

MARCH 2021
ISSUE 117

Bleadon News

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Parish council clerk, Bruce Poole, explains the Precept.

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Bleadon bids a very sad farewell to one of its brilliant business owners.

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Bleadon in Bloom looks ahead to 2021 with a hopeful eye.



“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
Maya Angelou

Dates I need to know for the next edition...

Publication of the Summer edition of the magazine: *June 2021*

Cut off for content: *May 14th 2021*

Cut off for advertisement: *May 21st 2021*

Front page image credit: *Becky Crathorne*



www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk



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www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/lifeline



Chairman's message

Gill Williams

It may seem like not very much has changed since I wrote my last letter in the pre-Christmas issue, and yet much has changed.

There are signs of Spring everywhere. Snowdrops round the edge of the car park, the bright purple and yellow of crocus in gardens and in a

field down the A370, little newborn lambs.

Nothing new in that perhaps but with the vaccination programme now well underway and numbers of new Covid cases dropping daily, there really is hope around the corner.

My next letter might even be able to comment on events being held in the Coronation Hall, the Jubilee Room and the newly refurbished

Church Room looking great on the corner.

I am very pleased to tell you that at last, after five years, the parish council is finally up to full strength with its nine places now filled. At our meeting on February 8th we were very happy to welcome Huw Boyce of Pine Lea into the final 'empty chair'.

Do enjoy the Spring and fingers crossed for some positive news from Boris!

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Parish Council Snippets...

by Bruce Poole

The parish council continues to hold its meeting despite the challenges that virtual meetings are producing. Regrettably, unless you have a reasonably strong internet signal and equipment that can connect with Zoom, then it can leave the end user out on a limb, but the council is working to come up with ways to improve this.

Although government and the national bodies who represent councillors and council staff accept it is a problem, they still advocate democracy and the administration of councils must proceed despite the challenges.

The parish council has, in its limited way, tried to mitigate the problem by providing individual tablets – not the ones you take orally but the IT type—to each of the parish councillors. They were ostensibly purchased to ensure members were online via their specific parish council e-mail address thus avoiding the need to use their personal IT equipment and e-mail address.

From recent governmental an-

nouncements it would seem this situation is to continue for a few months yet which in itself puts the holding of the annual parish meeting into some doubt. It would normally be held by Bleadon in the month of April – it was abandoned last April – however legally a council has until the 31 May to hold such a meeting. Watch this space!

Elsewhere in this edition I have endeavoured to explain the process by which the council's Budget for 2021-2022 was formulated and as a consequence what the level of the Precept will be. Although it has been fixed at the same figure as last year, i.e. £50,000, because of the lower level of Band D properties in the village from last year, there will be a very slight increase over 2020-2021.

The councillors were of the view that they should off-set the deficit budget by withdrawing the difference from current reserves.

Members have set out some interesting and challenging aspirations that should come to fruition over the next 18 months. They are keeping a very close watch on how North Somerset Highways is planning to make improvements to the A370 both at the

Catherine's Inn end of the village as well as Bridge Garage end.

The council is also strongly urging North Somerset Planning to refuse planning permission in respect to the proposed developments on Bridgewater Road and the junction of Bridge Road and Coronation Road.

We will wait to see if they have noted the concerns of both the local residents (105 objections currently) and that of the parish council.

Lastly, we now have a full complement of councillors namely nine. We have not been in that position for a long time.

Their details are here in the current edition of the Village News and on the website with full profiles.

The parish council endeavors wherever and whenever it can with the help of the website provider namely Webglu to keep the website fresh and up-to date.

If you cannot find what you are looking for or for argument's sake the venue of the next Council meeting unwittingly is not set out then do please make contact with me immediately.



Bleadon in the sunshine. Picture credit Graham Goff

Looking on the bright side—editor's column

So my dear readers we meet again and in, what I hope, will be a prosperous and more positive year than the one which we have just left behind!

I also write this on the day both my mother and future mother-in-law received their messages from the NHS inviting them to have their long-awaited vaccination!



It is truly tremendous and mind-boggling the events of the past year. I will be celebrating my 26th birthday this month—one which my boyfriend reminds me will take me one year closer to my 30s...You can imagine how well that went down dear readers—but I digress.

Celebrating my birthday will be somewhat bittersweet this year. You see, my birthday is on March 23 which, if you may recall, was the day Mr Johnson address the nation and told people we 'must' stay at home and non-essential businesses must close.

I'm not going to lie, when I woke up on my birthday morning last year, I didn't think a year on we would still be dealing with COVID, but here I am about to celebrate my second lockdown birthday.

But, I must look on the bright side. Here are a few other positives to take from the past 12 months:

- THREE vaccines were approved to fight against coronavirus.
- A 100-year-old man named Captain Sir Tom Moore raised £38.9m for the NHS and won the nation's hearts. (Rest in peace Sir Tom)
- Kamala Harris became the first female, black, South Asian US vice president.

- Due to movement restrictions and a slowdown of social and economic activity, air quality improved in many cities.
- We re-established our priorities and focused on family.
- We remembered how lucky we are to have the NHS.
- Africa was declared free of wild polio after four years without a reported case.

And really, these are just a few points. I really could go on and on! I only hope when I write to you in June, I will be writing to you not from my study in my home but from a beer garden, in the sunshine with a pint in my hand!

Take care readers and continue to be patient, the end is in sight and we just have one final push.

Be sensible and smart and we will have our lives back and be able to kiss and hug our loved ones soon.

Ellie Young

Census day 2021 is fast approaching

Households across North Somerset will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey which gives North Somerset Council the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

Deputy National Statistician for the Office of National Statistics (ONS), Iain Bell, said: "A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in

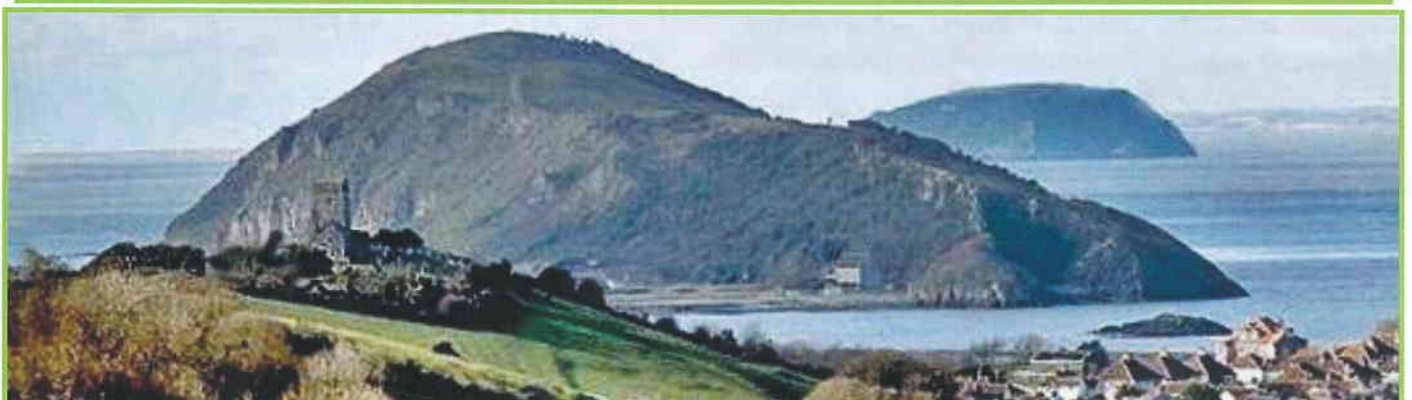
the places where they are needed most.

"This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That is why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them."

Census day will be on March 21, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March. Paper copies will be available on request.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity.

For more information, visit [census.gov.uk](https://www.census.gov.uk)



Where are we now and where are we going?

by Rev'd Tim Erridge

The last year has reshaped so many parts of our lives, often in ways which are still troubling and uncertain! Bleadon Covid Help came together informally, but with real energy and care during the first lockdown.

Many new friendships were made, much help was given and collective inspiration discovered. A WhatsApp group was set up and it pinged away repeatedly every day. The group was a hive of activity and a real encouragement to both helpers and those in need of help.

As summer came and shielding stopped a calm descended on the phone lines and on WhatsApp! Less help was needed, but also helpers and those in need had formed friendships and simply sorted things between themselves. Good support still happening, but in a different way.

In Autumn sadly infection rates went up again, WhatsApp woke up a little, but still most help was organised directly between those in need and helpers.

So what will help us now? As we saw in April 2020, we are the sort of community which rises to the need for help informally and in a good way.

Maybe we just need to see and trust it going forward? Or will it be helpful to have some sort of enabling organisation as we go forward? Throughout the life of the Bleadon Covid Help, a small enabling group has met on Zoom every month or so, simply to put heads together and try to notice if things were falling through gaps or if new difficulties or opportunities were emerging.

Christmas galvanised some members of this group to reach out to those in our community who live alone or in especially challenging situations and offer a small greeting, in the hope it would be a little ray of sunshine at this difficult time.

