

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT - 2005

Chairman

May I begin the Annual Parish Report by expressing my pleasure at a splendid year for Bleadon Parish Council. As you will hear from the Councillors reports much has been accomplished over the last twelve months. We have achieved Quality Council Status having adhered to all the requirements set by National Government. We gained this prestigious award last December and I proudly accepted the Certificate in January this year.

More recently we have also been awarded in competition with hundreds of parishes a NEC internet-ready PC and a twelve month connection to BT Yahoo Anytime as part of the BT Community Connections Award Scheme. For the benefit of the local community this will be sited in the new Post Office which will open on Saturday 23rd April.

After discussions in Council over the year the Village Plan was launched in January and is being masterminded by four Sub-Committees and a Steering Committee. We should soon be able to publish a questionnaire which will be distributed throughout the village and the returns from this will be vital to the final draft.

We have harried the Highway Services for "The Gang" to keep our roads in order. The Jubilee Garden has been refurbished and the Parish tubs filled with seasonal plants. A Speed Watch scheme has been set up and with help from more volunteers will be extended in the future. New fencing has been erected around the Play Park and the whole area has passed an annual inspection. The Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room continue to be upgraded and the car park is on our list to be resurfaced. So the heart of the village continues to improve.

As a Council we look forward with vigour to the year ahead and the general well being of our community. I thank you all for your continuing support and remind you that the Parish Council meets on the second Monday of each month and your attendance is always welcome.

Precept

Firstly my apologies for my non attendance this evening – I hope you have an informative meeting. In simple terms the Precept for this year has increased by £5,110. This is due in part to three main reasons as well as the usual inflationary implications.

1. Imposed government legislation
2. Council risk management
3. Future village aspirations

Each year more government legislation impinges on the Parish Council's responsibilities and its potential activities. This then has a financial impact – the major one this year being The Freedom of Information Act. As a result the council has had to over haul its filing and office procedures.

Another serious impact on the Council is risk management some of which again stems from government legislation. One of the major risks that have been highlighted by me this year is the potential loss of service that might occur due to the partial incapacity through illness of the clerk.

Finally the major increase comes from the short and long term implementation of the Village Plan where the costs of such will reflect themselves within the village over the next twelve months. To conclude the total village precept for 2005/2006 will cost each individual household this year a maximum of £75.00 – just some £1.45 per week. I would suggest a small price to pay to live in such a progressive beautiful and forward thinking village.

BLEADON PARISH COUNCIL - PRECEPT 2005/2006

	ACTUAL 2003/04	BUDGET 2004/05	ACTUAL 2004/05	OUTCOME 2004/05	BUDGET 2005/06
Receipts					
Precept	21430	27660	27660	27660	32770
Interest Received	339	190	325	420	375
Youth Club Rent	210	50	0	50	50
Allotment Rents	196	185	225	225	225
Newsletter Advertisers	785	650	1060	1060	800
Orderly Grant	126	125	141	141	141
War Graves	20	20		20	20
Total Receipts	23106	28880	29411	29576	34380
Payments					
OPEN SPACES					
General Maintenance	35	100	90	90	100
Planting	421	525		525	700
Jubilee Garden		50			50
Footpaths		100			200
Well Green - hedges		225			75
Tree Planting			147	147	700
Playground	107	875	166	166	250
Sundries					
Purn Quarry Cleansing		500			250
Shiplate Hill Sign		75			
Car Park	125				
Grass Cutting	2067	2020		2040	2400
Church Clock	100	100		100	100
Lighting	210	250	80	240	260
Village Orderly Costs					3640
Sub Total - Maintenance	3065	4820	483	3308	8725
Improvements	834		1382	1382	4000
Playground	72	850	4586	4586	
Lighting					
Well Green		850			
Jubilee garden		850	590	590	
Village Signage		2000		2000	
Sub Total - Improvements	906	4550	6558	8558	4000
Allotments - Rent	73	150		219	150
Allotments - Maintenance	186	200			350
Sub Total	259	350		219	500

Total Open Spaces	4229	9720	7041	12085	13225
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	ACTUAL 2003/04	BUDGET 2004/05	ACTUAL 2004/05	OUTCOME 2004/05	BUDGET 2005/06
ADMINISTRATION					
Clerk's Salary	4287	4560	3046	4665	5000
Clerk's Office Expenses	600	600	400	600	600
Staff Contingencies					1000
Stationery	1726	1000	654	750	1000
Faxes	38	50	5	15	25
Insurance	2201	2500	2375	2375	2500
Photocopying	136	200	124	130	50
Postage	210	250	95	140	180
Sundries	15	100	245	245	200
IT	614	600	770	800	800
Professional Fees	1040	500	120	120	300
Newsletter - Printing Costs	1538	1600	510	1500	2000
Subscriptions	345	600	228	228	400
Chairman's Insignia	531	0	0	0	0
Councillors Expenses	919	1400	555	555	1000
Election Expenses	98	200			100
Village Plan		1000		1000	2000
Total Administration	14305	15160	9127	13123	17155
GRANTS					
Coronation Hall	3000	4000	4000	4000	4000
S.137 Grants	180				
Sub Total	3180	4000	4000	4000	4000
Total	21714	28880	20169	25212	34380
Surplus/Deficit	1932	0	9242	4364	0

Planning

This past year has been fairly quiet on the planning front with 17 applications and 15 site visits. The Parish Council recommended refusal on three applications but this was overturned by North Somerset. They also overturned three other applications where the Parish Council recommended approval.

The ongoing saga on the certificate of lawfulness for the car-boot sale has been approved by the planning department but a public inquiry into its continuation was held on the 19th April 2005. The owner of a parcel of land in Facum Lane has been given 28 days to clear up the site as it contravenes planning law. Failure to do so will result in enforcement action.

Mary Sheppard

Open Spaces

I am pleased to report another successful year for the village and its open spaces.

Once again our village tubs have looked good throughout the seasons - mainly due to the quality of plants supplied by Sanders Garden World and of course the hard work of those dedicated few who came to plant them up in the spring and autumn. Once more I thank you all for your continuing support in this endeavour. There are other villagers who take it upon themselves to plant their own containers and the overall effect is very colourful, I should like to take this opportunity to thank them too.

Thanks too to the volunteers who helped with 'clean up day'. At least for a short time the village looked tidy but it is a shame that there is not enough public spiritedness to keep it so on a regular basis. If each villager kept their own patch clean and tidy especially on Mondays after the refuse collection I'm sure the whole village would benefit. There has also been more to say on the subject of 'dog mess'. I enquired into the costs purchasing bins and cost of emptying them, but the real stumbling block has been the positioning of them. In respect of this opposition the plan to have them around the village has for the moment been shelved. I can only implore all dog owners to be responsible carry plastic bags and take the offending material home to their own bins!

Mark Howe and his team have continued to maintain our playground and other grassy areas in the usual efficient manner, and have also done a good job in tidying the Jubilee Garden, which has improved visibility in that area immensely. The shrubs around the telephone box and the toilets have been cut back and that has also visually enhanced the area. We are also grateful to Mark for his work in looking after the Churchyard so well, and all the other jobs he undertakes when the occasion arises.

Parish Notice boards have at last reached the stage of being put in place and we hope they will be used well, and provide a source of useful information to villagers and visitors alike. New seats have been purchased to give respite along the way to those who walk to the shop and thanks to the generosity of District Councillor Peddlesden an additional seat is now also in position.

My thanks too, to the Mendip Rangers who led by Andy Eddy have kept our stiles and footpaths in good order. They also have taken care of the picnic furniture in one lay-by in Roman road and have placed an information table in the other. Boulders have been placed in the entrance of the larger Roman road lay-by, to prevent large vehicles from parking there. New kissing gates/squeeze gates have been positioned on the footpaths in and around the village, for which many of us are very grateful.

The Churchyard

There has been need for the usual remedial work around the churchyard, the cutting back of the undergrowth and the trimming of the trees etc. There was a major repair required to the wall abutting the Old Post office and this was undertaken and carried out very satisfactorily by a local builder.

After a meeting with the PCC a recommendation was made concerning the resurfacing of the footpath which runs through the Churchyard and also the entrance up to the West door. Quotations are still being sought for this work which it is hoped will be completed at the same time as the car park.

