

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

At our Zoom meeting on 16th November we were pleased to approve a grant of £900 towards the maintenance of the churchyard for this year and also for the next financial year. Councillors also agreed to purchase a Speed Indicator Device (S.I.D.) so once we have received approval for the locations from Somerset County Council, we will go ahead and buy the device. A few years ago, we used to hire a S.I.D. and the data from this was fundamental in assisting us with the 20mph speed limit. This device not only records traffic speed but it also shows drivers whether they are breaking the speed limit.

Although we cannot have the usual Christmas Tree Lighting Event this year, we are still getting in the festive spirit by having a Christmas tree in the Borough. The Christmas lights switch-on will be taking place on Friday, 11th December. If you are in the vicinity at the time of the switch-on, please remember to follow government guidelines on social distancing.

We have now received permission from Highways to put our new planters in front of the village stone markers in Yeovil Road and St Michaels View. These along with the 4 planters for the allotments will be planted up with some bulbs so we will have a cheerful display of colour in the spring.

Unfortunately, the clearance work in the allotments has been postponed because of 'lockdown' but we will soon be able to hire a skip and a digger to clear the years' worth of 'gardening' rubbish so that we can make the allotment site a more pleasing place to be.

We last reported on the pavilion project in August and we are pleased to say that the National Trust have given their approval for the style of building, the location and the groundworks. We have just received some new plans and we will be submitting a new planning application very soon.

The National Trust is carrying out an improvement project in the house's parkland at Welham Brook and councillors were invited to see how the project is progressing. This 'Slow the Flow' project will help to reduce flooding in built-up areas by deflecting rising water into a swale (or ditch), and then into one of two ponds. These ponds will hopefully benefit fauna such as grass snakes and amphibians. There will also be a couple of hibernacula which can be used by overwintering animals, birds and insects. If you would like to see the National Trust's report on this project, please go to the parish council's website.

We still have 2 vacancies on the council so if you are interested in joining the Parish Council and helping us to support and protect our village facilities and activities please contact Sarah Moore, our Parish Clerk either by email at clerk_montacutepc@hotmail.co.uk or by telephone on 822455 for more information.



PUBLIC NOTICE PARISH OF MONTACUTE

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 87 of the Local Government Act 1972 that two vacancies have occurred on the Montacute Parish Council. Unless a request for an election to be held is submitted in writing to the Proper Officer of the South Somerset District Council, at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2HT by no later than 30th December 2020 by ten electors for the Parish of Montacute, the Parish Council will proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option.

Covid-19 Guidelines Update

The Government have now announced that from midnight on Wednesday, 2nd December the lockdown will end. After that, the following will apply to all areas:

- Shops, gyms and personal care services will all reopen
- Collective worship, weddings and outdoor sports will resume
- People will no longer be limited to seeing one other person outdoors
- The Rule of 6 will apply in outdoor public spaces
- Non-essential foreign travel allowed, subject to quarantine rules

Once again, there will be a 3 Tier System of Covid-19 rules in place. As before, you can only meet people from other households in a group of up to six and the Rules about where you can do so apply.

- Tier 1 – people will be able to meet people they do not live with indoors.
- Tier 2 – people cannot socialise with other households indoors.
- Tier 3 – people cannot mix with other households indoors, or in private and pub gardens.

There are exceptions for childcare and support bubbles**. People are advised not to travel to and from Tier 3 areas.

People are allowed to go back into stadiums for spectator sports, and some pubs will be able to stay open until 11pm. However, the Rules on this vary depending on which Tier you are in.

**The Government is expanding eligibility of 'support bubbles'. A 'Support Bubble' is an exclusive close support network between two households. It means you can have close contact with that household as if they were members of your own. From 2nd December, you can form a support bubble with another household, if at least one has:

- only one adult; (including a household where any children are under the age of 18)
- only one adult carer (i.e. living with any additional adult(s) in the household that have a disability and require continuous care)
- a child under 1 (regardless of how many other adults are in the household); or

- a child under 5 with a disability that requires continuous care (regardless of how many other adults are in the household)

A 'Childcare Bubble' is where one household links exclusively with one other household to provide informal childcare to a child or children aged 13 or under. They can provide the childcare in either or both of the homes from the 2 households.

