

fields have received some care and attention, and the area around them has been re mulched in an attempt to keep weeds at bay. In field two we have also continued to remove overhanging hazel branches to improve the amount of sun light on the edges of the plots.

Vegetables and fruits produced by the plot holders were entered into the successful Village Show event last September, with a number of prestigious prizes being awarded. This event is being repeated on September 12th this year, so hopefully the organisers will build on

the success and receive even more entries from plot holders and parishioners.

We still have a number of both full plots and half plots available, so if you are interested, then please contact Aleana our Parish Clerk.

I would like to thank all of the committee for their hard work over the past year, and the plot holders for making the plots looking so fantastic.

**Councillor Brenden Hill
Chair Churchill Parish Council
Allotment Committee**

Winners of the Easter Rabbit competition

From left to right:
Rainbows 1st prize Isla McBride age 6 and 2nd prize Milly Pearce age 7.
Preschool 1st prize Caspar age 2 and 2nd prize Bobby age 4.



Annual Parish Meeting

**Monday 27 April 2015
7pm Churchill War Memorial Hall**

Everyone is welcome to come along and meet your councillors, have a drink and enjoy an informative evening.

All the details of the meeting are included in a separate leaflet delivered with this newsletter.



If you would like this newsletter in a larger/other format please contact: Aleana Baird, Parish Clerk, on **01934 824 801** or email **churchillpc@btconnect.com**

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999



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The Tower

Churchill Parish Council newsletter

Annual Report 2015 Developing our Parish

Issue 34
Spring
2015



'Developing our Parish' was chosen as this year's Annual Parish Meeting theme to raise awareness of the pressure for building new homes in North Somerset. The surrounding villages of Sandford, Congresbury, Yatton, Claverham, Backwell and Banwell have all seen planning applications for developments mostly well in excess of 100 dwellings over the past year and although Churchill is yet to receive one, it will do imminently.

There is a Public Exhibition for 150 dwellings on University land on Pudding Pie Lane on Friday April 17th at 5pm-8pm and on Saturday 18th April at 10am-4pm at Churchill Primary School. An outline planning application will be submitted in May or June. Your views are very important and it is your main chance to speak directly to the development planners themselves. The consultation information will be available to view after the exhibition at www.bristol.ac.uk/estates/projects/langford

The Parish Council have invited a North Somerset Planning Officer to talk about Neighbourhood Planning at the Annual Parish Meeting and we very much hope that parishioners will be interested in coming along and finding out more about this process. The creation of a plan to shape our parish in the future cannot take place without strong community support and involvement.

The aging population is a frequently mentioned fact within the media and there has recently been a conference held in Weston-super-Mare to look at ways to help with Dementia within communities. With this in mind our second speaker from St Monica's in Sandford will be talking about this and giving ideas and options that can be considered to help people and their carers.

Chairs report

Each year I sit at the computer and think 'What have we done that is significant this year, how will I think of enough to interest Parishioners and fill the front page of the Tower?' Some years we have major things to report or something big in the pipeline, but this year like many others we have plodded away doing what councils do, helping to make our Parish run smoothly and continue to be a great place to live.

Working together

There have been numerous planning applications for us to look at. We always take this part of our role seriously and consider any implications to either individuals or the wider community when making recommendations. Who could forget the threat of solar panels over Windmill Hill and the surrounding area and how this would have spoiled the heart of our Parish. It was good to see so many people voice their concerns and work together to put forward solid reasons why this should not happen. I'm sure this won't be the last planning proposal that will threaten our green and pleasant community but it does show what can happen if we work together and put forward a good case.



Village Show

September saw the first Village Show and Harvest Home take place after a long absence. It was fantastic to see so many entries, the hall looked really good with all the tables full of vegetables, fruit, cakes, jams and pickles, flowers and of course the many children's entries. I am sure that lots of the people will have left the show thinking 'I could have put my onions in to that class, grown a pumpkin that big, or baked a cake as good as that' and will enter this year's show that will take place on the 12 September. This will be followed in the evening by the Harvest Home which due to last year's success looks

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like also becoming an annual event. This is run by the Village Fund and I'm sure like the Show Committee they would welcome volunteers as these events need a lot of work.

Challenges

When you become a Councillor other little roles seem to fall into your lap! One of these roles for me is as a Community Governor at Churchill Primary school. In the past couple of years the Primary school has had to face challenges and this year great sadness when Val Tighe their Head mistress of many years lost her battle with cancer. I personally have spent a lot more time in school during the last eighteen months and it has been a privilege to be part of such a positive, happy and totally committed team. Our children are very lucky to be educated there.

Success!

This year saw us leave Woolavington village hall, where the annual Somerset Playing Fields Association AGM is held, with the Silver certificate. Although it wasn't the Gold of last year, it was still a great achievement. We were told the competition was so close that even a tiny piece of litter could have made the difference. We are up to this year's challenge and hope to regain the title!

Have a voice

As I close for this year I am reminded that this could be my last report, I may not be the Chair next year or even a Councillor if you, the people of this Parish, don't go out and vote. Your Parish Councillors are up for re-election in May. We need others to come forward to bring fresh ideas and energy and to ensure that we have a full council. It is important that the Parish has a vote and chooses people to represent them that they trust and can rely on to do their best for us all.

**Councillor Jackie Bush
Chair, Churchill Parish
Council**

Annual reports f

Finance and Personnel

Key achievements in the past year are:

- The Clerk was awarded her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). This success was the result of a great deal of work by Aleana, and we offer our congratulations.
- There were no issues raised on our finances or procedures by either our internal or external auditors, which was pleasing.
- To ensure that we maintain a very high standard of financial control, we have, since the middle of last year, instituted a system of regular audits by members of the Finance and Personnel Committee, as part of our process towards our Annual Governance Review.
- We have signed a three-year deal with an insurance company for the Parish Council's insurance. This gives us both a financial benefit, and the ability to forecast prices over the period.
- We are in the process of setting up a new professionally designed website, which will make it easier to update information, and give us greater flexibility in managing email addresses.
- The council precept has been increased from £56,451 in 2014-15 to £57,146 for 2015-16. This represents an increase of 89p for the year for a Band D property, in 2014-15 the parish precept element of council tax was £62.34 per band D property per year and for 2015-16 it will be £63.23.
- Our thanks go to Aleana Baird, our hard-working Parish Clerk, for her unfailing support to the Committee, and for helping us to maintain our high standards.

**Councillor Alan Brown
Chair of the Finance and
Personnel Committee**

Leisure

The Leisure Committee has had another good year in both maintaining and improving the leisure facilities available to the Parish.

Improvements to the Community Club have continued with the shower areas being retiled. The area outside the club has had the broken slabs replaced, which has smartened up the front as well as removed a trip hazard. At the front and rear of the club 'hedgehog' gutter protectors have been installed to prevent the gutters from becoming blocked. The area to the rear has also been cleared of rubbish that has built up over the years and re-surfaced.

The quarterly safety inspections of the two play areas have continued and the committee have acted on any issues identified to ensure that both areas are maintained to a high standard. This year we have refurbished the swings, replacing all the seats and treating the frames with preservative. The safety surface which surrounds the roundabout has also been replaced, as the old surface had started to break up. The Committee have also been looking ahead to the 2015/16 year and what further improvements can be made and additional equipment can be provided.

The wooden fencing has been replaced between the car park and the recreation field, as the old one had a number of rotten posts and broken rails. New steps up the bank on the recreation fields have made life easier for those carrying cricket teas out to the pavilion!

The Cricket Club has also continued to improve the pavilion and facilities that are available to the teams playing cricket. Last summer protective netting was provided to prevent the roof tiles from being broken by stray cricket balls. A second container has been

from the committees...

provided additional storage as well as helping to tidy up the areas around the pavilion. A kissing gate has also been installed into the recreation ground from the side of the bus shelter. This restores a previous access point removing the need for people to climb the fence. The net that protects the Turnpike Close houses has been repaired after storm damage and restoration of the posts and pullies is planned for the forthcoming year.

Following on from our achievement in 2013, last year we succeeded in receiving the Silver award for the best playing field in Somerset, so that's a Gold and Silver in successive years. The award is a fantastic achievement and demonstrates commitment of both the Football and Cricket clubs supported by the Leisure Committee.

As always I would like to thank all of the committee for their hard work over the past year and look forward to working with them during the next year.

Councillor Brenden Hill Chair of the Leisure Committee

Open Spaces

Since the last APM the Open Spaces Committee has held three meetings – May 2014, September 2014 and January 2015. Another good year has been spent in improving certain areas in the Parish and maintaining others.

Hedge and grass cutting continues on the recreation fields, play areas and Turnpike areas around the traffic lights. The barrels around the Parish are kept full of flowers and we bought seven new barrels this year, two on the cricket field, two in the playground, two by the Pavilion and one outside the Memorial Hall. The daffodils on the traffic island at the traffic lights have been a picture this Spring. Although we broadcast poppy seeds these did not

germinate which was disappointing. A new bench was installed outside the Reading Room in the Clock Tower enclosure and we have recently had a new pathway constructed to provide disabled access (this scheme was contributed to by the Reading Rooms who kindly gave £500, for which we are very grateful). We intend to repaint the old bench and the Clock Tower door.

Painting of the Parish fingerposts was completed by North Somerset Council and our Parish Orderly Michelle painted the mile posts and metal signs in Lower Langford and on the A38. We are going to provide a new 'WELCOME TO CHURCHILL' sign on the A38 to welcome visitors to the South West.

The bus shelter on the north side of the A38 by the traffic lights is to get a face-lift and the pupils of Churchill Academy liked the idea of improving its appearance with the promise of painting the inside with something really fun! (Banksy watch this space!).

We again reviewed the Burial Ground fees and regulations. We also discussed how to deal with the current issue of 'fly tipping' in the car park. We intend to improve the entrance to the car park and the stony surface which deteriorates over the winter months.

The pupils at Churchill Academy are helping with litter collection which is a great help, especially during term time.

The dog bins continue to be emptied weekly by North Somerset Council but paid for by the Parish Council. The gravel was replenished in the yellow bins around the Parish in October, although we were fortunate not to need so much of it this winter.

Another glorious summer in 2015 will cause problems with watering the barrels and flowers around the Parish. We are hopeful that our volunteers can help again with this

for which we are very grateful. We are trying to keep a high standard of maintenance of our amenities and flower displays which will enhance the AONB for everyone to enjoy. If you can suggest areas for improvement please let us know. We are currently tidying up the overgrown area to the north of the 'Hands' and the immediate neighbour is being most cooperative.

I wish to thank all of my fellow hard-working councillors on this committee for their continuing support and their time.

Councillor Valerie Langley Chair of the Open Spaces Committee

Allotments

As most of you will have noticed the allotments in Pudding Pie Lane have continued to flourish and are looking fantastic. During July Councillor Robert Vickery who had chaired the Committee through the initial set up period moved away from the area. I have taken over the role as Chair for the remaining months prior to the Parish Council Elections in May, and would like to thank Robert for his hard work and leadership over the set up period.

The Allotments Committee have continued to listen to the allotment holders and take on board their comments and feedback. When we originally set up the allotments and on advice from the National Allotment Society we decided not to provide mains water, but following the dry summer last year we received a formal request from a number of plot holders for mains water to be supplied. We made a survey and the majority of responses were that mains water was needed. The Committee will be following this up during the coming year and also looking at external funding to offset the costs.

The hedging whips that were planted when we first set up the