

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH  
COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 By Zoom**

**PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** K Otton,(Chairman), A Coleman, T Willmott.

**APOLOGIES:** S Alalia

**OTHERS PRESENT:** G Hughes, N Hewitt-Cooper

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: SAVANNAH ALALIA REPORTED:**

Firstly Thank You and well done to all in Butleigh and Butleigh Wootton who have been continued to stay in high in spirits at this difficult time. A special Thanks to Paul & Glynis Harwood and all the shop staff, as the Post Office and Shop have been a life line for so many.

Normally there would be an APM but due to quarantine that has not been possible this year. However I wanted to still take the chance to tell you what the PC has been up to this year.

**Parish Council Members and Meetings**

The PC has continued to meet through out the year via Zoom. There are currently 5 Parish Councillors. Most recently the PC welcomes Andrew Coleman.

We continue to publish dates for the monthly meetings at the beginning of the year, mostly they take place on the first Tuesday of every month. Agendas can be viewed on the Parish Notice Boards outside the shop and the minutes can be viewed on the Butleigh Village Website. Our Mendip Councillor Nigel Woolcombe-Adams and County Councillor Nigel Hewett-Cooper attend when their commitments allow. The Butleigh Parish Council Facebook page continues to grow and now has 206 followers. The Facebook Group for the Village is Butleigh Village Open Forum ( now at 589 members ) promotes village events, communicate agendas and shares news items of interest to the village from the PC, all other village organisations and businesses and all villagers.

**Precept**

The precept for 2020/2021 was set at £15,000, which is the same as last year as we are having all the fingerposts around the villages updated, repaired and painted.

This year the precept includes the maintenance of the village green, footpaths, street sweeping and the churchyard. Grants were also given to Charities and organisations within the village. This year we have supported two charities that whilst are not within the Parish we feel may well benefit parishioners at some point in the future. The chosen charities are St Margaret's Hospice and Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

This year we have also increased the money to the Churchyard to continue to support and take care of this valued village space.

A full breakdown of the precept can be found on the Butleigh Village website, which is being expertly managed by Gordon Hughes. Thank you Gordon.

**Planning**

As a public consultee, the Parish Council dealt with 14 Planning Applications between May 2020 and April 2021. The Parish Council recommended 11 for approval and 3 for refusal.

These figures do not include applications in relation to tree works. These types of applications are in most circumstances left with no comment and a decision is left for the Tree Officer at Mendip.

The vast majority of applications related to residential extensions, additions and/or alterations.

### **Highways**

There have been multiple pothole repairs through out the year and all signs which have been knocked down have also been re-instated.

### **Environment**

In October, with the kind support of Adrian Forsey, a successful socially-distant litter pick was co-ordinated on behalf of the PC with many of the councillors and villagers taking part; photos went up on the Village Forum to show all that were gathered. About 30 bags were filled. Whilst not a glamorous job, it was a great turn out and much fun was had. The council continue to report and organise collection of fly tipping.

This year the PC has joined forces with The Brue Valley Solar Panel project [www.solarstreets.co.uk/brue-valley](http://www.solarstreets.co.uk/brue-valley) where villagers could get Solar Panels at a reduced rate.

### **Footpaths**

We have some of the best maintained footpaths in the area and many thanks to the hard work of Alan Carr.

### **Affordable Housing**

Whilst a meeting was held in May 2019 there are currently no further updates.

### **Enforcement**

Enforcement continues to be an important but often frustrating role for the council. With cuts at Mendip, they have few officers “on the ground”. The council, however, continues to do all we can and report and chase areas of concern.

### **Speeding**

Speeding is of great concern to the Council. We have been exploring the subject of Speeding in the village extensively and are about to install a SID at the entrance to Butleigh ( Sourdown). We are also in talks with Baltonsborough about a joint Speed Watch Teaming.

### **Conclusion**

Despite being in and out of lockdown, it has been a very busy year. I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors for their hard work and dedication always, but especially through such an unusual time. That said, we have made significant progress with a number of projects and have seen some through to completion. We are all advocates of our village and the Parish needs a strong Council to maintain our beautiful corner of Somerset.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors and a very big thank you to our Clerk, Sheila, who has shown outstanding support over the last year in particular; we are lucky to have her.

**FINANCE** : A comprehensive report of the year end finances (unaudited), was given by the Clerk. The unaudited book was available for inspection. The accounts prepared for the Internal Auditor.

**BUTLEIGH PCC REPORT : Mrs S de Camp gave a report :**  
Churchwarden's Report 2021

This year has been dominated by the pandemic but we have endeavoured to provide services for our community and to maintain the building. There were no Easter services in 2020 but as restrictions were eased, we were able to hold regular Sunday services and other services that particularly appeal to the community: Harvest, Remembrance Day service held at the War Memorial, Christingle, Light up a Life ( St Margaret's Hospice ), Christmas Eve outdoor Crib service at the Church Room, Christmas Eve midnight mass, Christmas Day morning service.

