

SYMONDSBURY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

**Cllrs 2011/12 – contact details on
the website**

www.symondbury.org.uk

**Peter Smith (Chairman)
Selwyn Holmes (Vice-Chairman &
Ancient Monuments)
Mary Costello (Footpaths)
Brian Baker (Allotments)
Malcolm Leighton (Coastal)
Steve Ralph
Amanda Sreatfeild**

Clerk – Cathy Evans

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From the Chairman

Welcome to our statutory Annual Report which I hope you will find of interest. This is my first as Chairman since I was elected following the decision by Amanda Sreatfeild to stand down after six years. The entire Council was up for election in May of last year, unfortunately less candidates stood than the number of places (seven). So in these circumstances all five people who stood were deemed "Elected" and as two councillors are allocated to represent the West Cliff Ward, Malcolm Leighton agreed to be co-opted to join the Council. More details of this later in the report.

I do hope Amanda does not mind me using her last report as a template & I take this opportunity to thank her for her support in the past year. Also Selwyn Holmes who agreed to be Vice Chairman; as well as all of the councillors who freely give up their time to do their bit for the community.

Dorset County Council decided to go ahead with the Waste Transfer Station at Broomhills. Plans are due to be

submitted we understand to WDDC later this year by the Dorset Waste Partnership which in future will be responsible for both the collection and disposal of our waste instead of WDDC collecting & DCC disposing of it as at present. There was a strong indication that the project must not overrun the current budget and the cost of providing the Traffic Lights demanded by the DCC Councillors must be included.

West Bay Websites have agreed to continue providing our website and the outstanding agendas & minutes should now be available. We hope to be able to add more information and links very soon. A volunteer would be appreciated. Please contact the clerk if you can help.

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I have enjoyed my first year as Chairman, but as a relative newcomer to the parish I have to rely very much on longer term residents for help on historical matters. I was especially saddened with the passing of Bill Bartlett who lived his whole life in Eype as it was Bill who suggested that I represent the Parish Council on the Board of Governors at Symondbury School which inevitably lead to a place on the Council when a vacancy arose. We were extremely fortunate to have a qualified and dedicated Clerk, but David Wragg decided to retire from his "retirement occupation" last autumn and he is going to be difficult to replace. I much appreciated his able assistance through my first months. I had not fully appreciated the unpaid hours he gave us. David has agreed to be the editor of the Symene Voice though articles are needed to fill the 3 or 4 editions we hope to distribute each year

David remains active with DAPTC & the Community Land Trust which it is hoped

will soon be building Affordable Housing just beyond the Parish Boundary

We were delighted however to appoint Cathy Evans as our new Clerk, she has been busy keeping us in order as well as attending every training course and seminar to be found. Contact details and her "Office Hours" can be found elsewhere in this report and on the website.

Symondbury School

The School continues to thrive and even grow a little and we are lucky to have a village school at the heart of our community. The Head Teacher Helen Farmer has recently been appointed as Head at St Mary's Bridport (which is catchment school for the eastern side of the parish so is not too far away). . Adrian Mitchell is the Acting Headteacher, Colin Haley has been appointed as the new head who will start in the Autumn Term.

Meetings

Our meetings are on the second Tuesday of every other month (January onward) at 7.00 p.m. in the School. Do feel free to attend them, and there is always an opportunity to raise issues during the meeting in the Democratic Period which is early on the agenda. We also meet on alternate months as the Policy Committee to discuss some items in more depth, and these meetings are also posted. The latest Planning Applications are discussed at both types of meeting & all are welcome to express a view.

Local Councillors and officers

Geoff Brierley, our County Councillor, and Gillian Summers, one of our District Councillors, are very regular attendees' at our meetings and we much appreciate their time and effort in supporting any issues we have. We appreciate the interest shown by the local Police and hope that following the recent reorganisation an Officer or

PCSO will be able to attend meetings on a regular basis; it is a good opportunity to ask the little things you may wish to query. Paul Atterbury who has been our Ancient Monuments Officer for many years has now moved to Weymouth and Selwyn Holmes who is trying to resurrect the Eype History Group is now in this role.

Planning Applications

We have dealt with 26 applications this year, a little down on the previous year. We always make an effort to check each application with residents in the nearby area and respond to WDDC with any comments. If you have access to the internet, all information on applications is accessible at www.dorsetforyou.com.

Comments and plans can be downloaded, and it is quite easy to find relevant applications.

We await the finer detail of the new Local Planning Guidance due soon

It may be worth remembering that over 90% of applications are approved by District Councils with little delay.

WDDC are also well into the preparation of a new Local Plan as required by Government

The Proposals issued so far include the suggestion that up to 800 houses could be built at Vearse Farm. Further Consultation is due later in the year & we will be taking a keen interest in this proposal

Footpaths

Cllr Mary Costello, our designated Footpaths officer, has been most active in making sure our paths are safe and passable and has frequent contact with DCC who are the responsible Authority. Alterations and improvements to footpaths are long drawn-out and expensive affairs, but we do our best to work with DCC to sort any issues. Note this department seems to have taken a large budget reduction.

Allotments

Our allotments remain occupied. We are hoping to be able to offer allotments to residents of Pine View as the PC has taken a small patch of land at the top of the estate back in hand and have secured some funding to prepare the area for use.

Roads and Transport

Our ideas for improving the safety at the Eype Junction are still under discussion four years later. Our MP Oliver Letwin is always most helpful in his approaches to the Highways Agency. I still attend WATAG meetings on our behalf & reluctantly I became Chairman recently & will be pleased to see you at our meetings held bi-monthly in the WI Hall Bridport where mostly public transport matters are discussed. DCC are represented as are all of the local Bus operators. Details are available from myself or watag@hotmail.co.uk

Bridport Local Area Partnership

Amanda represents us on the Steering Group of BLAP which endeavours to bring together as many community groups in and around Bridport as possible, and we have been represented at all meetings, including some Planning Group sessions. We have been in the Lengthsman Scheme in conjunction with Bridport Town Council for over a year. 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 clearance, litter picking and hedge maintenance. The Lengthsman also installed the five SALT Bins we purchased following the bad winter of 2010-11 and the somewhat reduced service we receive from DCC.

We are going to review the installation of more salt bins as we have now had a less severe winter in 2011-12 and at £250 each has led to an increase in the precept to rebalance our books.

If you see a small highway or footpath job that has been annoying you I am the Lengthsman Liaison Officer.

The Clerk & I also tour the Parish each autumn with the local DCC Highways Engineer & Councillor Brierley when we try to establish what maintenance and minor improvements may be achieved. That said only one or two items highlighted each year are achieved though we live in hope!

Correspondence

The wider use of email has meant a considerable drop in conventional correspondence. Around 120 emails are received each week, with around 60 being sent. This does mean a reduction in office costs especially with the huge increase in postal rates expected shortly regard to postage. The use of email does have the advantage of being easy to distribute and creates a trail for record purposed.

Finances

Our Accounts are always open for inspection and a summary of the accounts are given in this newsletter.

Clerk and Councillors

Our clerk and councillors have attended at least 18 training sessions, conferences and planning meetings. We were pleased to welcome Cllr Steve Ralph who joined us at election time last year and Cllr Malcolm Leighton who is doing the work of two on West Cliff. Malcolm is also our chief researcher delving into the innermost detail of Policy and Guidance this is of great help to us all.

The Localism Act now in being. Although the finer points are eagerly awaited as I write this, opportunities for a strong Parish Council to really make a difference to their local community are considerable. We will not be just a

talking shop, but will have the powers to shape the way our parishes look and work.

Can you afford NOT to be part of this?

If you are interested in joining us and live within two miles of West Cliff Please contact the Clerk

Other Groups

We attend PACT (Partners and the Community Together) and the Coastal Forum meetings on a regular basis as well as the Western Area DAPTC meetings.

Symene Community Land Trust

This is again one of the real success stories of the year. Powered forward by Chris Reynolds, this group has joined forces with Hastoe Housing Association to produce a landmark scheme for affordable housing for the parish. It is sadly just outside the parish boundary, as no land has been offered within the parish, but the houses will be available to those listed on the WDDC Housing Need register in the parish. The years of doubt and frustration may well be over and the planners are being involved at this moment. This has been supported by the Parish Council and the Walbridge Trust and the opportunity for a really innovative scheme is very real.

Our accounts are always open for inspection, but below is a brief summary of our income and expenditure to give you an idea of where your money goes.

Summary of Annual Accounts (unaudited)

Previous Years Yr end 31/03/12

RECEIPTS

8,000.00	Precept	10,000.00
216.00	Allotment	225.00
3.00	Interest	4.17
500.00	Grants rec'd	0.00
0.00	VAT refund	625.02
8,719.00	TOTALS	10,855.19

PAYMENTS

3,587.00	Admin	4,559.37
1,500.00	Lengthsman	1,500.00
220.00	Insurance	212.21
386.00	Subscriptions	426.20
1,486.00	Fees	145.00
440.00	Rents	260.00
128.00	Printing	246.00
768.00	Purchases	684.70
1,000.00	Grants	775.00
261.00	VAT	494.47
9,776.00	TOTALS	9,302.95