

Bleadon village news

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FREE to Bleadon homes

Autumn/Winter 2013 - Issue 97

INSIDE this issue

**Marshall's Quarry - second
consultation on 27 November**



**Gardeners' Question Time
Village events**

**Bleadon Village
Christmas
MARKET**

Over 40 stalls packed with gift ideas and local produce
Enjoy a drink, a mince pie and raffle prizes with friends



Saturday 7 Dec
Coronation Hall
+ Youth Centre

9-12.30



Summer show

The 40th Summer Flower Show broke all previous records this century, with over 340 entries staged in the Coronation Hall. Judges and visitors alike marvelled at the overall quality of exhibits - from cakes to chrysanthemums and bread to beetroot.



Oh what a lovely summer!



Somerset sparkled and Bleadon looked its best.

Since May three new councillors have joined the team, so now at our full strength of nine councillors we are able to try and cover the crucial areas of local governance.

The 2014/15 Budget for Bleadon will be discussed by the Finance Committee before Christmas and recommended to the Council for approval in January. Debate is key before decisions are made. Contact us if you have views and constructive suggestions about where our spending considerations should lie.

Please remember that we shall spend wisely as more and more services are devolved down from district council to parish council. As a pro-active parish council we continue to serve this village with diligence and vigour.

Marshalls' initial presentation of their plans for the re-development of the Bridge Road quarry site attracted considerable interest at the Youth Centre exhibition in September. There will be a second chance to see their amended proposals on the **27th November**. The parish council will be at the forefront of the negotiations with North Somerset Council and the company when Planning proposals for the Marshalls site come forward for consideration.

The recent solar panels issues on nearby land have concerned us all.

For now the development has been refused by North Somerset. However, I suspect that this is an issue that may come back for debate and deliberation again in the future.

We send our very best wishes to the Rev. Philip Stevens who has now left Bleadon after three years for pastures new on Humberside. I thank him for pioneering our Civic Service and working to get so many village organisations more involved with the church.

The annual Contactus party which is sponsored by the parish council was held in June to welcome newcomers to our community. Our role to welcome new residents extends far beyond this annual party. **If you are new to the village and want to find out more about what goes on** we are here to help. Please don't hesitate to call me on 815331 if you want to know more about the delightful social activities available to you here in Bleadon.

We welcome our new community policeman Dave Easton to the Bleadon beat. He is currently looking at revamping the Tuesday Police Surgeries held at the Church Rooms. He hopes to have some proposals for us over the coming months.

After much reflection and consultation the Open Spaces Committee has recommended to move the new ball wall in the play area. There has been much concern

expressed by local residents about the problems and hazards created by footballs being kicked over the high fence into the highway and neighbouring properties. Hopefully, the new location in the play area will reduce the risks.

The Harvest Supper this year was replaced by a Big Breakfast in the Coronation Hall on 26 October. A great morning and full plates to hearten and cheer us before the Christmas celebrations begin.

The winter plant-up of our village tubs went ahead in October despite the lack of many volunteers to help. Once again South Bank Nurseries supplied hundreds of healthy plants at a price that meets our reduced planting budget. My thanks to those who did turn up to help. It would be nice to see more helpers when we get round to the summer plant up next May.

The parish council meets on the second Monday of the month at 7.30pm in the Coronation Hall. Come along, see democracy at work, share your thoughts and ideas - let's work and progress together.

Penny Skelley
Chairman Bleadon Parish Council



Bleadon Village News is published by Bleadon Parish Council.

Contributions to the newsletter are very welcome, so long as they are about Bleadon or can directly benefit its residents. Please ensure that your editorial or advertising material reaches the editor at least three weeks before publication.

The deadline for the next edition is Friday 28 February 2014.

We aim to provide a copy of this newsletter free to every household and business in Bleadon. Additional copies are usually available from the editor.

We are eternally grateful to the band of volunteers who deliver this newsletter to households throughout the parish..

bleadon.editor@btinternet.com

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Editor's views

Unless otherwise stated the opinions and comments expressed in this publication are those of the editor or contributor and may not be those of Bleadon Parish Council.

What do you want us to spend your money on?

It's the time of year when the parish council looks at planning its service provision and budget options for the year to come.

The parish council has little room for major budget flexibility because there are a number of essential fixed costs that we have to finance and services that you probably expect us to provide. The money we have left after paying for staff, administration, insurance and those essential services is very limited.

Using up our savings

Many of the village improvements that we have seen over the past few years have been paid for out of our reserves (savings). This follows a couple of cash windfalls in recent years as a result of development in the village. But these reserves are finite and dwindling.

However, there is always some opportunity for rethinking about the services we provide and way we deliver them.

Fresh ideas, new thinking

With three new councillors on the parish council we can expect some fresh ideas and alternative opinions about priorities being argued amongst councillors and parishioners. Already I'm hearing that we should be doing more for the older members of our community and reducing the parish precept.

Bleadon has over twice the national average of residents aged over 45, so personally, I would support that general proposal. After all, I'm one of them. But it is also the case that the majority of Bleadon residents are comfortably off and can well afford to pay for the services they need without additional support from the council tax payer.

What about the young people and families that give Bleadon an occasional touch of youthful exuberance? Shouldn't we be providing for them as well? I'm sure that we have all experienced that time in our life when demands on household budgets and our time resources far outstrips supply.

What do we need to provide?

The parish council needs to hear what is wanted for residents. Let's have some positive and affordable proposals for improving the lives of our villagers. How would you like to see Bleadon improved and how can we make it happen?

Government cuts

Fortunately, the parish council is not reliant on direct government funding, so it is not being crippled by the budget reductions in the same way as the District Council.

But reduced District spending means that many of the services they provide and that we take for granted will stop. Some people expect the parish council to take over those services.

We are aware that many villagers are seeing a real reduction in their spending power, so we are all keen to ensure that any increases in council taxes are kept to a minimum. With inflation at over 2.5% we are already failing to match our income to your expectations.

That means that any new additional services must be paid for out of diminishing existing budgets. Which will inevitably mean cuts in current parish services that are deemed to be of less value to our community.

If you have any constructive ideas we should love to hear from you

You can write to the Parish Clerk via email or post to the addresses shown at the back of this magazine. Alternatively, have your say just before the parish council meets on the second Monday of the month.

You do need to come forward with your suggestions fairly quickly. The Finance Committee and the Parish Council will be deciding on next year's budget over the next two months.

Editor

Looking after ourselves

When I was a boy my nana would regularly scrub her front step and sweep the pavement in front of her terraced house. She took great pride in her patch and if anyone messed it up God help them!

That was before most of us grew up expecting the nanny state to do everything for us.

The state can no longer afford to do everything that we have grown used to expecting. Having councils doing things like weeding of our pavements, sweeping of roads and regular clearing of drains are likely to become fond memories.

So it's time for us to return to looking after the patch in front of our house. Clear those weeds from the kerb and pick up the litter outside before it blocks a drain and becomes a real problem. No one else is likely to do it, and if my 90 year old father-in-law can do so can we.

Don't lose your vote

All Bleadon households will have recently received **Election Registration forms** from North Somerset Council. Please ensure that you complete and return the form. If you fail to do so you cannot vote.

In May 2014 you will be electing your European Members of Parliament and in 2015 there will be both Parish and District Council elections.

You can choose to **vote by post**.

If you find it difficult to get to the polling station on election day a postal vote allows you to vote from your sofa. Any voter can select to have a postal vote. It couldn't be easier.

Around 15% of Bleadon's voters have already registered to vote in this way.

NEWS

New skate ramps are a hit with youngsters

A range of new portable skate ramps and grind rails are proving to be a big hit with the youngsters at Bleadon Youth Club. For years skate ramps have been high on the Wish List for young people at the club but until now this luxury was out of the club's financial reach. Thanks to a £300 grant from the Lions Go Kids Go charity and match funding from the May Day Fayre the youth club has been able to purchase the longed-for kit.



The portable skate and scooter ramps are stored inside the Youth Centre to be brought out when required at youth club.

The block paved areas behind and alongside the Youth Centre provide space for youthful activities without jeopardising valued car parking space on busy Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

Starting school

Parents of children born between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010 need to **APPLY NOW** for 2014-15 school places in North Somerset and Somerset.

