



Bournheath Parish Council

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE

Back in March 2020, no-one would have anticipated that we would be in another lockdown in early 2021, and that we would be thanking residents again for everything that you have done to help one another in these unprecedented times. We know that people formed bonds in the first lockdown and have continued to support others over the past year. With the start of the second lockdown in November, people on the Parish Clerk's email distribution list were reminded of the Covid-Response team who can be called upon if help is needed, and thanks are due to all of those who volunteered to help in this area.

If you have neighbours who are new to the area or who might not have asked to receive information about the Parish, it would be great if you could ask them to be added to the email distribution list. All they need to do is to email clerk@bournheath-pc.gov.uk and stating "Opt into emails". This will give people regular updates about information relevant to the Parish, and will also provide information about Bournheath Village Community Centre.

Thanks also to Andrew Hewston from Bumble Hole Foods for running the community egg stall on Fridays again. The egg stall raised over £7000 for 10 different charities, including Parkinson's UK, Primrose Hospice, Dodford Children's holiday farm, The Blue Cross and New Starts. Bumble Hole have also given away over 100,000 eggs to local foodbanks and to the Princess of Wales Hospital. They plan to reopen a summer egg stall starting Friday 7th May from 10am to 2pm every other Friday until end August. Full dates will be published on their facebook page nearer to the time.

WORKING TO IMPROVE THE VILLAGE

Recently, the council has been working on the following areas following concerns raised by parishioners:

THE RECREATION GROUND

SAPLINGS

In November, saplings were planted to help with absorbing the water that runs on to the recreation ground from the adjoining fields. Although we were anticipating needing to plant them ourselves, Bromsgrove District Council did this – so thank you to the workforce. The condition of the recreation ground has been monitored by the District Council, and it is felt that the aeration of the ground has improved it. The Parish Clerk has been in regular communication with the District Council in order to make the maintenance of the field an ongoing issue for their team. We have had a lot of wet weather recently, which has meant that there are some noticeably boggy areas, although several people have said that the field is not significantly worse than any other recreation grounds in the area now. However, Bromsgrove District Council is aware that it is not perfect, and their representatives have assessed it again. We would also like to plant some more mature trees in order to speed up the capacity for absorption if the field becomes waterlogged.

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA AND DOG FOULING

We have also asked the District council if it is possible to have the Children's Play Area fenced off as there is currently a problem with some dogs fouling the area. Clearly, this is a health hazard, and several residents have, quite rightly, complained about it. We are hoping that the dark mornings and early nightfall in the winter might simply have meant that people couldn't see where their dog might have fouled, and that the lighter mornings/afternoons now will mean that the problem decreases. Thank you to all the many responsible dog-owners in the village who always pick up their mess.

SAFETY IN THE AREA

STREETLIGHTS

In our last newsletter, we reported that some streetlights could be upgraded this year thanks to finances provided by our County Councillor, Shirley Webb. The County Highways Department had initially selected four lights near the junction of Fairfield Road and Dodford Road which could be converted to LED so that they can be left on overnight, which, hopefully, will act as a deterrent to crime. A backlog of work caused by Covid restrictions have meant that this was delayed. In addition, several streetlights around the Dodford Road/Fairfield Road junction developed faults. A lot of work by the Parish Clerk has been done in trying to get the problems fixed. Western Power have now identified a fault with one of the columns and our County Councillor has been pursuing this in order to get a new column installed, which should also solve the problems with the other lights.

DORDALE ROAD

Some residents have expressed safety concerns about a narrow section of Dordale Road and we have been pursuing this with the Highways Department at the County Council. We have been informed that one of our suggestions, which is to have "Road Narrows" signs and "Oncoming vehicles in middle of road" signs at this point is feasible. It is, apparently, on their list of jobs to be undertaken after lockdown ends.

VALLEY ROAD

It has also been suggested that signs to warn drivers of the sharp bend near the junction of Valley Road and Bumble Hole Lane would be helpful, and this has been passed on to the Highways Department, as has a request for a grit bin at that point.

