

# Congresbury Chronicle

News and views from  
around the village

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## Parish Council News

The past 18 months have been difficult for everyone and have provided challenges for the Parish Council in the ways of working and supporting the community. The Parish Council worked together with Love Congresbury and North Somerset Council initially spending time and resources providing support to the most vulnerable in the parish. Love Congresbury continues with this vital work and many thanks to those who continue to support the food bank.

Members of Parish Council staff have continued to work from the Parish Office and from home to provide vital services. Very quickly, due to change in legislation, Parish Council meetings switched to being held virtually via Zoom and through sub-committees we have responded to North Somerset Council consultations and continued to respond to planning applications. The legislation which made this possible was not extended and from 7th May 2021 all meetings of local councils, their committees, sub committees or any other meeting must be held as a physical, face to face meeting. With the lifting of most legal restrictions to control COVID-19 we have now restarted our physical meetings in the Old School Rooms on Station Road where members of the public are welcome to attend.



The Parish Council has had a few changes of members with several resigning their posts and also we welcomed new members.

Parish Councillors are volunteers and give up their time to positively make a difference by influencing decisions that affect your community.

Our District Councillor has also changed and we welcome Mr Phil Neve who is the newly-elected Councillor for Congresbury and Puxton ward following the election on 22nd July. The Parish Council is a member of the Parish Councils Airport Association and has written a statement of objection with regard to Bristol Airport's planning application 18/P/5118/OUT. The Airport appealed

North Somerset Council's decision to refuse to grant planning permission for expansion. The appeal will be determined by public inquiry starting on 20 July 2021 and scheduled for 40 sitting days. This will be held at the Town Hall, New Council Chamber (Old Town Hall Entrance), Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ.

The Parish Council is reviewing the policies and Community Actions outlined in the Neighbourhood Development Plan. A request has already been submitted to North Somerset Council for 20 mph zones in the village to improve the environment and safety on village roads. Such zones create places where the priority for the use of the highway is on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, and not just vehicular movements. An improvement for parking on Broad Street with the inclusion of a disabled bay will hopefully be implemented in the Autumn.

Other priorities have included supporting the enhancement of village footpaths and green spaces through grants. Our green spaces have been greatly used and the Parish Council continues to provide essential financial support to the Millennium Green and Cadbury Hill. We are also looking at ways to work closely with Yatton and Congresbury Wildlife Action Group (YACWAG) in the management of the new Cobthorn Way reserve.

Anti-social behaviour continues to be a concern in some areas of the village which has led to a multi-agency approach to create possible solutions. Litter has been a major problem across the country but it is a big issue around the village. The Parish Council does employ an orderly but the amount of litter has exceeded capacity for working hours. We understand that many residents carry out litter-picking and we thank all those who do this. Also, a big thanks to all the volunteers who do make Congresbury a very special place including the volunteers who have ensured the Community Library has provided a service. This was initially, Click and Collect, but, the library is now open 3 times a week and also open Saturday mornings during August. Also, thanks to the volunteers who look after the Geoffrey Peacock Memorial Garden at the traffic lights which is looking stunning and a welcome addition to the village.

If you have any questions please contact me through the Parish Office.

Cllr Arthur Hacking—Chair of the Parish Council



# Spring Farm Silver Street

To introduce myself, my name is Mark Edwards and together with my wife Shelly we own and run Spring Farm in Silver Street, Congresbury.



We are both proud to say we are Congresbury born and bred. We produce 50 calves and 500 lambs each year from our herd of pedigree Limousin cows and our flock of sheep. They are raised to the highest standards on our

grass based system. Our mantra is, 'the more we do for the animals the more they will do for us'. All the stock are sold through Sedgemoor Auction Centre to local butchers and other farmers.



Outside my farming business I am privileged to hold the position of Chairman of the North Somerset Agricultural Society. We are a charity whose remit is to develop agricultural understanding by communicating with the public. We achieve this by

holding events such as the North Somerset Show in May and our Ploughing Match and Craft Fair in September. The proceeds of these events are used to fund our biannual Countryside Day when 2500 local schoolchildren come to the showground for a free day of learning how food is produced.

Small events have started this summer on the Bathing Ponds Showground, Wraxall with Field Fayres. These are market stalls selling local produce and crafts and each fayre has a different main attraction. These will be followed by a Ploughing and Hedging match on September 5th and also the Family Countryside Day on Saturday September 18th. This will be a ticketed event where there will be demonstrations of farming practices, rural crafts and lots of hands-on activities. A large picnic area will be available so it promises to be a day for the whole family to enjoy. Details of all these events are on our website at: [www.nsas.org.uk](http://www.nsas.org.uk)  
Mark Edwards Chairman NSAS



## Village Agent

After five years we have said goodbye to Bill Wallace and we welcome Maxine Gilman as our new Village Agent.

