

LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE AND TOLLAND ANNUAL VILLAGE REPORTS

This document contains the annual reports for many of the local groups, societies and gatherings in and around the two villages.

- 1. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE AND TOLLAND PARISH COUNCIL**
- 2. LYDEARD LIFT REPORT**
- 3. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK**
- 4. TOLLAND CORONA VIRUS SUPPORT GROUP**
- 5. LYDEARD ST. LAWRENCE VILLAGE HALL**
- 6. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE WI ANNUAL REPORT**
- 7. TOLLAND CHURCH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

1. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE AND TOLLAND PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019-20

May 2019 marked the end of the previous Parish Council's term of office. Both Matt Hele and Ed White stood down from the Council, and Tony Weir applied to rejoin. As usual there were not enough candidates to require an election (the last one was, I believe, in 1999!) and this left one vacant seat. Our former Chairman Mark Peters was persuaded to return and was duly co-opted onto the Council. I was re-elected as Chairman, as was Debbie Telling as Vice Chair.

Planning

As usual every meeting included two or three planning applications for the Planning Committee to consider, but nearly all were relatively simple and uncontroversial.

Highways

A number of problems were reported to Highways and most were sorted out, including blocked drains in Tolland and subsidence along Tarr Road. The Headteacher at the school raised the issue of vehicles – mainly delivery vans – driving too fast past the school. The “School” road-signs have been cleaned and cleared of overgrowth, and Highways have been asked to renew the markings on the road.

The annual hedge cutting was mostly done very well, much better in fact than in previous years, except around Westleigh where the contractor made a mess of the lanes and blocked drains with detritus.

Infrastructure

Restoration of the historic fingerposts proceeded slowly. Three or four more signposts have been restored but there are still quite a few to do.

The Council also purchased some new village name signs for Tolland, which have now been installed and are a great improvement.

The Council considered getting a dedicated bin for the disposal of dog waste, much of which was being put into the litter bin at the playing field. It was at first considered that the cost (not just of buying one but also having it regularly emptied) was too much to justify, but the Cricket Club have reported that dog waste is still being dumped in their bin, which means one of them has the very unpleasant job of emptying it. The Council will reconsider this matter in the coming months.

Broadband

Progress on this has ground to a halt. Although the government had promised to make every effort to connect outlying rural areas as soon as possible the current crisis has put that on hold, as it has to any self-help solutions.

Financial

We have again managed to keep the Precept at its previous level and have maintained a healthy reserve of funds in the Community Benefit Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy whilst at the same time contributing to the funding of various projects and initiatives. Funds are ring-fenced for footpath repairs, clock maintenance and play equipment upkeep. Grants were made to Tolland PCC for mowing the churchyard, to the school's garden project and to the set-up costs of the Brendon Towers Way.

My thanks go to all the members of our new Parish Council and to our hard-working Parish Clerk Lorna Thorne, for all their commitment and support over the last twelve months.

Jonathan Marshall, Chairman

2. LYDEARD LIFT REPORT APRIL 2020

Lydeard Lifts continues to offer a local transport service for the people of Lydeard St Lawrence, Tolland and the surrounding hamlets. Trips, both single and return, are carried out by volunteer drivers who are reimbursed for their fuel and running costs. These costs are met by the passengers. In the last 12 months the scheme undertook 27 trips (20 in the previous year). There are a number of regular Lydeard Lift users and a small pool of volunteers to service their requirements. The scheme will continue for the foreseeable future.

Liz McConnell, Coordinator.

3. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Following discussions at the Parish Council meeting on 9th March, local residents worked with the Parish Council and Village Agents team to set up a Community Support Network for Lydeard St Lawrence to coordinate local help during the coronavirus crisis. Calls for volunteers went out via the village website and newsletter, school email, word of mouth, existing WhatsApp groups and leaflets. By the time the full lockdown came into force we had already established a network of around 45 volunteers to offer practical help and support and share information about local services, all the while following evolving government guidance and rules on social distancing.

Group members are well distributed around the village and surrounding areas, and we keep in touch with neighbouring efforts in Tolland and Combe Florey (as well as beyond the Parish!).

Anyone who would like to request help can telephone Kate Campbell on 01984 667509, who will match the request with a volunteer.

