



Report for the Area Board, Thursday 10th October 2019, from Deborah Urch, Town Clerk.

The council has been very busy throughout the summer engaging with the community through a number of activities.



POPCAN Pop up event – bringing the community from Penleigh and Oldfield Park area together for a fun day. This event held in July was in partnership with Sovereign Housing and Wiltshire Council. We were grateful to our band of volunteers who were invaluable on the day, setting up gazebos and carrying out consultations. There were several activities taking place such as SPOV (poetry workshops), dodgeball, skate park

challenge and wonky Olympics. There were inflatables for the children and several communities led stalls e.g. Churches Together & The Neighbourhood Plan. This was so successful the council and its partners are planning similar events in the future.

Historically, Penleigh Park has seen its fair share of antisocial behaviour, litter and a lack of financial input. Over the past two years, working with our partners we have been engaging with and involving the community in several different ways and things have improved enormously. The success of Dodgeball at the pop up event led to additional sessions being held at the park during the summer. The Skate park has had a revamp, painted by local children who attended a “graffiti” workshop. More recently several of our volunteers were giving the play equipment a much-needed refresh (thanks to our sponsors idVerde and Novas), all in time for the grand opening of the newly resurfaced path through Penleigh. This replaced an unsafe and wobbly path and now all members of the community can use it including those with pushchairs & mobility scooters. This could not have been achieved without the hard work of our Councillors, the Area Board, Sovereign and Valletta Surfacing.



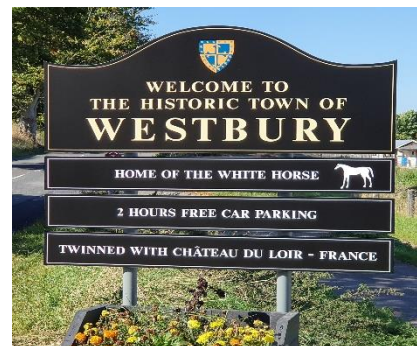
In Grassacres park we held a number Inflatable Dayz, unfortunately, the weather prevented us holding as many as we would have liked, but we hope to hold more next year. But these are ever popular and a great opportunity for the kids to let off some steam.

Over the summer of 2019 we have seen an increase in the antisocial behaviour in Grassacres. This has been impacting on the lives of residents. Working with Wiltshire Council streetscene team, the police, Cllrs and staff, we have introduced a few measures to improve the situation. Removing a bench that was used as a meeting point, reducing the height of hedging to increase visibility and access to CCTV. Through Westbury Churches Together we hope to set up a local group willing to stroll through the park and engage with young children.

The council has been working on initiatives to improve the look and feel of the town and more importantly take steps to help improve the environment

The listed phone box in the Market Place is about to receive a makeover. It will be turned into a mini art gallery promoting the work of local artists. In support of this the council held mosaic workshops for children during the summer break. We were delighted with the results that will be on display in the phone box. In fact, these were so well attended we are thinking about holding creative art events during school holidays.

New “Welcome to Westbury” signs have been installed across Westbury. This is in conjunction with a new town map. The map will be available from November and can be obtained from the Heritage Centre, Library and town council offices.



The council is working hard to be plastic free and we are using compostable goods to replace stationery items, drinking cups



and waste bags. We recycle cardboard, paper waste, bottles and cans. Up-cycling & recycling workshops are being held to encourage the public not to throw away items of clothing and buy new but to create something individual with what they already have in their wardrobe. In August we took delivery of an electric van, it is incredibly efficient and looks good too! To further encourage sustainable transport, we have recently installed bike racks at The Laverton.

The councillors are organising quarterly litter picks in the town. Although we have many loyal volunteers, more would be welcome. We have just developed a guidance pack for the coordinator with all the information needed to carry out a safe and successful litter pick. This is currently in draft format waiting for council sign off.

The Community Fridge has been up and running for seven months and is becoming more popular by the day. The aim of the fridge is ultimately to reduce waste by giving away food that is about to reach its sell by date. To date the scheme has saved approx. 2 tonnes of food from being thrown

away. Everyone is welcome to take food from the community fridge and do their bit. The fridge is kept in Crosspoint in the Market Place. We are grateful to the support received from Crosspoint, the volunteers and supermarkets.

The Town Council is developing its Strategic Aims

For the last year the council has been working on its Business Action Plan. This document supports the Town Strategy and details how the council, its staff and partners will achieve the vision, aims and objectives of the council. We are putting this at the heart of everything we do, including setting staff performance targets and council initiatives around the aims of the plan. Policies are being developed or reviewed to ensure they all conform with legislation and the aims of the Business Action Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan remains on schedule to be completed in 2021. Much consultation has taken place, locality grants applied for and awarded. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have approved a business survey to be sent to all businesses in Westbury. Quotes are being sought to complete a character assessment of the town. And the steering Group have approved the press release for a call for sites.



In September the council appointed a new full time Event Manager, Ryan Child. Ryan will help to bring the councils plans for smaller, frequent and local events distributed across Westbury to fruition. In his previous role Ryan delivered a series of events based on mental health and community engagement, nationwide. This puts Ryan in a unique position to transfer these skills to the council events for the benefit of the Westbury Community. Ryan will also be leading on increasing our links with charities & organisations, schools and businesses in Westbury. This will be in addition to the community grant scheme.

The council is very keen to engage with the young people of Westbury and hear their views. The council agreed to develop a platform for this to take place, possibly through a Youth Council. We did not get off to a great start, but this idea has been rekindled and we are all motivated to make it happen. The council is in the process of contacting schools for their opinion about how best to achieve this.

The council's new website & town calendar has been running for several months and we are receiving great feedback about the way it looks and how easy it is to navigate. The creation of a town calendar allows for local "trusted" groups to add their own events. We are hoping this can be the go-to place for everything happening in Westbury.

The council is moving closer to using the "cloud" for all its IT storage. This will provide councillors and the public with better access to information. A new IT provider (Netitude) is helping to enable this while making our systems safe and secure. We are working towards obtaining our Cyber Essentials certificate.

In light of well attended public meetings (e.g. Gasification Plant & Bath Clean Air) the council recently held a public meeting to allow the public and businesses to ask questions of Wiltshire Council and Atkins about the planned A350 Roadworks and the impact this might have. The meeting highlighted several concerns that were taken on board by the principal authority.

The Town Council has approved the setting up of a new committee / programme board to consider the transfer of services and assets from Wiltshire Council. Discussions with Wiltshire are due to

commence in January 2020 and there will be much work to do, including awareness and consultation events with the public.

There is much happening here in Westbury and if you would like to know a little more about one of the topics discussed in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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