

WESTERLEIGH & COALPIT HEATH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday April 22nd 2024 at Westerleigh Village Hall

Hosted by Councillor Jon Lean, Vice Chair of Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council

Councillor Jon Lean, Vice Chair of Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council, opened the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Rob McCullough, Cllr Phil King, Dean Ashpole-Chapman (Cotswold Edge Scout District)

22 members of the public were in attendance.

The Clerk and Finance Officer to the Parish Council were also in attendance.

The presenters were welcomed. Jon thanked Pat Parry and Cllr Carol Goddard for organising the refreshments and providing the delicious cakes for after the meeting.

1. Bob Taylor – Westerleigh Village Hall

Originally, from 1948, the community used a Nissen hut, as pictured on the wall. This building was completed in 1971.

It is run by a committee representing the Parish Council and village organisations that use the hall. We have no paid staff.

We hire it out to local groups, and for parties and meetings. The major client at present is Smiles, an organisation that entertains mentally- and physically-disabled children. Our income is from hiring, grants, and we also benefit from generous local businesses.

W&CHPC granted us £1,750 to upgrade the lighting to LEDs, with sensor-controlled ancillary rooms, and to install a Hive smart room-thermostat, which was possible following our installation of full-fibre broadband and WiFi.

This was finished in November 2023, giving cheaper bills, better brighter lighting, and the flexibility to easily change the heating times on cold days. This can now be done remotely from a phone or computer.

Our next planned improvement, in early May, is to sand and varnish the hall floor in a lighter colour that will better hide the scuff marks. We will also be marking out parking bays in the car park.

The Hall Committee is very grateful for the continued support of the Parish Council in maintaining and improving this well-used community building.

2. Alison Howard and Dee Powell – Westerleigh Village Speedwatch

The volunteer Speedwatch group was started in response to the increased volume of traffic through the village, increased speeds and number of accidents. Information about all of these issues has previously been supplied to the Parish Council.

Sophie Foxen co-ordinated setting up the group, working with Avon and Somerset Police to identify suitable places to monitor speeds for vantage and safety.

Speedwatch volunteers took part in an online course, followed up by a short questionnaire to ensure understanding.

Volunteers have also received training from a Speedwatch co-ordinator to cover equipment use and maintenance, reporting and how to deal with unhappy motorists. We are supported by the Police and issued with high vis jackets and optional beanie hats.

Speed monitoring takes place over a period of about an hour. A group of three volunteers monitor speeds, count traffic and take number plate details of speeding vehicles plus the vehicle make and model, and the time. These are submitted afterwards to the Police. We currently have eight volunteers who commit to about one hour per month.

Between late November 2023 and mid April 2024 we have recorded 167 cars travelling at over 36mph. The highest speed recorded was 58mph.

Any new volunteers are gratefully accepted as we can only realistically use daytime hours and have to work around work and other commitments.

3. Howard Rayner – Westerleigh Neighbourhood Watch

The Neighbourhood Watch was formed 30 years ago and is still going strong. Unlike most NW groups we cover the whole of the village rather than a single street. From the early days we received a great deal of support from across the village. There has been strong social element to the group from the beginning and our name now reflects this aspect of our work.

We publish a quarterly village newsletter. Thanks to a grant from the Parish Council (£200) we are able to print colour copies and publish an online version.

We organise an annual Family Fun Day at the Westerleigh Playing Field which includes stalls, family-friendly activities and a dog show. Each year the money raised goes to a different charity. We receive a grant from the Parish Council towards the event which covers insurance and other costs.

We also pay for and put up the Christmas Tree on the triangle each year.

Like other village organisations we need new volunteers to help us continue to provide these activities for the village. Please get in touch if you are interested.

4. Lauren Allen – Green Community Travel

We were fortunate to gratefully receive a grant from the parish council in July 2023. The grant was to advertise in the local Westerleigh neighbourhood magazine, as well as Matters Magazine which covers people residing in Coalpit Heath.

Our membership has increased since the grant was awarded, some passengers joined us to take advantage of our further afield trips. We also attended the Westerleigh fun day to speak to local residents about what we do at GCT.

