

Symene Voice

Symondsby Parish Council Annual Newsletter

Symondsby Parish Council members April 2021



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Keep Up To Date

Keep up to date with all the latest news via our new Facebook Page:



@Symondsby Parish Council

and our website: symondsby.org.uk

Covid-19 Resilience

Symondsby Parish Council would like to thank our lead co-ordinator, Pelham Allen, and his team during these uncertain times. He can be contacted on 01308 814477 or 07747 033733 or email: pba@staffordlodge.com

Any help or support please contact the Clerk. **STAY SAFE, REMAIN WELL!**

During this period if you have any planning matters please ensure you email the clerk with your responses in addition to your response direct on the following website:
<https://planning.dorset.gov.uk/online-applications/>

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

There will be no Annual Parish Meeting this year.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Tuesday 4th May at 7pm in place of the usual 2nd Tuesday of the month for May only.

A pleasant walk of around 5 miles

Please remember on most gateposts there are round directional signs with an arrow showing which direction the path takes. **YELLOW: FOOTPATH, BLUE: BRIDLEWAY.**

Start at the Car Park at Eype, Head West along the Coast path to Thorncombe Beacon. Continue to Seatown, then walk through the caravan park and past the water treatment plant. Just past Doghouse Farm head East through the fields to Frogmore Farm. Head up the field to Eype Down. Over the Down to Down House Farm, then down the fields back to Eype.



NEW COUNCILLORS

We are fortunate to have secured three new councillors within the past year. Here is a bit about them:

Nigel Mawditt

I am 63 and have been married for 39 years. I live on West Cliff, West Bay and have done so since 2003. I have 3 grown up children and four grandchildren.

Before retiring in 2017 I had an engineering business specialising in the design and manufacture of automation control systems. Through my business I travelled to and worked in over 40 different countries giving me, I believe, a global perspective of life.

My passion is cycling. I have cycled from John O'groats to Lands End. I would like to use my time as a Symondsburry Parish Councillor to promote safe cycling through and around Bridport and generally help our community where I can.

Pelham Allen

Pelham moved with his wife Janet to Eype from London in 2010, having had a holiday home in Seatown since 1982. He is a Chartered Accountant by training, and is now semi-retired.

He has taken responsibility for the Council's work on resilience, including the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and has a particular interest in making sure that the whole parish is able to access digital services.

Paul Hartmann

I moved into the Bridport area with my wife Lynne in 2018 after over 40 years international and UK experience in the property development and construction industry. One of the highlights of my career was being a senior member of the Olympic Delivery Authority delivering the 2012 Games from before the bid was won to post games remedial works. I am now mainly retired and working in non-executive director roles advising Kings College London, Cambridge University and the House of Lords Strategic Estates.

Wherever we have lived we have always tried to contribute to the local community and would like to do the same in the Symondsburry/Bridport area. Currently we are volunteering at the Bridport Medical Centre on the vaccine roll out programme. I am keen to support the values of the area in promoting sustainability, conservation, affordable living and viability of the local community. In joining the Parish Council, I hope my life experiences can assist the community, especially with regards to land, planning and property matters.

Notes from Broadoak

A couple of years ago I wrote some notes from the northern most region of our parish, the largest by area in the Dorset Council area I understand. This past year has of course been exceptional for all the wrong reasons, so activities in the parish have been greatly curtailed. However, our village hall website has been kept up to date and on it runs a monthly diary of life on the farm – rather unimaginatively entitled Farmer George's Diary! We still have no holiday lets in our village and many work locally on the land, or in Bridport but it is good to keep everyone in touch with what happens locally agriculturally and often explains why tractors may be working late hours, or stock seen in unusual places. www.broadoakhall.org.uk

The church has had only a few services during the year, but was still wonderfully decorated for Harvest, an important festival for our community. The Broadoak Choir has met for occasions just twice since March: one to record a 'distanced' song and message for one of our members' 80th birthday and once to record carols which were used in the Eggardon and Colmers Benefice online Carol Service. We did rehearse together a few times, when allowed. We seriously miss the camaraderie of meeting together to sing.

Our village hall has suffered with a leaking flat roof over the kitchen, which will need serious financial assistance to repair, not easily managed at the moment; and our community phone box, the Broadoak Box had its door removed during the recent storm Bella. The power of the wind to wrench a cast iron door from its hinges must have been immense.

It has been important for the community to be part of the Symondsburry Parish Resilience Scheme and we appreciate Pelham Allen's chairmanship of this to support us through difficult times.

Broadoak Hall

Building work has started at Broadoak Hall during the dry spell at the beginning of March. Thanks to a grant from Symondsburry Parish Council, and matched funding from the Walbridge Trust, the leaking roof will be repaired before more damage is done, and in time for the hall to open when restrictions are lifted. Matt Roberts from Whitchurch Canonorum tendered for the business along with two other local roofing businesses and the Village Hall trustees are most grateful that he was able to come so quickly.



Free Trees

Did you know that you can receive up to five free trees – all native species such as Silver Birch, Rowan, Hazel, Bird Cherry, Beech, Goat Willow and Hawthorn – from Bridport Tree Planting?



This group, which has been in existence since autumn 2019, is planting 600 saplings in public open spaces around the town and in neighbouring parishes, and is part of Friends of the Earth's hope to double tree cover nationally. But they also supply individuals with ordinary back gardens.

Demand has been so high this winter that they've had to buy in more trees but can still offer some free ones if stocks allow. Try contacting the Co-Ordinator, Joe Hackett, on 01308 456161 or email him at joe@thehacketts.uk.

Picture: Sue Arnold of the Millenium Green Project in Bridport planting in January this year helped by John Hinsley and Lucy Rowland, of Bridport Tree Planting.

Symene Community Land Trust

The trustees of SCLT and residents of Edwards Close have met a few times this year, when it has been possible, and via Zoom when locked down. We are pleased that there is now a new group in Bridport, the Bridport Area Community Housing group, which will work with us when opportunities at the Vears Farm Development begin to appear.

Broadband and Digital Access

Although parts of our Parish have benefitted recently from improved broadband access as a result of the roll-out of optical 'fibre to the premises' (FTTP), the Council is very conscious that there are many properties which cannot get a sufficiently fast broadband connection to meet the needs of families and businesses. The pandemic has accelerated our dependence on a good internet connection to make possible many activities that a year ago could easily have been done face to face, or perhaps did not need to be done at all. Now contacting the Bridport Medical Centre, ordering grocery deliveries, dealing with HMRC and many, many other interactions with officialdom have to be done online. In addition, modern forms of video communication are proving indispensable to keep in touch with family and friends whom we cannot meet in the normal way. The Parish Council has been working with Dorset Council to put in place a number of local schemes to take advantage of Government funding for rural broadband connectivity. Unfortunately these were terminated prematurely by the Government in February this year, but a new funding arrangement has now been announced, so

we are continuing to advance the preparatory work. In the meantime, many properties in the Parish could have a better broadband speed by contacting their Internet Service Provider and asking whether FTTP is now available for them. If you would like more information about improving your access to high speed broadband, or to make sure that your property is identified as being currently unable to get a decent service, please get in touch either directly with me or through our Parish Clerk.

In addition to the difficulty of getting a good broadband connection, the idea of using unfamiliar equipment to access the internet can be daunting for many people. If you have not used computers, tablets or smartphones before, or only in a limited way, the whole process can appear impossibly difficult. Dorset Council have introduced a service of Digital Champions to help. These are local people who are familiar with modern technology, and have offered to talk with anyone who is trying to get access to the internet for the first time or is having difficulty getting everything to work. If you would like to talk to a Digital Champion, please call 01305 221048 on any weekday between 10am and 12 noon.

Pelham Allen, Parish Councillor

Award to Eype Scrubs Sewing Group

Dorset's High Sheriff George Streatfeild was pleased finally to be able to present a High Sheriff's Community Award to Bev Chisnall and the Eype Scrubs Sewing Group. Over the first lockdown, the group of around 20 volunteers cut and stitched thousands of items of PPE for local hospitals and hospices at a time when there was a global shortage. Nominated by Symondsburys Parish Council, a distanced award ceremony took place outside St. Peter's Eype on Sunday 28th February with a few representatives. Pictured is Bev Chisnall, the co-ordinator for the group, with the High Sheriff.



Resilience

The Parish Council has for many years had a Resilience Plan, which identifies the risks that we believe need to be considered and might require an emergency response. In normal times we have been concerned about the impact of severe weather, perhaps causing flooding, blocked roads or electricity failure. One of the risks addressed in our plan is however Pandemic Flu, although we have not had to worry too much about this previously. 2020 has been very different. In March the resilience coordinators for the ten areas in the Parish met for the first time on Zoom at the start of a sustained effort to make sure that anyone in the Parish who needed help with shopping, getting hold of medicines or any other issue arising from the lockdown or the Covid virus itself had the help that they needed. The response from the Parish was fantastic. More people volunteered to help than asked for help, and a strong spirit of looking after our neighbours developed rapidly. In particular, the Eype Scrubs Sewing Group was formed by Bev Chisnall, harnessing the skills of quilters and other volunteers to make masks and other items of protective clothing. It is difficult to remember now, but in the early days the NHS was desperate for supplies of PPE. The ESSG started by raiding the fabric stores of the volunteers, but rapidly needed to fund raise so that materials could be bought. £5,500 was raised from local people, and over 3,000 Covid-19 related items were made, principally for Dorset County Hospital and Weldmar Hospice. Meanwhile each area within the Parish developed new ways of keeping in touch: several email and WhatsApp groups, and an innovative low-tech system of coloured window notices indicating either that all was well or that help was needed!

