



TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024

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

The weather has improved giving us a good summer, hopefully allowing all our residents to enjoy the amenities within the Parish and surrounding countryside.

The Council

I received an email this morning asking, "who are our Councillors?". We have 12 volunteers who serve the community as Councillors with the aim of improving the area we live in. You will find their names and contact details on our website. Besides the full Council meetings, generally on the first Thursday of each month at the Memorial Hall, we have committees that specialise in planning, amenities, cemetery and finance. All meetings are publicised on our website and Notice Boards. The public are welcome and are given the opportunity to speak. Non-Council members can join the amenities and cemetery committees, and we particularly would like help on the cemetery committee which meets 6 times a year. If you are interested, please contact the Clerk for details.

Since the last Newsletter we have co-opted a new Councillor to our ranks. The successful candidate was Brian Quinn and Brian introduces himself as follows:

"I am Somerset raised and have lived in Chard for the last 15 years. I am a husband and father, and I work delivering medication to those who are unable to collect. I also drive special needs children to school. I began volunteering for the Chard Carnival Committee a few years ago and I designed and now maintain the website. I am also a volunteer member of the Chard Town Team. I believe in teamwork and building relationships. I care about Tatworth and Chard and see it as my duty to actively work towards the improvement of the village. I will be sitting on the amenities committee as I wish to make a positive contribution to people's lives."

Youth Club

The Council are very committed to the continuation of the Youth Club in Tatworth which covers primary school ages. After 2 very successful fun days during the school holidays the Monday evening fun time commences on 9th September at the Memorial Hall from 6 - 8pm. If the weather is fine, it will take place on the playing fields. Please support this as there is a danger that insufficient numbers will mean the Club will have to close. The Club is funded by the Parish Council and run by Active Learning & Skills (see Facebook @funtime.als). They are looking for more local young people to join the team as volunteers and make a positive difference for children, to learn skills and enjoy helping to deliver the fun.

Do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

The idea behind neighbourhood plans is that they give local communities a say into the future planning of their area: the housing, the infrastructure, the services, and so on. But there are a lot of questions to which we really need answers:

- What is it exactly?
- What's involved in creating it?
- Does it ultimately make any difference?

Let's find out: please come and meet Janvrin Edbrooke, who is a Neighbourhood Planning Champion, and who will be speaking at the Tatworth Memorial Hall at 19:00 (7pm) on Thursday, October 24. Everyone is welcome, including people from neighbouring towns and villages.

Parish Amenities

The last amenities committee meeting was 18th July 2024 at Forton Community Hall where a very full agenda filled all the available time. It was surprising that no members of the public were present again. Extensive work has taken place on parish amenities in the period.



Jubilee Field
(what3 words) rafters, internal, makeup.



COOMBSSES Pond.
(what3 words) depravity, guitar, shores.

Jubilee Field



This invaluable amenity is looking fantastic. The Amenities Committee are delighted to report all the very extensive work completed to date has proved very worthwhile. The hard way path, the improved drainage, hedge laying, tree planting and fencing has been very successful. More work continues and the management of this facility remains a priority.

The new signs by the gate have at last been placed, providing a brief explanation of the different areas including the new provision of a dedicated field for dogs off the lead. This new area has been provided to allow dog walkers to exercise and train dogs off the lead and the perimeter hedge has been secured with a substantial stock fence for added safety to both dogs, their owners and passing traffic. Following the many complaints from dog walkers with dogs on the lead being annoyed by dogs running free this new arrangement provides a solution for all. However, this can only work if all users of Jubilee Field abide by the plan.

The area under preparation as a wildflower meadow continues as planned and we all look forward to seeing the results in a few years' time.

The specimen native oak, sweet chestnut, copper beech and wild cherry trees in the park field all look healthy but a few of the orchard fruit trees have been lost and a few more need help to stand again. The sixty or seventy trees planted within the fenced off wet area will be allowed to flourish undisturbed without any strimming for at least 2 years. The fruit

trees are heavy with fruit for any of us who would like to gather it. The allotment holders have provided several ideas for improvements that could be made to this very important and well supported parish amenity. Additional tenanted plots would make the improvements easier. Considering the very reasonable rents, the Council are surprised there is not a greater demand. The Council look forward to working closely with representatives of the allotment holders. Anyone interested in taking up an allotment should apply to the Parish Clerk to have their name added to the list. Anyone who would like to help with the orchard management is asked to give their contact details to the Parish Clerk. One suggestion under consideration is for a Wassail this coming January to encourage 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.