We had hoped to have a bus visit Westerleigh and Ram Hill weekly and do a round robin around the parish but we didn't have any uptake on this, however we support the passengers that are registered with us by providing 6 journeys per week to accommodate their transport needs. That being said we would love to do more to support the parish and remain available to help with any transport needs.

Our services are: Ring and Ride which is local journeys e.g to Tescos/Doctors' appointments, this is around a more localised area and passengers can book regular bookings for each week, passengers can also use a loyalty card for this service. Voluntary Car is supported by our fantastic team of volunteers who take people to hospital in their own cars, either wait for them or do a double journey, this also enables us to travel outside of our normal area of operations. Hospital Transport is the same concept as Voluntary Car but it is using our own vehicles so gives passengers a fully accessible option. Group Travel enables local community groups to hire our minibuses to take a group of people out, we have another team of brilliant volunteers who drive our minibuses but groups can also provide their own driver. Friends of GCT Trips are designed to reduce social isolation, they vary from lunches, garden centre visits and visits to places we don't cover on the Ring and Ride (such as the Mall.) Since 2022 we have expanded these to further afield destinations and are pleased these are continuing through 2024, our passengers have really enjoyed these and we have visited places such as Chepstow, Burnham on Sea and Chippenham!

Annually we do passenger surveys and at our 2023 end of year survey we were able to gather the following results; 82% of respondents said using GCT has improved their quality of life. 95% said using GCT's services has improved their life satisfaction. 90% said using GCT made them feel happier with day to day life. 85% said using GCT has improved their health and wellbeing. Green Community Travel is always at the end of the phone if anyone wants to discuss transport further and would welcome doing more to help the parish, we are incredibly grateful to the Parish Council for their continued support and publicity of GCT.

5. Daniel Meek – Swift Sports Coaching: Update on Children's Holiday Activity Days held in the parish

Thank you once again for engaging Swift Sports Coaching to deliver the Free Holiday Club provision for Westerleigh and Coalpit Heath Parish Council. We are specialist providers of PE teaching, After School Sports Clubs, wraparound care and holiday clubs in the local area.

The holiday club programme, delivered at Westerleigh Playing Field with use of the Village Hall for toilet facilities and in wet weather, continues to be extremely popular and successful.

We run two sessions per week each school holiday, except the Christmas holiday. We offer 32 spaces each session, with a minimum of two staff members (ratio of 1:16). We offer quality assurances to all of our partner schools and parishes including ID checks, enhanced DBS checks and safeguarding policies and procedures.

Our parish events mirror our very successful and well-established holiday club format. Children sign in at 10am and participate in games, activities and sports throughout the day until 4pm when they are collected. Activities include:

- Tag games,
- Football,
- Nerf battlegrounds,
- Rugby,
- Netball,
- Archery,
- Inter-venue competitions,
- Theme days.

Swift Sports Coaching takes care of all advertising, promotions, booking (online via our website) and admin for the activity days. Most bookings come via the parish primary schools.

For each event we collect data using our online booking system and provide this data to the parish, enabling you to measure the reach and impact of the events and your funding.

The Easter programme statistics (for 2nd, 3rd, 11th and 12th April) show that:

- 128 spaces were on offer,
- 94.53% of spaces were booked,
- 97% attendance rate,
- Age range of attendees was 5 – 11 years,
- Gender split was 47% girls, 53% boys.

This is an extremely good attendance and booking rate when compared to other parishes and our own holiday clubs. We also record the number of days each child attended, with the highest number of children attending for one day, although over 20 children attended all four days.

Over the past three years you have funded 429 hours of provision, 2,112 spaces and over 250 unique participants.

During the coming May half term holiday our free fun day events will be taking place at a new venue, Mafeking Hall. The additional indoor space will allow for a bigger variety of games and activities, as well as giving us more options when the weather isn't ideal.

The full report can be read on our [website](#).

6. Janet Morrison – Westerleigh Bloomers

The Bloomers are grateful to the Parish Council for a previous grant enabling them to purchase fresh plants and additional wooden planters. The group looks after 16 planters around the village including at the playing field, the Pound and on the triangle. A group of ladies help with planting and watering throughout the spring and summer.