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 15 Jan.2014

You can apply on-line at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/admissions.

On the same website you will find a full downloadable guide for parents.

Alternatively a paper application form and guide are available from the Town Hall.

If you wish to apply for a Somerset County school (Lympsham or East Brent for example) you will still need to apply through North Somerset Council in the first instance.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to make an on-time school place application. If you make an application after the closing date, it will be classed as late and you will need to complete a paper application form and it is unlikely that you will get the school of your choice.

Posters for the village notice boards

If you have a Bleadon village event that needs to be publicised you are welcome to have your A4 poster displayed on the five purpose-built parish notice boards that are scattered around the village. Of course, this is dependent upon there being space available. With so much going on in our little village space on the boards is frequently at a premium.

Leave your A4 (portrait format) posters at the Post House Stores at Purn. Tony the village ranger picks up the posters at 8.30 on a Monday morning and then distributes them around the notice boards. Please understand that it isn't always possible to display all posters but Tony tries to be as fair to everyone as possible. Priority will always go to promoting village based events for Bleadon residents.

NEWS

On September 18th and 19th Bleadon residents were given a first look at the draft plans for the redevelopment of the Marshalls' quarry in Bridge Road. Over the two days of consultation some 60 villagers went along to view the initial proposals in the Bleadon Youth Centre. Residents were given the opportunity to air their personal views and make suggestions to Marshalls staff and their consultants.

Purpose of Consultation

Despite the absence of a firm timeframe within which the site will become surplus to Marshalls' operational requirements, an alternative use planning application continues to be pursued in order to minimise any void period in the event that the site's current operational status should change. Marshalls intends to apply to North Somerset Council for Outline Planning Permission but not before the views and opinions of the local community are understood and taken into account. Marshalls wishes to ensure that a high quality scheme and a positive legacy results from the intended consent and wants you to be involved in this process.

This is the first of two public consultation exhibitions and your views are greatly valued.

If you have any constructive comments to make at this early stage of the consultation Marshalls would like to hear from you. **You can email them at:**

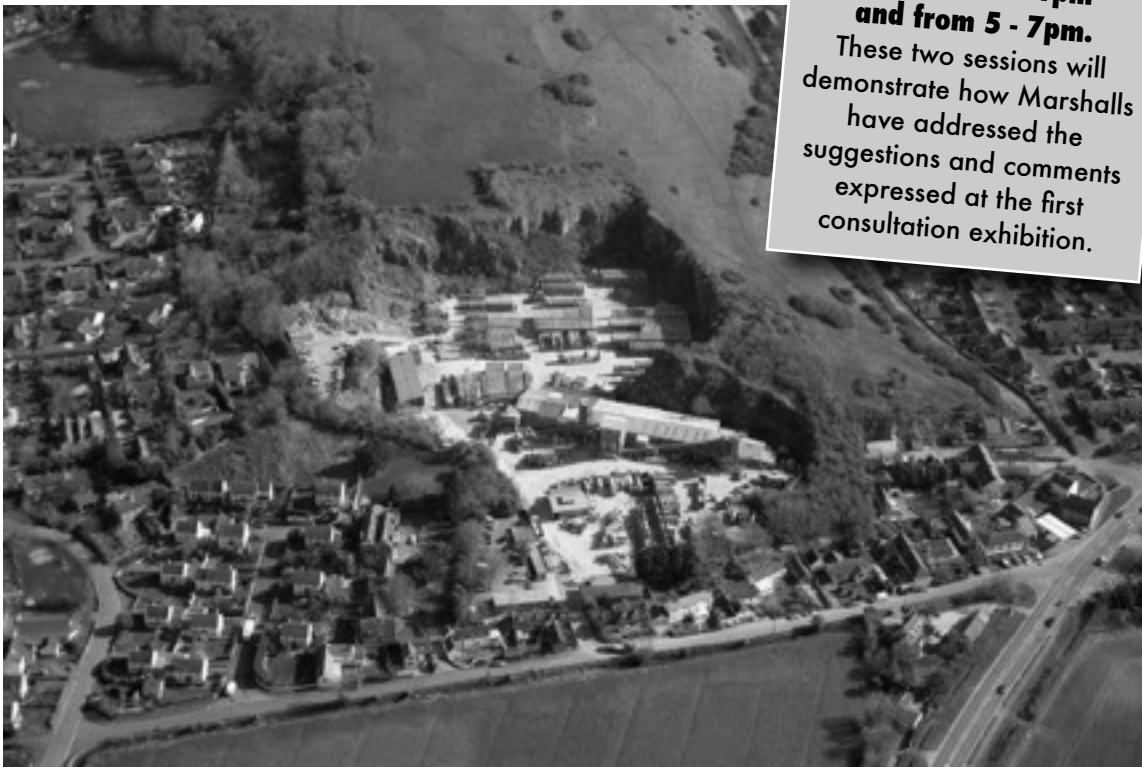
consultations.bleadon@marshalls.co.uk



A second consultation exhibition will take place in the Youth Centre on Wednesday 27 Nov. from 10.30 - 1pm and from 5 - 7pm. These two sessions will demonstrate how Marshalls have addressed the suggestions and comments expressed at the first consultation exhibition.

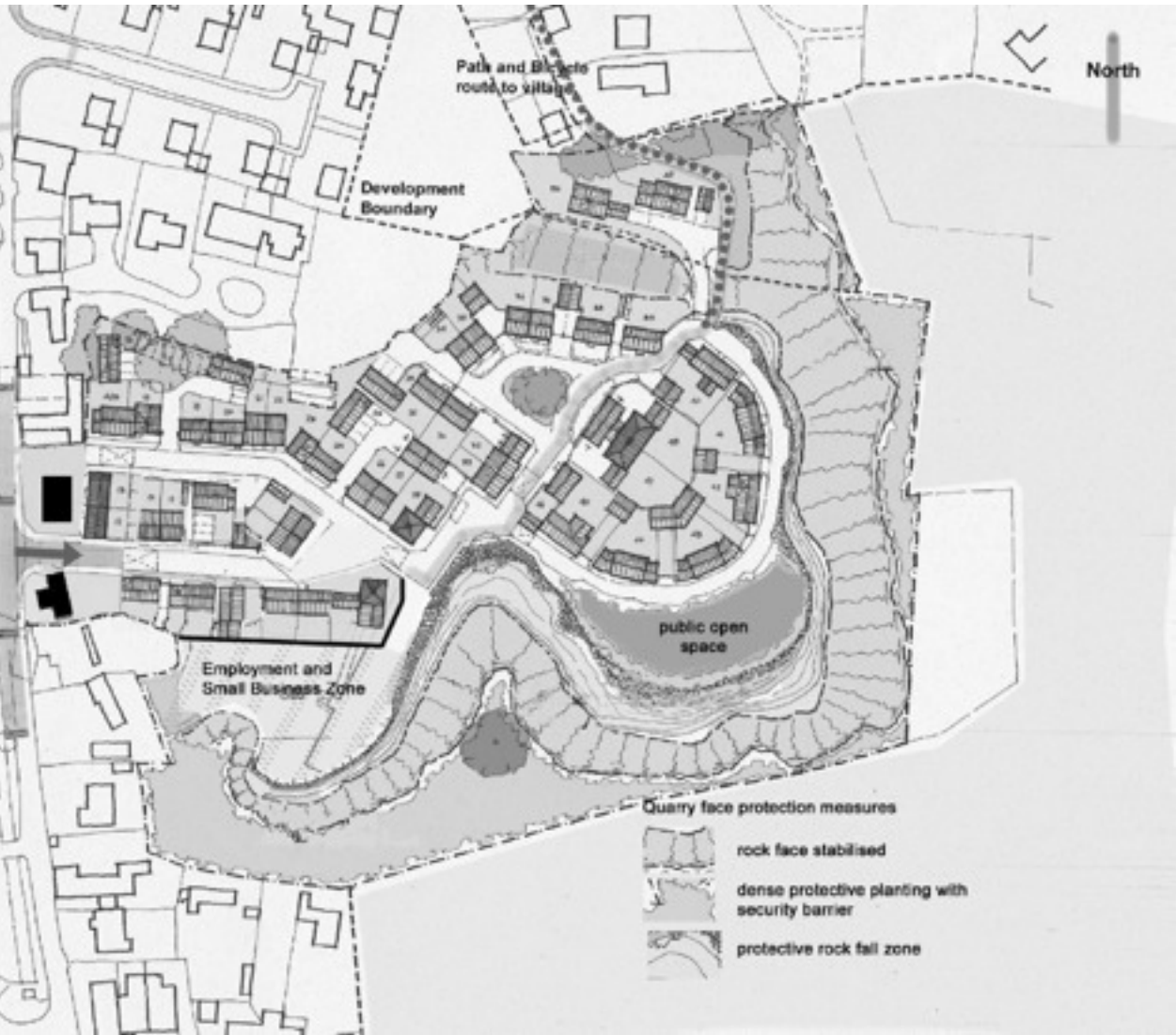
Initial draft proposals include the construction of a newly positioned wider entrance to the quarry site. Together with traffic calming measures this should offer easier and safer access to and from Bridge Road.