FLY TIPPING

Recently, we have experienced some fly-tipping at the junction of Dodford Road and Fairfield Road, which is clearly detrimental to the area and is, potentially, a health hazard. The Parish Clerk has been requesting speedy removal of the fly-tipped material, and the District Council works tirelessly to keep the District looking clean. If you do notice any material that has been fly-tipped anywhere, there is a form on the Bromsgrove District Council website on which you can report it so that it can be cleared away. The form can be found at <https://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/my-place/street-cleaning/fly-tipping.aspx>.

SPEEDWATCH

The Community Speedwatch team has been unable to operate because of Covid restrictions and social distancing over the past year. The team will start to operate again as soon as it is safe to do so. Some people had previously volunteered to become involved with this and to participate in training, and we know that this training still needs to take place. We are waiting for a new district Speedwatch co-ordinator/trainer to be appointed, but, in the meantime, if anyone is interested in getting involved, please contact the Parish Clerk on clerk@bournheath-pc.gov.uk.

FOOTPATHS IN AND AROUND BOURNHEATH

Peter Trueman is Footpath Officer for the Parish and he is regularly monitoring the public rights of way around the area. He has currently alerted Worcestershire County Council about any footpaths that need work, and the path between Fairfield Road and Stourbridge Road was cleared over the winter. However, if you notice anything that needs remedial work, please feel free to contact him via the Parish Clerk's email address. The message will then be forwarded to him. Alternatively, the Worcestershire County Council website has an online form on which you can report any concerns. This is available at: https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20233/countryside_and_leisure. If you do use this method of reporting, please could you just let Peter know via the Parish Clerk's email so that he can keep a record of individual issues and follow it up with the County Council if necessary.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Matthew Guest is the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, so thank you to him for his work. We have been fortunate in that there has been very little crime in the area over recent months.

In previous newsletters, we have provided the details of the Neighbourhood Watch Facebook and Whatsapp groups set up by Matt, and also the details of the Covid Help Whatsapp group.

Just as a reminder, these groups can be accessed as follows:

Neighbourhood Watch Facebook Group: Bournheath, Bromsgrove, B61.

WhatsApp groups:

Bournheath COVID Help: Please use this Bournheath Coronavirus support group to contact other residents within the parish. If you are self-isolating and need help with supplies or collecting medication, please let us know. If you can spare some time or help others please also join. As a community we can help each other.

B61 Neighbourhood Watch: This is a Neighbourhood Watch WhatsApp group for the residents of Bournheath Parish to inform other residents and the Neighbourhood Watch team of suspicious activity, crimes, and any concerns you may have. We will also update on any news that relates to Neighbourhood Watch within Bournheath.

Please be aware by participating within these WhatsApp groups your mobile phone number will be on display to the others within it. We will only add residents of Bournheath and people with connections to the village. By joining the groups you are agreeing for your number to be visible to others. To be added to either or both of these groups please log into your WhatsApp and add Matthew Guest's phone number 07802373636 and send a message stating which groups you would like to be added to.

TRIBUTE TO BRYAN HEWETT (Founder of the Neighbourhood Watch scheme in the village)

We were saddened to learn that Bryan Hewett passed away in January. Bryan was a dedicated and caring member of the Parish and he set up the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme several years ago in order to help everyone to feel safer. He worked consistently over many years to be of assistance and we are grateful for his valuable input into the community.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Meetings are currently being held virtually via Zoom. Members of the public are always welcome to attend. Please see the Bournheath Parish Council website or the noticeboards for details of agendas and how to join a meeting.

The National Association of Local Councils has recommended that all Town and Parish Councils should hold their Annual Parish meetings and Annual Parish Council meetings in April. We will, therefore, hold these via Zoom on **Wednesday 28th April at 7.00**. The Annual Parish Meeting will be followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting. All parishioners are welcome to attend.

LOCAL ELECTIONS ON MAY 6TH

The Government has announced that voting in the local elections on May 6th can be in person, and, as usual, the Polling Station for residents of Bournheath is the Village Community Centre. The organisers will ensure that covid-safe procedures are in place, and, if you are voting in person, one request is that you take your own pencil in order to avoid having to share, although sanitised spare pencils will be available if you forget. Postal votes can be requested, of course, if you prefer.

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

We have much to be grateful for in this village, and the neighbourliness shown throughout the year is just one thing.

