



Witham's Voice



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Autumn Edition

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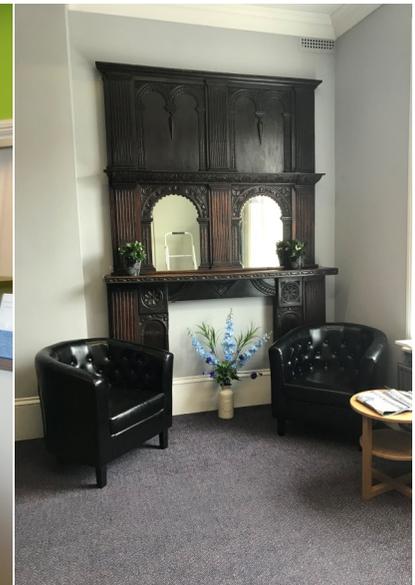
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Your Newly Refurbished Information Centre



Originally built in 1995 as the Heritage Centre, Witham Town Council's Information Centre was definitely in need of a revamp. As the use of the centre changed, the layout became less practical and saw an increase in unused space, deeming a renovation project necessary. Agreeing a committed project ambition and budget in late 2018, the Council aspired to expand and improve the scope of services available in the Information Centre and Council officers produced a report of options for delivery. After extensive public consultation was carried out, the final design has brought colour and life back to a tired room whilst creating a layout that makes better use of the space.

Designed and managed entirely in-house by Town Council staff, the project has not only come in under budget but has maintained a high standard of completion, despite the obstacles that Covid-19 produced. As one of the last remaining Information Centres in Essex, we pride ourselves on providing a valuable service to our residents and hope that the new changes enhance the experience of those who visit. Officially opened by the Mayor of Witham on Monday 6th July, the feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive and we hope this continues.

We have kept some of the original features, such

as the fireplace surround that now takes pride of place in our purpose built Heritage Room where our display boards and cabinet are available for a variety of exhibitions. We still provide an array of information about the local area, as well as a selection of tourist brochures. We continue to sell a range of Wilkin & Sons products alongside local honey, Witham memorabilia and various other gifts, and our bespoke hamper service is still available. Don't forget, you can also buy discounted tickets for days out as well as bus and coach tickets. The centre also provides a wide range of democratic services for Witham including access to all Council papers, reports and decisions. In addition to the creation of a more welcoming and open space, a new dedicated Events office has been constructed to accommodate the Council's growing bill of events, including new events to be announced for 2021. Recognising Witham has continued growth as a key commercial hub within Mid-Essex, the Council has ensured that essential local services like the Information Centre are being kept alive and well at a time when local infrastructure is under serious strain.



Witham
town council
Town Hall, Newland Street
Witham, Essex CM8 2FE
Tel: 01376 520627
www.witham.gov.uk

Witham's Voice

Witham's CCTV Upgrade

In 2017 Witham Town Council paid to upgrade the CCTV system in the town, including the 24hour supervision of four dedicated screens at Chelmsford monitoring station. Although this was an improvement from the existing system, Police Officers would have to make a dedicated journey to Chelmsford whenever they needed to check CCTV footage, proving inefficient for time-sensitive cases. In light of this, Witham Town Council have worked with Link CCTV to provide officers with a smartphone equipped to monitor footage and control camera positioning remotely, saving precious time and travel costs for all involved as well as keeping the town team in Witham for the duration of their shifts. As the first Council in Essex to introduce this new facility we are proud to enable a more efficient system for our local police.



This upgrade follows the 2nd anniversary of the introduction of Community Special Constables to Witham, after Councillors pledged funding for new crime-cutting measures. Since their introduction in June 2018, Witham's Special Constables have successfully improved police visibility in the town, working alongside Witham's town team and helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. As the first Council to join the Essex Police scheme and fund expenses for Special Constables in the town, Witham Town Council continues to work towards a safer Witham by allowing additional funding for four more Special Constables. If you are interested in becoming a Special Constable for Witham, please contact Witham Town Council or visit www.essex.police.uk/specials/witham for more information.

