



Milborne Port

Annual Parish Report – 25th April 2023

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Minutes of the Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting of Milborne Port was held on Tuesday 25th April at 7pm in the Village Hall.

1(a) The Purpose of the Meeting

Cllr. Tim Carty, Chairman of Milborne Port Parish Council, explained the purpose of the meeting: to share information about the activities of village organisations and groups during the past year; an opportunity to celebrate their achievements and contributions to the local community.

1(b) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Sarah Dyke, Lyn Harrison, Robert Tizzard, Anna Wagner and Richard Warren and from Emma Evans (Blooms Baby Group) and Sarah Warren (Milborne Port Climate and Nature Action Group).

2 – Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2022

Cllr. Tim Carty's proposal that the report of Annual Parish Meeting of 26th April 2022 be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting was seconded by Cllr. Robert Lockey and resolved by a majority of attendees.

3 – Reports from Parish Council Committees

Cllrs. Carty, Campbell and Lockey gave their reports on the work of the Full Council, the Planning and Environment Committee and the Management Committee respectively. (See below.)

4 – Community Resilience Plan

Cllr. Margaret Capon addressed the meeting on the topic of a Community Resilience Plan; such a plan would be designed to prepare village residents for coping with the unexpected, for example a pandemic, an accident impacting on large numbers/involving evacuations. Residents demonstrated capacity for such a community spirited and resourceful response with the 'viral kindness' initiative during the recent pandemic. There exists a Somerset Prepared scheme that can provide up to £5,000 in grants for activities such as First Aid courses, training children how to cope in an emergency, critical bleed training, a 'men's shed'. A plan would provide a list of 'places of safety'; Milborne Port is currently not one. Please contact Cllr. Capon (margaret.capon@milborneportpc.org.uk) if you are interested in joining a pilot project team - 'Milborne Port Prepared'. Some attendees at the meeting mentioned specific incidents in the south-west where emergency responses were required, so these events do occur.

5 – Reports from Local Groups and Organisations

Representatives of local groups and organisations gave their reports and responded to questions from attendees; written versions of these reports, as well as those who were unable to attend, appear below.

6 – Reports from Somerset Councillors

Somerset Council Cllr. Nic Clark addressed the meeting to talk about the recent transition to Somerset Council, which provides services for 600,000 people through the work of 110 councillors and their teams. Milborne Port is part of Local Community Network number 10/South East Somerset. Cllrs. Clark and Dyke invite Somerset residents to contact them if they need information, assistance or support.

7 - Open Public Parish Forum

Attendees made the following comments and observations during and at the end of the meeting:

- A resident asked after the possibility of having a bench installed outside Something Else Fishy; the bench on the opposite side of the road is covered with bird mess and it is very risky to sit there. The Parish Council will explore the possibility.
- A resident asked after the possibility of having a designated dog-walking area in the village; there was a discussion about the relative merits of such an area and Cllr. Carty gave some context about when this issue has been discussed before by members of the Parish Council; he also explained why the proposal to use the cemetery extension as a dog-walking area before it is required for burials has not gone ahead. Such an area might be possible if some currently Somerset Council land on the outskirts of the village ever came into Parish Council ownership.
- A councillor raised the question of a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Carty gave some context, explained its purpose and its relative merits and costs; there are benefits to be had when it comes to opposing planning applications for new building developments. It is a subject regularly discussed by Parish Council members but remains a significant potential investment of financial and human resources.

The meeting finished at 9.46 pm.



Chairman's Report – Councillor Tim Carty

It has been a busy year for the Parish Council, with a lot of catch-up after the pandemic, and a raft of new and historic issues being addressed.

First up, at the Town Hall itself we have done quite a lot of repainting and renovation. More importantly, the WI have been incredibly welcoming in bringing the Library literally 'in from the cold', sharing the downstairs room. This seems to have been a great success with the number and diversity of people using the facility, and the incidental benefit of electricity costs being reduced compared to the bus in East Street car park. The increased use of the dishwasher produced an odd smell, and further investigation showed that the Town Hall kitchenette had actually never been connected to the drains, a surprise that has now been remedied.