Maxine is able to assist anyone aged 50+ on a whole host of topics &

issues, such as applying for Attendance Allowance, Blue badges and connecting to groups or other agencies if required. It is a free confidential service delivered by the West of England Rural Network (WERN) in partnership with Community Connect. Maxine can be contacted on 07967 344 766 or you can email her at: [Maxine.Gilman@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:Maxine.Gilman@curo-group.co.uk)

# Broadstones playing fields

Congresbury has been very fortunate to have its own playing fields since 1935. Donald Harvey who lived at the Woodlands, Wrington Road donated the King George V Playing Fields to the National Playing Field Association (now called Fields in Trust) which is still the home of both the Cricket and Tennis Clubs as well as the children's play area.

As the population of the village started to increase in the 1950's and 1960's it became apparent that more sport fields were needed.

In 1985 the opportunity to purchase the Broadstone fields was taken up by the Parish Council. These are 2.87 hectares and large enough to create both a full size football pitch, a smaller practice field and a second cricket pitch. Turning a field that had been used for farming into a sports field was a major project. Over the centuries the fields on Dolmoor were raised forming a series of humps, the dip in the middle being called 'gripes'. This was the earliest form of land drainage and allowed the fields to be used for longer periods during wet weather. But, having humps across the pitches was not an option for playing football and cricket.

Undeterred by the major challenges the Parish Council drained the land, levelled the two fields and reseeded the land with grass suitable for football and cricket. There was insufficient money to provide new changing rooms, but Messrs Elliotts, who manufactured mobile classrooms in Mill Leg, donated a second-hand former classroom building to the clubs.

By 1997, the timber changing rooms were deemed unfit and new changing rooms were planned. John Churnside, who had been a professional footballer, was Chairman of the Football Club and well-connected with the Football Association (FA) who gave a substantial grant towards the cost. With another generous donation from Joe Urch, who also lived at the Woodlands, it was possible to build the current changing rooms and car park in 2000.



The new changing rooms were officially opened by Arthur Milton who was the last man to have played both Cricket and Football for England.

Although the Cricket Club no longer use

the second pitch, the Football club continues to use the facilities and hope to increase their teams in the coming years. The land is still owned by the Parish Council. With the Millennium Green, the KGV Playing Fields and Broadstones, Congresbury has around 12 hectares of amenity land which is well above the minimum standards recommended by Sport England and the Fields in Trust for the size of our village. However, there may well come a time when more sports fields are needed.

Cllr Michael Greaves



# Community engagement postcards

We are very pleased to announce some exciting information about the Village Postcards you may begin to see dotted about the village, through your letter box, in the library and other venues.



The Parish Council is working in partnership with Tina Huckle-Mills, Community Development Officer for the West of England Rural Network (WERN), to engage with the community and find out if there is anything you'd like to join or set up that will connect you to others, especially now restrictions are being lifted. Perhaps you have a real passion you'd like to share with others? What's great about this initiative, is that it's community-led and person-centered and that means it's about what you want as a community. It doesn't have to be something new; it could be building on the strengths already there (such as groups that were working pre-Covid). We can't make any promises, but we can promise that we will listen with the aim of helping to facilitate any projects, groups and plans if that's what you want.

The Parish Council would also like to take this opportunity to reach out to you, Congresbury, to welcome new residents, acknowledge those who have left, and to ask ourselves, how could we make Congresbury better? We imagine that you had time to reflect over the past 18 months, and to consider what has worked in the village and what, perhaps, is missing. We invite you to 'dream big'. If you have visited somewhere, read about a great project, or have been inspired by others, feel free to share those with us. Anything is possible when we put our hearts and minds to it, and we have an opportunity to reimagine Congresbury now.

So, look out for the postcards and share your thoughts with us. You can post them back through the Parish Council office door or use the 'post boxes' that will also be around the village. More details about this will be on the reverse of the postcard. Alternatively you can email any responses to [admin@congresbury-pc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@congresbury-pc.gov.uk)

If you'd like to find out more, you can contact **Tina** by emailing to [tina@wern.org.uk](mailto:tina@wern.org.uk) or contact the Parish Council office.

Tina Huckle-Mills Community Development Officer for WERN, Liz Greaves, Clerk to the Parish Council .



# Youth Partnership Update

Despite the recent lockdowns, Congresbury Youth Partnership has kept in contact with our young people and their families primarily through 'Zoom' meetings. The most popular online sessions proved to be a number of cooking workshops with our members taking it in turns to demonstrate their recipes which everyone had to attempt at home. The cheese scones were a great success. We also provided craft activity bags for families to use over the spring half term. The bags contained instructions plus all the items needed to complete the activities.

However, with the easing of restrictions Lucinda, our youth worker, and her team of volunteers have been able to have face to face contact with our young people.

