residents of all ages.

### Saturday 4 May

Spring Clean Day from 9am to 12 noon. Help to spruce up Congresbury and prepare the village for summer:

- Join volunteers weeding and planting the GPMG.
- Collect litter and clean up public areas such as Broad Street, the Riverside Car Park, George V Playing Field, Millennium Green and the Strawberry Line.
- Sweep and clear paths and pavements on your street. This will stop gullies getting choked and help prevent flooding.

### Saturday 29 June

Village Fete on the Church Paddock from 1:30 to 5pm. Fun and games for all ages with music, food, drink stalls etc. This year's theme is "175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Congresbury Cricket Club".

For more information on any of the above please contact the Church Office on 01934 833126.

# The Strawberry Line 150 Years Old

In August 1869 Congresbury had a Railway Station and its residents could now get to Bristol and London by train. They could only get to Cheddar in the opposite direction, but Yatton was on the main line with links to the whole of the Country. For hundreds of years Congresbury was a sleepy Somerset Farming Community, but it suddenly became a very important place. It had a Railway Station. Dare I say, if only we still had one now.

Building the Railway line was a massive and expensive project. The Railway Companies had to fund the work themselves and get an Act of Parliament to build the lines. Crossing the low lying land, then having to build a 180 yard tunnel was a major achievement and great credit to the Chief Engineer Francis Fox. But, despite the many difficulties it opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1869. Congresbury was on the map.

The Railway line eventually reached Wells and then onto Witham near Evercreech. A Branch line was added in 1901 to Blagdon where the Reservoir was being built. Over the years the Railway line became famous for delivering Cheddar Strawberries to Covent Garden Market in London.

Residents of Congresbury were now able to take the train to School in Wells or to work in Bristol. It was part of the community and an essential and vital means of moving freight. All of the coal used to cook and heat our homes came by train. Milk from the many farms was sent off to London and Birmingham and most of our food came in by train.

The Railway was also a major employer and to get a job on the 'Railway' was something to be sought after.

But, after 94 years it all came to a sad end. The Government appointed Dr Beeching the Chairman of ICI to undertake a review as it felt the Railways were costing too much and needed to be transformed. Sadly, the Strawberry Line was axed along with many other lines and Stations across the Country.

On 9 September 1963 the last passenger train ran between Congresbury and Wells. The end of an era, we were no longer a 'Railway Village'. The signal box, waiting room and ticket office, together with the goods shed were demolished and only the platforms and the Station Master House were left.

I believe in 'Phoenix's' and out of the ashes after much anguish, talking, discussing and bending arms plus a huge amount of persuasion we have ended up with one of my favourite places, 'The Strawberry Line'. What a wonderful place to walk, cycle and just stand and stare. It's got to be 'Shangri-La'. I have waxed lyrically about its magical spells and will continue to do so until it's declared a 'World Heritage Site'.

150 years is a good score and few places have played such an important part in our history, prosperity and wellbeing as this wonderful place.

It is hoped that we will organise some events to celebrate the 150 years, further details to follow.

Michael Greaves

# New Village Hall - Update

The Parish Council and project team are working together to look at the option of the Council applying for a Public Works Loan. The Public Works Loan Board lends Government funds to Parish Councils at low interest rates to support community projects.

A loan would mean increasing each household's Council Tax. Below is an example of the approximate **Monthly** increase for a £500,000 loan over 20 years. Some of the new building's surplus profit will be used to limit the increase after the building has been open for a few years:

Council tax Band	Increase per MONTH	Council tax Band	Increase per MONTH
A	£ 1.25	E	£ 2.25
B	£ 1.42	F	£ 2.66
C	£ 1.58	G	£ 3.00
D	£ 1.96	H	£ 3.66

Survey forms will be delivered to each house in the village to assess the residents support for the loan.

Along with the Community share offer from which we are looking to raise a minimum of £ 400,000, the loan will put the project in a stronger position when applying to potential grant funders.