It is critical that you follow all of the Government guidelines to keep both yourself and others safe. The virus is airborne. Guidelines are changing all the time about what we can and cannot do. You can find the most up-to-date information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/>

At the time of writing this article, we have not received the Government's decision regarding the rules over the Christmas break. Please check the website address above. Let's hope things will have improved enough for us all to be able to have some family time together in person– but if not, hold faith, we are inching towards it slowly! And the positive news about vaccine development is definitely something to hold on to.

Keep looking out for one another. Remember to be kind and we will get through it somehow - together. Keep washing those hands, wear face coverings and practicing social distancing! Stay Safe. Remember - Hands, Face, Space!



New Government Business Support Grant

Certain local businesses that have been forced to close during this latest lockdown period can now apply to the District Council for new grant support, even if you received a grant during the first lockdown period. Called the Local Restrictions Support Grant and the Additional Restrictions Grant.

Full details and how to apply can be found at **<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/covidbusinesssupport>** They are likely to go quickly, so apply soon!

Need employment support?

The new Step Up Somerset website offers a one-stop employment support for Somerset residents – for those who may have lost their jobs; and advice for anyone looking for training and skills for a change of career; and help and advice for young people just starting out. Contact **www.stepupsomerset.org.uk** and 0300 790 6275.

Feeling worried, uncertain?

Need someone to talk to? Voluntary organisations and the NHS have come together to provide 24/7 support to Somerset adults in their Open Mental Health support project. For support call 01823 276892 or find out more at **www.sparksomerset.org.uk/projects** (you can also chat online).

CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: www.police.uk. If you are a witness to or the victim of a crime, then it is imperative that you report it to the police immediately whether it is during the day or at night. When reporting an incident please telephone either 101 for non-emergencies or 999 for emergencies only.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Parish Council meetings are currently being held by the virtual Zoom app until further notice. However, there is no meeting in December and the next meeting will be on **Monday, 11th January 2021 at 7pm**. Parish Council meetings are open to the press and public, so residents are welcome to come along and listen to what we have to say. There is also a short public session at the beginning of every meeting. If you wish to join us, please follow the instructions below.

Parish Council Meeting 11th January 2021 at 7pm

The Parish Council are now holding their meetings via the virtual meeting platform Zoom. The basic package is free to use and can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/>. If you would like to attend our virtual parish council meeting please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk_montacutepc@hotmail.co.uk for the ID link by the Friday before the meeting. If you do not have access to the internet but would still like to listen in on the meeting please telephone the Parish Clerk on 01935 822455 for the telephone conferencing number so that you can dial in.

If you would like to participate in the public session, please email/phone through the subject/question you wish to raise with the council when you asked for the ID link/telephone number.

If you are accessing the meeting via the internet:

- Click on the link or copy the link into your browser given to you in the email
- Download the Zoom app, if not already done so
- Test your speakers and microphone on your device (you will be prompted to do this)
- You will then be put in a 'Waiting Room' until you are invited to join.
- Once connected, you must click on the video camera icon at the bottom left-hand side of the screen to enable the video. This is so that councillors can see who is attending the meeting.

If you are accessing the meeting by telephone:

- Dial the number given to you by the Clerk.
- Once connected you will be prompted to type in the meeting ID plus #, then #, then the password plus #. You will be placed in a 'Waiting Room' until invited to join.

All microphones will be automatically muted from the start of the meeting. If you wish to participate in the public session your microphone will be unmuted when you are invited to speak.

Council meetings will continue in this form until such time as we are informed that public meetings/gatherings may take place in person.

Contact details: Sarah Moore, Parish Clerk
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