Proposals also include a cycle/footpath to the centre of the village via Mulberry Lane. This would allow residents and visitors safe and easy pedestrian access to the existing community facilities in the heart of Bleadon.



At this very early pre-Planning stage it is important to recognise that these are only draft outline suggestions as to what may be possible on the site. More detailed proposals will come much later in the formal Planning and development process

New site access with traffic calming measures and provision for pedestrians along site frontage



- Site area 3.45 hectares
- Site excluding the highlands and rock face 2.78 hectares
- Developable area integrating the reports' conclusions
 - Assuming that the measures to reduce the rock fall risk are feasible 1.83 hectares / 54 houses (31 houses/hectare)
 - Without rock fall reducer measures 1.70 hectares / 50 houses (30 houses/hectare)
 - Without area shadowed for more than 20% of the day 1.26 hectares / 38 houses (30 houses/hectare)

- Ecology**
 - White line - green corridor
 - Highland Area within the site boundary
- Rock face**
 - Area of current rock fall risk
 - Rock fall risk area reduced with use of rock
 - Rock face
 - Rock face with existing stabilisation in place
- Shadow**
 - Area shadowed for > 20% of the day in 80% of the year, south and eastern
 - Area shadowed for > 20% of the day in winter
- Conclusion**
 - Developable Area



It is clear that Marshalls and their consultant architects have put a lot of work into extensive ecological and geophysical surveys of the challenging site to ensure that any development makes the most practical use of the available space.

Initial draft proposals are for around 50 houses plus some small business and employment opportunities.

Sheer rock faces and extensive shadow areas offer challenges that will require careful planning and engineering.

NEWS

Ball wall dilemma

Parish councillors have been tasked to find an affordable and practical solution to the problems created by the new ball wall in the play area.



For some years we have been made aware of the noise problem and damage created by young gamers kicking their footballs against the steel fencing. A practical, simple and robust solution appeared to be to install a wall of timber that the youngsters could aim their kicks at, well away from other park users. But nothing is that simple!

A new ball wall of Rowena timber posts was installed just before the summer holidays, which was an immediate hit with the youngsters. Unfortunately, the location of the wall adjacent to the southern boundary fence has created other safety problems which now need to be tackled.

Children have been using the structure as a climbing challenge and even using it to jump over the fence into the road. Things have improved since warning signs went up, but it appears that even the brightest of children sometimes have difficulty reading warning notices. It also seems that our footballers are not yet ready to be signed up by Man United and are sending too many footballs into the road and neighbouring gardens.

The parish council called in RoSPA to do an inspection and to make recommendations.

The preferred solution is to re-locate the ball wall in front of the two Silver Birch trees on the west side of the play area. The tops of the posts will be cut at an angle to discourage youngsters climbing along the top of the posts.

It will not be a simple job to uproot the timber posts from their current location. They are very securely installed to withstand the onslaught of hormone enriched youngsters. But move them we will.



Members of the Open Spaces committee ponder the options for re-locating the Ball Wall.

New accessible picnic table installed

As part of its constant programme of improvements to the play area the parish council recently installed a new picnic table with easy access for wheelchairs and baby buggies.



The extra large new picnic table allows access on both sides for wheelchairs or buggies. Positioned close to the play equipment and under the trees to provide shade in the summer or shelter from the rain. Perfect for mums, dads and grans to keep an eye on their charges.

What's the cost?

There are a few misleading figures being bandied about the village concerning the cost of these recent play area improvements.

For the record the actual costs are:

Ball Wall

Supply and delivery of 18 Rowena timber posts £648.
Installation of posts to create ball wall £420.

To re-install the ball wall in a new location will cost us an additional £490.

Supply and installation of a 700mm high **timber board fence** along 20m of play area perimeter cost £650. This has been installed to reduce the noise and damage caused by stray footballs hitting the wire fence.

Supply and delivery of the **picnic table** £533.88

Footpath along Axe closed

Part of the footpath that runs west along the riverbank from the A370 Bleadon Bridge to the caravan park has been closed temporarily.

Following advice from the Bleadon Rights of Way Group the District Council have imposed a Temporary Closure Notice for at least the next six months.

This is because of high water levels on the river Axe below the damaged Bleadon Sluice. The footpath has deteriorated and is no longer safe for pedestrians to use. The footpath alongside Riverside Cottage is partly under water. This was brought to the attention of North Somerset by the **Bleadon Rights of Way group.**

Concern was expressed that the path at this point was dangerous to walk along particularly for young children, a sheer drop of 6-8ft. into very deep water. North Somerset inspected it, together with the river authority, and issued a closure order.

Hopefully, we will see the Bleadon Sluice repaired or replaced in the near future so that we can get back to enjoying this lovely riverside walk towards the caravan park and beyond.

Bleadon Rights of Way Group

Under the stewardship of Andy Eddy the group of volunteers have been busy this summer maintaining the footpaths around our lovely village.

The total number of hours worked on the rights of way up to September was 65 hours. On three occasions this summer working dates were postponed due to the very hot weather! During the autumn and winter they will be installing new kissing gates, replacing old stiles and continuing to keep the Bleadon Rights of Way clear from obstructions.



Solar panel park plans refused

Plans by solar energy developer Energi installations to erect around 32,000 solar panels on land adjacent to the Bridgwater Road have been rejected by North Somerset Council.

The 21 hectare proposed site covered five farm fields between the railway line and the west side of the A370 road. The site was chosen because it was large, flat, accessible and the south west aspect enjoyed plenty of sunlight. It was expected that the solar panels would have a life of around 35 years.

Because of the impact such a major development was likely to have on an area so close to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty an Environmental Statement was demanded by the Planning Authority before it could consider the merits of the application.

Whilst the direct impact of the development on a majority of Bleadon residents was fairly minimal the proposal raised a lot of local opposition. Particularly from environmental activists and residents on the Hill, who feared that views over the Bleadon Levels would be ruined.

It seems that North Somerset Council agreed. They refused the proposal by reason of the scale, form and proximity to public viewpoints and residential property. Fearing that the resulting development would dominate the landscape and cause unacceptable harm to the landscape character. The development would not have improved the economic, social and environmental conditions of Bleadon.

Volunteers always wanted for footpath improvements

Swingeing budget cuts by central government mean that North Somerset Council and the Mendip Hills AONB are no longer able to provide the level of footpath maintenance that we have been used to. It now comes down to the parish council and volunteers to take over the role if we wish to keep our footpaths accessible.

The Bleadon Rights of Way Group has been set up to fulfill this need. If you have the time and energy to help maintain and improve Bleadon's footpaths please contact Andy Eddy on 814264.

NEWS

South Hill footpaths - some clarification

Lack of regular farming use in recent years has meant that walkers have used South Hill in pretty much any way they wish. This has led to a rather casual approach to use of the designated footpaths and dog management. Now that the new owners of South Hill Farm are returning the the property to a full-time working farm it is important for walkers and dog owners to appreciate that this is private farmed land and that they should respect the Countryside Code.