The meeting Chair gave a special thank you to Janet who, in the last few months has single handedly maintained the boxes, due to illness and family responsibility among the other ladies.

7. Sophie Peart – Bristol and Weston Hospitals Charity

Thank you for your donation. This really will benefit our amazing NHS staff, their patients and families in all 10 of our hospitals that we support.

I'm here today to share a bit about who we are and projects that we've funded in the hospitals. Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity is the official NHS charity for University Hospitals Bristol and Weston Trust. We fund anything that is over and above what the NHS can provide to transform the experiences patients have in our local hospitals. We support a workforce of 13,000 NHS staff providing care to over one million patients every year.

Some of you might be wondering about Southmead Hospital who have their own charity. The main reason we're separate to them is that we work in different geographical areas and every hospital has to have a charity since people can't give money directly to the NHS, so this is why we're separate to Southmead. Whilst we're in close proximity to one another, they are separate medical trusts that specialise in different medical areas so for example, Southmead specialises in Neurology

and Breast Cancer and so anyone who might be treated for this would likely support Southmead Hospital Charity and anyone who has been treated in Bristol children's hospital, would likely come to us.

Overall, any NHS charity has a similar goal to fund anything that's over and above what the NHS provides, so you'll hear of similar projects being funded in different hospitals, just in this case, it depends on which hospital someone would like to support. They'll also have similar key focus areas to support our local NHS hospitals and ours are...

Little things that make a big difference.

- Period packs for Children's, Weston, BRI – plans to rollout this out to St Michael's & sexual health clinic.

Some patients who are admitted to hospital experience their period during their stay and may not have the items needed. Some are long-term inpatients and may experience their period for the first time whilst in hospital. We've funded packs which contain a range of products, including different sizes and absorbency, pyjamas, wipes, hand sanitiser, underwear – all of those that they feel they may need when unexpectedly experiencing this in hospital.

In A&E at least one patient a day benefits from the Period Project, so approx. 30-50 patients a month. "Thank you so much I just didn't think about picking sanitary products up before leaving the house". "What a generous and wonderful project".

- Childrens hospital arts and crafts (2021)
- Teddies with replica medical feeding tubes attached.

These teddies help children adjust to their own medical feeding tubes. Not only are these there for the children to feel comforted by and to help them relax in an unfamiliar setting, but it also helps to teach them and those around them, like any younger siblings too for example, about the child's condition and can support a child who may be adjusting to new appearances.

These little things can have a big impact and make patients feel more relaxed/less anxious, which may mean patients complete treatment quicker, possibly recover quicker, less time in hospital.

We have also funded:

- Reclining chair in chemotherapy day unit (2019)
- A Children's Research Facility (CRF) which we called The Coral Reef.

The children's hospital in Bristol was the only big children's hospital without a dedicated Clinical Research Facility. These facilities could be found in major cities across the UK, including London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool and Sheffield. The lack of a CRF in Bristol meant we were unable to participate in a range of complex studies that should be on offer, which deprived children across the South West from accessing the latest treatments.

- You might have seen the Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity buses around the centre of Bristol.

These are the free hospital shuttle buses which means staff and patients have a free and easy way to get to the hospitals. Not only does this provide patients with ease to accessing our hospitals, it's

also able to carry 29 people, which is approximately 10 cars, avoiding unnecessary journeys to the hospitals and cutting down on emissions, making the air cleaner around our hospitals.

- A music teacher for Bristol Royal Hospital for Children.

Every Monday, a music teacher visits the hospital, teaching five to six patients each session. There are many children with special educational needs and profound and multiple learning difficulties who have been in hospital for a long time. For those children, simply being able to feel, hear or touch the instruments, can bring much joy and distraction during their stay in hospital.

We couldn't fund all that we do all without our supporters.

Reminder that we're looking for volunteers all the time and to ask for knitting.

- Big Bristol Abseil – doing an event – Register your interest for the next one, 27th April at Children's Hospital
- Event volunteers
- Donations of knitted items and crafts. People enjoy knitting but very often they have no-one to knit for, so they donate to us.