In the week before Christmas we delivered

small pots of daffodils to more than 60 people who had been nominated as those who would particularly benefit from a little extra encouragement. Those of us who took them round were very touched by the responses we got from the recipients. Clearly this small gesture was deeply appreciated by all who we had a chance to speak to briefly. It was a real privilege to be part of this little bit of sharing.

As we thought about what had happened with the daffodils, we noticed some people in our community who need help will readily pick up the phone and ask, but there are quite a number of others who stoically cope, are very touched by small gestures when they are given, but tend to keep quiet and very easily slip out of view, especially as we all continue to socially distance and avoid going out!

The enablers have also noticed when we get together and simply listen to what has been happening for each other and what we have noticed in our community, it is as if we bring different bits of a jigsaw to the table, and a fuller picture forms as we talk.

So far the enablers have been members of Bleadon WI, Bleadon Church and Bleadon Parish Council. We have recently made new connections with Weston Town Council and are looking to draw in others, especially representatives of different local groups, as we seek to sensitively nourish our shared community life.

If you know of local people who are currently in need of support, please ring 01934 811 008 for Bleadon Village or 07787460843 for Bleadon Hill.

If you or your local group would like to join in with the enabling conversations, please contact Tim on revtimerridge@gmail.com or 01934 815 404. Let's hope that the coming months bring relief to us all from some of the difficulties we have faced recently, but let's also do all we can together to help that happen

Yours with huge thanks to everyone who has helped others in our community in recent months.



Precept for 2021-22 explained

by Bruce Poole

One of the many dictionary definitions for the word 'precept' states it as being a Command or Direction meant as a rule of action or conduct to another Authority.

In this case the process is whereby the town or parish council (Bleadon Parish Council) 'directs' the higher authority (North Somerset Council) as to the sum it requires financially to run its affairs for a year.

Currently there is no cap set by central government as to what can be requested annually although councils clearly need to be recognisant of not seeking more than is actually necessary. It is known as being the only tax raised locally and spent locally.

In the autumn of each year the council is required to put its budget together for the following financial year. This happened in December last when various budget headings were closely looked into in order to ascertain where savings might be made yet at the same time making adequate provision for certain aspirational projects the parish council is currently considering.

The required 2021-2022 Precept is therefore set on those deliberations and the decision as to the level of need based on a Band D property was fixed at the January

Council Meeting.

The district council sets a figure known as Local Council Tax Element for properties in each Band (£ per property) for which there are eight bands namely A to H. The main Band is Band D which is set as the mean figure for all of the calculations, last year being £90.48.

Bleadon Parish Council sought a Precept of £50,000 in 2020-2021 which based then on 552.6 Band D properties in Bleadon. £50,000 divided by 552.6 equated to £90.48 which was the sum each Band D Household paid last year.

This sum would have been specified on your rates invoice for last year plus of course the charges made by other agencies such the District Council Fire Service and the Police.

The parish council's Budget for 2021-22, the details of which can be viewed elsewhere on the council's website, was resolved to be fixed at £68,637. Deduct the small amount of income the parish council receives in Newsletter Sponsorship and Allotment Rents of some £2,400 the net figure is £66,237. Conscious that generally speaking residents have suffered in many ways through the COVID pandemic it was decided not to seek an increase in the Precept for 2021-22.

Because the number of Band D houses in this financial period is less by nine properties the amount required from each Band D property to raise £50,000 will be £92.00 an increase of £1.52 or 1.7%.

It is recognised by the Parish Council that although they wished to have a nil precept for the reasons stated there still remains the question of making up the difference from the stated Budget of £66,237 and the expected Precept of £50,000 a difference of £16,237 from somewhere.

Local authorities are banned from producing a deficit budget. The council earlier this year applied for a Small Business Grant on the basis that it owned a rateable asset in the village i.e the public toilets and was successful in securing the sum of £10,000.

Part of this money will/has been used to provide IT equipment for each Councillor so that they might fully participate in now needed Zoom Meetings. The shortfall will also be supported by drawing down reserves.

The council were advised to at least seek a small increase in the 21-22 Precept if only to cover inflation and the cost of living increase but for the reasons stated in this article the Council chose not to do so. The keeping of either a low or nil precept increase should not be taken as being the norm going forward.

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Wildlife crime committed as dead ducks found

by Ellie Young and Kirsten Hemingway

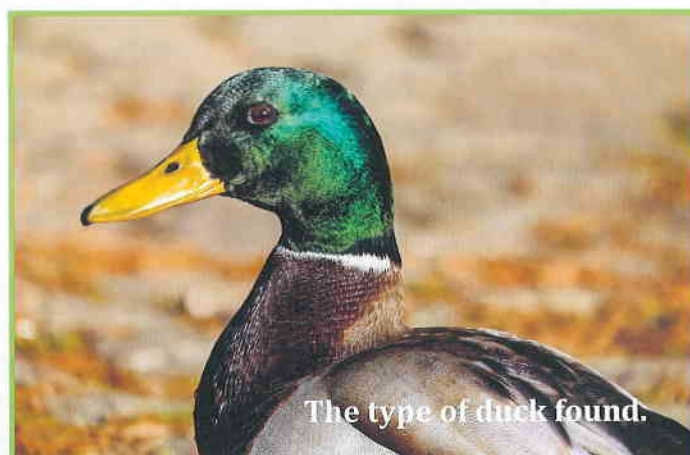
There were more than 40 dead mallard ducks and a number of pheasants found at Wayacre Drove near the entrance of the Wessex Water Works in February which has sparked a number of concerns.

It is not immediately obvious how they died but the initial worry was that they were poisoned, which has worried the parish council and Wessex Water and they have immediately raised the alarm with Bleadon in Bloom's Kirsten Hemingway to protect the water vole population in Bleadon.

On closer inspection, the birds appeared to have been tied together with bailing twine and were most likely not killed on site but dumped in the location. At this point in time, it is not clear what happened but there is a police investigation underway. The police suspect the people who dumped them

there had been unsuccessful in selling them or that a shoot simply had no need for them. Wildlife crimes are now being prosecuted and taken very seriously.

The RSPB has now removed the 42 mallards and pheasants. Please listen out for any talk of people selling ducks or any talk at all relating to this and inform Kirsten Hemingway on writer@kirstenhemingway.co.uk so she can keep the police and other authority abreast of the situation.



The type of duck found.

Seven-year wait finally over for bus shelter

by Ellie Young

The seven-year wait for a new bus shelter in Celtic Way has finally come to an end after Bleadon Parish Council passed plans to carry out work on the shelter at the end of last year and in January.

The parish council committed £1,039.72 to the rebuild and the shelter is now open and is already being used by parishioners.

The shelter collapsed after being battered by strong winds and soaked in the February storms of 2014.

The shelter was blown away, utility poles felled and the roof was ripped off and drains overflowed.

The former shelter had been moved more than 12 years ago from its original location at the junction of Bridge and Bleadon Roads and the council was awarded more than £1,200 in an insurance settlement.

Cllr I D Clarke, who has been campaigning for the shelter to be repaired since 2014, said: "Both as a councilor and as a parishioner, I have been requesting the parish council to rebuild it.

"I am pleased that an agreement was reached and that a replacement is now in place, but understandably I am not so pleased about the amount of time it took to reach this agreement.



The new shelter.

Neighbourhood Watch and community safety

by Ann Davies

I'm sure you will agree we live in a beautiful setting which feels safe whether at home alone, walking through the village or using the many public foot-paths over the surrounding hills and along the river.

The monthly Police Beat Report supports the fact that criminal incidents are few and far between in Bleadon but of course, this doesn't mean we should become complacent and 'drop our guard'.

It is still important to ensure your property, garden shed, garage, car etc are secure and that you are vigilant when out and about.

Participating in the Neighbourhood Watch



Scheme (NHW) is a proven deterrent to criminal activity. NHW co-ordinators have changed over the years and there isn't, as far as I am aware, a register of the co-ordinators and areas covered. To this end, it would be greatly appreciated if the cur-

rent NHW co-ordinators could drop me a line with your contact details and which road/area you cover.

Likewise if you are not in a NHW road/area and are interested in joining the scheme, please let me know and our beat officer, PCSO Mike Benfield will be happy to help set you up.

Due to the pandemic restrictions, the regular beat surgeries are suspended but PCSO Mike Benfield can still be contacted by ringing 101. I recently attended the Bleadon Covid Help group Zoom meeting.

The volunteers have done sterling work since the first lockdown, helping our vulnerable neighbours with shopping, prescription collections etc and chatting on the 'phone with people who need and want contact with another person.

I know the safety on the A370 is of great concern to most, if not all, of us. It is anticipated the speed limits from East Brent to The Toll Road will be reduced by 10mph respectively in the near future.

The parish council continues to press North Somerset Council for the traffic lights to be installed at the A370/Bleadon Road/Accommodation Road junctions.

News from Avon and Somerset Constabulary

by PCSO Michael Benfield

Your local policing team are working as normal during the third lockdown and are still available, if needed, on the non-emergency number (101) and the emergency number (999).