During the year we have made a number of grants to organisations in the Parish including Spirit of Milborne Port to assist with the Christmas Tree, the Playing Fields Management Committee and helping the PTA at the Primary School with their new Pirate Ship. There have

also been a number of new, eco-friendly benches acquired through grants and these are being installed around the village. Similarly, we have put in new bicycle racks at Gainsborough and the Village Hall.

At the Village Hall and the Recreation Ground we have been undertaking a review of our various lease agreements, entailing deep research through the archives, and we now feel we have a good understanding of what the current arrangements are and what needs to be done to migrate these to what they ought to be, honouring the intent of the original founders to make sure that Recreation Ground stays protected.

On a more practical level, we have been looking at spending Section 106 monies at the Rec. New ball nets have been installed. We have ordered the new equipment for the Play Area, and it was originally hoped this would be installed in January. Delays have arisen with the contractor and it now seems the new kit will go in in May, together with a re-fencing of the area. There is also a district wide initiative to upgrade tennis courts in a number of communities, and we have been positioned in the second wave of this. Monies are match-funded by the Council, and we are in the final negotiations to have the Parish's component funded by s.106 monies. If this all comes together, we should have our two tennis courts fully restored. Plans also continue for extensions to the Sports Pavilion, and we hope to be submitting a planning application shortly. The small football pitch by the tennis courts is not in great shape following the resurfacing of the car park, and we are looking to do some drainage work after the football season ends to address this.

There continues to be a high level of concern about dog fouling at the Recreation Ground, and during the year this unfortunately spread to the school wilding area on Wheathill Lane and to the cemetery. It had been the plan to use the cemetery extension for dog walkers, but when this was opened, we found that a few irresponsible dog owners were allowing their dogs loose in the cemetery itself, so sadly the area has had to be closed off. To reiterate, dogs are welcome at the Rec but the rules are that they must be kept on a lead. The argument that "I clear up after my dog" is not relevant. Nearly all owners do, as the full poo bins evidence. The issue is that if everyone kept their dogs on a lead, then the irresponsible owners would have to as well, and it is far less easy to ignore the mess left behind by a dog on a lead than a dog that has disappeared off into the far distance, especially at night. Dogs are not allowed into the wilding area; this is school property and the rules are just the same as the school grounds themselves.

On the subject of anti-social behaviour, last summer saw a number of our younger residents (together with a few from other parishes) rightly enjoying themselves as they celebrated the conclusion of their exams and school terms down at the Rec. Unfortunately, there was quite a bit of vandalism, which is a shame. However, the Parish has been engaging with the South West Youth trust and we had some experienced youth workers visit the village, initially for a tour with a couple of councillors, and then on a series of evenings where they engaged with our young residents. The results were enlightening, and we have committed as a Parish to participate in a wider project looking to get a greater understanding of youth need within the Parish, and practical steps that can be taken to make our community a better place in which to grow up, and to help our young residents to take pride in where they live. This is being scoped out across the spring, primarily driven by Castle Cary, Bruton and Wincanton and it is hoped it will be launched in the summer.

This was one of the tangible outputs from the recent Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset. As many will know, the four District Councils have been abolished as of 1st April 2023, and we now have one Somerset County Council. The 'hole' left at a district level is being filled by 18 Local Community Networks and we are in an LCN provisionally named South East Somerset. These LCNs are designed to be a conduit for local representation (Town and Parish Councils, Health, Education, Emergency Services and so on) to get together and provide communication to our representatives in Taunton. Our area has been running a pilot, focusing upon wellbeing and rural isolation, in which we have been quite involved at a steering group level. From June onwards, this limited scope pilot is to be upgraded to the real thing covering all areas of activity (except Planning).