The country went into lockdown in March 2020 and all churches closed.

During this time, Jonathan Harben cleaned, painted and restored the porch. The new church notice board, made by Steve Pope, was installed in Church Path .On May 11, Jack Clare of Wells, removed the window from the Hood chapel for restoration work ; the 2018 Quinquennial had highlighted the need for this work to be undertaken. The Fairfield Trust kindly funded the restoration and the window was reinstalled in September.

On June 16, the church was opened for private prayer in line with government advice and we opened on Tuesdays and Fridays. Two people were on duty to supervise seating, sanitising of hands and lock up at the end. This allowed for 72 hours to elapse between openings so no extra cleaning was needed. The small number who came for private prayer appreciated the opportunity to come into church once more. This continued until mid-July when the government announced the re-opening of churches for services. The first service took place on Sunday, July 19 and we moved the opening of church for private prayer to Wednesday mornings so that enough time had elapsed between private prayer times and services. Strict guidelines were followed: social distancing, face masks, a ban on singing, no provision of hymn books/Bibles, provision of hand sanitiser, separate entrance and exit for worshippers . Names and telephone numbers were taken for each service so that people could be traced if necessary. We held services at 11 am though until August, no Communion Service was provided. The first (adjusted) communion service was held on August 9.

At the PCC meeting on August 27, it was agreed to make the church available to the school for assemblies on Wednesday mornings. Opening the church for private prayer came to end.

In September, we resumed the usual pattern of services in line with government guidelines. We have been able to accommodate the congregation comfortably as numbers have been around 20/25 each week.

The second lock down started in November but we were allowed to open for private prayer which we held on Sunday mornings.

We reopened for Advent on December 6 and held weekly services in church until January. It was then decided to hold All Age Services (first Sunday in month ) and Morning Praise (fourth Sunday in month) by Zoom and the two communion services (second and third Sundays) in church. This has been the pattern throughout January, February and March.

We are very grateful to our Treasurer, Mark Tolhurst for supervising the accounts so thoroughly, as usual, throughout this time. There has been no church fete nor any fund raising during this year and collections at services have been lower, though planned giving has remained stable. Our finances have been seriously affected .Despite this, we have continued

to give to various charities and we have met all our commitments. We are very grateful to Anthony Durbacz who examines our accounts so efficiently.

We are also grateful to Rob Hallett who continues to maintain the churchyard to a high standard.

The Quinquennial report 2018 had highlighted the need to undertake some external works but we have not been able to start this yet. We have applied for a grant but have still not heard if we have been successful in this application. Without a grant, we are unable to pay for the works.

There are 72 people on the electoral role and we are grateful that so many wish to be associated with the church. However, this does not represent the number of people who give financially which is lower than 72. We now expect around 20 people to attend services which is lower than a year ago. The implications are obvious; the pattern is in line with the national picture. No weddings or baptisms have taken place this year in church but there have been six funerals, five for long term members of the church.

During this time, the church room has not been in use except for a PCC meeting on August 27. We have planned for reopening by writing clear written instructions for anyone hiring the church room ; we are following all government guidelines. Notices on guidelines are on display in the church room.

During this year, Bishop Trevor Willmott has regularly conducted services and taken communion to the homes of those unable to come to church. Reverend Chris has made online material available to the congregation and people have been able to join in services across the benefice every Sunday. A Lent course on Zoom is being followed; during Holy Week, a Zoom course is offered. We are pleased that the school has been holding weekly assemblies in church and despite the lockdowns and restrictions, the life of the church has continued. We thank all those who have worked hard to make this possible during a year of unease and restriction .

**BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT: Mr Gordon Hughes reported on behalf of Damien Salter:**

**OVERVIEW**

The BPFA is a Registered Charity with responsibilities to both the Parish Council and the Football Foundation. The play park at Holm Oaks and the large playing field at Backtown are owned by the Parish Council and are leased to the BPFA. The BPFA is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of both these facilities. The pavilion was financed largely through a grant from the Football Foundation and the BPFA undertakes to provide and maintain the pavilion and pitches with the aim to promote football locally. The loan and lease arrangements have been in place since 2004.

All of facilities are maintained to a high standard and are inspected every 2 weeks by the BPFA and annually by ROSPA.

We have a committee of eight to run the affairs of the association and there are two additional committee members provided by the Parish Council. The Parish Council representatives provide the information link between the two committees.

Our next Annual General Meeting is in September 2021 when once again we will struggle to retain the services of existing committee members and to attract new volunteers.