Witham's Rainbow Trail



Did you take part in the lockdown rainbow trail? We are putting together an album of rainbows to commemorate the support shown by Witham to our fantastic frontline workers. If you have any photos of rainbow displays in your windows, homes or any way that you chose to show your support then we would love to hear from you.

Please send your photos to events@witham.gov.uk to be included in our town album.



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW WEBSITE?

Brand new design. Cleaner layout. Clearer Information. But same address!

www.witham.gov.uk

Community News

Commemorative Bench Scheme

Witham Town Council has launched its Commemorative Bench Scheme for the town. The Council are responsible for the much-loved River Walk, as well as James Cooke Wood and Whetmead Local Nature Reserve and members of the public can choose to have a bench situated in one of these locations.

Witham Town Council recognise that a memorial bench in memory of a loved one is a tradition that many wish to choose as a lasting tribute and are therefore proud to offer this service for the town.



Two different bench types are available; a Georgian style cast iron seat treated with a metallic finish to be highly resilient to acts of vandalism or a traditional wooden bench made from ethically and responsibly sourced teak. Those wishing to purchase the cast iron seat can have an engraved plaque fitted with the words of their choice and the wooden bench will be available to have an inscription engraved into the back rail of the seat.

Once installed, the Council will offer the option to have a ribbon cutting ceremony for family and friends to mark the special occasion and provide copies of photographs to keep. The benches are available at a cost of £600 for the wooden bench or £1,100 for the cast iron seat, which includes three year's maintenance.

Further information and a leaflet about the scheme can be obtained from Witham Town Hall. Those interested can pop in to discuss or call the office on 01376 520627.

Do you need someone to talk to? Do you have a friend or family member that is feeling lonely or isolated? Age Concern has lots of volunteers waiting at the end of the phone, you simply need to call the number below to get started. They are looking forward to hearing from you!

AGE Concern
COLCHESTER & NORTH EAST ESSEX

Befriending Support 01206 368420
Call option 3 To Link to a Befriender

Help Someone Through COVID-19 With a Weekly Phone Call

Can you spare 1 hour or more a week to talk to someone who is lonely, having to isolate at home alone and is perhaps scared of what is going on? Call today or click here to Become a Volunteer

FINDING YOUR FEET IN WITHAM

FEEL MOTIVATED



Restarting on 19th June and every Friday

1.30pm till 2.30pm

Meeting at Tesco Witham

The walks will follow government guidelines and social distancing rules.
Please feel free to bring your own refreshments

Community360
Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester CO1 1UG
community360org @community360org community360org
www.community360.org.uk

Company Number: 04426567 Registered Charity Number: 1092567



Witham's Voice

An Alternative Puppet Festival

Unfortunately the current pandemic means we are unable to run our events in the same way. However, rather than leave a puppet-shaped hole in everyone's lives, we decided to try something a little different this year. So, here are the three puppet themed competitions that we will be running throughout September. We hope to see all of you getting involved!

All competitions are free to enter and open to everyone, you simply have to be able to visit the Town Hall Information Centre on Newland Street!



Name The Puppet

Fancy winning this cheeky chimp? Pop in to the Information Centre on Newland Street and try to guess its name. At the end of the month we will then see who guessed the name right, if that's you then you get to take it home!

This competition is open to all and will be running throughout September. One guess per visit.



Puppet Trail

Oh no, the puppets didn't get the message that the festival has been cancelled, and now they are all over the town! Can you help us to find them all?

Pick up your trail sheet from the Information Centre and head to the different shops on the list to see if you can find all of the puppets names for us. Each entry will go in to a prize draw to win a big jar of delicious sweets!

Trail sheets can be collected and returned to the Information Centre on Newland Street throughout September.

Puppet Making Competition

Do you enjoy a bit of arts & crafts? Looking for a little summer project? Need something to keep the kids entertained during the summer?

Why not enter our Puppet Making Competition!

Send us a photo of your homemade puppet, or even a video of your own homemade puppet show, by the end of September to enter. These will then be shared on our Facebook page where visitors can vote for their favourite entries! Winners of the over 16 category will win a fantastic hamper filled with delicious goodies, and winners of the under 16's category will win 2 free tickets to Adventure Island in Southend!