The aerial photograph reproduced below from Google Earth reveals the extent to which walkers have created additional footpaths straying well away from the Public Rights of Way designated on the North Somerset Council/OS maps.

Based on the information North Somerset provide I have tried to indicate with the white dotted lines the three footpaths that traverse South Hill. Each of these footpaths is

given a designated number by NSC to identify it. AX6/12 runs from the churchyard over the top of South Hill and down into South Farm itself.

AX6/16 runs from Shiplate (just east of The Veale) over South Hill to the lane above Bleadon Mill that leads to South Hill Farm.

AX6/15 runs from the stone stile just above Wonderstone on Shiplate Hill in almost a straight line towards Bleadon Mill.

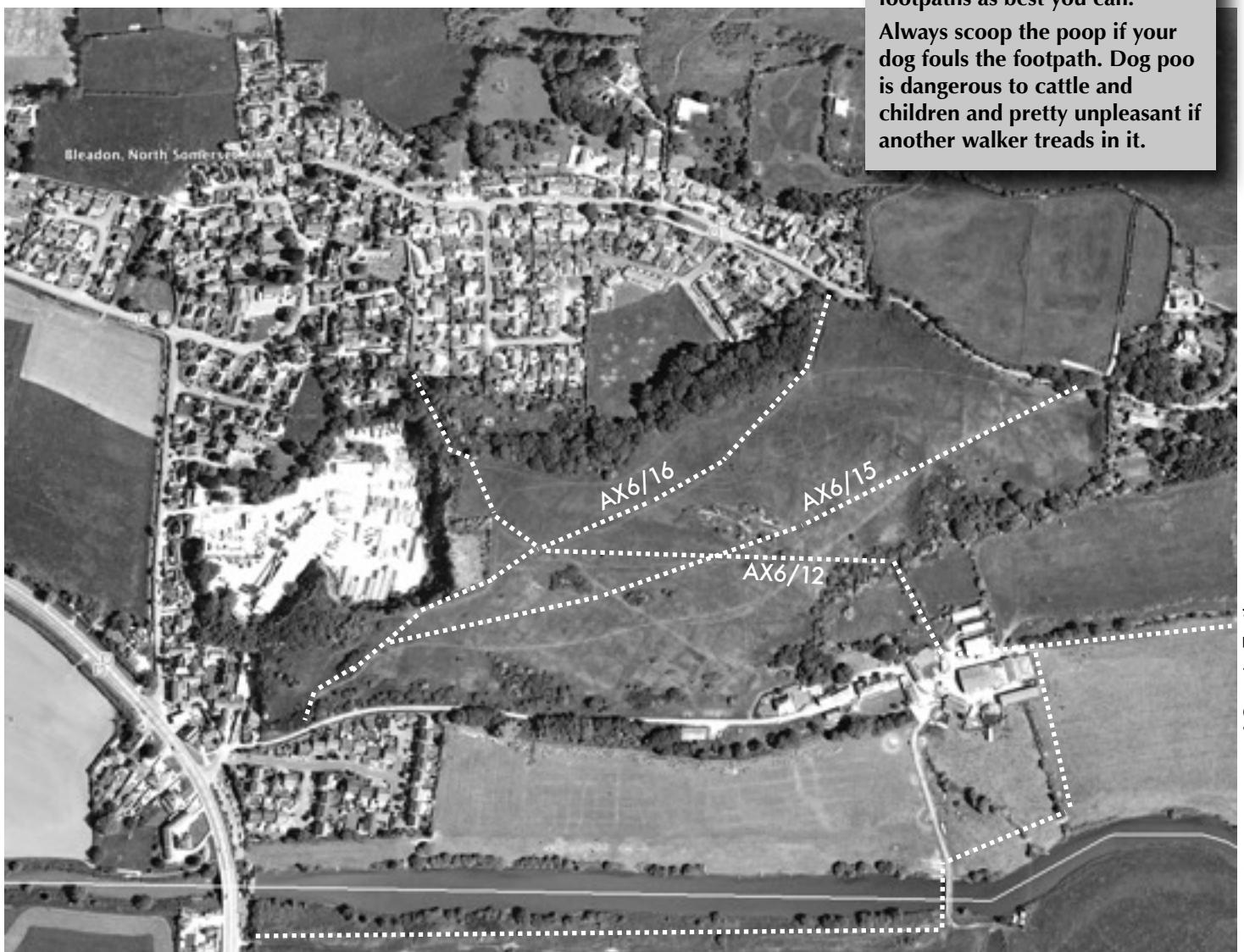
The three paths intersect on top of the hill, which allows walkers to take a sort of circuitous route.

There are no public rights of way around the fencing that has recently been installed on South Hill.

The newly installed kissing gates indicate clearly the access points to South Hill.

Keep dogs on leads at all times and keep to the designated footpaths as best you can.

Always scoop the poop if your dog fouls the footpath. Dog poo is dangerous to cattle and children and pretty unpleasant if another walker treads in it.



NEWS

40th
ANNIVERSARY
celebration
talk

The laid back gardener

The Bleadon Horticultural Society celebrated its 40th anniversary by inviting Radio 4's celebrated Gardeners' Question Time expert Anne Swithenbank along to the Coronation Hall to engage with an audience of enthusiastic gardeners.

Anne drove up from her home near Colyton in East Devon to entertain us in her very relaxed style with an insight into her professional background, gardening tips on how to be a more laid back gardener and answers to questions from the audience.

Colourful photo slides and sample plants from her own garden helped get the message across that gardening should always be fun and relaxing, despite the challenges Mother Nature throws at us.



Above: Anne enjoys a pre-talk cuppa while Chris entertains her with one of his more risqué gardening anecdotes.

Below: Questions from keen gardeners kept Anne busy before and after her talk.



It's been some time since we first reported on exciting plans for a recreational water park off Accommodation Road. BVN asked Alistair House for an up-date on how the major new visitor attraction is progressing.

Although the Water Park Project appears to be going slowly, plans are being drawn up behind the scenes so that very soon there will be a formal application to the planning authority for the change-of-use for the Lakes.

Weston Park Lakes

The plans are extensive and will cover an enormous range of water sports including water-skiing, wakeboarding, sailing, canoeing and swimming. This list is not exhaustive, as windsurfing, kite-boarding and others will also feature on a less regular basis. The new lakes will consist of 25 acres of water, clubhouse facilities and nature trails. The whole area was largely arable and will soon become host to a

wider range of flora and fauna. We are very excited about the project and a lot of water has gone under the bridge (in more ways than one!).

The next phase entails abstracting water from the River Axe into the clay-lined lakes.

The partners in the project will shortly be displaying their proposals to the public- for dates see the village notice boards.

For further information or to be put on the mailing list, email: alistair@purnhousefarm.co.uk



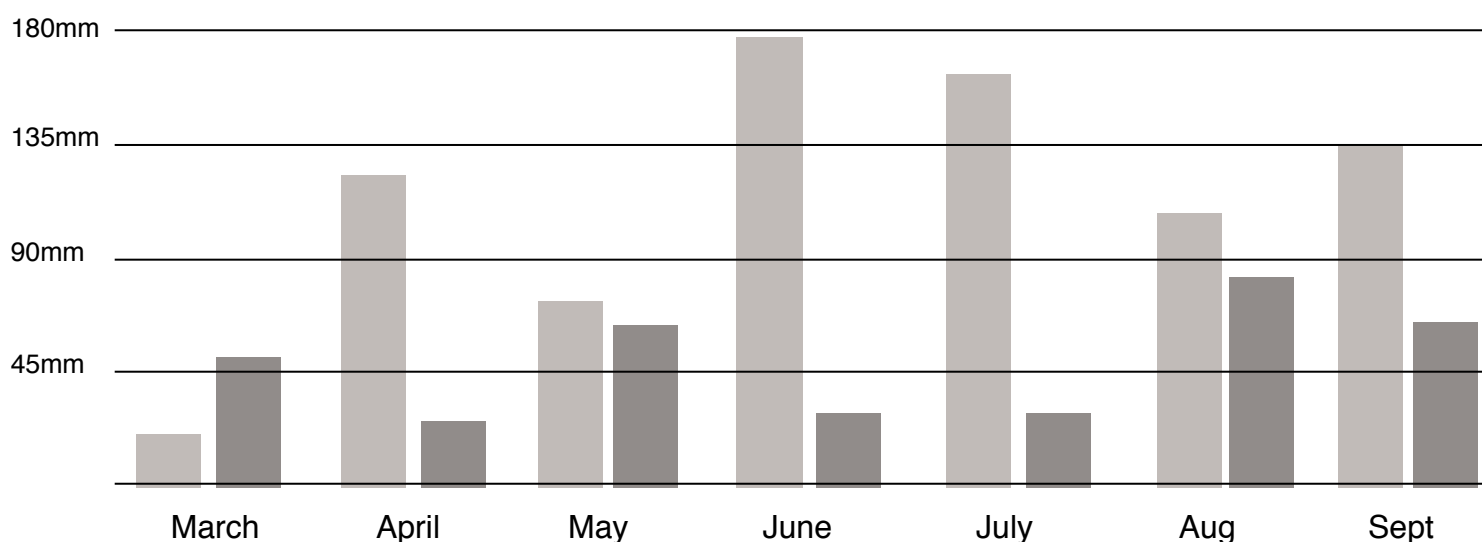
Site of the proposed Weston Park Lakes at Accommodation Road

