

Walford Parish Newsletter

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Comprehensive article on Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch Site on pages 2-7

Canoes on The Wye at Kerne Bridge – Photo courtesy of Charlie Baker

Chairman - Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch : Ward Councillor : Broadband : Neighbourhood Development Plan : Community Support Scheme : Budget for 2018-19 : Walford Village Hall Play Area : Rights of Way : Lengthsman : Wye Valley AONB : Walford Primary School : Dog Fouling : Bishopswood WI : Bishopswood Village Hall : Fly Tipping : Walford Village Hall : Walford Playgroup : Howling Bull Community Run : Parish Churches : Herefordshire Walking Festival : PC Election : 2018 Meetings Schedule :

Chairman: Frank Myers MBE
Vice Chairman: Shane Carlson
Clerk: Catherine Murray

Website: www.walford-pc.org.uk

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Kerne Bridge Canoe Launch Information for Parishioners

Frank Myers MBE-
Parish Council Chairman

THE HISTORY

WPC were first approached by Herefordshire Council, HC, during 2010. As has been well documented, HC, at that time, had begun a significant review of its assets with a view to exploring whether they could be managed in a better and more cost-effective way by third parties.

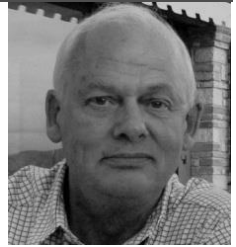
The Kerne Bridge canoe launch site was known to be one of the busiest on the River Wye. The river itself was voted the most popular river in England in 2010. Plans were in place to develop the site to make it more accessible and it was logical to assume that this development would lead to even more demand.

There had been persistent problems of accessibility and parking, particularly impacting upon Bishopswood Village Hall (BVH). Clearly, without a different approach to the management of the site these problems, with increasing numbers of visitors, were likely to get worse. There were also concerns about the uncomfortable relationship between commercial operators and regular private users.

The layout of the site and traffic movements at a difficult part of the B4234 were causing concerns. There were frequent occurrences of congestion on the site causing dangerous tailbacks onto the B4234 and it was hoped that a new regime could address these issues. Those with experience of the site and activity pursuits suggested that better traffic flows through the site and additional mooring for canoes would be a means of improving flow through the site and thus would alleviate congestion.

It was also proposed, at that time, that we would cut back and remove excessive vegetation in order to enhance the image of the site.

It had become overgrown and neglected and this was also affecting the efficient and safe operation of the site.



In February 2011 a meeting took place involving councillors and representatives of interested parties. The unanimous conclusion drawn from this meeting was that the site did need a management regime and that this would require an income stream in order to pay for it. There was general agreement that the income stream could involve car parking charges, licensing charges for canoe operators and perhaps a charge for each canoe launched. HC also suggested to WPC that café or retail facilities would be appropriate.

Throughout these developments we have kept to the policy that voluntary groups such as the scouts would not be required to pay a mandatory charge and would be left to decide if they wanted to make a voluntary contribution. We also propose to implement a permit regime for local residents and throughout the summer we have not charged locals who use the site for recreation, dog walking etc.

Bishopswood Village Hall, BVH, Committee expressed the wish that the final outcome should be empathetic with their activities and this has remained an objective of WPC throughout.

All of these matters are contained in the full business case which was prepared at the request of HC and can be seen on our website: www.walford-pc.org.uk

After the first season of operation, we are already looking at economic gain which will assist us in developing services in the Parish such as the Community Support regime which has so far been supported by grant aid and an increase in the amount of precept paid by each household.



Ownership of the site was transferred to WPC in 2016 and after discussing how we might achieve an affordable management regime, it was decided to follow a process being used by HC...that of seeking a 'preferred development partner'. This approach would relieve WPC of the day to day management responsibilities and would perhaps incentivise private investment in the facilities for mutual gain. We advertised our intentions in the local papers, inviting expressions of interest and three organisations applied to be considered. After a selection process Riversea Holdings Ltd, RHL, were chosen as the preferred partner and they commenced on site in time for Easter this year.

Throughout the process described above, we consulted with The Environment Agency, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty officers, the River Wye Navigation Committee, British Canoeing and the canoe hire operators. We decided to begin with a 'per canoe' charge whilst we considered and consulted upon a system of licensing. It is currently anticipated that licences may be introduced in time for the 2018 season.

RISK ASSESSMENT:

Our first approach, when we commenced operating, was to conduct a risk assessment at the site. There were three key risks which we felt should be immediately addressed:

Because of the layout of the site the normal practice of the canoe hire operators was to drive into the site with minibus and canoe trailer and head north into the car park towards Bishopswood Village Hall.

At this point they would discharge their passengers and then reverse back towards the canoe launch. This introduced the risks of reversing, the risk to the pedestrians, including children, who had just disembarked and the noise of the reversing alarm. It also added to potential turnaround time. At busy times it also meant that the vehicle 'last in' would have to be the first to leave, thus delaying the 'first in' and adding to the congestion.

Our risk assessment indicated that we could create a one-way system through the site by carrying out our stated intention of cutting back overgrown vegetation. Before going ahead with this we carefully checked to see that there were no nesting birds.

Thus, with an unchanged entrance layout off the B42434, we have been able to create a one-way gyratory system, with vehicles not reversing. This has considerably enhanced the speed of offloading at the same time as removing a serious safety hazard. Those living nearby have also expressed their relief that, on a busy summer afternoon, they are not plagued by repeated reversing alarms. We have also organised a cutting back of vegetation on the other side of the B4234 so that vehicles turning in to the site can see more clearly the traffic coming north on the B4234.

The second risk which we identified was at the launch point, where canoes go into

or come out of the water. This is the place where we judged that most 'water based' accidents would be likely to happen. Part of the intention of the management regime was to watch over activities, provide assistance where necessary and thus mitigate the risk of inexperienced users finding themselves in difficulty.

The banks were so overgrown with vegetation at this point that it was not possible to see enough of the end of the launch and particularly see clearly those canoeists who were coming downstream and wanting to come off the water at Kerne Bridge. These people need launching to be paused whilst they disembark and remove their canoes. So, we cut back this overgrown vegetation in order to be able to observe activities at this sensitive point and make it safer. We did not remove any mature trees and once again we checked for nesting birds.

