

It seems quite a while ago since our last article and a lot has been happening in the village and with the Parish Council.

The Christmas tree lighting celebrations were a resounding success. The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who helped to make it happen especially Vincent and Chris Baker for putting up the Christmas tree and decorating it with the lights, to Duncan Admoir for letting us use his electric to light the tree, Lucie Roberts and the choir from All Saints, and everyone who gave mince pies etc. towards the refreshments. Also, thank you to everyone who braved the cold and came along on the evening to celebrate the lighting of the Christmas tree and for taking part in the raffle. We raised a wonderful total of £61.

We would like to thank you to Louise and Andy from the Post Office for their kind donation of £35 from their Christmas light display. The proceeds from both these events will go towards the pavilion project. We would be grateful to any resident or organisation wishing to make a donation towards the pavilion. Don't forget, tickets are still on sale at the Post Office if you would like the chance of winning a teddy bear.

The work on the Pavilion project is going well. The building and groundworks are now complete. However, there is still a lot to do before we can use the building. All the internal work, electric and plumbing still needs to be completed and we are waiting for the National Grid to connect the electricity supply. We have just received the fantastic news that we have been successful in our recent s.106 grant application and have been awarded £39,653 towards the capital and maintenance costs of the pavilion.

The subject of Somerset Council's finances has been in the news a lot lately and in order for them to address their financial situation, Somerset Council are looking at a programme of devolution for some of their assets and services. Town and parish councils have been asked to take on/contribute towards some of these services, and Montacute Parish Council need to

consider what services will directly affect the village and you, as residents. The Parish Council need to take into account how much this will cost the parish, and we have spent a considerable amount of time discussing the ramifications on whether we can provide these services or not. Any decisions we make will not be done so lightly, but we have to make a decision before the beginning of February as we are required to submit our precept form for the financial year 2024/25 by 2<sup>nd</sup> February. However, at this moment in time, it is much of a guessing game as we will not know for definite which services will be cut until Somerset Council set their budget at the end of February.

The service areas which will directly affect the village mainly come under Highways and Streetscene. The services affected are:

### Highways

- Street cleaning which can include highway channels and litter removal from verges
- Winter Service – supply and filling of grit bins
- Roadside verges maintenance including grass cutting
- Vegetation clearance and cutting of the Rights of Way network
- Drain jetting/Gully cleansing – both ordering works from TMC contractor and local self-delivery
- Ditches and grips clearance
- Hedge trimming
- Non-illuminated sign cleaning and maintenance
- Signage for new or changed speed limits
- Weed treatment
- Minor Highways functions such as footway and footpath repairs
- Planned path safety inspections

### Streetscene

- Fly tipping
- Street cleaning other than listed above
- Provision and collection of litter bins and dog waste bins

- Bedding planting
- Provision of the Parish Ranger Scheme

### Other

- Provision of sandbags/gel bags and some local flood response measures

We are also in discussion with other parishes on whether we can join forces in order to provide the services to a standard to which we have all become accustomed to.

There will be an allotment holder meeting on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> February at 10am in the village hall. This will be an opportunity for allotment holders to get together for a chat and a cup of coffee or tea, talk to the Parish Council and for rents to be renewed.

It has been two years since our Speedwatch team was set up. In those two years there have been 16,500 recorded incidents with 927 cases of speeding reported to the police. Our fantastic Speedwatch team have been able to hold 45 Speedwatch sessions throughout 2023 and the Parish Council would like to express a huge thank you to Martin, our Speedwatch co-ordinator, and to all our volunteers.

### **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

If you are witness to any incident, it is important for you to report it directly to the police by telephoning the numbers listed below. Any reports given will be dealt with in confidence and your details will not be divulged. Also, you will receive an incident/crime number. Unfortunately, the Parish Council cannot report incidents to the police on your behalf as it would be considered as hearsay (third-party reporting).

**For any advice and further/up-to-date information on incidents please go to the website: [www.police.uk](http://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 are held in the Village Hall on the third Wednesday of every month with the exception of August and December. The next meeting will be on **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 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 Ordinary Parish Council meeting.

*Contact details: Sarah Moore, Parish Clerk*

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