At the moment our main focus is picking up prescriptions from local surgeries and pharmacies and helping with shopping for those who are self-isolating or shielded, but we are confident that we have a good system in place should the needs of our community change over the next months. For now, residents can be reassured that if they need back up, help is just a phone call away.

Kate Campbell

4. TOLLAND CORONA VIRUS SUPPORT GROUP

Tolland was pro-active in establishing a support group for its village residents which was supported by virtually all of the village. It provides email and telephone numbers of residents and communicates ideas, suggestions, information and offers of support which are shared amongst the community. There is also a prescription collection service.

The way that residents are all pulling together in this time of need is inspirational and the spirit of community has been re-kindled. Nevertheless, we are only too aware that several of our neighbours are working on the front line and whilst we are fortunate to find ourselves living in such a peaceful, remote village, we never forget those that are quietly and selflessly working on our behalf and thank them for their dedication and care.

Neil Longstreet

5. ANNUAL REPORT 2019 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 Pilates classes keep people fit on Monday mornings in term time.

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, which helps in maintaining the buildings and grounds.

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

Our biggest running costs in 2019 were, as usual, insurance at £660, a gardener at £600 and electricity at £820 we now also employ a cleaner which cost £420. The gardener helps to keep the grounds maintained and ensure the fabric of the Hall, garages & walls do not succumb to Mother nature and the cleaner ensures the Hall is always clean for its users.

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, Chairman, Village Hall Committee

6. LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE WI ANNUAL REPORT

Lydeard St Lawrence WI has always enjoyed an active calendar of events and this year has been no exception with a programme of speakers, outings, craft activities, meals and quizzes.

We are particularly proud to have been able to co-ordinate the Somerset Federation WI Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Our members sorted over 500 shoeboxes, which had been very generously donated by WI's throughout the county.

We distributed shoeboxes to charities in Somerset including YMCA's, ARC (the Taunton Homelessness Charity) and Sparkle. Lydeard St Lawrence WI are pleased to be co-ordinating the shoebox collection again this year.

We have listened to speakers on subjects such as Behind the Scenes at the British Museum, Global Warming and the work of ARC. In addition, we played in the County skittles competition, entered quizzes, submitted a resolution to be considered by the National WI campaign, entered the Taunton Flower Show Group WI category and enjoyed an outing to Brympton House and Christmas Carols at Midelney Manor.

Although our meetings have been suspended during these unprecedented times, our members continue to keep in regular contact. We are looking forward to getting together again, as we have another interesting year planned.

We would certainly welcome new members and if you would like to attend a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andrea Lindley, President, Lydeard St Lawrence WI, r.a.lindley66@gmail.com

7. TOLLAND CHURCH ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, APRIL 2020

Tolland church once again saw an active year of nine services in 2019 thanks to the Revd Martin Walker and all his team from the Wiveliscombe and the Hills Benefice. These included an Ashing service on Ash Wednesday, a Baptism and a packed candlelit carol service on Christmas morning. We are particularly grateful to the Parish Council for providing a wreath for Remembrance Sunday, which was presented during the service by Cllr Mary Harding, and to Lydeard St Lawrence WI for so splendidly decorating the Christmas tree.

The major fundraising event for 2019 was the Summer Fair that raised an amazing £650. Huge thanks to Sharon Birt and all her helpers for organising such a successful event, which also demonstrated the potential for using the church for events, being the only community building in the village.

Tolland's unusual peal of eight light bells were rung at every service thanks to the bell ringers from our own and surrounding benefices. We had eight visiting bell-ringing groups including a band from Hertford who rang a peal Yorkshire Surprise Major rung in 2 hours 33 minutes!

During the year PCC member Neil Musson spent considerable time researching how best to restore the decorative iron gates at the entrance to the churchyard and gathering in quotes. We're grateful to Parish Council for offering support for this project which has had to be put on hold because of the current lockdown. Thanks also to the Parish Council for its grant for churchyard maintenance kindly organised by PCC treasurer Neil Longstreet.

Tolland's churchyard is looking stunning at the moment with the bluebells and blossom coming into flower. Although the church is closed, it provides a special place where people are welcome and can hopefully find peace and solace during these uncertain and stressful times.

Maureen Canney and Linda Lloyd, Churchwardens, 17 April 2020