The third risk was the car park surface itself. In many places it was muddy and after rain, in the canoe launch area, slippery under foot, which is particularly dangerous when two people are carrying a canoe towards the launch point. There was also the potential for loss of traction for the vehicles and in general it was not suitable for its use. We therefore, invested in dressing the surface with scalplings and these were spread in the necessary areas. There is still some work to do in part of the car park area.

COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS:

RHL, in their proposal committed to manage the car parking, log the numbers of canoes launched, *voluntarily* manage the toilets at BVH and install the café.

Their original intention was to install a shepherd's hut in which to house the cafe.

The received advice was that this would not need planning permission. In the event, owing to delays in delivery, they changed their mind and purchased a field shelter

again believing that such a free-standing building did not need planning permission. It was installed in a secluded position such that it would not be overlooked and that the canoe launch point could be observed from it. After it had been installed RHL were advised that planning permission is needed and a retrospective application is currently progressing through the system.

Electricity has been installed in order to service the car park meter and the café. By combining the two from one service point we have been able to avoid the cost of a second connection.

The full pay and display regime for parking will be installed in time for Easter 2018. As can be seen in the Q&A in the full business case, HC undertook to complete this installation on our behalf.

COMMENTS FROM INTERESTED PARTIES:

Largely as a result of the planning application there have been a number of objections/observations which can be seen on the Herefordshire Council planning applications search system [*Link needed*] In this section I propose to try to deal with them, without attributing them to their authors:

Provision of signage

We do intend to install signs in appropriate places, in order to avoid people missing the site and turning back in inappropriate places but this has to be done sensitively in an AONB.

Provision of toilet facilities

There are toilets at BVH. These are not the responsibility of WPC but RHL have *volunteered* to attempt to look after them. Any formal commitment is embodied within the lease between HC and BVH and this matter needs to be referred to them.

Not enough car parking spaces

It is clear that, on the busiest of afternoons, the car park becomes full. The management on site take care to make sure that motorists park responsibly

We remain hopeful that we can agree a regime where overflow space could be provided in the BVH car park. The number of spaces has been optimised within the space available by the judicious cutting back of vegetation.

Collection of waste

There is no intention to do anything other than manage these issues in a responsible manner as required by the authorities.

Cutting down of trees and vegetation.

As was stated in the business plan the work done has been carried out as always intended and we have had confirmation that we have not breached any regulations regarding trees.

Matters omitted from the planning application.

This is being dealt with by the agent acting for RHL.

Kiosk already on site.

The on-site café, suggested by HC, is intended to provide services not provided by others and to be open at times when other facilities are not manned. Its purpose is also to provide income which will be used to enhance the public facilities.

Entrance from B4234

This has not been altered. The only changes have been within the curtilage of the site in order to remove significant risks to site safety.

Electricity supply and additional duct

The supply is single phase not three phase. The cabinets are those required to provide proper safety protection. There are two uses...the café and the car park machine (yet to be installed). The additional duct will enable future provision of telephone or broadband which will facilitate security provision and remote observation.

Increased use of the site

Prior to WPC involvement, the launch facilities were improved to make it easier to access the river.

The authorities, recognising the likely increase in traffic that this would bring, saw the need to invest in handling this increase, hence their approach to WPC and the desire for a management regime. Concerns about increased use have to be assessed alongside the benefits of making recreation more accessible. In reaching the decision to improve the site, it is clear that the balance of opinion was in favour of expanding its use and WPC have acted entirely in keeping with the HC initiative 'Dare to Win'.



A summary of these objectives is copied here.

"Within the UK there is a growing appetite and market for outdoor and "alternative" sporting activities. In Herefordshire the established local outdoor activity scene features the established sports of canoeing and mountain biking alongside less mainstream activities such as mountain boarding, extreme assault courses, and zorbing. The potential exists to become a lead provider for these alternative sporting activities by providing specialist facilities for particular activities, increased marketing of activity locations and specific companies, and by hosting regional and national level events or competitions."

More information can be seen at <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50040614/Appendix%201%20-%20DRAFT%20ECONOMIC%20MASTER%20PLAN%20SUBJECT%20TO%20REVIEW.pdf>

Noise

The effect of WPC involvement has been to decrease the noise as testified by local residents.

Piecemeal development without consultation

The only matters which have been kept confidential are those which could influence the commercial position of WPC. The outcome of the recent changes exactly mirrors the openly stated intentions of WPC since the idea was first made public. Plans (if any) to develop the facility further will be openly discussed by WPC if ever they arise.

Car park often full.

There have not been many occasions during the 2017 season when the car park has been full. When it has been there has been management in place who can deal with the situation. That has to be an improvement on having nobody there.

I can see that the café structure is in place on a concrete base

The structure is not on a concrete base, it sits on the ground.

There are several boxes providing electricity installed

These boxes are required to safely provide the electricity requirements to service the facilities suggested by HC. They will be hidden by planting as soon as possible.



OTHER COMMENTS DURING THE SUMMER OF 2017

From the Environment Agency

‘We did survey work regularly from a vantage point opposite the launch and our experience was all positive. Steady activity but no issues to note.’

From an interested parishioner...

‘Following all the fuss about the Canoe Launch at the Parish Council Meeting on Wednesday I went down to the site to see for myself what was going on. I found an immaculate site with nothing giving me any concern.

Charlie explained what was planned for the site. This seemed an excellent scheme to manage an existing facility and to produce an income stream for the Parish. I was able to determine that there was **no** new entrance to the B4234, merely a modification to the existing splay, and that any vegetation that had been removed had been done with all the proper consultations. The siting of the field hut had been done to minimize the visual impact on surrounding houses, and it could be easily moved if found to contravene any regulations. I suggest that an article in the upcoming Walford Parish Newsletter could nip the hysteria in the bud. It was quite clear that the protest had been organized and was not a spontaneous expression of concern.’

From a scout master...

‘Firstly, can I introduce myself. I am [REDACTED] Scout Leader with [REDACTED] Scouts, (Gloucestershire) and a UKCC level 2 Paddlesport coach as trained by British Canoeing.

I have been bringing scouts to Kerne Bridge for a number of years (greater than 20) and appreciate the facilities provided. Thank you and the committee for taking on the Launch point and enhancing it. I hope that your work also helps to improve

the behaviour of the commercial operators, some of whom, have made volunteer groups unwelcome and on one occasion I was told the launch point was for commercial operators only! Luckily, I was able to correct the expectation of this individual in a diplomatic manner. Your signage now makes the situation very clear. I look forward to using the facilities in the future.'

From a Metropolitan Police Officer...

'Just a very brief note to express my thanks to Charles Baker – The very nice chap who runs the car park at Kerne Bridge.

Whist putting in our canoes, he approached us and engaged in conversation; I found him most helpful and informative. He told me about the work he is doing there and I was most impressed at his efforts.

He was also very helpful in assisting with transport issues we had and helped us make the day very pleasant; I didn't get his contact details but would be grateful if you could pass on my thanks and gratitude to him.'

From a family from Hertfordshire:

'I am writing to express my grateful thanks to one of your employees Charles Baker, who is operating the car park and associated

activities at Kerne Bridge on the River Wye. It is not often that people receive praise from the public, but I feel it is my duty to write in and tell you what a wonderful and kind man he is. I have twice recently been kayaking with my family on the river and have found him to be so welcoming, kind and helpful, going out of his way to help us. He has personally helped me when I had transport issues, something which is above and beyond the call of duty, but a good example of what sort of a good man he is.

If everyone was as decent and helpful as he is the world would be a much better place. I do not often write in thanking people, but on this occasion his good work really does need recognition. He is there for the community.

Please can you pass this message of appreciation onto Charles and also can I ask that it is forwarded to whoever is his supervisor/ employer as they should be made aware ; finally can a copy be placed on his personal file.'



Dear Residents of Walford,

I try to attend all Walford Parish Council meetings - to which all members of the public are invited. I make a short verbal report at the meetings, and I'm always very happy to take any questions. Indeed, I'm equally happy to chat with individual local residents either before or after parish council meetings, so do contact me with any issues, questions or concerns and I'll do my very best to help.

So what does my report at the parish council meetings cover? Generally I start with an update on anything I've been involved with in the parish (please see the story on the Walford Community Support Scheme elsewhere in this newsletter). Then, I report on anything I think might be of topical interest to local residents.

For example, at the most recent meeting, on 11th October, I talked about my submission via an on line questionnaire, to Hereford Council's consultation on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

My submission focused almost entirely on FRACKING, and re-iterated all the arguments about not fracking in or under our precious AONB

(Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), including of course in this lovely parish (as recently proposed via license block SO51), and I asked for my fully supported, full council motion

against fracking in our AONBs to be mentioned in the official Plan.



I also talked about the near £1m overspend on the redevelopment of council offices at Blueschool House in Hereford and what, as Chairman of Herefordshire Council's Audit & Governance Committee, I am personally doing to try to ensure that any such wasteful incidents can't possibly happen again.

Finally, having attended almost all parish council meetings over the last two and a half years, I have had ample opportunity to observe the hard work and dedication of all our Parish Councillors, and the Parish Clerk, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them for all the fantastic work they do in support of our local community.

Paul.Newman@herefordshire.gov.uk

Superfast Broadband - The Rollout

Info from the Fastershire website

Phase 2 of the Fastershire rollout of faster broadband across Herefordshire and Gloucestershire will be based around four areas (area 1, 2, 3(A-E) & 4) and will comprise of premises that were not covered by Phase 1 or commercial rollout. Each area will go through its own consultation and procurement process to secure a supplier to carry out the deployment.

Updates for our local area can be found below:

Area 3(C): SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE

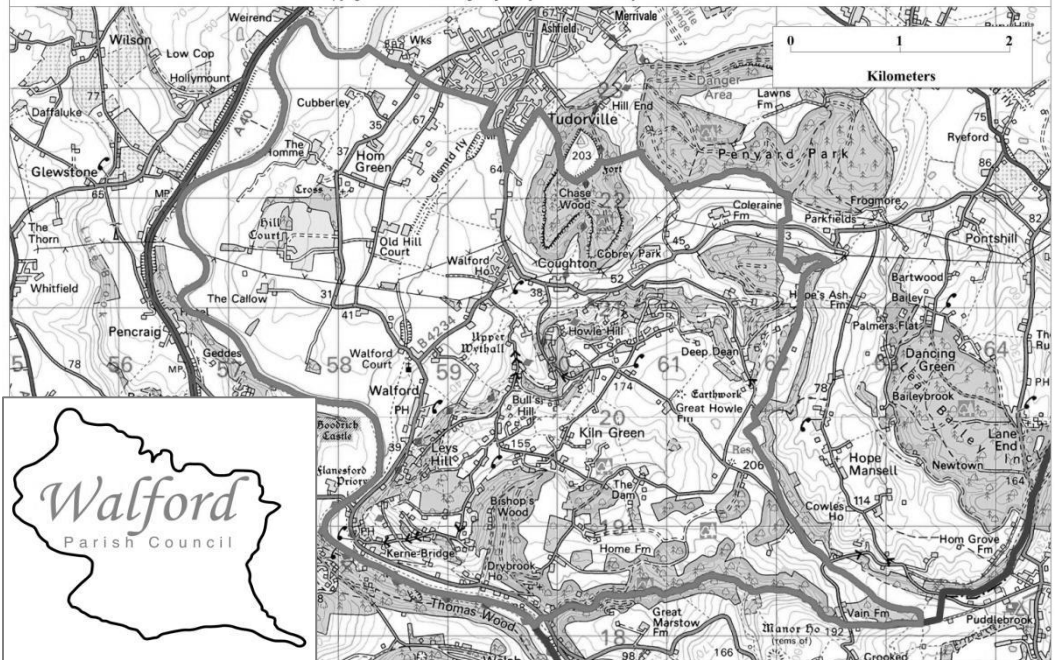
We have awarded a contract to Gigaclear to deliver the phase two rollout in this area, not upgraded to faster broadband in Phase 1.

Area 3C (South Herefordshire) - July 2017

The ultimate aim is that by 2018 there will be access to fast broadband for all who need it.

