

Community Speed Watch and 20sPlenty - May 2022

Speed watch

Under the auspices of Dorset Police our 15 excellent volunteers have undertaken sessions about once every 3 weeks during the last year. We do this in teams of 4 and warning letters are sent to those traveling at 36mph and over or with Janice, armed with her speed camera, when offenders are fined. Roughly 5% of vehicle exceed the speed limit by at least 6mph. We have asked Dorset Council for additional road safety measures which have been refused.

20sPlenty

In Fontmell the priority issue needing to be addressed is not adherence to the speed limit in force. It is the excessively high limit which exists in the first place. Our speed limit was set in the very different circumstances of 1934.

Having inadvertently become local coordinator for 20sPlenty I am convinced that moderating traffic speed is the most cost effective and least inconvenient way of maintaining traffic flow while keeping pedestrians safe and able to enjoy a normally expected quality of life in accessing parts of the village and beyond without using a car.

Most roads in Fontmell are very hazardous for the type and volume of traffic mixed with the, often vulnerable, pedestrians and others who use them. Reducing the traffic speed from 30 to 20 mph gives drivers longer to see and react to hazards and halves the energy involved in collisions. We know that people are frightened to walk or cross some of our roads, avoid them, or resort to needless short single occupancy car journeys to reach the shop, church, or village hall etc.

I have 20sPlenty posters which have been enthusiastically requested and displayed by village residents. It would be good to see a few more, particularly on the A350.

All across the United Kingdom 20mph speed limits have been introduced in communities such as Fontmell in recent years. Dorset Council is notorious for policies which are distinctively unsympathetic to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. It is hard to find a county in the UK which takes as harsh an approach.

A revised draft speed limit policy was published by Dorset Council in April which was completely out of line with the improvements being made elsewhere in the UK . With the Parish Council and County Councillor impressive representations were made which, with similar robust objections from around the county, resulted in Dorset Highways officers being told by County Councillors to redraft the policy to reflect the views of the public and to make it easier rather than harder to introduce lower speed limits where justified. The Councillors were all sympathetic to the sensible representations which had been made by the public

We await publication of the new draft policy and, if it is once again as unsuitable for village needs, I would urge residents to join us in making representations. Previously only 72 hours was allowed to respond but 4 robust letters of objection were submitted from Fontmell ,

and Michael Hobbs (on behalf of the PC) and I attended the relevant council meeting in Dorchester to speak.

The next few months are probably critical in potentially making the village, and indeed Dorset, roads safer for pedestrians, particularly children and the most vulnerable in our community.

Peter Mole

Report from St Andrew's Church for the Past Year.

2021 was a year of gradually coming to terms with living with the Covid epidemic and its effect upon the way church services are taken and recommencing activities which could safely take place.

After the more severe restrictions of the previous year there was some catching up for life-event services which totalled 17. Sunday service numbers have caught up for the Sung Communion service but attendance for the other services has not quite recovered to pre-Covid levels.

An aspect which is of some concern is the diminishing number of our members participating in the life of the church - it is hoped that the new housing which is being built will bring in new members both to the congregation and to those willing to support this valued village asset.

The presence of the church is something which enhances the whole community, whether devoted Christians or not, as it provides a place where important life events can be celebrated (baptisms, weddings, memorial services etc), concerts given, displays presented, children educated and where up to 250 people can gather under one roof. It is also the custodian of our valued heritage, not just in its fabric but in the records of generations of ancestors.

On the financial side the church is very grateful to all those who contribute via standing orders, the collection plate, one-off donations and to the Parish Council with its grant. But it was another year of Covid, hence limited church services and events. In broad terms, all of the planned income goes to support the ministry in the parish, so we are heavily reliant on the donations, weddings, concerts and the like to finance the maintenance of the fabric and to allow us to make the regular donations to those in greater need, the main recipient of which during 2021 was Alabare Christian Care who run the homeless service in Salisbury.

Barry Roberts (former churchwarden)

Gardening Club

I am pleased to report we have over 55 members and have managed to enjoy a full programme this year after the last couple of disruptive years.

We have had a good variety of speakers through November to March. If I may add guests from the community are welcome to attend any of our talks for a nominal fee of £2.00

Our social evening in April was well attended and was a very enjoyable evening.