Informed by our experience during the pandemic, we are now looking afresh at our Resilience Plan, to bring it up to date and make sure that we are well prepared should something similar happen again or if we have a bad winter or major storm damage. If you would be interested in joining the resilience team, particularly if you have expertise in this area, do please get in touch either directly with me or through our Parish Clerk.

Pelham Allen, Parish Councillor

Vearse Farm

In April 2020 we learned that the Judicial Review of the decision to give planning permission for the Vearse Farm development had been unsuccessful, and that the development would go ahead. Planning permission is for 760 houses together with employment and community facilities. The site lies almost entirely within Symondsburys Parish, and accordingly the Parish Council has responsibility for monitoring the development on behalf of local residents. In March 2021 we learned that the land for the housing element of the development has been sold to Vistry Partnerships and Barratt Developments Plc. We are expecting considerable activity over coming months as more detailed plans are finalised by the developers so that construction can start within the permitted 3 year time window. During this period the Parish Council will work closely with Bridport Town Council and Dorset Council to ensure that the commitments and assurances given in support of the application for planning permission are delivered, and in particular that the development provides the affordable housing and enhanced community facilities that we have been promised.

Pelham Allen, Parish Councillor

The Walbridge Trust: Are You or Your Neighbour Finding it Difficult to Make Ends Meet?

The Trust was set up in the will of Mrs W.M.Walbridge "wholly or mainly for the benefit of the people of the Parish of Symondsburys". This includes all the areas of our parish – Symondsburys, Eype, Broadoak, Watton Park, Pine View and West Cliff.

In the past the Trust has funded large scale projects such as the renovations of St. Peter's Eype Centre for the Arts, the School Room at Eype, and Broadoak Village Hall, but also individuals who needed a bit of help, paying for anything from heating oil to carpets and mobility scooter repairs, as well as contributions towards further education costs. During this Pandemic we have started to offer assistance to those who are struggling to make ends meet. This has taken the form of grants to individuals and families to help tide them over whilst we wait out the recovery.

So, if you (or your neighbour) need a bit of help, let us know. Contact us by email at: secretary@walbridgetrust.co.uk. We'll send you an online form to fill in, describing what help you need. Your reply is then circulated to the Trustees (who will keep the information confidential) and who may ask one or two follow up questions. They then decide if we can offer a grant, and how much it should be. Assuming you can demonstrate eligibility, you'll receive notification from us, followed by a cheque, the amount depending in part on how many requests the Trust receives.

SYMONDSBURY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

From the Chair

Welcome to our Annual Report included within the Symene Voice.

Resilience

This was a year none of us would like to experience as individuals again. One might have expected the first tier of local government, the Parish, to have been frantically busy helping people who have been isolated or ill – but that task seems to have fallen on thousands of volunteers and a very few overstretched health professionals.

Our resilience co-ordinator is Cllr Pelham Allen, who with a team of volunteers have been ready and able to respond to whatever has been needed but thankfully not much has been required in our sleepy corner of West Dorset.

However there is now a very able volunteer parish resilience team, now positively connected and able to do things were they to be required. The fact that people are talking to each other and building new networks locally is a very good thing and I wonder what will come of it, in future.

Celebration

My personal wish is that the parish put on a parish celebration when we finally can and celebrate the lives of those who have departed and not been properly mourned. I can think of several of my neighbours who I miss deeply. If anyone would like to be involved, please get in touch.

Thanks

Many thanks to Marilyn Stone, our Parish clerk, for compiling and editing the Voice and for keeping the website and Facebook account up to date and finances and admin in order. During the year we have started to become involved again in the Vearse Farm Development and carried out other activities as detailed below.

If you would like to be involved with any projects in the parish, then please keep us in the loop either at a meeting or direct to one of our councillors or to the clerk.

Councillors and Representatives

The other layers of government are Dorset Council and the Westminster Parliament.

Your Dorset Councillors usually attend our meetings and if you'd like to let them how better to manage our roads, children's and adult care, planning or other things that they do, you will be able to have your say at our meetings during our democratic half hour and invite us to put the collective influence and resources of the parish behind it. You will hear us discuss your points and see how we arrive at our decisions. We are represented by Cllr Sarah Williams, Cllr Dave Bolwell and Cllr Kelvin Clayton on Dorset Council and by Chris Loder MP at Parliament. Thanks very much to our councillors and to Selwyn Holmes who retired as a parish councillor during the year after more than 30 years of serving the parish and to whom we are very grateful for his input and enthusiasm.