Walford Parish Neighbourhood Area

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In the last report we published our vision and objectives for the NDP. We received a number of useful comments at the Annual Parish Meeting, and the NDP group would like to thank those who contributed.

The main focus of the NDP is to provide a framework for development in the parish, and to do this we need to know where we want development to happen. This means that we need to start with the availability of sites, and then evaluate these against a set of criteria to decide which ones to use as the foundation for the plan. To find which sites might be available, we asked the community to provide us with suggestions by issuing a 'call for sites' during the summer. Prior to this, in order that our evaluation is seen to be independent, we applied for and were awarded a grant by

DCLG to cover the costs of an external consultant.

The call was successful, and we received 17 site suggestions from 12 submissions. These have been passed to our consultant, who is starting with a desk based appraisal. This will be followed by a visit to Walford in November, so that sites can be looked at on the ground. This will also give us the opportunity to start talking to those involved. This process will continue until we have resolved any outstanding questions, and we will then be able to publish our results for consultation. We would expect this to be ready in December.

Once all this is complete, we will then continue to build the plan on the basis of the vision and objectives.

Message from our Community Support Co-ordinator

Please get involved...

Sarah Hayes

The Community Support Scheme has passed the one-year mark (in April) & last week marked the end of my first full year at the helm.

We are now actively helping 21 people in our local community & have 25 volunteers on our books. We regularly provide more than 40 volunteers hours per month worth of support to our Walford Parish friends & neighbours. This includes shopping trips, assistance with PCs & paperwork, social visits & lifts to appointments.

The Community Support Scheme coffee mornings are held on the second Tuesday of every month, at St Michaels & All Angels Church in Walford. They are proving a popular meeting place for our Service Users & Volunteers alike. Timings are from 1000 till 1200. Please do join us if you are free – all are welcome.



Coffee Morning at Walford Church

Friendships are continuing to prosper between volunteers & service users. One particular faction, affectionately known as the 'Walford Old Boys' has been encouraged & facilitated by one of our volunteers, Ward Cllr Paul Newman. He has brought together three of our male service users from Walford &

Bishopswood – Richard Hale, John Startin & Len Dewis. They regularly meet up together – with and without Paul - & today I joined them on one of their outings at The Prince of Wales in Ross.



The 'Boys' were undertaking the serious business of ordering their food as I joined them.

Richard had ordered a bottle of wine for the table, as he'd recently celebrated his 90th birthday. John is hot on his heels at 90 years young, followed by Len at 84. I asked them what was the principle benefit they'd found from the Scheme. Len explained that how he looked forward to hearing the other men's opinions. To have a group of people to talk to & bounce ideas off was refreshing & the companionship very much appreciated.

Richard added that as well as Len's point, he looked forward to going out to eat a meal he didn't have to prepare for himself.

John chipped in that they missed their wives, & therefore looked forward very much to each other's company. Also on a practical level the support of the scheme in terms of assistance with paperwork, emails & even advice on mobile phones were all invaluable ways of helping their lives run a little smoother whilst also providing a friendly face & ear, helping them all feel less isolated.

The fun-loving foursome have enjoyed some outings in the past few months.

The Water Museum (picture below) was one destination & a tour of Wilton Castle has also taken place. These are in addition to the regular pub lunches the chaps enjoy when they can.



Whilst Paul very often accompanies & collects them (indeed, considers them his mates, he told me today) John, Richard & Len also enjoy activities on their own. Richard & John sometime meet for coffee & all 3 attend Bishopswood Village Hall Community Lunch.

They are all looking forward to an upcoming trip to Oxford in the next month & also a visit to the Steam Preservation Railway in the near future.

Paul told me, ' The Walford Community Support Scheme offers a wealth of opportunities to spend time with local people, all of great character & experience. One particular opportunity I value very highly has been the chance to build friendships with this fantastic group of 'old guys'. We arrange our trips out & by staying in touch I'm always aware of any issues where extra help may be needed, be it with computers, admin or DIY. '

I enjoyed a very pleasant couple of hours in their company enjoying easy chat & lively banter (appropriately 'toned down' in my honour, I was reliably informed!) It was very pleasing to see how three – no four, including Paul – people were benefitting from our humble Scheme. And good to see that our Service also has a fun side to it as well as being able to assist with practicalities.

We are always in need of more volunteers, please do contact me if you're interested in helping. There is no minimum amount of hours expected & it can be very much on an 'as & when' basis.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to remind you that the Scheme is in place for anyone within our Parish needing assistance, regardless of age or personal circumstances. Misfortune, illness & loneliness are not discriminatory – and neither is our Scheme.

Please do also keep an eye on your neighbours & friends within the Parish. If you are concerned about anyone for whatever reason, please call in the strictest of confidence.

Find us on Facebook – Walford Community Support Scheme

Website <http://walfordcommunity.org>

Telephone 07493 171 430

Email community@walford-pc.org.uk



Sarah Hayes

Community Support Coordinator

07493 171 430

Com-sup-coord@walford-pc.org.uk

Your Views on the budget for 2018-19

Cllr Karen Chinn
Finance Chair

A message from Karen Chinn, the Chair of the Finance Committee:

It's that time of year again when we as a Parish Council are thinking about our budget for the new financial year which commences in April 2018. It's a time for us to reflect on priorities to ensure we continue to deliver value for money to our parishioners and to foster a vibrant and prosperous community.

It is at the Finance Committee meeting on the 22nd November (6:30pm at Bishopswood Village Hall) where we will be presenting our proposed budget for the coming financial year and seeking the approval of fellow councillors.

To give you an idea of where our current priorities lie, we will continue to provide basic services covered in the duties of our lengthsman and rights of way provision.

We will also be continuing the work being undertaken to deliver a parish Neighbourhood Development Plan, provide social and welfare support via our Community Support Scheme and continue along our journey to develop the canoe launch as an asset within our parish.



In order that we are taking into account the ideas and priorities of our parishioners, I am inviting you to get in touch with me via email if there is anything you would like us to consider for inclusion in next year's budget, or indeed that we could simply be looking into in more detail over the course of the coming year. I look forward to hearing your views: karen.chinn@Walford-pc.org.uk

Karen Chinn – Finance Committee Chair

Walford Village Hall Children's Play Area

Cllr Dave Berry

Enjoy the new play area at Walford Village Hall which was officially opened in May this year. The play area provides a secure area to give peace of mind to parents whilst their children play safely.

