

**A Virtual Village Annual Parish Meeting was held for
Lydeard St Lawrence & Tolland Parish
at 7:15pm on 19th April 2021**

Minutes of the Meeting

Cllr Marshall began the meeting by noting the recent death of Mel Horner after a long illness. Mel was a very active member of the village, organising and running many activities such as the youth club, the short mat bowls, the table tennis club and helping to organise the annual fireworks party He will be sorely missed.

21/1 **Apologies** were received from Cllr Charles Cox, and SWT Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew. Cllr Tony Weir was unable to attend due to poor internet connection.

21/2 The **Minutes** of the **of the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting** were agreed as an accurate record and to be signed. It was agreed that the Chairman would be posted the minutes to be signed.

21/3 **Reports were received from local groups and organisations**

- [LSL and Tolland Parish Council](#)
- [Lydeard St Lawrence Coronavirus Support Network](#)
- [LSL Village Hall Committee](#)
- [Lydeard Lifts](#)
- [Lydeard St Lawrence WI](#)
- [Tolland Church](#)
- [Community Council for Somerset and the Village Agents Update](#)

21/4 **Any other business**
None received

**LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE AND TOLLAND PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020-21**

It goes without saying that the whole of the past year has been completely dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and nearly all of the normal village activities had to cease. At the beginning of the first lockdown Kate Campbell in Lydeard St Lawrence, and Neil and Caroline Longstreet in Tolland, volunteered to act as village support co-ordinators to support people and their needs for help with shopping, collecting prescriptions or indeed anything else. They kindly resumed that role when we were locked down again, and they deserve our sincere thanks for taking on that very vital task.

The Parish Council itself continued to meet via Zoom, which whilst not by any means ideal was certainly better than nothing, and we were at least able to continue to fulfil our duties to the community.

Planning

Despite the lockdowns and other restrictions, the Council received very much the usual number of planning applications for the Planning Committee to consider, most of which were straightforward and uncontroversial.

Highways

There were problems with the state of the roads in the Westleigh area, and also Nethercott Lane which has been deteriorating badly for some time despite the Parish Council having made several requests to the County Council (SCC) for action to be taken to repair the road. SCC are to erect "Unsuitable for HGVs" signs at both ends of the lane, but I am doubtful if this will make any significant difference as the only HGVs likely to be using the lane would be going to or from the two farm sites, to which there is no alternative access.

The annual hedge cutting appeared to omit the area around Chapel Leigh and Westleigh; the Parish Council made a complaint to SCC about this.

Infrastructure

The Council purchased three new salt bins for the Westleigh and Hoccombe area which previously had no such provision. I was saddened to see that of the nine bags of salt we bought and placed before the bins were delivered, four had been stolen by the time the bins were in place.

The Council again considered getting a dedicated bin for the disposal of dog waste, but rejected the idea on the grounds of the ongoing cost of emptying it.

The Parish Council was pleased to contribute to the complete refurbishment of the church gates in Tolland, which has been a splendid success. Many people in Tolland have been involved, but the overall project manager was Neil Musson, who deserves credit for such an excellent job.

In Lydeard St Lawrence Paul Yeomans has also done wonders in restoring the church tower's cockerel, which fell down from the tower and was in a very sorry state but is now looking absolutely splendid – and hoping to return to his perch before too long!

Broadband

After the hope of getting fast broadband for the settlements outside Lydeard St Lawrence appeared to have died, a very recent initiative would seem to hold out at least some promise of future progress. We will keep parishioners informed as to how this latest idea develops.

Financial

We have once again managed to keep the Precept at its previous level, and have maintained a healthy reserve of funds in both the Community Benefit Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy. Funds are still ring-fenced for footpath repairs, clock maintenance and play equipment upkeep. I believe the Parish Council continues to provide good value for money to the people of the two parishes.

As always, I have been ably supported during the last twelve months by all the members of the Parish Council, to whom I extend my sincere thanks, and once again I would like to thank our Parish Clerk Lorna Thorne for her excellent work over the last year – not least for setting up the Zoom account for us!

Jonathan Marshall
Chairman

[Back to the top](#)

LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

Report to Parish Council March 18 2021

The Lydeard St Lawrence Coronavirus Community Support Network was set up at the beginning of March 2020 to coordinate local help during the coronavirus crisis, after discussions with the Parish Council and Village Agents team. Around 45 volunteers signed up from the village and surrounding hamlets, using a Whatsapp group with Kate Campbell as the central co-ordinator, to communicate quickly and effectively, offer practical help and support and share information about local services.

After the flurry of activity and information sharing at the beginning of the first lockdown, the group received a steady stream of requests to collect and deliver prescriptions, shopping and occasional other tasks. We liaised with groups in Tolland and Combe Fleury to avoid duplication and pool resources where possible.

Probably because the area was not hard hit by the first wave of Covid19, and because of the strength of other existing networks (family, friends, neighbours), we were never particularly busy, although requests continued regularly through the summer until the official end of the first shielding process. However, there was consensus that the group offered a valuable service and was a reassuring back up to residents (including those who moved into the villages during the pandemic) so we continued to advertise our services into the second lockdown in the autumn, and during the present one.

Although help requests are much rarer now, when they do come through, we are able to respond quickly and effectively. Because of our number and reach, we have also proved excellent at identifying and returning stray pets! When restrictions end this summer, it will probably be time to review our activity and perhaps evolve into an ongoing community network - and even perhaps, organise a social event?

Anyone who would like to request help or join the group can contact Kate Campbell on 01984 667509/ 07974 140632 or email katebest@btinternet.com.

[Back to the top](#)

LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE VILLAGE HALL REPORT

Annual Report 2020

The year started as any other year with the Hall being 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.

Then everything changed, eventually the Post Office service reopened complete with COVID 19 safety measures in place, but that was the only facility that returned.

The Hall remained closed for the rest of the year to all other users. We used this opportunity to carry out redecoration of the main hall and the tidying up of the remaining areas to keep the facility looking its best. Fortunately, the Government put in place financial help to assist with keeping the building maintained whilst it was closed.

We are grateful as ever for the Parish Council grant, which helps in maintaining the buildings and grounds and for the financial assistance in maintaining the Post Office service. All this, together with

the income from garage and parking rental, means that the Hall remains on a sound financial footing ready to reopen when restrictions are finally lifted.

Our biggest running costs in 2020 were, as usual, insurance at £650, a gardener at £738 and electricity at £720 we now also employ a cleaner which cost £738. 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 and COVID 19 safe for the Post Office users. It also cost over £1,300 for the decorating that was carried out.

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, April 2021

[Back to the top](#)

LYDEARD LIFTS 2020-2021

The imposition of lockdown restriction in March 2020 saw the immediate cessation of the Lydeard Lift provision in the villages. Although there was some easing of the Lockdown restriction in the summer and autumn of 2020, the Lydeard Lift team felt that we could not safely ask our drivers to take people in their cars, so the service has not resumed.

Once we are confident that it is safe to do so we will restart, but until that point, the service remains in abeyance.

Liz McConnell, March 2021

[Back to the top](#)

LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE WI

The WI have not met over the past year, it is hoped that they can resume meeting again in July.

[Back to the top](#)

THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, TOLLAND

The past year has been a difficult one for all of us in many ways. We therefore felt it was important to keep Tolland church open for anyone who needed space, quietness and a place to escape from their busy, stressful lives. We, of course, followed the government's coronavirus guidelines.

Once we came out of lockdown in the summer we were able to move forward with restoration of the church gates, generously supported by the Parish Council and match funded by a private benefactor.

Their removal immediately caused alarm and I was contacted by a concerned visitor who thought they might have been stolen! The whole project has been master-minded by PCC member Neil Musson and carried out by local craftsmen. By the end of the year the work to repair the ravages of more than 100 years of Somerset winters was well advanced.

Another benefit of the summer lifting of lockdown was that we were able to use the EuCAN Milverton Conservation Volunteers to help manage the churchyard. The combined force of local people and members of the group enabled us to cut and removed all the grass from the churchyard to help maintain and enhance the lovely wildflowers among the graves. The council's open spaces grant supported this work.

The congregation was able to enjoy the fruits of this labour when we had our first service at the end of August in the churchyard. Harvest and Remembrance services were also in the open air but sadly our Christmas carol service had to be cancelled.

We look forward to a more regular programme of services and other events in the coming year where everyone is always welcome.

*Maureen Canney and Linda Lloyd
Churchwardens, St John the Baptist Tolland
16th April 2021*

[Back to the top](#)

COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR SOMERSET AND THE VILLAGE AGENTS UPDATE

I thought I would update with how the Community Council for Somerset and the Village Agents have been working and supporting communities during this pandemic and how we will be moving on as restrictions ease. Please find my report below.

This last 15 months has seen a huge demand and expansion of the services we provide along with changes in the way we work. From this we are now taking on board different and in some ways a better way to work as Village Agents.

