

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF BUTLEIGH PARISH  
COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON 2nd April 2024**

**PARISH COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** T Willmott (Chairman), A Coleman, K Otton, M Acland-Hood

**APOLOGIES:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:** P Keggin, L Stringer

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

One of the reasons we chose to live in Butleigh was a desire on our part to belong to a community, and to contribute in whatever ways we could to its flourishing.

The main role of a Parish Council is to guard the community and ensure that its voice, and that of its residents, are heard as part of the democratic process. Our guarding takes many forms – listening; highlighting; defending.

This past year we have paid particular attention to the increasing traffic problems both in and through the village. The installation of the Speed Indicator Device at Sourdown has helped to slow down the traffic using Sub Road from that direction. We hope that the installation of a similar device in Butleigh Wootton will cause drivers who speed through from Street to think again.

We have raised the increasing problem of parking in the High Street, especially round the school and towards Henley Lane with Highways on a number of occasions and will continue to do so!

We continue to raise the issue of illegal parking on Watchwell Drove with the Police and Highways. In return, we've received many fine words, but sadly, no action to remedy the increasing problem.

Much of our regular monthly agendas has been taken up with planning matters. While we believe that the village needs growth to flourish, we remain convinced that large scale developments, without any increase to our infrastructure e.g. sewerage and roads, will only damage us. Sadly, there is little evidence of the new Unitary Authority agreeing with us, despite what they have said in their updated Local Plan.

My thanks, as always, go to my fellow Councillors, Mary, Andy and Keith, and most especially to Sheila, our Clerk, without whose wisdom, local knowledge and determination, we would never have achieved what we have.

If you would like to come and join us, we will make you welcome and gladly share the joys of being your Parish Council.

Trevor Willmott  
Chair

**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 sent a report :**  
St Leonard's Churchwardens' Report 2024

The number of regular Sunday worshippers has settled at around 22 but at festivals and special services, we have much bigger congregations in line with national trends. 179 people attended the two services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; Easter, Remembrance Sunday, Harvest and the Carol Service were also very well attended . On May 7, a special outdoor service followed by lunch was held to mark the coronation of King Charles which was a happy and well attended event .During the year, there were 3 weddings , 7 funerals and 3 baptisms ; the church continues to be an important presence in the village .

Apart from regular worshippers, many from the village contribute in various ways. There is a group of flower arrangers and another of church cleaners so that the church is always well presented. A community group tends to the churchyard from time to time and we are grateful to Rob Hallett who continues to maintain the churchyard to a high standard.

We are pleased that Butleigh school has regular services and holds the Nativity and Easter services in church. The church is open every day and visitors are welcome.

The church fete was successful and is a significant part of our fund raising. This is a fixture in the village calendar and many come to support and run stalls .Harvest Festival supper was also a fund raising event and we thank all those from the village and church who help .

New Beginnings, a monthly midweek soup lunch and short service, continues to be popular with those from both church and village communities. This year, the money raised was sent to The Lord's Larder.

The Quinquennial inspection, carried out by Thomas Griffin of Benjamin and Beauchamp architecture design conservation of Wedmore, took place on August 29. In the report, St Leonard's is described as "an elegant medieval medium sized parish church.....the interior of the church is very well maintained by the parish and in very good condition.....the churchyard remains open for burial and is well cared for by an active team". However, various works are suggested for the upkeep and protection of the outside, gutters and tower areas.

The Church Room is under used despite a very modest sum to hire it. We are grateful to Dennis Drake who has agreed to oversee the running of this village facility and we hope bookings will improve with increased publicity. We are grateful to Marianne Gaskell who continues to take the bookings.

During the year, the PCC voted to introduce a new scheme for giving to the church to run alongside Sunday plate giving and standing orders already in place. The Church of England launched the Parish Giving Scheme a few years ago and it has proved successful. We hope that following publicity in News and Views and leafleting households in the parish, parishoners will feel able to support St Leonard's through the Parish Giving Scheme and help us to maintain the fabric and work of our church.

We are pleased that Sarah Bailey agreed to be our new Treasurer following the retirement of Mark Tolhurst.

We thank all those who work so enthusiastically in the work of St Leonard's and hope that we will continue to be an encouraging and welcoming part of village life.

Roy Moody  
Sian Decamp  
Churchwardens  
March 2024.

### **BUTLEIGH PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION REPORT: – Damien Salter reported- April 2024**

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.

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

The BPFA currently operates with a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer plus committee members totalling approximately 10 people.

Our last AGM was held in November 2023.

We aim to hold committee meetings every quarter.

#### **FUNDING**

The BPFA currently receives funding from the Parish Council by way of the annual Precept. This now equates to £3,000.00 for the upkeep of the Playing Field and £1000.00 for Holm Oaks Play Park. The Play Park Precept payment is a match funded arrangement. To receive the maximum of £1000.00 the BPFA has to demonstrate an expenditure of £2000.00.

#### **Solar panels**

The solar panels continue to provide an income throughout the year of approximately £1000

#### **Butleigh School Nursery**

The school nursery moved out of the Pavilion last summer which meant a loss of revenue of approximately £3800

#### **Private Hire**

We now have a Pilates classes being held every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. A village café has also just started every Thursday morning and so far has been well supported. Ad hoc private hire for different events also continue.

#### Current fundraising events

The annual Multi Terrain Race is due to take place on Sunday 14th April and we are expecting approximately 80/90 runners. This is always a well attended event although it heavily relies on volunteers to make it a success.

The Butleigh Motor Cavalcade have now held 2 annual events at the playing fields and are returning again to hold another event in May.

#### WEBSITE

The BPPFA now has a new website that shows what facilities it can offer as well as an online booking form and events calendar.

#### FOOTBALL

Tor FC have now taken on the main football pitch to use for their home games. They have 2 teams that use the pitch over alternate weekends. The partnership between the BPPFA and Tor FC is working very well and we hope to keep this partnership going for future seasons. The BPPFA makes a charge to Tor FC for the use of the facilities for every home game that is played.

#### CROQUET

A croquet club is now situated at the playing fields and are creating a croquet lawn for their games. Once the lawn is playable they have indicated they will advertise the facility for villagers use and look to increase their membership numbers. If all goes to plan this will be an exciting addition to the village facilities

#### EXPENDITURE

Last year we managed to secure a grant from the FA foundation which meant we could buy the large storage container to safely keep safe our lawn mower and other items of value.

Overall costs continue to rise, our biggest single expenditure being the annual insurance for the Backtown and Holm Oaks premises including all liability insurances. This was renewed in January at a cost of now over £2000 an increase of £150 from last year.

Maintenance costs for the upkeep of the Pavilion and Play Park need to be covered when required and this is the biggest factor for depleting our capital funds.

**THE FUTURE** Our immediate concerns relate to maintaining a solid income base to pay for the necessary expenditure that is required to keep both the Pavilion and Playing Fields plus the Holm Oaks play park operational for all users to enjoy and most importantly in a safe condition.

Costs across all of our expenditure have increased and without the relative increase in income to compensate our capital funds will deplete, potentially leaving us in a vulnerable position.

We will continue to rely on funding streams from the Parish Council, community grants and fund raising events to maintain the BPFA and its work

**BATS REPORT: Mr Peter Keggin sent a report.**

BATS continues to provide an important service to those in Butleigh and Butleigh Wootton in need of friendly, convenient and economical transport. The use has risen above the pre-covid 2019 level. We undertook 227 trips for 29 different passengers with 6 drivers which were mainly for medical reasons, (hospital, doctor, optician and dental) but included railway stations and some social trips.

We have not rejoined the Mid Somerset Car Scheme and continue to operate on a cash basis with all telephone calls on the Keggin's landline so we have no significant expenses.

We do not use the Somerset County Bus Pass Scheme because of the administration involved and bank account issues but other Mid Somerset schemes do.