Dave Berry, Local Parish Councillor, who was leading the project said "this has been a great project where the local community has worked together to deliver a valuable asset which hopefully will be enjoyed for generations to come. It has been fantastic to see local companies work together to give back to the community".

Several local companies were involved in different ways:



MF Freeman Group implemented the planning consent and installed the fencing which was donated by Walford Timber and the supply of the play equipment was through contributions from E C Drummond & Son, Cobrey Farms and Walford Parish Council plus other local donors.

Over the past few months, our contractor has not been assigned work in the Parish, but numbers of paths are being kept clear & usable by, I assume, public spirited locals. Thank you!

Please report anything that needs work asap, as I hope to have our contractor improve the signage of our Rights of Way over the next few months, much of which has rotted away on old posts.

Some hedges continue to sprawl over paths, & while nesting birds are to be protected over convenience, land owners are meant to keep RsOW clear to

use, so if you have such a hedge, please ensure it is cut back sufficiently now to allow continued passage through the spring months.

WA50 has now been closed for over 10 years, due to having been undermined by a digger working on Thorny Orchard site. There are stirrings at Hereford Council, at long last, to create an alternative until this path is reopened. Anyone who has been affected by this prolonged closure should make a fuss, please, either directly to HC, or to me for forwarding!

Heather Evans. Parish Paths Officer

The Lengthsman Scheme

Please send any local reports to:
lengthsman.coordinator@walford-pc.org.uk

The term Lengthsman goes back to the time when local councils would use their employees to work in the villages and hamlets in which they lived.

By doing this the local knowledge of the roads could be put to effective use in maintaining the roads and the drainage systems in good order.

Sadly, due to funding cuts and changes in work practises and the move to contracting out the highway maintenance services to utility companies this local knowledge was lost, and regular maintenance of rural roads fell into decline.

Around 2006 the county council formulated a grant scheme whereby participating parish councils received a grant for which they could employ local contractors to carry out highway maintenance in their parishes.

Initially this work involved quite minor work such as grass cutting and clearing leaves etc. but as the county highway

maintenance contractors became less active in the rural areas the Lengthsmen had to upgrade their services and now many small companies carry out work for multiple parishes throughout Herefordshire.

One of these companies, Terry Griffiths Contracts, after previously carrying out specific tasks for the parish in 2016, formally took up the role as Walford Parish Lengthsman in April 2017.

In conjunction with the parish council's Lengthsman liaison officer Cllr Simeon Cole the aim will be to visit all the parish roads and carry out as much necessary maintenance as the annual grant will support.

The Lengthsmen recognise that local knowledge of the drainage systems on your roads is crucial and readily welcome and encourage residents to approach them when they are in the area with information about the drainage systems which may have lost over the years.

The Wye Valley AONB Annual Study Tour took place on September 22nd, bringing together parish, district and county councillors, along with officers, from across the AONB to look at a selection of projects and issues between Ross and Lydbrook.



The day started in Ross-on-Wye, looking at a partnership project between the Town Council and AONB Unit, with funding from Natural England, to better understand and manage the grassland and riverbank along the town's prestigious frontage.

Ross Town Council is keen to manage the popular amenity grassland for both public enjoyment and biodiversity. Following wildlife surveys and advice they have set aside areas of grass as meadows, allowing wild flowers to set seed before mowing and removing cuttings to prevent nutrient enrichment. A number of Helleborine plants had been seen on site and their numbers have increased since the change in management. Work to coppice trees on the river bank, to create greater diversity in their age structure, will be taking place soon, along with work to stabilise the river bank and create better habitat for fish.

Goodrich Castle was the next brief stop, but only as far as the visitor centre, where over coffee English Heritage staff explained their work while encouraging everyone to come back and explore the castle itself another time.

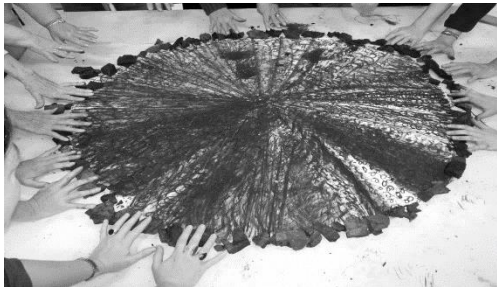
The tour then moved on to Coppett Hill, where members of the Coppett Hill Common Trust led a walk to the top of the hill outlining how the Trust manages the site. Since 1985 the hill has been in the Trust's ownership with over 100 local shareholders and plenty of dedicated volunteers. Management takes place to improve the habitat for butterflies and reptiles as well as public enjoyment, which was recognised through them winning the 2017 AONB Farming Awards.



In the afternoon the tour went to St Matthews Church in Marstow to look back towards Coppett Hill and the National Grid powerlines and towers that are dominant in the view.

National Grid's Landscape Enhancement Initiative (LEI) can provide funding to mitigate against the visual impact of their infrastructure in the AONB. The AONB Unit are currently putting together ideas and addressing the large amounts of detail needed by National Grid for an application. Two trainee ecologists with the AONB Unit have been carrying out wildlife surveys to consider opportunities for habitat improvements around the Garren and Gamber brooks that go under the pylons.

Earlier in the year the AONB Unit and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust were unsuccessful with an 'expression of interest' for LEI funding in Walford. This was for a habitat and access improvement project on and around the Coughton Marsh and Parish Field Wildlife Trust Reserves. The AONB Unit hope to resubmit a project taking on board National Grid's feedback in due course.



The final destination for the day was Lydbrook Bridge. Closed in 2016 due to health and safety issues, the bridge is an important link between Lydbrook village and Welsh Bicknor, as well as being on the route of the Wye Valley Walk. The AONB Unit is currently working with Gloucestershire County Council on options for restoration of the bridge. An overview of the issues and work being undertaken to try and re-open the bridge were given, which prompted much discussion.

