

Parents set up their own toddler group

A group of Stroud parents are launching a toddler group to provide much needed support, thanks to Stroud Town Council.

The Top of Town Tots group first opened in February, but had to shut after just three weeks due to the pandemic.

Chair Louise Higgins said they were overwhelmed when more than 60 people showed up to the group based at the Parliament Children's Centre in Bisley Old Road.

The group was set up with the support of the Town Council. Louise said Emily Osler, the Town Council's Community Development Officer, has helped in many ways, from sourcing funding to clearing and cleaning.

Now the group is reopening on Tuesdays, from 9.30am to 11am, from November. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the sessions will be limited to eight families and places must be booked in advance.

The group is appealing for more volunteers to support the sessions or join the committee. Louise said with more support they could possibly open more often. People interested in volunteering can contact Louise on louisehiggins9@googlemail.com.



Louise Higgins (centre) with Jo Ellis (left) and Issy Kellaway from the Top of Town Tots group

Making our town a better place to live

Stroud Town Council's team of staff work in myriad ways to improve the community.

The Green Spaces team looks after the parks and playgrounds in the town centre. They also advise people on how they can play their part in improving the environment.

The biodiversity ranger recently met with people from Bisley Old Road Allotments to discuss ways they could improve biodiversity value.

The Town Council supports organisations by providing a range of grants. This year it has a budget of £30,000 to support a range of community-driven initiatives, which has been increased by

another £10,000 to support community groups responding to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Subscription Rooms is heading up a new town-wide initiative which the team, with the support of Stroud Town Council, hope will help to safeguard the future of the town's vibrant cultural economy.

A grant from Stroud Town Council has funded the short-term role of a volunteer coordinator for the town. Heather Massey will initially focus on building a team of volunteers to work within the Sub Rooms, but by the end of her contract she will also present a feasibility report to Stroud Town councillors to assess how the

project can be rolled out across the town.

Other Town Council staff work with community groups to empower them to make a difference to people's lives.

Emily Osler, Community Development Officer, has been working with families at the Top of Town who have set up their own toddler group. Emily has also supported the Paganhill Community Group.

Project Officer Ally Rood has been developing the Stroud Active Travel Consultation and working on social distancing measures in the town centre.

In addition, working with partners,

Ally has supported the Commercial Waste Recycling Group to explore ways to improve commercial waste recycling in Stroud. Ally's work also includes the next steps for the Golden Valley Route Study and the review of Stroud's Neighbourhood Plan, 'Shaping the Heart of Stroud'.

"The Town Council is committed to improving the quality of life in the town," said Town Mayor Kevin Cranston. "While we are limited by what we can achieve, what we can do is provide the support and guidance to empower the community to be proactive. It is only by working together we can continue to make Stroud a wonderful place to live."

Briefs

Repairs begin on memorial shelter

Temporary repairs have been made to a shelter in Park Gardens following an arson attack.

The shelter in Slad Road was erected in memory of people from Stroud who sacrificed their lives for their country during the First World War.

The Town Council is establishing how much damage has been done and how much long-term repairs will cost.

It is also calling for people who may have seen the attack to contact the police.

The land for Park Gardens was donated by Councillor Sidney Park as a memorial to his only son Herbert and all those who fell in the First World War. Herbert was killed in France on 26 October 1917 in a training accident. He was 23.

Witnesses are asked to contact the police by phoning 101 or anonymously to Crimestoppers 0800 555111 stating incident number 78 (26/9/20).



A buzzard was spotted having some time out in the Park Gardens play area



Saddle up for a visit

The Green Spaces team have installed cycle hoops at Wallbridge as part of ongoing efforts to encourage more walking and cycling in Stroud. These provide people with somewhere to secure their bikes while visiting the town centre.

Lend a hand

The Stroud District Foodbank has been busier than ever and is appealing for people to support their Christmas campaign. Find out more at: <https://strouddistrict.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/christmas/>

Meet our own town heroes

The Town Council was inundated with nominations for its Lockdown Heroes.

Good neighbours, postal workers and NHS staff were among the scores of nominations.

Among the winners are Access Bike Project, a group of young people who refurbished more than 40 bikes for key workers and helped set up the Stroud Pedellars, who delivered over 590 items to shielded and protected people during lockdown.