Two very different summers

From his lofty hacienda on Bleadon Hill Chris Cudlipp keeps a daily record of rainfall. He compares the contrasting summers of 2012 and 2013.



Comparing rainfall on Bleadon Hill over the summer months of 2012 and 2013



Rainfall is measured in millimetres where 25.4mm equals one inch.

For the months March to September the total rainfall was **820mm in 2012** and just **359mm in 2013**.

During this period we had 95 dry days in 2012 and 121 dry days in 2013.

In 2011 the total rainfall for the year was 835mm (33"), so we could be in for quite a bit of rain between now and Christmas.

Don't blame me if it is very wet. I only record it! *Chris Cudlipp*



Mobile library

The mobile library rolls into Bleadon every fortnight on a Friday morning. Its next scheduled stop is on Friday 22nd November, from 10.45 until 12.45.

It parks up in Coronation Road near the church and brings with it friendly staff and lots of books. Talking and large print books too.

You can return items you borrow to any North Somerset library.

On board you can also browse the entire on-line catalogue and the internet.

FRIDAYS

Nov 8 + 22

Dec 6 + 20

Jan 3, 17 + 31

Feb 14 + 28

Mar 14 + 28

Meet our new PCSO

I am Police Community Support Officer Jan Jenkins, and whilst I may be new to Bleadon, I am not new to Avon and Somerset police, with over 20 years' experience, 13 years in the control room as an incident despatcher and 999 calls.

Therefore I'm pretty unshakable and calm natured, which is handy considering I have a husband, 3 grown up children, dependant mother, 2 dogs (German Shepherd, Jack Russell), 6 chickens and foolishly have taken on an allotment.

I hope you find me efficient, friendly and approachable and come and see me at the police beat surgery any Tuesday between 2pm and 3.30 pm, alternatively ring the 101 number and they will check if I am on duty and I will come and see you when I'm free.

This is my preference, face to face contact, rather than an anonymous phone call.

I do work full time shift work, opposite shifts to PC Dave Eastham, so hopefully you should always be able to get one of us.

I always check the phone calls and logs recorded and like to follow them up, making sure we have no pattern or escalation in crime, so please no matter how small please report it via the 101 number, it may well be the missing part of the link.

Please bear with me till I get to know you all, I'm not quite in uniform yet following surgery.

I also cover Hutton, Locking Village, Locking Parklands, RAF Locking, Oak tree Park and St Georges. Recently I have been very busy securing funding and setting up no cold calling zones for all my villages. With Grateful support from the Neighbour Hood Watch Co-ordinators.

Kind regards to you all

Jan Jenkins

Village News met up with Jan at one of the regular Tuesday afternoon Police Surgeries in the Church Rooms. This calm and very approachable PCSO brings years of experience to her new village beat, together with, a real enthusiasm to tackle crime and its accompanying social problems.

Jan is clearly a face-to-face problem solver who prefers knocking on doors to making phone calls.



In September this picture was taken during a tour of the amazing Alhambra when Joyce and Ray Tiney visited Andalucia. The Bleadon WI Bag caused quite a stir amongst other visitors.

Bleadon bag Continental travels

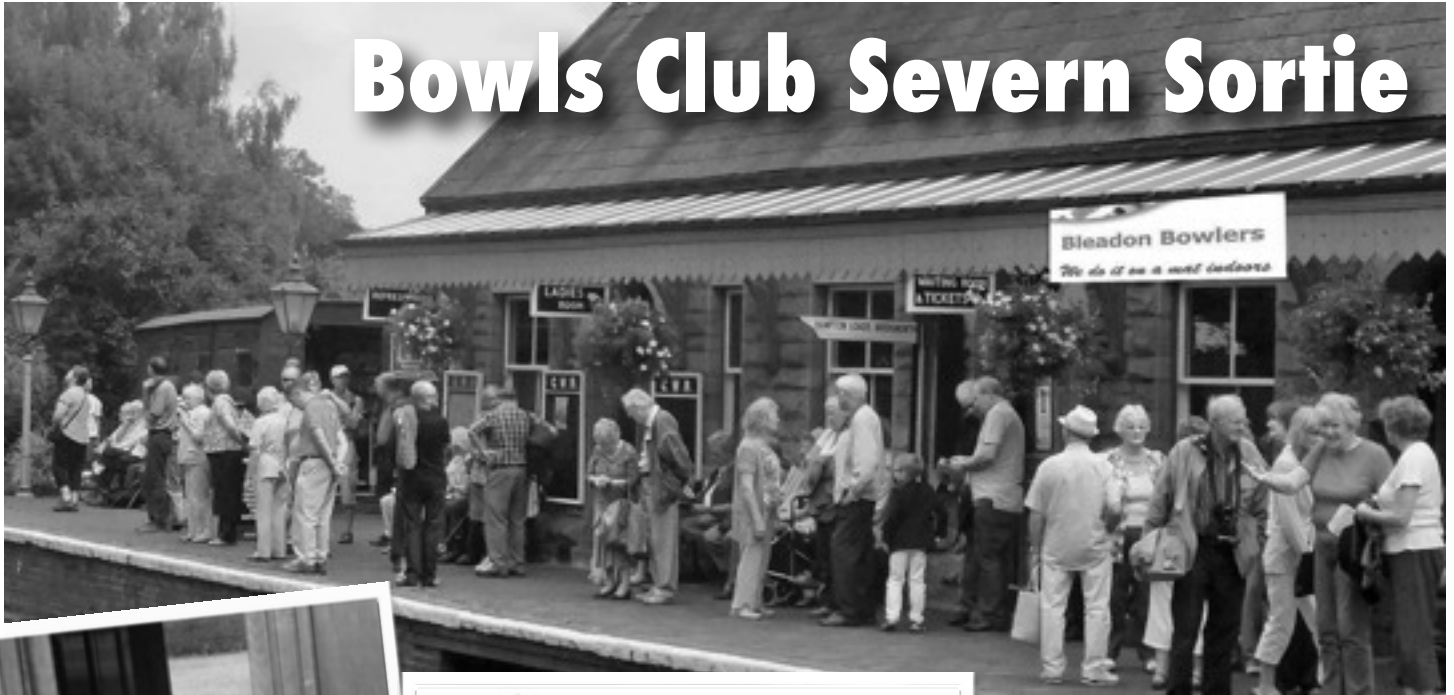
It seems that the Bleadon bag now has competition from a hot new WI contender when it comes to travelling the globe.

Either way - just keep spreading the word and sending us the pics to prove it.



Up Pompeii. Penny Robinson took her Bleadon bag on a visit to ancient Pompeii earlier this year.

Bowls Club Severn Sortie



The Severn Valley Railway, operating steam-hauled trains the sixteen miles between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, provided the venue for this year's day out.

