Reports from the Annual Meeting of the Parish 2022

CBC Cllr James Jamieson

Local Issues

* Yellow lines at various points in the village, to reduce risk to pedestrians and cars from traffic obstruction. There is currently a consultation on Manor Farm Way to put double yellow lines on both sides
* Major patching has occurred on Greenfield Rd, Church Rd and also the road between Westoning and Greenfield. The latter will be surface dressed later in the year. Chasing up some of the missed potholes on Greenfield Rd, also addressing the footpath on Greenfield Rd and between Sampshill R/Spensley Rd, and Church Rd/Oak Close
* Site south of Flitwick Rd has now received planning permission. As part of the negotiation along with PC was able to secure funding to support improved football facilities/recreational facilities/village hall/cycle path/cemetery totalling £430k. There will also be a £1.45m contribution to Education and £330k for Health/Libraries/Leisure
* Made Councillor grants to support Tuesday WesCaf and Westoning Football Club. Additionally capital grant to support Westoning Village Hall (£20k) improvements and resurfacing MUGA (£10k)
* By Church, road widening and kerbs have been installed

On the broader areas

* Flitwick Station new interchange is progressing well, and hope this will be completed this year, providing far better access to the station and enabling busses to stop at the station directly. Disabled access funding has been approved but we await Network Rail to progress this
* Flitwick Independent Living, Residential Care Home and over 55s accommodation on the old Flitwick Leisure site is due to commence in June. This will bring much needed down sizing and specialist accommodation to the area, enabling people to live independently and have access to facilities. This also has the added benefit of freeing up family homes.
* Crematorium on Froghall Rd has received planning permission and tendering for this will go to Executive in June, and subject to approval anticipate work commencing in the Autumn and completion in 2023.
* M1-A6 is progressing and anticipate work to start on site in the next 12 months with completion in 2-3 years subject to weather. This will divert considerable traffic, in particularly lorries away from a number of our towns/villages in particular Flitwick&Westoning
* Improvements to Clophill roundabout to improve traffic flow will also start this year, Consultation has started 16 May on proposals
* After many years the Local Plan was approved, which will provide significant protection to rural areas of Central Bedfordshire outside the Local Plan

Westoning Players report to Parish Meeting - Monday 16th May 2022

Thank you for inviting us to speak to you tonight. In March 2020, Westoning Players were all set to put on our show “Bunkered”. If we kept our costs to a minimum and played to full houses for 3 nights the surplus should, with our accumulated funds, have allowed us to purchase a new shed. We had picked out the shed we wanted at Dunster House – which at that time was about £3,500. Our current (20 year old) shed – located to the rear of the hall is very ricketty and leaks now as well. This makes all of our scenery, costumes, furniture and “props” vulnerable to damage and rot. Then Covid hit, “Bunkered” had to be put on hold as did the shed replacement too. We did manage to do a little maintenance and give it a coat of paint during the summer of 2020 when there was a brief respite in restrictions, which at least made it look a little better. Last November we were finally able to perform “Bunkered” and were delighted to find that our audiences were very keen to come and support us. For some this was their first venture out since lockdown.

We decided that our April 2022 show needed to be a money-spinner, so we opted for 2 separate short plays with a meal between. I believe some of you may came along to see the show. It was extremely hard work, as we Players are not getting any younger. But it was very rewarding to make so many people laugh out loud and good feedback was received for the plays and the meal. And a financial success too. Time to look at sheds again – prices had almost doubled. What to do? We are determined to carry on the drama group, we have a couple of younger members now, but need more. It’s a great hobby and we have a lot of fun. We believe, judging from our audience numbers that we are providing a valued and LOCAL LIVE entertainment to the community. Our next show, in November, is to be a family show to which you and the rest of our loyal audience will bring their children and grandchildren.

**Village Hall (Spensley Trust) Report to Parish Annual Meeting 2022 – 16th May**

The major accomplishment last year was seeing many years of debate coming to fruition in the building of the new entrance and toilets. It’s difficult now to remember what it was like before but everyone agrees that it has enhanced the building. Looking back we can be thankful that most of the noisy building work was undertaken during Covid-19 restrictions. By the time most groups were ready to return, in September, the work was finished. The opening ceremony which also marked 180 years of formal education in the village was conducted by Councillor Tracey Stock, Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing & Communities from Central Beds Council. The whole project, including upgrading the electricity supply cost in the region of £160,000.

Our aim is to keep improving the village hall to ensure it is fit for use in the 21st century and meets the needs of local people. The hall is very well used offering activities for the young and not so young, eg. dance, soft play and Socatots for toddlers and carpet bowls, sewing group, fellowship group and movement to music for those a bit older. There are also two Yoga classes, Westcaf, Twig family meetings, a youth group, WI meetings and the Players drama group. The Parish Council hold their meetings here and the village hall committee show Big Screen films, monthly, during the winter. With all these activities there is no reason to be lonely in Westoning!

Recreation Club

Firstly apologies for not being able to attend but we have been away and just got back and been decorating the club all day today for our Queen’s jubilee event weekend.

Some salient points regards the club.

We continue to progress on the clubs interior and exterior look of the club to make this a nice place to visit.  We have almost completed this project now with the club driveway almost complete, thanks to financial assistance from the PC in this joint project, the next big one is the clubs decking areas.

After the pandemic, we like others were extremely busy. Things have slowed down now and we are back to what we would call the norm, or there about.

Memberships are continuing to grow with new people from within and outside the village joining us. this year seen an all time high of new members joining. Regular activities such as music events are very much supported by our members. The newly refurbished function room is available and being used for presentation nights and external gatherings.

We are preparing for the Queens Jubilee and will soon be distributing flyers around the village. This is a family event with non-members also invited. There are lots of activities on the day, with all profits to be donated to the Ukraine Appeal.

We currently have adult football teams playing on the rec and have been approached by some others that may also be interested in playing in Westoning. The 2 Westoning teams, was 3 continue to play on Saturdays, one team ceased playing a few months ago. We also have a keep fit activity that is on the field twice a week, and inside during the winter months.

Last year we set up a pool team from members and in their first year have won the league so a fantastic achievement by them. We have also been approached by another team to use the club on alternate weeks for their matches.

The club is open and available to all sports teams / players for events and other village partners and we continue to use flexibility in  accommodating those requests.

We have set up a golf society run by one of our committee members and they had their first event which was a high success and something which we intend holding at regular intervals.

Pétanque is regularly played on the club car park as requested.

Finally but not least as many of you will know we lost our club president a couple of months ago, Geoff Bassett who was a stalwart to the club and highly respected within the village for his outstanding contribution, to many that knew him, for starting the westoning boys club football and with his enthusiasm, great work and support back then has put our club and the football very much on the map.