Many people who live here are regularly seen picking up litter, and it is great that so many residents are working hard to try to keep the village looking good. It's always a shame when some people who pass through our area don't seem to be particularly concerned about the environment, and, although residents shouldn't have to clear up after them, we are very grateful that people do this, several of whom have been quietly picking up litter for many years as "unsung heroes".

Please can we just request that people park considerately so that driveways are not blocked and so that emergency vehicles can always get past on the roads.

WALKING IN WORCESTERSHIRE

We have all become used to taking exercise around the village, but when the "Stay at Home" lockdown order is relaxed, people may want to start looking further afield for walks. We have recently received the following advertisement for a very helpful website:

Are you fed up with doing the same old walks?

Walking in Worcestershire www.walkinginengland.co.uk/worcestershire is the website for you!

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

BOURNHEATH VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE



RE-OPENING

Since the last Parish newsletter, the Community Centre has, of course, been closed. We have missed our regular users, and have particularly missed those people who attend the fortnightly coffee mornings/afternoons and the evening table-tennis sessions. We look forward to seeing people again as soon as possible and have been working hard to ensure that the building and the expectations for users meet the requirements for being “covid-secure”. At the time of writing, we have just been given information about the Roadmap out of Lockdown, and it appears that Community Centres could be opening no sooner than 12th April. However, since indoor mixing is not permitted until no earlier than 17th May, this may restrict what activities can be held in the Community Centre. Apologies for being unable to be more definite.

NEW-LOOK COMMUNITY CENTRE

Some good news is that we have finally managed to find a builder to refurbish the toilets, and work began on Monday 8th February. When this work is added to the re-wiring and painting that took place over the summer, it will be like walking into a brand new Community Centre, so we are hoping that everyone will want to come and see these improvements to the building when we do re-open. Believe us when we say that you will be dazzled by the change!

Our current plan is to hold a “Re-opening Coffee Morning” on Wednesday 2nd June from 10.30 to 12.00. Social Distancing Guidelines are to be reviewed by the Government on 17th May, so at that point we will know how we can get together. We do know that hospitality venues can open for table service only after 17th May.....so you can look forward to being treated like royalty and being served at the table regardless of any other social distancing measures! After over a year of various forms of isolation, we would love it if everyone could feel that the Community Centre is a venue where people can get together in person to catch up on news and just to see neighbours again. Please keep an eye out for the emails from clerk@bournheath-pc.gov.uk for updates on this and other events at the Community Centre.

HALL HIRE

With the improved facilities that have been installed, please consider using the hall for children’s parties or for meetings/courses that you might be interested in running when Covid restrictions allow. If you have a look at our website bournheathvcc.co.uk you will see that there are reduced rates for those living in the Parish.

LAND

The Parish Council is still negotiating the possibility of purchasing the freehold of the land on which the Community Centre is situated, and this has proved to be a very long process. However, we are hoping for good news soon.

EVENTS AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE



The Photography Competition in October 2020 was able to take place, and the results were displayed on our website and Facebook page. As usual, we had some amazing entries, and we would like to thank the judge from Bromsgrove Photographic Society for taking the time to provide detailed feedback on each entry.

The Photography Competition for 2021 will be held on Saturday 25th September, with the closing date being Saturday 18th September. At the moment, because of uncertainty about Covid regulations, we don't know whether this will be a physical event so that everyone can come to the hall and look at the photos, or whether we will need to move to photos being sent via email. However, the key thing is for people to get out there and to take photos! Details of the various themes/categories will come soon via Facebook, our website, posters, and the Parish Clerk's emails.

QUIZ NIGHT



We are also hoping to run a quiz on Saturday 16th October 2021. The Leap Year Quiz in 2020 was the last evening community event that we were able to hold at the Community Centre and it was a fabulous event with much camaraderie and friendly (?) rivalry. Watch out for posters, emails, Facebook etc. for more details nearer the time (Covid regulations permitting), and pencil the date into your diary.

IT'S A BIT EARLY TO THINK ABOUT CHRISTMAS, BUT.....

