



Healthy living in Woolwich Township

- Woolwich Trails • Clean Waterways • Coordinating Committee • Woolwich On-Road Cycling Group
- Township of Woolwich Environmental Enhancement Committee (TWEEC) • Trees for Woolwich

Covid Brings Big Changes ...and Some Uncertainty

Due to the public safety concerns regarding COVID-19 and recognizing how important it is to play our part in making the rate of transmission as slow as possible, we are postponing spring hikes and tree planting until further notice. Woolwich Healthy Communities, Woolwich Township, partner organizations and volunteers will focus on the immediate challenge we are in at the moment. We hope we will have another opportunity to reschedule those activities in the future. Stay Tuned!

Trees for Woolwich: Community plantings scheduled for May 2 in South Park woods Elmira and May 9 in Bloomingdale will be rescheduled to fall dates. Stay tuned for specifics.

Trees destined for Lions Park in Elmira will have to wait for a better "climate". Tree plantings at Floradale School and Woodland Christian School have also been deferred to the fall.

Enviro- Stewards, an Elmira based company, has been taking a half day off to plant with us for the last several years. Their scheduled planting in May has also been deferred to a fall date. Ricoh, another local company was joining us for the first time to help reforest an old gravel pit with 500 seedlings. Stay tuned for revised plans!

It will be a busy fall season (we hope) so check back for details as the whole situation becomes clearer.



Clean Waterways has canceled plantings for 2020 and looks forward to a productive 2021.

Check out the **Trails Group** page for their changes.

Looking to Get Outside and Still Distance?

The trees in our tree nursery still need care and we are setting up a schedule which allows one or two people to work there at a safe distance. If you would like to help with fertilizing, repotting or weeding please get in touch with Ann Roberts at aroberts@woolwich.ca and she will let you know how you can help keep our trees alive

Learn Pruning Online!

We had planned a 3-evening training session for new volunteers who wanted to be part of our street tree pruning program. This team pruned over 300 trees last year resulting in healthier trees which live longer. Our plan is to move that online to interactive sessions with our arborist Chris Morrison. This training is delayed to the beginning of May in the hopes that we can do the practical work on real trees after that. So there is still time to sign up and we will send out details as things evolve.



A direction forward for Woolwich Healthy Communities and a lot of somebodies

Bold, ambitious decisions were made in 2019 for members of Woolwich Healthy Communities (WHC). The year presented a few challenges for board members from saying good-bye to a long-time staff member, nixing a long-term event and facing volunteer shortages — many groups might have called it quits.

The board took these challenges as an opportunity to revisit our priorities and principles of the work we do in the community. Our visioning process revealed that our collective interests had changed and led to how we could be a catalyst for change in the community.

Somebody Should Do Something

That's the perfect segue into a community-wide engagement event we called "Somebody Should Do Something". Doug Griffiths — author of *13 Ways to Kill Your Community* — was hired to engage the community over two days last November and light a spark in residents to foster community-driven initiatives. We're putting this event in the "win" column based on the feedback, new initiatives, and new people that have joined our movement.

Since that time we've taken stock of the success we had presenting this event. We engaged over

300 EDSS students to get them to think about their own lives and role in the communities they join. About 250 members of the public listened to Griffith's *13 Ways to Kill Your Community* presentation and participated in an active Q&A session. About 25 community groups participated in our Community Showcase at the event. We had about 75 members of the public and community groups join us for a workshop outlining the many ways our municipalities will change over the next decade.

Gathering input

Upon registration for our "Somebody Should Do Something" (SSDS) event, attendees were emailed a link to a community assessment survey that



would identify areas of concern. Overall, our township appears to be in good shape. Areas of concern are how we engage our youth, having trouble considering new solutions to old problems, welcoming newcomers, complacency and taking responsibility. The survey results and analysis are available on our website at healthywoolwich.org.

Attendees at our keynote, “*13 Ways to Kill Your Community*”, also filled in a survey. They identified four areas where our community needed to improve:

1. Main street and Downtown
2. Housing and Liveability
3. Activities and Aesthetics
4. Cooperation and Ownership.

Participants of our workshops the next day divided into groups to further break down the issues and eventually craft a story and goal for that initiative.

[Somebody should do something – and we are](#)

In January of 2020, we contacted interested members of the public who were inspired to get involved. Approximately 30 people attended and joined various groups to work on their area of interest within downtowns, events, welcoming, and housing. These groups are meeting and organizing themselves with plans to promote their initiatives.

Since the SSDS event, Woolwich Community Services made the decision to push for affordable housing initiatives. They have organized a task force with local and regional government as well as community services in identifying area where they can make an impact.

Downtown Elmira as a place for residents was overwhelmingly identified as an area for improvement suggested by attendees of SSDS. Since then, Woolwich Township is now in the process of working with planning consultants to

review and recommend a plan to encourage a vibrant mix of products, services and entertainment for our residents. There will be opportunities to hear from the public and our new formed committee focusing on downtowns.

A book club was initiated at the Elmira library discussing *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*. WHC purchased 50 books and distributed them with the caveat that they continually be passed along to neighbours and friends to keep the “community building” conversation alive.

Lastly, we had amazing sponsor support to make this event a reality. WHC was able to start a “Community Builder Fund” that will be used to create events and programs for the community. We want to continue to build this fund and encourage the public to create more opportunities for residents to engage with one another.

It’s 2020 now with renewed optimism for the direction and scope WHC sees their role in promoting an engaged, healthy community.



Here we Grow Again!

Woolwich Community Tree Nursery

An exciting year ahead is planned for The Township Community Tree Nursery located in the south industrial area of Elmira. At present, 2,000 trees are sleeping quietly in the nursery waiting for spring. Some will find a permanent home in planting sites around the community; others will grow there for another year.

Last summer a major addition was built to the nursery so that it will be able to accommodate all the seedlings expected to arrive this summer.

One of the volunteers designed a solar automated watering system that allows different areas to be watered as needed. This saves hundreds of hours of hand watering!

More students than ever are involved in our educational outreach program “Seedlings in the Classroom”; they are growing native **oak** and **maple** trees from seed. Thirty-four classrooms in schools around the township have received seed trays and sprouted seeds, curriculum material, and even watering cans. They will be tending seeds they have planted until they deliver them to the nursery in May.

The “Seeds for Seniors” program continues to engage seniors with a green thumb at Chartwell Elmira; they will be growing **white cedar** and **spruce** trees.

We are launching a pilot program “Fostering Future Forests” where seedling kits will be provided to families in Woolwich to grow tree seedlings as well.

We will be preparing the nursery to house all these new seedlings this spring by leveling the original

nursery area and expanding our new sprinkler system.

We are always looking for volunteers to help with nursery activities – fertilizing, transplanting, watering, pruning, and weeding – if you have an interest in this rewarding activity, please contact Ann Roberts 519 669-1647 ext. 7027 or aroberts@woolwich.ca



Seedlings arriving at the nursery



Volunteers enjoying a break in the new nursery addition



2020 Trail Talk

Woolwich Trails Group

Since 1992, the Woolwich Trails Group has been promoting hiking and biking on trails as well as actively maintaining and developing the trails. For more information or to purchase the New 7th edition of Guidebook to Woolwich Trails, visit www.healthywoolwich.org

2020 Spring Hike Schedule

The Woolwich Trails group organizes and leads hikes in the spring, fall, and winter.

Due to the public safety concerns regarding COVID-19 and recognizing how important it is to play our part in making the rate of transmission as slow as possible, we may postpone or cancel spring and summer hikes. We will update you based on Public Health recommendation. Please visit our website for up-to-date information.

Dog walk on the Health valley Trail and St. Jacobs Dog Park- **canceled**

THURSDAY MAY 28,
9:30 am to 11:30 am

Nature Hike on the Grand Valley Trail

Join Jonathan Brubacher for a nature hike on the Grand Valley Trail near Middlebrook Road North. Explore the beauty of nature in springtime.

Please meet Jonathan at 9:30 am at the trail entrance and parking lot near 1054 Woolwich Pilkington TL, West Montrose (43.63072 - 80.477004). From West Montrose take Middlebrook Road/Township Road 62 north and turn east or right onto Middlebrook

Place/Township Road 60/Woolwich-Pilkington Town Line and park on the road near the closed bridge. The trail entrance is on the north side of the road near the closed bridge.

