
PRIDE IN PORTBURY

PARISH NEWSLETTER NO.7 – JANUARY 2017

INCORPORATING NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH



A very Happy New Year to all of you – we look forward to continuing to keep you abreast of the important things that are happening or have happened in our Parish.

Diary Dates – our February Council meeting is an important one to note as here we will be pulling together and discussing feedback on the Village Green and Playing Field. Please come on February 7th at 7.30 in the Village Hall.

The Annual Beer and Cider Festival will be on the 20th of May – tickets available nearer the time

New Councillor appointment – I'm very pleased to welcome Andrea Ireland as a new Councillor as from February 7th. I'm sure everyone in the Village already knows her from her connection with the Village Hall and the many forays into the woods with her furry residents. She has a lot of experience of the public sector to contribute and also a great deal of energy. I sure we will all benefit greatly. Although now up to our full complement of Councillors, 8, we will be losing another in a few months time, so those of you who have also expressed interest in joining us please do put your name forward.



Neighbourhood Watch – welcome to our first new style newsletter which will now always include a section dedicated to Neighbourhood Watch. We have gathered together the best list we can find of those of you who have been part of the scheme over the years, we've now merged the regular reports that you have been getting into this Newsletter. If there is anything "topical" and important to let you know about we will let you know about that by direct e-mail.



Happily it seems to have been a quiet festive period, no crime reports from the Village came to our notice. There were a couple of bikes that seemed to have been stolen and dumped however; these may have been from elsewhere. This does remind us that after Christmas there are many such attractive items in our homes that might be a magnet unwanted attention.

This report signifies that Roy Ball no longer needs to send out information to all you co-ordinators out there. He has earned a very well deserved retirement, as has Daphne who acted as co-pilot on the e-mail front. Without willing and enthusiastic volunteers in the Village things like this don't get off the ground. Roy has kept the Neighbourhood Watch going for so many years – I'm sure we all wish to thank him for this. I hope Roy that you will approve of what you see we do with the new Newsletter circulation.

Flooding - again! – In November the Village was in the news because of flooding. It wasn't as bad as a few years ago but water did travel up the skittle alley at the Hall. Properties facing the bottom of Mill Lane had a near miss too, with water just about staying below floor levels. Thanks to the volunteers who distributed sandbags and also to usual stalwarts who cleaned dup the mess at the hall.



We are not exactly sure what the long term solution is to this. It may be that clogged drains up Mill Lane and in the High Street contributed to the problem. We are talking to North Somerset about this and trying to get more routine work done before the winter rains come. It may be also that the water isn't getting away efficiently

near the Hall and we are looking into this too. In order to completely resolve the problem however will take a significant civil engineering exercise to duct the water away. We are looking at this too.



There was also flooding at the back of Priory Road during that time, near the track that leads to the playing field. This was due to a blockage which Wessex Water cleared fairly quickly. The blockage was reported to be fatty material, possibly a build up of kitchen type waste; this is to be investigated further. We are told also that our drains are vulnerable to solids such as wet wipes and therefore like to

remind people not to put things such as this down the drains. They also end up clogging sewage pipes with obvious nasty consequences. [For more information see here.](#)

Nighbourhood Plan – another questionnaire has been circulated, this time about ideas for the Village Green and Playing Field. Let us know what you think. There will also be an opportunity to discuss this at the next Parish Council Meeting on February 7th or at the Community Cafe on Saturday the 4th. The plan is developing slowly; you may want to read it [here](#). Please forgive the wordiness; we've yet to add illustrations and tables. If you have any views so far please let us know.

Traffic matters – we've had the usual plague of lorries through the Village over the last few months, some foreign looking for the docks, others just following their nose (or SatNav) to try to get to Nailsea! We have been tearing our hair out trying to find a way of improving signage to stop this problem, at last we've made a bit of headway. This year we expect to see new traffic regulation orders for High Street, Mill Lane and Caswell Lane. At the moment they are out of date and unenforceable. This will then be followed by better, illuminated signs at the A369, which is the main problem. It might still be that we get rogue lorries through the Village but regular offenders can then be reported to the police. We are also trying to get better signage on approach from the M5, the signs here say "For Docks Jct 19 PORTBURY" – no wonder some foreign drivers go wrong. All this takes too much time but we are in the hands of the Highways people at Weston and the Highways Agency who are very illusive!!!



