

Spring Newsletter 2021

Dear member,

After a year of restrictions and lockdowns, the future is looking brighter. From this week, six people can meet outdoors, sports and leisure centres will be opening. Although not able to hug family or friends, we can tend our gardens and, according to Wiltshire Council, litter picks can be organised. Something to look forward to, then!

In terms of tidying and planting, the DS committee has made a start. After the RHS cancelled InBloom for the second year running, we agreed to engage with their “It’s Your Neighbourhood” scheme. A limited project, focusing on the Borough, seemed “do-able” at this time, and we felt it would also provide valuable lessons for the wider village entering InBloom 2022.

So, new tubs on the Greens have been filled (daffodils peeping out being a hint of things to come) and summer planting will begin very soon; a group of enthusiastic, socially distanced, volunteers have cleared, tidied and prepared the borders of the Co-op car park, ready for planting; the RBL and Green Group will fill tubs in the Memorial Gardens, the school is working on an eco-hedge and residents are ordering hanging baskets. With restrictions lifting further, there may be small groups for bridge cleaning. In short, the centre of the village should become a brighter place over the next 3-4 months.

The DS committee continued to meet virtually, and has been largely pre-occupied with local government consultations and housing developments, about which we have emailed separately. It’s encouraging to see people in the village supporting the Neighbourhood Plan (with many positive comments on the Downton Now & Then Facebook page); and thank-you to all DS members who responded robustly to the Formula Land leaflet (deadline: 12th April). Going forward, we are working with the PC to update the Plan and, hopefully, to carry out a housing needs assessment.

We’ll continue to provide updates on our website (www.thedowntonsociety.org) where you will also find Conservation and Neighbourhood Plan documents, as well as information on community issues from HGV and traffic to the Footpath/Bridge project (both Working group and Longford positions being provided). There are also useful links to the PC, Village and Wiltshire planning websites.

Looking forward: It’s still too uncertain to plan any social events, Moviola cannot happen, and the Footpath group are not planning walks before the autumn. But we are exploring the idea of a “How well do you know your Village” quiz to encourage “walking about” and we will need to hold an AGM before the end of May (probably on Zoom). We would also love to have a new member on the Committee. We’re a friendly lot, so if you’ve got ideas, a certain amount of energy and are interested in the village, do put yourself forward. Contact me – or any committee member - for more info.

Until then, I’m sure that priorities will be the same for all of us - to meet up with family and friends, to appreciate the joys of Spring, to stay safe outdoors, and look forward to the summer.

Very best wishes

Nikki

HAPPY EASTER FROM ALL OF US

Nikki Wilson, Claire Freemantle, Susan Barnhurst Davies, Jeremy Parsons, Peter Edwards and Robert Willcox