The reports dealing with the playground and the allotments will be presented by my colleagues Councillor Pyke and Councillor Sheppard respectively.

Village News Magazine

The News has had another good year and has attracted several new advertisers, many of them small local businesses and I hope that they will continue to support us in the coming year. Once again I am indebted to Marshall's for sponsoring the additional photo page; this feature has been well received by the villagers and has attracted interest from far and wide. It is now possible to put a short form of the magazine onto the Parish Council website and I have already had responses from ex-Bleadon residents who are interested in the affairs of the village. My thanks once again to John Hickley for his original cover designs and to all those who every quarter deliver the News to the residents and of course to the regular contributors without whom there wouldn't be any news!

Penny Robinson

Combe Quarry

The Combe Quarry (near Catherine's Inn) was cleared and tidied in March. Numerous saplings brambles and Hawthorns cut down and removed to help open up the site to sunlight and make it more accessible to visitors. Donated seeds and bulbs have been planted and it's hoped that the more open aspect of the site will encourage naturalisation of colourful native flowers. The intention is that this should become a controlled naturalised site to encourage environmental diversity.

Notice boards

Three new oak notice boards have been purchased. These will soon be erected in three locations around the village: at Bleadon Road bus shelter near the village cross and at the top of the Veale. This should greatly improve communications throughout our community.

New benches

Two new benches have been provided. One in Purn Way thanks to the generosity of District Councillor Ian Peddlesden. Another near the Purn House Farm bus stop was purchased by the parish council.

Play area

The play area continues to be well used and enjoyed by residents and visitors. This year we introduced a regular safety inspection routine. This ensures that we stay on top of any problems or safety issues. The annual ROSPA inspection revealed just how safe and well maintained the play area is. The new steel mesh fencing seems to have been a success with everyone, despite the initial misgivings and grumbles of a few residents.

Bleadon Village Plan

Preparation for the Bleadon Village Plan began with the distribution of over 400 colour leaflets to households around the parish in December. The leaflet hi-lighted some exciting and contentious possibilities for the future.

Nearly 200 people packed the Coronation Hall on 15 January to hear about the parish plan. It was standing room only for many villagers at this inaugural event.

A 20 minute on-screen presentation explained the reason for having a village plan. Villagers heard how it could shape their future what it might include and how the whole community can help in the production of the plan.

Villagers gave us plenty of feedback on what they most value and most want to improve in the parish. We had hundreds of suggestions from those who attended. To help decide what this community needs in the future, four volunteer action groups have been set up to work on the key themes of the plan. Around 24 people volunteered to help with the action groups.

The four themes are:

Economy and prosperity, whose key priorities are:

- to increase local job opportunities and reduce the need to commute out of the area
- secure the prosperity of residents
- encourage enterprise

Well-being and safety, whose key priorities are:

- improve road safety
- reduce crime and fear of crime
- reduce anti-social behaviour
- maximise opportunities for older people to live full and independent lives in the community
- improve access and choice of housing for all
- promote healthy and active lifestyles

Learning and leisure throughout life, whose key priorities are:

- develop and promote enjoyment of our environment
- improve opportunities for play
- promote healthy and active lifestyles
- promote effective social inclusion
- widen participation in learning
- improve existing and create new community learning facilities

Environment, whose main priorities are:

- protect and improve the quality of our natural and built environment
- improve traffic management
- improve footpaths and access to our countryside
- ensure that future building development is in character and sustainable
- meeting future housing needs

The action groups are already busy with research and creative ideas for the future of Bleadon. The results of their labours are fed back to the Bleadon Plan Steering Committee, which ultimately has responsibility for producing the Bleadon Village Plan. The steering committee met for the first time in March to elect its management team and hear feedback from the action groups.

Meetings of the steering committee are open to the public.

The steering committee is now working on the production of an extensive questionnaire to go to all households and businesses in the parish. Results from this questionnaire will provide a "health check" on the parish and help each of the action groups to deliver what the community needs in the future.

