

# Charlestown Township Newsletter

Winter 2020 Newsletter

[www.charlestown.pa.us](http://www.charlestown.pa.us)

Published by the Board of Supervisors

4030 Whitehorse Road, Devault, PA 19432 - (610) 240-0326

Township Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Monday - Friday



## New Tree and Shrub Planting to Improve Habitat at Brightside Farm

— by Carol Armstrong, EAC Member



### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Linda M. Csete

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

#### Supervisors

1<sup>ST</sup> Monday @ 7:00 p.m.

#### Planning Commission

2<sup>ND</sup> Tuesday @ 7:30 p.m.

#### Historical Commission

Semi-monthly 3<sup>RD</sup> Tuesday  
@ 4:00 p.m.

#### Environmental

#### Advisory Committee

2<sup>ND</sup> Wednesday @ 6:00 p.m.

#### Parks & Recreation

3<sup>RD</sup> Thursday @ 7:30 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Great Valley Middle School, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern.

All meetings are open to the public.

A beautiful bird habitat demonstration site at Brightside Farm on Yellow Springs Road in Charlestown was just improved even more by the planting of 300 native trees and shrubs along a headwater of Pigeon Run.

This planting will filter pollution running down-hill towards Pigeon Run, keep the stream cooler as needed for fish and insects, create more wildlife habitat, and improve air quality.

*Photo by Pete Goodman*



Headwaters are very important because they establish the health of the stream where it begins, and there are some species of aquatic and other wetland life that can only exist in clean headwaters.

This project was the result of a collaboration between the Charlestown Township Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) and Green Valleys Watershed Association. It required cooperation with the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, and Chester County, both of which hold protective easements on the property. Funding came from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, with plant donations from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Fairmount Conservancy, to whom we in the EAC are extremely grateful.

Trees and shrubs are protected by partially translucent tubes that keep deer from eating them, and netting is necessary at the tops of the tubes to prevent birds from falling in and to reduce deer browse. After they mature and establish root systems, we will replace the tubes with less noticeable cages. Protection will be needed for several years.

In the near future, look for labels with the names of the plants on each. You might also see members of the EAC and interested volunteers helping with maintenance to establish the plantings with the hopes of achieving a high percentage of survivals. Watch these Pennsylvania trees leaf out this coming spring!

Your EAC continues to make more applications for further grants and donations. More funds are needed for the cages, signs, and more trees for Phase Two to connect the plantings with the mature forest immediately downstream on the headwater. If you are interested in getting involved by volunteering, please contact the EAC through Pete Goodman ([peteg@bee.net](mailto:peteg@bee.net)).

## **Become a Poll Worker for Election Day!**

If you are interested in working the polls at Charlestown Elementary School for the Primary Election on April 28, 2020, please contact Wendy Leland, the current Judge of Elections who will be vacating the position, at [lelandwd@verizon.net](mailto:lelandwd@verizon.net) or go to

<https://www.chesco.org/FAQ.aspx?TID=70> for more information.



### **Requirements**

In general, you must be registered to vote in Chester County. Exceptions exist for 17-year-old high school students, who must meet additional requirements. High school students should contact Chester County Voter Services.

Poll workers work either for the entire day on election day or half-day shifts, from before the time the polls open at 7:00 am, until after the polls close at 8:00 pm. Any time you have to work for the Primary Election on April 28, 2020 and the General Election on November 3, 2020 is needed! Turnout is expected to be huge!

Chester County provides excellent training for ALL poll worker positions on their election day duties.

*All poll workers are paid for their time on election day.*

## ***Poll Worker Positions***

### **Judge of Elections, Majority Inspector, and Minority Inspector**

- These three positions make up the local election board in each precinct.
- The judge of elections is the person in charge at the polling place. This position is VACANT for the Spring Primary.
- The judge of elections and the majority and minority inspectors work together to manage the polling place, keep track of the number of voters, and make sure that the returns are delivered to the county election office at the end of the day.
- These positions are filled during municipal elections every four years. The last time these elections took place was 2017, and the next time will be in 2021.
- When the positions are vacant, someone is appointed to the job.

### **Clerk and Machine Operator**

- These workers support the local election board. They are supervised by the judge of elections.
- Clerks and machine operators help check-in voters, manage the lines, and make sure voters know where to go at each step in the voting process.





## Tax Information for 2020

**Real Estate Taxes:** The millage rate for real estate taxes is .75 (3/4) mills, unchanged for 14 years.

Your real estate taxes for 2020 will be collected by the Chester County Treasurer Department.

Tax bills are mailed the week of February 1<sup>st</sup> to the property owner's address of record. For questions, call the County Treasurer's office at 610-344-6370 or email them at [TreasurerDept@chesco.org](mailto:TreasurerDept@chesco.org).

**Earned Income Tax and Local Services Tax:** Both are collected by the Keystone Collections Group.

Charlestown Township's Earned Income Tax is 1% for residents. The rate for non-residents is 1/2%.

The **Local Services Tax** is \$52.00 per year, deducted by your Charlestown Township employer. Persons earning under \$12,000 per year are exempt from this tax.

Employers throughout Chester County are required to withhold all earned income and local services taxes quarterly. Forms and instructions, including e-filing, can be found at [www.keystonecollects.com](http://www.keystonecollects.com)

## Earned Income Tax Return Due April 15

It's that time of year again. The 2019 local earned income tax return filing deadline is approaching.

Keystone Collections Group's [e-file](#) is the easy, fast and secure way to file your 2019 tax return. It lets you file your tax return when it is most convenient for you. You will need your W-2, your Social Security Number and any other income documents that may apply (such as a PA-UE or a Schedule C).

Keystone redesigned [e-file](#) to make it even faster and more user-friendly.

If you have questions regarding local tax filing, visit Keystone's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or call Keystone's **Taxpayer Helpline** at 1-888-539-1100 to speak with a local, knowledgeable Taxpayer Service Agent.

You can also email your questions 24/7 to [Taxpayer Support](#). Taxpayer Service Agents try to respond to all online inquiries within three business days.



## Looking Forward to Spring? Join us Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> for These Special Events

**Visit the Charlestown Mill, 12:30 to 2:00**  
**Wildflower Walk Along the Pickering, 1:30**

- Esther Underhill

We will meet in the parking lot behind the Charlestown Mill on Charlestown Rd.

If you haven't visited the mill or want to visit it again, allow for time to learn about and enjoy this piece of Charlestown history. Our walk along the Pickering is a short one, but we will take time to look around us and appreciate some of the special things we have right here in Charlestown.

There are always surprises, depending on when Spring comes. If spring is early, we hope to see the hepatica shown here. If it is late, we may see some skunk cabbage blossoms. There are lots of jewels we don't always see when we walk in the woods. Hope you can join us to visit the mill, to walk the trail, or both.



# Our 15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL EARTH DAY EVENT



## **Charlestown Township Seeks Resident Volunteers for Spring Roadside Clean-up & Earth Day Projects Saturday April 18, 2020 9 am – Noon (Rain Date April 25th)**

Once again we seek volunteers to participate in a clean-up of selected township roads, parks and open space on April 18<sup>th</sup>. The Township will provide trash bags, gloves, safety vests and bottled water for volunteers. Youth Groups are encouraged and welcome. We will assign safer off-road areas for these groups and for families with younger children.

Litter patrol not for you? We can work with you or your group on planning a specific earth day project.

*At left: Clean up crew on Coldstream Road at last year's event*

The Township Office is used as headquarters. Personnel will be on hand at the office and on the road throughout the event to handle calls, questions, problems, etc.

You may have a particular road or other area you'd like to take care of; otherwise we can suggest assignments and you can select one that appeals to you. You have the option of leaving the filled trash bags at the location for later pick up by the township, or if you have a truck or larger vehicle, the bags can be dropped off at the Township yard opposite our office on Whitehorse Road.

Families and Adult Volunteers meet at the township office for continental breakfast fare, to get their assignments and to pick up supplies.

Youth and other volunteer groups are set up ahead of time through their leaders and a modest reimbursement is provided for refreshments at your assigned location. Homeowners association groups are also set up in advance.

Do you want to participate but can't on April 18<sup>th</sup>? We'll provide supplies for any day of the year you or your group is available!

To Register or to obtain more information, contact: Linda Csete, Township Manager  
email: [admin1@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:admin1@charlestown.pa.us) phone: (610) 240-0326 between 9 am – 3 pm

## **Charlestown Township Directory 2020**

**ADMINISTRATION:** Office Hours are Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Linda M. Csete, Manager/Secretary-Treasurer  
Marie Stone, Assistant Township Secretary

[manager@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:manager@charlestown.pa.us)  
[admin2@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:admin2@charlestown.pa.us)

(610) 240-0326  
(610) 240-0326

**BUILDING INSPECTOR/CODES:** Anthony Merklinger – [amerklinger@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:amerklinger@charlestown.pa.us) (610) 451-5200

**PROPERTY & PUBLIC SAFETY COORDINATOR:** Timothy J. Hubbard – [thubbard@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:thubbard@charlestown.pa.us) (610) 614-6119