We have had our shopping evening at Castle Gardens, Sherborne a couple of weeks ago and our next event is an outing to Compton Acres Garden in Poole in June.

We have a month off in July and then we are looking to put on The Garden Club Annual Show in August which we haven't been able to since 2019.

Sue East



Fontmell Magna Community Land Trust Ltd

(a Community Benefit Society - FCA Reg. No:8113)

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REPORT TO FONTMELL MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL

18 May 2022

Last year we reported that we were going to be asking residents for some £200,000 to enable us to proceed with the purchase of the freehold of the village shop, and that with mortgage finance of another £150,000 we believed the project was viable.

The response from members of the community was terrific, and we received pledges of just over £200,000 very quickly.

The Chancellor had announced in the March budget that the government would be making grants available for projects like ours, and when details were announced in July we decided to apply for matched funding of just over £200,000. This application was unsuccessful, but a small number of members of the community agreed to provide loan finance on very favourable terms, enabling us to go ahead, to agree a firm price with the freeholder and to instruct solicitors.

However, the COF came back to us in January, indicating that if we submitted a further application (within a very short space of time!) it would be reconsidered. We did this, and it was successful, with COF offering us £204,800 – subject to some quite stringent conditions.

The position now is that our solicitor is holding the signed contract and the deposit money, and it is our intention to exchange contracts as soon as the grant money is in place.

The next stage will be to undertake work on the building to bring it up to standard, and, we hope, to negotiate a new lease with new tenants (and of course the transfer of the existing lease to new tenants is an entirely private matter for Rick and Jan to negotiate).

We are very grateful to the community for their support through this project, and we have been very fortunate with the addition of two people to our Management Committee: Chris Dymond and his property expertise, and Simon Man who put together the COF application forms. There will be a lot of work to do in the future, and we are, as always, looking for more help from the community to manage the administration and communication work, and to help with overseeing the refurbishment.

R J McCurrach

Secretary

18th May 2022.

Report to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council of the Fontmell Magna Village Archive Society.

The Fontmell Magna Village Archive Society has now resumed its regular meetings in the afternoon 4.00 to 5.00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the Month. We are a small group of active members with fortunately some new members joining us earlier in the year.

The group has been working towards a small exhibition in the Village Hall to coincide with the Jubilee Celebrations.

We are continually working to our objectives of preserving the substantial archive and to make it more accessible to the public generally but particularly the villagers.

One of our main costs is the support of our website which produces a constant stream of inquiries for more information mainly about relatives with connections to the village, many of which can improve our understanding of earlier times and family relationships. The site is considered to be a very informative site by those who use it. Our second major cost is the biennial exhibition which we have been staging for many years until the pandemic closed down such activities. The main expense being the hire of the hall for an extended period, usually five days.

Our income is presently subscriptions from members both active and non-active, which does not provide a large income and I anticipate an application to the PC in the future for financial help to stage the exhibitions.

The Society is now linked with the local school to provide material for topics and speakers if necessary.

The Village Hall Committee has committed to having the archive stored in the very suitable area in the hall for which the society is very grateful.

News members welcome.

Roger Hillman Chairman

Gossip Tree Annual Report to Community - April 2022

The Gossip Tree (GT) continues to be well used by local groups, clubs and societies as well as by individuals.

Editor, Graham Eames has worked consistently to broaden the content by publicising a range of local services and allocating space to new features. Readers will have noticed that editions frequently run to eight pages.

Discussion with Laura Kurton of the Parish Council looked at how overlapping and specific content should be shared with the community. Graham and Laura agreed that Laura will focus on immediate, day to day matters such as road closures, awareness raising, liaison with other parish councils and all things to do with Fontmell Magna PC. The Gossip Tree is available to publicise and inform people in the parish and wider afield of longer-term community activities. It will continue to provide information on local initiatives, events, obituaries and memorials, community and general matters. Contributions are very much appreciated and published at the editor's discretion. Constructive feedback is welcomed warmly.

Graham explored with St Andrews School ways to include younger people in GT content and readership with the objective of making it more relevant to the whole community. One result is that the school may decide to produce material for the annual Chimes in which case The Chimes will become exclusively a format for younger contributors.

