

WGRA Westgate Residents' Association

Westgate, Henty Gardens, Mount Lane, St. Bartholomew's Close, Tannery Close

Bulletin – May 2021

CONTACT US:

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Sale of St. Bartholomew's Church

There is a current proposal by the Church Commissioners to sell the building and its churchyard for use as a Dance Studio and for educational, cultural and community purposes. Full information can be found on the link below. There is also a pdf. attachment included with the covering email to this Bulletin while information is also posted on the notice board in front of the church building.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Draft Scheme - 27052021 - Chichester St Bart.pdf>

We are pleased to see the building being used again and we hope that the WGRA will be able to meet there occasionally. However, we are somewhat anxious about vehicle movements associated with the new business. If you have any concerns about the proposed sale, the above link provides contact details of the Church Commissioners.

Westgate's Relief from Lockdown Party – 21 June 2021

We're keeping our fingers crossed that this party will still be able to go ahead – save the date and please **RSVP** now and we will of course let you know if there are any changes.

Date: Monday 21 June 2021

Time: 1830 – 2000 in the Crate & Apple

To celebrate the end of Lockdown and to meet up again with our friends and neighbours

- the pub Garden is reserved exclusively for WGRA
- Pay Bar will operate all evening
- Tables and chairs will be available for all
- Food by individual order
- Name badges will be ready on arrival – to help us remember our friends!

The party is being arranged by the Beau Belles! If you are joining us, please **RSVP** to Nikki Clarke (No. 42 Westgate, 07958 255637 nixclarke3@gmail.com) so we know how many guests to expect.



Speedwatch

In our continuing efforts to reduce speeding on Westgate, our volunteers will be out again on 24 May by No. 19 Westgate with the speedgun. Details of cars exceeding the 20mph limit are forwarded to the police. We still need more volunteers so please contact David Thornley on david@thethornleys.net if you would like more information.



PLACE



As mentioned in April's Bulletin, this is a community mapping exercise to collect local knowledge and information for the Neighbourhood Plan. This Plan will have equal status with the Local Plan and will play an important role in influencing any future development as well as protecting what we have now. We have been making an initial assessment of the areas covered by WGRA listing what we feel are the most important points to make. We will then invite

interested residents to join us in a walk around to add their comments. If any more residents would like to help, other than those who have already contacted me, please email sec.wgra@gmail.com We will be in touch by email to confirm a date for the assessment walk.

WGRA Regular Social Events Restarting!

We are hoping to be able to restart these as soon as government restrictions are lifted. Further confirmation will be in the June Bulletin.

The Monthly Saturday Coffee Mornings at the Crate & Apple will begin again on Saturday 3 July at 10am
Knitting & Social Group – there will be a reunion coffee morning on Monday 5 July at 10.30am. All are welcome.

Local Elections Results

Congratulations to Sarah Quail for her election to City Councillor for Chichester City West Ward and to Julian Joy for his election to County Councillor for Chichester West Division.

Roman Week – Monday 31 May to Saturday 5 June



This year's Chichester Roman Week is taking place with a range of exciting events across the city and surrounding areas to entertain all ages. Led by the Novium Museum, the week-long event includes re-enactments, talks, trails, guided tours, family activities and immersive theatre. For details of the full programme: <http://www.thenovium.org/romanweek>

Parklands & Westgate Open Gardens

Date: Saturday 12 June Time: 11am to 5pm

Tickets: £2.50 (accompanied children under 16 free). All proceeds going to tree planting in Parklands.

Tickets and trail maps available from 11am on the day from:

The Lighthouse Fish & Chips in Parklands

No. 8 Sherborne Road

No. 64 Westgate

There will also be trail maps for children. Cakes and refreshments for sale at the Lighthouse from 2pm.

Please take some time to visit these lovely neighbourhood gardens. More are needed so if you would like to add your garden to the trail map, please contact Mary at gardens@pra-chi.org.uk



Rotary Family Fun Day 4 July 2021 **at Priory Park from 10.30 – 5pm**



An open letter from the Mayor – 5 May 2021

Today is my last as your Mayor. We have journeyed together through the strange, difficult and sometimes frightening times of this pandemic. I have been really proud of how our Chichester Community has stepped up to meet the challenges of COVID-19, with its unexpected twists and turns, the lack of certainty and the impossibility of planning ahead. How we missed our family and friends. I asked one lady how she was coping and she said: 'I keep on thinking I am in a bad dream and I will wake up in the morning.' I knew exactly how she felt. Occasionally, watching the TV news, I thought I was trapped in the worst type of 'B' horror movie.

In my first letter, at the start of the 2020 lockdown, I wrote: 'Together we can beat this and our Community in Chichester will emerge even stronger as a result.' The coming together of many residents' associations, churches and voluntary organisations as the Chichester Community Network (CCN) has been a success and will continue.

In the third letter, at the end of April, I reported the start of a CCN initiative called the Mayor's Hardship Fund, to help those people who had no money and resources to cope with the lockdown. It only took a week to set up, with the Chichester Welfare Trust as administrators and myself as the main point of contact. The City Council immediately made available £5,000 and, thanks to the generosity of many of you, funds swelled to over £11,000. More than 70 people, who had nowhere else to turn, have been given some assistance. I know that at least three were contemplating suicide. Talking to them was a humbling experience and made me realise how fortunate I was in comparison.

At the time of that early letter it was clear to me that the vaccine, a cure or mass testing were the keys to managing the virus and we were in for the long haul.

The fourth letter, in May, urged the use of face masks in confined spaces and on public transport. Meanwhile, the Government was saying that the science for wearing a mask was weak. Not for long.

By the sixth letter, in June, lockdown was easing and we were able to meet up with friends and family in the Park. By the seventh, in July, the Mayoress and I had managed our first haircut in months. (Little did we know!). Deaths in the UK had reached 45,000, compared to just 1,000 in Japan where my son and family are living. In hindsight the first lockdown should have started two weeks earlier and finished two weeks later. Seventy-two per cent of the population were willing to stay in lockdown longer if it meant reducing the infection rate. It was the first of many miscalculations by the Government. Remember when the scientists were saying that 20,000 deaths would be a good result? Today the total stands at more than 127,000; in Japan it is a little over 10,000.

By the autumn, and letter 10, the summer of greater freedom was over and the second wave hit us. The Government rules seemed confusing, and the clumsy Tier system was to prove ineffective. By November, and letter 11, we were back in lockdown, with the prospect of a respite at Christmas, but the Kent variant was spreading fast and had almost reached Chichester. By letter 13, in December, festive arrangements had to be cancelled, but we were promised the best Christmas present: the vaccine. That brought hope.

In January, when I wrote letter 14, we had entered the darkest and most difficult months of the pandemic in the UK. The hospitals, even our own St Richard's, were near capacity. The race was on to get as many of us vaccinated as possible. The NHS and the military did a brilliant job. We found out that, despite having always had one of the lowest infection rates in the country, Chichester was left behind in the vaccine rollout. In what was now the third lockdown, the people rose up and as a result we managed to get a vaccination centre at Westgate. Soon, as mentioned in letter 18, we had not only caught up; we were doing well. And in letter 19 I could pass on the most welcome news: St Richard's had no Covid-19 cases in its wards. We had emphatically turned the corner.

The Chichester Community, working together and following the rules, has come through the worst of the pandemic. There will still be challenges, particularly in the form of economic and long-term mental health problems. However, I remain optimistic and am planning that thank-you party I promised way back in letter No. 9.

My two-year duty as Mayor is done and, together, I believe we have made a difference. Thank you once again for all your support and encouragement. My mother and 'Pops' would be proud of us.

As always, please stay safe, well and strong. Yours sincerely,

Councillor Richard Plowman

The Mayor of Chichester

If you do not wish to receive further communications from the WGRA, please contact the Secretary, Bebette Jones at 6 Tannery Close or email sec.wgra@gmail.com