

# Witham's Voice

Summer 2021

## Puppet Festival returns!

The Puppet Festival returns this September with a bit of a twist

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## Climate Change

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Your quarterly newsletter

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Check out our upcoming events for 2021!



## In Memory of

### Councillor Paul Ryland

1942—2021

A respected member of the Witham community, Paul served on the Witham Urban District Council from 1966—1974, and then served Witham Town Council from its conception to the present day.

A local entrepreneur, starting and running a number of businesses in the town, Paul was instrumental in implementing the Tuesday charter market in Newland Street. Paul was also a keen conservationist who pushed for more trees to be planted and protected, and enjoyed regular walks with his dogs in James Cooke Wood.

Paul lived in Witham for his entire life—apart from short stints in Africa and the USA—and would often be spotted driving his distinctive yellow Land Rover around the town.

He will be sadly missed by many people in the town.



# The Information Centre is now open!

The doors may have been closed for a while now, but the same services are still available!

Come in and see us for your recycling sacks and free dog waste bags, or pick up a local brochure or bus timetable.

If you are looking for a special gift, order one of our bespoke hampers which can be filled with any of our Wilkin & Sons products, Witham gifts or local honey.

Want to buy tickets for a Witham Public Hall show? We sell those too! Or purchase a Theatre Token which can be exchanged at multiple theatres throughout the country.

Most of all, we are here to help—whether that is looking up local information or providing a safe space in a time of need.

Opening times and contact details can be found on the back page of this publication.

# Planning for the summer holidays?

We sell discounted tickets for local attractions:

Colchester Zoo

Adventure Island

Southend Sealife Adventure

Southend Adventure Golf



Or why not have some fun in Witham with our new activity books?



Areas covered:

- ◆ Chipping Hill
- ◆ Newland Street
- ◆ Guithavon Street
- ◆ Collingwood Road

Activity books are £2 each and can be purchased in the Information Centre.

# Have you seen our local traders?

We have a selection of local guest traders, with handmade products such as chocolates, candles and jewellery all made locally and available to purchase. Ideal as a present for someone special or just to treat yourself!

If you are a local handmade business and would like to feature your products in our Information Centre, please call 01376 502674 or email [infocentre@witham.gov.uk](mailto:infocentre@witham.gov.uk)





# Your questions answered

## **What is a Community Fridge?**

A community fridge is a fridge located in an area that the public can access. Some community fridges, like ours, also have an associated area for non-chilled perishable and non-perishable food. The concept is to take what you need and leave what you can, helping to remove the stigma from its use.

## **Do I have to pay to use the Community Fridge?**

No, the food is free, but we do ask for a donation if you can to go towards running costs.

## **Where does the food come from?**

We collect food from local supermarkets via two charity schemes that is still fresh enough to eat but cannot be sold. We also take donations from local food businesses and from the public.

## **What running costs do you have if you don't pay for food?**

We run a number of fridges and freezers, so we need to pay for utilities (electricity and water). We also have to maintain the building for regulatory requirements such as fire safety and insurance.

## **Do your volunteers get paid?**

No, none of our team get paid or even get expenses, everything is done completely free of charge.

## **Could I feed my family using the Community Fridge?**

We can never guarantee what we will receive so we can never guarantee that we can provide everything you need. Other food schemes we run are by referral and at the discretion of our trustees.

## **Are you a Food Bank?**

No we are not a food bank as we do not have set items, what we have is what is donated... we don't guarantee food will be available

## **When I come in I see other food but it's not on the Community Fridge, why can't I have it?**

We run a referral based scheme that is funded by various sponsors; the additional food we have goes towards these food parcels

## **How do I get a referral?**

If you have a child of school age you can approach the school family liaison or self-refer via our school support scheme on our website. If you don't have a child of school age you can contact Witham Town Council, Braintree District Council, Essex Well-being Service, your GP's social prescriber or contact the Hub direct. If you are not sure who to go to then contact the team on 01376 617998.

## **Why do I need a referral?**

We don't have a bottomless budget so we need to make sure that we spend it wisely. We will also help you to find additional support to make sure you don't become dependent on our services, particularly as we can't guarantee we will have food available.

We hope this answers some of the many questions we get asked and busts some of the myths

Feel free to pop in and see us to ask any extra questions you may have

Open 10am to 2pm

Monday to Saturday

# Somewhere over the rainbow



After the successful launch of the Commemorative Bench Scheme, Witham Town Council have introduced a new scheme for members of the community to pay tribute to their animal companions.



Our dedicated pet bench has been installed on the Mill Lane section of the River Walk, and members of the public can purchase an engraved plaque in memory of their beloved pet to be fitted onto the bench. The bench will feature multiple inscribed stainless-steel plaques, becoming a memorial for the lost pets of Witham.



Plaques can be purchased for £60 and can feature any pet that you wish to pay tribute to.



**For more information or to purchase a plaque for your pet, please call the office on 01376 520627 or email [assistantclerk@witham.gov.uk](mailto:assistantclerk@witham.gov.uk).**





# BE FRAUD SMART

Whilst the national lockdown saw a drop in some theft crimes, one area that saw a significant increase was financial fraud. Online and telephone related fraud can affect all groups, however criminals have exploited the COVID-19 pandemic and national restrictions to specifically target socially isolated members of the community.

Fraudsters will regularly impersonate well known brands and companies to deceive individuals and coerce them into disclosing personal information, and sometimes even making a payment for a fictional service. These scams can come in all forms, including phone calls, text messages, emails, letters and even door to door callers. They often include legitimate company details like official logos and email addresses, so they are not always easy to spot.

Luckily, help is on hand if do fall victim to fraud, and there is lots of advice available to protect yourself from potential scams. The best advice to remember is to check anything you are uncertain of before handing over any personal information or authorising any payments.

**Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime. They have provided some tips for protecting yourself against some of the fraudulent activity that have seen an increase in reports recently.**

## National Insurance Fraud

Following a surge in reporting to Action Fraud, Essex has seen an increase in automated National Insurance scams.

Residents have reported receiving an automated telephone call telling them their "National Insurance number has been compromised" and in order to fix this and get a new number, the victim needs to "press 1 on their handset to be connected to the caller".

Once connected to the "caller", they are pressured into giving over their personal details in order to receive a new National Insurance number. In reality, they've been connected to a criminal who can now use their personal details to commit further frauds. Remember:

**STOP** - Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

**CHALLENGE** - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

**PROTECT** - If you have provided personal details to someone over the phone and you now believe this to be a scam, contact your bank, building society and credit card company immediately and report it to Action Fraud at

[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

**Report all instances of fraud to:  
[www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk)**

## Vaccination Fraud

We have received reports of telephone calls being received, offering the Covid-19 vaccination, and demanding a payment.

NO PAYMENT IS REQUIRED FOR THE VACCINE.

The COVID-19 vaccine is free of charge on the NHS.

The NHS will never ask for:

▲ your bank account or card details

▲ your pin or banking password

▲ copies of personal documents to prove your identity such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips

If you are contacted, and are unsure if the invitation to attend for a vaccination is genuine, contact your doctors surgery.

Criminals are exploiting the current situation to attempt to steal personal details and your money.

There has been a surge worldwide of vaccine related scams. We expect to see this to continue over the coming months.

We have seen scams, emails, calls, text message and doorstep callers, so please always be on your guard.

Phishing emails seen have contained malicious files that installed malware, or links to bogus websites to obtain the victim's information.

Protect yourself from vaccine-themed phishing campaigns by checking the email addresses on incoming messages and be alert to hyperlinks that contain misspelled domain names; be aware of highly emotive language designed to manipulate you; do not supply login credentials or personal information in response to an email; monitor key financial accounts regularly; and keep software and apps updated.

Hang up on any call that asks you to pay for the vaccine, and forward any scam text messages you get to 7726.

## Holiday Fraud

Action Fraud and ABTA, The Travel Association, are reminding the public to think twice before handing over their money and personal information when booking holidays this year.

What is holiday fraud?

Holiday fraud can vary from fake accommodation listings that don't actually exist, to "too good to be true" offers with flights being particularly targeted. Criminals can approach you over the phone, via text, email and social media, offering incredibly cheap deals to tempt you into booking a holiday with them. In reality, the holiday you've booked, or parts of it, doesn't exist at all.

Before you buy:

- Do your research—make sure you've read plenty of reviews and have checked that the company is an ABTA member
- Pay Safe—use a credit card where possible and avoid paying into bank accounts
- If it's too good to be true, it usually is!

**Alternatively call:  
0300 123 2040**

# Climate Action



Public awareness is increasing on climate change issues and its impact on our planet. In May 2019, the UK Government declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to move towards being carbon zero by 2050.

Witham Town Council recognises the climate emergency and are currently looking to adopt a Climate Change Policy. A Climate Audit Panel is currently being developed so that the Council's performance can be evaluated on carbon reducing and key green policies.

