

Hazelbury Bryan Bytes

Parish Council Newsletter – Issue 40 - June 2021

Introduction by Steve Murcer, Chairman, HBPC

As I write this article at the beginning of June life is slowly getting back to normal, children are back at school, all shops have re-opened, pubs and restaurants are now able to serve food and alcohol in doors and foreign holidays are restarting. Equally we all hope that the vaccination programme which has been delivered so amazingly well by the NHS and volunteers will give us all the protection we need from Covid and that we will all soon be “double jabbers”.

I’m sure like me you are hoping that later this month the government will be able to lift all the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions and life will once again return to normality and we can once again visit family and friends, shake people’s hands and give our loved ones a hug; all pleasures we have been missing for so long. Many though will still be cautious about mixing in large groups of people or will wear masks where they think the risk is higher, but honestly that will be small price to pay if it gives people confidence to get out and about.

Looking back, I think we can be proud of how we as a community have responded to the pandemic, looking out for neighbours, delivering shopping for others, supporting our village shop and doing our bit to stop the spread of the disease.

So, let’s get back to business as usual! Over the years Parish Council has undertaken a number of community projects that have made a difference in our village including:

Establishing allotments; developing the Parish Plan; returning accumulated funds to community projects through the “Ideas Please” initiative; installing 7 dog waste bins; purchasing a traffic Speed Indicator Device to educate drivers about their speed; developing the Neighbourhood Plan, which is now enshrined in the planning policies of Dorset Council; building the Sports Pavilion; and latterly, declaring a Climate and Ecological Emergency.

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If you can think of any other issues we should be tackling, or a project that will benefit the village, please do let us know, by emailing our Parish Clerk Malcolm Wilson at parishclerk@hazelburybryan.net or talking to myself or any other parish councillor. The idea can be large or small and if you want to get involved directly yourself then so much the better. For the right project the Parish Council is willing to approach the Public Works Loan Board to borrow money at fixed, low interest rates to get a capital project off the ground.

The Cemetery:

Following the car damage in December we are pleased with the look of the replacement fence, gate and hedge. This is far more in-keeping with the rural setting of this cherished site than the pebbledash wall. Some of the grass was badly scorched and we are expecting nature to help us and for the grass to return with some additional scarifying and over-seeding.

We have also undertaken a full review of the how the cemetery operates looking at capacity, fees and regulations. It looks likely that there will be sufficient capacity for the next decade. Thanks to the generosity of the Wonston Club trustees we have £10k in a reserve to fund an extension, but we need a willing seller of adjacent land. Our fees for burials, headstones etc have been compared with 7 other local cemeteries. There are wide variations and changes will be made later in the summer to try and ensure, taking an average view over a three/four years period, that we cover the maintenance costs of grass and hedge cutting etc. The site has a wonderful bucolic setting and the rules and regulations will be changed to give the parish council the right to remove decorations that detract from the rural, and tranquil atmosphere.

New councillor:

David Maughan's departure was covered in the last edition of Bytes. Following the formal procedures for co-opting a replacement, Liz Stockley has joined as a parish councillor. Val Rubie was elected as Vice-Chairman by her fellow councillors.

Climate and Ecological Emergency:

A working group under the auspices of the parish council has been established – the group will look at things we can do locally to help the national and international effort. The groups first newsletter is being delivered at the same time as Bytes – it's very eye-catching!

Finances for the year ending 31st March 2021:

The accounts have been prepared, the internal audit is complete and the necessary paperwork has been sent to the external auditor. All forms, supporting documents etc are to be found on the parish council section of the web site as required by law. The external auditors final report will be published when received later in the summer. The key features are given below:

Income: Whilst the precept rose by £578, other income fell by £6,147. This was due to a lack of pavilion income from the sports clubs, youth club and other hirers and a smaller VAT refund, due to less vatable expenditure in the previous year.

Expenditure: Expenditure fell by £6,487. This was spread widely across many categories and reflects a reduced number of “one-off” payments – there was no SID expenditure, no capital costs on the pavilion, no planning consultancy fees and reduced vatable expenditure. These were the main items.

Reserves: The parish council has a healthy overall position, Reserves at the end of the year total £30,675. There are specific “earmarked” reserves, namely £10,000 for a cemetery extension, £1,200 for footpath gates, £4,135 for youth play equipment, £200 for winter grit; £1,000 for future election costs; £1,416 for footpath works and £500 for pavilion capital works. Unallocated reserves total £12,224.

Parish councils are not allowed to keep unnecessarily high levels of reserves, especially unallocated reserves. Ours are well within the expected norms, and it does mean we are well placed if funding is needed for any initiatives that come forward in response to the Chairman’s introduction. The parish council should also see developer contributions coming forward as a result of larger housing developments taking place like that at the old Handley Cross depot. The parish council expects to receive a significant funding contribution which has to be spent on community projects and not just held in reserve. A major improvement to the children’s play area is probably at the top of the list.

Pavilion: The pavilion remains closed, apart from a single toilet open for cricket matches. It will remain closed until the end of lockdown restrictions, but on an optimistic note, Alun Read is taking bookings for summer parties and events. It is a great facility available for hire at modest rates.

School fundraising fun run: Saturday 4th July at 10.00. Two routes, check with Natalie Perrett for details – toutedouce100@gmail.com

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS: In lockdown parish council meetings have been held using Zoom. It has worked remarkably well and more members of the public have attended. Sadly, the Government declined to extend the legislation allowing remote meetings and a legal challenge from the Local Government Association failed in the High Court. Going forward, meetings have to be held in person, and in public.....and in accordance with Covid rules! We are hoping that, if lockdown rules end on 21st June (which seems less likely at the time of writing) normal meetings can resume in July. We will, though, just have to wait and see how things pan out, but agendas and minutes will appear on the web site as and when written.

Parish Councillors 2021			
Name	Role	e-mail	Phone
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Val Rubie	Vice Chairman	valrubie@btinternet.com	818293
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Ken Huggins	Councillor	kenhuggins@hotmail.co.uk	818223
Sarah Meeks	Councillor	sarah.meeks78@gmail.com	817437
Martin Richards	Councillor	tractorbits@gmail.com	817372
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Parish Clerk			
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