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Kirklevington and Castle Levington Parish Newsletter

Welcome to your quarterly edition Parish Newsletter.

Firstly, Happy New Year everyone, we hope you and your families all had a great Christmas and New Year and despite everything going on in the crazy world currently – we hope you managed to spend time with family and loved ones.

- The main issue on everyone's lips at the moment is the Taylor Wimpey construction access through the village. We have been very busy in attending Council Planning committee meetings lobbying for an alternate means of access that would remove the dependency for the heavy goods traffic to use our village streets. A big thank-you to the residents that supported our case either in writing or in person for these planning meetings, its not a fun day out; but the cause is so great it needs to be done. For those that follow the press, you will see we have featured quite heavily recently with our plight – visit our website <https://www.kirkcommunity.co.uk/> should you wish to read the full articles. For brevity however, we have had a number of very pleasant conversations with the landowner who we wish to stress are EQUALLY as opposed to the construction traffic traversing our streets as we are. They made the land available from the offset, but the builders did not want to incur any additional costs related to the construction of the access road extension. After what seems like hundreds of e-mails, calls and meetings we have all parties now talking with each other about the possible shared use. The biggest win for us was being able to defer the Stockton Council decision on the Taylor Wimpey 97 home application by a month to afford us the time to evidence that the landowner was indeed open to the required discussions which was contrary to the impression being given by Taylor Wimpey in their application. These discussions are still on-going, and we cannot give any promises or false hopes – but please be rest assured we are all doing everything we can.
- Whilst on the topic of construction in the village please can we make you aware that there will soon be temporary road closures and restrictions in place on Thirsk Road from behind Levington Mews down to the new Story entrance. Temporary roadworks will be in place between Town End Close and the corner of Pump Lane to allow 2-way traffic to flow counter-clockwise around 'the oval' - you will notice that Story have removed their temporary compound in readiness and the 2x pallets of blocks will go when the roadworks begin, this is expected to be required from Monday 17 January until Wednesday 2 February 2022. Please respect the one-way system on Pump Lane as we had a few near misses last time with people trying to reach Forest Lane by travelling the wrong way up Pump Lane. This resurfacing work will address the concerns of residents about the uneven footpath, raised ironworks on the road and lighting issues around St Martins Green.
- Again, if you have been following the local press you will see that the Theakston's application for 300 houses was approved at appeal with no mitigation needed on Leven Road (article link on web site as above). It is incredulous to think that the compounded effect of the traffic volumes was not properly considered or argued.
- We would like to celebrate the Queens Jubilee as a village, given the past few years we have all had to endure we think it would be great to do something as a community. We would welcome all ideas and suggestions as to what we could do and most of all if anyone would like to be involved in helping organise such an event. Initial thoughts would be (similar to Kirkfest) a big group event on one of the greens bringing all village residents, new and old, together to enjoy some food, music and events. (Subject to weather & covid restrictions naturally)
- We have received LOTS of complaints about speeding traffic, so we AGAIN ask everyone to PLEASE slow down on Forest Lane and park considerably near the school and around Pump Lane – last year we had around 6,000

vehicles speeding. We worked with Story's to open their new car park on Pump Lane next to Squirrels Leap for us and we jointly welcome parents (& Village Hall users) to use this to alleviate the pressure outside of the school.

- We acknowledge we also have an issue with people parking inconsiderately on Pump Lane particularly when using the Village Hall, all hirers are instructed to advise guests to use the overflow car-park at the corner of pump lane as part of their hire agreements – please, if you are hosting an event there, can you also ensure that this message is heard by all of your guests as it is causing a nuisance and a misery to residents nearby.
- We have heard no more about the parish boundary changes as yet – it's more likely to be an administrative change to reflect the number of seats a ward councillor is responsible for, but we will clarify this once we know more ourselves – dialogue is still ongoing.
- Whilst it seems like a lifetime ago, we would like to congratulate the winners of last year's Halloween competition, a huge thank-you for everyone who took part in the event, its these little things that give Kirklevington the community feel; so long may they continue – we are considering extending it to include Christmas decorations this year so be warned! 1st prize went to 22 The Green, 2nd prize to Orchard House on Pump Lane and 3rd prize 8 Moor Close.
- On a similar note, it was great to see the choir out for our community Christmas event, always guaranteed to bring in a crowd and whilst they may not even realise it themselves, they are always a main attraction, and we sincerely thank them all for giving up their time to support us.
- You may recall that back in July we published a Questionnaire asking for residents' feedback, well we purposely left this open for several months to capture as much feedback as possible. The responses have been received, processed and soon we will look to publish the results on the website once they are compiled (it takes a lot of work to run this campaign, but we genuinely believe it is very useful – even if it just confirms what we thought)
- Thanks to the support of our ward councillors, we were approved for a grant for a planting scheme at the end of Thirsk Road (behind Levington Mews) – there has been just shy of 5,400 bulbs planted covering an area of 44 sqm which will look amazing in the spring – let us know of any other areas that may benefit from planting this year.
- There has been lots of discussions around a local bus service to provide a much-needed link between the village and Conyers then on to Yarm High Street. This service is due to commence once the 60th Story house has been occupied – they are currently at two thirds of that target; in the meantime, we continue to investigate alternative options to tide us over until then, it's not straight forward but again be sure we are looking into options.
- We have been meeting with Matt Vickers and colleagues about trying to secure some 'Levelling up' funding to provide a safe foot/cycle path link to Green Lane from the village. As everyone is painfully aware the existing path is both too narrow and dangerous with its poor illumination. There is no quick fix to this problem as there simply isn't any land readily available to expand the footpath on to, that said we have another meeting with them at the end of this month to propose a few ideas and to see what we can do to make things safer.
- We have been busy reporting water leaks to NWL in our aging village infrastructure, if there are any we may have missed; you can report them yourselves directly here <https://www.nwl.co.uk/report-a-problem>
- Similarly, we have been doing the same with reporting streetlights <https://streetlighting.stockton.gov.uk/> you will need the column number that is marked in the sprayed yellow box on the given streetlight.
- Whilst we do everything we can to look for issues around the village we might miss things – so please feel free to report if anything is broken or needs replacing to us – you can always contact us at kirkcommunity@gmail.com or pop a note in the white letterbox to the left hand side of the Village Hall entrance.
- We would also like to provide an update on the Playpark, it may look like work has stopped prematurely on the site, but we haven't forgotten about it. We intend to backfill the gaps between the seating areas with more soil and then turf/seed it to blend in to the existing. We are also investigating installing a cycle rack near the main entrance to avoid children abandoning their bikes at the gate or on the road and blocking the entrance.
- Kirklevington Ladies Social Group was founded in 2004. The Club is run by members for members and is open to ladies living in Kirklevington. They meet in the Village Hall once a month in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, with a speaker and a glass of wine. If you would like more information, please ring 07971295970 or visit <https://www.kirkcommunity.co.uk/whats-on>
- On behalf of Cleveland police "Op Gloucester is a clear permanent brand upon which Cleveland Police base its commitment to engagement in rural communities. The initiative is based on consultation with rural communities through communication with Farms; Rural Businesses; Schools and Village Halls. The overall intention of the operation is to develop a better understanding of the needs of rural communities and to include these communities in the solving of problems. For more information, please contact Cleveland Police Engagement Team on this email address; engagementteam@cleveland.pnn.police.uk "