Annual rate setting – I'm sure you will all be aware that North Somerset along with many local Council's is cutting back on services, being forced to do so by the Treasury. There is also a threat that a cap will be imposed on Parish Councils in the future in order to keep rates at the same level in real terms by 2020. Our annual precept, the money spent by your Parish Council, has not been increased for many years. Last year it went down owing to a quirk in the calculation method. In 2011 it actually went down by £10,000 when houses beyond the Ashlands were transferred to Portishead. So for many years now we've been suffering a gradual erosion of our spending power. The cost to each household is currently £44.90 and this raises £19607 which we then allocate to all the things we need to spend money on. Space doesn't allow me to show you where it all goes; [here is a link](#) to 2016/17 budget meeting and report which gives you an idea of this.



We know that there are a number of on-going problems that will need to be resolved, and these may get worse if NSC cut back services. In particular drain and gully clearance is something we want to spend more on, not less. I'm afraid this all means that your Council is considering putting up our annual precept this year, by up to 10%, to keep on top of service cuts and catch up with inflation. This will cost each household less than £5 but will bring in about £2000.



To put this in context, to hire a machine to do one street clean per year costs about £1000.

I think we'd be irresponsible if we didn't try to raise more money now before a threatened government cap gets imposed. After that we would only raise the precept by inflation, RPI, or if a specific cost arose which we couldn't cover any other way.

We realise that this won't be popular with everyone, but this small increase is really necessary if we are to keep on top of all the things we look after in the Village. Please feel free to give us your views on this by e-mail, Facebook or come to the February Council meeting where we will be signing off our Annual Budget ready for the next Financial Year.

And finally from me –



- We've been asked to publicise this call for volunteers

Do you have a couple of hours a month to help us improve the quality of health care for North Somerset?

We are your consumer champion in Health and Social Care. We need your support to collect comments about the public's experiences in e.g. dentists, pharmacists, GPs, hospitals, and care homes.

Our volunteers:

- Run information sessions in libraries, leisure centres and hospitals.
- Talk to friends, family and neighbours
- Visit community groups (e.g. W.I., stroke support, toddlers groups)

They chat to people, collect information and pass it back to us. Everything we hear is recorded anonymously.

The Healthwatch North Somerset team analyses all comments to see if there are common concerns or trends (e.g. discharge from hospital delays, or difficulty getting a GP appointment). This information is shared with health and social care service providers, local commissioners and all other relevant bodies. Healthwatch North Somerset's mission is to improve the quality of local health and social care by sharing your opinions.

To find out more or to offer your time, contact Healthwatch North Somerset directly

www.healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk contact@healthwatchnorthsomerset.co.uk

01275 851400

Registered charity No: 1158487

Mike Phipps – Chairman Portbury Parish Council

And read on for Village Hall News from Sharon

The Village Hall – First a big thank you to the community for their support with recent events. It was great to see new faces at the live music gig, which were pleased to arrange following feedback from parishioners. It was really good to see the support and the event was a real success.



We had a very busy December again and thank you to those who supported us. An even bigger thank you as usual to our volunteers, without them we would not be able to provide the invaluable service that we do.



We are now running monthly quiz nights on the 1st Sunday of the month, all welcome and again it would be nice to see new faces. I would like to remind everyone that without membership it makes it more difficult for us to keep up with maintenance and heating costs. Numbers are down but usage up; club membership is as little as £5 per year and brings in about £2000, if all of us who use the Hall contribute. Please look to support us. Membership forms are available from the club or Sharon/Andrea.

Early reminder for you the Annual Beer and Cider Festival will be on 20th May 2017.

[Back](#) *Sharon Worthy – Chair of the Village Hall and Social Club*



And Church news from Ann

St Mary's Church – We are very pleased to announce that our organ has now been repaired and is being played regularly each week on Tuesdays. We have also installed a completely new sound system in the church and a hearing induction loop is now working to help those who are hard of hearing. All this has been possible with the valuable help of Peter Cooke and Les Summerfield, two members of 'The Friends of Portbury Church Group'. If anybody is interested in joining please contact Ann Longstaff, Churchwarden.



The new toddler group which meets on Wednesdays at 9.15 to 11am is growing and going well and a reminder that everybody is welcome.

We are also planning another new venture in the spring; we will be visited by a wall pointing/rebuilding expert who will be teaching anybody interested in learning how to point walls etc. This will be open to anybody who is interested in learning a new skill! There will be no cost to anybody interested, the only proviso is that participants give at least a day's work on the boundary church walls. If anybody is interested please contact churchwarden Ann Longstaff 07552 629928. This is a fun thing to do especially when there is a team involved.



We are also planning a spring display of local artists' work in the church. Children from the school will also be participating so please feel free to join in.

Wishing you all a very happy new year from all at St Mary's.

[Back](#) *Ann Longstaff – ChurchWarden*