If you do need to speak to us in person we will still attend your home address while working with social distancing guidelines and other Covid measures.

We understand these are difficult times for everyone but if we keep to government guidelines and keep up with social distancing we will come out of this together.

Mike

BLEADON NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

BEAT REPORT

Calls received: 8



Road-related: 1

Covid breach: 1

Abandoned 999 calls: 1

Suspicious person/vehicle: 1

Concern for welfare: 1



Mai Wong
Neighbourhood Constable



Kayley Anderson
PCSO



Phil Rudden
Neighbourhood Sergeant



Michael Benfield
PCSO

A HISTORY OF OUR VILLAGE

Prior to 1800 education for poorer children was limited to isolated charity schools. During the course of the 19th century an institution called the National Society set about establishing a school in every parish of England and Wales.

These schools were usually next to the parish church and the system of education was a simple one and based around the teachings of the Church of England.

Our school in Bleadon was built in about 1854 and in its time served the needs of the local children until they were 10 years old. Later the school leaving age was raised to 12 years but here as in many a rural community a lot of the older children were taken out of lessons in order to fulfil labouring duties on the land, after all this was a farming area and education came a poor second at haymaking or harvest.

Photos taken at the time 1910 to 1912 show that the school catered for about 20 to 25 boys and girls who were divided into three classes.



Here are some of the memories of those who attended the school in the 1930s and the 1940s:

Sylvia Bird, now sadly deceased, dictated this account a few years ago. She attended in the 1930s. Sylvia remembered arriving at school on her first day to find a cloakroom on the right and there were pegs on which you hung your coat.

An archway led into the room on the right, and opposite the door was a big window and to the left was the teacher's desk, a blackboard and a round black stove.

Everyone sat at small tables and the teacher was Mrs Bennett, who every morning called the register and read out any important news, for instance if



someone had a baby brother or sister or was poorly, that sort of thing, then it was down to work.

We learned the alphabet by copying it from the blackboard, and later we progressed to writing our names and short words. Next we copied numbers and recited our tables in a singsong fashion and we all learnt to add; we also learnt about nature and heard stories from the Bible. We played outside games with beanbags and hoops and every morning we were given a free bottle of milk.

Once we were older we moved into the big room and here our teacher was to be Mrs Cam Parker who was the wife of the village blacksmith. We now had desks with lift up lids and inkwells, pens and pink blotting paper but we only used these on special occasions and usually ended up with ink everywhere.

Things became more complicated with spelling, punctuation, taking away, multiplying and dividing. There was history, geography and nature study, learning about trees, flowers and animals. Mr Maunsell brought a dead badger into the school playground and it was the first time we had seen one close up.

Eventually we moved up to the top class with Mrs Bell who was the headmistress as well as the teacher and now life got even more complicated with longer words, grammar, big numbers, long multiplication and division, fractions and decimals and there was more history and geography.

All through the school we did tests and exams but then we had to take the 11 plus. If you passed you moved to the grammar school, if not you move to Saint John's school, both in Weston.

As it was a church school we had regular visits from the Rector and we also had a yearly visit from a photographer who took pictures of the groups of

SCHOOL IN THE 20TH CENTURY

children. Then there was the school doctor and the nurse who came from Uphill to check our heads for nits. We also had to visit the dentist and we walked through the churchyard to see him in what is now the front room of three Church Cottages.

At Christmas time we had to take a brown paper carrier bag to school and we were given oranges by Mr Ruck who lived at Wonderstone. Best of all there was Mr Over from The Mount who visited us throughout the year; we lined up in School Lane and Mr Over and sometimes Mr Clogg would hand out perhaps an apple or a punnet of strawberries, cherry plums or a lettuce, whatever was available. I don't think we appreciated how lucky we were."



We were seated at double desks and everybody had a hinge desktop with a storage space underneath and their own inkwell. Most work was done in pencil but pen and ink were always used for the best work. Girls with pigtailed often had their long hair dipped into the inkwell of the person sitting behind, this of course led to trouble but the headmistress usually knew who was at fault!

Looking at the school from the road you only saw the classrooms, with two paths one on each side leading to the toilet block, but behind the classrooms and between the pathways was the home and garden of the headmistress and her family.

The school being a church school, once a week the Rector Rev. Powys Davis came in to teach us all the creed and the catechism; my family were Baptists and I was told it if my mother wrote a letter I could be excused that lesson, but my mother refused. "You might learn something useful" she said!

All the children including me were glad when it came to Pentecost because we went to church for a short service and then had the rest of the day off.

Sadly in the early 1960s it was deemed that there were insufficient children in Bleadon to warrant the school's continuation and it was closed. The pupils at the time were all transferred to the school at Uphill.



Ray Green came to live in Bleadon during the War as it was deemed a safer place to be than Bristol. He attended school from 1940 - 1943.

After about three weeks of living in Bleadon it was decided that I should attend the village school. Previously I had been in a big school with about 1,000 children and 20 classes so it was quite a change to be in Bleadon School which had three classes and probably only 30 to 40 children. The entrance was from School Lane into the main playground, then there was a porch into the building with two classrooms, a larger room on the left with two classes, and a smaller room on the right with one class of younger children.

The headmistress was Mrs Bell who took the older children in the bigger room and Mrs Parker took the intermediate group in the other part of the big room. I was placed in the class taken by Mrs Bell and while I found getting around the school quite easy the standard of education was very different; I found everyone else was way ahead of me and I got very upset about this. Mrs Bell the teacher told me not to cry but to just ask and she would help me.



Beat the lockdown blues at Shiplate Farm

Adam Cole

Fishing is one of the few fun things you can still do during lockdown, and there's no better place for it than Shiplate Farm Fishery, at the foot of the Mendips near Bleadon and easily accessible via the M5. The four lakes in

this tranquil setting next to the River Axe are ideal for outdoor exercise: thanks to tireless work by the Angling Trust, the government has agreed to keep fisheries open to promote mental health and wellbeing.

In pre-pandemic times, Shiplate Farm Fishery drew anglers from across the West Country and the Midlands, winning unanimous five-star reviews on Google. Its new owner plans to make it one of the best fisheries in the country, with more pegs on offer, a busy events calendar and exclusive fishing on the Axe itself.

There's also a new fishery manager, John Hawkins – who learned his skills at Shiplate Farm Fishery as a junior before studying Fish Management at college. He's determined to reel in fishermen of all ages. He said: "From January, I will be starting a junior section on a Saturday morning. They can get an introduction to fishing, with bait and tackle supplied. Spaces will be limited, so please call ahead.

"In March, the fishery is booked for a fishing festival, with accommodation and food included. This is the biggest sport in the UK and we are putting together a list of exciting events at Shiplate, including a festi-



Logan Crowley, aged 10, catching his personal best at Shiplate Farm

val, competitions and matches."

At the same time, the fishery offers the chance to escape the bustle of everyday life: 'If you simply want to sit quietly on the bank and fish, then you are equally welcome.'

The lakes are on the bank of the Axe, and Shiplate Farm Fishery will be offering five exclusive pegs on this unspoilt stretch of the river, where big predators lurk.

John added: "Every year, local clubs fish the river and some of the largest pike are landed. We have an exclusive stretch of the Axe available to our clients and we will prepare the pegs in good time for the pike season."

The lakes are open at the moment, but pegs must be booked in advance. Future events are subject to Covid-19 restrictions, but Shiplate Farm Fishery is confident that the lakes will be busy in March and throughout the year. If you have any questions about the fishery and its facilities, please call John on 07895852162 or visit www.shiplatefarmfishery.co.uk.

07895 852162
www.shiplatefarmfishery.co.uk

Open 7.30am-7pm (or dark).
Prebook only

A peaceful paradise at the foot of the Mendip Hills, Shiplate Farm Fishery has four substantial lakes offering idyllic fishing for both beginners and master class.

SHIPLATE
FARM FISHERY

“Thank you for braving the elements to see us”

Alistair and Charlotte House

Despite being in the middle of the 29th Lockdown (well it does feel that way doesn't it?!) the shop is very busy and being well supported. Thank you to all our wonderful customers who brave the elements and valiantly queue, sometimes in atrocious weather, we appreciate you so much!

We're well within the recommended limit for Covid-19 safety, so we've extended the numbers to 3 in the main body of the shop and 1 customer at the butchery. Home deliveries to those isolating or shielding have dwindled, but we're still there for those who need us.

You may have noticed a spectacular canopy over the fridges, giving the shop a French market flavour?! We are so lucky to have the talented Ellen in our team. This theme will extend into future developments...we're soon going to be expanding by opening a delicatessen and bakery in the spring. Hot snacks have returned in the form of locally made sausage rolls, with pizza slices on the way. More news to follow soon.

The Butchery is very busy, and we now stock meat from several more local producers. It really is delicious, and if you believe in 'field to fork' you can trace every step of our meat. Barry and Jay regularly put together options for your evening meal, (currently

making turkey stir fry packs) so if you fancy spicing up your evening meal, or are looking for inspiration, look no further!