Coombses Pond

A grant application to assist with the restoration of this amenity proved unsuccessful but initial clearance of the entrance and surrounding path has at last been actioned. This allows access to volunteers and more professional work. Dead, fallen and dangerous trees have been removed but many logs remain. Please go and explore the pond but remember great care must still be taken by anyone in this wild area with deep water and other hazards. The access and perimeter path will be kept clear of undesirable vegetation and wood piles.

The amenities committee are working on an excellent suggestion for a plan to prepare the entrance and the near pond bank for limited ability access

All owners of land bordering watercourses have critical responsibilities. 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.

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.

Shelters, Bins, Notice Boards and Seats

A new bus shelter is under consideration near the junction of Loveridge Lane and Fore Street. Other 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.

Two additional benches have been placed and a plan for additional benches that can be installed in memory of members of the parish can be obtained from the Parish Clerk. We have agreed upon the bench specification and gained authority for a few roadside locations to allow our residents to donate a seating bench, or a share of a bench, as a memorial. Anyone interested in this plan should contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

A restoration and maintenance of existing community notice boards is planned and look out for the new installation of a restored community notice board at the entrance to the Jubilee fields.

Parish Green Verges, War Memorial.

A plan to plant more spring bulbs has been approved. Additional work to the war memorial railings is planned now the trees from that area have been cut back. All other maintenance will continue as usual.

Road closures... and buses!

Wherever you go, you'll find road closures: whether for telecommunications, water, gas... or just because the road has been dug up so many times that it finally has to be resurfaced.

In Forton, the road into Chard has been closed on numerous occasions for one reason or another. In Tatworth, it's Waterlake Road which tends to be the focus of closures.

Whenever there's a closure, you never know precisely what it means, until you get to the site in question. Can pedestrians and bikes still get through? Can cars do an unofficial zigzag to get round the closure? Is there a diversion, and to what diversion in particular do the 'Diverted Traffic' signs refer? Oh, and is there actually a closure at all?

And finally, what about the buses? Let's take Tatworth. Whenever Waterlake Road is closed, the no. 30 bus goes straight along the A358 between Chard and Axminster. For Tatworth residents heading towards Axminster, the sole option is then the regular stop near the church. Heading towards Chard, you have to cross the A358 and use a rough, grassy verge where there is no sign for even a temporary stop. Since this is then the only part of Tatworth served by the bus, people on the Perry Street or South Chard side have to walk up to the church – a struggle for anyone with limited mobility. And all of this assumes that you actually know what's happening! Clearly, notices should appear at all our bus stops well in advance, but that rarely occurs. Sometimes bus drivers don't even know, either.

For some time now, the Parish Council has been pressing the appropriate authorities for:

- better planning of all such closures, with minimal disruption and a full clean-up after the work is complete;
- better liaison between contractors and the bus company, to ensure that any changes to services are comprehensively notified;
- where possible (for example, if half the road is still usable), a special dispensation for buses to pass through closures.

Going forward, we may need to consider an alternative arrangement for buses heading towards Chard whenever the closures take place.

As a Parish Council, we don't really know how many people have been seriously affected by the road closures. Please let us have your thoughts and comments! These could well strengthen our case for better procedures.

Planning

The Parish Council is writing to the Government and Somerset Council over concerns with flaws in the current planning system. It appears that companies such as Crossman are entering into 'Land Promotion Agreements' with landowners which aim to increase the selling price of land by obtaining planning permission on land not previously identified for housebuilding. The apparent objective is not to increase housing availability or build houses themselves but to simply profit from the increase in land value when it is sold after planning permission has been granted. A copy of the letters can be found on the Parish Council website. The Government is currently consulting on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Details can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/>

Speeding and Parking in our village

We have been made aware that the Police and Traffic Wardens are looking at speeding and parking in our community. Please be considerate to others – a few extra seconds on your journey can save a life. **Double yellow lines are not to be parked on.**

Grants

The Parish Council welcomes applications for grants (up to £300 matched) from Parish based non-profit businesses, charities, voluntary or community organisations. The closing date for applications is 17th September and application forms are on the website.

Cemetery

Maintenance continues to make this one of the most attractive cemeteries in the area. The lavender hedge has been extended around the new Garden of Remembrance and we are looking to replace other sections. The broken seat at the top of the cemetery has been replaced.

Dates of Meetings Full Council – 3rd October, 7th November, 5th December

If you have any questions or feedback arising from this newsletter, please send them to admin@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk. Clerk. Nigel Tinley. clerk@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk