

The Newsletter of Dodleston Parish Council

LocalLife

Edition 39 Spring / March 2021



in this issue...

- Village Hall
- Winter scenes in our beautiful area
- Observing and encouraging wildlife

Welcome all...



Roger Taylor - Editor

The front cover says it all. In just four weeks we experienced floods, frost and snow and the onset of Spring. The photo display which makes up the centre spread reminds us of the glorious area in which we live.



Thank you to all who have contributed.

We also feature the exciting possibility of a new Village Hall. Your Parish Council and the Dodleston Village Foundation and working together to try to make this a reality.

The issue of speeding also comes under the spotlight. It is a problem throughout the Parish, particularly on the main roads through the villages. The intrepid souls who are undergoing training to address this blight via the Community Speed Watch Campaign will soon be appearing.

With the children returning to School and the end of lockdown (hopefully) in sight, we can all begin to think more positively. Please note the advertisement from Lynsey McCabe and her footcare service. We hope you will support her and other advertisers.

If you or you know of a business that would benefit from featuring in Local Life the price starts from £75 per quarter page; £125 per half page and £200 per full page. As usual, three adverts for the price of two for those who book three issues.

A New Village Hall?

Our Village Hall has stood for about 150 years and has been in the charge of Dodleston Village Foundation (DVF) since 1982. It has served our community well – all the voluntary groups, Comedy Night, the WI, the School, Pre-School, the History group... the list goes on.

HOWEVER, we have become aware of its shortcomings: effectively, it can only host one group at a time; backstage and changing facilities for the Players are poor; regular users can't hire it at all the times they want because of other users (Pre-School is a case in point); time is wasted because equipment can't be left out so clearing up has to be done between each user.

So, DVF and the Parish Council each sent delegates to a steering group where the possibility of pooling our resources to commission a new, purpose-built Village Hall was discussed. It would be located on the Sports Ground. We would be seeking more flexible accommodation (and more units in total) to accommodate more users and allow exclusive space for some regulars.

We are only at the very beginning – a consultation process is taking place, the current users have already been engaged and have provided comprehensive feedback, with further and wider consultation across the Community to be sought. We are now looking to progress a feasibility study to ascertain further information on design, plans, costs, financing etc.

To this end, we are very keen to know if there is anybody in the Parish who can guide us on possible designs, scale and approximate

costs. If not, does anyone know such an individual whose brains we could pick?

It would be ridiculous to have two Village Halls, effectively in competition with each other. If the project goes ahead, it would be inevitable that the current Hall would be closed and, presumably, sold.

The delegates on the Steering Group are Mike Maughan, Paul Buchanan and Mike Dix from the Parish Council; Richard Lloyd, Andrew Bettley and Philippa Brooking from DVF. There is also a moderator who is a member of both groups. We will greatly welcome comments and offers of help (particularly in the short term a design consultant and / or architect) via any of the above or electronically. We will keep you updated of progress on this exciting project.

Home Watch Update

Since the last **Home Watch** report in the November 2020 issue, there has been an increase in the What's App Home Watch Group communications but there's always room for more contacts to be included in the circulation list. Whilst some residents still prefer email communication for reports and updates, the What's App system is by far the most efficient and immediate, which can be extremely beneficial for all concerned. My mobile telephone number is at the bottom of this page if you wish to join.

The following are examples of incidents reported by the What's App Group that occurred and were actioned upon within minutes:



1. Supposed bogus takeaway deliveries

Several residents reported having a knock at the door during the evening with a delivery of food they had not ordered!! These were reported via What's App locally and suspicions were aroused as to the motive; also, it's very unnerving for residents as one wouldn't expect callers in the evening, unless of course pre-arranged! Fortunately, they do now seem to have stopped. A theory has been expounded that the delivery firms satellite addresses for this area were incorrectly entered, hence the mis-deliveries! If this situation re-occurs, try to make a note of the origin of the delivery and registration number of the vehicle. It could be difficult as the deliveries happen when it's mainly dark.



2. Dog Napping

Some residents quite naturally linked the item above to potential dog nappers seeking out houses with dogs. This is not an unreasonable conclusion as social media is full of reports across the country of dog napping incidents. These are extremely distressing, especially when occurring on our doorstep, for example in Rossett! Friends in St John's Wood, London recently mentioned that a young child walking its dog in their locality was approached by an individual who admired the dog and asked if they could take a photo of the animal. That dog photo was put on social media and advertised for sale. The much-loved pet was then stolen to order. Fortunately, nothing like that has happened here, so far, but it is incumbent upon us all to be extremely vigilant as dogs, apart from being loving members of the family, are now a valuable commodity and can be sold at mind boggling prices to otherwise unsuspecting buyers.



3. Dog Mess

On the subject of dogs, it's not the dogs' fault where they leave their mess; if they have to go, then they will, wherever. It's the responsibility of the human dog walker to clear up the mess, and not just leave it for others to tread in and pollute the environment. There have been so many reports and publicity on this subject that it makes you wonder WHY do dog walkers continue not to clear up after the event? The Parish Council make poo bags freely available; the Village Shop sell them, so there's no excuse for this totally unsociable and irresponsible behaviour to continue!



