

Volunteers

Since the Chepstow Covid 19 Helping Group set up in March, we have fulfilled almost 5000 requests for help. Every day our volunteers take calls and fulfil requests for the people of Chepstow.

We have 14 teams across Chepstow and each area has a dedicated number of volunteers to provide the residents with support, whether that's taking food shopping to someone, or prescriptions, maybe it's walking a dog, or even just having a chat.

Thanks to Tidenham Parish Council this process was made MUCH easier, as they provided us with funds to buy and run a couple of the iZettle card machines we use to take payments in a safe and contactless way.

Every single person who has done or still does work with us are doing so without payment, including the admin team. It is a testament to

the community of Chepstow and Tidenham Parish that not only over 400 people registered to volunteer, but also are so ready to support in any way possible.

Running the group has been an immense privilege, and has given me an opportunity to build relationships and connections with people I may never have met otherwise.

It's so very easy to feel overwhelmed by the pandemic, and be scared of the risk, but recently I have been reflecting on the positive things that have come out of it. The most obvious thing has been the cohesion of the community in this crisis. The contact with elderly and vulnerable people who are otherwise alone a lot of the time, and being a lifeline for many.

We have been so grateful to receive such wonderful feedback from clients that have used our service, it's incredibly rewarding to be able to help in such a way.

Helen Child Villiers
- on behalf of the Chepstow Covid 19 Helping Group team.

Bench Restoration

Sometime before the first lockdown in March 2020 Gerald McBride and Bill Kerr approached the Parish Council regarding the poor state of the bench on the grassed area next to the roundabout on Beachley Road, junction with Sedbury Lane.

They very kindly offered to carry out the work required to restore it if the Parish Council would pay for the materials. This started a search for the owner of the bench. It does not belong to the Parish Council and seemingly to nobody else! Having spent a month or so trying to find the owner, and realising how important the bench is as a resting place for many members of the community, Parish Councillors agreed to adopt the bench and fund the restoration. A big thank you to Gerald and Bill for the community spirited gesture. A plaque was added to the bench to acknowledge their efforts.



Collette enjoying a welcome rest on the newly refurbished bench.

A. & H. JONES

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(all our meats and poultry are locally produced)
Homemade Pies & Sausages
Home Cured Bacon
Homemade Faggots
Steak, Guinness & Mushroom Pies
Fresh Fish

Telephone (01291) 622063
Coleford Road,
Tutshill, Chepstow

Useful Numbers

Chepstow Citizens Advice Bureau -
01291 623437

Samaritans - **116 123**

Gloucestershire County Council - Main
Switchboard - **01452 425000**

County Councillor - Mr Patrick
Molyneux **01594 529174**

Streetlights (Free-phone) - **08000 514514**

Police (All non-emergency) - **101**

Crime stoppers - **0800555111**

Bogus Caller Helpline - **0800 100 0777**

Doctors Surgery - Beachley Road
Sedbury **01291 626041**

-Coleford Road Tutshill **01291 637910**

NHS (Non emergency) - **111**

Sedbury Pharmacy - **01291 622532**

Revd David Treharne - **01291 760034**

Trading Standards Helpline - **03454 040506**

Education Helpline **01452 425300**

Environmental Helpline **01452 425500**

Forest of Dean District Council Main
Switchboard - **01594 810000**

Bulky Items Collection **01594 810000**

Tidenham Parish Council

Contact the Clerk, Mrs. Carol Hinton
on **01594 530779**

Email:

clerk@tidenhamparishcouncil.co.uk

or visit our website:

www.tidenhamparishcouncil.co.uk



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Tidenham Parish Council

Welcome to the latest Parish Council newsletter. I hope it finds you well and that you have not been too badly affected by the pandemic and the challenges we have all faced.

Like the rest of the country, the Parish Council has had to adapt to a new way of working during the past year.

Councillors quickly embraced holding meetings virtually through the Zoom video conferencing platform. Most meetings have taken place as scheduled and business carried on as normally as possible. Agendas for all meetings are currently displayed on the noticeboards throughout the Parish and on the website. Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings. Please contact the Clerk if you do not have access to the internet.

As well as the usual business conducted at meetings, the Council has been involved as a consultee for the Chepstow Transport survey and more recently for the proposed Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan.

The Council regularly shares Covid 19 information through the website and Facebook. The Covid 19 page of the website gives updates and contact information.

It was not possible to hold the Annual Parish Meeting last year. We had planned to hold several meetings throughout the Parish in April and May, but we are looking forward to being able to welcome you to our new look Parish meetings as soon as we are able to safely do so.

