

West Wittering Parish Council Newsletter September 2024

In memory of Drew Allardice

Our Community Warden, Drew Allardice, sadly passed away in July. West Wittering Parish Council offers its sincere condolences to his partner and family.



Drew worked tirelessly in supporting and helping local residents. He was so well known and respected amongst all the community and his approach in engendering cooperative relations with local people of all ages, and his clear love of his job meant that he got things done where other actions failed.

Here are some of the tributes from members.

"The whole area loved and appreciated Drew for all his many contributions to our community. He is already much missed as he was always there when needed for so many residents." - Cllr Pike, Chairman WWPC.

"This is sad news. Drew was a real trooper and dedicated to his role as a community warden. Many local people will be saddened by his passing and see it as a great loss to the local area." - Cllr Debegeer

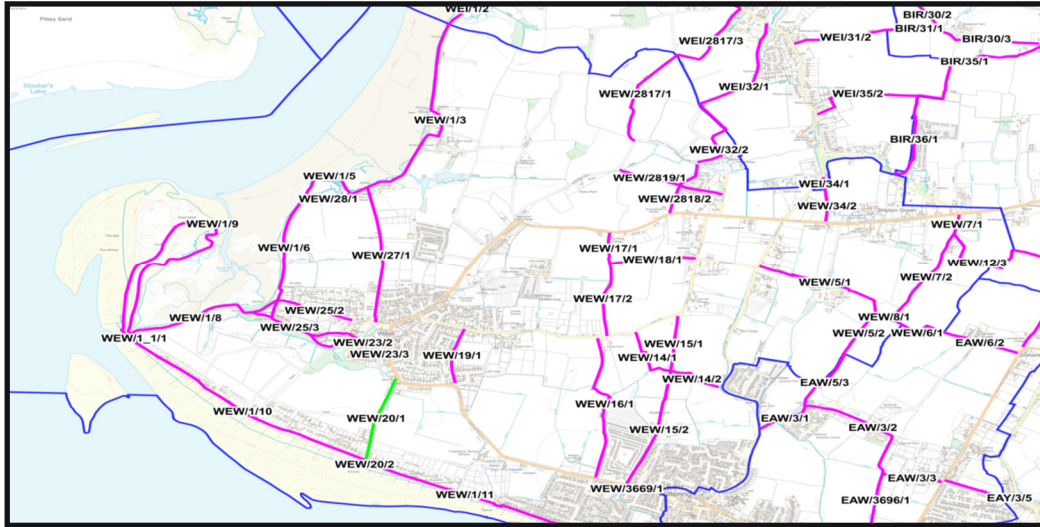
"I am saddened and shocked by this news. Drew has made a tremendous contribution to the community. As warden, he knew the village's young trouble makers and helped many a youngster keep clear of the law. But he expanded the role. His attitude was "how can I help?" He balanced the demands of the law and the individual's needs. His inter-personal skills were remarkable. Everyone loved him. His is an impossible act to follow." - Cllr Martin

"I absolutely endorse all the comments about Drew and feel saddened that we have lost such a vital member of the community." - Cllr Handford

Parish Public Footpaths



We are very fortunate to have quite a number of footpaths running across the parish and the Council are always keen to keep these in as good an order as possible so they are pleasant to walk.



The following are the footpaths we find to be most used;

No. 1	Coastal Path within the Parish Council boundary (Shore Rd to Rookwood).	No. 20	Berry barn lane to The Strand.
Nos 5,7 & 8	Hales Farm to Shipton Green.	N0.23	Cakeham Rd via The Wad to Snow Hill connecting to footpath no. 25 Coastguards Lane.
No. 14	Church Rd (opposite Furzeffield) to Elms Lane.	No 24	Pound Rd via the Church to Coastguards Lane.
No. 15	Cakeham Rd (Scotts farm) to Elms Lane.	No. 27	Ellanore Lane to the Coastal Path (no. 1)
No. 16	Cakeham Rd (opposite Joliffe Rd) to Elms Lane.	No. 28	Ellanore Lane to Rookwood.
No. 17	Elms Lane to Chichester Rd.	No. 34	Chichester Rd to Itchenor Rd.
No. 18	Elms Lane to footpath number 17.	G 18	Sheepwash Lane to Itchenor Rd.
No.19	Wellsfield to Elms Lane.		

The County and Parish Council undertake a certain amount of footpath maintenance and the Parish Councillors take inspection walks to look at the condition of footpaths but you can help by reporting badly overgrown or blocked footpaths to the parish office.

Should a footpath run along the boundary of your property could you please ensure that shrubs and trees are not overhanging into the footpath and causing an obstruction to walkers.

Bio-Diversity



West Wittering village is very lucky to have a new Neighbourhood Plan which, before being made, was subject to several rounds of public consultation. This means that it reflects the wishes of the residents and also contains community aspirations for the future. As such it provides a form of business plan for the Parish Council to use to create a strategy for the future actions. It also provides policies to protect the village and all its residents from inappropriate development .

One of the policies is to ensure that every time any development takes place in the village there is some benefit for biodiversity, this maybe some additional native planting, a hedge or tree, some wildflowers or an area set aside for nature or something as simple as a bird, bat or hedgehog box.

We are also trying to manage parish land more for the benefit of nature to respond where we can to the biodiversity crisis, which continues to get worse. Everyone with a garden can do their bit to help just put away the strimmer and chemicals and mow less, even little changes can make a difference and will help attract wildlife into your garden.

Rookwood Lawn Tennis Club



Bill mentioned in his reflections that he was able to finally open the tennis club in 2017 having started planning for them in 1994. That simple statement does little justice to the effort and hard work that Bill put in to starting the club. He worked determinedly and tirelessly to achieve his goal and I hope that he can be pleased to see how the club has prospered and grown since its inauguration.

Initially the club, with its two courts, had to feel its way and had a cap on the number of members to ensure court availability to members and also members of the public. Public accessibility has always been an important tenet that the Parish Council and the FG Woodger Trust sought to uphold. Working in partnership with the Parish Council and with the aid of the FG Woodger Trust the club doubled the number of courts from two to four last year. With the extra courts and the experience now gained from running the club for a few years the membership cap no longer applies and new members are very welcome.

The club is thriving with nearly 200 adult members and in addition has a healthy junior section of nearly 50 members. We have two LTA level 3 ranked tennis coaches who organise a full programme of coached group sessions for adults and juniors as well as offering individual coaching sessions. We have an active social programme which includes fun club tournaments. If you are passing the tennis courts you will usually see that they are in full use most of the time. In fact, it's a perfect village scene; there will be a backdrop of children running around having football coaching on the playing field, toddlers in the play area being supervised by their parents and the tennis courts all in use in the foreground. Bill and the Parish Council should be very satisfied with the way that things have turned out. The club is very grateful to the Parish Council and the FG Woodger Trust as without their vision and support the club would not exist.

Anyone interested in joining the club should email rookwoodtennis@gmail.com for more information.

Cycle Path Project—Bob Hutton



The Parish Council is currently investigating a project to plant a hedge along the full length of the East-West Cycle path. The hedge will encapsulate the existing timber fencing and as the timber fails, the hedge will become the dominant boundary.

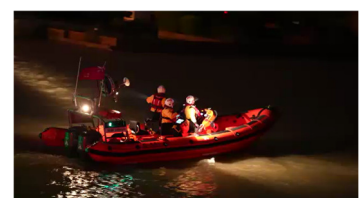
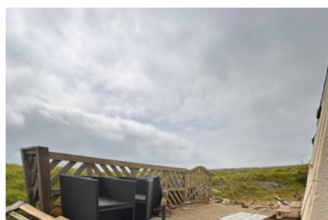
This is a long-term project, and we are working with the landowner, the tenant farmer, West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council and the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group. The area of hedge to be planted is in excess of 1000 metres and a funding application is being submitted to Defra and, if successful, we would anticipate the planting period to be during the Winter season of 2025. Further updates will follow in due course.

