

Bleadon village

FREE to Bleadon homes

news

Spring 2012 - Issue 92

www.bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk



**WI
fund
raiser
success**



**Two women
winning
against all
the odds**



Safer play on the way

A night of fun dedicated to a fun girl

This year's panto production was dedicated to the memory of Alice Hicks, the young girl from Bleadon who tragically lost her life recently in an accident.

When she was a little girl, Alice was a young Bleadon Player. Appearing on-stage with her brother and friends in several pantomimes. We are sure that Alice would have been proud of the success of Rumpelstiltskin and the wonderful support given by the audiences.



PYROTECHNIC EFFECTS
WILL BE USED DURING THIS
PERFORMANCE -
*- but they're not half as
scary as the songs!*

Look out for the Bleadon Players' next stage production in May

A short report for the beginning of the year. Firstly, you will see there is an inset in this Village News from Marshalls. The

Parish Council will work to keep abreast of Marshalls plans for their Bleadon site. At this stage progress is slower than had been anticipated. No planning permission has yet been applied for and I reiterate we are the local link between Marshalls and North Somerset Council. Eventually all will be in the public domain either through this publication and/or a presentation by Marshalls in the Coronation Hall later in the year.

In spite of the cold, grey early days of the year we have as a Parish much to look forward to. For the first time a **Parish Civic Service** will be held on Sunday 22nd April at St Peter and St Paul's here in Bleadon. The following day April 23rd The **Annual Parish Meeting** will take place. Please come and hear what your Parish Council has been up to, find out what we spend your money on and hear what we have planned.

Other Bleadon events in the village calendar is the **May Day Fayre** followed in June by the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee** fun packed weekend. The **Scarecrow Festival** entitled "Kings and Queens" has been moved to June this year. A **Contactus Party** is planned for mid June to welcome the new residents to our community.

The village bus service is constantly under review. Recently a site meeting was held at the Veale with the Parish Council, North Somerset Council and Webber Bus where we tried to resolve the issues of re-instating the bus service to the Veale. My interpretation being that there would be no added service, no new bus stop, no turning point and certainly no reversing.

I hope you find all the information you need in this ace magazine.

Penny Skelley

Chairman Bleadon Parish Council



Editor's view

With this Spring issue of Bleadon Village News you should receive a **Bleadon Housing Needs survey**. It is important to the future of this village that you complete and return the survey form.

Please take the time to talk with family members, fill in the survey and return it as soon as possible. **A Freepost reply-paid envelope is included, so there is no need for a stamp.**

It just requires a few minutes of your time and some thought about your family's future housing needs.

Assessing future need

It should be made clear that this Housing Needs Survey is being conducted by researchers at Leeds University on behalf of Marshalls.

As part of any plans that Marshalls may have for the future redevelopment of their Bridge Road quarry site they, the Parish Council and the District Council, need to know what the future **local** demand is likely to be for housing in Bleadon.

The information you provide will help the District Council to formulate what types of housing need to be provided in Bleadon in the future.

Our needs change

As we grow older our housing needs change. Families develop and grow larger or smaller. Our children leave home and have to find somewhere affordable to live. It would be nice if they could continue to live close by, in the village they grew up in. Unfortunately, couples become singles, our parents need support, we grow older and infirm. All this adds to our changing needs when it comes to a roof over our heads.

A home for life

Bleadon is one of those blessed places where people like to "settle down". It doesn't strike me as having much of a transient population. I'd like to think that most of us plan to enjoy the rest of our lives here.

Therefore, we need to ensure that we have a suitable mix of housing to accommodate people at all stages of life. As our lives change we may need different types of housing at prices that suit pockets short and long.

Helping Parish planning

The last housing needs survey was conducted by the parish council some six years ago as part of the Parish Plan process. In a rapidly changing world we need to be up-to-date on our parish's needs.

Whether the Marshalls development goes ahead or not the parish council has to prepare for Bleadon's future needs. So we are grateful that this work is being undertaken now by Marshalls at no cost to the parish council. Otherwise the parish council taxpayer would have been picking up the tab for this research sometime in the near future.

Ultimately, North Somerset planners and the economy will decide what and when any development takes place in our village, but we all have a chance here to have our say about what our future needs may be.

In the meantime, the parish council and Marshalls will continue to work together to ensure that we all get the best for Bleadon - now and in the future.

Editor



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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.

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NEWS & views

Veale bus service trials and tribulations

On a damp January morning Parish councillors met with North Somerset Council and Webber Bus representatives to try and resolve the problems created by the recent withdrawal of the 83 service to the Veale.

Whilst there was sympathy and encouraging smiles from the North Somerset officer and nods of agreement from the Webber Bus management it was clear to this observer that the driver was the problem.



The body language tells the story

It should be pretty straight-forward. Reverse the bus down into the Veale to do a three-point-turn (remember them from your Driving Test?). Then park up off the road to pick up passengers. Other bus company drivers have been doing this manoeuvre at the Veale for eons without incident. But then, the buses are bigger now.

It seems that for this seasoned Webber driver this is too much of a challenge. On top of that, turning right at the junction of Shiplate and Celtic Way is downright suicidal ! Then there's the problem of brewery lorries outside the pub. Other vehicles come tearing down Celtic Way. The summer traffic in Weston - plays havoc with the schedules. The excuses were numerous.

All this sounds like an everyday challenge to most of us Bleadon residents. But for this senior driver it is all too much it seems. Maybe time to look for another job?

