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The Parish Council Newsletter

Welcome to the February 2021 edition of the Parish Council Newsletter. This four page version of the Newsletter is available on the Council’s website. **Printed copies** will be available from our usual outlets at Forest Pharmacy; Fourways Stores; Budgen and Woodington Feeds. We will be making regular Newsletter updates to be found on our **web site** and our **Facebook** pages – type in **Copythorne Parish Council** on Facebook to get to our pages.

An Updated Message from the Parish Council

As ever, the Parish Council would like to express our **sincerest wishes** that all of you **stay safe and well** as the country continues to experience the threats posed by the Coronavirus (**COVID-19**). Sadly, **we are all in Lockdown again** with no real clarity as to when the restrictions will be eased.

But, fantastically, **the national vaccination programme is now under way** and several members of our community in the first and second priority groups have now received their first jab (and possibly, the second), so we’re on our way! Centres where we are currently being directed for vaccinations are **Totton (football club)** and **Romsey (Crosfield Hall)** plus **AR Pharmacy (West Totton)** for ‘NHS notified appointments’. Some of us are also attending a centre in **New Milton**.



The light is, hopefully at the end of the tunnel and if the Government can maintain and develop the pace of the programme and hit the targets which it has identified, **we will be able to see a potential end** to the terrible impact of the virus on all our lives!

Our local community shops and services are still providing us with sterling service and **all are open** at the times which we have previously published. In addition, **local groups are still supporting** the more vulnerable in our community. I’m sure readers will join the Parish Council in **thanking all those who continue to support us at this time in our Parish** and, indeed, all those working to provide the support and services and support to the nation as a whole.

But as we continue in Lockdown, please remember to continue to keep an eye out for those **neighbours** who are **vulnerable and / or alone** who still need our help and care! Even when we’ve had that vaccination, **all the normal restrictions and requirements still apply!**

The Parish Council continues to provide **updates on our website and Facebook pages**.

The next Parish Council meeting on **9th February 2021** will again be held **virtually via videoconferencing**. If you have an issue you’d like raised under the ‘**Public Session**’ agenda item, please contact the Clerk; details at the end of the Newsletter.

So everyone: Please Continue to Be Careful! - Be Safe! - Be Well!

On a final note:

As some of you may already know, **Stanley’s Own Magazine** – fondly known as the ‘Yellow Peril!’ – which is usually published every month, as regular as clockwork in the Parish and has been so for as long as most of us can remember(!) **will not be published in February**. This is due to the current restrictions and the Stanley’s Own team view that they can’t deal with all the preparation and delivery safely, given the lockdown constraints.

They are keeping the **situation under review** and in (sort of) the words of Arnold Schwarzenegger, **soon as they can, ‘they’ll be back!!’**



Local Elections 2021

Readers will know that **Elections** for certain local government bodies originally planned for **May 2020** were postponed for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Preparations are now under way nationally **in the expectation that elections will go ahead this year on 6th May 2021**, although this could still change.

Elections for which we are involved this year as an electorate will be:

- **Police and Crime Commissioner**, and
- **County Councillors**

New Forest District Council (NFDC), has started its own local preparations for the elections and staff have been working hard to ensure that planned polling venues are **'COVID secure'** for those of us who like to vote in person.

NFDC is also providing information to make sure that voters know what other options they have for casting their vote – **postal voting and proxy vote** – for which an application process is required.

NFDC is adding articles to their weekly e-newsletter which is published on its web site to explain the election arrangements and how to access the **alternative options for voting**. Clearly, many of you might want to consider how you'll cast your vote and it's important you take a look at the web site to find out more.



The poster features the New Forest District Council logo at the top right. The main heading is 'Apply for a postal vote'. Below this, it states 'Polling stations will be safe places to vote in May, but there are other ways to vote.' Three icons represent voting methods: 'IN PERSON' (a ballot box), 'BY POST' (a ballot envelope), and 'BY PROXY' (two speech bubbles). A call to action says 'Want to vote by post? Apply early'. Logos for 'The Electoral Commission' and 'YOUR VOTE MATTERS DON'T LOSE IT' are also present. A teal banner at the bottom contains the text: 'There are a number of elections due to take place on Thursday 6 May. We are working to ensure polling places will be covid-secure, but you might prefer to vote by post. If so, it's never too early to apply for a postal vote.' At the very bottom, a white box with a teal border contains the URL: 'Apply to vote by post: www.newforest.gov.uk/votepost'.

At present, there is **no indication that the elections will be postponed again**, but discussions are continuing at Central Government level and a final position is awaited

All relevant information can be found at: www.newforest.gov.uk/votepost

Copythorne Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

Parishioners will know that around this time of the year, the Parish Council **starts planning for the Annual Parish Meeting (APM)**, which is usually held in the **third week of March** and which is a meeting designed for the community of the Parish to join together and hear about a variety of issues and discuss items of interest. **The Parish Council facilitates the meeting** on behalf of the community and assembles the agenda, based on local feedback. In 2020, we had to cancel the APM due to the Lockdown.

At its meeting in January, the Parish Council considered an initial draft of a possible 2021 APM agenda and a possible date for the meeting in March. However, given that there is **considerable doubt about the position in respect of this new Lockdown** or any other restrictions by that date, it was felt that, even if the Lockdown was ended, there would certainly still be restrictions on large gatherings of people and **we should assume that we can't have the meeting in March**.

Therefore, it was agreed by the Parish Council that **we should defer the meeting** until we can be more certain about what is or is not possible, and pencilling in a **possible APM date in May**.

In the interim, however, **were the May date still not be possible**, we are looking into whether or not it would be feasible to run a **'virtual APM'** using Zoom video conferencing – we can manage up to 100 people on one video conference! But this would involve people having access to an appropriate system.

