

The Tower

Churchill Parish Council newsletter

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ANNUAL REPORT

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Report by the Chair of the Parish Council

As I sit at my computer and ponder the content of my report for this issue of The Tower I realise that yet another year of parish council business has been taken up with the tsunami of planning applications that threaten to urbanise our villages. There will be an article devoted to that topic further on in this issue so I will not spend time duplicating anything more in mine. What we must all remember is that while we for the most part feel that as a parish we are being expected to have too many new estates popping up, the new home owners or tenants are not to blame and must be integrated into our community and way of life for us to still feel we live in a village.

Many of you will have noticed that a pillar of the wall around the clock tower was damaged earlier in the year on the Dinghurst road side. This, along with the other side, which all needed repointing,

has been beautifully restored. This is a specialist job as the walls are listed and we are lucky to have Rob who does lots of jobs in the Parish and always takes great pride in his work.

A village tradition of a Christmas tree has been reinstated this year, sadly this was stopped a number of years ago, we have moved it to the traffic light area so that it can be enjoyed by all. This year we managed to secure some funding from the developers Crest Nicholson for the tree and purchased our own lights to be used for years to come.

As ever we are keen to improve facilities in and around the parish, many will have seen and hopefully used the new footpath along Pudding Pie Lane. Many parents had requested one to make the journey to school safer with the ever increasing traffic. It was on the list but would have

taken some considerable time to happen through the normal route, however due to the site being developed at the end of Pudding Pie, funding from the 106 agreement enabled it to happen before the extra traffic begins when the properties are inhabited.

The next project to begin very soon will be the provision of a 'Trim Trail' around the recreation field. We know that many families in the parish go to other towns and villages to take part in park runs and we hope that this may be something that somebody will organise here. Around the course will be several pieces of equipment with instructions on how to use them safely. We hope this will be up and running by the summer.

As always we have comings and goings on the council. We have sadly had to say goodbye to Simon Hegarty who has been chair of our planning and development committee and has been spearheading the many responses to North Somerset Council on planning issues and of course the JSP. Simon has been a councillor for five years and will be sorely missed, but we all acknowledge his need to concentrate his valuable time in other areas. On a happier note we have welcomed James Hoddell and Ruth Bruton to the council, both will I'm sure make a valuable addition to our team. We still have room for more and would welcome anyone who feels they would like to come along and see how things work on the second Monday of the month.

Our poor clerk Martin has been snowed under with all the new work that has come our way recently and as a result we have decided to employ an assistant clerk. We had some very strong candidates but decided on Mrs Ann Boote who took up the role on the 1 March. I am sure that she will be a great help not only to Martin but to us all.

Councillor Jackie Bush – Chair



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Finance and Personnel Committee

As Chair of the committee my first comment is that this past year has been a distinctly arduous period for our parish clerk Martin. The primary causes of this being the spate of planning applications, The JSP report and North Somerset Council's (NSC) determination to urbanise our parish. Add to this NSC's lack of communication skills, the lack of a liaison officer to NSC, and for various reasons, no District Council representation at our meetings. All the above has resulted in a tremendous overload and duplication of work, with no sign of this situation easing.

In order to mitigate this situation and to ensure parish matters, other than planning, proceed effectively, an assistant Parish Clerk – Mrs Ann Boote has been appointed from the 1 March

Despite all the extra work undertaken by Martin, he still managed to qualify for his CILCA qualification thus enabling us to remain a Quality Parish Council and to be able to use the General Power of Competence under the Localism Act which enables the Council to use much wider spending powers than would otherwise be permitted.

Our thanks at this time are also due to Michelle Miles for her unstinting work as Parish Orderly. Financially, the Parish Council is in a very sound position, with many beneficial projects for residents being implemented and more are under consideration.

It is also worthy of mention that the Leasing of the Old Doctors Surgery has now been finalised. Thus, a busy but progressive year is reported and we are all conscious that the hard work will not stop here.

Councillor Dev Clutterbuck –
Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee



Planning and Development Strategy Committee

This has been another demanding year for the village and the Development Committee with further applications for substantial developments and a number of smaller ones being made by developers and approved by North Somerset Council (NSC).

In respect of the larger sites, the Crest Nicholson (CN) development on Pudding Pie Lane (141 houses) is now under

Open Spaces and Allotments Committee

Allotment holders have once again been working hard to tame their plots from weeds by using weed suppressant material to cover their plots and growing through small holes cut in material to grow their crops – less time spent weeding – great news.

