

This document contains annual reports from village groups and communities
April 2018

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1 Lydeard St, Lawrence W.I.

“Are your meetings always like this? I haven’t laughed so much for ages – I have really enjoyed myself” So said one of our speakers as she said goodbye one evening echoing in part similar comments made by other speakers and summoning up the pleasurable times we have each month.

We have ood and ahd over pictures and stories about the Exmoor ponies, learned about the medicinal values of various plants to be found in field and garden and further learned how to use them to make pot pourri. We discovered the magic of driftwood and were taken back in time on hearing about Coleridge’s cottage.

Our ‘in house’ entertainment took us on members’ visits to exotic climes with pictures of beautiful birds, flowers and animals.

A visit to Mildenhay Manor – a garden meet on a beautiful summer’s evening - a Ladies’ Cocktail Party (posh frocks and hats!) all proved great fun with the climax of the year our 97th Birthday Party at The Bicknoller Inn with a delicious meal followed by an hilarious game of skittles.

Our programme for the forthcoming year appears to be as full and as entertaining as those in the past so if anyone wishes to join us you will be most welcome – come along and join in the fun!

2 Website Report

It has been a busy year on the Lydeard St Lawrence and Tolland Web Page. Web Designer Mike M redesigned the web page to give an easy to use and well laid out display with separate pages for the Parish Council, news, events and contacts as well as photos of some of the village activities and links to other local pages and services. Liz has taken over the administration of the web page, updating the newsletters, council minutes, photos and events on a regular basis.

The Web page itself has also moved seamlessly to a new home as the previous hosting company ceased providing a service. No exact record is kept of the number of visits made to the web page, but requests to add information and reaction to information there, e.g. downloading the flower show entry form and booking health checks, suggest it is being used.

Many thanks to Katharine Spry for all her work over the years as the previous Web Page administrator.

Liz McConnell

3 Annual Report 2017 from Lydeard St. Lawrence Village Hall

The Hall continues to be used well by the community. Regular local users include the Parish Council, Table Tennis Club, Over-60s Lunch Club and the W. I., as well as the twice-weekly use by the Post Office and Coffee Shop.

The School, the P.T.F.A. and the P.C.C. hold their indoor events here and the Dance Workout classes keep people fit on Friday mornings in term time.

Towards the end of the year a new resident started a Pilates class in the Hall on a Wednesday and this has proved to be popular.

We have also been pleased to host the very successful village horticultural show organised by Don & Liz and the team.

We are grateful as ever for the Parish Council grant, and thanks are also due to Cllr Wren for his assistance in obtaining full rate relief from TDBC.

All this, together with the income from garage rental, means that the Hall remains on a sound financial footing.

Our biggest running costs in 2017 were, as usual, insurance at £1,140 and electricity at £720. This year, we have carried out an Electrical Inspection which highlighted some work to be carried out to bring the Hall up to date, with this costing £1,100. A gardener has been employed on an ad-hoc basis to keep the grounds maintained and ensure the fabric of the Hall, garages & walls do not succumb to Mother nature. He also keeps the gardens tidy and the weeds down.

As with other organisations, we are always happy to receive suggestions or, even better, to welcome visitors and new members to our Management Committee meetings.

Don Hobson
Chair, Village Hall Committee

March 2018

4 Report from Lydeard St Lawrence Primary School for the Annual Parish Council Meeting

The following report gives an account of the current activities of the village school and PTFA, to give a picture of the schools community's current activities.

Interactive Whiteboard Update

In January, the project secured a further grant from the Ernest Cook Trust for £2000. This sum, along with £2000 raised by the school from a Head Teacher consultancy project, bought the project total to £9400.

The breakdown of the donors were as follows:

Lydeard St Lawrence and Tolland Parish Council: £4000

The Ernest Cook Trust: £2000

Wiveliscombe and District Rotary Club: £600

A Somerset Childrens Clothing Manufacturer: £300

PTFA events: £100

School Head Teacher consultancy work award: £2000

The Somerset Masons: £400

The project entered some urgency in February.

The existing Year 5/6 classroom board malfunctioned and would only work for 5 minutes at a time before overheating and turning off. Then in March, the Year 3/4 classroom board stopped working entirely, leading to a couple of days when arrangements had to be made to change planned lessons.

Fortunately, the decline of both these boards had been pre-empted. The total raised to date was enough to afford at least two Promethean boards and the installation costs; and so it was agreed by the PTFA committee and staff to proceed with the purchase of two new boards to replace those in the classrooms with failing equipment.

Fortunately, the installation date happened to be just two days after both classrooms boards had given up, so the children were not without the smart boards for very long.

The two Promethean boards were installed on Wednesday 28th February and the difference they make is absolutely remarkable. They are going to be an incredible educational resource for the children and we feel very lucky to have them. We have made a short video charting the journey of the project and showing the result of the boards before and after installation.

We now hold strong to our commitment to raise the remaining amount that we need to buy two further boards for Reception class and Year's 1 & 2 classroom (and maths equipment). To this effect, we have been successful in being the Waitrose Community Matters Nominated charity for February.

We also have pending applications into the Alice Ellen Cooper-Deane Foundation, the Frazer Trust, the Medlock Trust, and the Fairfield Charitable Trust.

Regrettably, our application to the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists was unsuccessful. As was our application to the Hinkley Point Fund – although we have been invited to reapply for this with a different project.