We have released some helpful videos on our Facebook page that could give you some ideas, but feel free to let your imagination run wild and come up with your own creations!

The competition is open to everyone, but please be aware that winners will have to collect their prizes from the Information Centre in Witham.

Please send all entries to events@witham.gov.uk by 30th September 2020 to take part



Latest Updates

River Walk User Survey Results

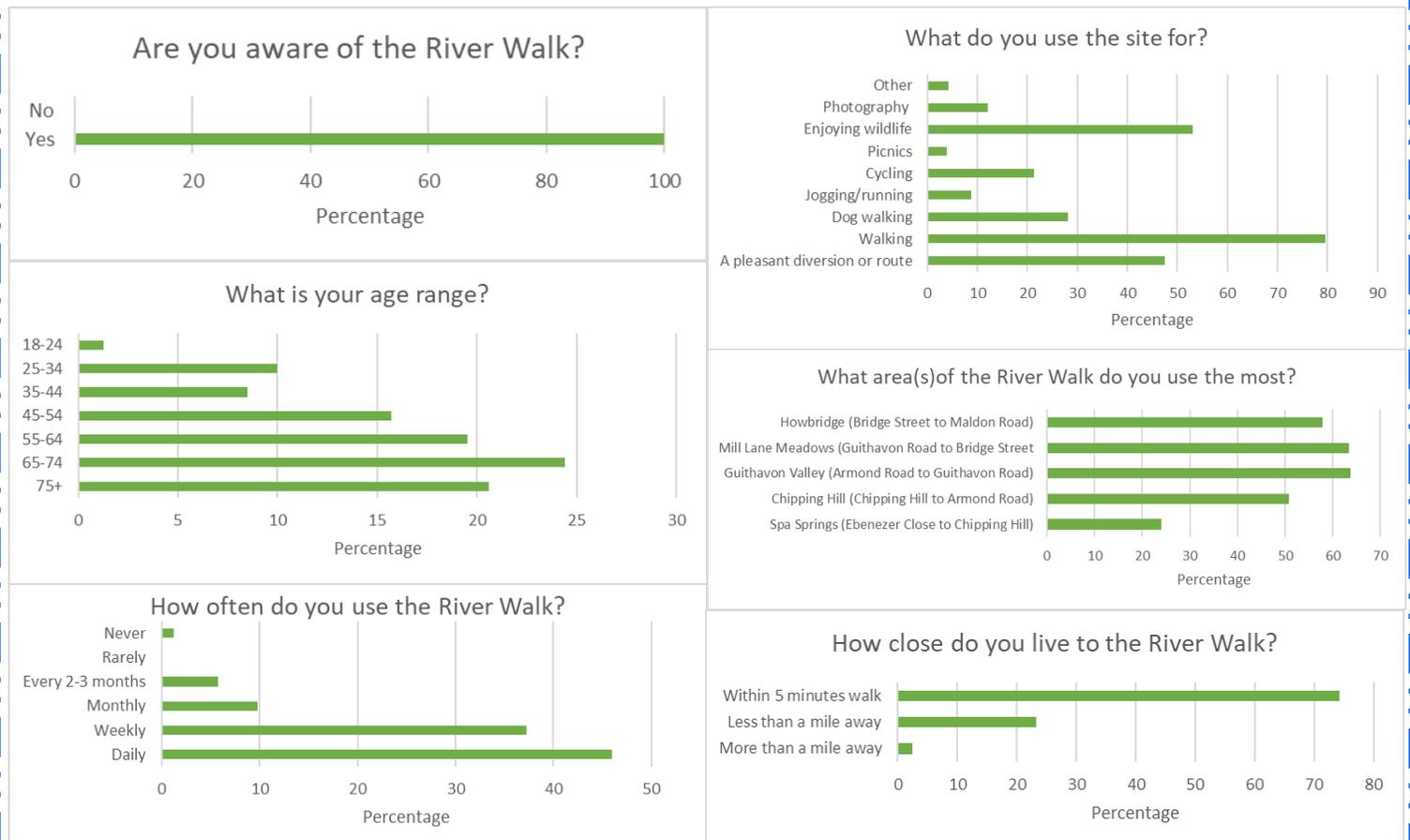
In the last edition of Witham's Voice, we included a user survey to find out more about who uses our much-loved River Walk. Many of you had been using the space for your daily exercise during lockdown and our Operations Team continued to work during this period to maintain the area for all users. We have a River Walk Management Plan in place providing details of how the open space is maintained and organized and we always welcome feedback from members of the public.

