



## TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

### NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2024

Hello, welcome to our second newsletter of 2024 for the residents of Tatworth and Forton.

The weather is finally improving after a long and wet Winter and Spring. Hopefully you can all get out and enjoy the wonderful countryside we are privileged to live in.

#### **Vacancy**

We have a vacancy on the Parish Council. If anyone is interested in serving the local community by becoming a Parish Councillor please email the Clerk at [clerk@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk). This is your opportunity to have an influence on how the area changes. We anticipate that the successful applicant will be decided at our July meeting.

If you do not want to become a Councillor but have an interest in local amenities or the cemetery there is the opportunity to be co-opted onto these Committees. We have one vacancy on the Amenities Committee and two on the Cemetery Committee. If anyone is interested please email the Clerk at the above address.

#### **Jubilee Field**

The extensive work completed in this important amenity for all the parish has been severely tested by our weather. After heavy rain the field used to be inaccessible, this is no longer the case although further work has been identified to improve the drainage and allow unrestricted access to the park field and orchard, allotments and the dog friendly field above the allotments alongside the A358. This field boundary by the A358 is to be secured with a stock fence this summer in order to provide for dog walkers a space to allow dog training and exercise.

The hedge laying to the left of the pathway left a huge amount of brush for far longer than we would have preferred but the weather prevented clearance until a dry spell was granted to us. The Council employed a contractor to chip the brush and use it to treat the muddy areas. We look forward to the promised new growth in the laid hedge to provide a safe screen, border and wildlife habitat.

The area under preparation as a wild flower meadow will be mowed again this summer in accordance with advice from our experts. The tree planting of specimen native oak, sweet chestnut, copper beech and wild cherry trees is completed in the park field and is looking good and it will enhance this area in the future. Some sixty more Woodland Trust trees planted next to the fenced off wet area plus more goat willow, silver birch and rowan are not immediately obvious yet but will grow in time if that area is allowed to develop.

Our thanks to Jan Morse who has served the parish in many respects for many years. Jan recently carried out some pruning in the orchard to encourage the fruit trees. Unfortunately, we left it too late to arrange helpers or those keen to learn how this should be done to assist Jan with this task so she was alone on that occasion. Perhaps Jan will inform us when next this could be arranged as a community exercise. Another really keen and active member of our parish has suggested a Wassail this coming winter to encourage even more growth amongst the apple trees in our orchard. This could be a special annual event and volunteers to organise and manage it should let us know via the parish clerk.

Please look out for and read the new information signs. The new dog walking rules are to encourage more visitors to the main field without the worry of free roaming dogs.

The installation of a restored community notice board is also planned for the entrance to the Jubilee Field.

Representatives from the allotment holders joined the recent Amenities Committee meeting and suggested some improvements that could be made to this very important and well supported parish amenity. A list will be added to the agenda for consideration at the next meeting although some work towards the requests is already in hand. One request was the provision of a composting type toilet for which the parish council was unsuccessful in a recent grant application.

Considering the very reasonable rents, there are still allotment plots without tenants but with the improved access we do not expect these to be available for much longer. Anyone interested should apply to the Parish Clerk to have their names added to the list.



### **Shelters, Bins, and Seats**

The bus shelters have been repaired, refurbished and repainted and an improved cleaning and maintenance plan agreed. It is unfortunate that these shelters are so badly treated by a few who spoil it for the many.

Parking in front of waste bins prevents them being emptied with inevitable results. Action to discourage this inconsiderate practice is under consideration.

We will soon be fitting 2 additional public benches in memory of parishioners.

On the grass verge on School Lane, looking towards the school, in memory of Neil and Val Joslin:

*My Sister and I were pleased to make a donation for the park bench situated on School Lane as a fitting reminder to our parents, Valerie (Val) and Neil Joslin.*

*They moved to the village in 1962 and immediately became immersed in village life.*

*Dad was involved with the village youth club and was Vice Chairman of Perry Street Club for many years. Dad sadly passed away in 1993.*

*Mum was a School Governor and chairperson, earning her the award of a British Empire Medal (BEM) for her near 40-year service to Tatworth School. Mum had previously been the leader of the local girl guide group and was formerly a member of the Young Wives group. In her latter years, Mum was the licensee of the pavilion at Tatworth Playing Fields. Mum sadly passed away in 2020*

*Please enjoy the bench!*

*Carol Hawley and Stuart Joslin*

The other bench on the corner of Linkhay and Perry Street, in memory of Kenneth and Winifred Peadon:

*Dad was born in Tatworth, he served and was injured in the war. Mum moved from London during the war, lived locally, met Dad and did not move back. They lived a quiet life contributing to the local community, working and living in the Parish. I lost Dad in 1994 and Mum passed in 2021. Greatly missed by all that knew them.*

*Eric Peadon*

## **Coombses Pond**

A team of professional workers were brought in to remove dead, fallen and dangerous trees to begin the task of restoring this important space to a safe, relaxation area. More work to this end is still to be completed.