The future of the Parish Directory is in doubt. There were few responses in 2021 to a call for entries and although a small group of people had suggested that they might be prepared to take it on as a project, there has been no further action to date.

Sue Mercer, a great support for many years, has decided recently to step aside. Sue Keen kindly agreed in March 22 to take over the responsibility of collecting and delivering paper copies. 70 are printed currently with utmost reliability by the Benefice Office in Iwerne Courtney. Jan and Rick Attfield most helpfully allow the Village Shop and Post Office to be a collection point for paper copies which are available for anyone to pick up. 15 more are delivered by Sue Keen to the homes of vulnerable readers.

Distribution continues to evolve. Requests for electronic copies have increased to 180 addresses which is about 70% of readership and demand for paper GT's has declined. A number of people living outside the parish are on the electronic distribution list.

The GT treasurer is Amelia Berriman. Gossip Tree funds are healthy partly because of historical donations from villages fetes and also because electronic communication has reduced some of the printing costs. There has been a small increase in printing charges by the Benefice Office adequately

covered to date, by sponsorship. The sufficient contingency fund will be maintained but the charge for sponsorship will be reviewed in June.

The Gossip Tree committee are pleased to be able to support the Platinum Jubilee celebration by covering the costs for two portable toilets, one standard and the other accessible. Both will be sited for the day at Moore's Farm. In addition, a special paper copy of the June issue, the initiative of and sponsored by the Village Hall Committee, will feature information about the Jubilee celebration and be delivered to every household in the parish in time for the celebration

A further platinum initiative is being considered and it will be to offer a limited number of young trees to local people to plant in gardens or in other suitable areas in the autumn. More information will be available if the idea is viable. We welcome your comments on this suggestion.

It is pleasing that The Gossip Tree is in good shape. Thank you so very much to everyone who contributes to and reads it and especially to Graham for his dedicated and continual hard work in bringing a useful and widely appreciated local newsletter to the parish and beyond.

Barbara Humphreys on behalf of the GT committee.

Village Hall Update - May 2022

For the Village Hall, last year has been extremely busy with a mixture of events, administration and maintenance.

The summer was wonderful with the opening of the Friendship Garden which was supported by so many villagers, sponsors and guests. The day had a wonderful feel and we would like to thank all the hard work from Sian and her team of volunteers who have created the most valuable village asset.

The very popular National Play Day – Picnic in the Park attracted over 70 parents and children, who all enjoyed the posy making, friendship bracelets, craft stalls, tennis, table tennis, pottery etc. Many brought their own picnics but Susannah de Ferry Foster and her team of caterers put on the most amazing array of food proving to be more popular than the home made picnics! We hope to run this event again in August, the date to be announced soon.

The Pop Up Café was extremely popular and ran from the end of April to end of August. The money collected over the summer has gone into buying seeds for next year. We were particularly grateful for the support from the parents of Fontmell Under 5's and St Andrew's School who ate their way through the delicious homemade cakes. The café will run again this summer and hope as many of you as possible will support this worthy project.

We were fortunate to apply and be awarded a community grant aimed specifically at getting our communities together again after all the lockdowns. With this grant we were able to provide for the village 5 Community Lunches and a Christmas Tea Party. I believe we catered for over 280 guests over the winter. Our last lunch was particularly special as student volunteers from Clayesmore School cooked and served the lunch, the sticky toffee pudding was especially popular with no portions left! Our lunches have proved to be very very popular so we are planning to run these again this winter but with a small donation from participants to cover the ingredients of the food.

We have been extremely lucky to have had some very interesting events and workshops that again have proved popular from the talk by Laura Scott-Walby on the Kenyan Flower journey, Sue Morgan instigating willow weaving and jewellery repair workshops, pottery painting sessions and Early Christmas Market. All of the events help to contribute to the running costs of the hall which is vital income to help subsidise the hall hire charges for regular users.

We have been working hard at the village hall to try and cut our use of electricity and to that end we have cleaned the solar panels, installed new LED up lighting inside and a solar powered car park light. A second one will be installed later this year at the far end of the car park.

Lisa has undertaken a major revamp of all the Risk Assessments at the hall and again we have installed and upgraded the fire detectors, alarms and new fire exit doors will be installed later this year.