We had 104 responses online to the user survey and 51 paper copies returned to the Town Hall. 100% of those that returned the questionnaire knew of the River Walk with 99% making use of it, 46% of those using it on a daily basis and 37% using it weekly or more often.

The location is used for different activities and we asked about the various reasons that a visitor may use the River Walk. 79% of those surveyed enjoy walking, 53% appreciate its wildlife and 47% of people use it as a pleasant diversion or route through town. Other comments added that they used it for painting, mobility scooter rides and a sanity break during lockdown.

The River Walk is divided into different sections and the survey asked which areas were used the most. The Guithavon Valley and Mill Lane Meadows were most popular with 63% of users regularly using these sections, followed by the Howbridge area attracting 57% of users and Chipping Hill with 50%. Spa Springs, located from Ebenezer Close to Chipping Hill, had the least number of users at 24% of those surveyed. It was also noted that the River Walk is closely accessible for the majority of Witham with 74% stating that they are within 5 minutes' walk.

The age range of those completing the survey were 1% 18-24 years old, 10% 25-34 years old, 8% 35-44 years old, 16% 45-54 years old, 19% 55-64 years old, 24% 65-74 years old and 21% over 75 years old. Although a survey such as this provides interesting information, we are aware of users of the River Walk that would not have completed the survey and we continue to work hard to provide a beautiful natural environment for all to enjoy.



Witham's Voice

Witham Town Council are undertaking a comprehensive report into our existing CCTV network and examining the feasibility of expansion.

Witham's 11 cameras are currently monitored 24 hours a day at the Chelmsford Monitoring Station where they can alert the police to any incidents seen on CCTV as well as access footage for the police investigating past crimes. Recently our Community Special Constables have been provided with remote access to the cameras which gives them the ability to watch events in the town in real time rather than having to travel to Chelmsford.

Please drop your consultation response to the Town Hall by the 23rd October 2020 or complete an electronic copy, which can be found on our website www.witham.gov.uk

Were you aware that Witham Town Council funded CCTV within the town? Yes/No

Have you ever needed to access CCTV images through the police or your insurance company? Yes/No

If you have needed to access CCTV did the images help to secure a conviction or settle an insurance claim? Yes/No

Please state the nature of the incident:

In the financial year 2019/2020 each household in Witham contributed a total of £2.31 through their council tax to fund the CCTV network. Do you believe this is value for money? Yes/No

Do you support the expansion of CCTV within Witham? Yes/No

Please explain why:

Each new permanent camera installation would add £0.29 per year to your bill. Would you consider this value for money? Yes/No

The following areas have been identified as potential sites for additional CCTV cameras. Which of these locations would you consider to be of most benefit?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Highfields Road (near the playing fields) CM8 2HJ | <input type="checkbox"/> Spa Road shops CM8 1NE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The River Walk near Guithavon Street CM8 1HF | <input type="checkbox"/> The junction of B1389 and Maltings Lane CM8 1EE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wulvesford CM8 1NL | <input type="checkbox"/> Junction of Colemans Bridge & Colchester Road CM8 3HP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Junction of Blackwater Lane and Maldon Road CM8 1HR | <input type="checkbox"/> Junction of Conrad Road and B1018 CM8 2SN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above | |

Any other comments on CCTV within Witham:



Al - Anon

Al-Anon Family Groups offers free and inclusive meetings for the benefit of the relatives and friends of drinkers.