Fares were reviewed and increased on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and since January 2022 drivers are reimbursed the full fare. This compensates for increased fuel and vehicle costs and the fact the scheme has no significant costs.

Thanks are due to all our volunteers for their time and commitment and to our passengers for using BATS.

Peter Keggin

Chair.

**SOMERSET COUNCILLORS REPORT-**

**Cllr Claire Sully sent the following report for March 2024**

Somerset Council sets balanced budget for 2024/25

Somerset Council has set a balanced budget for the coming financial year amid warnings of significant challenges in the years ahead.

Described as a "budget to avoid a S114 notice", Members agreed to a range of measures to bridge a funding gap of £100m for 2024/25, including significant savings, increasing Council Tax by 5%, and using reserves (a council's equivalent of savings).

The proposals also include a 'capitalisation direction' of £36.9m – this is where councils are given permission by Government to borrow money or sell assets to pay for day-to-day running costs.

The meeting also received an update from the Chief Finance Officer – known as a Section 25 Report – which comments on the robustness of the budget proposals.

This provided assurance around the estimates and the adequacy of reserves for this year, but also warned there is 'high level of concern around future years and the financial sustainability of the Council'. It highlighted a need for new and significant savings in future years and concluded:

Some of the services initially put forward for savings have been protected through devolution and partnership working with City, Town and Parish Councils.

This includes savings linked to Somerset's CCTV service, Yeovil Recreation Ground, Taunton Visitor Information Centre, highways maintenance, RNLI lifeguard provision, school crossing patrols, and important democratic functions. Negotiations with Somerset's household waste recycling centre contractor will continue before any savings in this area are taken forward.

No1 bus service between Yeovil and Shepton Mallet.

Somerset Council has awarded a new contract for its No1 bus service between Yeovil and Shepton Mallet.

The agreement which followed a tendering process is with current operator South West Coaches and will offer a revised version of the service from 15 April. The operator had given notice recently after raising concerns about the financial viability of the service and a tendering process was started.

Somerset Council has made some changes to the route – the existing service had a number of variations from the main Yeovil to Shepton Mallet corridor which were carrying small

numbers. The revised service focuses on a two-hour daytime frequency between the towns as well as a Saturday service which provides three journeys in each direction.

Connections are maintained for students at Castle Cary for onward travel to Strode College both am and pm, whilst entitled school children who were using some of the variations from the main route which will cease for education, will now be served through amendments to our school contract network.

Momentous day for Somerset as gigafactory plans move forward

Somerset to become the UK's biggest producer of electric vehicle (EV) batteries at the Gravity Smart Campus site in Puriton, near Bridgwater.

A £4 billion investment, the Agratas factory will create up to 4,000 jobs and many more as part of the supply chain. It will put Somerset at the centre of the UK's green energy revolution with the potential to kick-start countywide and regional economic growth and jobs. Somerset secondary school places announced for 2024/25 academic year

The announcement saw 94% of children receiving a place at their first preference school, with 98% offered one of their top three choices.

Flood anniversary: flood resilience and adaptation a key part of Somerset's future

Somerset Council marked the ten-year anniversary of the 2014 floods with the message that resilience and adaptation are more important than ever.

This winter marks ten years since the wettest winter for 250 years left large swathes of the county underwater for weeks, devastating communities, businesses and farming.

Much flood defence and risk management work has taken place since 2014, at a cost of around £80m as part of a 20-Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) delivered by local authorities, the Environment Agency (EA), the Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards which are all part of the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) partnership set up to give Somerset an extra level of flood protection.

Work has included:

- the award-winning raising of a 500-metre section of a road into Muchelney
- dredging stretches of the River Parrett
- enhancements to the River Sowey and King's Sedgemoor Drain system, for example with new river channels under the A372 at Beer Wall near Othery
- development of plans for a Bridgwater Tidal Barrier
- hundreds of natural flood management works to 'Slow the Flow' of water as part of Hills to Levels.

