

# **Shelburne Recreation Committee Town Report 2020-2021**

The Recreation Committee has the following members: Diana Hardina, Jackie Walsh, Norman Beebe, and Stefan Topolski. We currently have one vacancy on the committee. If you are interested in joining, please contact one of us. Our contact information is available on the town website. Bill Buck enters his third year as the Cowell Gym Director. Bill's background in both coaching and facility management continues to be an asset to the committee.

The primary responsibility of the Recreation Committee is to provide and facilitate opportunities for recreation within our community. Unfortunately, our usual programming aimed toward children-- Shelburne Falls Girls Softball for grades 2-6, West County Soccer for grades K-6, and the Cowell Youth Basketball Program for grades K-6--were not offered due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 also closed down all activities at the Cowell Gym. These activities included a senior walk three mornings a week, adult basketball two nights a week (both competitive and relaxed), and volleyball two nights a week. The closure of the Cowell also meant we were not able to rent the gym out for birthday parties, school team practices, events such as the Art Garden's Draw-around, etc.

The outdoor courts at the Cowell stayed open for tennis throughout the pandemic, with Covid-19 guidance in place. Pickleball, after an almost one-year absence, is now offered two mornings a week on the outdoor courts. Ice skating, thanks to the cooperative weather and recreation committee member Stefan Topolski, was a HUGE success! Stefan once again provided public ice skating in his side yard. He had good ice for nine weeks this winter, and there were over 200 visits to the rink. In addition, the Recreation Committee secured many pairs of free skates, which Stefan put out for skaters to take.

The Recreation Committee continued its collaboration with the Open Space Committee, in pursuit of a hiking trail along the Deerfield River. This trail, as presently conceived, would start at the Deerfield Avenue parking lot and follow the Deerfield River for about six tenths of a mile. The town owns close to ten acres of land along the Deerfield River, and this trail would primarily be on that land. In addition, we will work with the Open Space Committee to expand hiking trails within the town of Shelburne by identifying land owners willing to make their land accessible to the public.

The West County Emergency Food Pantry completed its sixth full year of operation in the basement of the Cowell Gym. This permanent presence allows the Food Pantry to be open every Wednesday from 11 am to 4 pm and serve over four hundred individuals in the Shelburne area. This past year, due to Covid-19, they've offered drive-through service at the back of the gym. They also offer delivery to Buckland and Shelburne residents. For more information, you can contact the Food Pantry at 413-773-5029. The Clothes Closet, run by Trinity Church and located in the Cowell Gym basement adjacent to the Food Pantry, was closed this past year, but organizers hope to reopen it soon.

The Recreation Committee maintains a Facebook page, and the Cowell Director sends out regular updates via email. You can like us at <https://www.facebook.com/ShelburneRecreation>, and if you'd like to receive the updates, please email [cowellgymnasium@gmail.com](mailto:cowellgymnasium@gmail.com). We will keep residents up to date as we begin the process of returning to "normal."

The Recreation Committee would like to thank the people of Shelburne, in particular the Selectboard and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz, for their ongoing support.