4. Scams

Almost daily a scam of one form or another is reported, either by the Police Alert system or local residents receiving phony telephone calls purporting to be from HMRC, Amazon, BT, Pay-Pal to name just a few. It has been said, many many times, legitimate organisations such as these will usually contact you by letter and will NOT ask you by email or phone for any bank or personal details. Don't be taken in, no matter how genuine the caller may sound. They are only after one thing, and that is to empty your bank account. If in doubt, ask a trusted friend first.

Bernard Dennis MBE

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Three Owl Lane

It was still dark as I crossed the road into Moor Lane with the Ridgeback one early winter's Saturday morning, the sky was crystal clear, the stars were out, frost covered the grass and there was no wind. It was what I called an "Owl night". To my left, amongst the tall trees behind Moor Crescent, a Little Owl called. It is a quite distinctive "kiew kiew" and has led to the name Screech Owl. It is a native of Greece and was introduced to this country at the end of the 19th century. Despite its size it is a fierce protector of its territory.



The Barn Owl

It was an "Owl night" due to the weather conditions. While hunting, their plumage would remain dry and with no wind their ability to pick up the slightest sound from the ground was increased and a clear sky aiding visibility. By now I was halfway down Moor Lane and to my right from the woodland across the fields came the eerie call of a male Tawny owl "towit hoo-oo-oo"

I listen carefully waiting for the reply and within 6-7 seconds the female replied "kee-wick". The paired Tawnys keep in touch by constant calls between the male and female. They are one of the earliest to pair up and breed which is sometimes before the beginning of March. This gives them longer nights with which to feed their young. The woodland at the top of Moor Lane has always had resident tawny owls and they are the most common owl over much of Britain.

At the top I turn and head back. The darkness combined with the clear sky giving a magical atmosphere, the horizons appear shortened and everything feeling close in. Often on such an early winter's morning you will hear the bark of a dog fox but not this time.

We are now halfway back along the lane when, to my right from the direction of Moor End, comes a prolonged eerie shriek. It's the call of a Barn owl; it is not like any other owl call and once again it is their method of staying in touch. This owl above all others has suffered significant decline since the 1970s with much of its habitat declining, loss of roosting/ nesting sites and becoming more affected by road deaths. December is when the barn owls pair up. I walk on for 10



The Screech Owl

metres then just ahead silhouetted on the branch of an Ash tree I see the outline of an owl, it takes off and I hear it return the call as it heads off across the unimproved permanent pasture to my left with its mate.

Barn Owls are farmland birds which hunt for primarily field voles over rough grassland and along field edges. Their prey occurs at highest densities in this rough grassland – tall tussock grass with a thick litter layer which provides the cover for small mammals such as voles, shrews and mice. A deep litter layer enables these animals to reach the densities needed to ensure barn owls can survive and breed within an area. The plumage of the bird is highly developed for silent flight, but this also means it is in no way waterproof and so in winter if a bird gets soaked it has a high risk of dying from hypothermia.

A pair generally hunts within 2km of the nest site during the breeding season and requires rough grassland in the form of blocks or wide strips along field margins and water courses. Rough grass strips should be at least 2m wide and ideally 6m and linked by hedgerows.

The Ridgeback and I had nearly finished our walk there was an extra spring in my step now, I knew we had a pair of barn owls once again and I could look forward to seeing them ghost over the farmland at dawn or dusk in the coming months hunting for the food for their young.

Andrew Hawkins

Local News



DODLESTON & DISTRICT WI

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

It is now over a year since our last WI face to face meeting in the village hall and it is really starting to feel like a life time ago!

We have continued to provide a monthly meeting on Zoom and had a really fun Christmas murder mystery. Many of us dressed up in character and a few of us even guessed the murderer. Since then we have had speakers on Journaling and Calligraphy.

The WI WhatsApp group continues to be a fun social place to swap books, show off our crafts, discuss wild life sightings and find homes for cats amongst other varied topics!

Despite being online at the moment we welcome any women in our community who would like to join us, simply contact us at

dodlestonwi@yahoo.co.uk

and we will add you to our mailing list so that you receive all the latest updates and invites.

Here's to hoping we can meet again face to face soon.

Babies and Toddlers playgroup:

Dodleston Babies and Toddlers playgroup will restart on Thursday 15th April following Government Covid guidelines. Come along with your little ones and enjoy a chat and a play - all welcome with parents, grandparents and child minders.

Any enquiries to Helen 07951 880702

Dodleston Baby & Toddler Group



Dodleston Baby and Toddler Play Group meets every Thursday morning during term time in the village hall, 10-11.30. Free play, arts and crafts, music and singing, snacks and refreshments. Come and meet other parents and grandparents for a chat and a cuppa! **Only £3 per session (plus £1 for additional children).**

Follow us on our Facebook page.

For more information contact Helen on 07951 880702 or just turn up!

We are following the government and pre-school alliance Covid guidelines.

Pre-School News



Keeping your hands clean can be fun too, and a great routine!

Our Spring News

Ahhh Spring! The time of year we look forward to casting aside wellies and splash suits in favour of sun cream and sunhats. Each combination is time consuming to apply but well worth the benefits. An equally time consuming but worthwhile activity is our schedule of hand washing and sanitising; our families are familiar with distancing as they arrive and then spraying their children's lunch boxes and shoes and sanitising hands.