Some key facts:

- The fundraising hub made £1,509 in August 2023.
 - We raised £4,700 selling knitting items in the hub from Jan-Sep 23 We raised £1,400 selling pre-loved books in the hub from Jan-Sep 23
- Volunteers gave us 1,300 hours of their time April 2022 – March 2023.
- We've got 165 crafters and knitters, but we always need more!
- The total distance cycled to raise money for our hospitals in 2023 was 7,900 miles.
- BWHC invested £1.6 million into our hospitals in the 2022-23 financial year.

Thank you so much for listening, for the opportunity to talk, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask them or you can follow up with them via email.

The full report can be read on our [website](#).

8. Jenny Benson – Great Western Air Ambulance Charity

Thank you for supporting Great Western Air Ambulance Charity over the years. Westerleigh Parish Council generously donated £5,000 in 2023, amassing to £17,000 across the last four years. We need to raise over £4million a year to remain operational, yet we receive no day-to-day government, NHS or National Lottery funding, so we truly couldn't do what we do without you. 2023 was our second busiest year on record. The Critical Care Team received a total of 1,979 call-outs to incidents across the region which includes South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and parts of Wiltshire. We're needed by around five patients a day, although this year it is already more like 7 patients each day. We continue to get busier and busier.

In 2023 in South Gloucestershire, GWAAC's specialist team of Critical Care Doctors, Advanced Practitioners and Specialist Paramedics in Critical Care and Pilots rushed to help 290 local people in need of lifesaving care in locations such as at the side of the road, in a muddy field or in their home. This is an increase of 17 patients compared to the previous year.

The crew responded to 57 children and teenagers in urgent need, which is 20% of the charity's total missions to South Gloucestershire. As a percentage of GWAAC's total missions to an area in its region, South Gloucestershire had the highest percentage of call-outs to young people. Luckily the team is well-equipped to deal with the increasing number of young patients. GWAAC has crew members that specialise in paediatric and neonatal critical care, and when a call comes in for a young patient, the team responds with the specialist kit bags set up to treat children and babies.

"We're very lucky to have access to manikins of all paediatric sizes for training purposes, from pre-term infant to school age. Equally important, we also carry a wide range of sizes of equipment allowing us to resuscitate and treat this vulnerable group." - Dr James Tooley, Critical Care Doctor, Great Western Air Ambulance Charity

Do you know the most likely reason someone would need GWAAC's air ambulance crew in South Gloucestershire?

The most frequent type of incident that required the attendance of GWAAC's specialist crew in 2023 in South Gloucestershire was cardiac arrests. The crew responded to 86 people who had suffered a cardiac arrest, which is 30% of the charity's total missions to South Gloucestershire. The team responded to 503 call-outs for cardiac arrests across GWAAC's whole region which makes up one-quarter of its annual missions.

The crew attended 73% of call-outs to the charity's whole region in 2023 in one of their fully-equipped critical care cars and 27% by helicopter. In South Gloucestershire, the crew responded to 90% of call-outs in GWAAC's highly visible blue and bright green critical care cars. The proximity of GWAAC's airbase in Almondsbury means that it is often quicker to respond to someone in urgent need in a critical care car, which carries the same highly skilled crew and equipment (minus a pilot).

9. Cllr Jon Lean & Finance Officer Sue Simmons – Update from Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council

The last year was a year of change for the Parish Council, but also a year of change and some unexpected challenges for residents of the parish.

This report will start with an overview of our Parish Council activities, and then move on to describe some of the broader changes and challenges impacting our parish.

A new Council was elected in May, with a new name! We became Westerleigh & Coalpit Heath Parish Council, a name which recognises the two largest communities that we serve. They also feature in our new logo – represented by the two halves of a tree.

Seven nominations were received for the nine seats on the Council, so all seven nominees were automatically elected. Cllr Rob McCullough was re-elected as Chairman of the Council and within a few months our numbers grew to eight, with Cllr Phil King co-opted to fill the vacancy for Westerleigh ward.