The Wye Valley Walk is a popular 136mile



regional walking route between Chepstow, near the mouth of the river Wye, to its source on Plynlimon in mid Wales. The route passes through Walford Parish from Kerne Bridge, along the edge of Leys Hill, Bull's Hill and Howle Hill and over Chase Wood. From this section of the path you can get some wonderful views of the Wye Valley and Walford Lowlands. The Wye Valley AONB Unit lead on promotion of the route on behalf of the Wye Valley Walk Partnership whereas Balfour Beatty are responsible for the Public Rights of Way which the route uses, on behalf of Herefordshire Council.

Also in the parish, Bishopswood Village Hall has been hosting the AONB mindSCAPE project, which provides health and wellbeing opportunities, helping people living with dementia and their carers reconnect with the landscape and art. The Village Hall provided the perfect winter venue for the fortnightly session before it moved to the Orchard Trust in Lydbrook with accessible outdoor activities and animals on site. The project is run in conjunction with ArtSpace Cinderford and is now in its fourth and final year of Big Lottery funding. A conference was recently held celebrating the successes and lessons learned through the 4 year project. The AONB Unit and ArtSpace are looking at options for continuing the project.

The children of Walford Primary returned to school in September full of enthusiasm and looking very smart in their uniforms. We were delighted to welcome thirty new reception children into the Walford family who have settled superbly well with the help of their 'buddies' and the excellent staff team.

Our very talented Year 6 Sports Crew ensured that the whole school had lots of fun and exercise during two exciting Intra-Sports days. These events, organized frequently by the Sports Crew, enable the older children to develop their leadership and coaching skills by teaching sport skills and techniques to younger pupils.



This year, the children celebrated their annual 'Hedgehog Day' raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support. Pupils came into school with 'hedgehog' inspired spiked hair styles, which made everyone smile, and brought in a fantastic array of wonderfully decorated hedgehog cakes, worthy of the Great British Bake Off! During the day, pupils learned how to protect hedgehogs and to preserve their habitats.

The children were also thrilled to welcome a very special visitor to school, Hettie the Hedgehog, a mascot who provided more

information about Ross-on-Wye, the land of hedgehogs.

The aim of this celebration is to educate and share the cultural aspects of hedgehogs, as an ancient icon and symbol of Ross-on-Wye. The British wild mammal and its link to Ross seems to relate back 1500 years when the Celts invaded Ross and called the area 'Ergyng' which meant, 'Land of the Hedgehog.' This was changed in Saxon times to 'Arkenfield' and later again to 'Archenfield.'

During the month of October, the children took part in the NSPCC 'Speak Out, Stay Safe Workshops which culminated in an exciting Bounce-a-thon in order to raise money. In a special 'NSPCC Thank You Assembly' we were thrilled to learn that we had raised an impressive £1,737.45 for this very worthy cause.

This week, our wonderful PTFA have been busy working with every class in the school, helping children to bake tasty treats, make beautiful gifts and prepare impressive hampers for our Harvest Festival and Market. Once again, this fantastic team effort has been a huge success and we are very pleased to have donated food to the Ross Community Larder and to have raised £295.75 for the schools we support in Uganda.

Another action-packed term at Wonderful Walford Primary School. The children have all worked incredibly hard and most certainly deserved their half term break! Hope you had a happy holiday everyone!

Contact details: Tel: 01989 562209

Email: admin@walford.hereford.sch.uk

Dog Fouling on Parish Footpaths – PLEASE STOP IT!!

Unfortunately more reports are coming in of dog faeces being left behind by irresponsible owners on our footpaths in this lovely AONB.

Thanks to dog owners who pick up what their pets have left behind, but some are still not doing the decent thing... So if you spot anyone, take a photo of them and we'll post it on our Facebook page.

It is worth reminding you AGAIN that our footpaths are used by parish residents and visitors alike, who all deserve to be able to walk our rights of way without having to dodge piles of dog faeces or bags of poo hanging from trees. If you own a dog, you also own it's poo, so take it away with you, **PLEASE**.

Most dog owners are responsible, respect their environment and clean up after their pets, but the Parish Council appeals to those who don't, to **please collect and dispose of your dog's faeces appropriately**. We all want to preserve the natural beauty of this lovely AONB – **TAKE A BAG WITH YOU AND BIN IT!**



Bishopswood Village Hall

Cathie Hatherall

The past couple of months have been a busy time for Bishopswood Village Hall. The end of August Bank Holiday activities proved to be popular as always, with the Sunday afternoon Songs of Praise being well attended.

The Bank Holiday Monday family fun day and duck race were the usual success, with the added bonus of sunshine this year!!! The evening entertainment, BGT (Bishopswood's Got Talent), was a huge success, with over 80 people attending and, we believe, enjoying both the barbeque and wide range of talents on show.

September saw another very successful Community Sunday Lunch, where people enjoyed a 2 course lunch, with those fabulous home made puddings.

In October, linking in with National Curry Week, the Hall put on a very successful Curry Evening. This was a very well attended event with all those that came

along being full of praise for the chef's wonderful curries and the evening as a whole.

Looking forward, the Christmas Community Lunch will be held on Sunday December 17th, booking for this is ESSENTIAL, places are filling up fast, so if you haven't already done so please phone Monica on 01594 860303 to book (we may have to turn people away if not booked as for the past 2 years we have been booked to full capacity).



Fly tipping is an illegal activity. Anyone caught fly tipping can be given a maximum penalty of £50,000 fine and/or 5 years imprisonment. The removal and disposal of fly tips is the responsibility of the person who owns the land and Herefordshire Council can give advice on how best to dispose of fly tips. If a fly tip is seen the following action should take place:

If you spot someone fly-tipping

Make a note of any vehicle used, including model, colour and registration number. If it is safe to do so without being seen, take a photograph or video of the activity

Note the fly tippers' clothes, and distinguishing features. If you can hear the fly tippers, take note of anything which was said along with the speakers' accents

Make a note of what they dumped, the location, weather conditions and how far away you were at the time.

Use Herefordshire Council's online form to report it:

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-fly-tipping>

If you see a fly tip and have not seen the person who has put it there

Use Herefordshire Council's online form to report it:

<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-fly-tipping>

Fly tipped waste must be collected and disposed of in accordance with the law

therefore it is always best to report fly tips to the council so that they can advise accordingly on the correct disposal of the waste. Please note that Herefordshire Council are only responsible for the clearance of waste from public land.

Anyone carrying waste which does not belong to them must be a registered waste carrier and hold a licence to do this. They must also have a legal arrangement in place to dispose of the waste they have collected which in most cases will have to be paid for as commercial waste.

Herefordshire Council Household Recycling Centres can not be used by lengthsman or parish councils to dispose of any waste, these facilities are for householders only to dispose of waste generated by them at their own domestic premises. If they have any waste for disposal, Lengthsman and parish councils should contact BBLP to ensure the correct method of disposal.

Local litter picks – what should happen with the waste?

BBLP can arrange to collect your litter, so it doesn't go into household bins.

To get a litter pick pack or arrange a collection of litter picked waste, call 01432 261800.

All litter and fly tips should be reported to BBLP to ensure that the correct duty of care is followed for the collection and disposal of this waste.

Walford Village Hall – Appeal for Committee members

Virginia Morgan

WALFORD VILLAGE HALL is a thriving Hall with a lively Pre- School Play Group open every term-time weekday and several other Groups meet there regularly. There is a small Management Committee but a new Treasurer is urgently needed as the current excellent Treasurer, Dave Berry,

will be standing down at the AGM which will be held on 14th November. A Bookings Secretary is also needed. **If anyone is willing to join us in either of these roles, or as a Committee Member, please contact the WVH Secretary, Virginia Morgan, by email: cavmorgan@btinternet.com**

Walford Pre-School Playgroup is a registered charity base at **Walford Village Hall**. We provide childcare for families in the area with children aged between 2 and 5 years old. Our main priority is to provide an excellent early years education that enables our children to learn and explore through play, in a friendly and safe environment.

Each day our children are presented with an exciting array of activities from baking, biking, gardening, painting, a role play setting, writing table and many more besides; while our **highly qualified staff** oversee all aspects of the children's development.

During term time we offer: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Fridays 9am till 3pm and Thursdays 9am till 12:30pm.

Please note the Wednesday afternoon session is for "Rising 5" children and is targeted at the older children in preparation for school.

On Sunday 26th November 2017 we are organising the third Howling Bull race (starting at 11am). The race is 6 miles around Howle Hill and Bulls Hill and finished back at the Village Hall. For any further information please view www.howlingbull.net

If you would like to get in touch please contact our Play Leader, Sara Jones, on 01989 566979 or during sessions on 07765 005871. Or via our website www.walfordpreschoolplaygroup.co.uk or find us on Facebook WALFORD PRE-SCHOOL.

Howling Bull Community Run

Sunday 26th November

The Howling Bull charity 'off road' running race will be coming along the footpath by your property on Sunday 26th November. All the proceeds will be going towards funding the Walford Pre-School Playgroup.

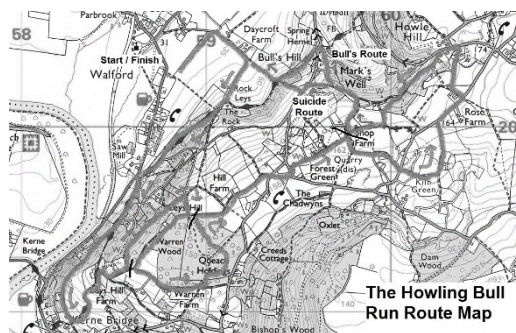
The run starts at Walford Village Hall at around 11am; it climbs up Bulls Hill along the Wye Valley Walk and then loops around the woodland footpaths on Leys Hill and Howle Hill.

The course is about 6 miles; I expect the faster runners to take under 1 hour and the slower runners no longer than 2 hours – All welcome!

The course will be set out on Saturday 25th Nov; there will be arrow signs and barrier tape showing the way on. All of this will be tidied away by Sunday afternoon.

Below is a course map, so that you can see where the route is going. You can also find more information out at: www.howlingbull.net

If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. If not, it would be great to see you cheering the runners on!



Dan Sandford 01989 566390
howlingbullrun@gmail.com

SUNDAY SERVICES SCHEDULE:

1st Sunday 11.15am Sunday Praise at
Bishopswood Village Hall
following 'Big Breakfast *see notes below*
2nd 9.30am Holy Communion
3rd No Service
4th 11am Holy Communion
5th Services vary around the Wye
Reaches benefice - see Border News
For information contact Church Wardens

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Sunday 12th November: REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE

Meet at the War Memorial at 10.45 -
service continues in Church at 11.05
Tea and Coffee served after the service.
All welcome.

Sunday 3rd December: CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AND CAROL SERVICE

The church will be open from 10am for all
to admire the wonderful window
decorations adorned with trees and all
things Christmas!!

See local adverts nearer the date for
further details.

Rounding off the day at 3pm, Berry Hill
Brass Band will lead us joyfully into
our Carol Service and
the beginning of Christmas Celebrations in
Bishopswood.

'BREAKFAST IN BISHOPSWOOD'

Served 9.30 - 10.45 am at
Bishopswood Village Hall

Sundays:

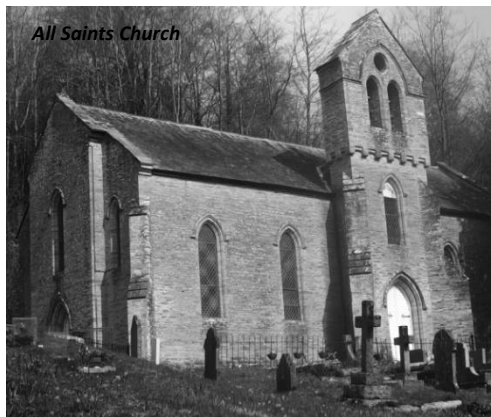
5th Nov

3rd Dec

7th Jan

4th Feb

4th March



Full English breakfast *plus* cereals, fruit
juice, toast pancakes & maple syrup! Tea
and Coffee, oh, and a beautiful view of the
riverside whilst you eat - you can't beat
that!

All this for £5.50 (£3 under 12's)

****Please note: No Sunday Praise Service
after the breakfast on 3rd December due
to Carol Service in Church.**

A warm welcome awaits anyone wishing to
join us at any of our events and services.