Prior to March 2020 when we had a referral, we would inevitably make a visit to the client and carry out a home visit to chat and assess before coming up with a plan and working on what was needed. As soon as lockdown started our home visits stopped which has proved to be both a hinderance and some help.

When we visit a client, we often can assess much more than we are asked to help with, particularly in the elderly. We can see what conditions a person is living in, is the house cold? is the heating on? does there appear to be enough food in the house? is it safe? are there trip hazards? By not going into homes, we had the ability to fully assess taken away. On the other hand, for some clients a home visit would not always be necessary especially if carers and micro providers are already going into a property and are therefore assessing.

We are now able to determine if we need to go out to a home and by prioritising can ensure we are seeing those who need that full assessment. Our home visits did start again and are allowed following

risk assessment to ensure our safety in terms of Covid and the safety of our clients. We have full PPE and adhere to social distancing measures. Some of our visits have been held outside if it has been determined this is safer.

As soon as lockdown commenced Community Council for Somerset became one of the Agencies who supported Somerset County Council along with Communities, individuals and families. This was achieved by:

Manning a phone line 5 days a week in conjunction with Somerset County Council

- Taking calls to find volunteers for medication and shopping collections by using local Coronavirus Volunteer Groups formed by local networks.
- Taking Calls from those feeling isolated get connected to organisations who supported through befriending by phone i.e. WVS
- Taking Calls from carers who were left with no support and time out as the person being cared for lost day centre and in some cases carer support.
- Taking calls from those in need of carers and micro providers and then sourcing these for clients.
- Taking calls regarding debt and loss of income due to finance and finding the right support and advice for these people
- Taking calls about housing issues, blue badge applications, social issues and many other problems people found themselves in.

Food Resilience Project

Community Council for Somerset along with Somerset County Council, Fareshare and HIS Church have been running a Food Resilience Task Force.

There are 11 community freezers, 4 of which are in the Taunton/Wellington area. The freezers are holding frozen meals cooked in 2 sites in Somerset, the most local one to us being Kolve. These frozen meals are being delivered to individuals and families by the Village and Community Agents. Organisations and charities such as YMCA are also able to use these meals.

Village Agents have delivered 20,000 units each week to families and individuals across Somerset. Dried/tinned ambient food has been stored and has also been distributed by Agents, since March 2020 180,000 items of food has been delivered across Somerset.

This project is ongoing and is still in constant use along with Food banks and Community pantries which we are also able to access.

Facebook Live Cafe

Since May 2020 we have been running a daily live broadcast on Face Book called Talking Cafe Live. A Village Agent hosts with topics including volunteering, mental health, WVS, benefits, careers advice, Pet care and much much more. It is easy to view and also available to catch up on if you can't view it live at 11am each day Monday to Friday.

Christmas 2020!

We were very well supported by Lydeard St Lawrence WI who very kindly donated over 80 shoe boxes of toys and goodies for us to deliver to individuals of all ages, we had a wonderful response from all those who received one of these boxes. Morrisons in Taunton donated toys to us and again Agents were able to distribute these along with Christmas food parcels organised by Taunton Food Bank.

Regular Work!

Our regular work has continued during this extremely busy time.

For those who are not familiar with our work, we are Social Prescribers. We receive referrals from GP Surgeries, self-referrals, friends and family members (consent of person you are referring is needed). We are able to help with benefits, hoarding, housing applications, getting a micro provider in or carer. We can make direct referral to Adult Social services, OT's and Physiotherapists in the Community teams.

We apply for grants on behalf of clients in need of appliances for the home, carpets etc. We have a phone scheme whereby we are taking in used phones, having them reset then giving them to someone in need. I have also had 2 laptops donated which are being used for clients in further education.

We have a bike scheme where bicycles have been donated, they are serviced and are given to clients who need transport to work or education.

We have many routes we can go down to help those in need so it's always worth asking. I was even able to intervene and have a parking fine reversed for a distressed lady who was having trouble dealing with the bureaucracy of trying to fight a system. We also help with Blue Badge applications.

Moving Forward

Work is very much continuing as above, however the need to help people with shopping and medication is much reduced. We are finding an increased number of people struggling with food, finance and mental health so this is very much a focus for us all. The phone lines will continue for 5 days a week.

The online Talking Cafes will continue for now as they have been shown to reach hundreds of people. Our regular Talking Cafes will resume at some point with venues and dates to be confirmed at a later date.

Contact Details:

Community Council for Somerset www.lovesomerset.org
01823 331222

Christine Brewer, Village Agent for Taunton Central PCN (including areas covered by Quantock Vale Surgery).
07535 277680
christineb@somersetccc.org.uk

[Back to the top](#)