

2022 - a good year for Gretton

Britain has a cost of living crisis so how can we justify increasing the Parish Council precept (the money we charge you)? Well our 5% increase is less than the predicted rate of inflation and actually translates into very little money. The increased payment on the average band D house is only £1.99 a year and on a band G is just £3.31 per annum.

In an era when local taxes are going up as local services have declined, Gretton Parish Council aims to increase value for money at Parish level by an ambitious programme of physical and social improvements to the village and village life. This is based on your feedback through the village survey and directly to Councillors.

It will be funded not only by your contribution but also available grants and match funding, and working with other village organisations and volunteers to get things done. This builds on our existing investments to deter traffic speeding and improve the village physical and social environment. Our Budget information is on the website at www.grettonpc.weebly.com

Have a look at the programme for next year and let us know what you think. Why not come along to our AGM which will be held on 11 May at 7.00pm in the Village Hall and join the public participation session.

John Hurley (Chair GPC)

Village improvements in 2022/23

Work programme	Project	Partner / Support
Improving the village appearance	Planting and sowing plan - maintain greening plan - war memorial planting - rewinding of churyard and verges Replacement litter bin for bus stop Refurbishment and use of phone box Monitor Horse Chestnut for maintenance Village tidy up Maintain bus shelter Monitor dog waste nuisance	Volunteers and the Rewilding Group County Highways Volunteers / Tewkesbury BC / UBICO Volunteers
Highway safety	Gates at the Alderton Approach Speedwatch radar gun - continue monitoring Pavement at Bugatti - imminent Monitor Parking	Highways match funding Liaison Road Safety Partnership Legal agreement by GCC with the developer
Village Hall / Playing Field improvements	Revitalisation of Playing Field and equipment Continue Paying off Village Hall loan	Led by the GVA S106 money from Spitfire houses.
Building a vibrant and engaged community	Environmental improvements for the Jubilee - new Jubilee noticeboard on the green - refurbishment of millenium bench - village information materials Jubilee and other village events Improvements to the Web Site, Village Communications and village welcome pack.	Includes £1000 grant funding Includes grant funding
Flood prevention / alleviation	Work with GCC to monitor flood risk and continue improvements	GCC Flood section
Planning	Produce Village Plan Information on GPC role in the planning system and our criteria for commenting.	Volunteers Publish in the newsletter and on the website



Greening plan - see p 3



Footpath - at last? see p 2



Flood alleviation - see p 3

Parish Council News

Since the last issue, we have continued working away to get improvements to the village environment and amenities in place. Often this involves working in partnership with the Borough and County Councils. Sometimes this is to catch up on the many issues that ground to a halt during the various Covid lockdowns but we are now moving forward with new initiatives, although some of these will have a longer timescale.

The Horse Chestnut

A couple of years ago, when the tree dropped a large branch damaging the gates and walls of two neighbouring houses, the County Council denied liability. As a result the Parish Council commissioned independent expert advice from a tree surgeon which recommended some remedial action.



The County Council Highways Department has now claimed responsibility and sent their own contractor to look at the tree. Their conclusion was that no work needed to be done.

While we are pleased that this beautiful tree will remain as it is, we are concerned about the potential danger or damage a further dropped branch could cause to nearby properties.

Normally fallen trees are deemed to be "acts of god", but on behalf of neighbours we have reminded the Highways department that they have been informed of the potential danger. This may establish their liability for it in the event of an accident or further damage. In response they have agreed to regularly inspect the tree.

Intensive coordinated lobbying was undertaken at the turn of the year by the Parish Council, the School and Bugatti site residents. This resulted in action at last on this long standing danger to school children and pedestrians. We were helped in resolving this by County Councillor David Gray.

County Highways eventually found the overlooked application for a pavement and dropped kerb, which was a condition of planning consent. After some redesign work Highways have signed it off.

A Bugatti Pavement soon



The work is now in the process of legal agreement between the County Council and the developer. We hope that this long drawn out issue will soon come to a conclusion and that a start on the work will be made fairly shortly.

Speedwatch - combating excessive speeds in Gretton

Speeding traffic is our real concern to our community. Gretton is increasingly a cut through for traffic and our narrow footpaths, parked cars and obscured vision all increase the risk of an accident.

To address this a Community Speedwatch was recently sponsored by the Parish Council and undertaken by a group of residents. Community Speedwatch is supported by the Police and all data gathered is sent to the Police who may be in contact with any vehicles travelling at excess speed.

Over the two-week monitoring period in February the team observed that 40% of vehicles were exceeding the speed limit and 10% of vehicles were exceeding 35 mph. At points 30% of traffic was exceeding 35 mph and speeds of up to 58 mph were seen.

The results confirm that we have a problem. At 30 mph it takes 6 car lengths to stop and at 40 mph it takes 9 car lengths to stop. Think about this in our village and it illustrates the problem if a child was to step off the pavement.

The team found that the

speed indicator as you enter the village works well. However far too many people let their speed creep up as they drive through the village.



Based on the Speedwatch findings a number of actions are in hand:

- The Police Camera Enforcement Team will now visit the village. Based on their first visit a number of "intentions to prosecute" have been issued.
- The Community Speedwatch will continue with data being shared with the Police.
- Village signage and additional speed prompts are being investigated.

The Parish Council have now purchased a radar gun. The Speedwatch team need more volunteers to work this so please get involved to help make our community a safer place. Contact Mark Oliver

mark@grettonpc-glos.org.uk

Parish Council News

The Parish Council encourages voluntary engagement by residents with working groups having been formed for traffic, flooding, neighbourhood planning, community development and greening. Here John Hurley feeds back from the group tasked with looking at flooding and Dick Green reports on the work of the greening group.

Flood alleviation work moves slowly forward

After the Christmas 2020 flooding in Gretton and Gretton Fields the Parish Council compiled a report on the events which it submitted to Tewkesbury Borough and the County Councils in January 2021.

This resulted in a meeting with the County Council flood prevention section and other authorities. A programme of work has been carried out at the Winchcombe end of the village principally to stop flood waters coming from Gypsy Lane onto the road and into the village.

Other scheduled work includes improvements to road drainage around the Royal Oak. Street cleaning and drain clearance by UBICO has been put on a more regular basis helping storm drains to cope more effectively. A relief drain has been installed by Severn Trent to control Spring water flowing into Close Field.

This does little to deal with the flow of water at the Alderton end of the village which threatens houses on the Gotherington Road and contributes to the major problem in Gretton Fields.

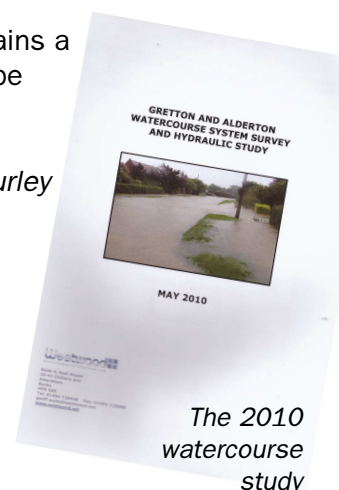
The County Council have pointed out that flood alleviation in Gretton Fields would currently be uneconomic. We are accordingly opposing all development there until a major solution has been found to improving drainage and dealing with flood water.

We are now working with Alderton PC to look at the whole problem in Gretton Fields and Alderton Fields. We have access to a flooding and drainage study commissioned by the two Parish Councils after the 2007 floods. The findings of this were accepted by the authorities but never implemented. We will press forward with these recommendations again.

We will be liaising with local landowners to discuss options for flood control. These include slowing the rate of run off in hillside watercourses, by creating leaky dams, which might help problems at the bottom of Gupshill Lane and the creation of ponds to collect flood water which *might* attract subsidy under the new government agricultural subsidy arrangements.

There remains a lot still to be achieved.

John Hurley



The 2010 watercourse study

Greening up Gretton

The Parish Council are working with the Winchcombe Rewilding Group (WRG), the Church and volunteers to introduce amenity and wildlife planting in key areas of the village.

The WRG have sown wildflower seeds behind the church, on the green triangle at the Gotherington Lane junction and on the village green behind the notice board. Further sowing will happen this autumn on the bank at Barn Close and on the playing field.

Some shrubs have been planted by the bridge to tidy it up, and a low hedge has been planted at the entrance to Barn Close in an attempt to dissuade drivers from mounting the curb.



Christine Vickery and her team have tidied up the War Memorial and planted some additional bedding plants, and are planning additional planting for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Also as part of the Jubilee celebrations oak trees, donated to the village by the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire, are being planted in the village. (See the full report on p 5)

Other areas of planting which are being considered include the entrances to the village by the

gates. If you wish to nominate an area which would benefit from improvement please

contact dick@grettonpc-glos.org.uk

Dick Green

Parish Council Community News

The Parish Council is working with the GVA, School, Church, and other village organisations and individuals to reinvigorate the once very active social life in the village.



Bringing our community together

Apple Rock

In the last newsletter we spoke about the desire to do more to “bring our community together.” Our first initiative was to expand the traditional Apple Rock planned for 9th October to provide entertainment for the whole community. At that time, we were simply hoping for a reasonable turnout.

On the day we were blessed with unseasonably pleasant weather and this together with great support from the community and school helped make the day a tremendous success. We had over 300 people who enjoyed an afternoon and evening of activities, music, food, and drink.

Our aim was to break even but the exceptional turnout coupled with some very generous donations of support meant that we made a profit of around £1600. These funds enabled us to allocate £500 to both the School and Gretton Village Association and £600 to future community activities.

Thanks to everyone who made the day an enormous success.

Mark Oliver



Photographs of Apple Rock Alix Scott

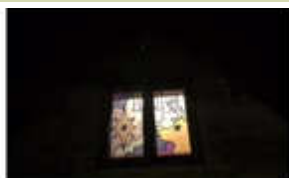
Advent Windows

The generous community spirit was once more on show for the annual advent window display. This year places were again oversubscribed as 24 households put on a creative display of advent windows leading up to Christmas.

The traditional closing festivities went ahead successfully on Christmas Eve despite the wet weather! A big thank you to Ange Hardie for once again organising the event and to Andrew and Laura Steward for their hospitality.

We need your help

Volunteering is the lifeblood of Community. The Parish Council and partners have an ambitious programme but we need your help to ensure we deliver on the village priorities. If you would like to get involved contact any councillor.



Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

On 6th February, this year Her Majesty the Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms, and the Commonwealth. To celebrate this unprecedented anniversary, events and initiatives will take place throughout the year, culminating in a four-day UK bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June.

To mark this important occasion the village is planning a series of activities and events as follows:



Jubilee Oak Trees

Two young oak trees have been donated to us by the Honourable Company of Gloucestershire as part of the Queen's Green Canopy scheme.

On the 12th of February the first tree was planted to mark the start of our Jubilee Year celebrations. Members of the community were joined by Professor Chris Gaskell, Warden of the Honourable Company, who planted the tree.



The second tree is planned to be planted by Gretton Village Association in the playing field as part of the celebrations.

Gretton Goes Platinum

On Saturday 4th June, the "Gretton Goes Platinum" event will take place. Together with celebrating the Jubilee the event will recognise local businesses and enable the full community to come together once again. We have benefited from a Gloucestershire County Council grant to help stage the event.

The day will start with the children parading from the school and then a whole village picnic will be held where everyone is encouraged to bring their own food. A bar and tea tent will be available, activities for both children and adults are being planned together with a bouncy castle. Later in the day a BBQ will be held, and a band will play us into the evening.

New Noticeboard

To mark the Jubilee, we intend to erect a new village noticeboard as the existing one is getting tired. The new board will commemorate the jubilee and have more space for local information, official notices, and local postings.

One initiative is to document local walks together with points of interest and include them on the board. If anyone has an interest in local history and would like to get involved, please get in touch.

Decorations, Flower Festival & Church Service

Over the 2nd – 5th June Jubilee Holiday weekend we will be decorating the village. Residents are encouraged to get involved and decorate their houses and gardens in a patriotic theme.

The Church will be hosting a flower festival 2nd – 5th June and on Sunday 5th June a commemorative church service will take place followed by a Pimms reception.

Community Pages

News from Christ Church

The church is now opened automatically at 9am and locked at 4pm.

SERVICES

Winchcombe Parish is in the process of appointing a new Priest-in-Charge; during this interregnum two services a month will continue at Christ Church, at 10am, as follows:

2nd Sunday – Holy Communion

4th Sunday – Morning Worship
Every Thursday at 9.30am – Morning Prayer (a short, informal service) ALL WELCOME!

PLATINUM JUBILEE

The Church will be central to the Jubilee celebrations. Details of the events are given elsewhere in the newsletter on p5.



RE-WILDING PROJECT

With the help of a number of villagers, a wildflower meadow was sown in the churchyard last Autumn – hundreds of bulbs and 50 native hedgerow trees and shrubs were planted, contributing to a village project to help encourage insects and wildlife. The school pupils of Forest School

have been enjoying working in the churchyard, and have created a Bug Hotel that still needs a roof!

Swifts are endangered birds, so with the help of the Winchcombe Swift Support Group, four nesting boxes have been installed on the north wall of the church, ready for the swifts migrating here this spring.

URGENT NEED

Due to illness our regular organist, Chris Guy, is no longer able to play for us. There is an electronic piano in the church - are you a pianist who could help us out? If so, please contact Sue Fleck, Deputy Church Warden, 604421 or 07976 295710.

Rogation day walk Sunday 22nd May 2022

Rogation Sunday was traditionally the day when parishioners "beat the bounds" by walking the entire Parish boundary.

We couldn't do this now without trespassing, and it would take rather a long time anyway! So a local walk for friends and neighbours is being arranged to remind us of this ancient tradition. Everyone is welcome!

For those who wish to attend, there will be a service at Christchurch beforehand. The walk will start from the Church and take about an hour and a half. A ploughman's lunch is available afterwards.

You are welcome to join any or all of these events. Just come for lunch if you wish, but please be on time for the service or walk.
Church service: 10.00 a.m
Walk from the Church: 11.00 a.m

Ploughman's lunch in the Village Hall from 1 o'clock

Lunch is £5.00 for adults, £1.00 for children (including Ploughman's & tea, coffee or squash). Bring your own wine or beer if you wish.

Please help us to plan the lunch by confirming numbers by email (by Wednesday 18th May) to: gvabookings@btinternet.com

Please note that this is not an official guided walk. A leader and back-marker will be present but you will be responsible for your own wellbeing and safety at all times. Good walking boots and clothing appropriate to the weather are essential.

If you need more information, please contact Jane Roberts at jane.s.roberts@btinternet.com or on 07766 713414

Cotswold Voluntary Wardens

Since the last newsletter, the Cotswold Wardens have been busy in the parish with over 20 jobs completed including fallen tree clearance, stile and marker post replacement and general path maintenance.

This voluntary work is important to ensure residents and visitors can all enjoy our fantastic local environment.

Mark Oliver is now the local Parish Warden having taken over from Jean Booth. A big thank you to Jean for her hard work and please let Mark know of any issues you believe need attention.

mark@grettonpc-glos.org.uk

Please use the dog bins provided around the village to avoid nuisance

Community Pages

Village Events

4 May - extraordinary planning meeting

To hear views on the two village planning appeals - developers will be invited.

11 May - Parish Council AGM

Meet in public at 7.00pm Village Hall. All residents welcome.

20-22 May - Winchcombe Walking Festival

22 May - Rogation Walk

See information on p6

29 May - TBC

Village clean up and Jubilee preparations
Volunteers needed.

2-5 June - Platinum Jubilee

2-5th Flower festival in the Church
Saturday 4th Picnic and activity event on the field.
Sunday 5th Service and Pimms reception

See flyer and programme for more information - coming soon

13 July - Parish Council.

Meet in public at 7.00pm Village Hall. All residents welcome.

GRETTON TOWER TRUST

The restored Tower is enjoying regular visits by locals and tourists, meeting the Community aims of the repair and restoration. It looked particularly beautiful when it was dressed with candles for the Advent Windows evening.

Limited mowing of the grounds will take place this season to stimulate the growth of dormant wildflowers, in line with the wider village rewilding project.