Our eco-friendly milk vending service with reusable glass bottles is steadily growing. Chew Valley Dairies deliver daily and we now supply their cream and eggs, so do come and sample this style of milk purchase if you haven't yet tried it out. The milk is a fraction cheaper than milk in plastic bottles, and we believe that this encourages customers to buy more sustainably.

Cut flowers and homemade cakes are very popular, you'll want to grab them when they are first delivered midweek. We also have fresh bread and cakes delivered daily from Astills. Do place your orders as these sell out fast! (Bread ordered for a specific day must be collected by 2pm on the day, or will be put out for sale). We have extended the range of greeting cards and stationery which we hope meet all your needs.

Staff-wise, we are still growing. Joining existing Post Masters Manshu, Rachael, Michelle and Amanda is Georgia, who has moved along behind the counter from shop work to Post Office Clerk. In the shop joining Kelly, Jaz and Luke, we have taken on Nikki, Mia and Oli.

Whether you are a seasoned customer or have never visited us before, we offer a warm welcome, friendly service and great produce.

The show MUST go on, and this time over Zoom!

by Peter Gibbon

Members of the Bleadon Players have traded the stage for their living rooms over the various lockdowns and has now 'Zoomed' their first production.

The play was called Zoom which was performed online during the first week of January. Four scenes were run over four days to tie in with what would normally have been Players' panto week.

The characters get together at the beginning of lockdown to rehearse a radio play where the virtual audience saw them over a course of 10 weeks, with hair getting longer, staying in pyjamas, drinking by 11am, home cooking while they rehearse.

"We can't hear you", "you are on mute" are familiar sayings this past year and, of course, dogs barking while the characters are online.

If you missed it, it is available on the Bleadon Players Facebook page via YouTube if anyone wishes to watch it in one go. Bleadon Players are now considering a sequel and possibly a trequel so watch this space.





A Christmas like no other!

by Rev'd
Tim Erridge

This year we celebrated Christmas in ways we would never have imagined until recently. Usually there are lots and lots of people together in the church for Carol services, and the Crib service and Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve, but this year none of those hap-

pened in the building!

The few services which could happen in the building had to happen with no singing and everyone at least two metres apart, which in our building means we can easily be full once we have 20 people, if they all live in separate households! We held an online Christingle and uploaded a recorded Carol Service.

We were able to sing Carols outside at 11am on Christmas morning, every one was very good at keeping appropriately distant, the Churchyard was beautifully decorated with baubles and it was such an encouragement that so many of you came and joined in.

This year we did celebrate Christmas, and whilst we did miss so much of what we would usually do, we made new discoveries too. I want to thank everyone who supported us and our community's celebration of Christmas this year.

When all the usual routines are taken away and everything has to be done in a new way, and quickly, there is a lot of work to do to make the new things happen. I especially want to thank all those who took on jobs that became bigger than they looked at the start! You stuck at it and we got there! Thank you so much.

Easter will be with us soon! What will that look like this year? As yet it is too soon to say!

In the meantime we seek to be faithful and encourage each other. We have started using zoom in a new way and continue to support each other using email, Facebook and the phone. We also continue to support 'Bleadon Covid Help' and many individuals in our community.

We look forward to a time, hopefully not too far off, when we can gather groups together again and celebrate with less restrictions.

We are here for all of you in whatever ways we can be. Please do get in touch if you would like to.

At Christmas we often read from the opening words of John's Gospel: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it". As we continue to trust and do what we can, please hold the light with us or ask us to hold it with you.

May the peace of Jesus be upon us all, Tim

Road safety

Dear editor, last year's fatal accident outside the Anchor rightly caused widespread concern, with everyone wanting more done to reduce accidents on the A370 through Bleadon, of which there have been far too many over the years I have lived here (33). It now seems likely that speed limits will be lowered at last, which is simple and relatively inexpensive and benefits all road users.

Traffic lights have been called for, which would be really effective but be much more expensive, even for North Somerset, and are almost certainly not going to appear this year. I note our parish council have offered to make a contribution, with which I do not disagree, but it would not be enough to make the difference between the installation going ahead or being deferred.

What is missing from all this is consideration of the situation at our other A370 junction by Bridge Garage, which

has also been the scene of many accidents, some of them fatal, and where no safety measures have ever been installed. There are no street lights and no traffic islands, whereas by the Anchor pedestrians and cyclists can cross safely and under a good light. The contrast is stark.

I have suggested to all the Parish Council that the contribution they can make for the benefit of numerous village residents is to provide a traffic island in the region of the bus stops near the Bridge Road junction.

To catch the bus to Weston people, often elderly like me, have to cross the A370. To enjoy the walk along the river, as many more residents are doing nowadays, the same applies. Think how difficult it is for parents with small children or walkers with dogs. The council has the means to make a really significant improvement to village life through this simple, affordable measure.

I write from experience. From

1990 to 1999 I was a councillor, during which time the Parish twice spent money on improvements that the district council would not fund.

The first example was street lights. All the lights between Bridge Road and Celtic Way/Shiplate Road, plus the one in School Lane and the one at the top end of Shiplate Road, were installed by the Parish Council over several years. The other was speed and weight limits on our roads, where neither the district council nor the police were in favour. All the costs of administration and signage were met by the Parish. In both cases I consider it money well spent and am glad I took part in those decisions.

I urge the present council to take the same approach to this issue, particularly as it has cash reserves much greater than we had in the nineties, and also hope that residents who read this will take the same view and make it clear to the Council.

Les Masters

Look out for hidden shoes

by Jo Jones

These three shoes/boots were found more than 20 years ago in the thatch of our Bleadon cottage—the pair are very small, perhaps a child's size two?

Old shoes were commonly hidden around the house to ward off evil spirits and bad luck. They were thought to retain the spirit of the wearer. In previous centuries, it was a live cat!

The well worn and much repaired state of the shoes is evidence of many users and a hard life walking to school and playing on Bleadon's rough lanes.

These shoes have now been added to the Northampton Shoe Museum Concealed Shoe Index, which by 2021 contained more than 1,900 reports of discoveries, mostly from Britain and almost

half from the 19th century.

The overwhelming majority have been worn and many have been repaired. Most finds are of single shoes, about half of them belonging to children.

The custom appears to have died out some time during the 20th century.

Has anyone else found similar items hidden in old properties?



Planning

To the editor, I write of astonishment and unbelievability that a local developer will keep on trying to overrule what a government inspector has said about these sites.

The fields flood regularly and they are part of the Somerset Levels and hold many forms of wildlife and flight paths for various species of bat.

It will also increase the traffic problems and parking on Bleadon Road. I have put in two further objections to the planning as a resident and encourage other parishioners to do the same. This is what the fields should look like...



Dave Sharman

by Mark Frisby

Bleadon Photographic Group

re-located to the village 10 years ago and, like everyone else, found 2020 the most turbulent year in our 72-year history.

Just 12 months ago the group were placed 3rd, out of 56 clubs, in the prestigious Western Counties Photographic Federation digital competition. Then as we were still celebrating our success, we were hit with the first COVID lockdown.

Not to be deterred we continued to welcome new members and discovered the wonders of Zoom. Our normal monthly programme

Bleadon Photographic Group

was re-jigged and competitions continued with digital entries only.

Many members used lockdown time wisely and a few of our group have gained awards and publication in national and international competitions. The group is determining to maintain continuity with a few tweaks to comply with ongoing regulations.

As photographers we appreciate we are so lucky to live in an area which offers so many beautiful opportunities on our doorstep which allows us to follow our creative streak without breaking any regulations.

The past 12 months have made us all realise how fortunate we are to have a lovely and well-equipped headquarters to meet up at.

We are a friendly bunch who are passionate about what we do, but still find time to enjoy some 'dad' jokes (mom jokes also welcome). As always we are still open to new members, so no matter what your knowledge level with a camera, you are welcome to join us and further your skill set. Join with a friend, you can't say you don't have the time: enquiries.bpg@hotmail.co.uk





Zoe's Recipes

Zoe Solomon from the Bleadon Café shares her culinary expertise with Bleadon News readers with three delicious delights.

Cheddar quiche with bacon, onion and roasted red peppers

Ingredients

600g block shortcrust pastry
 Plain flour for dusting
 2tbsp olive oil
 1 large onion, roughly chopped
 12 rashers smoked bacon, sliced into lardons
 6 large free-range eggs, lightly beaten
 300ml double cream
 1tbsp Dijon mustard
 125g mature cheddar, grated
 190g jar roasted red peppers, drained and sliced into strips
 75g semi-dried tomatoes, plus a handful to decorate
 Fresh flatleaf parsley, leaves chopped

Method

1. Preheat a baking sheet in the oven to 220°C / Fan 200°C / gas 7.

2. Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured surface and use to line a 23cm round loose-bottomed cake tin and prick with a fork and pop in the freezer for 30 minutes.
3. Line the pastry case with baking paper and baking beans or rice and bake on the sheet for 15 minutes.
4. Remove paper and beans and bake for 5-10 minutes until crisp and golden.
5. Remove from the oven and turn temperature to 180°C / Fan 160°C / gas 4.
6. Meanwhile, cook the onion in the oil over a low heat for 10 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and put to one-side.
7. Increase the heat, add the bacon and fry until crisp and set aside with onion.



8. In a bowl, mix the eggs, cream, mustard and cheddar and stir well.
9. Scatter the onion, bacon, peppers and chopped tomatoes over the tart case.
10. Pour over the cheddar cream and sprinkle with parsley.
11. Dot with the whole tomatoes and bake for 50 minutes until golden brown. If it browns too quickly, cover with foil.

Crepe egg brownies

350g dark chocolate, broken into squares
 250g butter
 250g light brown sugar
 3 large eggs
 1tsp vanilla extract
 1tsp baking powder
 100g plain flour
 30g cocoa powder
 8 creme eggs



Method

1. Pre-heat your oven to 180°C / Fan 160°C / gas 4 and grease and line a 12"x9" traybake tin.
2. Melt the dark chocolate and butter together in a pan on a low heat. When fully melted, stir together and remove from the heat and leave to cool for five minutes.

3. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs and light brown sugar until frothy.
4. Add the chocolate mixture to the egg mixture, whisking constantly as you pour it in.
5. Add the plain flour, cocoa powder, vanilla extract and baking powder. Whisk in until you can't see anymore flour.
6. Pour the batter into the lined traybake tin and bake for 20 minutes.
7. While it is baking, cut the creme eggs in half using a hot knife.
8. Take the brownies out of the oven, press the creme eggs into the batter, then put them back in the oven for 10 minutes.
9. Let the brownies cool completely in the tin before removing and slicing up.

Risotto balls

2 eggs
 1/3 cup grated parmesan
 1tbsp dried parsley
 1/4 tsp freshly ground pepper
 1 quart water
 1 cup uncooked rice
 1 1/2 cup dried bread crumbs
 2 cups olive oil

Method

1. Whisk together eggs, cheese, parsley, pepper and 1tsp salt.
2. Cover and refrigerate.
3. Pour water and 1tsp salt into a large saucepan and bring to boil.
4. Stir in the rice and reduce heat to low.
5. Cook rice until water is absorbed.
6. Remove from heat and slowly pour in the egg mixture and mix rapidly to avoid eggs scrambling.
7. Allow rice to cool for one hour.
8. Pour breadcrumbs into a pile
9. Dampen hands and roll rice mixture into one inch balls then coat each one with breadcrumbs.
10. Deep fry balls six at each time until golden brown in colour.

‘Thank you so much’ - Bleadon Café owner to start new chapter at Lympsham Cricket Club

by Ellie Young

One of Bleadon’s shining business stars has bid farewell to her café after five years and looks ahead to a new adventure in a nearby village.

Zoe Solomon, owner of the Bleadon Café, thanked her customers for their patronage as she closes the café with her tenancy coming to an end.

But it isn’t goodbye forever from the businesswoman as Zoe has now secured a new home at Lympsham Sports Ground, which she hopes to have up and running in March.

Zoe said: “My tenancy was coming to an end in July so it was sadly time to find somewhere else.

“I have loved meeting, talking to and serving my lovely customers in Bleadon and I hope they will take the short stroll up the road to visit me in Lympsham.

“I have loved every minute and have learned

so much and Bleadon will always hold a special place in my heart.”

With the move, Bleadon Café will be rebranded as the Lympsham Pavilion Cafe but Zoe will still be at the helm serving up delicious homemade food from the heart.



Bleadon Cafe is moving!
Zoe will be opening for business in March 2021.

Salads
Sandwiches
Baguettes
Breakfasts
Cream tea
Burgers
Fish n' chip takeaways
Coffee
Tea
Hot chocolate

Lympsham Sports Ground
Lympsham Road
Lympsham
BS24 0DN

Coronation Halls

Along with almost everything else, the Coronation Hall closed last March when the first lockdown came into force. The Management Committee of village volunteers that runs the Hall worked hard over the summer to carry out a risk assessment and drawn up protocols for its safe use once we were allowed to open again.

This included marking up the two halls into two metre squares to facilitate social distancing, provision of hand sanitising facilities within the Hall and a set of Covid specific conditions that hirers must agree to adhere to when using the building.

The Hall did reopen on 19th October for those hirers who were able to meet safely and a number of local groups did indeed restart. Unfortunately, Lockdown two then intervened and we had to close our doors again. We had hoped to open up again in time for Christmas but that of course never materialised.

The day-to-day running of the Hall is managed by a small but dedicated group of local residents who aim to ensure that Bleadon continues to have an excellent community hub for a wide range of clubs and other activities. We do need to recruit more volunteers to help in what is not an onerous commitment.

We generally meet monthly and would welcome interest from any Bleadon resident who would like to contribute their life skills and enthusiasm in running and improving the facility. The Hall cannot continue to play a key role in village life without this local support. Please speak to Betty (812183) or Kevin (811267) if you would like a chat about helping to run your local Hall.

Once we are able to open up again, we will be well prepared to welcome local residents back to the Hall and we very much look forward to seeing you once again.

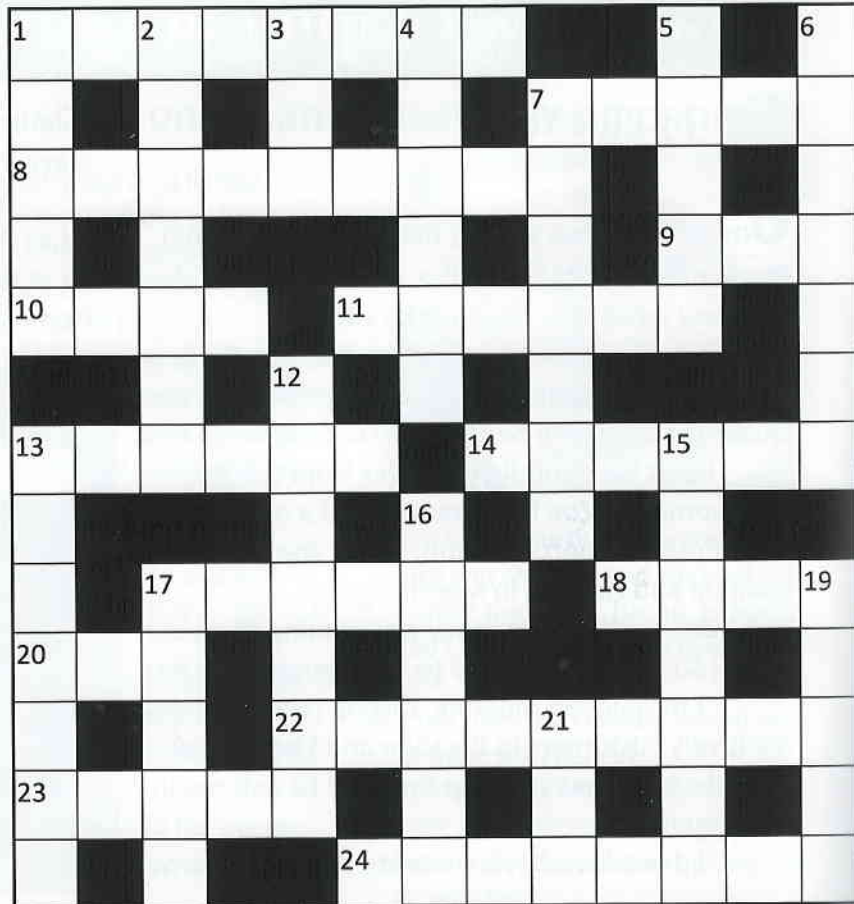
George's crossword

ACROSS

1. Hill to the north, heel and leg required (8)
7. Consent to Eastern gear (5)
8. Wagnerian hero held a pre-war defence line (9)
9. Born in needy circumstances (3)
10. God returns in pain (4)
11. Mighty good man mistaken we hear (6)
13. Men did this as carers perhaps (6)
14. Steer car to the left? Rubbish! (6)
- 17 and 18. Asian society—more strength to your arm (6, 4)
20. Queen's Arms perhaps in new surroundings (3)
22. Stage act I berate perhaps (9)
23. Should hot gout be confused (5)
24. South mountain, highest and hardest (8)

DOWN

1. Has Lawrence made speed? (5)
2. Story on chicken feathers? Relax (3,4)
3. Little person has a bit of an angel face (3)
4. Dazzles when George Scott initially covers dressing (6)
5. Bear second-class jewellery (5)
6. Torment—I have bled about it (7)
7. Postpone publicity for short trip (7)



12. Decision of opera composer cut short (7)
13. Wise men not on French pre-war defence line (7)
15. Bleadon perhaps, posh house over upcoming example (7)
16. Ha, less confusion—bother! (6)
17. I, Jones, enter as landscaper (5)
19. Lamb's call—served on messy table (5)
21. Dessert in plastic egg cup (3)

Ellie's sudoku

1	3		4	6				
		8				3	6	9
7			8					
		3	5	2				4
	2			1		9		5
		7		4	3		8	1
					6	4	2	
3	9	6		5	4	8	1	
	7				1			



Riddle me this?

