

# **THE LYMPSHAM PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT & ANNUAL REVIEW – MARCH 2024**

Lympsham Parish Council has continued to maintain the playground, the community shelter and hedgerows, and has organised the grass cutting and emptying of the refuse bins during the last twelve months. The council have also provided financial assistance for projects that will enhance our village and benefit the community as a whole: Lympsham in Bloom, the King's Big Help Out day, Chatty Hour, the Lympsham Old Photos Group and the maintenance of the churchyard of St. Christopher's Church.

The new Somerset Council replaced Sedgemoor District Council in March 2023 and has assumed responsibilities for the more strategic local services within the county, including: children's services, highway maintenance, waste disposal, planning and education. Local Community Networks (LCN) were created to help administer the changeover. It has become evident that the new authority has inherited a considerable debt and consequently will have to reassess the level of assistance previously provided (both financially and physical) to parish councils such as ours. We anticipate that we will have to assume responsibility and pay for some services from our own funds.

We were delighted that the Lympsham Village Green and Cricket Field were awarded third place in the best 'Large Field' category by the Somerset Playing Fields' Association. We had four local entrants in the prestigious South West in Bloom competition: the Lympsham in Bloom team gained a Silver Gilt award, the Lympsham Academy were assessed as 'Thriving' in the 'Neighbourhood' section of the competition as was Lympsham WI for their work in keeping the floral displays at Memorial Corner looking so attractive and Christine and Jerry King of Whitehouse Kennels in Eastertown were assessed at Level 4 for their conservation area and pond.

Users of the Manor Hall continue to enjoy the new energy saving lights and heating, new hearing loop system and external sensor lights. The booking and billing procedures for the hall have been streamlined and our Parish Clerk, Sally Ferguson, will administer them. We are pleased to announce that we can now accept payments by bank transfer.

The Sports Club was awarded £7,712.78 to culvert the rhyne behind the Pavilion last year. Their long-term plan is to extend the building to provide bigger and better changing facilities and to allow the village shop to extend their premises.

The Parish Council have installed a second Speed Indicator Device (SID) in the village this year funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). There is evidence that these devices are having a positive effect on speeding motorists and we are now able to cover 12 different locations throughout the parish in rotation.

The Parish Councillors again decided this year to award two Community Awards one to Jim Bishop in recognition of his efforts in working tirelessly organising the school children in planning, planting and watering the wildflower garden outside the Manor Hall and the second award to Prayag Rajpura the former manager of the Lympsham Café for his past involvement in the village and in particular, for his support of the 'Chatty Hour' initiative.

The Café at the Pavilion' has continued to be a popular venue for snacks and beverages. In the New Year Sarah Davis took over the management of the Lympsham café adding to her responsibilities of opening the bar in the evenings and during the day and at weekends. The members of the Lympsham Tennis Club, the Cricket Club and the darts and skittle teams along with members of the wider community continue to benefit from this facility.

Julia Rosser continues to lead The Chatty Hour' which is now on Tuesdays between 10.00am and midday. On average twenty people come along to the Café and enjoy socialising with a hot drink and cake. Julia has invested in some games, organises speakers, crafting and entertainment. Her enthusiasm knows no bounds.

The Lympsham Community shop and Post Office celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday in July with cake and outdoor games. Their committee have asked for volunteers to help in the shop and have urged the community to continue to use it or we are in danger of losing this wonderful resource.

The Reverend Kevin Wright our former Rector retired to Dorset in September. The Parish is now in a period of vacancy (Interregnum) but thanks to the Reverend Neil Biddiscombe the curate and lay preachers services are being covered during this time.

The editor of the 'Lympsham News' Malcolm Bennett has continued to produce a high quality village magazine four times a year attracting advertisers, which generates much needed additional funds for the Parish Council.

County Councillors Bob Filmer and Tony Grimes have continued to support us in our Parish affairs and I would like to thank them for their interest and help.

The Lympsham C of E. Academy head teacher recently married and is now to be known as Mrs Whiting. We congratulate her and wish her all the best.

Notable thanks from the Parish Council this year for assisting in village affairs go to: Danielle McEwan (our new PCSO) Corriena Evans (the Manor Hall caretaker) and Mrs Emily Pinn, Dona Kemble, Richard Young & PKF Littlejohn (auditors of the Manor Hall and Parish Council accounts respectively).

Thank you to all of the Lympsham Parish Councillors who give their time, expertise, support and encouragement to make our village the best it can possibly be.

Finally, I would like to add a personal vote of gratitude to Sally Ferguson our Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for all her hard work and for guiding us this year.

Aline Bennett  
Lympsham Parish Council Chairman

18.3.2024