

August/September Parish Magazine

St Martha Parish Council News

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COVID-19

A lot has happened since the last edition of this magazine and no one could have predicted a year ago that we would find ourselves engulfed in a worldwide pandemic. Like so many, the first reaction of the Parish Council was to see what it could do as quickly as possible to support local residents. Luckily, we were already very blessed in Chilworth with a strong sense of community and support from the Chilworth Care Committee, our local shops and Chilworth2gether – all of whom came into their own during lockdown. Everyone helped to make sure that information was freely available on how to access food deliveries, collect prescriptions and help the most vulnerable. People were quickly able to access information on our Parish Council website or follow us on the new Instagram and Twitter accounts.

Virtual Meetings and a New Parish Council Appointment

St Martha has held several virtual meetings by Zoom which has meant that work has continued much as usual though without our Annual Assembly and Annual Meeting. In line with other Parish Councils and Borough Councils, St Martha agreed not to hold an Annual Meeting in 2020 but allow all appointments to continue until May 2021. However, we were delighted to co-opt a new member to the PC in June, Jean-Pierre Pugh, and he has already become a much-valued member of the team. That still leaves one vacancy – so if there is anyone who would like to join the Council and help the community in this way please do get in touch with our Clerk or speak to a Parish Councillor.

West Lodge, Blacksmith Lane

Some of you will have been following the story of West Lodge (WL) and be aware that the Parish Council put in a planning application for ‘change of use’ from residential to community use. Though a number voiced their support there were also concerns from some residents in respect of parking, sight lines and the speed of traffic. The Parish Council has been listening! Parking in the lane can be managed by refusing access to users of West Lodge until compliance with a *requirement* not to park in the lane is met. (The application asked for off road parking spaces at the back of West Lodge for those using the property.) Parking in front of West Lodge can be stopped by placing permanent wooden posts on the verge, however the PC cannot control parking for other visitors to the Gunpowder Mills site. The Parish Council has concerned itself separately with the matter of the sight line from Powder Mills Place and has made enquiries

from the Police and Highways about any reported incidents of speeding in the lane. Chilworth2gether and the PC are looking at possible funding streams for the refurbishment of WL and Chilworth Manor has confirmed it will include WL as a beneficiary of next year's Picnic and Pimms and Chilworth2gether has pledged to deliver £20,000 matched funding (as part of a Heritage Lottery bid). We are not sure when there will be more news on the planning application, or further developments concerning West Lodge, so please do keep an eye on the Parish Council website and Instagram if you wish to keep up to date with what is happening.

Chilworth Post Office

As mentioned in our Chairman's 2020 Report, the Parish Council was very sorry to learn that Graham Fagg, after many years of running the Chilworth Post Office, is going to retire. We wish him well and give him our sincere thanks for the wonderful way he has supported the village and the amazing service the Post Office has provided over a long period. It won't be the same without him, or our own Post Office. However, the Parish Council has met with Shalford Parish Council to discuss if there is a way of keeping the post office service in the village.

'Thank you' to our retiring auditor

Our thanks go to Mike Taylor for undertaking the annual internal audit of Parish Council accounts for a number of years. We are extremely grateful to him for carrying out this work and supporting the community in this way. 'Thank you' Mike!

Councillors:

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John Peake (Vice-Chair) peake.j@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

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Jean-Pierre Pugh to be advised

Clerk: *Anne Tait* clerk@stmarthaparishcouncil.co.uk

The Next Parish Council Meeting (a virtual meeting on Zoom) will be held on 9th September at 10:00 a.m. This will be publicised on the Parish website, Twitter and Instagram. All are welcome to join the meeting, please contact the Clerk for the password in advance.