New Headteacher Appointment and Parent Governor Vacancy

Mr Christopher Rutland has been appointed as new headteacher at the school, but due to his current commitments as a headteacher, will not take up the post until April. Parents have been given the following introduction to MR Rutland:

Mr Rutland began his teaching career in 1999, studying for a BSc (Hons) in Science and Education at the University of Greenwich, which he completed in 2003. Over the next eleven years he developed as a teacher, manager and leader, gaining his National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) in 2010 and his first Head of School position in 2014. He has worked at a number of schools in Kent and Medway Local Authorities, including Cecil Road Primary & Nursery School, Holy Trinity C of E Primary, and Featherby Junior School, where he is currently the headteacher. His contract with Featherby continues until the end of the Spring Term 2018.

Mr Rutland has held roles as Science Subject Lead, Head of Key Stage, Deputy Head for Curriculum, Assessment & Monitoring and for Community Cohesion, Head of School Strategic Leadership, and Designated Safeguarding Lead. He has experience of working within a successful federation of schools and within a new multi-academy trust. He is keen to develop the school's role in the Tone Valley Partnership and strengthen the collaboration between TVP schools.

Mr Rutland and his family are moving to Somerset in the new year to be closer to his wife's relatives, who live in a village on the other side of the Quantocks.

Janine Donovan left the post of Head Teacher at the school in January and has moved to St Michaels in Minehead. The school is currently in the hands of Milverton Head Teacher – and our excellent teaching team.

The school are also advertising for a new Parent Governor.

Upcoming events at the school

Butlins Swimathon – Minehead Rotary Club - March 7th

The children take part in this every year and it generates a good amount in fundraising for the school to help fund extracurricular activities. We have five teams of swimmers competing, the children are sponsored to swim as far as they can in relay for 40 minutes.

Sports Relief – The children will be doing a sponsored challenge to raise funds for Sports relief which will involve running a mile a week.

World Book Day – This was snowed off, but will be held again in early March. The children not only dress up as their favourite character from a book – but can choose to participate in a spelling bee, a competition to illustrate a book cover about the South West, or to picture themselves doing some extreme reading.

Bikeability Training – The children will be participating in Bikeability training run by an external provider, and will be learning to cycle safely up by the school and along Nethercott Way in mid March.

Lydeard's Got Talent - The Year 6 children will be organising and running a talent show in the village hall on the 15th of March to raise money for the Year 6 Leavers Day Out.

PTFA News

We continue searching for match funding for the remaining £5000 needed for a further two smart boards for the Reception and Tawny Owl classrooms – but we are over the moon to have been able to order the first two boards for Snowy Owls Class and Eagle Owl Class. Thank you for the Parish Councils assistance with making this possible.

We are currently planning a Summer Social evening – which will replace our usual summer fair. It was felt we'd like to run a different fundraiser this year, with a bbq, music, bar and raffle.

We are also busy organising our regular fundraising events such as the Easter Egg hunt, Halloween disco and starting to think about timings for our Christmas Fair.

We are awaiting the arrival of the new headteacher – as we would like his ideas and input on creating a new project to reapply for the Hinkley Point Community Fund.

We have been advised that our last application proved the school community is clearly impacted by Hinkley traffic (disadvantaging parents who work and commute to Bridgwater and struggle to get back for school pick up due to traffic congestion).

We just need to find a project that links directly to offsetting this inconvenience, and it is then likely we might receive funding.

Update from Kate Stannard

Dear Lorna, I am writing with excellent news. This week the school has secured a grant for £1000 from the Medlock Trust, £2000 from the Fairfield Trust, £400 from the Somerset Masons and approx. £300 from the Waitrose Wellington token scheme.

This completes our funding total needed!

The two new boards needed for Tawny Owls and Barn Owls can now be ordered and installed.

In a few months' time, we are going to add to our video documentary of the project and the boards going into the school - and the difference they will have made in that time. We will send you a link to the video as soon as it is finished!

Many thanks to the Parish Council - without your grant it would have been more difficult to attract the funding needed.

We look forward to the boards enriching the education at the school,

Best wishes,

Kate

PTFA Funding Coordinator

Stannard

5 Tolland Church Report

Tolland Church has had a good year, despite the significant challenges it faces, in common with many rural churches, merely to survive. With such a small village and so few householders, funding is our principal concern, which sadly detracts from the purpose and the significant achievements of our village church.

We were pleased to conduct our usual varied range of 7 services in 2017 which were all well supported by the village and by neighbouring parishioners. Indeed 90 people attended the Christmas Day Carol service, which was incredible and a wonderful experience, enjoyed by all. Villagers pick and choose when they come and we try to deliver light, original, thoughtful and enjoyable services, suitable for all. It seems to work.

After 2 years where we have had to draw significantly from our reserves, just to stand still, we decided to undertake 3 fundraising activities last year: a coffee morning at the church run by Maureen Canney, another run at Ali Bolton's and a fundraising ball and hogroast at Neil Longstreet's. All these were highly successful. In addition, we were very fortunate to receive generous sponsorship for the fundraising ball and a significant donation to help towards our running costs. Thus, we increased our fundraising achievements from zero last year to over £4k, which has made a huge difference to our bottom line, meaning we achieved a surplus, enabling us to fund much needed repairs. The challenge is to maintain this without tiring our small pool of generous donors. Sadly, old buildings are hugely expensive to maintain.

2018 will see nearly 40 members of the US/Canada based Wolcott Society visiting Tolland to attend a special thanksgiving service and barbeque lunch in August. Their ancestors hailed from Tolland and emigrated to USA on the Mary and John in 1630, 10 yrs after the historic inaugural Mayflower voyage. 2 listed Wolcott tombs lie outside the entrance to the church, dating back to the 1600's. It should be some occasion.