

POPCAN UPDATE REPORT FOR WESTBURY AREA BOARD MEETING FEBRUARY 2021

As the Covid 19 Pandemic is still causing all our lives to be somewhat different to what we knew, but has become something of the norm right now, it continues to be a very difficult time for many and worrying times for us all. We have been unable to move forward with much pace right now and it feels like life is on hold BUT POPCAN is still here, we are trying to look forward to the better times ahead.

While in lockdown, POPCAN members have been forging new relationships, albeit by virtual meetings but nevertheless, still important connections to make to help serve the community of Westbury.

One of these connections is a positive approach from Selwood Housing who have expressed an interest in working alongside POPCAN and the residents of Penleigh and Oldfield Park. We look forward to developing new ideas with them.

C2 Communities are still supporting us via ZOOM chats and discussions regarding all that is community.

Sheila Kimmins has kindly taken up our request to join POPCAN as our Chair. We felt we needed some extra help and support with POPCAN after Scott Jacobs-Lange from Sovereign left for pastures new.

We still hope to organise our POP- IN sessions on the first Tuesday of each month for anyone to call in at the WCP to have a chat a cuppa and get anything off their chest. Richard Hatt, head teacher of Westbury Junior School has kindly offered us a "chest" which we hope people could drop in their worries, moans or concerns in hope by 'getting it off your chest will help people to talk and get involved. While the restrictions continue, WCP remains closed for now but we are all behind the project when we can press the restart button.

Samantha Shore, POPCAN VICE Chair and also a qualified Youth Worker has been an instigator of working alongside 4Youth to get funding for some detached Youth Work for Westbury. Thanks to WTC, WC and Community First, funding has been secured for Westbury. 4Youth (South-west), formerly Young Melksham, has been set up for his and Sam is now employed as a Detached Youth Worker alongside Carolyn May. Exciting times to start engaging with the youth of Westbury. This project went live on 21.01.21.

We still have a large stock of used, still with wear school uniforms which is available at no cost, to anyone who would like to support our recycling initiative. Our request for donations of school uniforms was outstanding and we thank each and every one who took the time to help us. So, we do plan to hold another event, coinciding with the Easter holidays- if present circumstances change.

We have come to the conclusion that our annual Pop-up fun day will not be taking place this year but hope that if our situation improves, we could consider a much smaller event- and have a small bouncy castle set up- this is an idea at the moment.

Looking further ahead, we are still very keen to install a container at Penleigh Recreational Park which would serve as a storage unit and facilities that can be used in the delivery of the detached youth work in the area. And or for any sporting events within the park. This was the first item of discussion when POPCAN was formed, and because we cannot make any arrangements for an event this year, we have decided to press forward with our planning, funding and insulation of a storage container for the local community. We are going to have sub-committee meetings so we can concentrate on this project. If anybody would like to get involved please get in touch with popcanwestbury@gmail.com

It is also great to see that WTC have purchased a new piece of play equipment for Penleigh Recreational Park. Team10 alongside POPCAN held a listening and consultation event to ask what the users of the park would like to see in the park, after 250 returned questionnaires, WTC installed an item of multi-play equipment, consisting of many of the aspects requested through the consultation. So, we would like to say a big THANK YOU to WTC.

On behalf of POPCAN & Partners we wish everyone a safe Happier and Healthier New Year. Keep Safe everyone. Many thanks to all the volunteers of Westbury who have worked tirelessly through these difficult times to help their local community.