

Bleadon village news

FREE to Bleadon homes

Spring 2013 - Issue 95

www.bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk



Spring Flower Show winners



A public convenience



May Day Fayre preview
New attractions + events

May Queen
Call for entries
from Bleadon's young ladies
aged 12 to 25
**Be Bleadon's Queen
for May Day**
WIN an Escape make-over
See inside front cover
for details

May Queen ✨

Call for entries
from Bleadon's young ladies
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**Be Bleadon's Queen
for May Day**

and WIN a FREE Escape
make-over

Be Bleadon's May Day Queen

We are looking for a natural local charmer to help us celebrate our special day of fun and revelry.

The arrival of the May Queen will herald the opening of Bleadon's May Day Fayre at 11am on 6 May

Who can enter?

Open to local young ladies aged 12 to 25 who live in Bleadon Parish or on Bleadon Hill.

The competition for the honour of being our 2013 May Queen is sponsored by **Escape Salon**.

Independent judging will be done by a lecturer from Weston College's Department of Hair & Beauty.

How to enter

Email your photo and a few words about yourself, together with contact details - name, address, phone number and age to: escapesalon@btinternet.com

or by post to Escape Salon, Longwood House, Bridge Road, Bleadon **to arrive by noon on Monday 22 April.**

Selected applicants will then be asked to come for **Final Judging at Escape Salon on Thursday 25 April at 6pm.**

The May Queen will get a full **Escape** make-over with **hair and beauty treatments** on May Day morning ready for her carriage to carry her to the May Day Fayre at 11am.

It's your chance to be someone special ✨

Spring at last?

Fingers crossed it looks like spring may be here at last. So surely summer can't be far behind?

It seems to have been a long dull winter. Probably because we didn't get much of a summer last year. The seemingly unremitting rain had the effect of morphing all the seasons into an endless greyness which even our lovely village found hard to shake off.

Now the time has come to get out your colourful summer cottons, dab on the sunscreen and celebrate the onset of summer. And there's no better way of celebrating all that is best in English village life than **Bleadon's annual May Day Fayre**. Hundreds of people from near and far look forward to enjoying this colourful community event. Come rain or shine our May Day celebration is a herald of promising summer days. An excuse for fun and revelry.

I make no apology for the heavyweight promotion of this forthcoming event in the following pages. A lot of people are putting a great deal of effort into ensuring that this year's May Day Fayre is entertaining, surprising and successful.

I must also declare an interest. This year the funds raised on the day will go to two local charities which I hold dear to my heart - Bleadon's Parish Church and Bleadon Youth Club. Both of these community essentials are in desperate need of funding, so please support them on May Day.

I promise it's going to be fun.

Editor



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.

A word from the chairman

Spring has sprung. Well almost. This first edition of the year, your favourite magazine is full of facts, figures and fun.

The **May Fayre** a much loved traditional village event is Monday 6 May. The Cornucopia of the day is revealed in this bumper edition.

The **plant up for summer** is Saturday 4 May 10am. in the Coronation Car Park. Help is always needed on that day to be spic and span for May Day. So please come along and help. All you need is a trowel, a bag for green waste and a barrowload of enthusiasm to see your village looking bright this summer.

Meanwhile, Councillor Pyke and myself are pioneering new plant outlets for the best prices for the twice yearly planting to match our reduced parish planting budget.

Sadly the Scarecrows have been set-a-side for this year, perhaps in 2014 the Festival will return to Bleadon.

The annual **Contactus welcome party** sponsored by the Parish Council, for the newcomers to our community will be on mid-summer's day Friday 21 June 6.30 in the Coronation Hall. Please may I request that the village clubs and societies have a representative there that evening to inform the new villagers about the variety of activities we are lucky enough to enjoy here.

Our **Civic Service** at St Peter and St Pauls is Sunday 21st April 10.15am. You are all invited to celebrate with us the work and commitment of the Parish Council.

With an ever tightening budget and after much debate, lengthy discussions and soul searching Bleadon's precept is set. A presentation of the financial facts behind the precept by the Clerk Mr Bruce Poole will be outlined at the **Annual Parish Meeting** on 8th April and is also included in this issue.

The Parish Council has continuously reported flooding in our area to North Somerset Council. Recent jetting of highway drains has alleviated the immediate problem but further investigations will be undertaken in preparation for more extensive work in the future.

Penny Skelley, Chairman Bleadon Parish Council



NEWS

Bleadon Parish Budget

By now all households will have received their 2013/14 Council Tax demand from North Somerset Council. This will have included an element for Bleadon Parish Council (the Parish Precept). Hopefully, you will have noticed that your contribution to the parish council was reduced this year.

When it came to setting the parish precept in January/February this year the parish council were very conscious of the financial difficulties many of our households are facing in the current economic climate.

Added to this was the unknown effect that changes in grant funding from North Somerset and ultimately central government would have on the precept funding we receive from NSC.

There was much debate in the Finance Committee and at Council. With arguments on both sides for and against maintaining a steady increase to match inflation and the increasing demand on services; versus a reduction in tax to accommodate people's strained household budgets.

In the end a compromise was reached where we agreed to keep the precept to the same level as 2012 for the average Band D property.

To accommodate this real reduction in Parish funding and to meet increasing service demands, such as the public toilets and dog bin emptying, it was necessary to trim some of the regular budget items for the parish. This year there are reductions in staffing costs, subscriptions to organisations, grants to local organisations, floral planting and village improvements.

Fuller details of Bleadon's budget will be published in the summer edition of Bleadon Village News. Or you can find out more and ask questions at the **Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 8 April.**

2012 brought additional strain on parish council financial reserves

A major unexpected expenditure was brought about by the need for repairs to the churchyard wall and removal of the trees that were exacerbating the problem. The bill for these major improvements is currently £6,732.