All about timing Malcolm tells us: up at cock-crow for the coach (08.00), Kidderminster in time for the train (10.25), comfort stop and visitor centre at Highley (1hr 15min) - an exhibit here that caused villains to do time, catch the train to Bridgnorth (12.21 arr.12.47) - a place where National Servicemen will recall the fun of drill time, finally a prompt departure (16.30) for home in fear of an expensive marooning in Shropshire. Pleased to report it all went like clockwork.

We rode the rail in period third-class carriages behind a Great Western 4-6-0 locomotive. More period



pieces were awaiting at Highley where eight full-size engines and diverse other interesting memorabilia were housed in the Engine House - including the actual travelling post office plundered during the 'great train robbery' - it's a place worth a visit in its own right.

Bridgnorth, rich in 17th Century buildings, is a feast of flowers in summer and we found it a pleasant place to spend the afternoon. For oldies, a cliff railway avoids a 178-step climb between high town and low town, the latter having an extensive riverside park and picnic area. Too soon perhaps we all assembled on time for the return journey but - (Dare I whisper?) - the coach was late.

Once stabilised on the motorway, in-coach hostesses Mandy and Grace were soon distributing raffle prizes to the lucky and Malcolm announced the quiz question. Not this year the dimensions of Mr Brunel's odd accomplishments but 'How much water was needed by our engine during a full days travel on the route?' Answers based on no data except number of journeys made naturally produced bizarre results and only one (a closet anorak I fear) got near it at 6000 gallons. In a photo finish for the wooden spoon, 'a great deal' won over Janet's 'twenty-four gallons'; she obviously thinking of how much the driver and fireman needed for their tea.



Another happy time then, thanks again to organisers Malcolm and Grace and those attending.

Pete Williams

Sociable Bleadon

Lot's going on

We are well blessed with over 20 clubs and social groups here in our little village. If you would like to join in the fun just pop along and introduce yourself. You will always be welcomed with a smile and a warm handshake. Many groups meet in the Coronation Hall. Check notice-boards.

Across the Severn

The Bleadon Horticultural Society summer trip to Dyffryn Gardens and House near Cardiff provided a delightful day out for the 48 gardening enthusiasts. Warm and sunny July weather, combined with 55 acres of Edwardian gardens and a Victorian mansion undergoing restoration made for a full day of exploration.

One of the latest National Trust additions in Wales, Dyffryn Gardens is an exceptional collection of garden rooms, formal lawns, statuary and an arboretum. In the mansion significant parts have been restored to their Victorian splendour. The light and airy cafe provided welcome sustenance for those of us seeking refreshment between explorations.



Sociable Bleadon

Monthly Village Market

In the Coronation Halls on **the third Saturday of every month** From 9am - 12.30pm. Dozens of stalls packed with delights. The usual refreshments and a chance to catch up with friends.



Saturday 7 December Christmas Market - always our biggest and brightest market of the year. There will be over 40 stalls packed with seasonal goodies and gift ideas. In the Coronation Hall and the Youth Centre from 9 to 12.30.

Sunday Club

On the **first Sunday of the month** youngsters of any age can come along to the Church Rooms for fun and games. Assemble in the church at 10.15 before we pop across the road to the Church Rooms. Usually goes through until about 11.30.

Bleadon Ladies Club - a plea

Meets the **second Tuesday of the month** in the Coronation Hall at 2.30pm. Yes we are still open, but where are you all? After many protestations last January, at the threat of closure, I decided to try and keep the club open. We have had a year of very interesting speakers and activities but our numbers have fallen in spite of free membership.

I feel that closure is a likely outcome after our Christmas lunch in December but it is up to you ladies to come and support the club. *For more information call Jo Lucas on 812 759*

Bleadon Horticultural Society

Third Tuesday of the month in the Coronation Hall at 7.30pm.

19 Nov. A new take on Christmas.
17 Dec. Beetle Drive & American Supper.

21 Jan. Gardening with wildlife in mind
18 Feb. Winter to early Spring

Saturday 8 March Spring Flower Show

Friendship Club

We welcome some very interesting speakers coming to the club during the coming months. Plus various musical items, quizzes, raffles and more. Come along to the Coronation Hall on a Friday afternoon, we are just a small group of people who always welcome new Friends. **Friday afternoons** 2.15 - 4pm. £1 *Audrey Lee*

Baby & Toddler Group

In the Coronation Hall **Wednesday mornings** from 9.30 - 11.30 during term time. Open to all pre-school children in the village and the surrounding area.

Bleadon Youth Club

Open to young people aged 10 to 18yrs from 6.30 -9.30pm. on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays**. Just £1.50 per session.

See the BYC notice board for full programme details.

Nature Kids New term starts Tuesday 5 and Thursday 7 November, **Purn House Farm, Bleadon**. Come and join us this term to make things that fly, learn about migration and explore a winter wonder woodland. Plus we will have plenty of games, digging up worms and of course...hot chocolate! Designed for 2-4 year olds and their carers. Contact Sarah on 07884203766 or see www.nature-kids.co.uk



Regular Coronation Hall events

Mondays

Bleadon Bridge Club 2-5pm

Exercise Classes** 7-8pm + 8-9pm

British Sugarcraft Guild 1st Mon 7.30pm

Bleadon Parish Council 2nd Mon 7.30pm

Tuesdays

Bleadon Ladies Club 2nd Tues 2.30-4pm

Short Mat Bowls 2.30-4.30pm Sept-May

Bleadon Brownies** 6-7.30 pm

Bleadon Photographic Group 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th Tues 7.30 pm (Sept-May)

Bleadon Horticultural Soc 3rd Tues 7.30 pm (Oct-June)

Wednesdays

Toddler Group 9.30-11.30

Yoga Class** 9.30-10.30

Bleadon Players/Rehearsals 7.30pm

Bleadon Pilates** 7pm

Thursdays

Bleadon Art Group** 10-noon

Bleadon WI 7.30 2nd Thurs

Bleadon Folk Dancing Group 8pm 3rd Thurs (Sept-June)

Bleadon Sugarcraft Club 7.30pm 4th Thurs

Fridays

Bleadon Friendship Club 2-4pm

Short Mat Bowls Club** 7pm

Saturdays

Village Market 9-12.30 3rd Saturday

Sundays

Short Mat Bowls Club** 2.30 (Sept-May)

**in the Jubilee Room

See notice board for contact details

The Halls are available for hire by private individuals or organisations.

There's a reduced rate for Bleadon residents. Call Joanne Jones on **812 370**.

Coach trip to Salisbury

Christmas Market on Tuesday 10 December. Pick up from Bleadon Road/Bridge Road bus stop at 9.15am. Return for 6pm so you should have at least five hours to explore lovely Salisbury and shop 'til you drop.. Cost £10pp. A £5 deposit secures your place. Call Gina or Di on 814237. Cheques payable to Friends of Bleadon Church.

Sociable Bleadon

Croquet Club

Weston super Mare Croquet club closed their lawns for the season on Friday 11th October to end their 2013 season. Improving plus remedial works begin immediately on the lawns to enhance playing conditions for next year. The season has met with excellent weather for play, only a couple of days were lost through bad weather during the season. Teams from Milton Keynes and Broadwas (Worcester) have been entertained in friendly matches and the 7club teams have hosted many league games with good results. The highlight of the season was the Association Croquet team captained by Brian Robinson won the overall league cup, proving to be the champions of four individual league winners.



During the close season the croquet members plus family and friends meet on a **Thursday afternoon in the Coronation Hall for a Whist Drive starting at 2pm**, any villager wishing to come along and join us would be most welcome.

Bleadon Party...thank you

Following the very successful Bleadon Party earlier this year, I would like to write and offer my congratulations to the organisers on what has to be the best event yet.

I am also writing on behalf of the local branch of the Cystic Fibrosis Research Trust to thank the committee for the wonderful donation towards finding an effective cure for CF. It seems right, after so many thousands of pounds having been raised, to recognise the hard work that goes into this party- and to help the committee realise that the hard earned donations are going to such a good cause.

Being from a family that is affected by this hereditary disease, we are only too aware of how much progress is being made, so it is perhaps important to pass some information on to the donors.

The DNA sequence was only identified in 1988. Since then work has progressed on treating the symptoms- to great effect. But now, genetic modification is being used to correct some of the faulty genes. Although in early 2000 a trial didn't work as planned, the transport of the



drug into the lungs has now been redesigned and phase 2 trials are underway.