We welcome three new councillors – Pelham Allen, Nigel Mawdit and Paul Hartmann. All of us are volunteers who receive no compensation and hardly any thanks!

Personally speaking I would like to see more people come forward to be elected as Parish Councillors and the next elections will be held in 2024. Now is the time to prepare your election strategies!

Meeting Times

Our meetings are on the second Tuesday of every month (August excepted) at 7.00pm and during this pandemic our meetings have been held on-line via Zoom. Please look at the website for information how we will be meeting during 2021-22 as we don't yet know ourselves. If we meet in August to look at planning applications we will post on the website, noticeboards and on our FaceBook page.

Planning and Vearse Farm

We have dealt with 25 applications this year which is much higher than the previous year. We always make an effort to check each application with residents in the nearby area and respond to Dorset Council with any comments. If you have access to the internet, all information on applications is accessible at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Comments and plans can be downloaded, and it is now easy to find relevant applications. This has recently been updated.

Over the coming year we will be involved with many planning matters related to the Vearse Farm development which has now gained planning permission and the housing land has been sold to two major developers.

We also intend to set up a planning committee of our own to deal with the extra workload.

Working Together with Other Councils

The Parishes of Allington, Bothenhampton, Bradpole, Bridport, and Symondsburys Neighbourhood Plan has been approved at Referendum and is now in force as the senior planning document – shortly to be complemented by a new Local Plan being developed by Dorset Council. Cllr Nigel Mawdit has recently become our representative on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and Cllr Pelham Allen is our Joint Council Committee representative. We are represented on the Steering Group of Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP) which endeavours to bring together as many community groups in and around Bridport as possible, and which organises lobbying on subjects such as Health and Well Being. We attend Western Area DAPTC meetings.

Footpaths

During the year one of our projects came to fruition and we engaged the lengthsman workforce to open up the footpath between Eype Down and the London Inn – a very useful path to avoid walking on the main road A35.

Please contact Cllr Steve Ralph with any queries or observations and he will make sure the right action is taken.

Allotments

We have two sites with one located by the former London Inn on West Road (A35) and the other at Pine View. From time to time plots become available and so if you are interested please apply to the Clerk; presently we have a very small waiting list.

Roads and Transport

Symondsburys Village is still being served by the PlusBus Service provided by Dorset Community Transport, has to be booked in advance and Concessionary Bus Passes can be used on this service (tel: 01258 287980 for details). The whole Parish is also served by Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring & Ride which has to be booked in

advance. (tel: 01404 46520 for details). There is a regular bus service along the main road between Bridport and Lyme Regis (Mondays to Saturdays all year, and also Sundays normally between May and September), operated by First Wessex (tel: 0345 646 0707 for details).

It is a legal requirement to wear a mask when using public transport. Unless you are exempt in-line with the government guidance, please ensure a face covering is worn for the entire journey and that it covers your nose and mouth to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Lengthsman

We have been in the Lengthsman Scheme in conjunction with Bridport Town Council for many years and have recently signed up for a further 3 year period. This has led to us being able to provide a better service with regard to the small jobs always needed to be done around the parish such as gully and kerb clearance, litter picking and hedge maintenance around street signs. We now fund this ourselves. If you have a highway problem, pothole or blocked street drain etc please report them on www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk as Dorset Council still do carry out some work and please copy it to us. We have a hotline to try better to get their attention.

Finances

Our Accounts are always open for inspection and a summary of the accounts are given below to give you an idea of where our money goes. We have given grants to the following organisations: Citizens Advice Bridport, Symondsburys PCC, Bridport Leisure Centre, Broadoak Village Hall and Symondsburys School.

The Parish Council has built up its resources over the years to enable it to continue to provide services to our Parish. If you have a suggestion as to what to do with the accumulated funds please do not hesitate to get in touch. We are pleased to advise that there is no increase in the Precept for this current tax year 2021/2022.

Summary of Annual Accounts (unaudited)

2019-2020		2020-2021
	RECEIPTS	
14,453.00	Precept	14,910.00
330.00	Allotment	430.00
215.91	Interest	162.10
500.00	Grants rec'd	0.00
817.87	VAT refund	400.00
16,316.78	TOTALS	15,902.10
	PAYMENTS	
5,742.82	Admin	6,191.84
2,000.00	Lengthsman	2,000.00
0.00	Maintenance	1,415.20
186.47	Insurance	186.47
423.43	Subscriptions	431.21
50.00	Fees	50.00
235.00	Rents	235.00
358.00	Printing	316.00
0.00	Purchases	0.00
1,326.58	Grants	10,064.40
400.00	VAT	490.22
14,722.30	TOTALS	21,380.34

Total Bank Balances:

Current Account £830.43
Deposit Account £24,595.50