The BPFA receives funding from the Parish Council by way of the annual Precept. This equates to £2,000.00 for the upkeep of the Playing Field and £900.00 for Holm Oaks Play Park. The Play Park Precept Payment is a match funded arrangement. To receive the maximum of £900.00 the BPFA has to demonstrate an expenditure of £1,800.00.

The insurance costs associated with the facilities and the machinery together with the cost of bark at the play park exceed the income from both Precept payments.

The costs associated with hedge cutting, weed and feed, top soil, equipment repairs and machinery maintenance makes fund raising essential.

### **FUND RAISING EVENTS.**

The main source of income is from the hire of the pavilion and from the solar panel installation that we invested in nearly two years ago. Income would normally come from:-

- Draw Club.
- Quiz Night.
- Multi Terrain Run.
- Sportive.
- Tag Rugby.
- Barn Dance.
- Pilates.
- Yoga.
- School Nursery.

Apart from the continuation of the nursery, and because of the Pandemic, none of these events have taken place this year. We do hope to run the Multi Terrain Run and the Sportive late 2021.

The school continues to make use of the pavilion for the nursery but Pilates and Yoga have not taken place. The nursery has increased its use of the hall from four days to five when government restrictions permit. The additional day has been agreed at a reduced rate to cover utility costs on the understanding that should Yoga and Pilates want to return they could.

### **FOOTBALL**

Last year we took the decision to rest the football pitches and the team that was using the main pitch was given notice of our intention and relocated. Football at grass roots level is proving difficult to promote and, in truth, very expensive to support. Without a large support base, several teams making use of the pitch and a proper junior section football runs at a loss. Because of the Pandemic we decided not to continue with football at this time and installed a strict cost control procedure to minimise expenditure. In the main this has been a success even though we had some large costs related to the Kubota Mower and need to spend some money on sharpening the large mower that gets pulled around by the tractor.

### **Community Grant.**

We once again have to thank the Community Grant for helping us with projects and a new Leaf Blower and Petrol Generator were secured following a successful application.

### **PLAY PARK.**

Regretfully we were forced to close the play park during the Pandemic and it is still closed. The rules laid down by Government on sanitising, booking the use of equipment and monitoring made it impossible for us to support the activities properly with a small volunteer group. We have managed to maintain the equipment and keep the facility tidy but use is strictly at the user's risk. Notices have been issued and information posted on the web site. During the Pandemic we have been successful in securing a grant of £2,000.00 for new equipment at Holm Oaks and negotiations are ongoing with a contractor to replace the Leap

Frog Posts with a Wobbly Log Structure. The money has been received and will be spent in the spring of 2021.

#### **COVID 19 Requirements.**

To enable the school and nursery to make use of the pavilion we carried out a detailed risk assessment and prepared new User Agreements with strict cleaning procedures. The hall has a “Deep Clean” twice monthly and the nursery cleans daily. A Track and Trace process was introduced together with detailed cleaning requirements for each type of clean. Extra sanitising equipment was purchase and a sub contract cleaner was employed.

#### **FINANCES.**

With the onset of the Pandemic we had obvious concerns but, due largely to the efforts of our Treasurer, we have secured money from the government and the continued use of the hall by the school has meant that we have more than covered the lost revenue from fund raising. Some of the funds have been “ring fenced” to cater for expected and reduced opportunities to fund raise. We have also successfully transferred to On Line Electronic Banking.

#### **FUTURE.**

Our immediate concerns relate to keeping existing and attracting new committee members. Our Groundsman, although still working for us, has retired and he and his wife will intend to travel when they can. Our Chairman has move out of the village and may not continue after September. We have two members who hold key roles that are in their seventies and the remaining members have work commitments.

To gain support from residents we have recognised that we may have to invest more in “Village Activities”. Events that get people together more and we would welcome new members with new ideas. Alternatively combining forces with another village group to create a new ‘Community Group’ could also be a way forward. Again we would welcome ideas from members of the village on this idea.

Both the play park and the playing field look to be surrounded by large developments if all the proposed plans go ahead. To date none of the developers involved have had discussions with the BPFA and we have to admit to being surprised at how the BPFA name was used on the presentation held at Backtown late last year. We have concerns regarding drainage and flooding at Backtown should the Baltonsborough Road development proceed and have sent our concerns with a Groundsman Report to Mendip Planning.

Target May 17<sup>th</sup> to re-open Play Area.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH:** New co-ordinator required, speak to Chis Allanson-Baily.  
2 break ins at Playing Field within the last year.