This is the most exciting stage as drugs are now being issued to some trial patients at three sites in the UK.

Meanwhile, other drugs are being 'fast-tracked' in the US and many other countries are working with the drug developers. The UK is different in that it is the CF Trust that has funded the research to bring the drug work forwards- due to so relatively few sufferers.

We are now at a stage when a potential 'cure' of many of the symptoms is in reach so this is not a good time to slow down on research funding!

We look forward to the day when we can turn our efforts to fund raising for another hereditary illness!

Thank you to all those that support this fantastic event.

Alistair and Charlotte House

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Bleadon Village Monthly Market & community cafe

**SAT
16
NOV**

**SAT
7
DEC**

**SAT
18
JAN**

**SAT
15
FEB**

**in the Coronation Halls
from 9 to 12.30**

Call Joanne on 01934 812 370 for more info

Sociable Bleadon



The Parish Church of St. Peter & St. Paul Christmas services

Sunday, 15th December

10.15am CHRISTINGLE

Children will have the opportunity to make a Christingle during this service and children are asked to bring a toy as a gift for children in need

Sunday, 22nd December

3pm SERVICE OF CAROLS AND NINE LESSONS

Hear again the story of Christmas from the Bible, listen to our choir and sing Christmas carols

Tuesday, 24th Dec. (Christmas Eve)

5pm CRIB SERVICE

Especially for the children, but all will be welcome

Christmas Eve

11.30pm MIDNIGHT MASS OF CHRISTMAS

The essential start of Christmas for all

Wednesday, 25th December

Christmas Day

10.15am FAMILY COMMUNION WITH CAROLS

Children are invited to bring their presents to show the congregation. Everyone will be most welcome at all of our services

During the vacancy please direct all enquiries regarding baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. to the Rev. Steve Hartree 01934 811849

Church repairs and improvements

Many of you may be aware that the church electrics need urgent attention (with complete rewiring and updating of lighting and heating) as they are in a dangerous state.

The exterior stonework of the church also needs re-pointing and other minor works, and the sound system is to be improved.

The church architect has drawn up a specification for the work and quotations have been sought from contractors. The total cost of the works is estimated at £65,000.

Currently funding is being sought from charitable sources and the reserves held by the Parochial Church Council will be utilised partly to finance the work. A donation of £500 from Bleadon Parish Council is also gratefully acknowledged.

There will be a need to raise funds for the planned work within Bleadon and a Gift Day will be held in February 2014



Brian Robinson captured this rather mystic moment on his phone as he waited for the bus one misty morning in October.

The Bleadon Big Christmas Lucky Ticket Draw

The Bleadon Big Christmas Draw will be made on Sunday 22 December 2013 at 8pm in the Queens Arms, Celtic Way, Bleadon

Lucky Draw tickets available from the bar at the Queens Arms and from Miles Orme - text him on 07989 410767

All profits from sale of tickets go to the Bleadon Youth Club improvements programme.

PRIZES

Meal for 4 at the Queens Arms
£25 cash prize
Butcombe Party Tin
Bottle Champagne
Brandy . Vodka . Wine
PLUS many more prizes

www.bleadon.org.uk

is an independent online community resource for Bleadon village community and beyond. Get on-line and get involved.



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- Fencing erected & repaired
- Shed erection & repair

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contact the Editor on **01934 813 127**

bleadon.editor@btinternet.com

Advertising rates start at just £20

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Village people

Royston Walters continues his revelations about Bleadon villagers. Here he meets up with Peter Briffitt



At one time there were 36 garages in and around Weston that provided a full service for motorists, that is, a one stop shop where you can go to buy a car, get it repaired and fill it with fuel. Amazingly, there is only one that remains and it's just down the road from you.

The pace of change is sometimes staggering but here is a snapshot of how some things change and some things don't.

Peter Briffitt owns Bridge Garage in Bleadon and has done for 28 years. They sell and service cars, they have fuel, check tyre pressures and oil levels but they do it all for you - just like the good old days.

From his earliest memory Peter knew he could do things with his hands, was always interested in what made things go tick, whirr, ping or clank. The 'innards' of everything held a special fascination for him. He was naturally endowed with skills meant for wheels and cogs, he had a God given gift for the expert grasp of complex detail.

Peter's parents were good people but failed to see how his natural inclinations could be turned to a 'respectable' occupation. He left

school at fifteen and, at his father's behest, got a job at the Westminster Bank, he was the youngest person they'd ever employed.

After an induction course he ended up at the Axbridge branch, pushing paper and pressing buttons, then to a bigger branch in Bristol where he pushed more paper and pressed more buttons. Westminster Bank funded evening classes for him in 'Principles of Banking', Economics and Law which led to a promotion to the Burnham-on-Sea branch where he pushed yet more paper and pressed yet more buttons.

He stayed at the bank for seven years and what alleviated the tedium was his first car. As soon as he was 17 he and a friend went half shares in a 1934 Ford 8 which they bought for £17.15 shillings, this was a very good deal for Peter because his friend couldn't drive! That car was Peter's joy and delight and every bit of spare cash and spare time was spent lovingly tending it; not that there was much spare cash. 'New' tyres for instance had to be purchased second hand and 'bald', he would fit them himself and run them until the canvas showed through. Truth is he couldn't afford to

run the car that often, mostly he bicycled to work in Burnham because he couldn't afford the petrol for work and leisure.

SOMETHING.....had to be done about his finances.

He got a job at the Victoria Garage in Alfred Street as a weekend petrol pump attendant, he worked from 1pm until 10pm on Saturday and Sunday and working these two days increased his total pay by nearly half. This garage sold Jaguars, Triumphs, Hillmans, Humbers and Sunbeams and during quiet evening periods Peter had the whole place to himself and he was free to wander the showroom and wonder at all the gleaming machinery on display.

With his new found wealth he was able to buy his own car. He fell in love with an aged 'MG' sports car for sale at the garage. It was in 'Old English White' with a red leather interior, she was sleek and pretty as a picture. Like all young men in love he was oblivious to this female's faults, after all, the workings of a car held no fear for him. However after driving his new car for only a few days he realised the engine was in a sad and sorry state. He complained to the management that they had sold him a pup.

It was at this point it became apparent that his time at the bank had not been an entire waste of time, his study of law meant that Peter could recite to them, almost to the letter, the Sale of Goods Act. He brilliantly organized his arguments, the company buckled and agreed to put a brand new engine in his car. Another surprising consequence was that they were so impressed with his negotiating skills that they offered him a job as a salesman, same pay as the bank plus commission plus a company car. Oh joy complete!

Peter had a good boss, Weston-super-Mare was prosperous and business was brisk, within two years

he was the senior salesman. Among his really good memories of that time was when he had to deliver a new red, soft top 'E' Type Jaguar. It was a sunny warm day and it had to be driven to its new owner in south Wales. With the top down, the six cylinder engine in turn, growling or purring and the wind in his hair he meditated on what a wonderful job he had.

During this time there were three Rolls Royces in Weston, one was a Silver Wraith limousine run by the owner of Weston pier, when he died his family asked the Victoria Garage to sell it. Peter sold it quickly and was asked to deliver it. It was the first time he had driven a Rolls, the first time he was able to fully appreciate the silky precision of the of the best British engineering. Somewhere along the seventy or so miles of that journey began his lifelong affection for the Rolls Royce marque.

A young man living at home with his parents brings with it the usual tensions and Peter begins to look for his own place to live. Mortgages were hard to come by then and the only property which matched the criteria by which the building societies would lend money was a bungalow in Locking which was in the process of being built. He had sold everything he had to make up the deposit for the property but it was still more than he could afford so he reached a deal with the builder to let him have the property without downpipes, no central heating and undecorated.

It is Christmas 1966, Peter goes to a dance at the Winter Gardens and sees a stranger across a crowded room. I know, it's a quaint and cutesy cliché but not when it's actually happening to you! The stranger was Sonia, a nurse working at the BRI and it was the first Christmas she hadn't worked in three years. For a man with an eye for graceful elegance it was love at first sight, it was the day after Sonia's twenty first birthday and they have been together ever since.