Riddle one:

What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it?

Riddle two:

The person who makes it has no need for it; the person who buys it has no use for it. The person who uses it can neither see nor feel it. What is it?

Riddle three:

With pointed fangs I sit and wait; with piercing force I crunch out fate; grabbing victims, proclaiming might; physically joining with a single bite. What am I?

Ratty is back in Bleadon

Photo by Bill Hewitt

by Kate Jones

There has been an increased interest in these endearing creatures during our lock down walks. We are so lucky to have them here. Here is an updated version of an article published a few years ago: Mole's dear friend 'Ratty' of *Wind in the Willows* fame was in fact a water vole, and they have been having a hard time over the past century.

Water voles used to be found in nearly every waterway in England, Scotland and Wales, but the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) now estimate that they have been lost in up to 90% of these sites.

Threats include habitat loss and fragmentation from unsympathetic waterside management, predation by non-native mink and pollution. In a new 'Red List' of UK mammals, the Mammal Society classes them as 'endangered' alongside beaver, red squirrel, and grey long-eared bats.

Water voles are a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and efforts are being made across the UK to halt their decline. Several reintroduction programmes are underway with an active National Water Vole Monitoring Programme coordinated by PTES. Water voles are fully protected in UK law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and their habitats must be considered in planning applications.

Under this act, it is a legal offence to intentionally damage or obstruct access to water vole burrows. So things are finally looking up for Ratty! In fact, so much so that they have been regular-



ly seen or heard 'plopping' in and out of the rhynes surrounding Bleadon's fields.

Take a walk on a quiet afternoon and you may be lucky enough to see one cropping a neat lawn surrounding its burrow, or hear it 'plop' into the water and see one swimming – a short, brown, furry tail making it easily distinguishable in the water from a rat. Unlike a rat too, they typically swim with their whole body showing above the water, whereas the rat will just show their head.

They have glossy dark brown fur and a blunt muzzle with small, black eyes. Their ears are rounded, furry and almost hidden unlike the rat's; they have a chubby, and remarkably cute face. They are mostly active during the day, sitting on their hind feet and feeding on grass stalks held in their front paws. In the absence of Ratty himself, a water vole's burrow can be identified by his living habits.

Aside from the giveaway hole in the bank, water voles like a well-stocked larder. That is, plenty of fresh vegetation growing nearby. If your eyes are good enough, they will nearly always have a neatly cropped patch of grass and reeds surrounding their burrow, and a well-trodden path leading to their latrine (the contents of which, as I can tell you from my graduate days and numerous water vole surveys, is small, green and rather pleasant smelling!).

We are very lucky to have these endearing creatures in our village, and in making sure our rhynes are kept clean (let's pick up the litter!) and well maintained we can ensure that they continue to breed here. So, as Mole cried before setting off on the journey that took him to Ratty's place on the riverside "Hang spring-cleaning!"; get out for a walk to the rhynes at the heart of our village and take a look.



Photo by Richard Cole

Spring has sprung for Secret World

by **Pauline Kidner**

With spring days tempting us out in the garden, it's important to remember that we are already in the wildlife baby season.

Clearing untidy areas mean that you may well disturb animals or nests that have not been visual before. If you disturb a nest and the mother runs/flies away then stop what you are doing, maybe gently replacing any covering you may have removed and leave the area if possible, to the next day.



Most mammal mothers will return and move the babies as soon as it is safe and that may mean during the night. With garden birds, they will usually fledge and be out of the nest within a month so you could leave the area until the youngsters have flown. You could have the pleasure of watching from a distance and seeing their progress.

Building work is continuing of our new treatment centre although it won't be ready until probably August so we shall have to try and manage with limited facilities.



Last year was the same as we had staff on furlough so with a shortage of staff, our volunteers did take orphans home – mammals and birds which was a great help.

We are always looking for volunteers to help in many ways such as caring for the animals, maintenance, driving to collect feed items or visits to the vets. If anyone would like to help us, please contact us on 01278 768707.

We are always available to give advice which is sometimes the best thing to do, if you are faced with a wildlife situation that you are not sure whether to intervene or not.

Tel: 01278 783250



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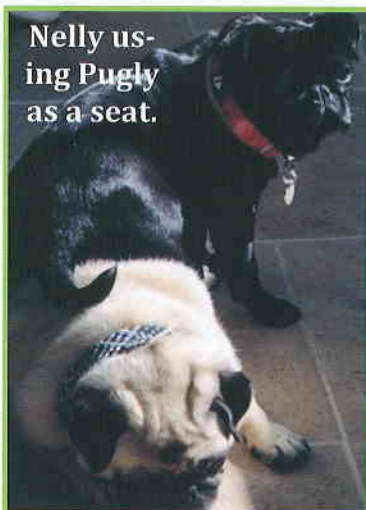


by Christine King

A Cuddle Buddies letter from the animals at Whitehouse Kennels

Dear friends, we hope you are all well—it is Pugly here! We are missing you lots and thought we would let you know what we have been up to recently. The staff had planned a trick or treat Halloween event for the kennels but because of horrible COVID, they had to cancel it. They had made us scary outfits—mine was cool as I was a pumpkin and look incredibly sweet—but Nelly's was hilarious as she was a bat but looked more like a rat!

The staff had spent ages making things like jars with potions in and were sad they could not use them, but they then took them into a special shop called Weston Collective in the Sovereign Centre and they made use of them. I was cross though as they took all the boo bears—teddies dress up as ghosts—which I liked to carry round. I had a collection in my bed!



Nelly using Pugly as a seat.

Last week Gerard was off school so he went away for a few days to I stay with his sister, Helen, which was awesome. Helen has chickens and she feeds the chickens her left over tea. She takes it out in a metal bowl and then puts it down for them.

I watched her do this but there was a slight problem, the chickens are behind a plastic fence and she climbs over the fence to get to where they live. It is much taller than me so I couldn't climb over, even if I jumped up on Nelly first.

I tried squeezing under but it was too tight for me. So I decided I would do my rhino move and barge at the fence

to see if it moved. I tried one afternoon and managed to move the fence enough to squeeze through. Well, what a wonderful afternoon I had. Helen had had a roast dinner the day before so I had gravy and potatoes and some meat and it was delicious!

I was a bit worried about being caught so I managed to persuade Nelly that I was worried about one of the chickens so had gone in to check on her. I managed to squeeze back out again and this all worked well first day.

On day two, Helen had had curry and rice which looked delicious and I couldn't wait for her to go to work so I could get in to the enclosure. What I had not realised is her partner Lewis was working from home. I was busy smashing into the fence getting it to budge when he heard me and looked out the window to see me doing my rhino moves!

I pretended Nelly had made me confused and I had accidentally hit into the fence but I don't think he believed me as he made me come inside and I wasn't allowed out again unsupervised. So disappointing but I did have really bad belly ache that day perhaps... I had eaten a tiny weeny bit too much.

Daisy is really old now and she lies down each day but she is very happy as Helen gives her special food and she has a very lovely new bed Helen says for her bones. Daisy lives with Helen now as Helen is a nurse who looks after poorly dogs and she says we don't leave Daisy alone enough to rest.

It is Nelly who is the problem, not me. She insists on giving Daisy a wash every day and won't sit on a floor so will climb all over Daisy to sit, now Daisy is old this is not nice for her so Helen says it is best she has her own very special bed and stays with Helen so Nelly can't



Pugly as a pumpkin

climb all over. Nelly does love her, she just can't see that Daisy doesn't want to be sat on — silly Nelly.

It is really quiet still so we can run around all day. I don't run but I watch silly Nelly run. She is obsessed with birds and doesn't like them flying over. She chases them and shouts at them until she is so exhausted she has to sit down for a rest. As soon as she has her breath back she is back up chasing them again.

As we are allowed to run around now as the gate is locked we can go in the kitchen and where the staff make up the meals for the dogs staying with us.

Some dogs people don't want them anymore and they just let them go in the street. The staff go and collect them from the kind people who find them and then they stay here and the staff make them tasty food. We are allowed to help in the kitchen and this is my favourite job as when they drop things I am ready to help clear up.

The staff now have lots of time to cuddle us and I get so many cuddles each day. This is to try and make up for my visits that I miss with you all. We get to sit with them at break time and have so much fun and we get to help with eating their snacks. My favourite are Wotsits and Mollie brings them to work most days so I am best friends with Mollie.

I must go now as nearly break time and will miss out on my biscuits. Lots of love, Pugly & my sisters Nelly and Daisy and our very good friends Spartacus and Reginald.



Pugly with Mollie.