The playground is our major focus going forward. As many of you will know the Village Hall has been awarded infrastructure funding from Dorset Council due to the new houses being built in the village. With part of this money specifically allocated to the playground plus the money we have raised over the past 4 years, we are in the process of installing a new playground which we hope to be operational at the end of this year. Pictures of the design are available at the Village Hall.

All in all the village hall is in a good place and used daily by regular clubs, tea parties, weddings and other events. We look forward to your continued support of this very valuable asset and look forward to welcoming new residents from Spring Meadows in the future.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday 27th July – Village Hall AGM
Wednesday 3rd August – National Play Day

Rosie-Anne Yates

Moviola

“Sadly, we have had a disappointing year with very low ticket sales on most of the films we have shown. I think this is partly due to people still being anxious about going out again after the pandemic and also we had a very limited selection of films available from Moviola for us to select from as of course few films had been released over the past two years. However, we are fortunate that we have reserve funds which we have been able to fall back on to keep us afloat, as it were! We always cease showing films May to August each year so are very hopeful that our numbers will increase when we restart in September and that we will have some excellent film titles available to us.

We are very appreciative of those that have continued to support us over the last year and look forward to welcoming everyone again in the Autumn.”

Libby Gendall

Dorset Council ANNUAL Report

BEACON WARD

Cllr Jane Somper – cllrjane.somper@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Another interesting and challenging year where my main focus has been on supporting each parish as and when they have needed ward member input, along with of course the many residents who contact me about a variety of concerns and problems. This is the part of my role I really do relish and it is very satisfying when I can solve these for residents.

I've been deeply moved by the incredible show of support and wave of generosity shown by so many in the ward for the people of Ukraine. We are a kind natured bunch here and so often think about others before ourselves. Many families across Dorset have volunteered in opening their homes to those who want to come to the UK and Dorset Council has a wide range of support ready and waiting for them on arrival. DC estimate over 500 people arriving in Dorset in the coming weeks.

Who knows what the next year will throw at our peaceful and beautiful corner of Dorset but we have proven to be resilient.

Another pulling together of community is the sign that Speed watch is gaining momentum again with valuable support from volunteers and the Police with some successful co-ordinated action days....and there will be more to follow.

BUSINESSES

As well as farming the Beacon Ward is home to many small and medium size businesses who offer a whole range of services and goods. Supporting all sizes of businesses goes without saying is important to the local economy. These businesses employ local people and keep the demand for digital infrastructure high on the agenda and we all benefit from this. There is more to be done as we know there are still white spots where digital access is not as we would like it to be, but I keep up the pressure and we are seeing more of these white spots receiving the networks they need.

Our farmers are key in keeping our land grazed, green and thriving and I believe they are sometimes overlooked in the important environmental work they do, ensuring wildlife keeps its natural home as our farmers continue to conserve the land.

RECYCLING

Recycling rates for DC hit 60% putting the county in the third position best performing unitary authority in England and 8th overall. WHY will partly due to more people being at home during covid but this is also down to you, the amazing Dorset residents who put the right waste in to the right bins!!

COMMUNITY TEAM WORK

Dorset Together which is a network of organisations inc DC, NHS, Public Health, Volunteer Centre Dorset, Dorset Race Equality and a whole host of other volunteer groups was put together to support communities across the whole of Dorset during the first lockdown – all working together as no one organisation can do it all.

This group is now supporting the Ukraine regugee response and working to help people who are experiencing financial difficulties.

The group gather each week to make sure any support required is picked up and most importantly delivered rapidly on the ground.

CHILDRENS SERVICES

Through the development of new Children's home facilities in Dorset there has been a reduction in the number of children's care placements made outside the county. Keeping young people in Dorset where they are closer to their home and community and people and places they already know has huge benefits emotionally for these young people helping them to thrive and ofcourse provides savings to the council.

The highlight for Childrens Services this past year was the Ofsted visit where DC when from requires improvement to Good and Outstanding. This is the mark of the investment in improving the lives of young people and families across the county has been recognised. The good work continues.

PLANNING

Planning convergence activity has seen 6 legacy council areas converged onto one system. This has migrated 47 years of data and over 4 million documents to the new system in one year. 200 report and letter templates have been reviewed and consolidated and workflow has been automated