The result of all this carping was a schedule of highway improvements to accommodate easier turning at the top of the Veale that will probably cost tens of thousands. In the current financial climate I cannot see it happening. But the North Somerset officer promised to go back to the Town Hall and ask the Executive councillor responsible if the funding would be forthcoming.

Better start waiting for Hell to freeze over.

Editor



The good news for Veale residents

Coombs continue to provide the weekly 831 service into Weston on a Wednesday at 10am.

It was good to see the Coombs bus picking up passengers at the Veale whilst we "consulted" with Webber and North Somerset. It ain't much, but it's better than nothing.



WiFi installed in Coronation Hall

The Parish Council is set to install BT Broadband in the Coronation Hall. At the time of writing this is scheduled for 22 February.

We haven't had the opportunity to test it yet, but we are hoping that this will allow free public WiFi access for internet browsing in the surrounding public space. This will, hopefully, include at least some of the car park and play area.

The BT broadband hub will be located inside the Coronation Hall. This will allow hall users to wirelessly access websites via their laptops, tablet devices and iPods. Thus opening up the whole worldwide web to presentations and events in the hall.



NEWS

Our Big Society

The success of our many village activities depend on people who are willing to go the extra mile to make things work. If you've got something to give - please DO.

Paperless Planning

Bleadon has benefitted directly from the move by North Somerset Council towards paperless Planning procedures by acquiring information technology kit at a heavily subsidised price.

In the near future North Somerset will no longer be sending out paper copies of Planning Applications for consideration by the parish council. In order to ensure that the parish council continues to have full access to planning information the District Council has provided us with a laptop, portable projector, portable screen and a printer for a nominal contribution of just £100 from the parish council.

By linking with the new wireless broadband in the Coronation Hall (see story left) this will now allow the parish council's planning committee to consider local planning issues via the North Somerset website. Rather than pouring over unwieldy paper plans.



We already have a projector permanently fixed up in the main Coronation Hall and linked wirelessly to the parish laptop. This additional equipment should now allow us the flexibility to make presentations and view on-line information in the Jubilee Room and Bleadon Youth Centre as well.



David stands down

Work commitments and other family pressures have forced Cllr David Plaister to stand down from Bleadon Parish Council just nine months after being elected.

We shall all miss David's no-nonsense professionalism. In his short term on the parish council he has provided a welcome shot in the sometimes sluggish arm of the grass roots democratic process.

New councillor needed

This means, of course, that we be looking to fill the yawning gap left by David's resignation. If you've got the energy, time and community commitment necessary to be a good parish councillor we would love to hear from you. You can speak to any Bleadon parish councillor if you want to find out what's involved.

We want our parish council to continue to be vibrant and active, filled with people who are willing to get involved and help shape our community. Yes, it does mean that you will have to stand up and take responsibility for your actions, fight your corner on occasions and put our community first.

If you are interested in becoming a Bleadon Parish Councillor please email Bruce Poole at: parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

North Somerset should be advertising the vacancy in the weeks to come.

Parish Precept set to rise

After this year's reduction in the parish council's portion of your Council Tax bill, I'm afraid that in April we will see an increase of 6.25% in the Precept.

For an average Band D property in Bleadon that means an annual increase of £4.67. That's 9p a week.

The parish council has set an annual budget spend of £51,415 for the coming year. The Precept (Council Tax) will bring us £40,000. So we shall be drawing on our reserves and income for the remaining £11,415.

The parish council is facing some significant expenditure over the coming months with emergency work on repairing the churchyard wall and replacement of corroding play equipment in the play area.

This year's **Annual Parish Meeting** will take place on **Monday 23 April at 8pm** in the Coronation Hall.

This is the opportunity for Bleadon residents to discover what the parish council has been up to and what we intend to spend your money on.

This is not a Parish Council meeting.

It's an open public meeting with parish councillors attending as members of the public.

All Bleadon residents are welcome to join us from 7pm onwards for a glass of wine and a chat.

By then we may have some information from Marshalls about their plans for the Bridge Road site.

**Your meeting,
your chance to have your
say about Bleadon**

NEWS

Promise of an even better NEW Bleadon Youth Club

The exciting news for the 30 plus youngsters who attend each week is that our youth club looks set to be bigger, better and more inspiring than it's been for decades.

The withdrawal of universal youth club provision by North Somerset Council from 31 March means that the club here in Bleadon has had to work very hard over the past seven months to secure its future.

I'm delighted to report that the current youth leader Mike Jordan has been commissioned by the youth club management committee to continue providing youth club activities. His newly formed **Youthworkx** enterprise will be running the club from 1 April.

Mike plans to run **two sessions a week**, extended over 48 weeks of the year. That's a big improvement on the current NSC provision of one session per week during term time only.

Tuesday evening sessions will focus on project-based activity, while **Thursday's** club will continue to be an open social activity evening. Mike also plans to extend the age range to now include youngsters in school Year 6.

To help fund this new enterprise subs will increase to £2 on Tuesdays and £1.50 on Thursdays.

The management committee has secured an Enabling Grant of £4650 from North Somerset Council. This ensures, that for the coming year at least, the club's future is secure.

On the first evening of the NEW Bleadon Youth Club (**Tuesday 3 April**) we hope to provide a taste of what's to come. **Parents and youngsters are welcome to come along, meet Mike and his team and see what exciting and inspiring things are happening at Bleadon Youth Club for our young people.**



The new replacement play equipment includes two cradle-seat timber swings for toddlers and two senior flat swings.

Plus a timber hexagonal climbing frame with scramble net, climbing bars, pole and rope, and two tumble bars.

Play bark will provide safety in the fall areas - just as it does under the current swings and around the triple-slide multi-play climber.

New equipment for Play Area

After many years of enjoyable use we shall soon be seeing new replacements for the ageing swings and metal climbing frame in the Play Area.

Residents who have seen themselves or their children grow up on the old swings and climbing frame may feel a nostalgic tinge of sadness to see the brightly painted equipment go. But it is reaching the end of its safe and useful life.

Following the advice offered by RoSPA's annual inspection of the play equipment the parish council have commissioned Fenland Leisure Products to install two pairs of new timber frame swings for toddlers and youngsters, and a new timber hexagonal climbing unit at a total cost approaching £10,000.

All of the new equipment will be located at the eastern end of the play area, around the area of the existing swings and multi-climber/slide. The multi-climber slide unit installed three years ago will stay where it is.

Play bark safety surfacing will be installed beneath the swings and hexagonal climber. At the same time we are moving the sand pit and two toddler spring rides to the east end of the play area. This will then free up the west (Coronation Hall) end for games and wider activities on the grassed area away from toddlers.

We hope to get the work completed in late April - after the Easter holidays and before the May Fayre. For safety and security reasons the play area will be closed whilst the work is undertaken.

NEWS



Coronation Hall to get paint job

The main hall is set for a Spring spruce up when contractors move in to redecorate. The work is scheduled for the **last week in March**. Regular hall users are being accommodated in the Jubilee Room or the Youth Centre whilst the work takes place. Work should be completed within the week.

Diamond Queen celebrations?

Bleadon's celebration plans for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee are gradually coming together. Everyone seems to agree that **we should do something**, but few appear willing to stand up and actually do it.

Are we all still suffering from post *Royal Wedding Stress*?

Despite the reticence there are a number of events already planned that should bring a **diamond sparkle to the village over the Jubilee holiday**:

- The parish council has resolved to **give all Bleadon children** under 16 a commemorative gift to mark the occasion. This will probably be a unique Queen's Jubilee **commemorative coin**.
- The **Scarecrow Festival** will be held over the extended holiday weekend. The theme this year being **Kings & Queens**. We want everyone to participate, build a scarecrow and fill the parish with fun and colour this year.
- Somerset **Roast Pork & Cider** will be the tasty lunchtime treat on the Youth Centre Green on Sat 2 June.
- The Friends will be offering scrumptious **Cream Teas** in the Coronation Hall.
- It would be nice to have a street **Party Picnic** in the car-park and play area on the **Sunday**. No doubt the Coronation Hall and Youth Club will be happy to provide the tables and chairs. Everyone can bring their own food and drink. Let's hope that some fun-loving people come forward to organise things!

We hope to have lots more to report in the summer issue of *Bleadon Village News* which should be published before the June event.



Churchyard wall essential repairs

Extensive repairs to the churchyard wall in Mulberry Lane are scheduled to start as soon as the weather and temperatures allow. There will be some disruption to nearby residents as the essential work to make safe the ancient structure takes place.



You can bring our yesterdays to life

The aim of the Bleadon History Group is *'to collect and preserve any archives and artifacts that we have and do our best to encourage study and promote as much interest as possible in the history of the village'*.

I would like to take these ideas forward and to that end I'm asking once again for as many of you who were either born in Bleadon or who have lived here for many years to share with me your memories, in much the same way as you did with the photos a few years back. If you know of people who have moved away who would be willing to help then please let me have a contact address, I know there is a wealth of historical knowledge out there and it needs to be tapped into while there is still time.

The sorts of thing that we are interested in are:-

- Letters
- Photos
- Old postcards
- Maps
- Pamphlets or leaflets of village events
- Diaries of the time etc

But most of all it is your personal memories I want to hear about ... of school, church or chapel, the quarry, farming, transport, commerce, - anything in fact that paints a picture of bygone Bleadon.

I know from the response that I got from publishing the old photos in the past that there is a great interest in Bleadon's History. I should like to turn that into something positive so that the children living in Bleadon today have a permanent record of how it used to be. Please be assured that any precious documents will be taken great care of and personal artifacts will only need to be scanned and/or copied; most of the archive material will only need to be kept on computer at this stage, so as to preserve the information on disc.

Penny Robinson
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01934 814 142

Desert raid

Liz Wiggins is a villager who undertook a huge challenge in November, raising money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer in the process. She participated in a five day race in Oman. Running 195 kms and over 6000 feet

of climb. From the mountains to the sea through the dunes of the Wahiba desert.

She tells her remarkable and inspiring story on her iPhone at 35,000 feet.



I'm sat on the plane, flying home to England after completing the Oman Desert Raid.

Wow - what an experience.

I'm already planning my next one though need to secure a sponsor first. My salary as an M&S store employee won't get me very far!!

I ended up sixth overall and first woman but came away feeling that there is most certainly room for improvement.

The mountain I had to climb on stage 1 is something that I have never even come close to before. 3000 feet of climb over 7km and once at the top another 3000 feet of climb to the finish. All in temperatures of over 40 degrees! Didn't get much chance for any similar training in the UK this summer!

I came in sixth for stage 1, just a few minutes behind guys 4 and 5.

