

# FAIRFIELD**matters**

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER | [fairfieldmatters.com](http://fairfieldmatters.com)



**FPC applies for  
removal of permitted  
development rights**

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SPOT OUR LITTLE BLACK CAT?

AND MORE

1/3 OFF YOUR FOOD BILL!

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**OFFER  
EXTENDED  
NOW UNTIL  
30 NOV**



Would you like to lay a wreath at Fairfield's Remembrance Service on Sunday 8 November? Wreath laying has been confined to councils and the Scouts in the past, but Fairfield Parish Council (FPC) wants to make this year's event more inclusive.

All the management groups in Fairfield have been invited to lay a wreath and if residents have a strong reason for wanting to remember a family member then they will be welcome too.

To comply with the regulations for the event, numbers attending will be limited and details will follow shortly about how to apply if you would like to attend. The service will take place at 3pm on Sunday 8 November.

For full details keep an eye on the FPC website and Facebook page, or email [newsletter@fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk) to subscribe to the FPC email newsletter.



## FAIRFIELD PARISH COUNCIL APPLIES FOR REMOVAL OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

All residents should by now have received a letter from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) informing them of Fairfield Parish Council's application for an 'Article 4 Direction' to remove permitted development rights in the parish, and a leaflet from Fairfield Parish Council (FPC) explaining its position. Here's a summary of the main points.

### What is permitted development?

'Permitted development' (PD) is a loosening of planning law first introduced in 1995 and updated several times since, which allows homeowners to undertake certain types of work without needing to apply for planning permission. These include rear and side extensions, front porches and loft extensions.

### Why is that a bad thing?

Current PD legislation specifies the maximum size of extension that is allowed, but does not have much to say about style. For that reason, Article 4 Directions are fairly standard in conservation areas and other places where the local heritage – the 'look' of a place – is important. Fairfield was created around the old Victorian hospital, and took its inspiration from that iconic building. This makes the village unique in many ways; its design and feel is very different to that of other modern housing developments. Unregulated building work is a threat to that. Of course, most people will want to keep Fairfield looking as it does and will make sure their extensions are sympathetic – but currently they don't have to, and this could over time chip away at Fairfield's distinctiveness.

### Would this stop me extending my house?

No. Many of us want to make changes to our properties. FPC is in favour of that, as long as the changes are in keeping. It's not just FPC: in a survey of Fairfield residents in 2014, 95 per cent of respondents agreed that any further development should keep the current look and feel of Fairfield. With that in mind, a design statement was drawn up to crystallise what the key characteristics of our buildings are – you can see this at <https://www.fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk/design-statement-2/>. However, if the Article 4 Direction is agreed, residents will need to make a planning application for every extension or addition to their property. The downsides are a small charge (around £200) and the time taken to go through the planning process (around 8 weeks). Planning applications will be considered against various criteria including, most importantly, the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan and Design Statement.

### Does this consultation relate to all of Fairfield?

The dwellings which make up the converted former hospital are listed buildings, which have different restrictions. CBC has also excluded Fairfield Gardens and the unbuilt area around Fairfield Park Lower School's Ruskin Drive campus from its consultation. FPC asks residents responding to the consultation to point out that the same rules should apply to these areas, if they agree that they should.

### So what happens now?

To comment, visit the CBC website by 26 October. Under 'Consultations', scroll to 'Restricting Permitted Development in Fairfield' and find 'Have Your Say'.

## LOWER WILBURY FARM SHOP

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Saturday 14th November  
Start time 7.30pm



IN SUPPORT OF TEARFUND FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CHURCH WILL BE HOSTING A QUIZ NIGHT VIA ZOOM ON SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER @ 7.30PM, TO MAKE A DONATION TO TEARFUND PLEASE GO TO THE JUST GIVING PAGE:  
<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/FairfieldCommunityChurch>

TO REGISTER FOR THE QUIZ PLEASE CONTACT ALLISON (Tel 07983 730291) OR EMAIL [info@fairfieldcc.org.uk](mailto:info@fairfieldcc.org.uk) THANK YOU.



**REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE**  
Sunday 8 November 2020

10.30am

Fairfield Community Church  
at Fairfield Community Hall  
& live streamed:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMVJZg326iLaEh2Jc64ESFQ>



I've enjoyed going back to school and seeing all my friends and teachers, but I'm sad I can't play with my best friend at break and lunchtime as she's in a different bubble.

Freya, Fairfield Park

# learning

It feels strange, exciting and overwhelming to be back because I haven't been with many people during lockdown and shielding, so being with lots of people at school has felt overwhelming sometimes. But it's really great to be with my friends again. I missed all the Year 4 leavers' activities which was sad, and I have returned to school but to a completely new middle school, so the routine, people and building are all new to me. I'm gradually getting used to that and trying to stay safe from the coronavirus. It's hard to social distance at school and that surprised me.

Michael, Pix Brook

# how homeschool, government restrictions and school safety measures have affected Fairfield's younger generation

It felt good going back to school after lockdown. Everything, everything you do in school I've missed!

Brodie, Pix Brook

It was strange going back to start with, but I got used to it quite quickly. I was surprised how quickly we got used to the new changes.

Harry, Etonbury

The no singing rule is a bit odd. I like singing – so I keep singing and then remembering that I'm not supposed to sing.

Jack,  
Fairfield Park

# through

Lockdown for me came at the most unsuspected time. With my A-levels right round the corner, teachers had been overflowing us with work making sure we revised and achieved the grades we wanted. Then suddenly in March it was announced that the exams we had been prepping for, for two years straight, were no longer going ahead. Of course teachers told us the sensible thing was to keep revising and to try and teach ourselves the rest of the syllabus in case there was any type of turnaround. However, most of my motivation was lost. Lockdown for me consisted mostly of watching films, lots of baking, cleaning and napping.

The end of quarantine couldn't come soon enough, it was a lot harder than I thought to keep myself busy when you can't really see anybody or leave the house. When 13 August came around and results were ready to be collected I was extremely nervous. That morning I received an email saying that my first choice had been rejected, so straight away I knew I hadn't been given the grades I'd hoped for. Trying to find out what my options were was pretty inconclusive. The school didn't know a lot more than us, but did the best they could to help. I had been told to go into clearing as my only option or retake the year. Luckily, I was offered an unconditional in Biological Sciences at my top choice university a few days later. The same day, it was announced that grades would be changed to the teacher assigned grades (changing my A-levels two grade boundaries.)

Due to coronavirus I was also unable to work as much as I'd like in order to save up for university.

Overall, it wasn't a great experience. I think I would have achieved better doing the tests themselves but I still ended up with a good course at a great university. I'm excited to experience uni life even if it isn't exactly like it would've been pre Covid!

A sixth-form leaver, Samuel Whitbread

It's nice to be back at school learning with teachers again. I've got something to talk about with my parents. But I've been surprised how short lunchtime is!

Evelyn, Pix Brook

It feels good to be back. I missed my teachers, my friends and playing with dinosaurs. I have to wash my hands more now.

Joseph, Fairfield Park

Going back to school after lockdown feels a little bit weird because we are in the same classroom all day and we have to stay apart from each other.

Lucia, Henlow

I have new teachers. We have to space out in class and have bubbles and areas we can and can't use. Nothing has surprised me other than there is not as many toys in Year 1. I am happy to be back.

George, Fairfield Park

We have to sanitise our hands and wipe down our tables and we are not allowed to carry our bags around. Face coverings have to be worn on the school bus.

Sophie, Henlow

# (and after)

I'm in a bigger school with LOTS of children and teachers. There are lots of new rules, especially at playtime, so we have to think of new games to play. Super early mornings are not good!

Josh, Henlow

I missed my friends during lockdown. Going back to school felt weird, but then after a few days it felt quite normal. There are new one-way systems and it takes a long time to get to each lesson.

Lily, Etonbury

I missed all my friends during lockdown and I still do as they have gone off to other schools.

Gracie, Etonbury

We watched in awe as Covid swept through the globe and little by little 2020 was almost wiped from existence. We traded sun hats for face masks, sun block for hand sanitiser and classrooms for zoom calls. Before we knew it, the prime minister was announcing a national lockdown and then parks were empty, schools abandoned, and we became confined to our houses. We all read *The Hunger Games* growing up but when Covid hit it felt like we were living it.