The Wednesday After School Club has been running every week from 3:15 – 5:00 pm with the Youth Club open every Thursday night between 6:30 -8:30 pm. For more details go to our Facebook page, call into the Youth Club or check out our new website at [www.congsyp.org.uk](http://www.congsyp.org.uk)

9 activity days have been planned during the first 3 weeks of the Summer holiday on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week. As usual these have proved to be very popular.

Congresbury Youth Partnership looks forward to welcoming our young people back to the Youth Club. Life over the last 12 months has been very unsettled and confusing, especially for the younger members of our community. We want to know what sort of activities we can provide to help you get your confidence back.

Contact us by email at [Lucinda@congsyp.org.uk](mailto:Lucinda@congsyp.org.uk)  
Di Hassan—CYP

## Armed Forces Covenant



Congresbury Parish Council has demonstrated its commitment to supporting current and ex-Armed Forces personnel who live locally by signing the Armed Forces Covenant.

Councillor Arthur Hacking, Chair of the Parish Council signed the Covenant which says: "We the undersigned agree to work and act together to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel (Regular & Reserve), Cadets, Veterans and military families contribute to our council, business, charity and community". This is an important step by the Council which underlines our joint commitment with businesses and voluntary groups to do everything possible to promote greater understanding and awareness of the needs of the armed forces community.

Cllr Laurie Freeman



# Community Library

Congresbury Community Library is now open on Mondays and Fridays from 2- 4:00 pm and Wednesdays mornings from 10 -12:00.

We have a lot of new books, both fiction and non-fiction, available for you to borrow, plus, a number of new children's books ranging from board books, and picture books to readers for older children and young adult literature. Call in and browse our shelves, and remember we can reserve books from other libraries if the book you want is not on our shelves.

This year's Summer Reading Challenge, organised by the Reading Agency in partnership with the WWF, is entitled Wild World Heroes and encourages children to think about our environment. Congresbury Library will be working with YACWAG to provide activities that families can do at home during the summer holidays.

During lockdown we made up grab bags of books using the stock from our Honesty Library. Each bag contained 6 books and these were very popular with our readers. Many enjoyed the random selections and were introduced to authors they had not read before. We intend to continue with this service. The reintroduction of our Jigsaw Swap also proved popular and we are going to continue with this.

For all the latest information on what is happening at the library please go to our website at [www.congresbury-library.org.uk](http://www.congresbury-library.org.uk) or visit our Facebook page.

# Congresbury Residents Action Group

Congresbury's action group CRAG, having successfully campaigned against unsustainable development in the village for seven years, is preparing to fight another wave of speculative projects.

With planning reform on the government agenda, many commentators see the proposals as a green light for developers. Prime Minister Johnson wants: "Radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the Second World War."

The Council for the Protection of Rural England's chief executive Crispin Truman said that, 'the fact that some of our most highly-prized areas of countryside are being lost to build more executive homes says a great deal about our planning system'. Under the cloak of providing more homes, the government appears to want to free developers from the strictures of the current planning system and CRAG is well aware that developers have land in Congresbury on their radar. John Mills, CRAG Committee Member

# Old School Rooms

The Parish Council was very pleased to open the Old School Rooms for limited groups in May and we have slowly built up the number of activities as Covid restrictions allowed. The Old School Rooms is a hub and essential for all types of community groups and activities.

Not all of our regular groups have come back yet but we are hoping that all activities will restart in September after the summer break. We are pleased to have introduced some new activities including more yoga sessions, having Congresbury Brass meet for their practice sessions and a series of very popular courses and one day workshops covering various aspects of dressmaking, pattern-cutting and design.



Tutor Jonquil Brooks is planning more courses in the autumn, including pattern-cutting and more advanced dressmaking courses both as day and evening classes.

Our regulars include Pilates and Yoga classes including sessions for pregnancy, post-natal and baby yoga. Popular keep fit sessions are being run by Sara and we have keep fit for the more mature run by Jo Knowles. Our creative art classes include art classes with Dawn Cox and we have groups that meet to enjoy patchwork, craft and art. Rascals playgroup also use the hall to meet on a Tuesday morning and Georgie teaches Children's dance. Library-based activities include their book club and knitting group.

We also hope to welcome back Congresbury Singers, bridge club and the lunch club very soon.

There are still slots available to hire the hall for regular activities or one-off events and if you wish to learn, more about our current classes, please do get in touch with the office.

# Bluey Trips

Our free shopping trips will re-commence every Tuesday in the month starting from Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July.

Also re-starting on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August will be "Lunch Club", Congresbury residents wishing to book a seat for either or for information regarding private or group bookings please ring: 01934 257247 or email: [book-ingmanagerbluey@gmail.com](mailto:book-ingmanagerbluey@gmail.com)



Our AGM will be held on Tuesday, 3rd August at 7pm in The Methodist Hall, High Street, Congresbury. Everyone Welcome!

Pam Biffin - CCT

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