Planning has been deliberately kept separate from the other parts of Somerset Council, as the expectation was that if it were treated alongside the remainder, then nothing else would ever be discussed. There are two concerns we have identified. The first is that there was an explicit commitment that Planning issues would not be dealt with in Somerset Council at a level higher than was already the case at the District Councils. In our case in South Somerset, this was at an Area East level based in Wincanton. It turns out however, that Planning will actually be dealt with at a level covering more or less the old South Somerset, which is a significantly broader level of review. Further, none of the six elected County Councillors from our South East Somerset LCN will sit on the Planning Committee for South Somerset, which raises concern that the nuances of our area, let alone our specific Parish, may not be understood as future Planning decisions are made. Of course, the reverse may be true and officers and councillors may bend over backwards to ensure that our voices are heard.

Milborne Port benefits (or suffers, depending upon one's point of view) from having a degree of critical mass, and having quite a bit of flat land around it, making it a target for new development. The Parish Council has sought to prefer and support small level development including extensions and in-fill of small plots. On larger scale developments, we have sought to ensure the maximum benefit to the community, not just through s.106 monies, but also through additional benefits. We are also very much of the view that new developments should be connected to the village by appropriately wide footways (minimum 1.8m), as required by the regulations. Developers are required to satisfy high environmental standards and net neutral or positive environmental impact, and we do our best to ensure this is genuinely part of the plans and that any permitted off-set occurs within the Parish, rather than up a hill in Wales. This is often difficult as local offset is not required by Law. Residents will see the new Redcliffe development at Wheathill Lane being constructed. There are two further applications in at present, being the next adjacent site to the East (which we support), and at Court Lane (to which we object). No major planning will be approved in our Parish at the moment due to the long-standing phosphate issues, but this does not mean that the other issues in applications are not being addressed.

The new application at Wheathill Lane, if approved, will generate a few new allotments for the village. At the main allotments we have dug out the main track so it is now passable to vehicles with a lower wheelbase, and we are looking to do further repairs to the entrance area. Some clearance of the border areas have also freed up a couple of additional allotment plots. There has been a fair bit of work on our roads this year. Much of it relates to Super-Fast Fibre installation, and we understand that limited parts of the village will shortly have the option to make use of this. There has been a reworking of parking restrictions, which is the output of discussions going back some years. There remains a concern that the levels of parking

availability is not adequate, particularly in the older parts of the village, and we do our best to make this as good as it can be, and try to avoid new development making the problem worse (not always successfully). We are continually pressing Somerset Council on the flooding issue on the Charlton Horethorne Road (unsuccessfully so far). We continue to await the installation of the, now approved, pedestrian crossing to the Post Office at Blackmore Garage.

For many years successive Parish Councils have examined the possibility of establishing a safe functional alternative route to Sherborne that avoids the A30 and could be used for cycling, pedestrians, and also wheel and push chairs. Some years ago, there was an attempt to establish a route through Sherborne Estate proper, but that was not possible. In recent years we have looked at a route through Osborne, but the topography of this with multiple gradient issues meant this was not possible either. Early this year we were made aware of an initiative driven by Sherborne Town and Castleton Parish Councils. Since the pandemic a researcher has put in a huge amount of research, mostly into the 18th century Turnpike Acts, but also into the post war history of public rights of way through to the Local Government reorganisations of 1973. It seems that Pinford Lane, through the Sherborne Estate, was once a turnpike, and that when it was 'closed' this was to vehicles (carriages and carts) and driven livestock, but not to horses and pedestrians. As a small part of Pinford Lane sits in our Parish, we were asked to be co-signatories to have this route confirmed as an existing public right of way; this is a different process from establishing a new right of way, or moving a right of way, and is a matter of laying out the case before the relevant experts and seeing whether the fact can be established, rather than it being anything to do with merit. This application has now been submitted and we shall see in due course, if it is approved, and if so, what type of right of way it will be.

I would like to extend my particular thanks to our two officers, Simon our clerk, and Nathalie our deputy clerk, who have worked tirelessly and often well above and beyond to help the residents of our Parish. I would also like to thank my fellow councillors for their commitment and expertise, and their willingness to help and gently correct me. Just as importantly I would like to say thank you to all our residents who through their efforts, generosity and friendliness make this such a wonderful place to live.