The women involved with Stroud-based MOBS (Mothers Offering Breastfeeding Support) also received an award. It is part of the GBSN, the Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Support Network.

The team at The Long Table, a Community Interest Company, won an award for preparing and delivering over 31,000 meals to the community from mid-March to 31st May.

“Congratulations to all those who were nominated. This is such incredible proof that Stroud’s sense of community is alive and thriving,” said Town Mayor Kevin Cranston.

Visit the Town Council website to see the full list of winners.



A golden vision for the busy A419

An innovative project has been launched to make the A419 Stroud to Chalford route welcoming for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

The initiative suggests creating a designated footway and cycle track along the busy route.

The study was commissioned by Brimscombe & Thrupp Parish Council, Chalford Parish Council, Stroud Town Council and Stroud Valley Cycling Campaign in collaboration with Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council.

It looks at whether and how the A419 between Stroud and Chalford could be improved, making it welcoming to everyone, not just cars.

The study is the first step in a longer process to look at how to address the issues faced by all users of the A419. There will be numerous opportunities for people

to make comments as the study progresses.

The study highlights eight places – ‘villages’ – along the route where extra steps could be taken to strengthen local communities. There could be speed limited zones in the villages with added measures such as raised level zebra crossings, visual narrowing of the road and improved junctions and crossings.

Roads could be safer where people live, and crossing them could be easier. Bus stops and the canal towpath could be easier to get at and use.

Individuals and businesses can support the initiative in a variety of ways, from registering their support for the initiative to donating money or space to the project.

To find out more about the initiative, go to www.goldenvalleyroute.net

Keeping shoppers safe in the centre

A section of London Road through the centre of Stroud will be closed on Saturdays to enable the Farmers’ Market to maintain social distancing.

The limited closure follows a review involving Stroud Town Council, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud and District Chamber of Trade.

Town Mayor Kevin Cranston said:

“All the local authorities, at town, district and county level, are working incredibly hard to promote and nurture town centre businesses while maintaining important infection control procedures.

“Now, more than ever, it is important to maintain social distancing which is why we have decided to keep London Road closed on Saturdays to enable the Farmers’ Market to spread out and operate more safely.”

Shoppers are reminded to always bring their face covering to wear in stores and to maintain social distancing at all times.

Councillor Doina Cornell, SDC’s Leader, said: “We know this is a critical time for traders which is why we are backing high streets across the district with our Shop Local campaign and have introduced a raft of changes to car parking, proposed by traders.”

Cyclists can park up and take the train

Cyclists can take advantage of a new storage area at Stroud station thanks to a project supported by Great Western Railway and the Town Council.

The train operator teamed up with Stroud Town Council to provide 40 extra cycle parking spaces alongside the entrance to platform 2, which serves trains towards Gloucester.

Funding was secured from the Town Council and the Department for Transport's Cycle Rail programme.

Dan Okey, GWR's interim head of commercial development, said: "Stroud is an important station on our network and it is great to see investment being made here to support sustainable



Stroud Town Mayor Kevin Cranston with Chris Rule, GWR's Interim Station Manager for the South Cotswolds.

transport by bike and by train." Town Mayor Kevin Cranston said: "There is secure storage for up

to 40 bikes under cover, so rail passengers will be able to cycle home on a dry saddle."

Hundreds have say in travel consultation

Hundreds of people have made a total of more than 950 comments on how to promote more active travel in Stroud and the surrounding area.

Stroud Town Council set up the Stroud Active Travel consultation to capitalise on the increased appetite for more active forms of travel bought about by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Throughout September respondents could add their own comments, or 'like' those of others. This highlighted 'hot-spot' locations for concern whilst other comments indicated other problems in many other locations.

Among the areas of concern

was Cainscross Road, which was considered both cyclist and pedestrian unfriendly, mainly due to the speed of traffic. Calls for a segregated cycle lane and reduction in speed limits were common threads.

London Road and the A419 from Chalford received numerous comments along the length of the route. A cycle lane and reduced speed limits were suggested outside Waitrose.

Another cycle lane, a 20mph speed limit and cycle awareness signs were proposed between Bowbridge and London Road to increase cyclist safety.