A new Village Hall has been talked about for over 25 years, but now we are in a position to make this come true. What else can you buy for 29p to 85p a week, depending on your council tax band, and see the fruits on your doorstep for generations? The new building will provide the following facilities / activities:

- Large hall, ·Bar, ·Meeting space for clubs, societies,
- Sports club facilities, ·Skittles Alley, ·Community café,
- Cinema club, ·Party venue for hire, ·Theatre & Arts venue,
- School holiday activities, ·Social Prescribing / Wellness facilities / activities, ·Music/band nights

More information including a questions and answer leaflet can be found on the village website, Post Office and Community Coffee@Bridge House. Any questions please email [congresburyvillagehall@btinternet.com](mailto:congresburyvillagehall@btinternet.com) or call Ian Sheppard on 835291 or Lester Biffin on 876082.



Community Coffee@Bridge House is open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:45am to 1pm. It is a volunteer-led community initiative developed and run by Congresbury Village Hall Ltd. This new cafe and meeting place in the heart of Congresbury sells great coffee, teas, homemade cakes and snacks with profits supporting the Congresbury Village Hall project. The café is in Bridge House, part of the Debbie Fortune Estate Agency ([www.debbiefortune.co.uk](http://www.debbiefortune.co.uk)) building which has allowed the use of two rooms in line with its continued commitment to local charitable causes across all its offices.

Coffee by Bristol Twenty Tea and Coffee company  
[www.bristol-twenty.co.uk](http://www.bristol-twenty.co.uk)

Ian Sheppard—Chair of Development Group

# Youth Partnership News

Drop into Congresbury Youth Club and see what is going on.

As well as our usual Tuesday and Wednesday After School clubs, we now have a CODE CLUB running on Mondays from 3:30 to 5:30pm. Young would-be-programmers can try their hand at making cartoons and games with SCRATCH, learn to programme with PYTHON and ARDUINO. New members can drop in at any time during the sessions and find out whether we have a volunteer who understands your programming problem.

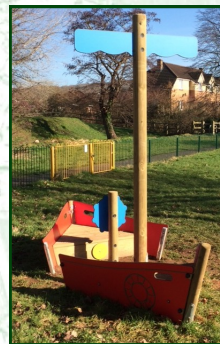
The transition group on Wednesdays (6 to 7:30pm) for years 6 and 7 offers activities which are a bit more challenging than the after school sessions, and our youth worker, Michelle, is keen to get members out and about doing what they want to do. Youth Club on Thursdays (7 – 9pm) is for years 8 - 11, and worker in charge, Sarah, is likewise looking to plan a programme which is exciting for that age group. She's also a great listener, and will help and advise on many of the worries that members have in those challenging school years.

During half term, we enjoyed two days of porcelain painting, pancake making, French skipping, street hockey and "treasure" hunts as well as a trip to the dizzying heights of Clip and Climb in Weston Super Mare. Activities during the Easter Holiday will include Easter Egg Hunt & Egg Making and a trip to Hollywood Bowl & Blaise Castle. The dates are Tuesday 9 April, Thursday 11 April, Wednesday 17 April and Thursday 18 April. Costs are usually between £10 and £15 per day, and can be subsidised in cases of need. To book a place see our website [www.congsyp.org.uk](http://www.congsyp.org.uk), or email Michelle on [mdcongsyp@gmail.com](mailto:mdcongsyp@gmail.com).

We are always interested to hear from adult volunteers who would like to help support our young people.

Alex Ballard

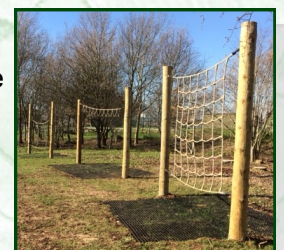
Secretary Congresbury Youth Partnership



## Play Equipment on Millennium Green

The Parish Council has used S106 money to enhance the play area on the Millennium Green with the purchase of a wooden boat for younger children.

Also, the climbing structures have been re-sited away from the trees.