Keith Pyke

Allotments

This past year has been successful one with all 16 plots occupied. For the time for several years we now have a waiting list this is probably because we are becoming more aware of having a healthier life and gardening provides strenuous exercise as well as providing fresh unadulterated food. The gate is awaiting collection and I apologise for the delay in this regard. Rubbish is still proving to be a problem at the north east corner. Steps will be taken to clear away the debris therefore making plot 2 nearer to its normal length.

I congratulate to all the allotment holders on their neat and tidy appearance and wish them a successful growing season.

Mary Sheppard

Coronation Hall

The Coronation Hall Management Committee has continued to invest in this valuable village asset by making further improvements to the main hall. We are self financing for all normal running costs such as heating lighting insurance cleaning licences etc as these are largely met by hall hire charges. However we have to look elsewhere for financial assistance for major items of expenditure and we are therefore grateful to the Parish Council for their continuing support.

Projects completed in the past year include:

- Further improvements to the Coronation Hall kitchen – new sink unit and additional cupboards
- Installation of a new in-line water boiler for dispensing beverages in the Coronation Hall kitchen
- Purchase of new lightweight tables, some of them easy stacking, to replace damaged tables which were difficult for users to handle
- Refurbishment of the timber floor in the Coronation Hall and removal of unsightly quarry tiles

These developments have all contributed to the appeal of this popular village venue that is now used by a wider range of people in the community for family events group meetings craft meetings exercise classes dancing and so on.

The monthly Village Market is a continuing success which generates valuable income for the upkeep of the Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room.

A successful village hall demands considerable support from the community and the Hall Management Committee wishes to acknowledge and thank the many individuals who have given their time and commitment over the year.

We are now embarking on another busy year and you can already see the start of our next two projects.

Finally, tribute must be made to the spirit and generosity of the people of Bleadon who donated a magnificent amount towards the South East Asia Tsunami Appeal in February 2005. All proceeds from the Village Market that month were donated to the Disasters Emergency Committee together with donations from private individuals and various groups who donated very significant sums towards this tragic cause.

Clive Morris

Youth Club

The youth club welcomes young people aged 11-19 every Thursday evening 7 to 9.30pm. It is pleasing to report that the enthusiastic effort by the leaders and their volunteer helpers has meant a steady rise in membership from 8 to 24 young people over the year.

Flower baskets now bring a more welcoming hint of colour to the front of the building thanks to the planting efforts of the young people. An exterior notice-board has been recycled from the church to help promote the club's activities. We've seen improvements inside to the electrical systems kitchen and office areas. A donated TV provides a permanent outlet for dance-mat exuberance and comfortable seating offers a quiet lounge area. The members have enjoyed activities like ice-skating bowling cooking pancakes and making Easter treats and Christmas crackers. A visiting sports worker is providing a variety of sports activities every other week. All the time they are developing their social skills and preparing for adult life.

Brownies

This thriving group continue to meet every Tuesday evening during term time in the Coronation Hall. Under the leadership of Mrs Bella Ware the Brownies have worked hard since September to obtain five new interest badges. In October the group welcomed Karen Kelson as a permanent leader. With two full-time leaders the group is operating at its maximum of 17 Brownies. If the vacant third post could be filled the group could expand to 24 Brownies. There are still seven girls from Bleadon and Lympsham unable to join until they have another qualified leader. Ist Bleadon Brownies take their community responsibilities seriously and continue to attend church services sell their cakes at the village market and help at the May Fayre.

Keith Pyke

ALCA

ALCA has continued to provide an excellent back-up and co-ordination service for all the Local Authorities in the old AVON area during the past year.

One of their most valuable functions is to monitor all Government legislation which affects local authorities and provide advice to Parish Councils about its implementation. A typical example of this is the Freedom of Information Act General Right of Access which came into force in January 2005. It also examines proposed legislation and makes representations via the National Association of Local Councils.

During the last year NALC has been very active in discussing with the Government the proposed changes in the Roles and Powers of Local Councils to enable them to play a more active role in tackling local crime and anti-social behaviour. Under the proposals local councils will be able to employ neighbourhood wardens and community support officers generally in partnership with principal authorities. It is proposed that "Rangers" and "Wardens" will be able to issue fixed penalty notices on, for example, people who allow their dogs to foul the footpath. Other offences will be littering, graffiti and noise nuisance. It is proposed that the penalties will range from £30 - £100.