**PARISH PATH LIAISON OFFICER:** No one in post at present.

**BATS REPORT: No report due to Covid 19 BATS has not operated.**

#### **SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT : N Hewett-Cooper reported:**

Future Parish, Town and City Council meetings: The government announced on the 25th March that the Coronavirus regulations allowing for remote Parish, town and City Council meetings would not be extended beyond 6th May 2021. This effectively means that all Council meetings scheduled for the 7th May or later will have to be held in public, face-to-face. No provision is available for remote attendance including mixed hybrid (part attendance) meetings. A legal challenge has been launched by Hertfordshire County Council but this will not be heard until later in April and planning should now be made to

either pull forward meetings before 7th May, postpone meetings or determine Covid secure meeting facilities for the Council and Members of the public.

At the same time the Government have launched a consultation on allowing remote or hybrid meetings on a permanent basis via their website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>

Road Map out of lockdown: From 29 March - Outdoor gatherings of either six people or two households were allowed including gatherings in private gardens. Outdoor sports facilities such as tennis or basketball courts reopened and organised adult and children's sport, such as grassroots football, returned. From 12th April: major parts of the economy are permitted to reopen including non-essential retail, hairdressers and some public buildings like libraries; Outdoor settings like beer gardens, zoos and theme parks; Indoor leisure like swimming pools and gyms; Self-contained holiday accommodation, such as self-catering lets and campsites. Wider social contact rules will continue to apply in all settings - meaning no indoor mixing between different households.

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 1st April the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 19,982 (up from 18,890 on 28th February) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 787 (722). The rate per 100,000 stands at 41.8 for Somerset with Mendip at 26.8, Sedgemoor at 53.6, South Somerset 61.2 and SW&T at 22.6. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 25% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.7 and 0.9.

It is vitally important to remember, even those who have had a jab, to observe Hands-Face-Space and to Ventilate indoor areas at all times.

Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline: A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. 0300 790 6275, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

Vaccination programme roll-out: Teams across the wider health and care system have worked round the clock at 13 GP-led community vaccination sites, two hospital hubs, two large vaccination centres (Taunton Racecourse and the Bath and West Showground) plus seven local pharmacy sites. As a result Somerset has one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing 309,227 having received at least their first vaccination in the County or 66.7% of the 16+ population. In addition 33,765 have received their second dose. Take up rates across the County of the first dose remains very high: 80+ (98.7%), 75-79 (100%), 70-74 (99.3%), 65-69 (91.6%), 60-64 (96.5%), 55-59 (94.2%) and 50-54 (88.3%).

**Somerset Medal:** The Somerset Medal is designed to say a heartfelt thank-you to the best of the best that have really gone beyond the call of duty during the Coronavirus pandemic. So many people, from teachers and nurses, police and fire officers, carers, shop workers, volunteer drivers and waste collectors have all gone the extra mile to make sure that every effort was made to support communities. To nominate someone who has really made a difference to your community please submit an email with a maximum of 250 words, providing the nominee's name and location and describing why they deserve the medal to [DemocraticServices2@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServices2@somerset.gov.uk) and put 'Somerset Medal nomination' in the subject field. Nominations close on 23 April with the inaugural Somerset Medal award winners unveiled on Somerset Day, 11 May.

**One Somerset:** The government's public consultation into changing the way local councils work in Somerset ends on the 19th April. The County Council's proposal to replace the county's five existing councils with a simple, single unitary model to end confusion for residents, remove waste and duplication, and free up funding to invest in vital public services is a key part of the consultation. It would also offer more powers for local Town and Parish Councils and one strong voice to lobby for funding and support. For more information and to take part in the consultation visit: [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk)

**Investing in School (1):** Plans are underway for a major £6.2m project to expand Holyrood Academy in Chard to increase student numbers and meet growing demand. The new building will incorporate a purpose-built student/dining area, six classrooms, new office spaces and meeting rooms and a single point of entry into the school. If approved, building is set to start late summer with the new building complete by September 2022. To have your say then email [FuturesInfo@Somerset.gov.uk](mailto:FuturesInfo@Somerset.gov.uk)

**Investing in Schools (2):** The new Somerton primary school will open after Easter following a £7.3m build programme by Somerset County Council. The new school can accommodate up to 420 pupils and 52 early years children, with 14 classrooms, a pre-school, a school hall, a production kitchen, sports pitches and a multi-use games area. The facilities used innovative construction techniques to ensure the school has strong environmental credentials. Plans for the school to open in September 2020 were delayed due to archaeologists uncovering evidence of Roman and Iron Age settlements at the site ahead of construction.

**Highways Awards:** The multi-million pound project to upgrade Taunton's M5 Junction 25 has won a two prestigious awards at the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transport (CIHT) South West Awards 2021 ceremony. As well as winning the Project of the Year and Collaboration Awards for the £19.2m scheme SCC also picked up the Innovation Award for on traffic modelling for the Toneway scheme.

Meeting closed at 7.30p.m.

Chairman  
4<sup>th</sup> May 2021



