

RAVENSHEAD PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Corona Virus – Covid 1

Covid 19 continues to plague the nation and we remain in lockdown, probably at least until early March with both, reported cases and deaths continuing to reach high levels. We all know the rules by now, so I won't repeat them again here, however the light at the end of the tunnel is, I believe, starting to get brighter with the successful development and delivery of several types of effective vaccine. Acceptance of the offer of the vaccine is of course a personal choice, but I would strongly urge all eligible residents to respond positively to their NHS invitations. I believe that the ultimate herd immunity that mass vaccination will help to provide, is the only way that we will eventually defeat the current threat to our health and livelihoods. As I write, the programme to vaccinate the over 80's is nearing completion and invitations for the next phase, the clinically vulnerable and over 70's, should start to arrive. The advice from the NHS and Public Health England is not to contact them, but to wait for your invitation to arrive to avoid flooding the helplines, however **(only)** if you are over 80 and have not yet received your invitation, I would suggest that you do contact the helpline, otherwise please sit tight until you are contacted. As I write over 4 x million people have now been vaccinated and the rate of vaccination is increasing all the time.

Christmas Tree and Lights

Despite the fact that we couldn't have our usual Christmas Tree Light Switch-on event in 2020, we still put our lights up at the village hall and within the shopping precinct and this year, as previously reported, planted our own tree, superbly decorated by Stephen Reddish of Choice Custom Curtains. What was particularly noticeable this year was how many private households joined in the festivities, with the village being a blaze of light and colour throughout the festive period. Whether this was the village's way of forgetting or putting aside the dismal effects of the pandemic I don't know, but I thought that it looked fantastic and showed a real resilience and defiance of the effects of lockdown and covid. Well done Ravenshead, and let's have even more this Christmas.

Ravenshead Leisure Centre

As with my last article, Ravenshead Leisure Centre remains closed for internal use in accordance with government instructions, but the grounds are open for community access, if only to have a stroll and enjoy some exercise and fresh air, which is not only permitted, but encouraged. However, we have not been idle during this period and the volunteer group the 'Ravenshead Commoners' together with Parish Councillors have been busy planting some additional trees on the site, by the orchard approach, adjacent to the tennis courts and alongside the arena football pitch. They have also planted hundreds of spring bulbs in the 'common' area alongside the footpaths, kindly donated by the Ravenshead and Blidworth Rotary Club. Many thanks to all concerned.

Ravenshead Litter Force

Unfortunately, covid restrictions have meant that we have not been able to meet as a group to continue with our work in keeping the village spick and span, but this has not stopped many of our volunteers, who have continued the work within their own household bubbles (legally and safely). Obviously, this is a great time for clearing litter

and detritus whilst the winter die-back is still in place, as it becomes more difficult once the spring growth takes hold, so please, those of you that are able, keep up the good work. We will be in touch with some organised dates, at the very least by the spring, when there will be a national 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign.

Ravenshead Post Office

In previous articles I have made mention of possible changes to our local Post Office sorting facility and that I had requested further information through the office of Mark Spencer MP. I am now informed that there are currently no changes being proposed to the current set-up. So, whilst I don't know whether this is a Royal Mail U Turn or whether there were never any changes proposed at all, it is clearly good news for the village and our loyal and hard-working local posties.

Whilst on the subject of the Post Office, some residents contacted me in December regarding full and overflowing post boxes in the village. Liaison with the Post Office Deputy Manager revealed that a Royal Mail Van had been seized by the Police following an incident in Mansfield and unfortunately the keys to our local post boxes were left in the vehicle. My thanks to Police Inspector Chris Pearson who, at my request, swiftly located the vehicle and arranged for the return of the keys freeing up the trapped mail.

Grit Bins

During the recent icy conditions, we have all had occasion to give thanks to the NCC Gritters which keep our main roads clear and safe and within Ravenshead this includes Longdale Lane, Sheepwalk Lane, Main Road, Nottingham Road, Chapel lane and Church Drive. With some 3,000 miles of roads in the County it simply isn't possible to grit other than significant routes, so to keep other side roads and less well used routes open, we have a number of grit bins situated in the village to allow residents to self-treat problem areas. The yellow bins belong to and are filled by NCC Highways and the blue bins (plus the Milton Crescent/Church Drive Jitty) belong to and are filled by the Parish Council. We are however receiving reports of some residents emptying these bins and using the salted grit for their own personal driveways, thus leaving no grit for dangerous hills, bends or pavements in the public highway. **Please Don't**, salted grit is relatively inexpensive and can be purchased from most good hardware stores for personal use.

Overhanging Hedges & Trees

We have many jitties or footpaths within the village which are very useful when out strolling, or for residents visiting the shopping precinct, post office or doctor's surgery on foot and leaving the car at home. All good for exercise, fresh air and general well-being, particularly at a time when we are mostly cooped up at home in 'lockdown'. Many of these jitties have street-lights running through them, which are particularly useful and necessary during these dark winter mornings and late afternoons. Unfortunately, many of the properties bordering the jitties have understandably tall hedges or tree-lines for privacy purposes and when untended they can and do obscure the lighting which make the jitties very dark areas to use. Not only can you not see where you are putting your feet, but on occasions it makes the cycle barriers within the jitties impossible to see and a very real health & safety hazard. I say this as someone who personally went head over heels over one of the barriers prior to

Christmas when a street-light was out. So, I would respectfully ask that residents whose homes border our jitties just check that their boundary hedges are not obstructing the streety lighting. Many thanks.

Obstructive Parking

Whilst on the subject of boundaries and obstructions, I have recently received a number of complaints about obstructive parking of vehicles on pavements and across dropped kerbs within the village. Many roads are quite narrow and I do have some sympathy with divers who park with one wheel on the pavement so as to leave the road wide enough to allow free movement of larger vehicles including refuse lorries, delivery vehicles and fire engines. However, I have had several complaints regarding vehicles which are parked in such a way as to totally obstruct the pavements. Pedestrians are forced to walk out into the road, mobility scooters and buggies cannot get by and for the partially sighted this is particularly hazardous. Please when you park with any part of your vehicle on the footpath, check that you have left enough space for pedestrians to get by, the general rule of thumb for the police is that there is still enough pavement width to allow free passage of a double buggy. As regards dropped kerbs, these again are to allow free movement of buggies and particularly mobility scoters when crossing roads, when vehicles park alongside these (particularly by the shopping precinct) you strand such users in the road with no means of safely accessing the pavement.

Ron Brookes

Finally, it is with sadness that I have to report the loss of Ron Brooks who had been our Haddon Road Park gate-keeper for many years. Ron passed away suddenly and unexpectedly just before Christmas and will be sorely missed by family, friends and all those that knew him. Ron was a great character, well known throughout the village, particularly by the children who regularly used the park. Ron was also a regular presence at parish council meetings with a twinkle in his eye and always ready with a quip. Rest in Peace Ron.

Chris Barnfather
Chair of Ravenshead Parish Council