Like any good housekeeper the parish council has been prudent to set aside cash reserves for just such contingencies. But we don't want any more surprises right now.

83 bus service - change of bus company

From 1 April the Bleadon to Weston bus service will be provided by Crosville Motor Co.

The number 83 bus service is heavily supported by funding from North Somerset Council who have negotiated the new bus service contract that replaces Webber Bus.

Our relationship with Webber has always been a little challenging. Let us hope that the new provider delivers the service we deserve.

At the moment it looks like there is no return to providing a link with the Veale. Maybe the parish council and residents in the Veale and Shiplate Road could lobby for this to be re-examined by NSC and Crosville?

Three new parish councillors needed

With the recent resignation of three of our parish councillors we will be looking to fill these vacancies at the earliest opportunity.

There has already been a call by 14 local residents for an election to fill one of the vacancies. If this is contested because more than one candidate stands for election then we can look forward to there being an **election on Thursday 9 May.**

If there are no further petitions for election then the remaining two vacancies can be filled by the parish council co-opting the two other new members onto the council.

If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor and have the time and energy to make a positive contribution please contact the parish clerk.

See the following pages for more info on the forthcoming councillor elections

A matter of convenience



Rather than see them closed and boarded-up Bleadon Parish Council has agreed to take over the ownership and running of the public conveniences in the Coronation car park from North Somerset Council.

Subject to around £2500 of repair work being undertaken by North Somerset contractors before the hand-over, the toilets should transfer to parish ownership by April 1st.

The parish council will also be receiving immediate grants from North Somerset Council to cover £500 of legal costs, plus a grant of £7,752 towards identified future repairs on the toilet building.

As an incentive to keep the toilets open for church-goers the Friends of the Church are also offering the parish council an annual £100 grant towards the cost of operating the toilets.

Currently the toilets cost North Somerset Council almost £3000 to operate and maintain each year.

Naturally, the parish council will be looking to reduce these running costs and is keen to find practical and cost-effective ways of raising income from users to help recover the running cost.

For this year at least the parish council is funding the cost of running the toilets from savings it has made in other budgets - particularly the Village Improvements budget, as it sees the retention of the public toilets as a necessary and valued service.

Extra grit bin for Roman Road

Following a request from residents an additional grit bin is being provided by the parish council towards the eastern end of Roman Road.

The parish council pays for the bin and North Somerset Council keeps it topped up with salty grit through the icy months.

Request for a traffic mirror at Hillcote

The parish council was asked by a Hillcote resident to look into the possibility of providing a mirror on the highway opposite the exit from Hillcote. The hope of the resident was that a mirror would aid drivers entering onto the main highway from Hillcote.

As this is a matter beyond the parish council's legal authority the request was passed to North Somerset Highways for advice and consideration.

North Somerset responded by saying they do not provide or permit highway mirrors. The reasoning they give is that they have **proved to be detrimental to safety**. It would appear mirrors can lead to an increase in the speed of emerging vehicles as they come to rely too heavily on mirrors. Such is the controversy with highway mirrors that where local highway authorities do permit them special authorisation needs to be sought from the Department for Transport.

Dog bin emptying costs soar

The current poop bin emptying contract with Fountains ends at the end of March. Not surprisingly, the new contract with North Somerset Council is considerably more expensive.

The emptying price of 50p per bin could never be cost effective for Fountains. It is little wonder that the previous contractor went bust. The new contract with North Somerset will see the cost of weekly emptying of our four dog bins rise to £2 per bin.

With no other options open for the provision of this essential service the parish council has no choice but to accept the more realistic charges or see our lovely village once again mired in doggy doos.

As we are all paying for them, we ask dog walkers to please use the bins for their pets' poops. Or take it home.

NEWS...

There's been a bit of a blogging fuss made recently about the extinguishment of an old public footpath that ran through Bleadon Quarry. The footpath was a forgotten leftover from the days before the quarry existed. Claims that this footpath extinguishment was carried out by North Somerset Council "**under the noses of the parish council**" implies that the parish council were unaware of the proposal or that we didn't care.

This is not the case.

As the ancient footpath ran across the void of the quarry and would involve some very dangerous climbing down the quarry face to access, the parish council took the view that this was no longer a practical or safe route for walkers and that there were safer existing alternative routes.

There is no prospect of the quarry being infilled in the foreseeable future and, therefore, there is no prospect of the footpath being of practical use. The parish council had no objections to the proposal to close the unused footpath as there are suitable alternatives available.

Residents expressed concerns some years ago about the dangers of children and walkers approaching the quarry edge. The parish council is relieved to know that this is one more measure put in place to ensure the continued safety of villagers.

Should the quarry be redeveloped for other use in the future there is no doubt that the parish council will lobby tirelessly to make sure that public footpaths and easy access are included in any development.



Aerial photo courtesy of Google Maps

Route of the old footpath shown as a broken white line. Looks challenging!

Can anyone remember using this ancient footpath through Bleadon Quarry?

Talking to villagers who have lived here all their lives, it seems that quarry blasting probably finished in the 1950s because of local objections to the noise and dust. The site was then turned over to concrete product manufacture, with all the ingredients being brought in by lorry. It is hard to imagine that anyone has been able to use the ancient right-of-way in the last 60 years. But for some it's loss is still a cause for concern.

Good fences make better neighbours

The recent installation of wire fencing on South Hill has come as a bit of a shock to walkers used to having free range. The new owners of South Hill Farm have installed the fencing to safeguard stock. Hopefully, this is a sign of good husbandry and improved stewardship of this valued open space. The new signage and clearer walk-lines should help walkers and dogs to keep to the straight and narrow.



Three Bleadon parish councillors step down

There's been a spate of resignations by parish councillors in the past six weeks with a third of the nine councillors giving up their seats.



Cllr. **Trevor Marshall** gave his unexpected resignation to the chairman at the February parish council meeting. Changing workloads and other personal commitments meant that Trevor felt he was unable to continue as a parish councillor.