Bleadon in Bloom looks ahead to 2021

by Robin Flavell

We are very excited that our plans have been approved by the Parish Council for a number of exciting new initiatives for Bleadon this year. The Bloomers are hopeful that the South West in Bloom competition will go ahead this year. Here's a reminder of the three core pillars of the competition:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Environmental Responsibility
- Community Participation

The fantastic effort from everyone in 2019 won us the blue campaign for the South West, recognising our achievements particularly in rewilding our village. We'd like to carry on with this theme of environmental responsibility in 2021 by continuing with our rewilding projects.

This will have multiple benefits for the village: a community project to help us come together and feel proud of our village, environmental improvements encouraging the return of wildlife to the area, a small contribution towards tackling climate change, as well as a playing a part in the safety of

the A370, making the road feel more part of the village and encouraging motorists to slow down on this busy stretch of road.

Here's what we've got planned:

- **Tree planting:** we're hoping to secure some free saplings for the village, we've applied to Thatchers for some apple trees from their community orchard scheme. Provided we get permission from North Somerset Council, we will be planting trees along the verge of the A370 Bridgewater Road. They will have proper protection from deer and rabbits to give them the best chance of success.

- **Wildflowers:** we'll also be planting a 1-metre-wide strip of wildflowers along the A370 outside of the village. This work will be carried out by professional contractors, which will be safer, and will guarantee a longer lasting result with the wildflowers returning every year. Unfortunately, we can't plant wildflowers along Bleadon Road or Bridge Road this year as there is ongoing work to eradicate the invasive floating pennywort from the rhynes. We're considering other locations for the remaining wildflowers.

- **Summer flower displays:** Our band of volunteers will be growing the plants to fill the existing 50 tubs in the village. This year's theme is "Thank you key workers", and we'll be using the colours of the rainbow in our tubs. We're going to add some new barrels, and some extra special features to make this year's display bigger and better. This year we're also planting some perennial flowers to improve the sustainability of our displays.

- We'll be adding two new benches around

the village, providing a welcome place to rest.

- We'd like to create some nature trail signs at the entrances to South Hill, to show the route of the paths and indicate which native species and wildlife can be found on the hill.
- We're planning on creating a booklet of walks in and around Bleadon, to enhance everyone's enjoyment of the area. We're also thinking about creating a hedgehog trail, to allow our prickly friends to navigate between people's gardens safely!
- This year we'll be making dormouse and swift boxes to encourage more wildlife back to the village.
- And finally, we'll be making a small financial contribution to Wessex Water. This will allow us to be involved with their plans for the Bleadon Levels nature reserve which is a valuable habitat for local species including water voles, otters, skylarks, and short-eared owls.

How can you help us?

- **Tree stewards:** We're looking for a small team of people who will keep an eye on our newly planted trees, water them and make sure they are protected while they get established.
- If you think you might have a suitable place to put up a dormouse or swift box, let us know.
- We're always looking for volunteers to get involved in growing, planting, watering or helping us build new features for our displays.
- Can you create a small hedgehog friendly space in your garden? Could you make a small gap in your fence to help us create a safe hedgehog highway? Get in touch if you are interested.
- Thinking ahead to next year, having gained some experience with tree planting, we could add some more trees to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. If you have any ideas



they could be planted, contact parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk

Bleadon in Bloom achievements in 2020

If you want a reminder of what we achieved in 2020, despite the main competition being cancelled and all the challenges of the pandemic, you can find the Bleadon in Bloom portfolio for last year on the Parish Council website.

Some highlights:

- Tractor tyre planter at Bleadon Mill and improved planting at the Bleadon village store, cafe as a thankyou to key workers during the pandemic.

- Cross planter outside the Church for the VE day commemoration.
- Beautiful floral displays despite the challenges of getting enough plants in lockdown, themed on the NHS rainbow.
- Ongoing efforts to keep the rhynes clear of floating pennywort and litter.
- Achievement recognised by a certificate from the South West in Bloom organisation.

The costs of Bleadon in Bloom for 2020 can be found in last year's portfolio. In brief we spent £820 – made up of £630 on plants compost

plus £190 on the cross planter. We made £292 from the sale of leftover plants to help fund the planting.

We also had over 250 hours of volunteer time and more than 20 hours of time from local businesses donated to make this all happen, which equates to at least £3k of value donated to our community project. Not to mention a tractor tyre, tubs and free plants adding up to another £300 of donations.

Full details of the budget for 2020 are in the portfolio on the Parish Council website. Follow us on Facebook – Bleadon in Bloom, or email Kirsten Hemingway writer@kirstenhemingway.co.uk to join our WhatsApp group.

Bleadon Belles still singing!

by Jo Jones

Although we found it strange when we started in March 2020, we soon adapted to Zoom rehearsals, and it has been a really positive experience, learning new songs under the brilliant leadership of our musical director Naomi.

Of course we haven't been able to perform, but in spite of this we had a successful on line Carol service for WI members in December.

We were joined by the Ref Tim Erridge and it was much enjoyed by those who took part. In the meantime, we'll continue to enjoy our weekly sessions and look forward to entertaining you when things return to normal.



An update from Bleadon WI

Bleadon WI members continue to meet on Zoom. In December we held a Christmas social with Nutty Noah and had a lovely virtual Carol Service led by our choir Bleadon Belles and their Musical Director Naomi Hickman. We were also joined at our Carol Service by Reverend Erridge.

We started 2021 with some exercise on Zoom led by local instructor Marie Keele. In the coming months we look forward to making cocktails, learning how to ditch plastic, hearing from author Amanda Prowse and making some Easter crafts.

Bleadon WI membership is currently at our maximum of 100 but if any ladies would like to be added to our waiting list or join us as a guest on Zoom, please email bleadonwi@hotmail.co.uk

Wildlife braves icy conditions



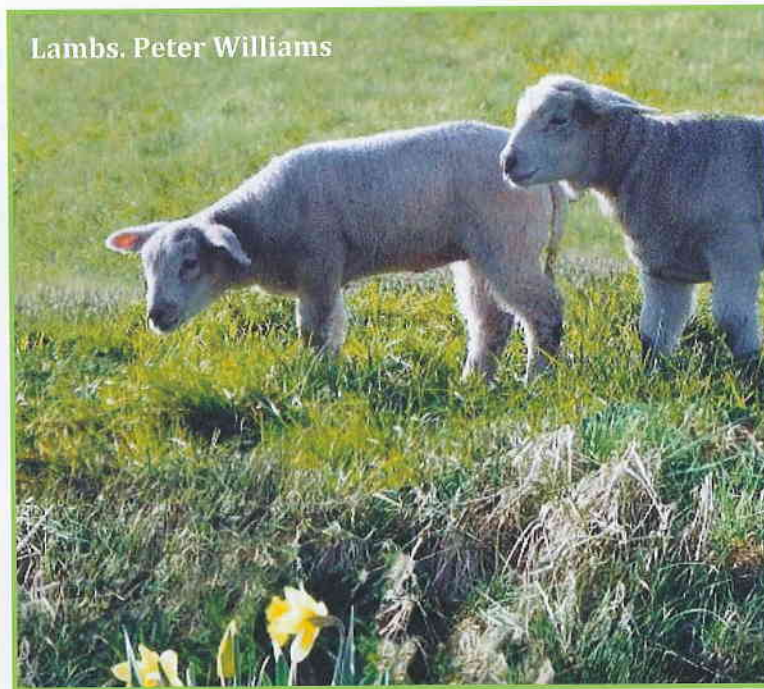
Peacock. Rita Dibble



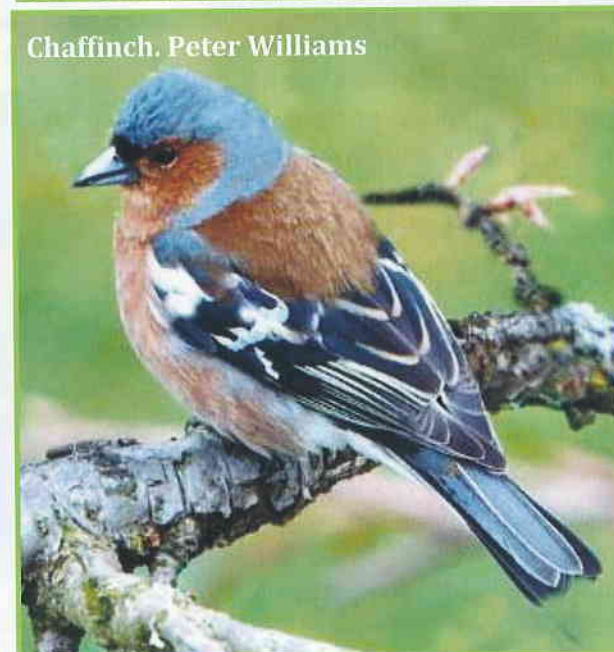
Robin. Richard Cole



Beatrice on the breakfast hunt. Richard Cole



Lambs. Peter Williams



Chaffinch. Peter Williams



Contact me

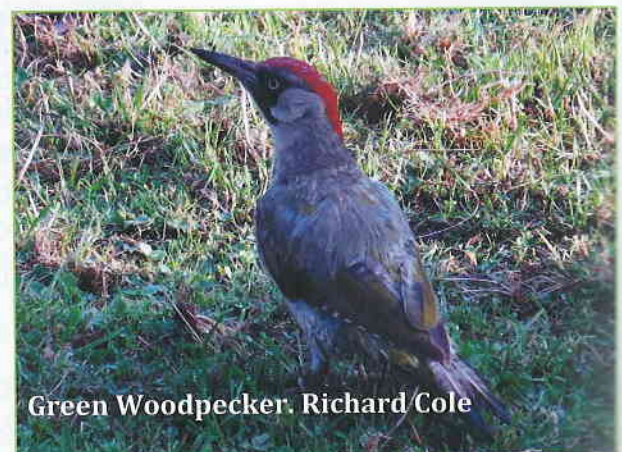
www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk



bleadonnewseditor@gmail.com



07715 333830



Green Woodpecker. Richard Cole

Reasons to be cheerful

My boss, back in the day, frequently reminded us that set-backs and challenges are opportunities. Well, the past year has certainly presented us all with plenty of challenges and set-backs. With that have indeed come opportunities. A chance to put the everyday on hold and rethink what we do and how we do it.