**ROADS AND PUBLIC WORKS:** Roadmaster/Project Manager: Jim Thompson (610) 656-9315

**TOWNSHIP ENGINEER/ZONING OFFICER:** Daniel T. Wright, P.E. – [dwright@advancedgeoservices.com](mailto:dwright@advancedgeoservices.com) (610) 840-9100

## ***2020 Dates for Chester County Household Hazardous Waste Events***

Charlestown Township is a 2020 Participant in the Chester County Hazardous Household Waste Event Program. Bring unwanted hazardous household, automotive products, home maintenance, lawn and pest control products to the next Collection event. There are six events as listed below, all from 9 am – 3 pm. For a list of items Accepted and Not Accepted, go to: [www.chestercountyswa.org/Document Center/View/1803](http://www.chestercountyswa.org/Document%20Center/View/1803)

Saturday, April 4, 2020  
**Center for Arts and Technology  
(Technical College High School)**  
1580 Charlestown Road  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Saturday, April 18, 2020  
**Octorara High School**  
226 Highland Road  
Atglen, PA 19310  
*(Proof of County Residency May be Required)*

Saturday, May 9, 2020  
**Owen J. Roberts Middle School**  
881 Ridge Road  
Pottstown, PA 19465

**Friday, June 19, 2020**  
**Coatesville Learning Center**  
1635 East Lincoln Highway  
Coatesville, PA 19320  
*(Stone Wall Entrance – Veterans' Drive - same entrance as  
CAT Brandywine- Rt. 30 across from Dairy Queen)*

Saturday, Aug. 29, 2020  
**Oxford School District Admin. Building**  
125 Bell Tower Lane  
Oxford, PA 19363  
*(Proof of County Residency May be Required)*

Saturday, October 10, 2020  
**Government Services Center**  
601 Westtown Rd, West Chester, PA 19380



### ***Snow Reminders***

The first objective is to have the roadways open for emergency vehicles. This is basically one lane with anti-skid and road salt applied only to areas that require extra traction such as hills and major intersections. The other roads are then opened.

After the snow has ended, the cleanup begins, that is, trying to get the roadways opened "curb-to-curb" and clearing snow and ice from the intersections, fire hydrants, storm water drains and inlets. We ask for your continued patience and understanding during these snow events.

When a plow operator is pushing back the snow and slush from a roadway, the plow must be run at a speed that throws the snow and slush off the road and over what has previously been plowed. This precludes the plow operator from stopping at each driveway and mailbox. If a plow is lifted at a driveway or mailbox, all of the snow and ice in the plow would be dropped on the road causing additional problems.

### ***Which Roads in Charlestown are State Roads?***

For Snow Removal and other Maintenance Issues on State Roads listed below, call PennDOT at 484-340-3200.

Bodine Road between Foster & Seven Oaks Charlestown Road Church Road Coldstream Road Conestoga Rd (Rt. 401)	Foster Road Hollow Road Merlin Road Morehall Rd (Rt. 29) Newcomen Road Phoenixville Pike	Pickering Dam Road Pikeland Road Seven Oaks Road State Road (Rt. 29) Valley Hill Rd (East of Rt. 401)	Whitehorse Road  Yellow Springs Road (north of Hollow Rd)  Yellow Springs Rd (east of Morehall/Rt. 29)
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# ***Remember: We Drink with the Fishes***

- by Richard Findlay, EAC member



Whether you are on a public water system or have your own well, the origin of that water falls from the sky and reaches you via the wells, the streams, creeks and reservoirs. The last couple of years have seen above average rain fall here in our township so we have no worries currently re supply. However, that does bring some quality challenges to our source streams' natural environment.

With winter here already we have seen first light snow falls. Heavier storms are to be expected and our natural reaction is to salt, salt and more salt. As we are frequently told salt is not good for our bodies but can be more devastating for the creatures that populate the streams and provide a

cleansing function. With the recent high levels of rain our groundwater levels are at an all-time high. This has two impacts; first new rain or snow runs off our driveways in greater quantities and faster into the streams and secondly the salt reaches the groundwater more easily and quickly and accumulates there year after year. The end result is that higher concentrations reach our ground water and streams, which eventually means our drinking water.