Education is probably one of the aspects of 'normal life' that has been disrupted the most by Covid. I'd say one of the hardest things about dealing with Covid as a final year student is adjusting to the new world it left behind in its wake. A new world where we can't hug our friends, go to parties or even smile at people we meet in town or on the bus. It made returning to school very difficult, whilst everyone worked to keep everyone safe all we wanted to do was squeeze and hug every person we hadn't seen in over six months. Returning to school felt familiar yet alien segregated from the younger years, to teachers in face visors and yellow tape stating please stand two metres apart. Another oddly familiar yet foreign aspect is navigating the university process remotely. Covid has made us all feel uncertain about our futures, even more so than we already do. How can you imagine your future somewhere through a virtual campus tour? Or Google maps? I think I can speak for all Year 13 students when I say we feel like we've missed out on a huge part of the process when it comes to university. We are all adjusting and doing our absolute best to keep everyone including ourselves safe whilst navigating this brave new world.

Jessica, Samuel Whitbread

# lockdown



# A sneak peek inside Pix Brook Academy's permanent building

*More than ten years of worry over school places in our area have been brought to an end by the (so very nearly) completion of Pix Brook Academy's state-of-the-art new building, which has sprung up from a farmer's field off the Stotfold/Arlesey Road in just a shade over a year – a schedule that would have made it record-breaking in normal times and is nothing short of remarkable in light of the additional restrictions created by Covid-19.*

With the global pandemic still being what it is, it's unlikely that we'll see a grand opening in the near future, but this long-awaited new school building is open for business – and that's big news for Fairfield families, who (being furthest away from Etonbury Academy and therefore always last on the list) have struggled for years to get middle school places in our catchment.

On 7 September, both the school's first cohort, which was housed last year in a temporary building on the Etonbury Academy site, and more than 130 new pupils who joined this year, were welcomed into the 'primary' wing of the new building. Contractor Willmott Dixon is working to bring the remainder to completion in time for handover during October half-term.



*Two of the highlights already in place: The Learning Resource Centre (LRC, above) is an inviting space that takes full advantage of the building's wide-ranging views on two sides, while looking over the canteen on a third. The canteen itself (below), although not quite ready to be shown in all its full-height glory, will be an impressive triple-storey space and truly the centre of the building, with both the first- and second-floor corridors galleried above it, spaces including the LRC looking down into it, and with direct access into the hall, drama studio, playground and staff room.*



# Children's activities for October half-term: you won't be-leaf the fun that can be had!

This month, I am sharing a range of indoor and outdoor activities on an Autumn theme, to keep little ones busy through the October half-term holiday – or on any other autumn day when you need some inspiration. These are activities I have enjoyed doing with my own children, hence all the personal tips, but feel free to put your own spin on them!

## Hedgehog bed

It's almost hibernation time. You can attract hedgehogs into your garden by putting out dog or cat food and water, or leaving a pile of autumn leaves for them to forage in. Create a safe space for nesting by leaning some wood against a wall, raising a patio tile on some bricks or cutting a hole in an upturned planter to keep predators away.

## Rangoli patterns

Diwali is just around the corner: celebrate by having a go at this traditional Indian art form. Mix uncooked rice with some different coloured paints (or use food colouring and a splash of white vinegar) and leave it to dry, then use it to create colourful patterns on the ground (lay down paper or an old sheet first for easier cleanup). Geometric and flower patterns work well – chalk out a pattern first or just grab spoons, cookie cutters and other utensils and make it up as you go. Uncooked rice is great for sensory play with young children, but if this sounds too messy, you can also make rangoli-inspired patterns with pavement chalk.

## Sensory painting

Add spices (we used ginger, mixed spice and cinnamon) to water and mix to create sensory paint.

bright  
lights  
&  
colour  
fun

## Autumn lanterns

Decorate an old jar with leaves or tissue paper, then pop an led candle inside to create an autumn lantern.

## Breadstick sparklers

Bonfire night-inspired fun without the crowds (or the naked flame): dip breadsticks in chocolate and sprinkles to create edible sparklers.