Al-Anon members provide one another with mutual support, by sharing their experiences with each other. Your anonymity is protected by using first names only. Anything discussed within an Al-Anon meeting is treated as confidential, including your presence at the meeting. Al-Anon also helps to raise awareness of the problems associated with alcoholism. We do this by welcoming professionals to open meetings and providing information to researchers and the media.

Al-Anon provides solidarity and hope. For those who have been affected by someone else's drinking and don't know where to turn, our door is always open and our welcome

Keep Safe

Witham Information Centre is part of the Keep Safe Scheme, where vulnerable adults can request a call to be made if they need any assistance, from losing their phone to feeling unwell. This scheme is available for all vulnerable adults, and full details of the scheme and how to sign up are available from the Information Centre on Newland Street.

In addition to this, the Information Centre is a safe haven to anyone that is in distress. If you feel in any danger, have found yourself without a bed for the night or just feel you need some kind of assistance then we

are happy to provide you with access to a phone or will be able to make a call on your behalf. This discreet service is available to anyone, just come in and speak to our friendly staff for assistance.

Self Care

We all need a bit of extra help sometimes, which is why we have set up an area in our Information Centre with details of charities and organisations that offer support for all different reasons, and a selection of leaflets for self help. Here is a sample of the information we provide, but why not pop in to find out more and see what other support is on offer.

Crossroads Care for Carers

Crossroads care provides regular short breaks to carers who would like a little time to themselves. Our trained care support staff will come into your home for a few hours each week, taking care of the person you care for and giving you a break.

Crossroads Care is Britain's leading provider of support for carers. Working with individuals and families to help carers make a life of their own outside of caring.

We have an open referral system so anyone can ask for help, and subject to meeting the criteria set by Essex County Council we may be able to start a service at no cost to you for up to twelve weeks.

For more information, please pick up a leaflet from the Information Centre.

Mind

For better mental health

Our free Support, Time and Recovery Service is for adults living with a mild

to moderate mental health problem in mid and north east Essex. It is for people who need more information and support for problems such as:

- Housing
- Debt and finance
- Employment support and job seeking

They can also introduce you to groups and activities local to you if you are feeling lonely and isolated.

A worker will be there to help you and work on an action plan to support you, which can be done either in person or over the phone.

Missing out on Town Council meetings due to social distancing?

Whilst the social distancing measures are in place, many Town Council meetings are available to the public via video conferencing .

Details of each meeting will be published in advance on our Facebook page, or alternatively you can contact the Town Council directly for details on how to virtually attend a meeting.



Witham Town Council



TOWN HALL

Tel: 01376 520627
townclerk@witham.gov.uk

INFORMATION CENTRE

Tel: 01376 502674

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
Paul Ryland: 6 Old Parsonage Court CM8 1XP
Tel: 01376 502500

SOUTH WARD

Kevin Atwill: 11 Guithavon Street CM8 1BJ
Tel: 07798 873544
Chelsey Jay: cllrchelseyjay@gmail.com
Angela Kilmartin: Flat 3, Iceni 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: 01376 514033
Jack Bayford: 112 Oak Road, Rivenhall CM8 3HG
Tel: 07860 748151
Steve Hicks: 9 Malyon Road CM8 1DF
Tel: 01376 5125890 email: cllr.shicks@braintree.gov.uk
Michelle Weeks: 20 Elderberry Gardens CM82PT
Tel: 01376 515912

HATFIELD WARD

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

It's your council...

Witham Town Council Offices are open Monday - Thursday 9:00AM-5:00PM and Friday 9:30AM-4:00PM.

Closed Weekends and Bank Holidays.

Meetings of your Town Council are open for you to attend. There is usually an opportunity to speak before the beginning of each meeting to raise your concerns to the Council.

Full details are displayed at www.witham.gov.uk

Agendas are on display on the noticeboard in Newland Street.

All meetings are currently being held via zoom and start at 7pm.

Meetings are held in the Council Chamber in the Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, Essex, CM8 2FE.

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

DUE TO THE CURRENT PANDEMIC WE ARE ONLY RUNNING FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS.

UPCOMING DATES OF THESE ARE:

- Tuesday 1st September
- Monday 28th September
- Monday 26th October
- Monday 23rd November
- Monday 14th December