

NEWS FROM HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL

Phew, what a scorcher! Brown grass, wilting plants and not a drop of rain has been the order of the day since the last news update. Hopefully you have managed to stay reasonably cool and healthy.

Like all grass, the recreation ground will recover once we get a reasonable amount of rain but of course has not been cut recently. The sloping sides will be cut and grass gathered in line with the wild flower programme. Due to the extremely dry weather a couple of smallish holes have appeared along one of the drainage lines at the top of the field. They are being remedied but care should be taken in the meantime.

Work to keep the Hermitage stretch of Eling Way has continued as has upkeep of the butterfly larder and meadow, despite the heat often making it difficult to work. HPC thanks sincerely the volunteers that do this. Whilst it is pleasing that Furze Hill is so popular with dogwalkers and other residents but please keep an eye on dogs so that you can retrieve their droppings. There are three dog waste bins on or next to Furze Hill. The volunteers working in the butterfly meadow on August 16th had to pick their way around many patches of dog mess. This is unpleasant for the workers and increases soil fertility which is bad for wildflowers. And please don't be afraid to point it out to others if you see this happening.

Stretches of the fencing around the exclusion zone have failed but will probably have been repaired by the time you read this.

Work to upgrade the sewerage system has caused some chaos near the Priors Court roundabout due to a large hole in the road needing traffic lights. This is preparation for CALA Homes, due to build 16 homes on the land at the end of Charlotte Close. Their start date is not known at the moment as there are conditions laid down by WBC planning that must fulfil beforehand. Mitigation measures for bats and newts have already been done.

As the month of August is quiet as far as the number of cars on the B4009 is concerned, and because volunteers are on holiday, monitoring speeding was suspended. But it will be starting again in September so please don't go above 30 miles an hour anywhere in the village or be prepared to get a letter from Thames Valley Police.

It should be said though, that the reduced number of cars did seem to give some cars cart blanche to travel at great speed. You have all been warned!

A new group has been formed of people who care sufficiently about climate change, sustainability and all of the issues connected with this, to want to do something. The group agrees that anything, however small, is better than nothing and the simplest idea can encourage and help people to see what we can all do to combat the threat this poses. There is now no doubt that climate change is real and happening now. Events are being planned for Green Week, September 24th to October 2nd. More information will be posted on Facebook when plans are better formed. If you are interested in being part of this group, please look out for the new Facebook page which is being produced.

It's now the time of year that hedges can be cut safely without fear of damaging a bird's nest. Several houses have hedges which grow over the pavement making it difficult for pedestrians, wheelchair and mobile scooter users. Please if this is you, get your hedge cut as there are rules about this kind of thing - a hedge which overhangs the footway or a verge must be least 2.3 metres / 7 ft 7 inches above it or 5.3 metres /17.6 feet above the roadway.

Also cars and vans in particular are being parked half on and half off the pavement. Pedestrians come first in the new Highway Code, not cars so please do not do this nor allow others to do it outside your house. Not only does it impede those mentioned above but it also means people with pushchairs have to go out into the road to pass by. How can this be considered safe? If traffic has to pause to allow oncoming vehicles to pass it's usually only for a few seconds and will help to reduce the speeding problem!

The next HPC meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 15th September in the Adelaide room which is at the rear of the church. Residents are always welcome to attend. The council can be contacted through the clerk, Nicky Pierce, on HermitagePC@outlook.com. The village web site can be found at www.hermitage.org.uk.