## turning leaves

### Leaf art

if you have lots of leaves in your garden then this one is for you. Lay a plain coloured sheet or blanket down on the ground as your canvas and then use the leaves to create a picture. You could even insert yourself into the picture and get someone to take a photo from above!

### Leaf lion mane

Grab a paper plate and cut out a face-sized hole in the middle. Glue leaves around the outside to create the mane, then hold up to your face to become a lion! Once you've finished playing with them you can attach them to your front door as an Autumn wreath.

### Leaf necklace

Grab a needle and string then go on a leaf hunt. Thread the leaves onto the string as you go to make a leaf necklace. Alternatively, you could bring your leaves home and use a hole punch to make holes before threading string or ribbon through them.

## Hedgehog bread

Make dough from scratch or using a bread mix, then form small rolls and snip them with scissors to create spikes, and add raisins for facial features. We served ours with curried carrot soup.

## nurture nature

### Spider web fine motor activity

Thread some wool through a colander, washing basket or any other container with holes in. Place objects inside – we used plastic spiders but most things will work. Then use tweezers or kitchen tongs to retrieve the items.

### Potions

Fill old plastic bottles (we have some we keep especially for these activities) or containers with food colouring and water (labels not compulsory, but you could have fun making your own). This is a great activity for colour mixing and is lots of fun!

These are just some of the activities you and your younger children could try this Autumn. If you have any fantastic activity ideas of your own, please share them on our Facebook page.

### Halloween smoothies

Blend milk, spinach, banana, agave syrup and ginger to create monster smoothies.

spiders  
&  
spells

*Lucy Whittington has lived in Fairfield Park since June 2019 with her husband and two sons. She is a teacher at Fairfield Park Lower School.*



## In conversation with Amber: Steve Adams

*Pix Brook Academy opened the doors to a beautiful new building at the start of this school year. I had the pleasure of a tour and a conversation with Steve Adams, the Principal and clearly the driving force behind much of what the new school has achieved.*

**AF:** Thank you for meeting today! Would you mind starting out by introducing yourself?

**SA:** Hi, I'm Steve Adams. I'm the Principal of Pix Brook Academy in Stotfold.

**AF:** How long have you been in education?

**SA:** 25 years.

**AF:** Wow, long time! What made you get into teaching?

**SA:** I was a late joiner: I didn't start teaching until I'd had another career. My degree is in economics; I subsequently got a job working for a construction firm, trying to be a surveyor. And it's possibly – in my opinion – the most boring way of spending your time.

**AF:** Hahaha

**SA:** It certainly wasn't for me! I worked quite hard and saved, then travelled for a couple of years. While I was travelling, I met a number of people who were teachers. They were travelling in the holidays and I thought, "Oh, this might work for me, because I really like travelling. So I'll go and do that." I came back and trained at the London Institute of Education as an economics teacher, and I loved it.

**AF:** What is it about teaching that you find so engaging?

**SA:** I think if you work with young people, then every minute of every day is a question to be solved, a question to be answered. And I think if you're helping others feel like what they're doing is worthwhile – and that includes staff and pupils – then the day feels valuable.

**AF:** Did you know early on that you wanted to get into the management side of things?

**SA:** I decided this very early on, probably naively, actually, but I wanted to be in charge of things, because that's in my nature.

**AF:** And what do you find most rewarding about being the Principal of Pix Brook?

**SA:** Oh, loads of things. But if you don't find working with the kids the best bit, then you probably wouldn't have done the kind of time in schools that I've done, because that is absolutely the best bit. No question about it.

**AF:** In terms of the situation we've had with the lockdown and coronavirus: what kind of ramifications has it had for Pix Brook?

**SA:** I think we've managed the process pretty well. During the period of initial lockdown and towards the summer, 210+ different directives and guidelines came through to schools. Responding to those, as well as doing your job,

is not easy. If you combine that with trying to get the school off the ground and instructing effectively and properly, it was quite busy.

**AF:** Sounds intense! What would you like people to know about the school?

**SA:** I'm most proud of the way in which my colleagues are working with the pupils. There's a number of things that have been added to what is already an enormously busy role, and an enormously challenging role to do effectively. I'm mindful of how my colleagues have responded to that: they have been *brilliant*.