Sadly, one of our number has recently resigned and so we continue to have two vacancies for Coalpit Heath ward. We would love to hear from anyone who is passionate about their community and could represent their local area as a Parish Councillor. Please talk to me, contact our chairman Rob McCullough, or our Clerk to find out more. And please let other people know who may be interested in this opportunity!

In October our Clerk, Sue Simmons, moved into the role of Finance Officer. Having recently gained her CiLCA qualification, our Deputy Clerk Rachel stepped up to the role of Clerk.

As a Council we owe a great deal to Sue, who first joined us back in 2017 on a temporary basis, and has never left!

In terms of serving the community as a Parish Council we benefit from an annual community benefit payment of almost £20,000 from the Says Court Solar Farm. In the past few years we have also benefitted from substantial additional funds from developers. Combined, this external funding has been invested into projects and improvements to benefit our communities, and distributed as grants to local organisations - over £25,000 in total last year alone.

Sue, our Finance Officer is going to cover some of the projects and initiatives we've undertaken over the last year:

We started and ended the year with two substantial capital projects.

In May we undertook a major refurbishment of Westerleigh Play Area. A futuristic new climbing tower and slide unit replaced the ageing wooden equipment and new swings were installed, including a birds' nest swing that can be enjoyed by children of all abilities. We also refurbished the play area benches so that parents and carers can watch the children play in comfort.

The second major project, completed during January and February, was to fix an ongoing leak at Bitterwell Lake and to install a new headwall and outflow. The leak has been sealed using sheet piling and the Fishery Manager can use a newly fitted valve to control the water level and safeguard fish stocks. Looking ahead, this investment will protect the lake against more frequent and intense periods of hot weather and rainfall.

This project complemented a project completed earlier in the year, to replace part of the lake pathway and refurbish a number of fishing platforms. There is now a level easy-access path all the way around the lake.

At this point I would like to congratulate one of Bitterwell Lake's own young anglers, who has been selected for the England Under 15s team attending this summer's World Championships in Serbia. He is none other than our Lake Manager's son!

We have also grant-funded improvements to five of the parish's community buildings:

- The Manor Hall received £12,000 in funding as part of ongoing commitment to the upkeep of the building, including painting and maintenance,
- Coalpit Heath Village Hall received a grant to install a zoned heating system to increase energy efficiency,
- Henfield Hall received a grant to fit new doors and insulation,
- Westerleigh Village Hall, as you have already heard about tonight, received a grant to improve energy efficiency.

Last, but by no means least, the Mafeking Hall Scout Hut opened its doors having previously received a grant towards building costs from this Council. A further grant was awarded for the purchase of kitchen equipment, tables and chairs. We also funded the installation of an emergency

defibrillator outside. We are looking forward to holding our May Annual Parish Council meeting at the hall so that we can experience the venue for ourselves.

This is a good time to mention our investment in projects and services for young people in the parish this year.

We have continued to fund our popular free Holiday Activity Days delivered by Swift Sports. In the coming year Swift Sports will be delivering these at Mafeking Hall as you have heard, taking advantage of the indoor space to provide different activities.

We have also continued to part-fund the Frampton Cotterell Youth Service so that young people from our parish can attend youth club sessions and the youth café, as well as benefit from outreach sessions.

In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III by presenting every child at the Manor Primary School and Immanuel School with a Coronation medal. We purchased some extras for children in Westerleigh who don't attend either school, and for children who attend the Edventure project based in our parish.

On the theme of environmental improvements, we have now replaced almost all of the ageing litter and dog bins in the parish and installed a new bin at the entrance to Blackberry Park. We now look after and empty 28 bins across the parish.

Finally, we have invested in our local hedgehogs. Alongside Frampton Cotterell Parish Council and keen volunteers, we ran two well-attended Hedgehog Heroes events at the Bockeridge Centre. We raised awareness of how to help our local hedgehog population, provided free hedgehog welcome packs and gave away three hedgehog houses to the winners of hedgehog themed baking and colouring competitions.

Returning to reflect on the parish as a whole, a significant change was incurred in July last year, when the A432 overbridge was closed by National Highways at short notice.