A major change to our practice has been to the way that we receive and send children home. We have always been rather proud that we do not have a settling in policy. We recognise that every child and every family bring unique experiences with them, and what works for one child will not necessarily for others. A policy suggests inflexibility, and knowing children as we do, this is not a practice we could support. Our parents and carers have always chosen their own way

to settle their children, and this often includes staying for parts of sessions until the child feels that they know us a little and feel confident to stay unattended by their grownup. Unfortunately, Covid has brought a temporary close to this child-led approach, and today, children are welcomed by a purple lady at the door who takes their lunch box and coat and then joins them to play. From here, it is business as usual for ladies and children as cuddles, hugs and knee sits are in abundance.

We were wary when we first learned that parents would not be allowed into the hall and we expected our new starters to be unsettled and anxious. In a fascinating twist however, we have found that children are settling in fantastically – better

than ever before, and it is a phenomenon that other settings are noticing too.

These are two and three-year-olds who have seen little of the world, partly due to their age, but also due to Covid, yet they are walking in confidently, engaging with staff and other children and getting on with the important business of exploring and playing. Part of the credit, without doubt, goes to the wonderful ladies at Preschool who work incredibly hard to get to know the children, ensure they feel safe and give them a sense of belonging.



A hand washing station

Even so however, attachment theory, as well as our own experiences dictate that we would expect the children to be displaying higher levels of distress than they are. I have a few theories regarding this, however the most important consideration, is that whilst the circumstances make for an outwardly more pleasurable experience for parents, children and staff, at the forefront of our minds is consideration for the bits that we don't see – are children really managing as well as they appear to be? Are they falling apart when they get home, and what will be the effects on their future wellbeing? We continue to monitor wellbeing as ever but with additional thought for potential stresses surrounding new situations and routines.

Deep-thinking aside – Pre-school life continues, there is a lot more hand washing and cleaning of equipment than ever before but before long our nest box will hopefully hold blue tits again, our grass will need cutting, herbs will grow, we will admire Beluga flying through the blue sky and disappearing behind clouds, we will hear the birds in the hedge and we will all be soaked to the skin from water play and dried by the sun. Bring it on – because we are ready!!



St Mary's Church, Dodleston

Easter 2021

Dear Friends

As I write this, we in St Mary's Church are hoping that this Easter we may be able to have some Worship Services. Currently under planning are a Good Friday service on April 2nd and an Easter Sunday morning service on 4th April. These are expected of course to still be operating under Covid-19 restrictions with use of masks and sanitizer and no congregational singing. We will have Easter Day as our high point of Easter with Holy Communion once more. It is Lent and it seems right to wait until Easter day before we celebrate Holy Communion again.

To celebrate in church this year the Resurrection of Jesus will be doubly poignant and rather special as we could not even have services last year (so we have moved on at least).

We know and are acutely aware that for many people this has been a year of loss and heartache and grief. In order to mark this on Easter Day an Easter garden will be created outside the Lych gate for Good Friday and Easter day and people are invited to put a small floral tribute (alongside) from a single flower in a jam jar to a small nosegay of Spring flowers similarly housed (we are not looking for large bouquets) just small tributes to your loved one to brighten up the space where the Christmas Tree goes (and where this Easter tribute will remain for a short while afterwards. It is not intended to be a long term or permanent feature; please note as flowers fade, they will be removed).

This may be especially helpful if you are not ready to come back to church (we will still be having limited numbers of people in church). Plants, butterflies and if you wish to join in the thanks to the NHS this year, I believe a butterfly (or a rainbow or a butterfly on a rainbow!) is the suggested motif and will be acceptable in our Easter garden. No small statues or figures or ornaments as the garden of Jesus' tomb, was quiet and natural - just flowers, small and simple please and butterflies fluttering by.



Church Calendar

Good Friday 2.15 - 3pm

Quiet service as we gather together thoughts for our Easter Garden and think about Jesus' journey through arrest, death and burial...

Easter Day 11 am Easter Holy Communion

Almighty God who can bring life out of death be with all who are mourning and with all those whose wintry hearts are grieving, for the loss of hope and dreams and loved ones. As you raised Jesus from death to be our hope of new life; forgive us by his wounds; and comfort and heal us from our wounds and draw us to our eternal home. We claim his promise in his name
Amen.



Dodleston Cricket Club 2021 Season

Now that the days are getting longer, and the grass starts to grow its time to start to plan for this years cricket season for Dodleston CC.

Last season obviously didn't happen, so we go into the forthcoming season as the year before last league champions! The 2019 season was a great season for us, and we will be playing our matches this year in the 4th division of the Chester 2020 midweek league.

The first job for this season as ever will be to put the nets back up in the next couple of weeks, once the

ground dries a bit more. To get the old bowling and batting muscles going we are planning to start outdoor nets on the playing field on Tuesday 6th April – weather permitting, and we plan to have nets practice every Tuesday evening starting at 6.30pm through the season. If anyone – boys/girls/young/old - would like to have a go, please feel free to come along to one of the sessions – we are a friendly club and we have plenty of spare kit (juniors and adult sizes) so just come and have a go. We are playing this season in Division 4 and our home games will be on Wednesdays starting at 6.30pm as in recent years, with our away games on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and quite a few Thursdays. Our first game of the season will be on or around 5th May – as we go to press the fixtures haven't been announced, and the last league game of the season will be around 5th August. This seems to be an early finish for the season but as we play evening cricket the light starts to fade around this time and it's not really possible to play

midweek evening games much later into August. For those of you who would like to keep up with our progress or would like to watch the matches we will post the fixtures and results on the usual village notice boards and in the pavilion.

The ground is going to get regular use again this year so there should be plenty of cricket to watch, not just from our own village team, but the pitch will also be used by Hawarden Park Cricket Club on Saturdays who will be using the ground as their home ground for their 3rd team this season so plenty of cricket planned this year - weather and other events permitting!

We are always looking for new players to join so if you are interested or just fancy having a go please come along to one of our nets sessions. If you don't fancy playing and just want to get involved with the club, please contact Jeremy Parker - 01244 661526.

Our Village in Pictures

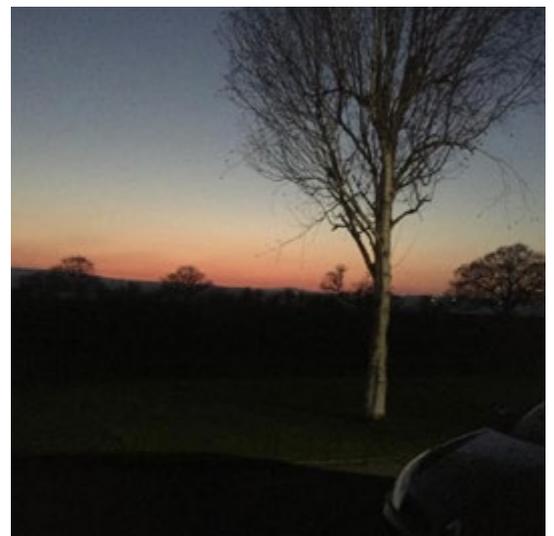


Pedestrian Railway Crossing
- new pedestrian railway crossing which has been installed between Dodleston and Chester Lakes on the public footpath





Daffodils on the DVF playing field. A lovely sign that Spring is just around the corner. Hopefully these blooms will last and not be destroyed by youngsters, as in previous years! They are a gift from nature to lighten our wellbeing.





A Pond Platform, ideal for school kids to pond dip



ophrydium versatile often described as "floating zoos".



We were chuffed to count twenty smooth newts in the pond

Taking Pride in a Pond

Ponds are truly fantastic resources that provide a home, a shelter and a watering hole for a host of wildlife. And size doesn't matter! Ponds big or small (and everything in between) have a role to play; so, whether it's your puddle-sized effort at the bottom of your garden or the large pond in your local park or nature reserve, ponds can really enhance the biodiversity of an area.

Which brings me onto 'The Parish Pond Project'. Dodleston Parish Council have set up a team of volunteers with the aim to improve the pond within Dodleston Sports Field by enhancing it for wildlife and the local community, with funds potentially available for the project.

A suite of local interest groups were approached for their thoughts on what they would like to see done with the pond, and the responses have been gathered and will be used to formulate a draft plan. Once this plan is produced it will be consulted on fully, with all residents of the Parish having the opportunity to comment.

One of the first steps in any enhancement project of this type is to get a handle on what's there in the first place. And at first glance, it would appear, not a lot! Except for a stand of bulrush (or reedmace which it's also called), some isolated patches of plants, especially rushes (including jointed rush) along the pond's margins and limited water plants (including, unfortunately non-native Canadian pondweed).

Early in February however, one late afternoon as it was getting dark, my wife and I took our little boy, Zack, to the pond armed with a torch and walked around the edge checking the pond for other signs of life. We were chuffed to count twenty smooth newts (the UK's commonest newt)

which had obviously found the air temperature to their liking to venture back into the pond after a long winter hidden under a log or rock.

Within the pond we also came on what wouldn't have looked out of place in a sci-fi movie – large green globules. At first, they appeared to be some sort of algae. They are in fact called *ophrydium versatile* (I know the name just drops of the tongue!) and they are often described as "floating zoos". The globules are made up of single-celled organisms called protozoa, and a type of algae lives in these giving them the green colour. Within the globules is a watery gel which can be home to all manner of microscopic creatures. Interesting for what essentially looks like just a blob!

So, the pond already provides home to some wildlife, but the aim of the Parish Pond Project is to make it even better, and this will likely include leaving a rougher vegetated buffer around the pond and planting up with native plants and scrub which will both provide better cover for animals, and perhaps even the addition of a floating island where animals can rest, maybe even waterbirds.

And to enhance the pond for the local community, options which we are currently investigating are the inclusion of an information board, a platform so that school kids can 'pond dip' and a 'wild' seating area with logs.

We hope to make a bit of a splash with the project (if you excuse the pun!) and I hope you agree that improvements to the Dodleston Sports Field pond for both wildlife and the community can only be a good thing.

That's all for now but watch this space!

Dr Colin Bonnington

Local News & Events



Community Speed Watch Scheme – Dodleston and wider Parish

The Parish Council has received a large number of complaints about speeding which regularly occurs through Dodleston, Lower Kinnerton, Gorstella and Balderton.

Community Speedwatch is a national initiative where proactive members of local communities join with the support and supervision of their local police to record details of speeding vehicles using approved detection devices.

During the first couple of months in 2020, the Parish Council approached Cheshire Police as well as Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWACC) to develop a Speed Watch scheme which will be managed by volunteers from our communities. Training was on track to be delivered in March 2020, but the pandemic put a hold on to it. These sessions are now organised for March 2021.

Registered keepers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit are contacted - initially with a letter explaining the potential risks and consequences of their dangerous behaviour. Repeat offenders will receive a visit from the local police, irrespective of where they live. Beyond these friendly gestures, focused enforcement and criminal prosecution follow based on the collated evidence.

Speedwatch has been in place for several years, however, management of the scheme, collection and processing of data and identification of risk drivers who are then targeted for enforcement has traditionally been paper based, taking a great deal of police officer and staff time and effort, and has not always been effective.

FOODBANK - Help for struggling families

Our amazing communities have really stepped up to support the local Foodbank collection point. Since the last Local Life edition, we have made four more drop offs at the West Cheshire Foodbank and a fifth is on its way.

West Cheshire Foodbank provides emergency food for local people in a financial crisis. The need for Foodbanks has increased hugely due to the current economic crisis and our local bank reported a 46% increase of children supported April to December 2020 – that represents 4178 children that were given emergency food parcels.

The local collection point, available 24/7, can be found at 12 Egerton Walk, Dodleston red box by the front door. We post the delivery receipts in the local WhatsApp groups as well as on the Parish Council Facebook page.

A typical drop off starts by collecting enough donated food through the red box which gets emptied regularly and then into the car boot. As soon as we have enough, which is usually once a fortnight, we drive to West Cheshire Foodbank at Ellesmere Port where the food gets offloaded into trolleys, weighed and a receipt gets issued in our name. The bank accepts non-perishable items like tinned and dry food (like pasta, rice etc), toiletries and pet food (pets are also struggling during the economic downturn). For a complete list see www.westcheshire.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food

Please consider putting a regular 'Foodbank' reminder on your shopping list - whether that is one can of food or a few items, you will be making a difference to a family's wellbeing.

If you are in a financial crisis, you can ask for a voucher simply by contacting one of the agencies listed below. They will quickly understand your situation and may give you a voucher which can be exchanged for 3 days of food for your household.

CWAC Help Scheme – 0300 123 7065

Citizens Advice Bureau – 0344 576 6111

Forfutures – 0300 123 2442 opt 3

This resulted in the local Speed Watch Schemes being born.

We are very pleased that Cheshire Police supported Dodleston Parish Council in obtaining a grant from the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner to purchase a speed radar gun as well as Hi Viz Vests.

Once the volunteers are trained, we will together agree a rota of two volunteers at a time to watch an agreed stretch of road, at a mutually convenient time. One volunteer will manage the speed gun and they need to other write down the car registration plate of the offending vehicle. The log is then sent to Cheshire Police who will issue letters of warning to those speeding motorists.

We believe that the existence and awareness that a Community Speed Watch Scheme is operational in our communities will help drive down speeding offences.

* We aim to repeat the training to increase our volunteer pool. If you would like to support us managing the scheme, please contact Welna Bowden at [wlnabowdendpc@gmail.com](mailto:welna@wlnabowdendpc@gmail.com)

Dodleston Parish Litter Picking – 28 May to 13 June, supporting the Great British Spring Clean

Dodleston, Lower Kinnerton, Gorstella and Balderton will for the fourth year in a row take part in the Great British Spring Clean which will run this year from 28 May to 13 June 2021.

Please look out for the notice via our social media channels and join us for our litter pick! Last year we had fourteen volunteers taking part and we hope to smash that target in 2021.

The Parish Council has agreed to buy litter picking equipment including Hi Viz vests which could be borrowed should volunteers want to do some litter picking outside of these dates.

<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>

Hare Roundabout Project

Mel Hughes

A giant March Hare is due to make an appearance at Rough Hill roundabout

Roundabouts – such a British concept – functional, nondescript, and people take turns to go around them. But what if we could make them into a symbol for our natural world and a beautiful place to drive by? Well, coming soon to the Rough Hill roundabout, adjacent to Meadow Foods, you will see just that!



A visual of the proposed roundabout (inset: the brown hare)

This March, Forest City Projects CIC, who created the Chester Supertrees Project, are realising their second project which will feature a giant 5-meter hare sculpture, by artist Russell Kirk, leaping over a beautiful wildflower meadow. A visual representation of the concept showing how the hare and wildflower meadow will look when in full bloom is pictured here.

The project is in collaboration with Meadow Foods, enthusiastically supported by the Parish Council, and Ringway (highway maintenance contractors) have also kindly donated their time and expertise to oversee safe installation of the sculpture.

The inspiration

The Brown Hare was chosen as an icon to represent all meadow species found in the area (photographed here by Sam Ryley – Canteen Create), many of which are declining. In part due to the 95% loss of wildflower meadows in the UK, these dreadful losses were the inspiration for the designs. Hares have also been documented locally making them one of the most powerful and relevant symbols to highlight these issues.

Calling for the community's contribution to the "Hare Trail"

The Dodleston Parish community are invited to show their commitment to helping wildlife by planting wildflower patches, and proudly display their very own hare sculptures in their gardens. Instructions on how to make them will be coming through your letterbox soon!

Community groups in Dodleston have signed up to take part in a number of willow sculpting workshops run by the Artist Russel Kirk, and these wonderful willow hare sculptures will be displayed around the village. This "hare trail" will raise awareness of wildlife in rural and urban spaces and is supported by Cheshire Wildlife Trust as part of their "Action for Insects" campaign and also RECORD - The local biological records centre.

Start recording and sharing wildlife spotted in the Parish

It is interesting to understand what has already been recorded in the area, and Iona Cowell from RECORD stated, "In terms of wildlife, Dodleston is currently an under-recorded part

of our region, residents will get the chance to become citizen scientists, recording biodiversity which will help to take Dodleston Parish from being an under-recorded area to becoming a real hotspot for wildlife records".

This is where anyone in the community can join and contribute to the new "Dodleston Naturewatch" Facebook group, where everyone in the Parish is encouraged to share the wildlife that they have photographed locally, to really capture what wonderful wildlife we have living around us.

Wildlife camera trap

In addition to the hare trail activities and encouraging people to go out and really look at what nature exists in the local area, Forest City Projects and Meadow Foods have bought the community of Dodleston it's very own wildlife camera trap. This will be shared amongst community groups and residents to document as many locations and species as possible.

About Forest City Projects

Forest City Projects aim to bring life and community back to disused and underused spaces (like roundabouts!), redesigning and rewilding, to make places that inspire and educate people about the importance of biodiversity and climate issues.

Two of the four Directors, Mel and Steve Hughes, live right here in Dodleston. Mel loves sharing the great outdoors with the Dodleston Guides & Brownies, Steve has a boundless energy to positively fight against the climate and ecological crisis in any way he can, Sam Ryley is a keen wildlife photographer and loves connecting people to make good things happen, and Jon Mason is a Landscape Architect who designs creative spaces for people to experience the best of nature.

Contact us at: forestcityprojects@gmail.com



Dodleston Community Woodland & Orchard

Nature's is one of the few things in that has remained constant through lockdown, indeed many of us have been in a position to appreciate and cherish what is in our localities more than ever before.

This has certainly been the case with the ever-evolving community woodland and orchard projects on Dodleston Sports field. We have had a lot of joy watching the whips that we all planted over three years ago develop and grow, whilst much else around us has stood still. Many of the trees have now outgrown the preschool aged children for whom the project was started with and this is likely to continue apace. There seems to have been more flowers and varieties of plant life across the area too. As well as the flora expanding and changing, the fauna also seems to have increased, with regular sightings of meadow pipits being flushed by the proliferation of pedestrians and kestrels hovering above with the implied abundance of small mammals. At present the adjoining fields are full of various wintering geese, the sound and sight of these magnificent birds flying overhead in their V formation, honking away to each other never fails to lift the spirits.

The woodland is hopefully now getting towards the stage when it will be self-managing. There has been the inevitable loss of some of the trees we planted, particularly in the boggy areas but most are flourishing. We are looking to replace some of the trees that have not survived at our next Autumn work day. The orchard provides a contrast to the woodland with its ordered rows and more developed, substantial trees. We are excited to see how many of these will be blossoming this spring, just 18 months after they were planted with help from the 1st Dodleston Brownies and Guides, and then whether we will get any fruit to harvest come next Autumn. If so then we might have to re-establish the Dodleston Wassailing, traditionally held on twelfth night.

Going forward we have a couple of projects the group are working towards. We are looking at understory planting around the existing trees to provide an extra layer of vegetation and habitat. We aim to link this in with the Parish council's ideas for the pond's development. Secondly, we are hoping to create a wildflower meadow bordering the

woodland and path which will provide a generous splash of colour, help support the local pollinating insects and in turn the orchard.

In the Autumn last year, we held a socially distanced work day which was enjoyable and plan to organise another couple of events in late spring and Autumn in 2021, restrictions permitting. Keep an eye out around the village for posters and also for the sporadic updates on the Facebook page 'Friends of Dodleston Community Woodland and Orchard'. It is always great to see anyone, and everyone get involved be it for 5 minutes or 5 hours. If anyone is keen to do any tasks in the meantime, then please do get in touch.

We hope to see you all soon.

Louise Billett and Andrew Barnett

Contact us at:

loubillett@gmail.com

andbar1@hotmail.com

Please like or Facebook page:

Friends of Dodleston Community Woodland and Orchard



Throxton Bunions

About ten years ago, Dodleston Local History Group organised an exhibition 'Dodleston In 100 Objects'. This was based on the excellent programme devised by the British Museum 'The History of the World in 100 Objects', hosted by Neil MacGregor. It has since been repeated on BBC Radio 4 and is a fascinating compilation of artefacts.

Whilst the local history group has a fine archival record, we were certain there was still much to be learnt about the history of our village.

Several months before the planned exhibition date in September, a call went out to as many residents as possible to search their lofts, wardrobes, cupboards, suitcases and boxes residing under beds, etc and we were staggered by the response. So many artefacts and photographs appeared that had been gathering dust and not seen the light of day for many years!

These included fairly ancient images of local families and farms, events, such as the Dodleston Players performances, Village Day fairs, diaries and other records of local life through the past decades. Many were donated, some lent and returned after the exhibition.

Amongst this great collection, there was one particular coloured photograph that intrigued us all, and it's reproduced here.

It shows the original red telephone kiosk positioned at the junction of Church Road and Kinnerton Road. The Dodleston and District Parish Council notice board is just behind the sandstone wall and to the right of that is a directional sign post. Apart from delineating Dodleston, Pulford and Wrexham it also directs visitors to Throxton Bunions and its castle, instead of Lower Kinnerton!!



Investigations as to the creator, or creators of this spoof sign drew a total blank, so a notice was posted in the exhibition, together with the photograph, asking if anyone knew who might have been responsible. The exhibition lasted from Friday through to Sunday, finishing at 5 pm. It wasn't until the very last moment on Sunday afternoon, a local resident approached me and confessed to having been one of the architects of this hoax sign. He said he was one of three young men, who in about 1974 had produced the sign; they had worked on it over several nights in a barn near the church and had managed to surreptitiously put it in place without being caught or recognised. It was certainly very well made and quite convincing. He said it lasted several days before being removed but many visitors to the village were intrigued to know the whereabouts of the castle at Throxton Bunions.

At last, the mystery was solved,
but what a great name for a village!

When you study the photograph in greater detail, it is obvious there are no houses in the background, just a field and trees. This is now where the pathway into Mallory Walk is located, having been built as part of the Boydell Park estate in the early 1980s. It is evidence of how even more rural Dodleston was at the time. The sandstone wall now accommodates the 1865 village water pump having replaced a more modern telephone kiosk.

Bernard Dennis MBE

Chairman Dodleston Local History Group

Mob: 07966 436073

Local News



DODLESTON PLAYERS **Greetings** **Dodlestonians** **- we have news!**

Dodleston Players are feeling very positive and, with all fingers and toes crossed, are planning to produce another great, live pantomime for your enjoyment in February 2022.

We have all missed the fun and camaraderie this year so are excited to get back into rehearsals.

Even more exciting is that we are considering performing a panto we have never done before.

Obviously, if things change in respect of the pandemic, we will adhere to government guidelines.

Dates for the panto are 17-19 February.

The first meeting for all those aged 7 and over who are interested in being involved in any way will be September 19th at 7pm in the village hall.

We can't wait to get back to treading the boards and look forward to seeing you there.

Chapel Stores, Dodleston

I have just been asked for the spring submission of our entry into Local Life & I thought I would look back to my Spring 2020 draft. It is very hard to believe that there is not one mention of the Pandemic that was about to take over our lives for the coming year

I did point out that we have been through many changes over the years working to become a better community shop and Post Office for our lovely customers. Hopefully, this past year we have stepped up to the mark.

As did the community of Dodleston in supporting us and using us as your first choice when it came to shopping local and in a safe space.

Maybe even realising the value of a village shop that was not realised before the pandemic.

During the year we have added lots of new products so that you have even more choice.

We are still on reduced hours of 7am till 7.30pm Monday to Saturday & 8am till 5pm on Sundays. We intend to increase the Sunday hours very soon.

The clocks spring forward on the 29th of March followed by Easter Weekend.

Pop in for Easter cards, Hot Cross Buns, and all types of eggs, both chocolate & chicken!

Best Wishes from Samantha, Lloyd Jan Kelly Julie Paul & Lucy xxxxxx

Our Easter opening hours are...

Good Friday 2nd April
8am till 5.00pm.

Easter Saturday 3rd April
new normal opening
7am till 7.30pm

Easter Sunday 4th April
8am till 5pm

Easter Monday 5th April
8am till 5.00pm.



A Pandemic Poem by Peter Tomlinson.

Once upon a time, in a land far, far, away,
where Chinese Dragons might live, so they say.
An invisible killer escaped from the City of Wuhan,
a terrible Virus, passed from animal, to man.

The exact place of origin seemed elusive,
WHO investigations proved inconclusive.
What we do know, is that the Virus was bad,
did it come from a wet market, or a virology lab?

The wet market sold Snakes, Bats and Pangolins,
bought to make potions, food, or medicines.
Completely different to our butchers' shop,
animals sold live, before being given the chop.

The virus spread, its speed was surprising,
all over China, the death toll was rising.
The virus crossed continents, it shook us to the core,
Within a few weeks, it was at our front door.

Our Queen and her family, retreated to Windsor Castle,
we were asked to stand firm and to help fight the battle.
We were asked to fight a foe, that could not be seen.
We gave it a name, Covid 19.

No longer were we allowed to leave our town,
we must stay at home and go into lock-down.
So, how do we defend ourselves, dear Lord protect us,
even those who look healthy, could be infectious.

Not allowed to visit our family, now that's a big ask,
don't touch, keep your distance, you must wear a
mask Pasta and toilet rolls, there used to be plenty,
I queue for an hour, but the shelves are empty.

The Virus grew strong, it took the old and the weak,
the headcount grew, hundreds a day at its peak.
Our Doctors and Nurses, they could not rest,
we did all we could, to protect our NHS.

Captain Sir Tom, heard all of the talking,
he wanted to help, so he went walking.
He raised millions of pounds from absolute zero,
for twice in his life, he was a national hero.

We needed an Army to fight this invisible foe,
Professors, Scientists and those in the know.
They worked day and night in their high tech labs,
soon they developed several Vaccine jabs.

I have learnt just how fragile human life can be,
but also our strengths, when facing adversity.
We may have to accept, this Virus is here to stay,
but with the hope that our Vaccines, will keep it at bay.

Such a small number of Scientists stepped in to save the
day, a massive debt of gratitude, the whole world should pay.
The words below may be familiar and oh so true,
never, has so much, been owed, by so many, to so few.



Foothealthcare at Higher Kinnerton Village hall.

Includes Toenail Trimming, Callus reduction, Corns, Fungal nail treatment, Dry skin & Ingrowing toenail problems & Advice

Call Lynsey **07538 523011** for further Enquiries & to make an Appointment

Directory of Local Activities in the Parish

You have joined a thriving community where dozens of people give their time voluntarily to provide active opportunities for all.

The Village Hall is used for meetings, pre-school education, lectures and classes, and other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation. Although the hall is in use throughout most of the week, it is available for hire for private functions, including children's parties, wedding receptions, funeral teas, and village social functions.

Contact: Diane Swift -
07733463620

Dodleston Youth Players

Friendly group of adults and youngsters whose main production is the annual pantomime in February. Great team spirit and lots of laughs. Come join us. Contact us via email dodlestonyouthplayers@gmail.com

Dodleston & District Women's Institute

Dodleston & District WI are a group of around 40 ladies, we meet on a monthly basis normally in the village hall on the 2nd Thursday in the month. We have a variety of speakers through which we hope to inspire, educate, and pass on skills and knowledge. We also give women in our community a voice on issues that matter to them and in doing so we have a lot of fun, foster community spirit and make friends. If you would like to join us, then please get in touch by contacting us at dodlestonwi@yahoo.co.uk or join our Facebook page for more information.

Dodleston Local History Group

Founded in 1984, the History Group has recorded the origins of the Parish. It also holds regular lectures in the village hall. Contact: Bernard Dennis MBE Chairman. Tel: 07966 436073 email: bernarddennis531@gmail.com

Dodleston Leisure Group

We meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons in the Village Hall. Diary of events will be published on the notice board inside the main door. Contact: Jim Howard Secretary 01244 661468

Toddlers & Babies

Dodleston Toddlers and babies playgroup meets every Thursday morning 10 until 11.30 during term time, in the village hall. Free play, craft activities, sing along and refreshments! £3 per session.

Brownies & Guides

Brownies (aged 7 to 10) meet Mondays 6 pm - 7:30 pm
Guides (aged 10 to 14) meet Mondays 7:15 pm - 8:45 pm, at the village hall. We have a very active and diverse program very much led by the girls themselves.
Brownies highlight: "Pack holiday" where we go away for a weekend of fun indoor and outdoor activities.
Guides highlights: campfires, making "Smores", learning camp skills, and games on the Parish field.
Adult volunteers also wanted so please get in touch to find out more about Guiding!
Mel Hughes (Guide Leader and Assistant Brownie Leader (Snowy Owl)). Tel: 07970802213.
Beth Daniels (Brownie Leader (Brown Owl) and Assistant Guide Leader)). Tel: 07860614041.
Dodlestonguides@gmail.com

Dodleston Home Watch

Keeping local residents informed and updated with Cheshire Police Alerts. Also, reports and circulates any suspicious incidents and anti-social behaviour.
Contact: Bernard Dennis
MBE. Tel 07966 436073 email: bernarddennis531@gmail.com

Chapel Stores

Not just a Village shop & Post Office, so very much more, come and find out and say hello to Lloyd & Sam

Dodleston Pre-School

Highly qualified staff facilitate learning through play with child individuality at the forefront of practice. Large play spaces, free flow to outdoors, continuous provision and child-initiated play. Dodlestonpreschool@gmail.com

Fitness & PT

Qualified Internationally in Group Fitness, Personal Training and Yoga, 20 years' experience.
Providing 1 to 1 Personal Training and online Zoom sessions.
Contact: Vicki Rahill - 07963500607.

Dodleston Sports Field

Is owned and operated by Dodleston Parish Council. This facility has cricket and football pitches, a pavilion, perimeter walking / jogging track of about 1km and an outdoor gym for all ages. All members and groups within our community are free to use the facilities, details of which can be found at www.dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk

Cricket

Dodleston CC - play in the midweek league and weekend friendless, won our division last season. Matches on Wednesday evenings and nets Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm. Email Jtbparker@me.com or phone 01244 661526

Dodleston Village Foundation

The Dodleston Village Foundation was established in 1979 to provide and maintain a Village Hall and Recreational Field for the inhabitants of Dodleston, Lower Kinnerton and Marlston-cum-Lache and believes its objectives to be consistent with current Charity Commission guidance on providing for the public benefit, and these objectives are pursued in the activities of the charity. Dodleston Village Foundation is a registered charity (510057).

The Recreational Field is a significant asset to the character of the village. It presents a wide variety of play equipment catering for a range of ages, along with picnic tables and benches, a basketball court, a small football pitch and an activity course, and is well used by both villagers and those living outside the parish.

St Mary's Church

Our inspirational vicar, Hazel Clarke, leads services each Sunday at 11am. There are coffee mornings at 10.30am the first Wednesday of the month and a craft group the second Monday at 10am (both suspended during lockdown). You'll be made very welcome!

Bell Ringing

Join our team for an exercise of body and mind in a 400-year-old tradition. For ages 10 - 75 with reasonable health and hearing. Contact: Liz 07762 630364

Dodleston & District Parish Council Officers

email: katepcdodleston@gmail.com

Tel: 07872927050

Clerk to the Parish Council: **Kate Lloyd**

Chairman: Cllr Mike Maughan

Tel: 01244 661776

email: mike.maughan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk



Vice Chairman: Cllr Paul Buchanan

Tel: 07710 900833

email: paul.buchanan@dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk



Cllr Mike Dix

Tel: 01244 661030

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Cllr Chris Ward

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Cllr Mark Williams

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Cllr Rachel Jones

Tel: 01244 660206

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Cllr Welna Bowden

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www.dodlestonparishcouncil.co.uk



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