***Please note that it is sometimes necessary
to cancel a breakfast due to private
bookings at the hall – please phone the
wardens below to check***

Monica, Carol and Bishopswood PCC wish
to thank everyone for their generosity,
help and kind support of events
throughout 2017 and wish you a healthy,
prosperous and peaceful 2017.

Church Wardens:

Monica Edmunds 01594 860303

Carol Pimblett 01989 565533

We have welcomed our new vicar Rev. Chris Blanchard and his wife Sarah to St Michael's and All Angels' and they have been settling in over the last few months. Chris has certainly been busy getting to grips with the Walford ways attending many community events, visiting Walford school on a regular basis and integrating seamlessly into our parish.

On October 1st we enjoyed a wonderful candlelit sung evensong service to celebrate our patronal festival of Michaelmas, welcoming the choir from St Mary's church in Ross to make the evening a truly magical experience, followed by a gathering over wine and nibbles in our beautifully refurbished social area.

Harvest Festival has been a highlight of the season, seeing our church beautifully decorated with all local seasonal goods and flowers. The service saw us give thanks to our local farming community and others who work hard to make life in Walford more enjoyable.

We are about to embark on a very busy period with Remembrance and Christmas; the service highlights are listed below. Annually we come together for a morning before Remembrance to give the driveway and churchyard a little attention, so please come & join us on Sat 4th Nov 10am-12pm.

There are also opportunities coming up to undertake confirmation so if you are at all interested in participating then please contact the benefice office administrator@rawchurch.org.uk.

Finally a huge thank you to all the parishioners who have contributed to our Gift Day appeal, we are extremely grateful for all your support:

Find us at Facebook @walfordchurch or <https://rawchurch.org.uk/st-michael-all-angels-walford/>



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Churchyard tidy-up: 4th Nov 10am-12noon

Remembrance service: 12th Nov 10:50am

Christingle family service: 10th Dec 9:30am

Christmas Carol service 17th Dec 3:30pm

Christmas Nativity service: 24th Dec 4pm

Midnight Mass: 24th Dec 11:30pm

Christmas Day service: 25th Dec 9:30am

REGULAR SERVICE SCHEDULE:

1st Sunday of the month: 9:30am Morning Prayer

2nd Sunday of the month: 9:30am Family Service with refreshments after

3rd Sunday of the month: 9:30am Parish Communion

4th Sunday of the month: 11:15am Family Service. Arrive from 10.45am for refreshments before the service.

REGULAR EVENTS:

Our monthly Paddle and Praise, kindly hosted by Wendy Alston, is an ever-growing and very popular event. The usual format is for parents and kids to have a swim and a sing in Wendy's pool followed by snacks, a bible story and a craft activity. Please contact Wendy Alston for more details about upcoming Paddle and Praise activities (wendy_alston@btinternet.com). Coffee on a Tuesday (COAT) is held monthly and welcomes everyone in the community. Please contact Revd. Chris Blanchard via the office for more details administrator@rawchurch.org.uk

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DO YOU WANT TO ADVERTISE?

**This newsletter goes
out to 650 households
in Walford Parish**

It is published approximately every
4 months, depending on how much
information we have to share

If you have a business or service
you wish to promote, please
contact the Parish Clerk

Tel: 01989 562476

E mail: clerk@walford-pc.org.uk

The Parish Council reserves the right to
assess the suitability of advertisements

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Email: feetfirst642@gmail.com

Herefordshire Walking Festival 2018

Planning is already underway for the **2018 Herefordshire Walking Festival** which runs from **16th to 24th June, 2018**. Now in its 17th year, the Walking Festival highlights all aspects of the county—landscape, architecture, heritage, art, food and farming, village and market town.

This year we would like to give parishes an opportunity to show off their villages, local paths and sites of interest to people who come from all over the country and abroad to enjoy the beautiful scenery and unique villages of Herefordshire and to introduce Herefordshire residents to more of their own beautiful county. We are looking for Parish Path officers to either put together and lead walks around their local area or to identify local people in the parish who would be interested in leading a walk.

The walks can be anywhere from 1 to 15 miles and would ideally have a theme such as local history, food, flora, fauna, churches, etc. All walks leaders will require the services of a fellow helper who can act as a backmarker and either hold a current first aid/heart start certificate or attend our free Heart Start training session.

This is an opportunity to show visitors why Herefordshire is regarded as one of the beautiful counties in England and the key role local parishes have in preserving its unique charm.

Have a look at last year's programme on www.walkingfestival.com and email Lisa Richardson on:

herefordshire.walking@yahoo.com

Election requested in Walford Parish

At the last Parish Council meeting a vacancy was declared and as required by law, was advertised within the Parish for 14 days. This time period allows for parish residents to submit a request for a formal election to Herefordshire Council, should they wish one to be held.

If an election is not requested within 14 days, the Parish Council may, by a proper public selection process, co-opt a new member to sit as a Parish Councillor until the next formal 4 yearly elections are held in May 2019.

This process is perfectly lawful and transparent and it is most often the way in

which a vacancy is filled as there is no cost.

However, The Electoral Services Office has advised the Parish Council that because at least 10 Parish residents have requested an election, if more than one candidate is successfully nominated, one will be held on 11th January 2018 and will incur the usual costs. **To illustrate what the election will cost the Parish, the figures from 2012 were:** Election, including the issue and posting of polling cards: **£2,526.41p**. The figure will be higher for this coming election, due to increased postage and printing costs.

When the budget is set for 2018-19 this cost will have to be considered.

Parish Council meetings schedule 2017 & 2018

6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Full Council	22/11/17	Bishopswood Village Hall
7.30pm Full Council	10/01/18	Walford Village Hall
6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Full Council	21/02/18	Bishopswood Village Hall
6.30pm Annual Parish Meeting 7.30pm Full Council	04/04/18	Walford Village Hall
6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Annual Council Meeting	16/05/18	Bishopswood Village Hall
6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Full Council	27/06/18	Walford Village Hall
6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Full Council	29/08/18	Bishopswood Village Hall
7.30pm Full Council	10/10/18	Walford Village Hall
6.30pm Finance Committee 7.30pm Full Council	21/11/18	Bishopswood Village Hall
No meeting in December		

Clerk: Rose Cottage, Coughton Ross on Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5SF.

Tel: 01989 562476 **E mail:** clerk@walford-pc.org.uk