



TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023

Hello, and welcome to our second Newsletter for the residents of Tatworth and Forton Parish.

We are halfway through another year and finally pleased to see an improvement in the weather. It is all action within the Council to improve our amenities, flood resilience and fight unwanted housing developments.

Vacancy

We have a vacancy on the Parish Council. If anyone is interested in serving their local community by becoming a Parish Councillor, please email clerk@tatworthandfortonparishcouncil.org.uk for an application form. This is your opportunity to have a vote on how the area changes. The closing date is 23 June. Applications will be decided at the full council meeting on 6 July.

Litter Pick

We are holding our next community litter pick on **Sunday 25 June**. We will be meeting in the Memorial Hall car park at 10:00am. Please come and help make our community a clean and safe environment to live in.

Progress on Flood Information.

As our water flows into the Axe River we come under Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and a meeting has been arranged with the Flood Engagement Officer, who is coming out to walk around in Lower Coombses area and Forton on either Monday July 17th or Tuesday July 18th weather permitting at 11.30ish. He will be willing to talk with residents either then and / or come back another time for a resident's meeting according to our need. He is responsible for advising people about flood risk, flood prevention, riparian responsibilities, flood warnings and community emergency plans/training. Residents' information will be placed on the Parish Website and the Tatworth and Chard website.

Jubilee Field

We have approved a quotation for the creation of a safe and easier access to this very important amenity using permeable plastic pavers that will be refilled with soil and seeded with grass or similar. The possibility of this 3 metre wide path being seeded with not only grass but, perhaps, clover, creeping thyme or similar to withstand foot traffic is being looked into. The work will include the restoration and improvement of field drainage as well as the creation of a wild flower bank that will also help to avoid the saturation of the access area in wet weather. The essential issues of flood mitigation, wildlife preservation and safe general management of this important parish amenity remains a delicate balancing act.

The tree planting that has begun will continue with oak, sweet chestnut, copper beech and wild cherry trees to be located in the main field. More trees in the enclosed wet area are also under consideration.

A stock fence has been suggested to make sure dogs that are out of control do not escape from the Jubilee fields to the road or adjacent stock grazing areas. We must all remember to make sure our dogs are under control at all times for the time being until more funds are available.

The allotments now have 5 of the existing plots without tenants. An application to the lottery fund has been made to finance a dry toilet for plot holders. No representative of the allotment holders

was present at the last meeting to put forward any other ideas to further improve this very important amenity.

The work completed to manage trees and hedges is very encouraging and has allowed the next stage of the provision of a wild flower meadow to begin. This will be in the top field between the allotments and the A358.

The revised hedge and grass cutting contract is designed to encourage residents to take advantage of this fantastic amenity with trees and wildflowers to encourage wildlife and diversity.

Shelters Bins and Seats

The new bus shelter at Perry Street Club is soon to have a community notice board that we all can take advantage of via the Parish Clerk.

The other bus shelters maintenance continues and a repair to the Church, A358 shelter has been completed.

We hope our suggested solution to the inadequate dog waste bin at Tatworth Memorial Hall will soon be accepted by the hall committee.

Our attempt to provide more litter bins has stalled but we plan to raise this again at Somerset County level.

We are working on a bench specification to allow our residents to donate a seating bench as a memorial. A number of likely locations for seating benches around the parish have been identified but permission to place even a seat is not straight forward. However, we hope to report some progress on that soon. At Forton, for example, one grass verge identified as a location has been used for parking.

Coombses Pond

The purchase procedure continues. A working party of local volunteers is needed and will meet to discuss what is required as soon as Coombses pond comes back into Parish Council control. All who can offer help to bring back this very important amenity to the benefit of us all please give their name and contact details to the Parish Clerk.

Parish Green Verges

A number of areas around the parish can be adopted to maintain grass and/or plant spring bulbs or wildflowers, perhaps. Some work towards this can begin immediately.

Resilience Sheds

The two small stores now contain some equipment that will prove useful in the unlikely event of a major incident in our parish. Access to the stores will be under the control of incident wardens and the details will be published for all soon. We again thank Perry Street Club and Forton Club for continued cooperation.

Solar Lighting

A Somerset contractor has been selected to install solar lighting for the short path adjacent to the Forton brook from Lower Coombses to Holway. This will help to make this hazardous area a little safer.

Cemetery

Maintenance continues to make this one of the most attractive cemeteries in the area. The painting of the front gate and shed will be completed within the next few weeks.

The cemetery has been busy over the last few months and the Parish Council would like to offer condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones.

Planning

The planning application for the building of 95 homes at Perry Street was due to be discussed at Somerset Area South Planning Committee in Yeovil on 23rd May but, due to lack of time available, discussion has been deferred until 27th June. The Somerset Area South Planning Officer has recommended that this application be approved. The Parish Council had already lodged its objections before this recommendation was made but will present further objections on 27th June within the 3 minutes allowed to it. In addition, it has agreed to engage a local expert to review the planning application for errors and omissions and discuss the way ahead.

Anyone considering submitting planning applications for new properties or change of use of existing properties should be aware that greater emphasis is being placed upon mitigating the impact of phosphates. These are generally produced by human and animal waste and have, in the past, contributed to the degradation of water quality. Locally, this has particularly affected the River Axe.

The Parish Council is grateful to those residents who responded to the request for assistance with setting up a Neighbourhood Plan. Unfortunately, overall response was poor. The Parish will therefore have to continue to respond to applications for large numbers of houses on a case by case basis rather than in an overall planned matter. However, the Parish Council is seeking advice on how to influence the replacement for the current South Somerset Plan which ends in 2028.

Community Matters:

Youth Club

The Parish Council has organized and funded a Youth Club at the Memorial Hall on Monday evenings. During the Spring up to the school holidays this is aimed at the 6-11s Fun Zone either at the hall or playing fields. If the weather is good the 11-18s are meeting at the playing field for a Pop-up Youth Zone session. The numbers are increasing every week and anyone in these age groups can join. We are planning 2 summer holiday events at the playing fields, dates to be announced.

A great thank you to Active Learning and Skills for running these events.

Coronation Celebration

The Council organized a Coronation Celebration at the playing fields on 7th May with the band IOU playing. Hundreds of residents came together for an enjoyable afternoon. We would like to thank the Playing Fields Association for their hard work, IOU for playing on a Sunday and Wheatons for the trailer.

Forton Community Hall organized a picnic the next day and, despite the weather, many of the villagers attended. The Council financially supported the event.





Finance

The Parish Council welcomes applications for grants (up to £500) from non-profit businesses, charities and voluntary or community organisations. These should be submitted no later than 8th August. Details on the website.

Grant claims should be for a specific purpose which directly improves the well-being of some or all residents in the Parish.

Please contact the Clerk for an application form and accompanying rules. (Particularly note that applicant organisations must operate a bank account distinct from that of any organisation which they are affiliated to).

The Annual Audit Report 2022/23 was completed on 23rd May. No major issues were found.

The Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 was approved by the Council on 1st June.

Both Audit Report and Annual Governance Statement will be published on the Parish Council website in due course.

Comments

We would like comments and ideas for the community. In 2019 we sent a questionnaire to the youth of the Parish and 2 comments were extra bus shelters and youth provision. We now have a bus shelter opposite Perry Street Club and a youth club on Monday nights. It does work.

Dates of Meetings

Full Council 6th July, 3rd August, 7th September

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