

ARTICLE FOR MAGAZINE February 2022

It's only a month ago but it still seems strange to talk about Christmas. We hope you all had a very enjoyable Christmas and wish everyone a Happy New Year!

A huge thank you for everyone who came out in the cold to celebrate the lighting of the Christmas tree and to enjoy a mince pie and a drink or two. The raffle was won by Anouska Masson, and we raised £90 which is gone towards the new pavilion funds.

As you are aware from previous articles, we have received planning permission for the new pavilion, and we are hoping to meet up with the National Trust shortly to discuss possible a landscaping scheme which is a requirement of the planning approval. In the meantime, we have been busy getting new quotes and putting together a business plan so that we can apply for funding. A huge thanks to Roy Littlefield on the mammoth task of contacting all the contractors needed for this project. A job well done!

We have just had the annual inspection carried out on the play area and the report has come back saying it is 'very low risk' to 'low risk' which is good news. As always, we will carry out our own monthly inspections and monitor any areas of risk.

Where is the fingerpost, you might say! Sorry to say it has been some time coming but Somerset Forge who are carrying out the work have been inundated with orders. They have recently confirmed that the foundry is in the process of pouring the new post and fingers and were hopeful that they are able to complete the construction and painting so that it can be installed in early February.

Our speed indicator device (SID) has been in place for a couple of months now reminding road users to monitor their speed at either end of the village. We will be getting one of our councillors 'Chapter 8' trained so that they will be able to move the SID themselves and access the reporting system.

Our newly reformed Speedwatch volunteers have received all their training and have had a presentation by Avon and Somerset Police. The police have now approved the designated areas in the village so hopefully you will see the team will be out and about. Many thanks to Martin Myram for running with this. If you see the team in the village, please give them your support.

Several concerns have been raised over the last few months about the parking in Yeovil Road by parents who are dropping off and picking up children from school. We know that parking is difficult in the village but this irresponsible parking on the visibility splay to Back Lane and on the main road is extremely dangerous. Therefore, the Parish Council are liaising with the school and looking into ways to stop this.

When looking at the budget for 2022/23 in December, the Parish Council agreed to keep expenditure as low as possible and only spending on statutory requirements. However, the Tax Base has been reduced considerably which means that Council Tax increases even if our precept stays the same as the previous financial year.

What does this mean?

The Tax Base is calculated from the number of residents who are eligible to pay Council Tax and when the Tax Base is reduced, it means that there are more residents claiming tax relief so those who are eligible have to pay more to cover the shortfall. Historically, Montacute's Tax Base has been decreasing each year since 2018/19 and this coming financial year is the lowest it has been for eight years.

The Parish Council have looked at the budget again but can see no way in reducing it any further so we have reluctantly had to make the decision that even with taking the estimated general reserves for 2021/2022 into account the precept will need to increase to £29,430 in

order for the Parish Council to break even. This increase will raise the Band D rate to £119.88 per year.

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 held in the Village Hall and the next meeting will be on **Monday, 21st February 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.

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