Witham Town Council already carry out various 'green' activities reducing carbon as part of everyday activities and have further plans in the future –

## Our Open Spaces

- In 1993/94 we planted a 14-acre plot of land with trees to create James Cooke Wood in Maldon Road as a community space for all to enjoy. During 2021/22 we will be looking at plans to make further improvements to the site
- We take care of the much-loved River Walk through Witham. The recently adopted new 10-year River Walk Management Plan ensures that long term climate benefits are in place.
- Whetmead Nature Reserve was a former landfill site and is now a wildlife haven. There are future ambitions to make further wildlife enhancements to the site.
- We used chipped tree waste to create nature pathways in our open spaces
- We are considering trialing wildflower planting on our sites
- Witham Town Council work closely with the Witham Tree Group providing an annual grant towards tree planting throughout the town

## Our Town Hall

- Recycling bags for household recycling can be collected from the Information Centre at the Town Hall
- The public can safely dispose of ink cartridges in our Information Centre
- The Information Centre collects used batteries for recycling
- Recycling practices are carried out by Council staff at the Town Hall

## Other

- During 2019/20 we replaced the light fittings of all 75 lamp columns that we are responsible for to LED bulbs. They have a 30 year life span which results in energy and cost savings
- The Environment Committee's 2021/22 business plan includes a complete review of the Town Council's fleet for carbon free alternatives and decarbonization of the Council's operations





# Witham Tree Group

Witham is very fortunate to have the Witham Tree Group whose aim is to protect and increase tree cover in our town for the benefit of its residents. The voluntary group was formed in 2012 and, after an initial planning period, started planting trees throughout the town in November 2013.



Witham Town Council provide support to the group along with Braintree District Council's landscape department. Locations throughout the town are reviewed for their suitability for new tree planting and regular watering of new trees is carried out by the group. Since the group's formation, planting has taken place in various areas of Witham and they have been involved in the planting of around 500 trees in the town. In just the 2020/2021 planting season 68 trees and 226 whips (small trees) have been planted by Witham Tree Group.

The known benefits of trees are numerous – they improve air quality by removing pollutants, they absorb carbon dioxide helping to slow the rate of global warming, they provide additional wildlife habitats, provide shade in the summer, lower the rates of asthma among children and increase property value, to name a few.

Witham Tree Group always welcomes new members and as the number of new trees planted by them steadily increases, more assistance with watering will be needed. Further information about the group and how to join in with their activities can be found on their website at [www.withamtreegroup.org.uk](http://www.withamtreegroup.org.uk)



## Completion of the World War 1 Memorial Park

The Witham Tree Group have been working with Braintree District Council on the creation of a Memorial Park, sited between Bramble Road and Honeysuckle Way.

There are over 80 names on the War Memorial of those men of Witham who gave their lives in the Great War, and this Park is a permanent growing memorial to those brave individuals, and indeed to all those who served then because, of course, none of them is with us now.

The Tree Group organised the planting of over 50 native trees last year, and with frequent watering by the Group from spring to autumn, all survived well except one. A further 30 trees have now been planted by the Group, to complete the project, which was designed by Braintree's Landscape Officer, with the District Council also providing the land and funding the purchase of the trees [ and the assistance of local contractors Bee Brook].

This Park will develop into a significant feature within the town, for the benefit of all our residents. Work is now taking place to install display

boards to explain the Park.

If any residents would like to help the Tree Group with watering this summer, please let us know via our website.

[www.withamtreegroup.org.uk](http://www.withamtreegroup.org.uk)



# WHAT'S ON IN WITHAM

## Witham Dog Show

Saturday 3rd July 2021

Taking place on the picturesque River Walk, Witham Dog Show is a great family day out for you and your pooches.

Featuring multiple fun show classes suitable for all abilities, you will have plenty of chances to show off your four-legged friends.

Also joining us will be a variety of stalls offering dog and pet supplies such as baked goods, accessories and care products. Food and drink will also be available.

For show categories and more information, please visit our website or email [events@witham.gov.uk](mailto:events@witham.gov.uk)



That's right, the Puppet Festival is back!

This year we will be celebrating slightly differently, but we still promise a fun day out for the whole family!

Follow us on social media to keep up with the latest updates!



### WITHAM DOG SHOW

Bring your furry friends along to a fun-filled dog show on the River Walk.



### WITHAM PUPPET FESTIVAL

Join us for an old favourite with a brand new twist!



### WOOD YOU DARE - CURSED

Dare to venture to the cursed wood in our fright-filled Halloween event. Not for the faint of heart!



### WITHAM CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Come along to our brand new Christmas market and enjoy the festive atmosphere whilst shopping for gifts and treats.