You can **reduce salting impact** by:

- Never put SALT on fallen snow.
- Always clear snow from driveways and parking spaces before salting.
- Use SALT sparingly and only when absolutely necessary to just melt the ice.
- Reuse the SALT after the snow melts by sweeping and re using.
- Be diligent in the products you use. No urea, kitty litter or ash-based products.
- Consider salt alternates such as calcium chloride, potassium chloride, or magnesium chloride, however these have lower chloride levels which can be harmful to your pets.
- If possible use a pre-wetted 1:1 sand to salt mixture.
- Spread the guidelines by talking to your neighbors and speak up if you see over-salting and especially uncovered, unprotected SALT piles.

Winter can be a beautiful time of year when trees and land are covered in snow. Enjoy, keep warm, and be safe.

If you want to know more about how you can help to protect our environment and watersheds contact Charlestown EAC chair at [peteg@bee.net](mailto:peteg@bee.net).

## ***USEFUL CONTACTS FOR YOUR REFERENCE:***

*Pennsylvania State Police (610) 486-6280*

*PennDOT Maintenance for State Roads (484) 340-3200*

*For Township & County Real Estate Taxes: Chester County Treasurer (610) 344-6370*

*For Great Valley School District Real Estate Taxes: Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100*

*For Earned Income & Local Services Taxes: Keystone Collections (866) 539-1100*

*SPCA (610) 692-6113*

# Organic Community Gardening at Brightside Farm Park

The Brightside Farm Community Gardens are made available each year to interested local gardeners who are able and willing to make a full season commitment to managing a plot.

These 20' x 20' plots (400 sq. ft.) go quickly, and there is already a short waiting list for the 2020 season. However, the Garden operates on a rolling enrollment basis should plots become available.

If you are a returning gardener or a new one, complete the form below and return it to the Township Office by March 15<sup>th</sup> to reserve a plot.



----- cut here -----

## BRIGHTSIDE FARM PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN REGISTRATION FORM

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Please Check One for 2020:

- ☐ I am a returning gardener and would like to keep my plot # \_\_\_\_.
- ☐ I am a returning gardener and would like to be assigned a new plot #.
- ☐ I am a new gardener and would like to be assigned a plot.
- ☐ I gardened in the past but won't be renewing my plot this season.

### Instructions:

Please return this form with your annual \$25.00 garden fee to the Township Office with checks made payable to Charlestown Township by March 15<sup>th</sup> to reserve your garden plot for the upcoming season. Mail to: Charlestown Township, P.O. Box 507, Devault, PA 19432.

### Please Note:

1. Returning Gardeners are given priority but must return this form with their payment by March 15<sup>th</sup> to keep their plot from the previous year.
2. After March 15<sup>th</sup>, plots will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Charlestown residents will be given priority.
3. Only one plot per gardener will be assigned, in order to provide them to more people.
4. If there are vacant plots after April 15<sup>th</sup>, we will then allow gardeners to have more than one plot. We'll notify you if there are any available.
5. Garden Plot Registration is handled by the Township office (610) 240-0326 or [admin1@charlestown.pa.us](mailto:admin1@charlestown.pa.us)
6. The Garden Coordinator is Charles Buck, who can be contacted at [buck.charles.a@gmail.com](mailto:buck.charles.a@gmail.com)

**Acknowledgement:** I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby acknowledge that I will maintain my plot as an organic space, with no synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.

☐ Please check here if you would like to be contacted for garden-specific volunteer opportunities this season.

# Charlestown Township Meeting Schedule 2020

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Board of Supervisors</b> <b>GVMS Room 154,</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> Mon. 7:00 p.m.</b>	6	3	2	<b>6</b> **	4	1	6	3	1 *	5	2	7
<b>Planning Commission</b> <b>GVMS Room 154,</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Tues. 7:30 p.m.</b>	14	11	10	14	12	9	14	11	8	13	10	8
<b>Environmental Advisory</b> <b>Committee</b> <b>GVMS Room 154,</b> <b>6:00 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed.</b>	8 ***	12	11	15 *	13	10	8	12	9	14	11	9
<b>Historical Commission</b> <b>GVMS Guidance</b> <b>Office, 4:00 p.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues.</b>	21	None	17	None	19	None	21	None	15	None	17	None
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b> <b>GVMS Room 154,</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs. 7:30 p.m.</b>	16	<b>20</b> **	19	16	21***	18 ****	16	20	17	15	19	17

\* Meeting to be held on a day other than the usual meeting day

\*\* Meeting to be held at a different location: **TO BE DETERMINED**

\*\*\* Meeting to be held at a different room in the Middle School: Library

\*\*\*\* Meeting to be held at a different location: High School Choral Room

GVMS = Great Valley Middle School, 255 N. Phoenixville Pike, Malvern, Pa.

**Charlestown Township**  
**P.O. Box 507**  
**Devault, PA 19432**