As a result, even though this winter has been the wettest since records began in 1910, the areas devastated in 2014 have not been badly affected. More flood risk management works are planned and the SRA is currently developing a new Strategy and Flood Action Plan for the next ten years.

However, across Somerset, the impacts of climate change mean that resilience and adaptation to flood risk will need to play a bigger part in Somerset's future.

The major flooding incident at the start of 2014 flooded 165 homes, mostly on the Levels and Moors, lasting weeks in many cases. Between May 2023 and the end of January this year, almost double that number of homes across the county flooded as a result of four storm events, the most recent being Storm Henk in January.

Although the more recent flooding has been shorter-lived, flash flooding, the last year has demonstrated the need for resilience and adaptation as climate change increases the frequency and severity of weather events.

Resilience is about communities understanding the risk of flooding and being well prepared, for example signing up for flood alerts, identifying flood wardens and being ready with practical steps like flood evacuation plans. Adaptation is about making changes that help limit the impacts of flooding if it does happen, for example raising electrical sockets and having water butt storage to help reduce flash flooding.

The Somerset Prepared multi-agency partnership works with communities to provide advice, support and training to help improve local resilience to all kinds of emergencies, including flooding. To find out more visit [www.somersetprepared.org.uk](http://www.somersetprepared.org.uk)

As part of its plans, the SRA is proposing to fund a new project called Adapting Somerset. Run by Somerset Wildlife Trust, it would help adapt and increase resilience to flooding and other risks linked to climate change in Somerset.

For information and guidance about flooding in Somerset, including being prepared, and what to do during and after flooding, visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/flooding) For information about the SRA and its work, visit [www.somsetriversauthority.org.uk](http://www.somsetriversauthority.org.uk)

ITVX feature on Croscombe village preparing for flooding.  
[https://www.itv.com/watch/news/the-somerset-village-preparing-for-future-floods/w45zs2v?fbclid=IwAR3rXx8\\_7tBnOm75vU-XLuZYzoo6DWA5QLzWfiYC3mfIBkguSOhog8XBtR8](https://www.itv.com/watch/news/the-somerset-village-preparing-for-future-floods/w45zs2v?fbclid=IwAR3rXx8_7tBnOm75vU-XLuZYzoo6DWA5QLzWfiYC3mfIBkguSOhog8XBtR8)

Council renews successful partnership with lighting contractor

A new contract which will see cheaper and greener lighting on roads around the county has been signed by Somerset Council.

The contract with Enerveo Ltd will see essential maintenance services delivered on all the council's illuminated and non-illuminated electrical equipment across the county.

Following a procurement process and approval by Somerset Council's Executive, the tender for the new eight-year contract (which has the potential to be extended by four years) was awarded to current service provider, Enerveo Ltd. The contract covers the County's highways lights, illuminated signs, bollards and electrical equipment.

- Somerset Council has 59,593 illuminated assets to look after, consisting of lights, illuminated signs and bollards
- 65.9 per cent of these have already been changed to LED, helping towards Somerset's 2030 carbon neutral target
- Part of the new contract includes the provision of new EV charging stations

Need to report a problem on the road, including lighting issues? Visit [Report a problem on the road: https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/)

For traffic updates and roadworks follow @travelsomerset on X and Facebook.

Sign-up for the latest climate news: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/climate-and-ecological-emergency/newsletter-sign-up/>.

Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities: Live travel information <https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/>

Potholes and road damage Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

Report a problem with a street light We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>



Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate and how to apply for a new road sign Speed limits:<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/road-signs-bollards-and-road-markings/>

Speed limits Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/speed-limits/>

Traffic lights We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the county  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/traffic-lights/>

Street and roadworks We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/street-and-roadworks/>

Thanks to Adrian Forsey for organising the letter pick on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024.  
Meeting closed at 7.24 p.m.  
Thanks to all who make the village a good place to live

Chairman  
7<sup>th</sup> May 2024