# Diaries at the ready!

With national restrictions starting to ease, Witham Town Council are looking forward to filling your calendar with lots of fun events! From returning favourites to brand new events, there is plenty in store for 2021.

All events are subject to government restrictions and will follow safe Covid practices where required.

For more information, please call 01376520627 or email [events@witham.gov.uk](mailto:events@witham.gov.uk)

# CURSED

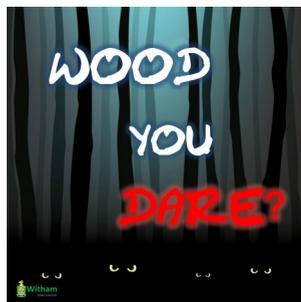
## NEW FOR HALLOWEEN 2021!

Are you brave enough to visit James Cooke Wood at night? Do you know what lurks behind the trees after dark?

This Halloween, Witham Town Council are bringing you a brand new event.

Families are welcomed during the afternoon for a fun-filled Halloween trail through our spooky woods—will you be tricked or treated?

But for those of a steelier nature, our night time event will truly test your nerves. Work your way through a series of puzzles but keep your wits about you—who knows what could be hiding in wait for you.



Witham's brand new Christmas event brings festive magic to a shopping extravaganza.

Music, food and drink will be available alongside local traders and vendors, offering a perfect Christmas gift shopping experience.

Don't forget to stick around to see our Christmas light switch on after dark!

More details will be released in the coming months, so keep an eye on our social media for more information.



Follow us on social media for the latest updates:



@withamcouncil



@withamtc



@town\_witham

## TOWN HALL

Tel: 01376 520627

[townclerk@witham.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@witham.gov.uk)

## INFORMATION CENTRE

Tel: 01376 502674

## 61 Newland Street, Witham, Essex CM8 2FE

Witham Town Council Offices are open Monday - Thursday 9:00AM-5:00PM and Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM.

The Information Centre in the Town Hall is open from 9:00AM-4:30PM Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00AM -4:30PM Wednesday and 9:00AM - 3:50PM Friday.

Both are closed Weekends and Bank Holidays.

Meetings of your Town Council are open for you to attend. There is usually an opportunity before the beginning of each meeting to speak directly to members of the council regarding current agenda items.

Full details are displayed at [www.witham.gov.uk](http://www.witham.gov.uk)

Agendas are on display on the noticeboard in Newland Street.

Meetings usually begin at 7:30PM and Planning Applications & Transport Committee meetings at 6:30PM. These are held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Town Council:** 28th June, 27th July, 23rd August, 20th September

**Environment:** 12th July

**Community:** 9th August

**Policy & Resources:** 14th June, 6th September

**Planning & Transport:** 1st, 14th & 28th June, 12th & 27th July, 9th & 23rd August, 6th & 20th September

## YOUR COUNCILLORS

### CENTRAL WARD

**Michael Lager:** 45 Chipping Hill CM8 2JT  
Tel: 01376 513747

**Robert Williams:** 25 Guithavon Valley CM8  
1HF Tel: 01376 510845

### WEST WARD

**Susan Ager:** 15 Chelmer Road CM8 2EY  
Tel: 01376 512470

**John Goodman:** 2 Chippingdell CM8 2JX.  
Tel: 01376 516918

**Tom Pleasance:** 5 Helford Court CM8 1TL.  
Tel: 01376 501597

### SOUTH WARD

**Kevin Atwill:** 11 Guithavon Street CM8  
1BJ Tel: 07798 873544

**Chelsey Jay:** [cilrchelseyjay@gmail.com](mailto:cilrchelseyjay@gmail.com)

**Angela Kilmartin:** Flat 3, Icen House, Newland  
Street CM8 2FS.  
Tel: 01376 502872

**Cliff Livermore:** 4 Norah Guilder House, Strutt  
Close, Hatfield Peverel CM3  
2HB Tel: 07825 093394

### NORTH WARD

**Philip Barlow:** Rivendell, Chalks Road CM8  
2BT Tel: 07774 196679

**Jack Bayford:** 112 Oak Road, Rivenhall  
CM8 3HG Tel: 07860 748151

**Steve Hicks:** 9 Malyon Road CM8 1DF  
Tel: 07836 690551 e-mail:  
[steviehicks57@outlook.com](mailto:steviehicks57@outlook.com)

**Michelle Weeks:** 20 Elderberry Gardens CM8  
2PT Tel: 01376 515912

### HATFIELD WARD

**Clare Lager:** 45 Chipping Hill CM8 2JT  
Tel: 01376 513747