Beeches Green was felt to be noisy

and polluted, with high volumes of traffic. There was agreement that as a primary walking/cycling route into the town centre improvements were necessary.

The Merrywalks area of the A46 was also regarded as being heavily polluted, congested, and unpleasant and dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The comments will be shared with Gloucestershire County Council as the Highways authority and Stroud District Council. It will also help the Town Council campaign for improvements and additional funding and help inform the review of Stroud's Neighbourhood Plan, 'Shaping the Heart of Stroud'.

Take time to honour heroes

People can pay tribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the country by attending this year's Remembrance service online.

Due to the pandemic, large groups cannot gather so Stroud Town Council is planning a small private service on Sunday November 8th at 10.45am at the Cenotaph in Park Gardens.

To ensure people can still pay their respects, the service will be filmed and streamed live.

The event will consist of a traditional service and a reduced parade of 29 Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps. A limited number of people will be invited to lay wreaths.

"We know that so many people will be disappointed that they cannot join the service in person, but it is vital we follow government guidelines around gatherings in relation to the pandemic," said Town Mayor Kevin Cranston.

"To ensure as many as possible can pay their respects the Town Council is arranging for the service to be live-streamed."

Full details of how you can watch the service can be found on the Town Council website.

Please note that these plans are based on the rules currently in place and will be reviewed if the rules change.

Lighting up for Christmas

A more modest Stroud Goodwill Evening will take place on Friday December 4th.

The Town Council is working with the Goodwill Committee to help them with public safety and risk assessment and has agreed a £2,000 grant in principle towards the celebrations.

The Town Council will also install Christmas lights in the town centre as normal.

"It will be a very different Christmas for all of us but we will do our utmost to bring a bit of festive cheer to what has been a difficult year," said Town Mayor Kevin Cranston.

"Please support our local shops as much as you can. By buying local you will be safeguarding the future of our town centre."

Making the most of lockdown

Essential work has been carried out at the Subscription Rooms during lockdown.

Grants from a range of organisations have funded the work at the Town Council venue. The Summerfield Trust has provided a grant for acoustic work.

Monies from the Arts Council went towards replacing broken mic stands, improving lighting and upgrading outdated equipment. Support from the Foyles

Foundation has enabled vital improvements to be done to the upstairs bar.

A team of event specialists have worked together to create a special visitor attraction. It features illuminated built corridors, tunnels and rooms designed by Stroud artist Jack Wimperis who had been due to design this year's Glastonbury stage.

Special Covid-19 safety measures

will be put in place to ensure that families can enjoy the spell-binding visual display 'Everything is Light', from November 9-21. The event has been supported by Arts Council England, Stroud Arts Festival and d&b Audiotechnik.

The newly-decorated box office and People's Republic of Stroud shop is open every Saturday.

For tickets to 'Everything is Light' and other upcoming events, visit www.thesubrooms.co.uk.

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www.stroudtown.gov.uk



Following on from a public consultation on how the Town Council manages Park Gardens in Slad Road, the Green Spaces team have been working hard to make the space more natural and better able to help pollinating insects, as well as providing a really pleasant place to wander through or sit and enjoy. The team has added wildflower meadow strips and continued to add more perennial plants within the beds of 'The Wheel'.

Meet Jess, our new councillor

Jess McQuail has been co-opted on to Stroud Town Council to represent Valley Ward.

Jess, who works in the charity sector, has lived in Valley Ward for 13 years and is passionate about the town.

"I firmly believe that local actions can make a huge difference to the quality of life for local people and am committed to work hard to make Stroud stronger, fairer and more climate friendly," said Councillor McQuail.

The Labour councillor has been involved in several projects in Gloucestershire, including the Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (GRASAC), the women's refuge, the anti-incinerator campaign, the Stroud Fringe, the Sub Rooms, and the Stroud Lido/Outdoor Pool.

She will represent the ward for 10 months until the local elections in May 2021.

Councillor McQuail said: "I would encourage anyone who wants to make a difference in their community to consider running for Stroud Town Council. The grassroots is often where real change that matters to local people happens."



Make a difference

The next election of the full Town Council is due to take place in May, 2021. To find out more about how to run as a councillor contact Town Clerk Helen Bojaniwska. Email: clerk@stroutdown.gov.uk Phone: 01453 762817

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Useful numbers

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