Tidal Flooding at Medmerry

In April an extremely high tide caused extensive flooding and damage at Medmerry. Around 180 people had to be evacuated overnight from the Medmerry Holiday Park.

There is little doubt that the six metre tide on 9th April would have over-washed the old sea wall between Snowhill and East Head, possibly by ½ metre. It would likely have endangered the pumping station on the Beach Road and prevented public access to the beach. This was the first serious test of the new flood bund constructed in 2012 and funded in part by local donations.

Some dramatic photographs were recorded of the event which were widely reported in national and regional newspapers and television.



Bill Buckland - Reflections of a Parish Councillor

I was born in 1942 and my father, George Henry Silas Buckland, was born in 1901 at Holdens Farm and later lived in Woodbine Cottage, West Wittering. My grandfather, Robert Buckland was a Shepherd in the eighteen hundreds until the nineteen thirties along with Tinkle Phillips, both Shepherds at Rudgwick Farm. My Great Grandfather, Silas Lewis Buckland, was a Shepherd at Stubcroft farm and then, in 1886, lived at Piggery Hall.

So I think I just about qualify as a Local! In 1986 I stood for election as a Parish Councillor and have seen many Councillors come and go serving short and long terms, not least Richard Shrubbs whom I feel deserves a medal for all that he achieved during his long service on the Parish Council.

I am still serving on the Parish Council and try to do my best for the community in which I grew up and have lived in all of my life. In 1994 I started plans for having public tennis courts for local children and residents who could not afford to join a private club. In 2017 I finally managed, with help from the FG Woodger Trust, Richard Shrubbs, Bob Hutton and the Parish Council, to open the Rookwood Lawn Tennis Club (RLTC) which has been successfully managed by Aidan Hickman and the RLTC Committee for eight years. Thanks must go to my Wife, Rose, Mrs J Fitch, the then Secretary of the Club, Mr D Armstrong, currently Chairman, Mr & Mrs Adams, Sally Temple and the rest of the Committee members for all that they have done and still do to provide this wonderful facility for the village.

I do feel a little sad when thinking back to my father who, in 1912, looked eastwards out of his bedroom in Woodbine Cottage across to East Wittering and the only buildings to be seen were Cakeham Green Farmhouse, East Wittering Windmill, The Royal Oak Pub and Admiralty Row Coast Guard Cottages. The rest was mainly farmland and has now become more urban. The Parish Council is very aware of the importance of a sense of place for residents and continues to fight for a balance in development that is appropriate for the village. I was on the Steering group, ably chaired by Cllr Pike, managing the development of the West Wittering Neighbourhood Plan in recent years and this document clearly describes what is appropriate and acceptable with useful policies to guide the planners and applicants alike. Protecting the Green Gap between the two parts of the village is a particular success. It may feel like we are fighting a losing battle sometimes but without the Neighbourhood Plan and the skills and knowledge of my fellow hardworking Councillors along with the expertise of residents, I would be more worried about this but we now have some protection in place.



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1. Great Grandad Silas Lewis outside Piggery Hall

2. Aunt Ada Buckland's wedding and Grandad Robert Buckland

3. Great Granny and Grandad Lewis

4. Piggery hall 1800's

5. The Old Boat House, Mrs Coombes at the window.

6. Armada Barn

7. Uncle Phil Coombes's lorry at The Old Boat House.



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Facebook - Ivan Western

As part of our drive to publicise parish events and issues the Parish Council can now be followed on facebook for all those using this platform. Councillor Western is leading this initiative and any feed back would be welcome. Please send your comments to the Parish Clerk Sue Hawker.

Moutiers-les-Mauxfaits Twinning Visit with West and East Wittering—Leslie Handford

On Wednesday 8 May this year a group of people from East and West Wittering were delighted to welcome nineteen visitors from the town of Moutiers-les-Mauxfaits in the west of France, with which we are twinned. The group had travelled in a large minibus, which was able to park in the Parish Council car park. The Twinning Committee had planned an interesting and active itinerary for the visitors, so with the sun shining on Thursday morning we were all ready to go.



The first activity was a trip to Arundel. There was time for a wander around the town and to visit the stunning gardens of the castle. Afterwards we all gathered for a very convivial lunch at the Black Rabbit by the banks of the River Arun. Our visitors spent the evening with their hosts, enjoying, I am sure, the delights of English cuisine.

The sun shone again on Friday morning, ready for a treasure hunt around West Wittering. Well organised by the committee, our French visitors set off to hunt for various clues in the village. As a light relief from their search, they were treated to an ad hoc coffee stop at Snow Hill. This caused some amusement and questions from locals walking their dogs hoping for a free coffee! This was followed by a sandwich lunch at the Cricket Club. During the afternoon groups either explored East Wittering or visited West Wittering Primary School. At the school the children were excited to practise their French and our visitors were very impressed! Their leader spoke to the children about Moutiers and French schools and delighted the children with artefacts from the area. Again, the hosts entertained their visitors in the evening.

Another day of glorious sunshine on Saturday added to our visitors' enjoyment of a day in Chichester. They were of course impressed by so many historical features of the city.

One of the highlights of the visit took place in the evening at the Memorial Hall. We were all given both a demonstration and a chance to practise our skills at line dancing. A lively "caller" attempted, successfully in some cases, to keep everyone in step! This was accompanied by a delicious paella, speeches and gifts from the Twinning Committee.

It was with sadness that we waved our French friends off for a very early Channel crossing, but it was with joy that it had been a successful visit for both visitors and hosts. A big thank you to the Twinning Committee, to all the helpers and for the glorious weather we enjoyed throughout the four days.



This article is written by the committee of the Sierra Leone Bo School Appeal

Many of our readers will know this charity which has become a cherished part of West Wittering life. For those who don't, the Sierra Leone Bo School Appeal is run by a group of local volunteers who all share a passion to improve the life chances for young people in one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2006, our community helped create and now supports St. Paul's Secondary School in Bo, Sierra Leone's second city.

Since 2006 your generosity has allowed us to fund several capital projects including classroom blocks, a school hall, a 2 km perimeter wall and a network of storm drains around and within the school. In 2023, a 22 tablet computer lab was added and we delivered over 1,000 books for the library. The school is now one of the top ten secondary schools in Sierra Leone with almost 2,000 students.



You also sponsor 330 of the very poorest children who could not otherwise attend the school. Please read on for more about our work and how you can help. We aim to fund a purpose-built domestic science lab. Currently, most lessons and exams for this take place in the open air. In a country where rainstorms last hours and cause flash flooding this is dangerous. The school has presented a fully costed design for the facility which will equip the students with essential life skills; and is keen to start construction before the new school year.

We are also keen to provide a better, more permanent and stable electricity supply to the school as the mains supply and back-up generator are inadequate, polluting and expensive. This will involve the purchase of solar panels, batteries, inverters and switching gear as well as the use of local electricians all at significant cost.

We can only provide the support Bo School needs with your help. You are making a difference and giving children a chance in life, a chance to fulfil their potential which they otherwise simply would not have. Please be assured that every penny you donate goes straight to the school. The committee takes no payment for our work and, if we travel to Bo, we do so at our own expense.

PLEASE SPONSOR A CHILD

We need to find new sponsors to add to the wonderful army who already support one or more children at the school. JUST £5 a month allows a child to attend St. Paul's with all the necessary uniform, books and other equipment and to have a daily lunch, often the only time they will eat in a day. Please visit our website (www.slbsa.co.uk) for more information about St. Paul's, the children it is educating, and how you can help.—**Education, a gift for life**