Insurance limitations restrict working party activities to using hand tools. Only those who carry a recognised certificate in using power tools in a public area will be permitted to volunteer in this way.

The access and perimeter path will be cleared of undesirable vegetation and wood piles and made safe. More professional contract work is proposed in the first instance in the hope that volunteers can gain access and return this very important amenity to all the parish to enjoy.

One excellent suggestion is to prepare the entrance and the near pond bank for limited ability access but it must be remembered by all that the perimeter of the pond is still hazardous and visitors must take considerable care to avoid injury.

As all owners of land bordering watercourses, we have critical responsibilities. A high priority should be given to the clearance and management of the leat bordering the pond and banks of the brook to ensure the unrestricted flow of storm water.



## **War Memorial and Green Verges**

Additional work to the war memorial railings is planned now the trees from that area have been cut back. All other maintenance will continue.

We planted 1000 daffodil bulbs around the Parish and Cemetery, as the years pass the display will be impressive.



## **Highways**

Maintenance is carried out by Somerset County Council who plan to reduce their budget for reactive maintenance of blocked gullies, drains and ditches, overgrown hedges and noxious weeds from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. 'Reactive maintenance' occurs when issues are identified by Highways inspectors or reported by communities.

Note that 'reactive maintenance' is distinct from 'planned maintenance' where Highways have a programme of work for cleaning highway surface water drains on all the roads they maintain.

Parishioners are recommended to report problems via the 'Fix My Street' app.

Additionally, it would be useful if parishioners could advise the Parish Council of the location and frequency of any issues which they believe should be subject to a planned programme of maintenance rather than be fixed as and when they go wrong. This will assist the Parish Council in its discussions with Highways and assessing whether to engage its contractor Kier or set money aside to deal with the problems itself.

### **Finance**

Finance seldom grabs the headlines but a number of improvements were made in 2023/24 including

1. The use of direct bank transfers rather than cheques to pay suppliers
2. Transfer of parish funds to higher interest accounts (while retaining the security of the Government's Financial Services Compensation Scheme)
3. Improved presentation of the accounts
4. The use of What 3 Words to enable Council assets to be more readily reviewed

Parish Clerk Nigel Tinley is to be congratulated for his excellent work in this area as well as being involved in successful negotiations with Chard Town Council for the sale of Tatworth and Forton Parish Council's legacy interest in the land at Zembard Lane in Chard. (Tatworth and Forton retain their interest if the land is subsequently sold by Chard Town Council).

The Cemetery Committee is currently investigating the possibility of using the funds generated from the sale of the Parish Council's share of Zembard Lane to open the Cemetery extension (land already owned by the Council) for natural (green) burials and the scattering of ashes.

### **Planning**

There has been a noticeable increase in the last year of planning applications refused by Somerset Council being appealed by the applicants. Two (small) appeals are currently ongoing.

The lack of a 5-year supply of housing land in our area continues to be an issue as National Planning Policy favours approval of sustainable development unless the harms of doing so noticeably outweigh the benefits.

### **Youth Club**

The Parish Council has organised and funded a Youth Club at the Memorial Hall on Monday evenings. After a review of the 2023-24 provision the Council has decided to concentrate on the age 5-11 Fun Time group running between 6:30-8:30pm. After meeting at the hall, if the weather is good it will be moved to the playing field. This will run until 22<sup>nd</sup> July after which we will have two daytime summer events, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August, and will restart on 9<sup>th</sup> September.

A great thank you to Active Learning & Skills for running these events, and the Memorial Hall and Playing Field for allowing us to use their facilities.

### **Defibrillators**

The Council manage the defibrillators at St John's Church, Perry Street Club and the Memorial Hall. We would like to thank Peter Fosh for maintaining these on our behalf.

### **Grants**

The Parish Council welcome applications for grants (up to £300 matched) from parish based non-profit businesses, charities and voluntary or community organisations. Please look out for details on Facebook or on our website.

**Dates of meetings:** Full Council – 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 5 September.

If you have any questions or feedback arising from this newsletter please send them to [admin@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:admin@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk).