

# LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE AND TOLLAND PARISH COUNCIL

## Annual Village Reports – April 2024

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### PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2023-24

The Parish Council were saddened to hear of the death of Tony Weir in May last year after a long illness. Tony had been a member of the Parish Council for many years and he will be greatly missed. Mr David Oxley of Woolcotts, Tolland, was co-opted to fill the vacant seat.

That meant that we had a full complement of Councillors, but unfortunately at the end of February this year Charles Cox, another long-standing Councillor, tendered his resignation and that vacancy has not yet been filled.

#### Planning

As planning applications can now be circulated online between members of the Council it was decided that the Planning Committee was no longer necessary and could be disbanded. There were several applications to consider this year, but rather fewer than usual and none of them were controversial.

#### Highways

Owing to the recent heavy rainfall there were some incidents of flooding of some of our lanes, most of which were short-lived. Potholes remain a problem, as although they are usually dealt with quite quickly once they have been reported to Somerset Council the repairs often seem to be of poor quality and the potholes then re-appear.

The Parish Council were asked by Somerset Council to consider a Community Funded 20mph speed limit through Lydeard St Lawrence. This was discussed, and for a variety of reasons it was decided not to go ahead with such a scheme at present, not least because it would cost us a minimum of £15,000. We will continue to monitor the situation.

#### Infrastructure

The play equipment at the playing field has been renovated; many thanks to Ed White and his helpers who did an excellent job.

#### Broadband

Work on new broadband connections continues to take place throughout the area on an occasional basis. A representative of Airband attended our September meeting at which she told us it was hoped to have the scheme up and running by the end of October. Six months later the work is still not finished!

#### Financial

The Council's finances remain in a fairly healthy state, with funds in both the Community Benefit Fund and Community Infrastructure Levy. Monies are still ring-fenced for footpath repairs, clock maintenance and play equipment upkeep.

Once again I thank my fellow Councillors for their support over the last twelve months, and our Parish Clerk Lorna Thorne for her extremely competent and reliable work on our behalf over the last eight years. Sadly for

the Council, Lorna has tendered her resignation due to the amount of other work she has; she will be greatly missed by us all.

Jonathan Marshall  
Chairman

## **THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, TOLLAND**

One of the key events of the year for Tolland church was the announcement by our rector, Revd Martin Walker, that his appointment was not being renewed and therefore the Benefice would be entering a vacancy (interregnum) in February 2024. Martin has been very supportive of Tolland church for which we are very grateful.

Tolland had its usual pattern of eight services, but this year it was the turn of Brompton Ralph to host Remembrance. We therefore held a new celebration for the first Sunday of Advent. All were well attended and it was standing room only for the Christmas morning carols with some 120 people including a good number of children. Produce collected at harvest thanksgiving was, once again, donated to Wivey Kitchen and the Taunton Food Bank.

In April we were pleased to welcome Bishop Michael and his family to the church as part of the opening of the Brendon Towers Way, the long distance footpath that visits all the churches in the Wiveliscombe and the Hills Benefice.

The newly formed Tolland Community Group organised a wonderful Big Tea when members of the village gathered to celebrate the coronation of King Charles in May. The following month they organised a lively Summer Solstice barbecue with games, live music, dancing and a delicious hog roast. Both events raised valuable funds for the church for which we are very grateful.

No major works were carried out in 2023 as, following the architect's advice, we were still allowing the plasterwork to dry naturally after the repair of the valley gutter. The re-plastering and limewash is planned for 2024.

We continue to manage the churchyard for wildlife and, as usual, the EuCAN Milverton Conservation Volunteers came to cut and raked up the long grass at the end of the summer to encourage the seeding of the wildflowers. We are particularly grateful for the annual churchyard maintenance grant that was received from Parish Council.

*Linda Lloyd, Acting Churchwarden, April 2024*

## **LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE WI - ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

As we have enjoyed another year, we have continued to see the membership of Lydeard St Lawrence WI continues to grow.

Our programme of events and activities has been varied and included speakers who have given us increased awareness on subjects such as art, deep nature connection, Mind in Somerset, recycling and carbon awareness

and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In addition, we have entertained ourselves by attempting new crafts and have attended meals, quizzes and outings.