Planning and Environment Committee – Chairman, Councillor Tom Campbell

I have been the Chair of the Planning and Environment Committee from May 2022 with Cllr. Lockey serving as vice chairman; there are now 8 members of the council on this Committee.

Planning: The Committee has considered 13 planning applications over the past year, seven of which were for extensions to existing buildings; the Committee has generally been supportive of these applications. There has been a handful of applications for work on trees with Preservation Orders. The phosphates issue continues to delay some applications in the county.

The Committee has also responded to various matters relating to plans for building on land in Court Lane and off Wheathill Lane; both developers have sent their representatives to meetings to consult with members. The Committee is cautiously supportive of the application to build 58 houses on land off Wheathill Lane but does not support the Court Lane

application for 22 houses at this stage. No decisions have been made by Somerset Council in either of these applications.

Members are also monitoring progress at the Redcliffe site at Wheathill Lane/Coldharbour and liaising with contractors as appropriate; the adoption of the new roads on the new housing development on Gainsborough is also being monitored.

Highways: The Committee was instrumental in the application to Somerset County Highways for the new double yellow lines which were painted last year. Members are disappointed at the lack of progress with the planned crossing at Crackmore and continue to follow this up with councillors at the new Somerset Council. The SID is now in constant use and its location is changed regularly; it has proved effective in slowing motorists down at its various locations, a new one of which has been created on Station Road.

A number of residents have attended meetings to express concerns over speeding on the A30 at the different ends of the village. Members have liaised with Somerset Council Highways on some of these matters but currently there are no plans for any changes to signage of speed limits because the SID and accident data do not reflect a serious enough problem with speeding.

There was a parking issue on Higher Kingsbury and Wick Road for a number of months due to the rapid expansion of a local business; members and some residents liaised with the parties concerned to try to find a resolution. The problems have since been alleviated by the moving of the company to different premises.

Members have been very concerned about the flooding on the road out of the village towards Stowell in front of White House Farm and are liaising with Somerset Council Highways in this matter.

Environment: The Committee oversaw the acquisition and location of two new benches – one at The Meads/East Street junction and one at Plover Road/Gainsborough junction (which will be dedicated to the late Tim Cadisch whose planting on Gainsborough continues to delight residents on a yearly basis).



Management Committee Report – Chairman, Councillor Rob Lockey

The Management Committee manages the open spaces within the village such as play areas, allotments and cemetery, along with the management of its premises such as the Town Hall and Cemetery Chapel. We meet approximately every two months.

The main activities this year have been the extension of Springfield Play Area; we hope to see this completed in the next couple of months. I would like to thank Councillor Wagner for all her hard work in making this happen.

You may have noticed that there has been an extension to the cemetery. Although it will not be needed for this purpose for several years, it was agreed to have this area for dog walking to try and get dog walkers to use this area rather than the recreation ground. However, issues have

arisen with dog walkers going into the area and letting dogs run around in the cemetery which is totally unacceptable. The gate to the area has been locked for the time being.

We have carried out work on the Cemetery Chapel, a building currently being used by our History group. The roof has been repaired and insulated. Thanks to Councillor Lyn Harrison for overseeing this.

Thanks to Councillor Warren for his expertise in advising on the care of the Station Road Copse, along with other areas in the village.

Somerset Council have advised that they are no longer able to water the hanging baskets along the High Street. We are still investigating other options but so far without luck. Our Somerset Councillors have been contacted with a view to finding a solution.

Ball stop nets have been supplied for the recreation ground using S106 money and we are hoping to provide a youth shelter at the recreation ground using further S106 money.

Reports from Local Groups and Organisations



Village Hall – James Crow, Chair of Management Committee, for and on behalf of The Trustees of the Milborne Port Village Hall Charitable Trust

The Trustees and Management Committee are pleased to report that the Hall finances are in a good position as of March 2023. We have reserves, and normal income and expenditure are at a similar level.