Councillor John Powell stepped down as Parish Councillor last August after many years serving the Parish. I would like to extend thanks to John on behalf of the Council for his hard work over the past years.

The Parish Council is working on an exciting project to create new opportunities for young people in our community. More details on this will be announced as soon as it is launched. Watch this space!

With best wishes to you and your families, and looking forward to being able to meet together as soon as possible.

Jan Roning Parish Council Chairman

Census 2021 will provide a snapshot of modern society

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

"A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed," Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at the Office for National Statistics, said.

"This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That's why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them."

Census day will be on **March 21 2021**, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.


**census
2021**

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. For the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit: www.census.gov.uk



 Join the Tidenham Parish Council Facebook Group and keep up to date on what's happening in the Parish.

A note of the progress of the Wye Valley Greenway; Chepstow to Tintern - October 2020

Charitable organisation Greenways and Cyclerroutes has been working for over two years to make the Wye Valley Greenway a reality.

In September 2020, the highlight of the Greenways year was a volunteer workcamp. Over 50 people worked their socks off to complete all the works through the 1100-metre-long Tidenham Tunnel. The contractors had done a great job in laying a surface of tarmac all through the week before, making it easier to ferry people and supplies through the tunnel. Although the tunnel has been locked for 30 years there are surprisingly few bats hibernating in it, so roof voids were made less draughty, alcoves partially bricked up, and wooden bat boxes screwed to the tunnel roof. Specially designed bat friendly lights were made up by volunteers and connected in the open air before being marched into the tunnel by 'chain-gangs' of volunteers each holding a light and section of the 275m long cables. Volunteers also installed a hanging "shield" below the central airshaft to catch any debris which might come down that way. The Tunnel is now locked off for the 6-month winter hibernation period during which time our bat specialist, will be monitoring the bat population to see if the bats are benefiting from our work. None of this would have been possible without the support of the National Diving and Activity Centre, and funding from the Railway Heritage Trust, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Enover Community Trust, Chepstow A to B and Sustrans. Our indefatigable Welsh contractor, John Davies, has cleared

off all the old trackwork north of the tunnel. If you are walking in that area you will notice some lengths of rail left in place. This is to protect a rare species of sedge which likes the outside edge of the rail. Dean Forest Railway are removing the continuous welded rail between the A48 bridge and Sedbury Lane. Hopefully this will all be complete well before Christmas leaving us a clear stone base to build that section of the path.



Volunteers at the cleared landslip north of the tunnel

Our local contractors, Ecovigour, have coordinated the supply of equipment and now Richard Nash's team are laying the main limestone dust path north and south of the tunnel. They will be joined by another local contractor, Safety Green, to construct a path around the Wydean school playing fields.

All being well, if the winter weather and the pandemic allow, we will open the path from Wydean School to Tintern at Easter. For the time being the route follows a short section of Sedbury Lane but we hope in due course to be able to make use of the remaining section of the Wye valley branch line to make a completely traffic free Greenway, 5 miles long, for the use and enjoyment of local cyclists and walkers.

Over the winter our local volunteer coordinator, Jeremy Cowen, will be arranging a number of working sessions. Works will include fencing to Bishton Lane where Robert Adam has kindly allowed an access for local people, and general tidying up beside the route.

If you would like to get involved please contact Jeremy by emailing: wyevalleygreenway@yahoo.com

Community Speedwatch Initiative

In conjunction with our Gloucestershire neighbourhood Policing team, the Parish Council is intending to carry out a Community Speedwatch Initiative in various locations throughout the Parish (once it is appropriate and safe to do so of course).

The purpose of such an initiative is to:

- encourage motorists to drive at a safe and appropriate speed
- reduce speed in areas of concern
- re-educate drivers about the dangers of speeding
- encourage motorists to comply with all traffic laws and regulations

Volunteers will be required to take part in the initiative which will involve monitoring traffic behaviour from the roadside. All equipment will be provided - including hand held radar guns and high viz clothing and training will be given by members of the local police team.

If you would like to register your interest in volunteering to take part in the initiative please contact the Clerk who will be in touch with you once a date has been agreed.

**clerk@tidenhamparishcouncil.co.uk
Tel: 01594 530779**

Our Local Unsung Heroes and Heroines

During these miserable and worrying times, when lots of people see only doom and gloom, and grey, cold and wet weather makes us feel even more desperate for spring, how can we cheer ourselves up?

Well, let me tell you how I have managed to smile and be grateful and happy.

Every month, and sometimes more frequently, since last March and our first lockdown, in my capacity as a District Councillor and as Older Persons' Champion (a little bit of type casting here!) I have phoned 18 care homes in the Forest of Dean.

At first it was to check that they had all the PPE they needed and to help if they didn't.

Then, when testing of staff and residents became compulsory, to check that all their test results were coming back in good time to spot any problems.

In some cases I was able to point them in the right direction for help.

I expect you've wondering why this makes me happy and makes me smile.

Well, first of all, since March these care homes have only told me of 3 cases of the virus, 2 asymptomatic and one resident ill but recovering. When I get weekly and monthly figures from Gloucestershire County Council we are doing very well in care homes in the Forest.

Again, so what? Nothing particularly joyful here.

Well, when I phone, I am invariably answered by a cheerful, happy voice.

The management and care staff are always optimistic, kind and caring. Their kindness is obvious in so many ways.

I was anxious about swab testing for very vulnerable patients who might not understand what is happening, and together with Tim Gwilliam, the Leader of the District Council, lobbied for saliva testing for our most vulnerable loved ones.

When I discuss the swab testing with the care homes, they are more than aware of the problems, but with their experience and kindness manage to perform this task with as little distress to the residents as possible.

The care homes are aware of the distress caused to families by the "no visiting" rule, but have to take into account the safety of all the residents and of course the staff.

Recently there had been anxiety about the residents and staff receiving the vaccinations that they need.

We were assured that a "strong arm" would be put around care homes. Our most frail and vulnerable family members needed to be vaccinated urgently. After a few false starts, I am delighted to be able to say that all the care homes that I have been contacting now tell me that all their residents and staff have been vaccinated. There were also no ill effects reported.

I could hear the relief in the voices of the staff when they told me this. They all seem to put their residents first in everything they do. The residents' families can feel reassured that their loved ones are in good, kind and caring hands. I hope that I have become a welcome voice on the phone to the care homes, and they know that they can contact me at any time if they think I can help in any way.

I have standing invitations to call in for a cup of tea when this emergency is over, and I'm really looking forward to being able to put faces to names. Let's hope it won't be too long before I can take up the invites!

We should all try to show our gratitude to these unsung heroes. They really are the salt of the earth. My faith in humanity has been restored.

We do not need to clap them.

We should shower them with bouquets of flowers!

Helen Molyneux, (District Councillor, Tidenham ward)

Scouts
1st Sedbury and Tidenham



1st Sedbury and Tidenham Scout Group were delighted to receive a grant of £500 from Tidenham Parish Council last year.

The Group is located in Sedbury and caters for boys and girls; Beavers (6-8 years), Cubs (8-10 years) and Scouts (11-14 years). The children come from all the local schools in the area and from both sides of the border. We also have a number of Young Leaders who are too old to remain Scouts but wish to help out in the group and work with all sections. We really enjoy a range

of activities and try to spend as much time outdoors as possible!

Due to the lockdowns and various restrictions it was very difficult for us to operate in a face to face manner during 2020. We have been busy updating our Scout Hut and are still working on improving our systems to potentially re-open in a "Covid-safe" manner in the New Year.

This has prevented us from running the Scout group as we would wish to and has stopped many camps that were lined up for last year. Sadly this has meant that we, as yet, have been unable to use the

equipment that the generous grant has enabled the group to buy. We are all excited to use the new kit and are really looking forward to the time when we can test it out!

We are run entirely by volunteers and are always on the look out for people who could come and lend a hand. This can take the form of a single session (perhaps on local history or your interests), a longer commitment or even helping out with some hut maintenance! If anyone would like to contact us then feel free: m.lillington@monscouts.org.uk.

cyngor ar bopeth **citizens advice**

Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice
Cyngor ar Bopeth Sir Fynwy

Telephone Advice : 03444 77 20 20
Company Limited by Guarantee - Registered Number 6532431 :
Registered Charity Number 1125068
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority
FRN: 617672

Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice offices are taking your calls

Monmouthshire County Citizens Advice offices are closed for Face to Face contact. However, we are still giving advice over the telephone, via webchat or email and we are now also able to offer video appointments if that is more convenient for you.

As you can imagine we have not been able to fully staff our offices however calls to the Chepstow office are being answered between 10am and 2pm Monday to Thursday.

If you don't get through or call out of these hours, please leave a message and we will call you back.

Alternatively, outside of these hours you can access the Citizens Advice webpage: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

To talk to us via webchat: Type 'webchat' in citizens advice web page search bar.

We are aiming to open the Chepstow Office for appointment only advice shortly so please phone us for latest updates.