That's not the whole story though. Apparently, she took some wooing and wasn't easily won, she insists she wasn't playing 'hard to get' she was just very shy.

Peter's avuncular boss at the Victoria Garage dies suddenly and the business is sold to a large corporation. His new boss has no experience in the motor trade and sees everything in terms of the 'bottom line', someone for whom he can have little respect. Within six months Peter, with Sonia's support, decide to set up in business for themselves, no small decision with a baby on the way. They buy a house in Congresbury in the garden of which the owner has erected a large workshop, opposite the house is a filling station. Peter negotiates the hire of some space on the forecourt on which he hopes to sell cars, 'White House Garage' is born.

The business prospers, the Briffitt's first son is followed by another son and then two more.... twins! A few years later they take on the lease of a large garage in Yatton owned by an international petrol company. Again the business flourishes but after five years, in an abrupt and spiky turn of fate, the owners seek a five fold increase in rent on a full maintenance lease, it also coincides with the beginning of the recession at the start of the eighties. All at once everything seems to be disintegrating. The increased rent demanded would make any profit impossible, they have to leave the premises and they have no income. They sell their house and the family, now six of them, are lent a small flat by a friend in which to live.

Peter never loses his affection for the motor trade but funds are dwindling fast when he hears that a business in Bleadon is up for sale. Soon, in 1985, Bridge Road Garage has a new owner and the long process of building up another enterprise begins.

I have known Peter for no more than half an hour and what strikes me is his courtesy, his correctness, propriety and, dare I say, his

respectability. (His parents would be proud) I asked him how all this stood up in a profession often seen as one where shadowy deals are the norm, where the 'shy and reserved' secondhand car salesman is a standard joke, where standards are ill defined and where 'the punters' are regularly 'taken for a ride'.

He genially dismisses the stereotypes, saying his business philosophy, such as it is, is based on the love and appreciation of great engineering and on the satisfaction of making something work, that before - didn't. "In a village the size of Bleadon, you couldn't fool people for long even if you wanted to. And why would I want to, I've met some lovely people here?"

On these points I have the testimony of a customer of his. A family of limited means had a trip to Scotland planned when two days before they meant to go the back axle on their car 'broke'. A replacement from the dealership was out of the question and no guarantee about when it would be ready anyway. Peter took the car and worked until 10pm on the night before they were to depart to repair the vehicle. The cost was less than half what it might have been but more importantly the holiday was saved. His name is still spoken in hushed tones in that house and they remain loyal customers.

In his time Peter has owned three Aston Martins, two Ferraris, two Rolls Royce Silver Spirits and a Bristol 410. All of them at one time or another had their engines stripped and put back together!

Peter is now 72 and still works six days a week, his skills and passion for engineering undiminished and indulged with Sonia's support for him and their family.

Last week they celebrated their 44th wedding anniversary. Last week they sold and serviced some cars. Last week they pumped some fuel and checked the oil for some regular customers.

Love, fidelity, pride in one's work - some things never change.

Bleadon Parish Council meets on the **second Monday of the month** at 7.30pm in the Coronation Hall.

An **Agenda** is published on the Parish notice boards and the website at least three days before the meeting.

We welcome parishioners to attend meetings and get actively involved in things that matter to Bleadon.



Email address for the Parish Clerk
parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Parishioners' Voice is your opportunity at the start of each meeting for you to talk briefly to the Council about any issues you have.

If there is a particular issue you would like to raise **please let the Parish Clerk know by the Friday before the meeting.** This will give him the chance to collect the most up-to-date information available. If it's a last minute issue you wish to raise you can still ask to address the Council but they may not immediately have the answers you require.

Send all correspondence about Bleadon Parish Council matters to the Parish Clerk:
Bruce Poole, Bleadon Parish Council,
Rooftops, 10 South Street,
Burnham-on-Sea TA8 1BS

Tel: 07887 802 922

parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Visit the Bleadon parish website at:
www.bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

You will be heard

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If there is a particular issue you would like to raise **please let the Parish Clerk know by the Friday before the meeting.** This will give him the chance to collect the most up-to-date information available.

Your Bleadon Parish Councillors

I D Clarke	The Granary, Mulberry Lane, Bleadon	Tel: 815182
Steve Hartree	Chestnuts, Chestnut Lane, Bleadon	Tel: 811849
Robert House	Purn House Villa, Purn Lane, Bleadon	Tel: 815 588
Ian Findlay	The Mount, Shiplate Road, Bleadon	Tel: 812 862
Clive Morris (Vice Chair)	20 Bleadon Mill, Bleadon	Tel: 811 591
Miles Orme	Purn House, Bleadon Road, Bleadon	07989 410767
Keith Pyke	8 Whitegate Close, Bleadon	Tel: 813 127
Mary Sheppard	Littlewood, Bridgwater Road, Lympham	Tel: 812 921
Penny Skelley (Chairman)	Mendip Croft, Celtic Way, Bleadon	Tel: 815 331

Bleadon Village News is published by Bleadon Parish Council.

Contributions to this magazine are very welcome, so long as they are about Bleadon or can directly benefit its residents. Please ensure that your editorial or advertising material reaches the editor at least two weeks before publication.

Send your Village News contributions to:

Keith Pyke, *Village News Editor*

8 Whitegate Close, Bleadon BS24 0PW

bleadon.editor@btinternet.com Tel: 01934 813 127

Unless otherwise stated the opinions and comments expressed in this publication are those of the editor or contributor and may not be those of Bleadon Parish Council.

We aim to provide a copy of this magazine free to every household and business in Bleadon. Additional copies are usually available from the editor. We are grateful to the band of volunteers who deliver this newsletter to households. If you can help let me know.

We do need more volunteer distributors. If you are able to help deliver this magazine to households in Purn Way/Chestnut Lane or around Bridge Garage please contact the editor on 01934 813 127

The copy deadline for you to email your contributions for the Spring edition of Bleadon Village News is Friday 28 February 2014.
bleadon.editor@btinternet.com



Bleadon brilliant!

The Catherines Inn once again dazzled us with a free firework display to celebrate bonfire night.

Families turned out in their hundreds to watch the spectacle, enjoy a pint and a burger or two. Thanks Catherine.

ENGLAND

Beachlands Hotel

17 Uphill Road North, Weston-super-Mare

December Dinner Menu Monday to Thursday

To start

Home-made Stilton & broccoli soup with croutons

Crispy breaded mushrooms filled with Ardennes pate served with a spicy orange compot

Filo pastry parcels filled with crispy duck, spring onion, mandarins and winter greens with plum sauce

Salad of blueberries, kiwi & melon served with apricot sorbet dusted with ginger

Crab & smoked salmon salad with winter leaves and toasted pine kernels

Whole baked Camembert served with homemade chutney and crudites

Traditional prawn cocktail

Mains

8oz Sirloin steak served with black peppercorn sauce, handcut chips and peas*

Fillet of salmon with a creamy prawn & asparagus sauce on a bed of quinoa

Traditional roast turkey with bread sauce, sausage, bacon, pear & sage stuffing and gravy

Wafer thin crepes filled with leeks and spinach topped with roasted vine tomatoes & pesto bechamel

Fillet of seabass with a chive mash and lobster bisque

Lemon chicken with curly kale, crispy prosciutto and caramalised pineapple

Loin of pork with apple fritters and a brandy cream sauce

Green Thai vegetable curry with coconut milk, lemon grass and pak choi

Desserts

Traditional homemade Christmas pudding with cream and brandy butter

Blackberry ice-cream with crushed meringue, whipped cream and sweet fruits of the forest

Homemade chocolate brownie topped with vanilla ice-cream

Traditional banana split with strawberry ice-cream, whipped cream, chocolate sauce, toasted almonds & a cherry

Homemade Bakewell tart with custard

Homemade chocolate mousse topped with white chocolate dipped strawberries

Selection of cheese and biscuits

Two courses £18.50 / three courses £21.50 pp

Both options include complimentary coffee or tea, mince pie and cracker

* this dish carries a £2.50 supplement



Party nights every Friday and Saturday in December

Call 01934 621 401 for details and prices

To book your table call 01934 621 401