**AF:** You feel like everybody's pulling in the same direction?

**SA:** Absolutely. And that's not a given. The school has doubled in size. Not only are we in a new building in a new sort of regime of restrictions and guidelines, but we've also got a brand new body of pupils, and staff, all of whom have got to try and become part and parcel of what it is to be at Pix Brook. That is why I'm very mindful of ensuring that when I go into the classes, that I have an impact, just by virtue of the fact that pupils need to know who I am and what I stand for, and so do the staff.

**AF:** Do you go into the classrooms?

**SA:** I go into every classroom, every day, at least twice.

**AF:** Wow! I don't think I've heard of the principal in other schools being as hands-on with the students...

**SA:** It would be easy not to do. I greet the pupils at the gate every morning, and I'm on the gate every night. I do every break time and I do every lunchtime. I will go around lessons, at least twice during the course of the day. The purpose of that is for me to see what's going on and to remind everyone what we should be doing. I'll try to engage with a class because I like the teachers to know that I do remember what it's like to be in a class. I'm continually reminded of this at home because my wife is the head of science at a large secondary school;



she reminds me regularly that the job requires support to do effectively. And it's easy to sit and criticise, complain, comment if you're not doing it. So get back in there and do it and remind yourself what it's actually like. So I've never lost sight of that.

**AF:** It's so lovely to hear. I'm sure you get a really warm response from the children as well.

**SA:** I guess you'd have to ask them. I'd like to think so. Sometimes I have to pop in for other reasons, and I get less of a warm response!

**AF:** Hahaha

**SA:** But that's part of the job as well, isn't it? The teachers and staff are used to me coming and going, and I don't think the kids would even notice. It's been how I've done it all along. The staff we've got here are very good, and I want them to know they're supported. And I want people to know who I am. I never wanted to be an invisible head teacher – that would miss the best part of the job.

**AF:** Well, thank you again for agreeing to do this, I really appreciate it!

**SA:** You're very welcome. I'm glad you were able to come!

*Amber Fortier moved to Fairfield Park in 2017 with her husband and three young children. She is originally from New York.*





## TREE PLANTING VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED!

Be part of a legacy at Fairfield! Volunteers are required to help plant the 420 saplings that will be arriving this winter. Do you have a group or family unit that would enjoy planting saplings to ensure the future of our woodlands?

Fairfield Park Residents Association have recently received confirmation from the Woodland Trust that we have been awarded 420 native tree saplings. These will be planted within the shelter belts to re-invigorate the woodlands. By planting a whole host of new, young trees, which will also include the introduction of new species, we will widen the habitat and ecological value of the woodland. The saplings will be planted in batches of 15 at sites that have been identified and marked out around Fairfield.

Further details will follow nearer the planting date, but we expect the event to take place in December or January. The event will take into account the latest Covid 19 precautions. We would welcome as many 'family or support bubbles' as possible to come help plant the new trees, and we will ensure that these 'bubbles' of volunteers are social distanced at all times.

If you would like to take part, please contact us by email: [feedback@fairfield-park.com](mailto:feedback@fairfield-park.com).

Fairfield Park Residents' Association

*Part of Fairfield's charm is its setting amongst mature trees, but gaps have started to appear in our shelter belts as trees have fallen or needed to be felled. Periodic planting of new trees is necessary in order to maintain our woodland setting for the future.*

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## READERS' LETTERS



Is Fairfield your home and are you still working from it? Do you now know more than you did a year ago, has a life-threatening virus and isolation for thousands given you a 'can do' mindset? Zoom, Facetime, Skype and Teams are familiar words...do you now realise you don't need the daily grind of a sapping commute to get things done?

Many friends and neighbours around me now opt to work at home rather than commute. "I get more done." "I like being able to really concentrate." "I don't have to waste time at pointless meetings." "And I don't miss the journey, the traffic and the weather." So many are reluctant to go back to commuting on a regular basis.

Six months of working from home has made you realise you don't really need to GO TO WORK. Besides the cost, the pollution, and the time and energy. If your work involves a computer and phone, you can in theory work anywhere! Commuting to Cambridge, London, Stevenage, Luton, Bedford or

further, it seems crazy to expend all that energy.