As of April 2022, almost all our regular users were back in full operation after the pandemic.

The Committee has only had to support one group during the last year which was struggling to find new members after the pandemic. That support has now ceased, with the group now in a good position to continue operating.

There has been a steady stream of wedding enquiries for 2024 and 2025 but there are more bookings for birthday parties now, particularly as we can accommodate some of the larger inflatables that can be hired. We do work closely with one local supplier (based in Yarlington) which constitutes 62% of child birthday party bookings.

The Committee has continued to improve the Hall facilities during the last year to make the Hall an even better venue for all the users, regular and one-off.

We have successfully trialled and adopted an online booking system with MyHallWizard. The company has been very helpful in sorting out any queries or bugs that we have had since adoption. The system has been working efficiently and allows potential users to access the calendar online and then make an enquiry for hiring the facility.

We have also invested in a terminal for taking card payments which has been successfully used at various events, including the Milborne Port 2023 Opera production 'Everything Goes'.

This production also saw the use of our new lighting desk which resulted in enhanced lighting effects during the show. Although the desk can control very large stage lighting installations (the desk is used by the BBC for Strictly Come Dancing!), it can also be configured so that it is a simple desk for a non-trained operator. We have had three events where the operator was untrained. Two events were controlled by experienced users.

The Opera Group has continued to improve facilities in that it now installs a system to provide stage audio into the Green Room (Camelot Suite) and the Mezzanine. Those improvements have been linked in to the hearing loop in the Main Hall, allowing those who use hearing aids to access the loop and better enjoy the event.

We regret that the 2023 Winter/Spring Moviola screening had to be cancelled when we were notified that the provider could only satisfy one of the four booked dates. We had booked the required dates some 12 months earlier. The contractor expected the booked dates to be changed to accommodate them; this meant that we would have to cancel three confirmed bookings, including the National Blood Donor session, as well as the Opera booking! We did feel that the supplier had forgotten who the Customer is. Having invested in the projection screen, events that use this are still required, and we are looking for funding opportunities to allow the purchase of the projector and, if possible, a sound system.

The Hall has been very fortunate during the last 2.5 years to have a fixed rate electricity deal at 14p per unit until 30/09/2023; the present price being quoted is around 35p per unit. We have gathered that many other halls and community buildings in the country are struggling with the huge increases in energy costs and some have had to consider closure. We are watching the developing situation carefully and waiting to see what happens before making any decisions about future deals or providers.

The Committee is also investigating how to make the Village Hall more energy efficient, considering ideas such as extra insulation, installing a false ceiling in the main Hall, and even making use of air source heat pump technology.

Following some investigation into putting solar panels on the roof, we have been advised by the original architect that they would still be too heavy for the present structure. Also, there is the problem of what to do with the energy once it is produced.

The Committee has put together a priority list of further upgrades to the building and top of the list are the Ladies' toilets. Initial plans have been drawn up for the alterations which will significantly increase the number available, but we need to identify where the present sewage outlet runs before proceeding with any work. So, if anyone knows anything about this or has any bright ideas how we can find this out do please let us know.

Last summer we were approached by the Friends of Milborne Port Library to see if the Camelot Room might be a suitable venue for the Library. After careful consideration, the Trustees and Committee offered them the use of the room but could not allow bookshelves to be fixed to the walls or large book racks being left in the room as this would adversely affect other regular users. In the end, the Library has found a more suitable home in the Town Hall.

Before I finish, I would like to thank all the Trustees and Committee for their dedication and support during the past year. I would also like to give special thanks to those who work hard to keep the place clean for us, Michelle Cullen and Paul Girling; they have not only done the

normal cleaning but have maintained a special COVID cleaning routine as well to make sure every user is kept safe.

So, to sum up, Milborne Port Village Hall continues to be used by a large variety of different groups from the community, for regular sessions and one-off events such as weddings, Christenings, birthday parties, business dinners, Bingo, blood donors and productions such as the Opera and The Kings' Command Performance. As one of the largest community buildings in the village, it also has modern kitchen facilities and a large car park for its users. It is a place where people come every day to relax, connect, learn, and celebrate.