We also hosted a social evening on the Life of the Honeybee by Andy Glendinning. This was a well-attended, successful social event and our thanks go to Andy. Characteristically the members of Lydeard St Lawrence WI worked as a great team providing the supper and organising the many aspects of this event. We were very pleased to make a donation of half of the profit to The Brains Trust.

Lydeard St Lawrence continues to contribute to the many Women's Institute's community projects. These have included oncology cushions, blankets, twiddle muffs, walking frame bags, toys, beanies and scarfs. For any members who wish to participate, help is always on hand to assist in learning new skills. We have again co-ordinated the Somerset County Federation Christmas Shoebox appeal. More than 600 shoeboxes were collected from WI members throughout the County, sorted and distributed to YMCA's, women's refuge and the elderly and in need via the Village Agent. Many of these shoeboxes included handmade items to add a person touch for the recipients. We are very proud of our participation in this appeal, which touches the lives of many at a time of need.

The WI's tenets are to create a world where women come together to learn, share skills and work together to influence change and improve lives in their local, national and global communities. Lydeard St Lawrence WI embrace these principles and very much look forward to the events of forthcoming year.

We are a friendly group and if you would like to come along to meet us, you would be very welcome. For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andrea Lindley, President, Lydeard St Lawrence WI

## **LYDEARD ST LAWRENCE VILLAGE HALL CHAIRMANS REPORT 2024**

The year started with hope and expectation of a successful year.

2023, saw the abrupt end of the Post Office service in the Hall ending a service that villagers have enjoyed for many years. The main office in Watchet had decided it was no longer financially viable for them to continue providing this service, so on 25<sup>th</sup> May our Post Lady Teresa Potter made her last visit.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued financial support for this service.

Whilst the Post Office was running the Coffee Shop continued to be well supported both Mondays and Thursdays. I would like to express my thanks to Phil Barker, for managing the Coffee Shop and ensuring a good supply of tea, coffee, and cake, provided by village residents.

After the closure of the Post Office, it was agreed to continue the Coffee Shop on the 1st working Monday of the month.

Other regular uses of the hall include the Parish Council and WI who meet most months in the hall, and the thriving table tennis group, run by Paul Yeomans, who meet weekly.

The short mat bowls club met once in January but were unable to get enough people together to continue with this, I would like to thank Anna Broad for managing this.

Other events that took place in the Hall during 2023 included it being used for one-off bookings including half a dozen children's parties, a christening celebration, two adult parties and a wake. We also hosted the local bell ringer's competition tea, a photo shoot, the Horticultural Show and a gathering of the local WI groups.

In addition, we have loaned out the wooden tables and chairs for the Coronation party, the Croquet and Cream Tea, the Church Fete and the Summer Social.

The Car Park has been used on several occasions by various rambling groups and locals wishing to leave their cars off road for whatever reason.

The Hall has also been used by the Committee to run social events which included a Mediterranean Feast night, a Games night and a very successful Book night with refreshments.

I would like to thank Paul Yeomans who has been invaluable to the Committee, providing advice and guidance, and has carried out numerous maintenance tasks to ensure the Hall is safe and useable for everybody.

My thanks go to Andy Glendinning our Treasurer, who has kept the Committee up to date with all the financial dealings throughout the year and has completed the accounts for 2023, which have been examined and signed off.

Also, thanks must go to Clare Marshall for her role as Secretary responsible for recording minutes and providing us with all the documentation needed for the smooth running of the committee. She also ensures supplies are maintained and makes any necessary equipment purchases as required.

Liz McConnell must be thanked for doing an excellent job as Booking Secretary liaising with the Treasurer to ensure hire payments are made correctly.

Michaela Greener, our Social Secretary and her team, deserve a big thank you for bringing the Village together at several different events throughout the year.

Throughout the year the gardener and cleaner have kept the grounds tidy and the building clean.

On a sad note, Liz McConnell has decided to step down as Booking Secretary and committee member. Over the years her time as Booking Secretary and committee member has been much appreciated. Thank you and good luck with your future plans.

Unfortunately, our Cleaner Linsey Attree decided that she would be unable to continue with her role and completed her final cleaner in October. Many comments were made on the difference her work made to the Hall and hopefully a replacement will be found soon.

I have decided that after over nineteen years, I will also be standing down as Chairperson and committee member.

During 2023 the Committee has worked very well together as a team, which I'm sure will continue in 2024, providing further opportunities for social gatherings and activities.

Don Hobson , Chairman, Village Hall Committee

March 2024