At the same time Cllr. **Brian Gamble** gave notice of his intention to step down at the end of the council year. Health problems and the prospect of surgery in the near future meant that he felt it was time to make way for a fitter man or woman. I am pleased to report that Brian aims to continue with his role as church warden.



For our newest councillor, **Pete Trevitt**, it is a combination of additional work and increasing family commitments that have forced him to make a difficult decision. He too feels that he has to reluctantly make way for someone who has the time that being an effective parish councillor demands.



"When I joined the council last year I had all the best intentions of taking an active and positive role, but now

know that I have been guilty of underestimating the amount of work involved and overestimating the amount of free time I have available".

What price democracy?

Following the resignation of Cllr. Trevor Marshall the parish clerk notified North Somerset Council immediately of the vacancy. This fired into motion the democratic process that leads to the filling of the vacant seat on the parish council. What many people do not realise is that this process of democracy sometimes comes at a pretty hefty price.

If ten or more Bleadon parishioners petition for an election then an election must take place. In the event of there not being a call for an election the parish council may, if it chooses, co-opt a suitable candidate onto the council. Usually this selection process is as a result of people putting their name forward for co-option onto the Council.

On this occasion 14 parishioners have petitioned North Somerset demanding an election. Clearly there is a will amongst some of the electorate to see democracy in action. Which, after years of democratic lethargy is very welcome.

However, this democracy has a price and the parish council has to foot the bill. That means that if the election is contested and a ballot is necessary the parish taxpayers will be faced with an election bill that we are told will be **in excess of £1500**. In addition, if the parish council decides that it wants to send out polling reminder cards to every elector this will be a **significant additional cost**.

Without wishing to stifle the democratic process the hope is that now we have three vacancies to fill it won't be necessary to hold expensive contested elections.

However, there will certainly be one election to fill the first vacancy because 14 petitioners have demanded it. If more than one candidate puts their name forward for election a ballot will be necessary. The polling day is likely to be held on **Thursday 9 May**. If only one candidate is put forward then the election is deemed to be uncontested and the candidate wins the seat. Thus saving the ballot and considerable expense.

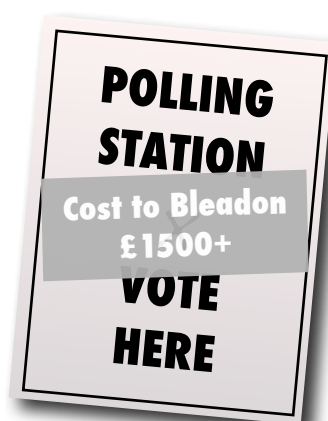
The two other parish council vacancies are likely to be advertised by North Somerset Council before you read this. If you, the Bleadon electorate, demand that there be an election to fill the vacancies then there will be an additional election after 9 May. This too will come at a cost to Bleadon if the election is contested.

It may sound like this editor is trying to prevent or circumvent the democratic process. Believe me I'm not. But I think it is important that everyone understands the process and the implications.

It will be great if we have a load of community-minded people come forward wanting to be parish councillors. But I won't hold my breath.

The next full Parish Council election is scheduled for May 2015. Then the voters of Bleadon will have the chance to elect all nine parish councillors.

Editor



NEWS

Burglars hit Bleadon

Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators have been receiving email warnings from the Police over the past few weeks about a rash of household burglaries in the villages around Weston.

Sad to say, Bleadon was hit on the evening of Tuesday 19 March, when a home in the Veale was broken into by jemmying a front window, valuables stolen, home and belongings trashed.

The pattern seems to be that the culprits break into homes in the **early evening** (when you probably least expect it). TVs, laptops, cameras, cash, jewellery and even clothing are targeted. Presumably because these are easily disposed of.

On top of the loss of valued and hard-earned belongings, the damage caused by the violation of the family home can be heart-breaking. The trauma suffered by the victims often far exceeds the financial loss.

The advice from the police is to keep windows and doors locked even when you are at home. Don't leave keys inside doors. Don't leave portable devices on display. Install an effective alarm system if you can. This is a known repellent against casual burglaries. Take photographs of any valuable jewellery, so that if it is taken the police can help identify it.

Most importantly, be a good neighbour and please keep an eye out for strangers and people acting suspiciously in your neighbourhood.

Call 999 if there is a crime in progress or life is in danger.

Call 101 if a crime has taken place or you have something to report.

Residents who have concerns about home security can contact PCSO Emma Wright to arrange a visit. Email:emma.wright@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Or visit the confidential police surgery held on Tuesday afternoons in the Church Meeting Room (2pm - 4pm)

Census results for Bleadon

Statistics from the 2011 Census are now available from North Somerset Council. You can also see some results on our parish council website. There are few real surprises in the stats about Bleadon, but a few stand out as marking us different from the national norm.

Bleadon stats

- Usual resident population is 1,079
- 48.5% male, 51.5% female
- We have only half the average number of children aged 0 to 9yrs
- and half the average number of young people aged 16 to 24
- We have 67 youngsters aged 10 to 15 which is a little below average
- It's in the age 45 plus that we have almost twice the national average
- Nearly half the Bleadon households (47.5%) are married couples with no dependent children (national av. 26.9%)
- 66.6% of you live in detached households (22.6% is nat. av.)
- 58.6% own their homes outright (30.8% is nat. av.)
- Over half of our households have two or more cars.
- Two-thirds of you aged 16 to 74 are in employment (69.7% is nat. av.)
- Almost 25% of residents are retired
- 10% of you work from home, which is twice the national average
- Three-quarters of you drive to work
- 96.5% of Bleadon residents were born in the UK and are white
- Two thirds of you claim to be Christian. The rest have no religion or refused to answer.
- 80% of you claim to be in good or very good health, which is about the national average

No big surprises then. But what do all these statistics mean for the parish council and the residents of Bleadon?

It means that we have to consider carefully our existing customer base. With so many residents (council tax payers) in the 45+ age group we have to ensure that the facilities and services we provide meet their needs. The fact that so many choose to live in Bleadon suggests that we are already doing that. Here in Bleadon we already have thriving social activities and a real sense of community spirit and involvement.

The dilemma is whether we work more pro-actively to redress the balance and try actively to bring more young families into the village.

Do we work to satisfy our existing residents or create an environment that meets the needs of our future generations?

Help us plant the village flower tubs

On Saturday 4 May a team (I use the word loosely) of village volunteers will be planting out the tubs with summer plants ready to add a splash of colour to our streets in time for May Day.

We've got six large tubs and 22 medium tubs to plant around the village. The parish council provides the plants.

We always welcome additional help to reduce the workload of the regulars, so if you've got an hour to spare please turn up at the **Coronation car park at 10am**. Just bring a trowel and a green waste bag. You don't necessarily need green fingers, just a fistful of community enthusiasm.



Monday 8 April

This is your opportunity to talk to parish councillors and **air your views** on matters in Bleadon that concern you.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the Coronation Hall on **Monday 8 April at 7.30pm**.

Join us for a chat and glass of wine from 7pm.

We hope to hear about:

- Developments and future proposals at Weston Lakes
- How the parish council spends your money

Drains cleared at last?

After months of winter rain and continual flooding problems in the village the jetting gang have at last started to tackle the problems.

On a very cold day in February the contractors arrived back in the village to finish the gully jetting started some weeks before. Whilst the rain had abated the cold weather brought its own set of problems with frozen pumps and trickles rather than jets of water.

Despite the setbacks the Highways team persisted and spent several days clearing gullies in Coronation and Bridge Road.

Whilst the gullies are now running freely it is clear that there are major structural problems with the drains that now demand further

investigation. Cameras will be sent underground to help identify the problems outside Bridge Garage and in Coronation Road.

Let us hope that some of the extra funding that North Somerset Council has re-allocated to highways maintenance this year finds its way into our parish.

With thousands of road drains and gullies to be emptied and cleared after a record-breaking spell of wet weather one can sympathise with the difficult task ahead. Nothing that money and good husbandry can't put right. We just need the barrow-loads of money!



Very sociable Bleadon

May Day Fayre festivities... a day of fun

A new collaboration between two village charities will pump a reviving breath of fresh Spring air into our village's best loved community event. The Friends of Bleadon Church are working with the Youth Club to ensure that this May Day event will be the best for many years.

New attractions and a day full of events should guarantee that the traditional May Day celebrations are enjoyed by the hundreds of visitors who come to this village centre attraction.

**STARTS at 11^{am}
until 4^{pm}**

Chalice Morris Men return
performances at 12.30 and 1.45pm



NEW ATTRACTIONS
for 2013

Plus all the usual fun and frolics,

Bleadon May Queen

Sponsored by Escape

Traditional Maypole

The Bleadon Brownies will be celebrating the coming of summer by demonstrating their newly acquired Maypole dance skills

Mickey & Minnie Mouse

will lead the children's Fancy Dress Parade and offer plenty of photo opportunities

Gladiator combat

Knockabout inflatable fun with a very competitive edge

In the stocks

a chance to get your own back

Children & Family Games are back!

In the afternoon with all the usual mayhem and the possibility of a bit of a soaking!



*Gladiator Combat...
...time for revenge!*



Facepainting



Win prizes



*Children's Fancy Dress
"Spring into Summer" Theme*



Plant Bargains

**Monday
6
MAY**

May Day Fayre admission

May Day Fayre will open at 11am. Not as previously at 10.30. No admission before 11am. Listen out for the Church bells at around 10.50 as a reminder.

The Fayre will continue through until at least 4pm with a full day of events and family fun.

Children under 12 get FREE admission when accompanied by a paying visitor.

Admission for visitors over 11 yrs is £1 and will include a printed Programme

and entry into the three FREE CASH PRIZES draws of £50, £25 and £10

There will be the usual Flowers & Music in the church. Free admission - but we do ask that you leave a contribution.

This year the Bleadon Art Group will hold their Exhibition of Paintings in the church. Free admission with some works on sale.



CAR PARKING

It's always a problem, so please leave your car at home if you live within walking distance.

Weather permitting there will be FREE parking for Fayre visitors in the field on the corner of Bridge Road and Bleadon Road. Follow signs. Please use it.



jazz, dance, stalls, games, food, drink and more....



Book Bargains



Live Jazz



Tradition



Bacon Butties



Naughty but nice



Homemade Cakes + Jams

To put the record straight....

...reports in the local press that the future of Bleadon's May Day Fayre has been secured by the parish council are not accurate.

Bleadon's biggest community annual event has been saved by a community collaboration of the Friends of Bleadon Church working with the Youth Club to manage the event. A couple of parish councillors are involved because of their links with the youth club management, but the parish council is not financing or underwriting the event.

This event is the **major fundraiser** for both community institutions and can help safeguard their future. All profits made on the day will be shared equally between the two charities. Please be generous on the day with your pocket money and your smiles.

They'll be much appreciated.

How you can help.....

- With your time and energy on the day
- Donations of bric-a-brac
- Donations of books

May Queen

Entries to Escape Salon by 22 April.
Open to Bleadon & Bleadon Hill residents
age 12-25. See inside front cover.
Send photo and personal details to:
escapesalon@btinternet.com

WANTED

for the May Day Fayre Your bric-a-brac

It's time to clear those unwanted (but still loved) goodies out of your loft, spare room and under-stair cupboard.

If your unwanted items are in good condition, and you just know that someone will buy them, please donate them now.

WE WANT

in safe, good condition

**China, Glass, Jewellery,
Collectables, Toys, Working
Electrical, Household, Kitchen,
Gardening items, DVDs, CDs,
unwanted Gifts**

NO THANKS to

Clothes, Bedding, Soft
Furnishings, Jumble, old TVs,
Videos.

We are happy to collect (before 24 April) your carefully bagged or boxed donations.

**Please call to arrange
collection or delivery:**

Mary on 811 165

Brian on 813 636

Graham on 811 571

*Every penny raised goes to the Friends
of the Church and Bleadon Youth Club*



BOOKS WANTED for people who love a bargain read

Good condition books are needed for the bookstall at the May Day Fayre. Particularly novels and childrens books.

No encyclopedias or out-of-date manuals please.

Please call Pete Williams on 812020 before 20 April to arrange collection/delivery.



Helpers needed on May Day.

Each year a gang of hard working stalwarts get together and make this community event happen to raise funds for the village. We need new helpers to run our stalls and help on the day. If you can help call Miles now on 07989 410 767

Sociable Bleadon

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



Civic Service on Sunday 21 April

A celebration of all that is best about Bleadon and its governance. All parishioners are welcome to join this special service on Sunday 7 April at 10.15am in church.

Bleadon Coronation Halls management committee



Chairman – Mr Len Chamberlain – 814517
Vice-Chair – Mr Tony Pettit - 815432
Secretary – Mrs I D Clarke – 815182
Treasurer – Mr Clive Morris – 811591
Booking Officer – Mrs Joanne Jones – 812370
Mrs Jane Derrick
Mr Dave Hobbs
Mr John Hurcombe
Mrs Ann Northy-Baker
Mrs Betty Paterson
Mrs Lynne Riding

AGM
Thurs 18 April
at 7.30pm
Your chance to
get involved

Regular Hall users are welcome to have a representative on the Hall Committee, as well as villagers, to support this important village amenity and have a say in the running of your village halls.

To book the Coronation Halls for parties, celebrations and events please contact **Joanne on 812 370** or email her at: jojonesbleadon@tiscali.co.uk

Bleadon residents get a special discounted hire rate.

New windows and carpets for Youth Centre

Thanks to some serious fundraising in the village by the Youth Club their building now benefits from 12 new UPVC windows and new carpets in the sports room, music room and hallway.

Thanks to all those involved for their hard work and generosity.

Each of the following sponsored a window: Winterstoke Decorators, Miles Orme, Better Kitchens, Keith Pyke, Andy Zanelli, David Plaister at Mayfair Properties, Gerry Goodall, Paul Williams Kubix NRG Dan And Kelly Till the Larkkom Till window, The House /Hanse Families, Tony & Kate James, Elliot Johnson Swallow soft Drinks.

The Queens Arms hosted a raffle before Christmas and raised over £400 from the lucky draw. Thanks for their generosity with prizes and all the team effort.

Miles Orme, BYC Chairman

Dates for your diary.

All events at the Coronation Halls
unless shown otherwise

- Saturday 6 April – Coffee & Cakes Morning – Friendship Club
 - Monday 8 April - Annual Parish Meeting
 - Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 May – Art Exhibition (Mon 6 May in Church)
 - Monday 6 May – Bleadon May Day Fayre**
 - Thursday 23, Friday 24 & Saturday 25 May – Bleadon Players present a suspense play - Nightmare
 - Friday 21 June – CONTACTUS - Welcome to Bleadon
 - Saturday 7 September – Autumn Flower Show – Bleadon Horticultural Society
 - Saturday 28 September – Harvest Supper – Bleadon Church
 - Saturday 26 October – Big Breakfast – Bleadon Church
 - Saturday 16 November – Phoenix Charity Quiz
 - Saturday 19 November – Magic Lantern Show
 - Saturday 9 November – Coffee Morning – Bleadon Friendship Club
 - Saturday 7 December – Bumper Christmas Market
 - Saturday 7 December – Punch & Pie – Bleadon Church
 - Thursday 9, Friday 10, Saturday 11 January 2014 – Pantomime
- Watch the notice boards for details*

Royston Walters continues his revelations about Bleadon villagers. Here he catches up with Phil and Mary Ashley.

Village people



If one is to believe Gilbert and Sullivan, "When constabulary duty's to be done..... a policeman's lot is not a happy one!" It is gratifying to tell you that after 30 years as one entrusted with upholding the law Phil Ashley can still disagree wholeheartedly with the victorian vision of a bobby's life.

Phil was born in Yorkshire but spent only three months there before his parents came to Weston. One of four children he had two sisters and a brother eight years older to whom he felt especially close. He went to Locking Road School where Mary Thomas, the prettiest girl in the class, made a point of letting him know how much she disliked him, however, they always seemed to end up at the same birthday parties and by the age of nine they spend their summers together picking fruit at 'The Mount' in Bleadon. In 1944 he volunteered for the navy

and trained as an air mechanic in the Fleet Air Arm. On his first visit home after basic training, walking along Weston sea front in his smart new uniform he met Mary Thomas again. She had grown into a bit of a 'looker',

according to Phil, but was in an 'avoiding men' phase due to commitments with an amateur dramatic group where she was learning lines for her starring role in the next production. Any sort of romance would be a severe distraction. They chatted and her brittle exterior dissolved like sugar in tea when Phil, who had borrowed his Dad's car for the day, offered to drive her home. Now 64 years later, Mary can't swear to whether it was the car, the uniform or the man but the result was the same, she was smitten.

Phil left the services in 1948 to join the police. He was too short by 1/2 inch to join the Somerset constabulary but

matched the regulation height for the London Metropolitan police. There were stringent criteria for entry to the 'Met' and of the 60 others taking the entry tests and medical only Phil and two others were accepted and he was eventually posted to Wembley. Mary and Phil married in 1949 and lived in rooms not far from the police station; there was no accommodation supplied in those days. Financially, things were difficult and Mary got a job in the office at the Heinz headquarters not far from where they lived. If, on the factory floor, an operative's button went missing, for instance, that shift's production would be withdrawn and sold to employees at a reduced rate. Mary says that for two years they lived on tinned beans and spaghetti. Phil's first job with the police was on the vice squad where he was part of a team keeping a lid on prostitutes, brothels and the men exploiting them. This was plain clothes work, the police had to gather evidence for five days on each suspect, watching these men collect the money from their girls or meting out their gruesome street discipline.

Phil applied to become a police dog handler and at the interview he was asked by a Commander about the work in which he'd been involved. By coincidence there was the latest copy of the 'News of the World' folded on the desk and Phil was able to point to the headlines on page three: "JEKYLL BY DAY - HYDE BY NIGHT" a story about his vice squad team apprehending some scoundrel which made national news. He got the job and he and Mary began a long and happy association with a succession of German Shepherd dogs, it really was a team effort because the dog becomes a member of the family.

Officially, at least, dog handlers worked only a seven hour shift because of the time they needed for training and grooming but in practice it rarely unfolded like that. In addition to regular shifts Phil was sometimes called out two and three times a night, usually to violent situations where a dog's appearance was able to persuade an angry or lawless person to



'come quietly', or, where the animal's tracking abilities were required. One night after a robbery in Hampstead, led by his trusty dog but without the aid of a torch, which might have alerted the assailant(s), Phil followed a scent over Hampstead Heath for two miles or so before confronting the villain hiding in a garage. This was in the fifties before mobile communications and help at hand; honestly now...would you have the courage to face that situation? It was while Phil was chasing a bike thief that the wretch waded into a small lake calculating that he wouldn't be followed, he misjudged Phil's determination and when caught, the thug, in the ensuing struggle, pulled out a screwdriver and started stabbing him in the head. On another occasion while chasing a ne'er-do-well over garden fences he ripped his hand on barbed wire fencing and has the scars to this day.

Another time a suspicious character was spotted on the top of the Marks and Spencer's building in Baker Street. Phil and dog made it to the roof whereupon the frightened staff locked the door behind him. The dog immediately found the scent and gave chase, hard on the scent of his quarry. Phil followed to see the dog bounding over a plank no more than eight inches wide, this being the only way over a ten foot gap beneath which was a yawning void. No time to think of consequences, the dog is barking in the darkness beyond, he takes heart of grace and in scorn of the consequences crosses the divide to find the miscreant... vanished. Returning the way he came he realises that the decisions made earlier might have been



bordering on the rash. No longer in thrall to the chase he finds the plank thinner, the gap wider and void deeper than before, what's more, so does the dog. Searching around for another way off the roof and safety, he finds he is on a precarious ledge where the only means of reaching the floor 20 feet below is by means of a very narrow ladder. His only course of action is to carry the dog on his shoulder and descend the ladder single handed, one perilous, treacherous rung at a time, he is hanging by a thread, trembling in the balance, courting disaster and tempting providence, all for £5 a week.

It's not all work of course. Phil and Mary love spending together what spare time they have and on one memorable occasion they cycled from north London to Weston-super-Mare on a tandem. It was a beautiful summer day, they set off at the crack of dawn and arrived saddle sore and stiff the same evening. After a short break with family, unsurprisingly, they caught the train back.

Mary by now has become the mother of two boys, Paul and Peter and, while aware of the dangers of her husband's work, realises that constant worry can only wear her down. She does her best to foster a mind set that frees her from chilling speculation about the randomly brutal nature of Phil's vocation. It falls to Mary too to help look after the dogs. When a dog approaches the end of his working life the handler takes on a puppy which will eventually replace the older dog. The sad day arrives when the older dog can no longer accompany his master and has to watch the new dog being taken in preference. The old dog then takes on the duties of family pet and the children loved bringing friends home to witness their dog's special abilities like finding a handkerchief that's been hidden under an array of flowerpots, and whether it be Wellington, Sam or Timba he never failed.

Mary also finds a new role as social worker. She and Phil are well regarded in their community in Kingsbury and people come to discuss family problems, troubles with wayward children and how

the finer points of law affect situations in which they find themselves. One particular evening they had three rooms occupied by people discussing or waiting to find help with dilemmas. All the while she is doing a full time job as a school secretary. In the 1970's London is under attack from an IRA bombing campaign and Phil as acting sergeant joined the bomb squad. (Promotion to full sergeant meant that you organised the dog section but did not have your own a dog). In the fight against terrorists his duties, for the most part, are clandestine even his vehicle's numberplate has been erased from all records. This in itself posed a problem. An IRA phone call confirmed by a recognised code sent Phil driving through Piccadilly at 70mph, suddenly he finds himself being chased by the police. One call on his radio and two minutes later their roles are reversed and the patrol car is leading him with flashing lights through the London traffic.

Being stationed so near to Wembley stadium a big match day finds him and his dog at 5.30 in the morning flushing out people who have broken into the stadium or who have hidden themselves after the previous night's dog race meeting. Later, he and the dog are searching for explosives, then on to bodyguard duties for any VIP's attending. After a 14 hour shift he arrives home.

Back in the 1960's Britain's most notorious criminal lived on Phil's 'patch', a convicted armed robber he had been tagged 'Public enemy No.1' by Scotland Yard after escaping from prison several times. One morning Phil

was called to Willesden Green high security Police station where they were expecting trouble, on arrival there is a tangible atmosphere of menace and unease. The duty officer in charge wants a dog handler nearby because this villain had been arrested by the Flying Squad, bearing in mind his reputation as an escape artist they had handcuffed him by both arms to a Victorian iron radiator. In his anger and frustration at being taken he had ripped the substantial and weighty old radiator from the wall, Phil and dog are called and the situation is soon defused. This is typical of Phil's daily life where little vignettes of streetwalkers, domestic upsets, the country's hardest criminal and a man and his dog all share the same canvas.

Phil retired from the force in 1977 and he and Mary bought a bungalow in Bleadon in view of the hill where they picked fruit as children.

In their spare time they took caravan holidays particularly in France of which they are very fond. Phil's older brother was a member of the elite SAS (Special Air Squadron) and parachuted into France behind enemy lines as part of the D-Day operation in 1944. The chaos of the day saw his section of 30 men scattered far and wide, they regrouped but were surrounded and captured. Interrogated for three days these men were then taken to a forest clearing and shot. The full details were never revealed to the family so Phil and Mary's time on the continent afforded an opportunity to do some research. After a series of amazing, sometimes bizarre coincidences, they were able to piece together and visit the place of the moving, memorable and gripping story of brother Allan's death.

Now in their mid eighties, health has deteriorated but their love of Bleadon has been fully reflected in the help and support of friends and neighbours, it is a constant source of comfort. They are keen bird-watchers, they each have a computer and read from a 'Kindle' so they're able to astound their four grandchildren and two great grandchildren with their ready adaption to modern technology.

I've heard of life being described as 'A ticket to the greatest show on earth'. It seems to me that Phil and Mary got the ringside seats.



Sociable Bleadon

Sweet Valentine

With the routine Valentine's Day chores over, our Church Friends held an 'afters' event on the 16th promising an evening of sweets and competition; the first competition being to avoid buying a raffle ticket - no winners there!

Following the varied pudding sampling came a quick auction for a posh haircut, hardly relevant to most males present but conducted by a man with an admittedly very loud voice.

Decks were then cleared for a Beetle Drive, (Malcolm's Rules OK?), and with these explained and the initial chaos over the Beetle Drive began and eventually produced one of our guests Lesley Taylor as the runaway winner (200+).

Finally, thanks were given to the Friends of Church ladies for producing such a splendid collection of sweets and to our welcome friends from St Andrews Church for their enthusiastic support.



Sweet Valentine photos by Pete Williams

New Year with our woodland friends





Horticultural success

The scent from the flowering shrubs and cut flowers mingled with the hyacinths in bloom in the Coronation Hall when the society held its 39th Spring Flower Show.

The cold winter weather had an effect on the total number of exhibits in the cut flower and pot culture classes but the mouth-watering home crafts and handicrafts helped fill the hall with entries from adults and children alike. The judges commented on the very high standard of the exhibits in every section.

Libby Lockyer was the most successful exhibitor collecting three trophies with Rose Green collecting two. Other adult cup winners were Lindsay Ireland, Steve Hartree, Maggie Pettitt and Pete Williams while Charlotte Pitman, Louie Wagstaff, and Amy Lance won cups in their respective children's age groups.

The next meeting of the society will be held in the Coronation Hall on Tuesday April 16 at 7.30 p.m. when Don Everitt will give an illustrated talk on **hardy perennials**. Open to all at £1 admission.

The **bring and buy plant sale** and social is a free admission event to be held on Tuesday 21 May again at 7.30pm in the Coronation Hall.

Bleadon bag travels

Bleadon's unique bag continues its travels far and wide. If you've got a Bleadon bag to show off to the world contact the editor



Council Chairman Penny Skelley proudly presents her Bleadon bag in front of Dubai's Burj Khalifa



The 'Woodland' theme fancy dress party at the Queens Arms on New Year's Eve gave all the regulars and some irregulars a chance to dress up and let their hair down.

A stonking night of celtic music, fake snow, bizarre costumes and lively company helped welcome 2013 in with a Butcombe bang. Thanks to Nick and all those who helped dress the pub to suit the theme.

A great night.

Working Bleadon

When she returned super beautified from a recent wax and polish at **Escape**, Mrs Editor was glowing with praise for the new enhancements at our local salon.

Clearly, the therapy and treatments were working, so BVN sent it's chief reporter to investigate this local success story and met up with Tracy and her team.

How come Bleadon?

Ian and I came to live in Longwood House about ten years ago. Cath and I were then teaching at Weston College. For some time we had wanted to set up our own salon with a village atmosphere. Bleadon was perfect.

Six years ago, when the post office and shop moved to Purn House Farm, we tried to open a salon down there, as it seemed a good fit. But the Highways authority was against the idea because of concerns about increased traffic. So we extended the house and opened the business here. Haven't looked back since.

Now we employ nine staff. That's what I'm really proud of.

There's a real lively family atmosphere here. What's that down to?

I'd like to think that we are more than a salon. Our clients are friends and we want them to feel relaxed and upbeat. All the girls, with their different skills and personalities gel well together. We have a laugh, and we do like to party!

What are these enhancements I've been hearing about?

Last year we added our Beauty Room. Now we've created our Colour Bar. This is the first in the area. You'd have to go to Cheltenham to find the nearest. It gives us a dedicated space with a unique relaxed atmosphere for clients to have their one-to-one colour consultation. Then we create the colour in front of them, apply it and the customer sits back and relaxes while the colour processes. There's TV, free WiFi, complimentary tea, coffee and non-alcoholic cocktails.

We might be a village salon but we are totally on trend here in Bleadon. The younger members of staff make sure we keep ahead.



Above: The new Colour Bar consultation area.

Left: Jean enjoys her Shampoo
Below left: the stylish new colour Bar is the result of local craft - with custom joinery by Andy Harper and electrics by Kubix NRG.





Above: It isn't just the ladies who get the treatment.

Left: You can add sparkle to your new found glamour look. With skill levels to match all pockets it means that most of the clients are local.



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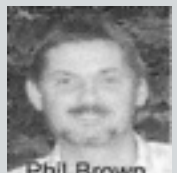
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Phil Brown

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Sociable Bleadon

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

Sunday Club

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

Friendship Club

If you are missing some of the company and friendship of others please come and join us on Friday afternoons in the Coronation Hall.

If you have difficulty getting to the Hall we can arrange for the community bus to pick you up from home.

We try and make Friday afternoons a bit of friendly fun with quizzes, talks, bingo and music. We are just a small group of senior citizens waiting to welcome new ladies or gentlemen.

Friday afternoons 2.15 – 3.45pm. £1
Audrey Lee 814517

Short Mat Bowls

In the Coronation Hall on **Tuesdays** 2.30pm, **Fridays** 7pm and **Sundays** 2.30pm. Brings out the natural born killer instinct in a genteel way.

Bleadon Youth Club

Fun and social activities for young people 10 to 18yrs from 6.30 -9.30pm.

Tuesdays: social and creative activities £1.50 per session.

Thursdays: open social access, games and activities £1.50 per session.

See the BYC notice board for full details.



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.

Bleadon Ladies Club

Are staying open - in spite of any hearsay or past decisions. After 20 years of meetings in the village, I felt it would be such a shame to close down the club, especially as members had said how much they enjoy the meetings. But with so many resignations by members who had served for 10 years or more it was going to be a bit of a struggle. Now we have a committee of just four to organise the club, but I'm sure we will manage somehow.

If anyone wishes to join us you will be very welcome. We continue to meet on the **second Tuesday** of each month at 2.30pm in the Coronation Hall.

Jo Lucas 01934 812 759

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.

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 2-4pm
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 10-noon
Yoga Class** 9.30-10.30
Bleadon Players/Rehearsals 7.30pm
Bleadon Pilates** 7.30pm

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**.

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**SAT
20
APR**

**SAT
18
MAY**

**SAT
15
JUN**

**SAT
20
JUL**

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

Call Joanne on 01934 812 370 for more info

Business directory

If you want your Bleadon business to be included here free of charge contact: bleadon.editor@btinternet.com

Actionwork Film & Theatre

PO Box 433, Weston-s-Mare BS24 0WY
Tel: 01934 815 163
www.actionwork.com
Film, theatre and anti-bullying solutions.
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AMH Electrical Services

Tel: 07841 637 077
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Anchor Inn

Bridgwater Road, Bleadon BS24 0AW
Tel: 01934 812 352
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Bleadon Post Office & Country Store

Purn House Farm, Purn Way, Bleadon
Tel: 01934 815 584
Post Office services, fresh produce and everything expected from a village store. Plus Post House Coffee House

Bleadon Village Laundry

Hillside House, Bridgwater Road, Bleadon
Tel: 01934 814 133
Mob: 07979 794 478
Email: raggettchelsea@aol.com
Laundry, dry cleaning, ironing services on your doorstep. We collect and deliver.

Bridge Garage

Bridge Road, Bleadon
Tel: 01934 812 206
www.bridgegarage.com
Vehicle sales, full servicing all makes and models. MOT. Attended fuel station.

Catherines Inn

Bleadon Road, Bleadon BS24 0PZ
Tel: 01934 812 275
www.hungryhorse.co.uk
Friendly local with quality family food, sense of fun and affordable prices.

Chatterley Plumbing & Heating

The Croftings, Purn Way, Bleadon BS24 0QE
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Mob: 07887 768 877
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Dogzone

Accommodation Road, Bleadon
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www.thedogplace.co.uk
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Drink Tea Eat Biscuits

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Tel: 01934 707012
www.drinkteaeatbiscuits.co.uk
Email: franky@drinkteaeatbiscuits.co.uk

Escape Hair & Therapy Salon

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Andy Harper Joinery & Building Services

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Ian Dance Services

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To advertise your local business in Village News

contact the Editor on 01934 813 127

bleadon.editor@btinternet.com

Advertising rates start at just £20

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 parish council 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.

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

Your Bleadon Parish Councillors

Robert House	Purn House Villa, Purn Lane, Bleadon	Tel: 815 588
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, Lymphsham	Tel: 812 921
Penny Skelley (Chairman)	Mendip Croft, Celtic Way, Bleadon	Tel: 815 331

The parish council has three vacancies. At the time of printing a parish council election for at least one of these vacancies is in the offing. Please watch the Notice boards.

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.

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 new volunteer distributors. If you are able to help deliver this magazine to households in any of the following areas please contact the editor on 01934 813 127

Purn Way/Chestnut Lane; Coronation Road/Rectory Lane/Tenterk Close; Bridge Road/Barton

The copy deadline for your contributions to the Summer edition of Bleadon Village News is Friday 17 May 2013.

Send all correspondence about Bleadon Parish Council matters to the Parish Clerk:

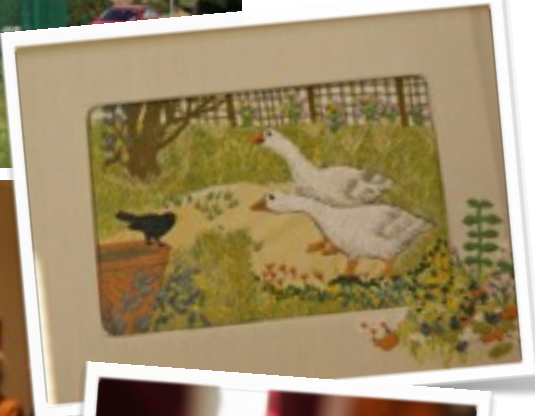
Bruce Poole, Bleadon Parish Council,
Rooftops, 10 South Street,
Burnham-on-Sea TA8 1BS

Tel: 07887 802 922

parishclerk@bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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

Usually the daffs around the play area are out in abundance when the Annual Spring Show comes round in early March. It is a sign of our cold start that this year they were hardly in bud. Fortunately the late Spring didn't prevent exhibitors from putting on a delightful display of flowers and home-crafts at this year's show.





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