

WEST DOWN VILLAGE FORUM

A Village Forum Meeting was held on 4th April 2019, attended by members of the community and representatives from the following organisations.

Parish Council
Community Shop
Gardening Club
St Calixtus Church
West Down Green Field Association
West Down Parish Hall Management Committee
West Down Women's Institute
West Down Productions

They reported as follows:-

Parish Council – A list of the tasks undertaken by the Parish Council was read out and included:

Providing and maintaining the defibrillator (routinely monitored by Councillor Sue Ayre).
Ensuring grit bins are filled, distributing sacks of salt and organising gritting village roads.
Picking up litter and clearing drains.
Cleaning and repairing road signs and general maintenance (Councillors Richard Watts, Roy Drew and Keith Oades).
Monitoring bus shelters and litter bins.
Checking and maintaining footpaths.
Making recommendations on planning issues.
Liaising with District and County Councillors and MP.
Financial contributions to:- Parish Hall, Green Field, Church, West Down website, car park, footpath and village maintenance.
Managing grants, etc.
Monitoring local crime statistics.
Giant hogweed control.

Recent business has included, obtaining planning permission for Air Ambulance lighting mast, (Obtained after considerable difficulty by Councillor Sue Ayre) getting war memorial listed status, lobbying MP on planning issues and school funding, and dealing with THE BIG DOG POO DRAMA. This has arisen because the firm that usually collects has gone out of business and the District Council is trying to put a replacement service into operation.

Advice from the District Council is – **take your dog poo home and put it in the dustbin!!**

It was noted that without the Parish Council, West Down would just become part of Ilfracombe.

West Down Parish Hall Reported that they have an excellent committee who work together well. Recent bad weather had caused the roof to leak, which had been a blessing in disguise, as the repairs revealed woodworm in the eaves. This had been put right and electrical testing had been carried out. The hall is to be redecorated and the new colour was shown. This work will be done when the hall is out of use, so there will not be a disruption to normal services. Plans for the new toilets have been completed and will go out to tender. Acorn, the company working on the Pearl Dean development will be vacating the section of the car park that they have been using and will restore that area with a permeable surface. The new room next to the kitchen will be named the Eric Nott Room in recognition of the years of service given by Eric to the Parish Hall. Members of the Committee regularly attended 'Hall Share' meetings, at which other halls share information and ideas. There will be a fund raising stall at the Village Fair in July. A Christmas event will be held with competitions, such as best decorated house etc.

Future events are – Treasure Hunt and barbeque June 23rd
Big Breakfast TBA
Ferret Race 16th November
Evening with Rick Tucker 30th November
Christmas event 7th December

Gardening Club – Has about 70 members and has an excellent reputation. There is to be a holiday in May, visiting the East Midlands. They have an excellent programme of speakers and visitors are welcome. Members pay £6 a year and £2 a night.

West Down Women's Institute - Has around 30 members and a varied programme of speakers and organises a number of outings and visits to places of interest. Visitors are welcome, men may also attend meetings as a visitor. The members join children of Oak Class at West Down School to commemorate Remembrance Day, and a wreath is made and a contribution given to the British Legion. It is a member of the Lundy Group, comprising local Women's Institutes.

West Down Green Field Association – It was emphasised that this is an asset for the whole community and running costs have to be raised. This includes grass cutting, insurance and checks of the play equipment. There have been complaints about Garden Lane following the installation of the cable for the Air Ambulance lights and it was reported that work has now started to scrape the mud away and repair the surface. Access from Farriell Road will be improved by moving the gates. A Village Fair is planned, stalls will be free to local organisations and will cost £12 for businesses. Prospective stall holders should contact John Stainer or Keith Oades. Volunteers are needed for the Management Committee and a variety of jobs.

Future Events – Village Fair Sunday 7th July

West Down School The Headteacher reported that the school is oversubscribed and the positive, friendly atmosphere is valued by everyone. Recent changes have included the levelling of the garden which has now been covered by fake grass and enables children to enjoy more active play times. The new school uniform is being phased in and now both West Down and Berrynarbor Schools have the same uniform. This makes outings much easier to manage and presented a delightful picture when the children sang in Exeter Cathedral. The Pre-School is flourishing and offers help and support where needed. Currently there are groups in the school working on six topics and are happy to work with the community to further these. The topics are:-

- Charity and Community
- Learning
- Environment
- Well-being and Friendship
- Sports
- Worship and Values

Mental health training will be available for families and extended families, this will be advertised on posters and anyone in the community is welcome to participate. Adult volunteers to come into school and work with the children are always needed and welcomed, volunteers always find this an enjoyable experience, well worth the necessary checking procedure. The Headteacher also explained that the school now has to source its own services and hoped that economies of scale could be achieved by sharing this whenever practical, as in the checking of play equipment etc. She urged the community to use the children when possible and the offer to produce more 'dog poo' signs was made and gratefully received! The 'Senior Dudes' Christmas lunch was always popular and it was suggested that this could perhaps be extended to an 'Afternoon Tea'. It was noted that, in common with other schools, they are in deficit budget and need to make savings, which makes the PTFA, volunteers and community support even more important.

West Down School PTFA Explained that they are running a lottery with excellent prizes that will help school funds. They are a new group and are raising money to improve the school environment and children's experience. They would be happy to use the community shop newsletter to advertise their activities. A request was made to Councillor Sue Ayre to do a familiarisation session in the use of the defibrillator.

St Calixtus Church –The Reverend Steve Painting, and his wife Clare have now moved in but have to cover several churches. Falling numbers of the congregation are still a concern and it was hoped that the family service in particular would be better supported. It was suggested that a later start for this service would be useful. The traditional Flower Festival will be revived and organisations volunteered their support for this. The theme would be the colours of the rainbow. There will be celebrations in the church at Christmas. The possibility of using the bell tower will be investigated. The school will publicise the Christingle service and will look into the possibility of the pupils providing music in the church.

Flower Festival 5th and 6th July

West Down Productions produced a very successful revue and the pantomime in February was sold out every night. All the proceeds from these productions were donated to local organisations and this was gratefully received.

West Down Community Shop – It was reported that this was very well managed by Sam, with Vanessa working at weekends. It is well stocked with the usual staples, as well as interesting local produce. It is hoped that more people will use the shop to ensure its viability. There have been problems with the freezers, but new ones have been purchased which will solve the problem. Volunteers are always needed to carry out a variety of tasks. This does not necessarily have to be done on a regular basis but it is an interesting and rewarding way to get to know the community. The monthly newsletter carries shop news and general information about the community and its activities.

Future Events – Jose and the Hotdogs Parish Hall Saturday 20th April.

Bar and refreshments – Tickets £5, proceeds to the Community Shop.

Annual Members Meeting June 25th

Mobile Library – It was noted that this service will be withdrawn if it is not supported. Details of its timetable can be found on the West Down website.

Outreach Post Office – Again, this service will be withdrawn if there is not sufficient support. Opening times on the West Down website.

West Down Website www.westdown.org.uk This supports all local organisations and is happy to publish minutes of meetings, news and forthcoming events and general information.