Trail rating: This is an earthen trail with varying topography. No baby strollers on this hike please.

Note: Please contact Jonathan at 519 807-2401 or jonathanandlaurajane@gmail.com to confirm meeting time and location.

There is no rain date.

**SATURDAY JUNE 20,
9 TO 10:30 AM**

Summer Solstice Hike on the Mill Race Trail, St Jacobs

Join Nancy and Linda of the Woolwich Trails Group for a hike on the Mill Race Trail in St. Jacobs. This will be an interpretative hike with three stops along the trail with a short talk at each stop about the history of the mill and raceway, and flora and fauna along the trail. This hike will be limited to a maximum of 20 hikers.

Please pre-register for the hike by contacting Carrie at coordinator@stjacobsvillage.com.

Trail rating: This is an easy walking, level granular trail.

Meet at the entrance to the Mill Race Trail at 10 Front St., St. Jacobs just before 9 am.

There is no rain date.

Things that go "Screech" in the Night...

Over 35 intrigued hikers dressed for the snowy Sunday evening on February 9, 2020 to join members of the Woolwich Trails Group for the Snow Moon Night Hike at the Sandy Hills Pinery Trail north of Elmira.

Darkness was just enclosing the woods as we began our trek of about 2 kilometres over newly fallen and falling snow that muffled our footsteps and softened voices to whispers. At various stops, we heard about the history of the Sandy Hills Pinery property, its management and some key species for which it provides habitat.

At a point farthest into the woods, we stopped to play a recorded call of a screech owl. After about a minute of play, and a few seconds of hushed breath holding, all were delighted to hear several minutes of response from a resident screech owl that nests deeper in the swamp beyond.

Darkness was just
enclosing the woods as
we began our trek ...

Completing the loop without lighting lent novelty to the hike, and we capped off the evening with hot cider and shortbread "snowhike" cookies at the trailhead.

While we didn't get to see the full "Snow" moon, the night provided wonderful insight into the after-dark world of nature that goes on right

around us, and in fact, in spite of us. A magical evening indeed.

The Woolwich Trails Group hike members Nancy, Ann and Gloria would like to thank all of the participants for making the event a true delight.

If you would like to hear more about Woolwich Trails Group events, or join our mailing list, please visit www.healthywoolwich.org or contact Ann at aroberts@woolwich.ca



Eastern Grey Screech Owl
Photo Credit: Raymond Barlow

School Hike Day

Woolwich School Hike Day began in 2006 at St. Jacobs Public School as a way to encourage students to become involved in an activity that combines healthy and happy living with an appreciation for our natural environment. As recently as spring 2018, four elementary schools and over 1,300 students participated on or near Earth Day in April.

Woolwich residents are so very fortunate to have many wonderful trails in Woolwich such as the Mill Race, Kissing Bridge and Lions Lake Trails and schools are fostering a love for outdoor activities like hiking, a fun pastime that requires little equipment other than an umbrella occasionally, and no uniform other than a sun hat.



Trees for Woolwich

Will New Guidelines Keep our Trees Alive?

How many homeowners in a new subdivision have been frustrated to discover that thin topsoil and compacted soil in their yard have caused the death of the tree they so lovingly planted? How often have you watched a boulevard tree slowly wither and die?

In an effort to increase survival, the township has revised its planting and landscape guidelines for new developments. Chief among the changes is the requirement for deeper topsoil on boulevards and front yards.

Boulevards

The guidelines now require 45cm, up from 30 cm, of soil that is native and screened, on the boulevards. Where trees are being planted the soil should be scarified to a depth of 70cm. Soil

compaction from the heavy equipment used in construction is another hardship for trees whose roots cannot penetrate far enough into the ground to get the nutrients they need especially during a drought. Scarifying that soil will give roots on large trees a chance to penetrate deeper in the ground.

Yards

Front yards will now have to have 60 cm of topsoil (up to 90) instead of the previous 15 cm. There is no change to the backyard requirements, which

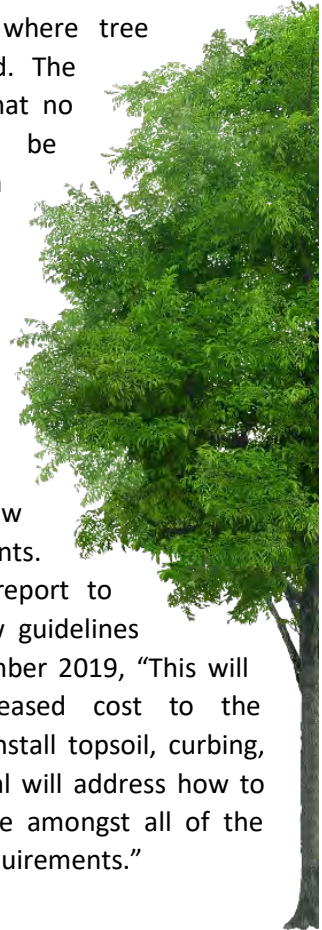
remain at 15cm, so you may want to have a look at what you have for soil before you start planting back there. Many of the larger municipalities require that the soil used to back fill around trees meet certain soil condition requirements but those were not incorporated into the new guidelines. A staff report indicated that, "This is logical but places the onus on the developer to meet this requirement and for staff to verify. Under current staffing conditions, staff would not be in a position to verify if the soil conditions met those requirements beyond relying on the developer's information."

Parking Lots

Public consultation in preparation for the Elmira Green Infrastructure Report indicated concern with the heat islands created by large unshaded parking lots. The new guidelines require one tree for every 5 parking spaces in the interior of the parking lot. This is in addition to perimeter trees to be planted around the outside of the parking lot to provide some screening from the road. There is some flexibility with these guidelines to allow for site specific issues. Alternative surfaces such as

white concrete may be considered to reduce heat islands where tree cover is not achieved. The general guideline is that no parking spot should be more than 30 m from a tree. That tree will have to reach considerable heights to shade that parking spot!

It remains to be seen how these changes will be implemented in new parking lot developments. As indicated in the report to council when the new guidelines were passed in November 2019, "This will come with an increased cost to the development to dig, install topsoil, curbing, etc. The design manual will address how to achieve this in balance amongst all of the other development requirements."



Help Save Your Trees!

If you have a tree planted on the boulevard in front your house and it hasn't rained recently please dump a bucket of water on those roots. It is especially important for the small ones. It will greatly improve the survival of the tree you enjoy.

Be part of the Green Legacy!



Clean Waterways

Clean Waterways has been planting since 1993. We have worked with 21 farmers/sites and planted 7,670 trees and shrubs. About 100 students have been helping out with tree planting per year. We thank all the volunteers who have helped over the years.

Unfortunately, our plan to plant trees at Susan Martin farm is canceled due to COVID-19.

Coronaviruses

(This is basic information only. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice)

Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through close contact, for example, in a household, workplace or healthcare centre. There is no vaccine available to protect against COVID-19. The virus is spread through:

- respiratory droplets;
- from person to person through coughing, sneezing, close contact; and
- touching contaminated surfaces.



Symptoms range from mild to severe, and can include:

- Fever,
- cough,
- difficulty breathing,
- muscle aches,
- fatigue,
- headache,
- sore throat, and
- runny nose.

Complications from COVID-19 can include serious conditions, like pneumonia or kidney failure, and in some cases, death.

If you have any of the above symptoms please stay home, monitor symptoms for 14 days after any suspected exposure and – drink plenty of fluids, get rest and sleep as much as possible. Try a humidifier or a hot shower to help with a sore throat or cough.

How can I protect myself and my family, and others?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- avoid contact with people who are sick;
- physical distancing (maintain 2 metres/6 feet distance from anyone coughing or sneezing); and
- stay home if you are sick

Physical distancing

Everyone in Ontario should be practicing physical distancing to reduce their exposure to other people. Everyone in Ontario should do their best to avoid close contact with people outside of their immediate families. Close contact includes being within two (2) metres/6 feet of another person.

If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms, you should begin to self-monitor for a period of 14 days. This means that, in addition to physical distancing, you should track how you feel. You should take your temperature daily and log any other symptoms that develop (for example, sore throat, new cough). You can share these records with your primary care provider, if you seek assessment services.