One A year ago Bleadon Youth Club were looking at ways to improve the interior of the building. To make it more welcoming and thermally efficient. The first lockdown gave us the opportunity to carry out a thorough refurbishment of most the building. Without any interruption to normal activities, because there were no normal activities.

By the end of that first lockdown we had completed all the planned work and more. We had a brighter and more efficient building whilst still retaining its old youthful appeal.

When the youngsters and the young-at-heart returned in late September they all loved it.

Two The Bleadon May Day Fayre has been the annual big fund-raiser for our lovely parish church and the Bleadon Youth Club. The community fun day regularly raises over £5000 for the two organisations and gives the village an opportunity to shine. The 2020 event was cancelled because of Covid restrictions and it looks like this year's May Day Fayre will not be taking place either.

Nothing to be cheerful in that you'll be thinking. Pressing the pause button for two years has given us the chance to rethink the event and seek different ways of celebrating and fundraising.

The Church Rooms refurbishment in the Autumn has meant the loss of storage space in the old garages next to the Church Rooms. We have been forced to look for alternative storage solutions for all the May Day Fayre equipment.

Over the next few weeks you will see a new storage shed erected at the rear of the youth centre to accommodate all our event games and equipment. The good news is that in future we shan't have the hernia challenging task of moving lumpy gear from the Church Rooms and back.

Next year we can look forward to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as well as May Day to celebrate. It should be a heck of a summer party.

Three As it looks like the current lock-down and restrictions will be taking us into late Spring at the least, we hope to make use of the time to repaint the outside of the youth centre. Give the building a freshen up. The old girl is beginning to look a bit tired in her 12 year old Dulux paint.

When the weather improves we will be there with rollers and brushes.

Which brings me to an appeal for your help. We need more parents and Bleadon residents to come forward and help manage and maintain the building that houses Bleadon Youth Club.

Come and join the Bleadon Youth Club Management Committee. The Club needs your hands-on help and support.

The Youth Club Management Committee is made up of volunteers **like you** who are willing to give an hour or two every couple of months. It's not too onerous. We meet one evening every other month. We raise the funds and look after the building to ensure that there is a safe and welcoming venue for our young people.

We don't run the youth club sessions. We pay the YMCA to do that on a Thursday evening.

We receive no financial support or leadership provision from the local authorities, so we have to operate as a charitable business. Raising funds in any way we can.

If you want to see the youth club in our village thrive and continue to provide young people with somewhere to socialise please come and join this small and merry band.

If you want to help call Keith on 01934 813127 or email: keith.pyke@btopenworld.com



Puzzle Page answers and thanks

Riddle me this?

Riddle one:

Silence

Riddle two:

A coffin

Riddle three:

A stapler

1	3	9	4	6	2	7	5	8
2	4	8	1	7	5	3	6	9
7	6	5	8	3	9	1	4	2
9	1	3	5	2	8	6	7	4
8	2	4	6	1	7	9	3	5
6	5	7	9	4	3	2	8	1
5	8	1	7	9	6	4	2	3
3	9	6	2	5	4	8	1	7
4	7	2	3	8	1	5	9	6

Disclaimer

Bleadon Village News is published independently on behalf of Bleadon Parish Council. The views and comments are those of the Editor and contributors and not necessarily of the Parish Council.

With thanks to...

Bruce Poole	Peter Gibbon
Becky Crathorne	Alistair House
Richard Cole	Mark Frisby
Les Masters	Zoe Solomon
Dave Sharman	Keith Pyke
Cllr Gill Williams	Kevin Barrett
Graham Getty	George Scott
Cllr Mike Solomon	Elaine Mellor
Rev'd Tim Erridge	Kate James
Jo and Kate Jones	Pauline Kidner
Cllr Kirsten Hemingway	Charlotte King
Cllr I D Clarke	Robin Flavell
Cllr Ann Davies	Ray Blezzard
Michael Benfield	Rita Dibble
Penny Robinson	Peter Williams
Adam Cole	

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Thank you to everyone who has advertised with us for this edition.

Strawberry Line

Tea Rooms

in Winscombe is celebrating...

Mother's Day

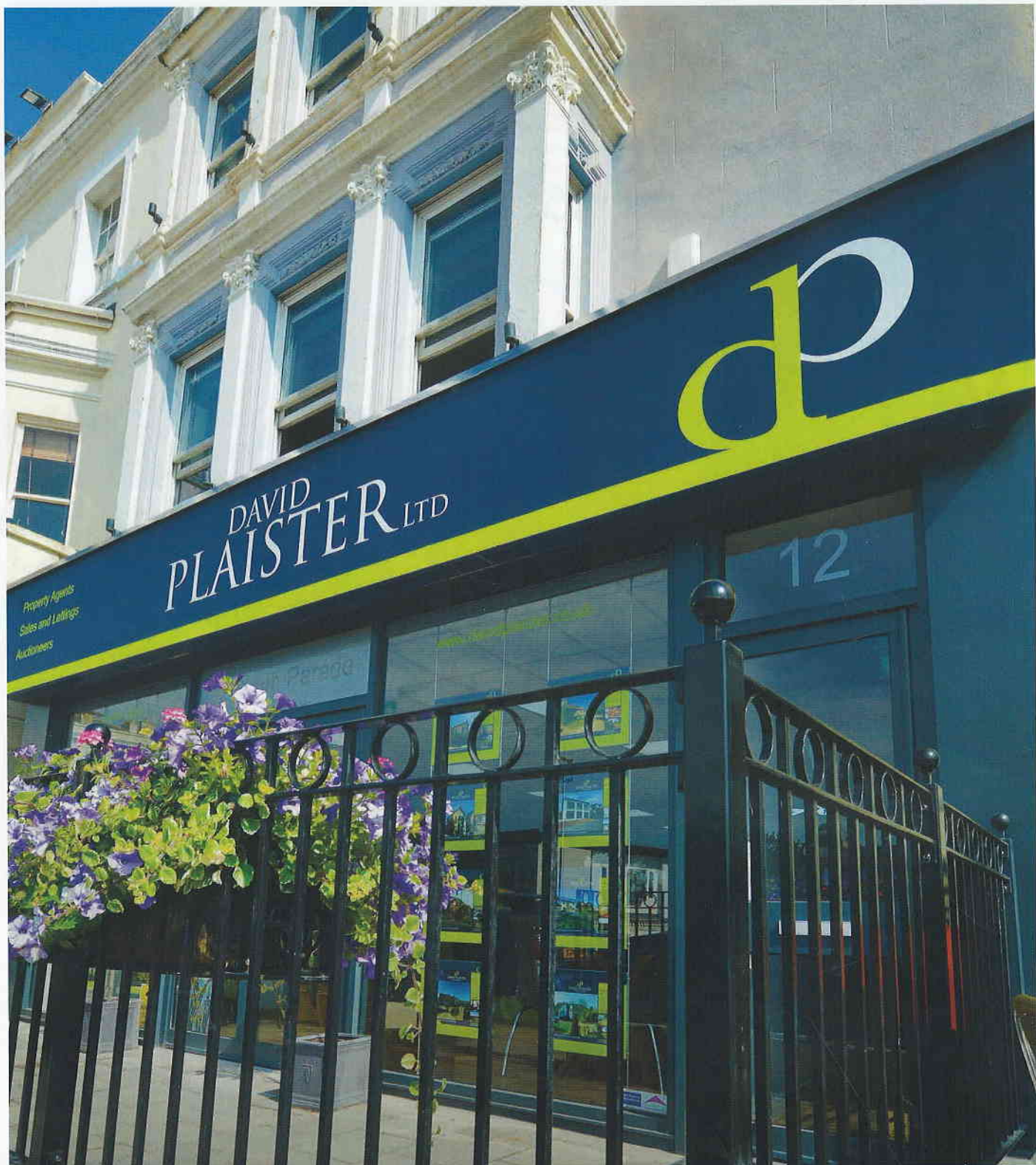
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