Stage 2 was a full marathon with another 6000 feet of climb and some rugged trail. A real beast. Had a strong run in just under 4.5 hours and this time five minutes behind guys 4 and 5.

A cold night and a wet start to stage 3. This was something else. A real adventure downhill race that got the adrenaline pumping. Just over 12 miles back down to sea level with some seriously steep descents.

Set off well, 6-7 minute mileing on rocky trail. Then... the fun began. The rain started and I have never known conditions underfoot to change so fast.

Water came gushing down and the rocks seemed to turn to slippery marble. It was a struggle to stay upright, let alone run! AMAZING! Though I felt my legs could shoot put from under me at any moment I felt

this enormous grin spread across my face. I knew my eta of 1:20 was screwed but I didn't give up.

I was nearing the bottom of the mountain and the trail turned to road. Treacherous. It was a skating rink. I skirted the edge where a river was now flowing and raced on finishing ten minutes later in around 1.30 and seconds behind number 6.

Behind me the landscape had changed dramatically and the other runners were getting stuck along with our back up team and vehicles. Our day bags with our kit for the night time race were in a vehicle half way up the mountain. It had crucial kit for our night time desert run.

A rescue team went up, and over a period of several hours carried our bags down part of the mountain to a rescue vehicle. Everyone and everything was covered in mud and there were many cuts and scrapes! Our original transport had to be abandoned on the mountain.

From here we had a two hour transfer to the Wahiba Desert for our fourth stage.

We changed into clean dry kit, refuelled and fixed sand gaiters to our trainers and glow sticks to our backs.

As the sun went down off we went for another 12 miles through sand dunes.

Magical. It was nearly a full moon and although we had headlamps many of us ran by moonlight. Creatures scurried out in front of us as we dodged odd brittle and spiky clumps of vegetation growing from the desert floor.

Not my best run. Just over 2 hours but finished confident that I had reserved what was required for the 5th and hardest stage early the next morning.

I gave myself a good talking to that night. I planned my race for the marathon in the giant dunes and packed my kit accordingly. I knew I

could be out there for about 6 hours and it was going to be a hot day.

Breakfast was at 6.30 and they advised us that we would start ahead of schedule as temperatures would hit the high 40's. I was confident and strong and set off with purpose. There were 5 check points today as we would need to refill our water packs. CP1 was at 6 miles and I was going well. I was very strict with my refuelling at planned timed intervals. CP2 came at 11 miles and still I was going strong. Legs felt good as did my lungs. I hit the GIANT dunes and here you really had to focus to find the flags and negotiate your way through the rolling dunes. I ran from one massive mound to another but eventually came to a flag and was unable to see the next. All around me was sand (for miles and miles). I wasted about 7 minutes here scouring the landscape for the next small red flag. I was getting anxious. The sun was beating down and I could see no one in front or behind me. What to do? A moment of inspiration - I thought. Footprints. I knew it wasn't the best option but I had to do something. I set off and soon saw two other runners out in front of me. They too were lost and were heading back to me.

I grabbed my map and compass and suggested a route based on the info we had and how far we'd travelled. What I later discovered was that CP3 was in a slightly different place than shown on our guide. Our race organizer had major headaches from the previous day with our vehicles, tents, food and water still half way up the mountain so the briefing hadn't been as thorough as it perhaps could have been.

We crossed another wadi over another set of giant dunes and found ourselves in a valley. Based on the Map info we needed to go south along a sandy trail through small dunes. CP3 never came and I kept running. It was so hot and mentally tough on this never ending trail. One of the organizers 4wd came



up behind me and although communication between us was stilted (French to English) I realised I needed to turn round and head back about 3.5 miles. A horrendous thought but I knew it was my responsibility to get to that check point. I passed the other runners I had been lost with but they weren't prepared to turn back.

I then proceeded to pass about 7 more runners that were heading to the finish.

I wanted to cry. The heat was burning like I've never known. The track just ran on and on in front of me for miles. It took me about 50 minutes to find CP3 where I collected water, ate a bag of crisps for salt and filled my small belt bottles with cola. I had to ration my other supplies now. I needed to turn straight back round and cover this trail for the third time. I had missed this CP by about quarter of a mile!

I was now five hours into my run and had covered 21 miles though only half way though the course. I had calculated getting back in 5.45 so mentally I was beat.

I had been told that 7 other runners had missed the check point but only one other had gone back. He was the guy at the top of the leader board and I later discovered that he had to pull out as the heat was too much. It really was brutal.

I carried on (no idea how) and saw no other runners but did have support from the team who passed twice in the 4wd to provide water and encouragement.

I reached CP4 (I'd nearly been there once before) and once again refuelled. Ahead of me was the toughest part of the marathon. Giant dunes once more. It was also at this point that I noticed that the bottom of my heels on both

feet seemed to be moving around separately from my actual foot. Yuk. Didn't like to think about what was going on down there. My legs were burning with pain. Sun screen only lasts so long and my small pack was used up. I knew the sensible option was to bail out but I also knew I'd lose my position as first lady and I wasn't prepared to do that.

I can't describe how I got through those next miles. I just did.

CP5 was at the top of a near vertical massive dune I had to scale. One step forward two slips back. After more or less ploughed on. Struggling over steep and sheer faces of soft sand from one red flag to another. Each time hoping it would be the last one at the top before heading down to the finish.

I finally reached the penultimate flag along with a fellow Brit. We stumbled down a few hundred feet of sand to the finish line which we crossed together in tears.

I had been out there in that searing, unforgiving desert for 8.5 hours. I was emotionally and physically exhausted. The welcome home was amazing. I imagine the photos taken will show what I went through more than words can describe.

I had covered 33.33 miles but it was over. I cleaned up and then knew that the doc should take a little look at my feet. I'm rather squeamish so I lay down and left it to him. A bit of a state but he fixed me up ready for the sixth and final stage the next morning.

While having treatment I got wind of the days events. Seven other runners had missed CP3 and some of those runners missed CP4 & 5 too having

covered just 36km. One also had ended up travelling the last 5km in a 4wd as he was out of water and the heat was too much.

As you can imagine this led to all kinds of discussion about what should happen to the positioning and whether penalties should be applied.

It was left with the organization to work out a solution while we were transferred to our next camp to prepare for our final race.

Transport was an issue as some of our vehicles were still up the mountain so we were squeezed into the 4wd we had and set off in moonlight to camp which should have been a few hours drive away.

This is another story in itself (so I won't go into great detail). I'll just say that we arrived at camp over 7 hours later and one more vehicle down which we'd had to abandon in the dunes.

The weather on day 3 had started a series of problems which snowballed as the days went on and the decision was made to abandon the final stage for a number of reasons. Safety being the primary concern.

The organizers did everything they could and I in no way hold them responsible. Even after running 182km in those conditions I think I had an easier time than they did.

I finished sixth overall (penalties were applied for the previous day) and first woman in 20 hours and 35 minutes. Proud but convinced I can do better next year. I'm not even home yet but want to go back. First though there is a 45 mile race in Bristol in March I have entered and I have my eye on one in Senegal in the Spring.

I could tell you so much more but am tapping away on my iPhone and have finger fatigue PLUS I want you to read this and if I go on for much more you may not!

Liz Wiggins

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WANTED!

Cleaner for Bleadon Coronation Halls.

To work initially for one hour per week on Friday mornings, but also to provide holiday and sickness cover.

Interested?

Call 812 370
or 811 591

What's on

Check the village notice boards for regular up-dates on the dozens of activities and events in the village.

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.



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. With a range of activities which take place each week including arts and crafts, singing and a soft play area for babies. Visitors provide exciting fun events. Its a great opportunity for your children to play. To meet other mums, dads and grandparents come along any Wednesday morning.

Sunday Club

On the first Sunday of the month youngsters of any age can join Chris and Stevie for fun and games in the Church Meeting Room. Starts in the church at 10.15 and usually goes through until about 11.30.



Coronation Hall AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Management Committee will be held on **Thursday April 19** in the Jubilee Room at 7.30 p.m. You are all welcome to join us.

Bleadon Ladies Club

The Ladies Club meets the **second Tuesday of the month** in the Coronation Hall at 2.30 p.m.

March 13 **History of Fry's Chocolate**
Peter Goodchild

April 10 Display of **Spanish Dancing**
Mrs Katie Gaunt

May 8 **Music of Rogers and Hammerstein** Sing-a-long Terry Merrett Smith

We always welcome new members and feel sure you will have a very enjoyable afternoon with us. A good speaker, a cup of tea and cake or biscuits. A free raffle and ending the afternoon with a quiz and all for £1.

For more information call Barbara on 814362

The Friendship Club

We had a lovely after Christmas lunch at the Beachlands Hotel. Now we have speakers, music, quizzes and bingo to look forward to throughout the year. We are a happy mixed bunch of people and welcome any new ladies or gentlemen, so do come along. Transport can be arranged. **Every Friday 2-4 pm.**



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 Guides** 7.30-9.00 (term time)
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 (Sept-May)

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 **812370**.

Fresh Local Produce. Cheeses. Jams, Honey & Preserves. Somerset Beef. Fairtrade. Crafts. Handmade Jewellery. Books. Collectables. Bric-a-brac. Cards. Gifts. Refreshments & Gossip

Bleadon Village Monthly Market & community cafe

**SAT
17
MAR**

**SAT
21
APR**

**SAT
19
MAY**

**SAT
16
JUN**

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

Call Joanne on 01934 812 370 for more info

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.

Sociable Bleadon

Horticultural Society

With no snow on the horizon this time around the December beetle drive and **American Style Supper** was very well supported with everyone enjoying themselves. At the end of the fun filled "drive" there was a tie for first place so there was a "beetle off" between Ann Hurcombe and Glenys Sutton Jones with Ann eventually emerging as the winner. The coveted **gnome**, who had been waiting patiently for a new home for two years, was awarded to Jeff Davis as his various playing partners had all helped him.



Guest speaker at the January meeting was Jon Whatley, chairman of the South West **Britain in Bloom** and Vice Chairman of the National Britain in Bloom Committee. He is also a designer of gardens which have won gold medals at both Chelsea and Hampton Court flower shows. Jon gave a very enthusiastic, interesting and informative illustrated talk on Britain in Bloom from all aspects

including anecdotes of experiences while judging various towns and villages throughout the Country.

The Spring Flower Show will be held in the Coronation Hall at 2.30 p.m. on **Saturday 10th March**. Schedules for this event will be available from the village shop/Post Office, the Church porch or committee.

Bleadon WI

The Hall was packed for our Christmas celebrations at our December meeting. Members were welcomed with drinks 'n' nibbles, and the sight of the buffet table was a wonder to behold. Did the number of glasses consumed hinder finding the answers to the Christmas Quiz -

maybe. Did anyone care – certainly not. A great start to the Christmas Season.

Members, partners, friends and neighbours sang their hearts out for **Carols at the Queens** – accompanied by excellent playing from four (RAF) musicians. Practically every carol in the book was sung and 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' was an indisputable masterpiece. Thankfully, no snow this year but hot cider punch and mince pies (courtesy of



the Queen's Arms) were really appreciated. We raised over £60 and this will be shared equally between the Bleadon Youth Club and Friendship Club. Thank you to everyone who turned up on the night and for your generous donations.

To counteract the post- Christmas blues we welcomed a talk on **Happiness**. We were encouraged to think more positively and be grateful for what we have rather than dwell on what we don't have. Good advice!

We toasted our **3rd birthday** in February with a glass of bubbly and a slice of cake, after a lesson in self-defence by local lady, Ann Davies. There was a lot of laughter whilst we practised some relatively simple methods to keeping safe, but she left us with much to think about, so thank you Ann.

We were also very excited to finally hand over our cheque for over **£3,700** to the representative from the **Children's Hospice** (South West). He gave us a short talk on the support they offer to terminally ill children and their families, which made us



doubly proud of our achievements. We are all looking forward to continuing our birthday celebrations with a meal at the Imperial Brasserie in March and a talk by Lady Carnarvon of Highclere Castle (The real **Duchess of Downton Abbey**), which has been arranged for the members of Bleadon WI, no less!

Audrey's 90th birthday

Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers, cards and fond thoughts which you gave to me. So appreciated. I had a lovely party with all my family. Many thanks again. *Love Audrey*



The NEW Bleadon Youth Club

From 1st April the club will meet twice a week, on **Tuesdays** and **Thursdays**. Opening earlier at 6.30pm for three hours.

Youngsters and parents are welcome to come along anytime to find out what's happening. Especially on **Tuesday 3 and Thursday 5 April** when Mike will be running intro sessions to let everyone know what he has planned for the next six months.

Men with bells on

The weekend of June 22-24 will see Bleadon jingling with Morris dancers when the **Chalice Morris Men** come to the village to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Teams are coming from all over England to help the local team celebrate. The pub will be busy!



Sociable Bleadon

Help plant up our village tubs ready for Summer

If you can spare an hour on **Saturday 12 May** to help plant up our village flower tubs please join the merry band of volunteers in the car park at 10am. Just bring a trowel, a bin bag and a hand-full of community spirit.



Spring Show 10th March

With classes ranging from plants in pots to cut flowers, floral arrangements, cakes, preserves, handicrafts and bread, plus dozens of options for children there's no excuse for not taking part. Get your **Programme/Entry form** from the Village PO & Stores. If you just want to go along to see all the entries on the day it will cost you 50p.



May Day Fayre

The **May 7th Bank Holiday Monday** will once again see the centre of the village packed with stalls, games for youngsters, food, drink and live music. This annual fun family event helps fund our beautiful ancient parish church.

New helpers are always needed. If you can help run a stall or in some other way please volunteer now by contacting Brian or Reyn.

If you are having a clear out your quality cast-offs are welcome. We will happily collect up to the week before the event: kitchen equipment, china, glass, garage and garden tools, toys and games, small bric-a-brac, books and puzzles, small safe electrical items, CDs, DVDs and games (not video tapes).

Contact Brian on 813 636 or Reyn on 811 490

Parochial Church Council

On the **16th April** the PCC holds its **Annual Meeting**. All adults within the church parish are invited to attend. If you want to find out what's planned for the church please come along to the **Church Rooms at 7pm**.



Rainbow over Bleadon image by Pete Williams

Weather Report from Bleadon Hill for year 2011

Regular readers of the *Village News* know that Chris Cudlipp has been recording precipitation (ppt) of rain, hail, sleet or melted snow in his rain gauge in his back garden since 1981. **All measurements for rainfall etc are in millimetres where 25.4 mm equals on inch. Overall precipitation for the year was 834.7 mm or 32.9". The two wettest months were, surprise – July and August!**

Summary of results (*figures have been rounded up or down*)

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
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Monthly precipitation in mm during 2011

94	56	31	19	52	73	104	114	73	55	73	90
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Average monthly precipitation 1981 - 2010

93	65	68	61	71	66	71	86	81	110	97	99
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Number of dry days in 2011

12	13	24	26	19	10	17	13	11	19	10	8
----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---

Average number of dry days 1981 - 2010

13	14	15	16	17	18	18	17	17	14	12	14
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Village people

Royston Walters continues his revelations about Bleadon villagers with Penny Robinson's story...



In 1941 while the war is going badly, a young engaged couple fearful of a bleak, uncertain future decide to marry and take hold of what happiness they can. Three days into their honeymoon the Japanese attack Pearl Harbour and the young man must report for military duty immediately. The young man becomes a soldier, his wife becomes pregnant and he leaves for the front. Three years later the soldier returns...but not to his wife and child, there is talk of his mind having been crushed by the violence and mayhem of war and Penny Johnson never meets her father. There she is, a daughter in a single parent family long before the phrase is even coined. But, mother is strong and vigorous enough to provide, nurture and instill in her little girl a sense of independence, of being heart-whole and these circumstances make the bond created between this mother and child have a Bostick like intensity. The errant father and the proud mother produce a child with a fine mind. By her own admission Penny was a 'swot' and when, at about seven, a serious illness means an extended absence from school, she spends the period reading anything and everything, little does she know it but this illness is a springboard to self discovery. In this fallow year she finds that science piques her interest the most; the life cycle of a tadpole is minutely observed and recorded from a jar in her bedroom and something stirs in her when diminutive frogs find their way in this world as habitues of her bedclothes,

she realises domestica is going to be spectacularly unappealing. A bright little girl wins a scholarship to the Grammar School For Girls in Portsmouth and runs into a Headmistress whose vision of the life, roles and aspirations of her girls are rooted in another era. In her opinion men are not better at everything - only most things. Girls, apparently, are suited only to the arts; a female scientist? Oh no....oh dear me no! Fortunately for Penny there's safety in numbers and she finds herself among a group of girls most of whom, providentially, have scientific leanings. The headmistress is aghast that 30 out of 36 girls in her highest stream find physics more interesting than linguistics and the poor woman works herself into a frenzy of irritation that 'Northern High' has become a holding pen for the next generation of female scientists. Penny, with some encouragement from her Mother, begins to think of medicine as a possible career, but somehow treating people does not have the great emotional appeal that caring for animals does, Penny feels a strong urge to cure and if this involves deep incisions so much the better! Animals it will have to be. Penny wins a place at the Royal Veterinary College in 1961 and starts her 5 1/2 year course, she is one of only six girls in a total intake of 70 that year. Her first day at this august institution is enlightening. A veterinary luminary has been invited to welcome the new students to the college and to the

profession but finds it instructive to tell the audience in a voice precisely modulated to mingle suffering and disappointment: "How saddened I am to note the number of women here taking places which should have been filled by men". The girls were left in no doubt that female vets were a luxury the world could well do without, Penny had been at college only an hour and she had come across her first case of an old dog which needed to be put down. Penny takes to her studies with ease. The blood, the five day old carcasses, the handling of entrails do not induce in her a stomach heaving repulsion and she finds a certain contentment among the contaminated and festering, an added bonus is that this is London in the 'Swinging Sixties' and she loves every minute. One difficulty she does encounter is to do with her stature, Penny is petite and when she has to insert her arm into a cow's rectum to examine for signs of pregnancy the staff at the college quickly have to find an orange box for her to stand on. Penny Johnson, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine graduates, finds her first job at the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals and is posted to Nottingham. She is their first salaried vet and in a scenario that would do justice to a film script she has a real baptism of fire. She joins them in the midst of the biggest distemper epidemic ever, 12 dogs a day are presenting with symptoms, there is no vaccination or treatment available and most die but her sang-froid is noted. The PDSA initiate a new service, Penny gets a van and a driver, not unlike the traveling library we know today. She travels around the outlying villages of the Midlands with her driver acting as assistant. Penny stays with the PDSA for 2 years then feels the urge to spread her wings and gain more experience. She applies for a position with a practice in Yorkshire. When Penny begins to tell me about this period in her life her voice drops an octave and becomes much quieter. It is the winter of 1969 and particularly severe, on the day of moving from Nottingham the

snow is so deep she has to dig her way OUT from her front door and after a tortuous journey following the removal van arrives in a place called Shelf to find she has to dig her way IN to her new home. She starts work next day to find her employer as inhospitable as the weather, a curt nod takes the place of a cheery morning greeting. She has to work hard, very hard, and she doesn't mind that but she feels as if every day is a test, a test which, in the eyes of her employer, she is found wanting. His attitude to women is ingrown and septic. Every morning she is given a list of calls to make, these calls take her to the farthest reaches of the most inhospitable parts of Yorkshire and when reaching the end of the list at the end of the day would find a message giving her more cases to attend. Very often she finds herself having to dig her little car out of snowdrifts on bleak moors late at night and arrives home exhausted. Her conditions are grim and the workload remorseless, she concludes that her sullen employer gave her the job just to prove she couldn't do it.

She could do it, what she couldn't do was put up with his withering scorn and after a year was drowning in the black waters of despair. Penny moves south, Chigwell in Essex actually but her work takes her regularly to the East End of London.

Here conditions are much more amenable and the male partners treat her, well, if not as an equal, then at least with some respect. This is an extremely prosperous area, famous footballers and pop stars abound. Penny cares for the pets of Bobby Moore (then England football captain), Geoff Hurst who scored the winning goals in the 1966 world cup and Joe Brown (of 'Bruvvers' fame) on whose Doberman bitch Penny performed life saving surgery. Luxury gated houses by day but night found her driving alone around some dodgy areas of the East End, Limehouse, Hackney, the Docklands, in those days vets attended animals at home at all hours of the day and night wherever they were.

" 'ere Ma, there's a girl 'ere says she's the vet!" Penny spends five years in London, her confidence grows and for the most part she is happy but it niggles that all the Saturday night, Christmas Day emergencies seem to fall to her, besides, she has an

ambitious streak. To achieve a greater status in her profession she has to leave this alpha male dominated practice. Penny's next move is near to 'home', Eastbourne in Sussex, she is promised that upon completion of a suitable probationary period a partnership will be offered. Penny buys a house and settles down. This probationary period, however, is not actually stipulated and the man at the head of the practice procrastinates. After three, not unpleasant, years Penny insists the agreement be drawn up. On reading the details Penny is horrified to discover that it contains a 'No marriage' clause. This is completely preposterous. Penny refuses to sign which in turn uncovers three years of financial impropriety by her employer presenting Penny with a huge tax bill which can only be met by selling her house.

Up to this point in Penny's life the influence of males, has been dreary at best and at times downright ulcerous but that is about to change dramatically. She is contacted by a man with whom she studied at university - oh happy day! They meet and exchange their stories. He has been married, has three children but has been divorced for some while. The attraction is instant and compelling. Penny soon has a husband and a part time family, they set up home in Bridgwater where Tim's veterinary qualifications have taken him to the Ministry of Agriculture, she finds work in a practice where her stature makes her admirably suited to treating sheep which form the backbone of the work. Penny is particularly adept at lambing so the early part of every year is a very busy time.

For seventeen years they live what we consider to be a 'normal' life including the roller coaster of helping to bring children to maturity but they love much and laugh often. Penny and Tim prosper. Tim moves to a smart office in Bristol and they buy their first house together in 1990....in Bleadon. This is the time when most people here get to know Penny, she is a vet in the area for more than three decades. She is totally at one with the world, her life and her profession, a particular, unforeseen and constant joy, she finds, is that in treating pets she is also treating, in some way, their owners and witnesses

on many occasions the medical benefits of just listening.

Another day dawns, just an ordinary day; toast for breakfast, coffee quickly slurped, peck on the cheek, "See you tonight love...". Except that she didn't. Penny didn't see her Tim again. Heart attack at his desk. Dead on arrival, age: 50. In retrospect the signs had been there, stressful job, 'indigestion' but the doctor had said his heart was fine - it wasn't. She is besieged with a cruel numbness and the hills around Bleadon are alive with the sound of....screaming, that's how Penny dealt with her grief, that and kicking the fridge - quite, quite mangled in the end apparently.

I'm running out of space so I have to telescope the rest of what I know. Penny is elected to the Parish Council on which she served for 13 years, she was there at the start of the Historical Society, edited and produced the 'Bleadon Village News' for 10 years. 'Mum' is now 92 and Penny spends much of her time caring but when circumstances allow her interests include genealogy and photography, she spends time birdwatching and canal boating. Computers have bewitched her too and after several courses in information technology the sorcery of 'Windows' has been revealed to her. And, now, after a life devoted to the sciences she enjoys literature, particularly that of the Brontes - very romantic, her old headmistress would have been proud of her.

This could have been a story about the inequality of women and I, for one, would happily have stood shoulder to shoulder with her but Penny will have none of it, it is, instead, a story about the notable achievements of a remarkable woman.



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.

You will be heard

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.

Bleadon Village News is published quarterly by Bleadon Parish Council in March, June, September and December.

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 three weeks before publication.

If you've got a story to tell on the pages of **Bleadon Village News** or a constructive comment to make contact bleadon.editor@btinternet.com

or mail to 8 Whitegate Close, Bleadon BS24 0PW
Phone 01934 813 127

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.

The copy deadline for your contributions to the Summer edition of Village News is Friday 4 May 2012.

Show success - a few tips for exhibitors

With the **Spring Horticultural Show** coming up on **Saturday 10 March** here are a few timely tips on how to show successfully.

Pot Plants Show off your specimens in clean pots with no discoloured or damaged flowers or foliage.

Cut Flowers Show off the blooms to the best of their advantage in a suitable container – a jug with a pouring spout is not a vase! Some exhibitors use florists oasis or moss as support but this is not necessary. A bud on a stem counts as a bloom.

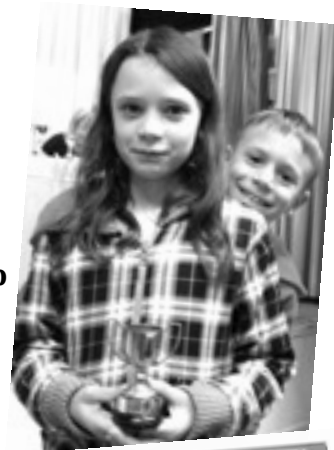
Floral exhibits Don't exceed the space available/allocated.

Homecrafts Surely anyone can cook! Put exhibits on a suitable plate (not highly decorated). Cover with cling film if you wish (the judges' steward will remove it before judging). Labels on pots of jam should be non obtrusive and neatly placed. There is no need to put your name on any exhibit as you will be supplied with a small label with your own exhibitor's number and the class you are entering. This label should be placed upside down with your exhibit.

Read the schedule and remember – **judges like to encourage** and hate having to disqualify exhibitors.

Most of all it's great fun taking part – have a go and enjoy it!

Chris Cudlipp



Your Bleadon Parish Councillors

Brian Gamble	Ashdene, Bleadon Road, Bleadon	Tel: 811 709
Robert House	Purn House Villa, Purn Lane, Bleadon	Tel: 815 588
Trevor Marshall	15 Bleadon Mill, Bleadon	Tel: 811 548
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, Lympsham	Tel: 812 921
Penny Skelley (Chairman)	Mendip Croft, Celtic Way, Bleadon	Tel: 815 331

We have one vacancy following the resignation of Cllr David Plaister

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 website at:

www.bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

**New email
address for
the Parish
Clerk**



Naturally beautiful Bleadon

Here's just a taste of the wide range of plants and flowers you'll discover over the summer months if you take a walk around and about Bleadon's beautiful countryside. Thanks to local author and keen naturalist Alan Kerr, who kindly sent these photos to Bleadon Village News.



Knapweed



Early Purple Orchid



Lady's Bedstraw



Cuckoo Pint



Yellow Wort



Teasels

Bleadon



lovely!