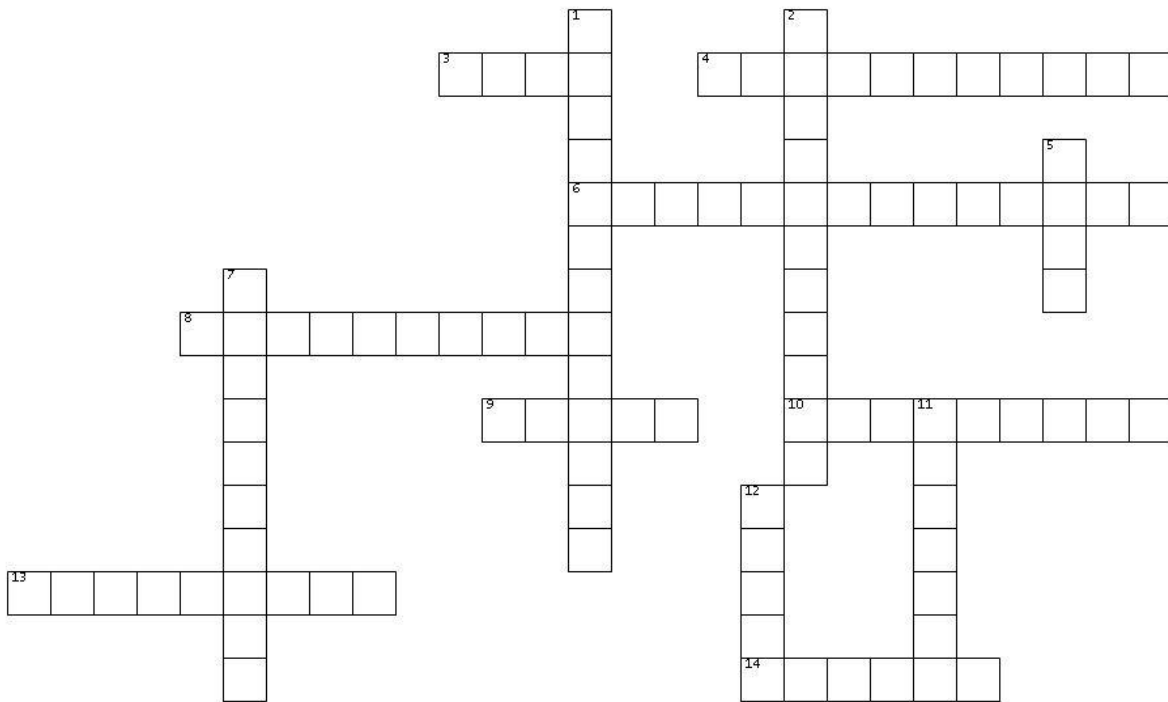


Sadly, the Christmas Fair had to be cancelled in 2020, but we're planning to hold the 2021 version on **Saturday 27th November**. This has gone from strength to strength over the past few years, and we're looking forward to seeing the many talented craftspeople with their stalls again, and to seeing as many residents as possible there. We can't predict Covid regulations at that point, of course, but save the date (in pencil!) More details will follow.

Our Spring 2020 lockdown competitions were popular, and demonstrated a huge amount of talent in the village. We have tried to replicate this with some Winter Lockdown competitions, but haven't had many entries this time. We had a poetry competition on the theme of Winter, and then an option to produce any type of artform on the theme of Light. We also invited people to send in Winter photos, and a selection of these has been displayed on the website and on Facebook. Our website address is www.Bournheathvcc.co.uk if you would like to look at the photos or poems.

KNOW YOUR VILLAGE

Just for a bit of fun, here's a quick crossword so that you can test yourself on your knowledge of Bournheath:



ACROSS

3. Pub in Dodford Road
4. Road running past the community centre
6. Do bees live here?
8. The name of the road dividing Bournheath and Fairfield
9. This product used to be made in Parish Hill
10. The denomination of the chapel that is now a house
13. This road eventually becomes Bournheath Road
14. pub on Doctor's Hill

DOWN

1. What is now in the telephone box?
2. The "youngest" of the Bournheath pubs
5. Tuppenny what?
7. The trade Bournheath is famous for
11. Famous poet born in Valley Road
12. This part of our village name means "stream".

ANSWERS

