

Hazelbury Bryan Bytes

Parish Council Newsletter – Issue 45 - September 2024

It's over 3 months since the local elections and I am pleased to be able to write to you again as the Chairman of the parish council. I was re-elected by councillors at the parish council meeting in May.

I also have the honour to be your new Dorset Council councillor for the Blackmore Vale ward, taking over from Pauline Batstone – she will be a very hard act to follow.

The parish council, of course, is not based on political parties, just individuals who want to do their bit to help the communities in which they live or work. I will be very careful to avoid muddling my two roles and I have asked our parish clerk to pull me up sharply if I start to go astray! All seven existing councillors put their names forward for re-election and as there were no other candidates they were automatically re-elected. I think we have a very good team with a mixture of skills and expertise and an enthusiasm to make things happen and get things done. Whilst parish councils will always be about the art of the possible, parish councils that don't do anything are pointless.

With that thought in mind this edition sets out the ideas and projects that we will be working on over the coming months. Most of these are at the early stage but you'll get a sense of what we are planning.

Steve Murcer

Chairman, Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

The Plan originally made in 2018 has been refreshed and renewed. Our planning consultant, supported by Ian Stevenson and the parish clerk worked for a year on reviewing the housing need and current sites and generally updating the content. There was no need to identify further sites for development and the revised Plan was accepted by Dorset Council in the spring and has full planning weight in decision making. The National Planning Policy Framework had been amended whilst we were working on the Plan and these changes have given longer life and greater independence from external factors to policies in Neighbourhood Plans. There has been much publicity about the need for greater housing development but there is no indication yet that small villages will be affected – we keep our fingers firmly crossed.

Cemetery

The cemetery opened in 1947 and is a very special place, wonderfully tranquil in a supreme location. It is relatively rare for a parish council to have a cemetery to manage and we have recently joined the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Managers (ICCM). The Chief Executive happens to live nearby in Stourpaine and she visited and shared her expertise on a number of matters, including capacity and safety. At current rates we estimate we have grave spaces for 10 – 15 years and much longer for cremated remains. We have some funds earmarked for an extension, but finding a site that is available is something we monitor closely. The ICCM will also be undertaking a safety inspection of gravestones. If these are unstable then accidents can happen. We will need to try and contact the families of those deemed unsafe for remedial action to be taken. This is the responsibility of the family, not the parish council, although we may need to take steps for safety reasons in the short term. We recognise this will be a very sensitive matter for those with family and friends in the cemetery. Some of the cemetery is consecrated ground so we are also in liaison with the Diocese of Salisbury.

Community Resilience

We all experience those moments of panic when the power goes off, the floods come and trees are blown down. As a community we always seem to really pull together at these moments and someone gets their chain saw out to clear the road to Sturminster or help clear drains and gulleys to remove surface water from the roads. In Covid, the support to deliver food from the shop to the vulnerable was a magnificent effort. The world and its climate seem to be increasingly unpredictable and we have started to think that a more formal community resilience plan might be a very useful and timely development. There are a number of community buildings – the village hall, Alec's Field pavilion, the church, the pub.....even the school at times – which might be used as some form of community hub providing temporary emergency shelter and a hot drink, or even some food. We might even twin or network with other village(s) to provide shelter in the hope that one but not all might lose power or be flooded. We have had an initial meeting with Dorset Council's Community Resilience Co-ordinator and will be looking to form a working party to work on devising a plan for Hazelbury. If anyone is interested in helping, please let the parish clerk know, or speak to any parish councillor

Web site

If you want to publicise an event you are involved with or have other community information that you want to share, do send copy to Vanessa Weddell at vanessaweddell@gmail.com who will load it to our web site and alert social media channels.

Climate and Ecological Emergency

The Hazelbury Bryan Parish Council's environmental working group has organised another drop-in Open Day at the village hall on Sun 6th October. The event will run from 1pm to 4pm, and all are welcome.

There will be displays showcasing our community's achievements to date, and also providing information and advice on a wide range of actions we can all take to play our part in addressing the climate and environmental issues that so urgently need our attention.

Topics will include the successful decarbonisation of the Village Hall, the River of Flowers, Sustainable Dorset's Green Living Guide, heat pump and EV myth busting, the Hazelbury Abuzz pollinator rescue scheme, Hedgehog Rescue of Hazelbury Bryan, our Nature Recovery Strategy and the Great Big Dorset Hedge project.

Experienced residents will be on hand to answer any questions you might have, and to offer advice on the most appropriate actions for you to consider taking.

Sadly, the UK is presently among the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The environment affects us all one way or another, and it requires our urgent help in order to undo past damage and to make the future one we can all enjoy and be proud of having helped to create. Dorset Council has declared a Nature Emergency and we might well follow suit.

Oh yes, and there will be free refreshments! Just bring your curiosity, your questions, and your enthusiasm to be part of helping to make the world a better place. We look forward to meeting you.

Highways

A meeting has been held with Highways officers to review a number of matters including speed limits, especially the possibility of a 20 mph limit at the school and from the Antelope junction up to the shop. Highways has to work in accordance with Department of Transport guidelines. Neither they nor we can just do what we might like. At the school, there is no realistic chance of a 20 mph limit – the site is too rural and the likely average speeds are unlikely to make a scheme possible. At The Causeway, from the Antelope to the shop location, traffic calming would need to be installed to help compliance with a 20 mph limit – this would have to be lit at night and the costs would be prohibitive. However, we are looking to see if something might be done to reduce the large hedge on the Hall and Woodhouse land to improve visibility for road users including pedestrians. This will be on the agenda for parish council in September. Highways also emphasised that if you see a pothole, blocked drain or gully etc then please report it on the Dorset For You web site. This means it will be logged in their system and dealt with as quickly as possible.

Play area - Discussions have taken place with contractors about improving the play area. We have some Lottery funding and community infrastructure funds from the Violet Cross development. The existing equipment, which is quite extensive, will be repaired and refurbished as appropriate. More excitingly, we expect to build a new all-weather Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) between the play area and the cycle jumps. This will provide space for a number of activities – netball, basketball, soccer kick-board and general games play - to suit a wide age range of users. Watch this space!

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