

THE BIG LUNCH: Sunday 27 June

A reminder, the Big Lunch is back! This is the first time the villagers have had the opportunity to meet together in the last year and a half.

This year it will be at the Club which has ample outside seating, a well stocked Bar and is open all day, and as before, bring a picnic for yourselves or to share ;

However, the Denisons will also be there with their brilliant BBQ!

The Club requires that alcoholic drinks should be purchased at the Club; currently there is table service, but this may change in June...payment can be by cash or card.

At the moment, masks must be worn in the Club, but this also may change.

There will be an ice-cream van and free teas and home-made cakes available in the afternoon; plus live music from local musicians.

Well-behaved dogs, on a lead, are welcome. The football pitch is being drilled and therefore not available for picnics or dogs, but there is plenty of other space.

Spread the word, come along on Sunday 27 June from 12.0 until 3.0.

PS You do not have to be a member of the Club, but, of course they would always welcome new members.

Ed: we can't wait!

20s plenty.....

You will know from an earlier edition of this newsletter, that, following a door to door village survey, the Parish Council have been trying to have some of our narrower single track lanes designated as 20mph zones. We haven't yet succeeded.

In the meantime, it would be wonderful if everyone acts as if we do have compulsory 20mph zones and drives within that speed. Let's keep our pedestrians of all ages, cyclists, dogs and horses safe (and hedgehogs!).

The Railway Farm Shop: News

As you will no doubt have heard, back in 2020 we launched a crowdfunding page at the Farm Shop entitled 'The Railway Farm Shop Community Engagement Scheme'. We were absolutely blown away with the support of the local community (including Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council and our councillors at East Suffolk District Council) and humbled by the generosity to help us achieve our target.

New fencing, pathways

Those of you who use our shop will have noticed lots of comings and goings over the past few months as the area was cleared, trees cut back and new fencing and pathways put in to make us Health and Safety compliant.

As we write this, we are waiting for the builders to begin work constructing the frame for the outside kitchen. The smaller polytunnel has been cleared, the doors replaced and is fast becoming the hub of our project.

Pub-style picnic benches

The area surrounding the polytunnel is now weed-free and the ground covered with membrane and wood chips. We also have pub-style picnic benches and the area is really beginning to take shape.

Community allotment - taking shape

For those of you who follow our socials, you may have seen we had a dig day on 20 May, with volunteers clearing the land for the community allotment.

Do come and have a look - and shop with us too of course! It's the time of the year when there is so much local produce. We will keep you updated.

Signing off for now, best wishes,
Kerry & Martin

How to contact us: do tell us your news, thoughts and ideas. We can list your local event (Benhall & Sternfield) and report on it. Email us at benhallnews@gmail.com.

For Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council info: www.benhall.org.uk, the Noticeboards, or Facebook: [@benhallsternfieldparishcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/benhallsternfieldparishcouncil) or Twitter: [@BenandSternPC](https://twitter.com/BenandSternPC).

Sizewell C – Rail Noise

During the many consultation stages for Sizewell C there was considerable pressure to reduce the amount of lorry traffic, and switch delivery of construction materials to rail. At Stage 3 consultation in January 2019, EDF considered options of 2 or 5 trains a day. The difference between 2 and 5 trains a day was a reduction in the average number of HGVs during peak construction from 375 to 225, with maximum daily numbers reducing from 750 to 450.

EDF have carried out further consultation with Network Rail, and the maximum number of daily trains that can be accommodated is now 4 (8 movements), but with only one movement being possible during the 'day' (0700 – 2300). Seemingly the biggest constraint on capacity is that passenger trains travel at 55 mph, whilst the freight trains travel at just 10 – 20 mph. This leaves 7 movements a day during the 'night' (2300 – 0700). Noise assessments have been carried out along the line, and documents relating to this have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, and are available on their web site. These documents are extensive and highly technical, and finding specific information in them is nigh impossible to the lay reader. EDF have published a 'targeted consultation' for 'Rail noise at Whitearch Park, Benhall'.

Their assessment shows that just three homes at Whitearch Park will experience 'significant' noise levels, in excess of 70dB, and many others will experience noise levels in excess of 60dB, the lowest limit for adverse effect. The mitigation proposal is to construct a 2.5m high acoustic barrier along the boundary between Whitearch Park and the railway. Construction of such a barrier would require planning consent, and would not be part of the Development Consent Order for Sizewell C.

EDF are seeking views on this proposal by Friday 11 June. Comments can be sent to EDF at info@sizewell.co.uk titled "Targeted consultation on rail noise impacts/mitigation". Alternatively let the Parish Clerk (clerk.benhall@gmail.com) know your views by Friday 4 June, and they can be considered in the Parish Council response.

Will my home be affected?

Please note that this consultation is specifically about the proposed acoustic screen at Whitearch Park. Any other concerns about the impact of increased transportation of Sizewell construction materials by rail should be addressed directly to EDF, using the same e-mail as above, but more specifically titled. There will be a link on the website with more information.

Alternatively, you may wish to visit the Sizewell C Information Office, 48-50 High Street, Leiston IP16 4EW, but call 0800 197 6102 first for an appointment.

Nature Notes

In spite of the cold start to summer, nature is getting on with the business.

The fruit and hedgerow blossoms have been wonderful, and now the oaks have pale, green, fragile leaves.

Our winter birds are all gone, but we have swallows, swifts and martins, but the little songbirds too: chiffchaffs, blackcaps and whitethroats..

There is a cuckoo calling regularly and a hobby has been seen several times.

Fledglings are starting to appear – heartbreakingly vulnerable; good luck to them!

For the first time, I think, we have a pair of buzzards nesting in the village.

What a nice place to be! HG

The Rural Coffee Caravan

Will be at the Village Green on Thursday 10 June from 10-12, for some company and a catchup with your neighbours in a safe place. Remaining Covid-19 aware, they are asking all to observe social distancing and bring their own chair and mug. They will provide free tea, coffee, biscuits – and good cheer, along with useful information. See you there!

Parish Council Meetings

As you know, Benhall & Sternfield Parish Council meetings are open for anyone to attend: and there is an Open Forum session at the start of each one for public comments and questions. For the last year, meetings have been virtual, on Zoom and a few residents have joined us. And we are invariably joined by our County Councillor, Andrew Reid, plus our District Councillors, Jocelyn Bond* and TJ Haworth-Culf*. From now on, we are legally required to meet in person so we will be back at the Benhall Club for the next meeting on Thursday 15 July at 7pm. We are waiting for guidance as to what Covid-19 rules may apply. In the meantime, we are asking that anyone wishing to attend register their interest by emailing: clerk.benhall@gmail.com

NB: at our AGM, we voted to keep the same Chair, Vice-Chair and representatives for our various areas of interest. For full details, see the Minutes on our website.

* Sadly Jocelyn and TJ have resigned; they have been very helpful to us- thank you to you both.