Members of the ALCA executive committee also play an active role on key committees e.g. Regional Planning, PostWatch, Bristol Airport Liaison Committee, which discuss matters affecting the local communities in the old Avon area.

Another key area for ALCA is providing information on employment matters and levels of remuneration and expenses for local authority employees and Councillors. They also provide a comprehensive range of training programmes for both Clerks and Councillors.

Perhaps the most valuable function of ALCA is providing advice and a reliable source of information to the Clerk and the Council about any new matters raised by constituents. In particular it is able to share experience about issues that have arisen in other areas and to recommend appropriate courses of action. This reduces the time taken to deal with issues and prevents everyone re-inventing the wheel.

Ray Hicks

Roads & Transport

During the year ending April 2005 there have been some major improvements to roads within the village. These include the surface dressing of Roman Road, Hillside Road Accommodation Road and Celtic Way. Also Bridge road was repaired and re-surfaced. However Bleadon Road continues to deteriorate but is not deemed as being serious enough by the Highways department to warrant attention at the moment. The schemes that have been planned and are outstanding include the following:-

1. Facum Lane to Accommodation Road Footpath
2. Shiplate Road.

These two projects seem to have dropped off the register and I have yet to receive the list of planned projects for the area to see where in the ranking they appear.

On the whole the conditions within the Parish are good. There is a continual assessment of the roads and footpaths within Bleadon and, as necessary the Highways Department Patchwork Gang is informed of deficiencies. If the council or general public are aware of any locations requiring attention these are gratefully received and will be acted upon although the Highways department regard what is important to Parishioners differently and they consider budgetary constraints. A case in point is the Bus stop area by the Catherine Inn – the cost of the work is too much for the 'General Purpose Gang' and too insignificant for a separate scheme.

At the time of the last report requests for dropped kerbs were made and passed onto the Highways department of North Somerset. On a positive note this request was acted upon very swiftly and the crossings were constructed a short time after.

As a result of the works on the A370 Bleadon was again subjected to additional traffic. Although assurances were made that the conditions of the roads would be monitored and repairs affected afterwards the main concern is that the route through Bleadon would attract more long term use. Unfortunately there is little the Parish Council can do other than to monitor the situation. In reality the roads through the village are restricted both in terms of width and weight capacities so cars are usually forced to drive with more care even though there are rogue elements who would always abuse the system come what may. The presence of the speed watch teams will deter some but others who know the way the system works cynically ignore the teams which is a shame.

I am glad to summarise that the general condition of the roads and footpaths is higher than average but a continual process of observation and where necessary submission of reports to the Highways department is required.

Justin Harvey-Bennett

Police Report

Annual Crime within the Parish remains at a reasonably low level especially when compared with other areas locally. In the twelve months, from 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2005, there have been 56 reported crime related incidents within the Parish. The vast majority of offences were either of a domestic nature or involved commercial premises and therefore did not impinge upon the quality of life of Bleadon residents.

There have been five dwelling burglaries within the Parish in the past twelve months. Whilst this figure is not particularly high it is the one offence which causes the most distress to victims. Tackling dwelling burglary has always been a high priority for the Police but it should also be a high priority for householders. From the figures it is clear that non-alarmed properties are far more likely to be broken into than homes with an alarm fitted therefore we have directed efforts towards encouraging residents to have alarms fitted to their homes.

The subject of 'Anti-social behaviour' is very topical at the moment and is the focus of much debate. Dealing with such incidents occupies an increasing amount of Police resources particularly in Weston-Super-Mare town centre. I am pleased to report that incidents of such behaviour within the Parish are particularly low, in fact almost non-existent.

I can report that local a local 'speed watch' scheme is now operating within the village. Residents who have concerns over speeding motorists are encouraged to get involved, as new volunteers are always needed.

Monthly Police Surgeries are still being held at the Church Room on dates published locally. Residents are encouraged to attend if they have concerns over any issues.

I would like to thank Phil Ashley for his efforts in running the Village Neighbourhood Watch and would encourage any villagers not covered by a scheme to contact me about becoming involved. I would also like to thank the Parish Council members for all their support over the last twelve months.

Pc 2307 Adrian Woolacott Te101934638123.