

Fittleworth Parish Council - News for December

As we steam up to Christmas, the shops are beginning to look very festive and the number of sales and special offers increases, so I hope all your preparations are going well in these difficult times, I cannot believe how fast this year has gone as the days get some much shorter, now that the clocks have gone back.

Parish Council Audit - I am delighted to tell you that we recently had our annual audit in respect of Governance and Accountability and comply with Proper Practices and passed with flying colours with no areas of concern. A big thank you to Rachel, our clerk who went to a great deal of effort to ensure that everything was in good order and that the documentation they required was readily available.

The Village Gates - Unfortunately at the time of writing these were still not in place - we are keeping everything crossed that they will be up before Christmas and will be a bit of Christmas present for the village if we can achieve this. We are regularly chasing the suppliers/installers to make sure this happens.

SID (Speed Indicator Device) - On the plus side the SID continues to move about the village to good effect. The latest location being just by Church Lane before you go down the very narrow bit of Lower Street and I noticed every car going through this area slowed down as a result.

The Traffic Group met recently and decided to keep the existing programme of locations and monitor how effect it is - it had been suggested that it should be sited more frequently along the Fleet.

Community Highways Scheme - We are still waiting to hear the result of our application to the West Sussex County Council to the CHS budget to reduce the speed limit along the Fleet to 30mph and put in a couple of additional crossings. We have had some very positive feedback from Janet Dunton our County Councillor, but understand we are now unlikely to hear before the spring as all the applications need to be moderated. You may have noticed the black strips along the Fleet recently which were part of this process.

Community Hub Project - At the time of writing we are just finalising the membership of the Working Group to progress this exciting project and hope to meet before Christmas or early in the New Year.

We recently had further consultation with members of the Sports & Social Club who were also in favour and could see the benefits that a combined facility would provide for our village. It is not anticipated, or indeed our intention, to significantly increase users from outside the Village, this is a village facility and will remain so.

Some concerns have been expressed about the increase in parking - one of the ambitions is to improve parking in this area which is a cause for concern at peak times, like school drop off and pick up and we feel the plans will help us do this, which can be viewed in more detail on our website.

If we are successful the intention will be to use a more porous surface, rather than the current tarmac, so also improving the drainage position and will complement the current plans to improve the school playing field. With appropriate screening, planning and so forth.

The next steps, following further consultation with users by the working party is to draw up detailed plans for full costings to be obtained and submission of a Planning application and also to explore in more detail the funding opportunities which are available.

Budget for 2024/25 - We are currently putting together our Budget for 2024/25, which is quite a complicated process, and we need to make sure we have funding for every eventuality.

We had to use some of our reserves during Covid and also to pay for some unexpected tree works over the past couple of years. We have been trying to replenish these and so it is anticipated that there may be a small increase in precept in the coming year in region of 16p/week for a Band D household - but we shall be discussing this at our November meeting, and I will update you in January's magazine.

Hesworth Common - We have had a number of working days on the common recently and I wanted to say a huge THANK YOU to all of you who gave up your time and energy to help. in all weathers. We have had a much better response recently for volunteers to help us with our Heathland restoration project on parts of the common which we have some allocated CIL funding for, and this is now progressing well, thanks to you. A big thank you too, to the Councillors who give up their time to organising this and ensuring everything is on track.

The Parish Council's next meeting is scheduled for 7pm on Monday, 16th January 2024 in the Sports & Social Club. There Is NO Meeting December.

If you would like to join any of our meetings please email our Clerk, Rachel Gorvin on clerk@fittleworth-pc.org.uk or phone 07385 175198

Fittleworth, a Village for All

Stay Safe and Stay Well

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to You All

From your Chair - Jane Claxton