We are grateful for a Gloucestershire County Council grant to help us restore the gate at the entrance. Our next tasks are the repair of the perimeter wall, signage and an information / heritage board.

We are always grateful for the help given by the Gretton Community.

Gifts can be made by bank transfer to:
Gretton Tower Trust, Lloyds Bank Cheltenham
Sort Code: 30-91-87 Account : 66921668

School Report

Dear Readers

I hope this latest edition of the Parish Council Newsletter finds you in good health.

It's been another challenging term for the school. Cases of COVID have been at an all-time high, resulting in very high rates of staff and pupil absence. However, everyone has rallied round, covering classes, playground duties and serving school lunches when required!

Despite the difficulties the children have continued to really enjoy their time with us and there have been some notable successes. For example, our British Wildlife Quiz Team have been going great guns in the Gloucestershire Schools' competition and earlier this term both our boys' and girls' football teams won the Tewkesbury and District tournament.

We had the honour of representing our area in the County Finals, with both teams finishing a very respectable 3rd place.

Further sporting success was

achieved at the Cheltenham and District Sports Hall Athletics Championships, when our little school was crowned as overall champions – we really do punch well above our weight in most areas!

Sport continues to be play a big part in the life of the school but so does outdoor learning, especially in the form of forest schools. Our Y1 and 2 "Kingfishers" class thoroughly enjoyed their involvement in the churchyard rewilding project and the other children have learnt a great deal from their regular visits to our fantastic forest school site.

In addition to sport and forest school, the arts are also one of our main curriculum drivers. Thanks in part to the generosity of our Friends of Gretton School, all the children have benefited from samba lessons with a professional music teacher – this proved to be a very loud but memorable experience for everyone concerned!

Best wishes to all members of the local community.



Richard Woolston
Headteacher
Gretton Primary School

Parish Council News

Contact your Parish Council team.



Andrew Steward
01242 604640
andrew@grettonnpc-glos.org.uk



Mark Oliver
01242 604251
mark@grettonnpc-glos.org.uk



Richard Green
01242 602272
dick@grettonnpc-glos.org.uk



Geoff Hanson - Vice Chair
01242 603848
geoff@grettonnpc-glos.org.uk



John Hurley - Retiring Chair
01242 620437
john@grettonnpc-glos.org.uk

Village Communications

Effective communications are always a challenge as different people use different media. However, having the ability to reach everyone in our community is important to share valuable information and share events and activities that may be of interest.

Currently, we have the following channels for communication in the village:

- *The hard copy Newsletter is distributed to every household about twice a year.*
- *Noticeboards in the village and church are used in a variety of ways*
- *The Gretton Noticeboard Facebook group*
- *The Gretton Help Force WhatsApp group*
- *The Gretton Help Force Facebook group*

- *The Gretton Network Facebook page*
- *The Gretton School Parents Facebook group*
- *Neighbourhood watch What's app groups*
- *The Parish Council web page.*

Each of these are useful but we are considering how to improve communications to ensure that people get important information. Although a blend of different tools will always be needed it is believed that a Gretton Parish Council Facebook page may help provide a central location for important information and a resident's email list could be developed by the Gretton Village Association to enable people to opt in to receiving relevant information.

Watch this space for developments.

Towards a new Parish Plan

The Parish Plan group has not met formally since the last issue but most of the topics identified are currently being progressed by other working groups.

These have resulted from the key responses to the village survey last year.

- revitalise village social life post covid
- improve village communications
- greening the village environment
- GVA village hall and field improvements
- traffic speeding and nuisance parking
- flood alleviation
- GPC's approach to planning and development

The Parish Plan group will be convened later this year to review progress and agree the framework for the forward objectives for the village.

Geoff Hanson



A footnote from the retiring Chair

It has been my pleasure and privilege to Chair Gretton Parish Council for the last seven years. We have Parish Council elections next year when I will stand down from the Council. So it is appropriate that I make way for a new Chair who can take the Council forward, with my support, over the

next year and into the future. I will continue to work on planning and flooding issues for the Council. We have a good, forward-looking Councillor team who will continue to make an impact over the next year.

John Hurley