Making raised beds from recycled wood also seems very popular this season. These new innovative ways seem to be very popular as allotment holders pass their new ideas on to others.

Lots of growers have been taking advantage of the use of poly-tunnels expanding what can be grown with the help of these tunnels. We look forward to the allotment holders having some good produce on display at the Village Show this year which will be held on Saturday 8 September (details will be advertised shortly).

This coming year allotment holders have also introduced a scheme welcoming nature around the allotment site, introducing bird and bat boxes along with bug houses and hedgehog houses, all made by the allotment holders themselves.

A few brave and hardy allotment holders have undertaken training to enable them to introduce bees to the allotment site. Hives will have to be safely placed on certain plots with the correct protection taken. They will now be looking forward to producing their own honey in the near future.

We've also seen the formal opening of the community and flower garden (which was built in memory of a very special lady, Mrs Heather Hodges, a former member of the allotments) this event took place on 1 May. Jackie Bush, Chair of the Parish Council carried out the honours which was followed by a barbecue which many of the allotment holders attended.

If you would like to join in the fun and start growing your own fruit and vegetables, please call Martin Dolton (Parish Clerk) on 07399 523 961.

Upcoming allotment events

- May Day Barbecue
Saturday 5 May (3pm in field 1)
- Hawaiian themed Barbecue
Saturday 14 July (2pm in field 1)

To confirm your attendance email sue.list@interserveps.com

Councillor Sue List –
Chair of the Open Spaces and Allotments Committee

Open Spaces

Reconstruction of the raised bedding area around 'The Hand' sculpture has taken place during the autumn months and is now ready for a beautiful floral display to be added this coming spring and summer.

The newly refurbished finger post at the junction of Hillier's Lane and Dinghurst Road that has been repaired, assembled and painted in its original colour scheme has now been put back in place thanks to all the hard work of Brenden Hill.

There has been intensive work carried out on the Clock tower Enclosure, since a vehicle hit the wall there, as this enclosure is listed we had to get a local expert in for carry out the stone work, who has also painted the metal railings surrounding the enclosure – this work is now completed and looks wonderful.

Following a request from a few of our parishioners to have a village Christmas tree, this year, with a donation from Crest Nicholson and the Parish Council, a provision of our first Christmas tree with lights was erected by the Churchill lights junction just in front of the bus shelter. As we have had so much good feedback on this it has been decided to hopefully erect another this coming year.

construction. The Development Committee have been liaising at length with CN, NSC and Wessex Water to ensure a sustainable drainage system is put in place on a site that is subject to a high groundwater level and flooding.

The second site at Pudding Pie Lane (35 houses) has yet to receive full Reserved Matters approval.

The third site at Says Lane (43 houses) is awaiting Reserved Matters approval and build out has yet to commence.

A fourth large application at the A38/A368 traffic lights (41 houses) has just received outline approval from NSC.

A fifth large application across the A38 from Budgens (25 house) is yet to be considered by NSC Regulatory and Planning Committee.

Many residents have expressed concern at the considerable disruption caused around the CN site. Such problems are a foretaste of future difficulties we are all likely to experience at this and other large housing locations.

To reduce the significant extra work these complaints make for our Parish Clerk, residents are asked to address their concerns direct to site management or NSC.

The Development Committee would like to emphasise that all these major applications have been vehemently opposed with fulsome representations on sound planning policy grounds but in all cases have been rejected by the NSC Case Officer who has approved the applications and has been supported by the Planning and Regulatory Committee of NSC.

It is quite clear that NSC are determined to prioritise the achievement of housing targets ahead of sound planning policy considerations and that Churchill and Langford have been targeted for major development. The PC has raised its serious concerns about the cumulative effect of these developments on traffic, road safety, landscape, environment, drainage and schooling and regrettably have received utterly ineffectual responses from NSC who seem wholly unwilling to recognise the cumulative detrimental effects upon our village.

Leisure Committee

The Leisure Committee have continued to develop and improve the recreation facilities within the Parish. We provide facilities which all members of the Parish can use, which include cricket, football and children's facilities.

For 2018 we will be adding a fitness trail, which will provide a challenging run around the whole recreation field, with some strategically placed items of fitness equipment on route. During September we were advised that we had won yet another award through the Somerset Playing Fields Association. Members of the committee attended the AGM and we received a Highly Commended, which is a slight drop on the two Bronzes, one Silver and a Gold that we received in previous years. We have already started looking at how we can move back to a Gold award for 2018.

In July we formally took back management of the Community Club, as the Football Club were experiencing issues in running both this facility and also the football teams. As initial works we carried out a deep clean during the summer, and during 2018 will be looking at some redecoration and improvements. The aim is that parishioners will be able

to hire the Community club for private or village functions.

We have also finished a project which has taken a couple of years to complete, and this is to provide a completely separate electricity supply to the Cricket Pavilion. This is the first part of some key improvements to the facility, with toilet and shower facility at the initial project stage.

We have also continued with a maintenance programme of the two play areas to ensure that any issues highlighted in the quarterly reports are quickly actioned.

One issue which had arisen from the reports is the condition of the safety matting under some pieces of equipment, and we decided that the current matting had reached the end of its life. This has now been replaced with a modern surface which provides increased protection, but reduces the maintenance required.

I would like to thank all members of the committee and Martin our Clerk for the hard work and support over the past twelve months.

Councillor Brenden Hill –
Chair of Committee



This attitude is further evidenced by the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), a regional development planning document covering transport and housing and jointly produced by NSC, Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire. In this document, NSC have proposed the building of a new town near Churchill of 2800 houses.

This proposal has also been the subject of fulsome objections not only by the PC but by hundreds of residents, thanks to the marvellous efforts of our local action group CALRAG led initially by John Whitewood and Peter Morris and latterly by Jan

Murray, Jan Lyons, Robin Jeacocke and a cohort of other volunteers.

The JSP will go before an independent Planning Inspector later in the year (date to be confirmed) and efforts will continue by the PC, working with CALRAG, to defend the village from further applications and to make representations to the Planning Inspector to challenge the key proposal for the new town at Churchill.

Already, NSC have expressed surprise at the level of opposition of Churchill and Langford as gauged by formal responses submitted to the JSP which they have been struggling to process. The recent protest walk on 3 February organised by Zena Simmons and others was heartening in demonstrating the level of support and determination to continue the fight to save the village. Your full and continued support and involvement is vital.

Councillor Alan Lovell – Vice Chair

Parish Councillor – two vacancies

WE NEED YOU



To become a Parish Councillor you must be 18 years of age or over, and have either resided within, own land, or have worked as your main job in the parish for the past 12 months.

What do we do?

We manage and operate various functions and assets including:

- The Community Club.
- The Pavilion.
- Recreation/sports fields.
- Play area and skatepark area.
- Clock tower and enclosure.
- Church Lane Burial Ground.
- Allotment site Pudding Pie Lane.
- Comment as a statutory consultee on all Planning Applications in the parish.
- Submit (often lengthy) responses to numerous consultations.
- Responsibility for receiving and spending (within strict guidelines) the financial precept from every household within the parish.
- Provision of dog waste bins.
- Bus shelters and some road signs.
- Providing Grants to local organisations.

How much will I be paid?

Nothing. All parish councillors are volunteers and give their time free of charge.

How much time does it take?

Different people will have varying amounts of time available to assist and they bring different skills and experience to the role. The full council meets monthly on the second Monday of each month and every councillor is expected to join at least one committee (which meets three or four times every year).

There is plenty of scope to give additional time over and above those meetings by assisting with various projects or activities that are ongoing.

How do I apply?

Contact Councillor Jackie Bush – Chair of the Council, any other councillor or the Clerk (contact details on the back page of this newsletter).

Churchill Parish Council meetings – April to July 2018

All meetings are held at 7.30pm (unless otherwise stated) at the Community Club, Ladymead Lane. The Public are very welcome to attend.

Monday 9 April	Full Council
Monday 23 April	Annual Parish Meeting (Memorial Hall) – for all residents
Monday 14 May	Full Council (AGM)
Monday 21 May	Open Spaces and Allotments Committee
Tuesday 29 May	Planning and Development Committee (7pm start)
Monday 11 June	Full Council
Monday 25 June	Leisure Committee
Monday 9 July	Full Council
Monday 16 July	Finance and Personnel Committee

Did you know...

North Somerset Council fund a loan scheme for homeowners, for essential home repairs and improvements?

For more information, visit www.wrcic.org.uk, call **01823 461 099**, or email enquiries@wrcic.org.uk

Your local, not for profit lender working in partnership with

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Heatherton Park Studios,
Bradford on Tone, Taunton,
TA4 1EU

* Subject to Status

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Mrs Elizabeth Wells

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Other contacts

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Parish Orderly: Michele Miles

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Tree Wardens:

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Ben Vosper 01934 852 679

Police: Non emergency 101

Police: Emergency 999

War Memorial Hall booking

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