In September 1993 I devised a central London conference on remote working entitled 'The Best of Both Worlds' – way ahead of its time. BT, Mercury and Digital spoke about the future. There was talk of teleworking, telecottaging, and hubs of remote workers meeting up regularly!

Because of the virus, we have watched TV programmes where social distancing is in place, and interviews are conducted from individuals' homes, with carefully curated bookcases of course! However, for many jobs you need to be in situ. And if you add child care into the mix, it can be a terrific strain and relationships can be under pressure. It's a nightmare to manage meetings, talk to customers, management and colleagues whilst a squabbling war breaks out elsewhere.

Working from home for half the time, with the right equipment, halves the expensive office space. Or does it? Long leases may mean it's either "stay or go." Fifty per cent does away with the crammed commutes, traffic congestion, and on a rota basis, just like some schools, saves time, energy and pollution.

Unnecessary meetings, often decided beforehand, or in an inquest later, are used to justify the existence of junior and middle management. Now we are all monitored by results, and don't need to be seen to be working. Technology can monitor your mouse moves, on-screen input and telephone use!

Face-to-face meetings can motivate, justify, agree, but we have found Zoom, Facetime, Skype and Teams can almost do the job just as well, for most of the time.

Perhaps we need a meeting place in Fairfield, where we can meet up, have a coffee and chat. After all, as humans we are social creatures, and many miss the company of the Company! And some rather like the after work social scene!

Also a train, bus or car journey divides home from work and vice versa.

Decades later the technology has advanced so much – perhaps we need a hub or two in Fairfield for all those remote workers beaver away without social contact. Maybe the higher bills for heating our homes all day will make us slink back to the office, if it's still there! Let's not squander this chance to make life easier.

Val Tyler

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There was no Apple Day this year, but a lot of apples were turned into juice using the equipment from the Community Hall, and the pigs at Lower Wilbury Farm enjoyed the spoils as usual. There are no more juicing dates, but there are still plenty of apples left in the orchards if you feel a pie or a crumble coming on!

## First Step

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## WHERE AM I?



How well do you know Fairfield? If you recognise this rope swing, email [editor@fairfieldmatters.com](mailto:editor@fairfieldmatters.com) with its location to get your name in the next issue of *FM*. Last month's picture showed the information board in the West Orchard, just off Hardy Way/Eliot Way, which gives details about life in the former Fairfield Hospital.

## ALLOTMENTS IN FAIRFIELD

Would you like one?

Would you like to be involved in helping to set them up?

Email: [allotments@fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:allotments@fairfieldparishcouncil.gov.uk)

## TENNIS COURT CLOSURES FOR WINTER

We are almost at the end of our season. The court will close for the winter on Monday 19 October. We hope you have all enjoyed this season and we will be sending out communication once everything is over, to let you know what our income was and how much we have surplus to put into improving the court. If anyone has any suggestions for next year please let us know and we will see what we can do. As ever, email us on [directors@fairfieldhall.net](mailto:directors@fairfieldhall.net) if you have any queries.

Your Directors at Fairfield Hall



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Fairfield Matters is published by the independent Fairfield Matters Editorial Group for the benefit of all Fairfield residents.



**Fairfield Park School**



*We have spaces available for September 2021*

**Admissions into Reception Class September 2021**

This is a key time in your child's educational journey. If you would like to visit our school prior to submitting your application form for your child's school place in September 2021, we are providing COVID—safe appointments, where you will meet one of the Senior Leadership Team who will share our ethos and give you a tour of the school. These are bookable in advance and are taking place on a Monday and Friday afternoon during September and October. Please contact the school office on **01462 830000** if you wish to arrange.





# BOO HOO

*Halloween (as we know it) is cancelled*

*Brunel Walk will not be decorated*



*Trick-or-treating is discouraged*

Halloween in Fairfield is officially awesome – but, sadly, awesome draws a crowd.

Please do your bit to ensure our community stays Covid-secure this Halloween by keeping decorations and celebrations inside your house, and spreading the word that Fairfield will not be putting on a show this spooky season.