We'll keep everyone updated on a monthly basis in the Newsletter, but for now, have assumed a possible meeting in May.

The Annual Parish Award 2021 is Open for Nominations

One of the events at the APM is the announcement of the results of the **Annual Parish Award**, which has now become a prestigious regular annual feature of the Parish calendar! Obviously, if there is a delayed, virtual or even cancelled APM, this would affect the announcement.



As with last year, when the award was made to a **very worthy recipient, Barbara Smith**, for her sterling work for the community in a number of roles over many, many years, at a suitably 'socially distanced' event at the Parish Hall car park, the Parish Council has decided to proceed with the **process to obtain nominations for the 2021 Award**. The Award will be made in March, at an appropriately organised event.

To that end, we are now announcing that the **2021 Annual Parish Award nomination process is now open** for contributions, which will be decided via a vote by the Members of the Parish Council at its meeting in March.

The Award can be made to an **individual or group who have made a real and significant contribution to the life or environment of the Parish as a whole** – not just one element or grouping within it. Your nomination will need to include a citation, explaining your reasons for the nomination you've made.

Full details of the **Annual Parish Award criteria** are in the nomination pack, which can be obtained from the **Parish Council Clerk**, contact details below.

We look forward to receiving your nominations, which are due back by **1st March 2021!**

The 2021 National Census is Drawing Closer



In our January edition we set information regarding the forthcoming **National Census** which is due to take place on **Sunday 21st March 2021**.

We thought we'd refer to it again in this edition as, remarkable as it may seem, we're already one month into 2021(!) and **the census will take place in less than 2 months from now!**

The National Census is managed by the **Office for National Statistics (ONS)**, which has set up a **dedicated web site** to provide more information on all aspects of the Census – its process, purpose and operation. A key function of the Census is to determine how, in the light of population information, the Government needs to plan for future services. The web site explains all this and is being updated on a regular basis and is well worth a look! It can be found at: www.ons.gov.uk/census (and apologies if you tried to access it following our last edition as I'd put an extra 'n' in the web address. **Sorry about that!** Corrected here.)

As time moves forward, more very informative information is becoming available. The ONS has **now published a very useful booklet** which contains answers to most of the probable questions people may have about the Census and what it means for every individual, which is now available on the web site.



Also included is a very helpful page with information about **how the on-line Census works, what you need to do it and how you'll be informed**.

NFDC also now has a dedicated web page established for census information locally on its website at: www.newforest.gov.uk/article/1724/

Local Government Boundary Commission Review Update



Readers will know that the **Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE)** in conjunction with **New Forest District Council (NFDC)** has been reviewing the electoral ward boundaries within the NFDC area, to consider the number of District Councillors it assesses would be appropriate in the future with a **2019 electorate size of 143,000** and a forecast rise to **148,000 in 2024**.

Although there have been some minor timing delays to the original timetable due to the Covid 19 restrictions, which was scheduled to complete in the Autumn of 2020, **the review is now complete**.

As expected, the published final recommendations for changes in the New Forest District state that **residents should be represented by 48 District Councillors –12 fewer than current arrangements**. There will be 26 wards, with between one and three councillors per ward. **The boundaries of all wards will change**.

Final orders now have to be **'laid' before Parliament** for final approval (the documents which form the basis of the 'legal change'). The original timetable indicated this would be in late 2020, but will take place in the near future, when Parliamentary time allows.

For Copythorne, this means that the Parish is now linked with **Netley Marsh** and **Ashurst and Colbury Parishes**, as well as **Bramshaw Parish** in the District electoral Ward, but **no longer with Minstead Parish**. As a result, from 2023 (i.e. by the time of the next major local elections at District level), we will have **2 District Councillors rather than the current 3**.

For more information on the review and outcomes, please go to:

lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/south-east/hampshire/new-forest

The Parish Council will now be looking at what this may mean for Copythorne which, as Parishioners know, is split into **2 Parish electoral Wards, North and South**, which was highlighted as an 'anomaly' in the original consultation information. **Watch this space!**

Prestigious Award to Local Community Member!

Local member of our community, **Mike Lashmar**, whom many of you will know from his role as the **Chairman of the Parish Hall Committee**, has been honoured with a major regional award for his professional work as a **Finance Director** at the Ageas Bowl complex in Southampton West End.

Major accountancy and business advisory firm BDO LLP and specialist recruitment consultancy CMA Recruitment Group have named Mike, Director of Finance at RB Sports & Leisure Holdings, which owns the Ageas Bowl, as the **Central South Mid Market Financial Director of the Year**.



This is a particularly well-earned reward, given that the Ageas Bowl, like so many sports and leisure venues has had to weather the Coronavirus storm of last year and continuing into this year, with Mike leading a process to keep the finances, and the venue, going. Mike has also played a key role in negotiations to ensure, despite Lockdown restrictions, the **Ageas Bowl hosted the first international cricket sporting event** following the spring lockdown - a major achievement.

Congratulations to Mike – well done!

The Next Two Parish Council Meetings

The next two meetings of the Parish Council will take place on Tuesday 9th February and Tuesday 9th March, starting at 7.00 p.m. At the time of writing, both meetings will take place 'virtually', in accordance with the restrictions due to the Covid 19 Lockdown

The **Clerk to the Council, David Rigby**, can be contacted by post at: **9, The Cleaves, West Totton, Southampton, SO40 8WL** or by telephone: **02381120150** or by email at: **parishclerk@copythorne.org.uk**; website: **www.copythorne.org.uk**. Details of individual Parish Councillors, and information on District and County Councillors, can also be found on the Parish Council Website and on community notice boards.