The abrupt closure of a major commuting route into Bristol has, of course, had consequences for residents across the parish. South Glos Council and National Highways have done their best to manage the impact, but it is fair to say that many local roads are still seeing significant disruption as motorists seek alternative routes.

Westerleigh, Coalpit Heath, Henfield and Ram Hill have all been affected by increased traffic, HGVs and speeding. We have already heard from Westerleigh Community Speedwatch tonight about the impact in this village and how local volunteers are tackling the problem. The challenges continue.

We now know that the bridge will not reopen quickly and will instead be demolished and rebuilt by National Highways. South Glos Council has proposed a package of longer-term mitigation measures and there will be meetings about this, led by National Highways, open to residents imminently.

As your Parish Council we will be looking carefully at the mitigation measures and providing feedback. We urge local residents to engage with these meetings too so you can have your say.

As 2023 drew to a close, more change came our way as the third phase of consultation on the Local Plan for South Gloucestershire began. In the consultation South Glos Council set out its preferred

strategy to meet the need for new homes and jobs in the area and to mitigate the climate change and biodiversity crisis over the next 15 years.

Welcome news for the Parish Council is that, unlike previous plans, the land east of Roundways is not included in the emerging preferred strategy, and so likely to be safe from development for the plan period.

No development around Westerleigh village is proposed. But a 90 home site next to Blackberry Park has been put forward.

The emerging plan concluded that the need for local homes and jobs cannot be met without some building on the Green Belt and a large site north of the M4 and Lyde Green, and south of Henfield, has been put forward for around 800 homes. The northern part of this site falls within our parish.

As a Parish Council we voted to support the emerging strategy overall but to oppose the inclusion of this particular Green Belt site. However, in our consultation response we also set out a list of protective measures we want to see if the site is to be developed. These included protecting the remaining, surrounding Green Belt from speculative development by making it a green common.

We await the final version of the plan and will continue to lobby for protective measures if this site is identified for development in the final preferred strategy.

As we look ahead to 2024/25 another change is on the horizon as South Glos Council progresses its proposals for an active travel corridor along the A432 Badminton Road. The proposals will include designated cycle and footways, ultimately linking Yate with UWE.

Following an informal residents' engagement event to showcase the fledgling plans, a formal public consultation will take place later this year and we would encourage our local residents to respond to this.

Again, as your Parish Council we will be looking carefully at the proposals and submitting our own response.

Please keep an eye out on our website and Facebook page for updates about the Local Plan the other events and consultations I have mentioned.

10. The minutes of the last Annual Parish meeting held on Tuesday 11th April 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record of the meeting and duly signed.

11. Report from Westerleigh Warm Space project – read out by the Clerk

Once again with the cold weather looming, the Parish Council enabled the ladies from Westerleigh W.I. to cater for Villagers who welcomed the chance to enjoy hot soup, rolls, homemade corn beef and potato pie, and a variety of cakes and puddings.

A regular attendance by some of the older members of the village resulted in a lovely atmosphere and lots of reminiscing about the old days. The Village Hall was literally buzzing with conversation and lots of laughter. Hobbs Bakery in Chipping Sodbury donated the rolls weekly as part of their Charitable Programme, any leftovers were taken home by attendees.

The £150 Grant from the Parish Council was gratefully received to continue this lovely social event for Westerleigh Village.

12. Report from Yate Heritage Centre – read out by the Clerk

The grant of £300 was spent on holiday workshop activities and resources at Yate Heritage Centre during 2023 to 2024.

- Children, adults and adult learners were able to undertake a wide range of craft activities linked to history, culture and natural history.
- Participants were able to develop craft skills and knowledge of local, British and Ukrainian history linked to the craft.

Between April 2023 to March 2024 the following workshops were staged: -

- St George and the Dragon models,
- Roman pots and oil lamps,
- Chinese culture workshops
- Ukrainian flower crowns,
- Japanese Koinobori fish models,
- Autumn leaf suncatchers and bunting
- Willow lanterns.

140 participants took part in the workshop activities inside Yate Heritage Centre between April 2023 and March 2024. An estimate of over 200 children were able to take part in activities at our St George, Viking and our International events.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm.