

Annual Parish Meeting – 14 April 2008

Chairman's Report

As always I am able to begin my report by saying it has been another good year for the Parish of Bleadon and that the Parish Council has been able to contribute to the quality of life of our Parish.

One of our greatest assets is the Coronation Hall and its "West Wing". These are flourishing with continuous hiring's events and functions. The market is now part of the village fabric and it is hard to remember a time when there wasn't a monthly Market.

I feel sure that you appreciate the work carried out on the overall appearance of the Village. The Open Spaces are constantly being checked and improvements made each season the Churchyard footpaths and the four new kissing gates all look very good. The allotments have a waiting list and the tubs will be summer planted by the May Fayre. The area around the Hall has been transformed by the "Sparkplug" project with just a small area behind the Jubilee Hall still to be completed. I must also mention the new Cycle Racks in the Car Park.

Our Village Ranger and the Mendip Rangers are to be praised for the work they do in keeping our small part of the Mendips so beautifully.

The Youth Club goes from strength to strength with refurbishing inside and upgraded CCTV outside. The Youth Club Leaders are to be congratulated and we thank them for their focus on our young people. Our Guides and Brownies blossom growing in numbers and as always a heartfelt thank you to their committed leaders.

The upkeep of the play area is under review and we intend to have a complete new slide complex in place this summer so we will again be the envy of other villages.

Planning – we have had many planning applications throughout the year and these take up a great deal of our time. We have site meetings thorough discussions and deliberation and consider each application in detail. You must appreciate though that we are not the final arbiter and that North Somerset planning committee has the final word.

Our Beat Officer and the PSO have served us now for a year. The weekly surgeries work well and with your support the village will stay relatively crime free.

The Bleadon Historical Society has had its first meeting and was well attended. With all the artifacts and photos that arrived on the night it was more like an Antiques Road Show. The future plans of the Society will be announced later in the year.

I should say here that you will find a great deal more information on all of the topics I have only covered broadly on the Parish Council Web-site. The full reports of Parish Councillors on their specialist areas will be made available on the web site and will be repeated in the next issue of the "Bleadon Village News".

In closing forward planning is essential for a Parish Council as it is the tier of local government closest to the people it serves. I hope you agree that your Parish Council endeavours to serve you well.

I thank you for attending this Annual Parish Meeting. Your help and support are keeping this village as we all wish it to be. I personally thank your volunteer team of Parish Councillors.

Penny Skelley

Open Spaces

I am pleased to report yet another good year for Bleadon and its open spaces; I hope that the residents have appreciated the work and effort that has gone into making the village look good the whole year round.

The summer floral displays around the village were up to the usual standard and I have to thank all those volunteers who planted them and also the good folk who tended them during the summer. (In spite of some unwanted attention from a vandal determined to spoil them). The winter tubs have been equally well maintained and the spring bulb display both in the tubs and along the roadside look very welcoming as you drive into the Village.

We have to thank our Village Ranger John Hurcombe for his constant attention to these as well as other aspects of village tidiness, e.g. the old quarry, the lay-bys, the pathways, the play area and the Hall car park – not to mention the outer boundaries of Accommodation Rd. and Roman Road. Never have so many leaves been swept up!

There still appears to be the perennial problem of 'dog mess' on the footpaths and verges, in spite of the bins which were strategically placed around the village for this purpose. I really am at a loss to know what more we can do unless the offenders are caught in the act, when perhaps 'naming and shaming' would prove an effective deterrent.

Mark Howe has continued to keep the grass cut around the play area and the churchyard and for this we thank him and his team.

The car park and area around the youth club have benefited during the past year from a grant and I know that you will all agree what an improvement there has been. CCTV installed at this time has been invaluable in controlling some of the vandalism.

The Churchyard railings are in the process of being painted by Brian Thorne and his son Mark and there is to be some welding done by Peter Briffet at Bridge Garage in order to make them safe. Mr. Briffet has offered to do this free of charge. We thank him for this kind gesture.

As ever the more outlying rural parts of the Village have been kept in good order by Andy Eddy and the Mendip Rangers. In addition to the usual maintenance of the gates and stiles there is a band of willing 'stone-wallers, busy repairing the wall along part of Roman Road. This will look splendid when finally completed.

My thanks to Councillors Mary Shepherd and Keith Pyke who respectively look after the allotments and the children's play area; their reports will contain details of the past year's activities on these fronts.

Penny Robinson

Open spaces

We continue to see improvements at the heart of the village following on from last year's Sparkplug Project, which enabled the revitalisation of the area around the youth club and Coronation Hall. In the early summer we planted up the bed between the car park and Jubilee Room. The shrubs and low maintenance plants should soon develop into a bank of green to help soften the landscape. Behind the Jubilee Room we have terraced the ground to help create a safe and accessible area for the Brownies and Guides. The intention is that over the summer they will turn it into a garden area and work towards their Gardening Badges. We've ordered six hand carved toadstool seats for the area from a Somerset woodcarver. These will form a seating circle for story-telling and ceremonies. The little green in front of the public toilet was enhanced early last summer with trellis and timber planters. These provide a welcome splash of colour throughout the year and help screen the toilets. In the play area we are looking to soon replace the slide, which is reaching the end of its life. The thought is to provide a small piece of equipment for young children that will offer more social activities than just a slide. It's always a delight to see how well used our play area is. From toddlers and teens on swings to young lads playing footy.

Thanks to a grant from Life Cycle UK, Bleadon now benefits from four new cycle parking stands alongside the public toilets. The Youth Club and the Coronation Hall each applied for two free cycle parking stands under the Take a Stand scheme from the Life Cycle charity. Each of the stands is worth £150, and was supplied free providing the community installed them within four months. The parish council welcomed the initiative to get villagers on their bikes and agreed to pay for the installation. We are hoping that this will encourage more of you to get around the village by bicycle.

The CCTV cameras continue to record day and night activity around the car park and community area. Proving their worth last summer when the recorded images helped the police pursue a persistent adult male vandal who kept pulling up our plants at 4am in the morning. During one school break a small band of reckless and over excited youngsters were quickly identified on cameras. I'm pleased to say that some very responsible parents soon put their houses in order.

Youth Club

The investment of time, money and effort in making physical improvements to the youth club in recent years is paying off. We now have a popular and suitable venue for our young people. The Tuesday Boys Nights and Young Women's Nights have proved to be very popular and successful. These special projects evenings have introduced the members to healthy cooking and eating, physical challenges like climbing and canoeing, advice on sexual matters, music and dance, performing arts and much more. A £900 grant from the Youth Opportunities Fund helped us buy a range of musical instruments. Now additional funding will allow us to provide musical tuition and inspiration. We would like to see more young people coming along to the Thursday evening sessions. So if you want to help some young people to change our world please send them along. Thanks to overspill of stalls from the monthly village market we've had hundreds of visitors to the club at the Christmas and Easter markets. For some villagers it was the first time they had been in the club since their youth. Now they were tugging their children in behind them. The club has also successfully hosted a christening, a wake and a children's party (complete with bouncy castle and ball-pond). We look forward to increasing use of this valuable asset by the whole community.

BLEADON VILLAGE NEWS

Most of you do not realize is that each copy costs at least £1.20p to produce. Other villages charge a subscription, - we deliver it free. The charges for advertising have gone up considerably, (although by modern standards our rate are still pretty modest), but by doing this we hope to recoup some of those printing costs.

The photo-centrefold is still a feature much enjoyed and I am again most grateful to Marshall's, who have generously sponsored us to the tune of **£250.00p** in the coming year, to cover the additional cost of printing these extra pages. Due to the great interest generated by the photos, we have started up a Historical Society in the village and after two meetings I am pleased to say that the response has been overwhelming. As always I have to thank John Hickley who every quarter comes up with original drawings for the cover, and he always manages to find a topical theme. Regular contributors also send in short stories and interesting articles so making our quarterly newsletter more than just a series of club and Parish Council reports.

My thanks all those who regularly distribute the magazine, thus ensuring that all the households in the Parish receive a copy. I am pleased to report that 'Bleadon Village News' still reaches a much wider audience as copies are regularly posted to Canada, Australia and the USA, to ex-pats who still want to know what goes on in our lovely Somerset Village.

I am pleased to report that the magazine has been entered into the 'Village Newsletter of the Year' competition

The Parish Council Website (www.bleadonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

If for any reason you do not receive a copy of the magazine it is possible to access it via the website. This site also carries the up to date agenda and minutes of the Parish Council meetings, a diary of village events as well as details of the markets etc. I am also in the process of putting more photos onto the site. Other useful links include those to the Church, N.Somerset and the Mendip Society. More to come as the site develops.

Penny Robinson - Editor

Coronation Hall

I am pleased to report that the Independent Examiner Shirley Campbell has examined the accounts for the year ended 29 February 2008 and she has confirmed that these have been correctly maintained and there is no matter which gives her cause for concern.

The Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room continue to be popular village venues that are now used by a wide range of people in the community for family events group meetings craft meetings exercise classes dancing and so on.

Total Income for the year amounted to £22,047 up by 37% on last year but Expenditure also rose by 57% to £16,458. Expenditure covers all aspects of maintaining and running the Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room which includes heating and lighting water and sewerage insurance licences cleaning general repairs and improvements. I would like to point out that energy costs rose by a staggering 54% over the previous year. This was inevitable but hall users must be encouraged to conserve heat as much as possible by not leaving doors open or tampering with the controls and by not switching the heaters on before they are needed.

The main income has been from hiring the Hall with income up by some 18% compared to last year. This increase is due mainly to additional bookings as we did not raise our Hall Hire charges until 1 January 2008. We have seen another year of successful Village Markets and a new innovation, the Harvest Home family fun day, was another successful event enjoyed by the community. Credit for the success of these functions must go to the many volunteers who assist on these occasions. The Hall Management Committee would also like to thank the various people and organisations who have kindly made donations or offered their services, in particular Mr Les Masters.

The Hall Management Committee has continued to invest in the Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room with the following improvements made during the past year:

- Installation of a commercial dishwasher in the main kitchen
- Installation of a Lincat automatic water boiler in the Jubilee Room kitchen
- Installation of a fire alarm system in both Halls activated by break-glass points
- Installation of a wireless roving microphone system in the Coronation Hall

This has been another successful year for the Coronation Hall and Jubilee Room. The Hall Management Committee would like to thank everyone who has used the Halls for their continuing support in particular the various organisations who regularly hire the facilities and, of course, supporters of the monthly Village Market.

Clive Morris