# Community Library

The monthly talks held in the Old School Rooms continue to be well attended and appreciated. The next talk at 7:30pm on Thursday 18 April is by Lois Benchley "The Strawberry Line – Past, Present and Future". Tickets are £4 and available from the library. They are selling well so don't delay in purchasing yours. Tickets can be reserved by phone 426200 or email [congresburylibrary@gmail.com](mailto:congresburylibrary@gmail.com). Suggestions for future talks are welcome.

We continue to make improvements to the library as and when funds become available. The next addition will be the erection of a large notice board on the perimeter of the library/Old School Rooms car park – this will enable us to advertise events more effectively particularly to passing pedestrians and hopefully encourage greater participation in some of the activities we hold. The library is grateful to the Fete Committee for the generous donation of £500 for children's books and activities.

Due to lack of interest we have had to cancel the Library Chess Club. This is regrettable as initially there appeared to be sufficient interest to make this a success.

The recently formed CCL Knitting group is proving to be very popular. The group meets on the 3rd Friday each month between 10am and midday in St Congar's Room. The majority of members knit articles for charity, and they have been very busy and productive! There will be a coffee morning on Saturday 27 April 10 – 12.30 when all the items knitted will be displayed before being sent to the relevant charities. Please come and see what has been produced and support the group. Monies raised from the sale of cakes and drinks will be used to buy more wool for the charity knitters.

The Knitters coffee morning coincides with the monthly Jigsaw swap shop, so bring your jigsaws with you and swap.



Katy Flook aged 5

The **Wild Life Photography Competition** was well supported with 58 entries. The winners were Nick Hayman and Katy Flook Aged 5 (under 15 class).



Nick Hayman's entry

## Be Creative in May

A series of 5 workshops/demonstrations will be held in the library throughout the month:

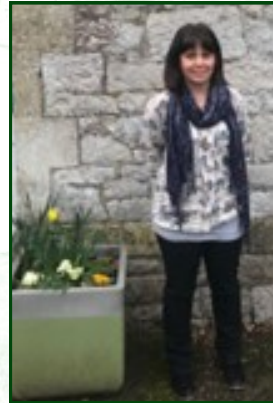
1. **Friday 3 May 10:30 – 12:30**, Lizzie Burd and Liz Greaves will demonstrate how to make a collage picture using material. If you would like to have a go just bring along a photo or picture.

# New Parish Council Staff

The parish office has welcomed new staff.



**Alicia Fox** has the role of Responsible Finance Officer. The role involves her specifically being responsible for the administration duties and financial direction needed to properly manage the assets of the Council. Alicia works Thursday mornings during term times.



**Catrin Lewis** has recently started as the Administrator. Her role includes the management and operation of the Old School Rooms, burial ground, allotments and other parish assets. Catrin will also be taking a lead on monitoring key contractors and organising specific events. Catrin works on Monday, Tuesday and Friday mornings.

With the addition of these key staff members the office is now open every morning except for Wednesdays.

There has also been a change for the village maintenance contract.



**Adrian Leonard has been appointed to** empty litter bins, dog bins, litter pick and trim vegetation along footpaths around the village. Adrian will work for 2 days a week. It is hoped that this change of contractor will enable the Parish Council to have greater

communication and control over the work and so providing a better service for the parish.

Liz Greaves - Clerk to Parish Council

2. **Wednesday 9 May 10:30 – 12:30**, a crochet demonstration by Beverly Mattock.
3. **Wednesday 15 May 10.30 – 12.30**, Ann Kelly will show how to make "Inchies".
4. **Wednesday 22 May 10:30 -12:30**, Beverly Mattock will demonstrate the art of Calligraphy.
5. **Friday 31 May 2:30 – 4:30**, Ann Kelly will run a Felt Paper Weight Making Workshop in the St Congar's Room. Suitable for all ages.

If you are interested in attending any of the above please contact the library on 01934 426 200.

Gail Lee – Chair of Library Management Committee

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