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing means avoiding close contact with others to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and can include:



Avoiding non-essential trips in the community



Limiting, postponing or cancelling gatherings



Working from home, where possible



Conducting meetings virtually



Keeping kids away from group settings



Avoiding visits to long-term care homes and other care settings

Keep a distance of 2 metres from others when going for walks or shopping for groceries



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PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19

Meet new WHC volunteers

We asked several of our new volunteers two questions: How are you volunteering in Woolwich Healthy Communities? Why are you a volunteer? Here are their responses.



Sue From

I chose to help out at Woolwich Community Services (WCS) because I think that they are doing great things for our community. I love where I am living in Elmira and am so grateful for the life I live here that I wanted to give back in some way. WCS seemed like the natural choice. There are several different options as far as volunteering goes and the people there are great. I am working in the food bank by sorting food and helping people shop when they come in.

Clark Koch

To answer your first question, I find myself volunteering in a couple of ways. One is that I have and plan to again volunteer with TWEEC in planting more trees in the area this coming season, as well as helping to prune/maintain existing plantings. I am also a volunteer in a relatively new group that is working to help organize and orchestrate the revitalization of our downtown cores throughout the Township.

I am a volunteer because I have a desire to encourage community living and to better our communities, and this will only happen if you and me act.



Graham Strong

I volunteer as a member of an ad hoc group ("The Downtowners") that is concerned with supporting downtown revitalization efforts in Woolwich Township. As a resident of St. Jacobs, I have a keen interest in helping to preserve, promote, and strengthen the viability, resilience, accessibility, charm, and novelty of the village's downtown core.

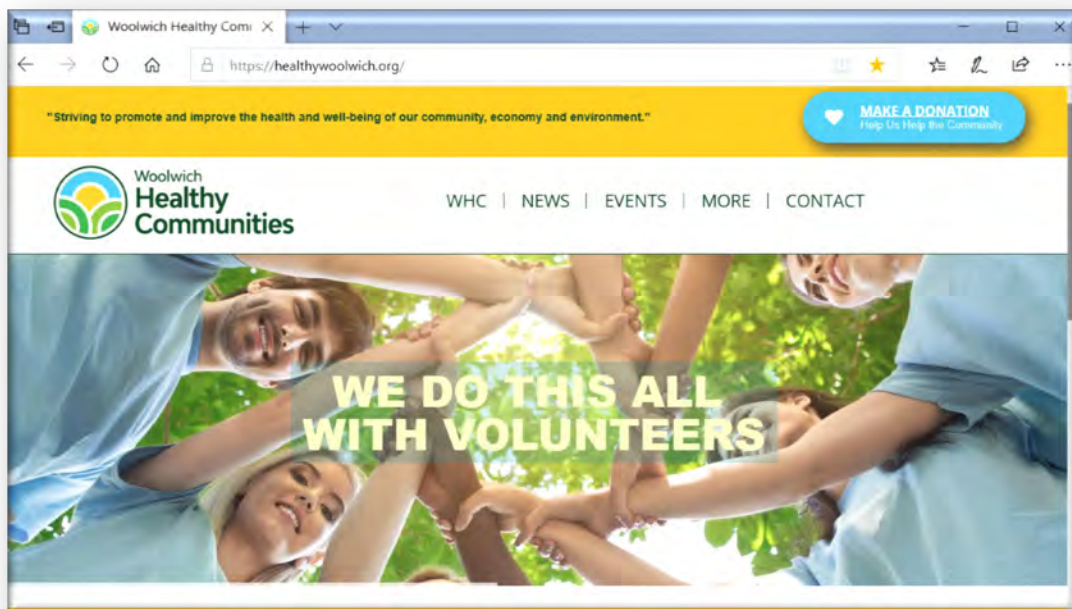
Bill Scott

I am an active member of the group known as “The Downtowners” that was formed as a result of the *Somebody Should Do Something* event that took place in November 2019. Our group’s Mission is “To proactively influence the direction and outcome of our downtowns to meet the needs of our community.” We will be working closely with the local BIAs and Woolwich Township to help influence improvements to the St Jacobs and Elmira downtowns.



As a citizen of Elmira for over 13 years, I want to see our downtowns prosper and evolve to better meet the needs of our community. What better way to do this than get directly involved?

Join us! Make a difference where you live! Call or visit the WHC website: healthycommunities.org



**Find local information. Get involved.
Build a better community ...**

**Get started online.
www.healthywoolwich.org**