The Trustees and the Committee are committed to continuing to provide the facilities for the community at a reasonable level of charge so that everyone in the community can benefit. But to continue to do this we do need more people to join the Committee and help to share the load. If you are interested in finding out more, please let us know.



FOOD SHARING

Foodshare Milborne Port – Elaine Ennis

Milborne Port Foodshare exists to provide food and household consumables to any individual or household in financial hardship in the village and local area.

Milborne Port Foodshare is approaching its second anniversary and has grown considerably since its first appearance. On average we have around 20 people calling at Church House on Thursday afternoons and they are catering for around 35-40 adults and 25 children.

We continue to collect food which is still good to eat from the Co-op on three evenings a week and store it safely ready for distribution. In addition, we receive donations from local people who place food and household items in the collection basket at the Co-op and also donations from the Co-op itself. St John's congregation continues to donate food and toiletries on a weekly basis and all of these are very welcome.

The Foodshare team is very grateful for the financial support it receives from time to time. In the last year funds have been received from Somerset Council for equipment, from Milborne Port Parish Council for additional food items, from the Milborne Port Magazine Committee and Milborne Port Parochial Church Council. These donations allow us to pay our public liability insurance and other essential running costs. Church House Trustees continue to provide invaluable support by allowing the project to use a room in their building for storage and for distribution of food and toiletries on Thursday afternoons.

Foodshare is also now formally linked to Sherborne Food Bank and the Chair of Foodshare has recently become a Food Bank Trustee. Sherborne Food Bank view Foodshare as a project which helps to prevent local people needing Food Bank parcels (although we can easily refer them if requested to do so) and also provides continuing help with food once the 3-6 weeks of emergency Food Bank parcels have come to an end. The Food Bank gives Foodshare a sum of money each month which is used to buy food and toiletries.

The Foodshare team is currently moving from being an informal group of volunteers to applying to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Associate); this will mean that we

have the same organisational structure as Sherborne Food Bank with Trustees but also have a structure where other volunteers are able to discuss and vote on developments.

The Foodshare team is a relatively small group of volunteers and we would welcome more help. If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer and hearing more about what is involved, please email foodshareadmin@milborneportchurches.org.

Milborne Port Football Club – Rob Lockey



It has been another good season, apart from the weather causing one month of fixtures to be cancelled, resulting in the Youth season extending to well into May.

Our reserves team, who were promoted to Division 1 this season, are on the verge of winning promotion to the Premier League. We can only be caught by one team if they win all their remaining fixtures.

Our Under 15s team have won their league and have not been beaten in any matches.

We have had a very popular Under 7s team this year, with many younger children joining and taking part in training.

In total, we have had 80 adult players registered to play for the adult teams and 139 children registered for the Youth leagues.

Next season we will have Under 7s, 8s, 9s, 11s, 12s, 13s, 15s, 16s and Under 18s, along with 3 adult teams.

We would like to thank the Parish Council and Playing Fields committee for providing the pitches and new stop nets and look forward to working with them on the Pavilion extension project.

Milborne Port Dementia Friendly Community – Rob Lockey

As part of my role as the Health and Wellbeing Champion, I have been supporting the village's aim to become a Dementia Friendly Community.

The term 'dementia' covers a range of different brain disorders that trigger a loss of brain function. It affects people in different ways, but it's a condition that progressively gets worse over time. As well as problems with memory, symptoms can include feeling confused, having difficulty thinking things through and following conversations, impacting on a range of everyday activities, from socialising to shopping.

In the UK, one person develops dementia every three minutes. It turns lives upside-down and there is no cure. Almost everyone knows someone whose life has become affected. Many people living with dementia are often isolated and do not feel part of their local community.

In the run up to Dementia Action Week (15-21 May), in April and May we offered some free Dementia Friends awareness sessions at various venues and times in Milborne Port.

Each session lasted an hour and raised awareness and understanding of the problems that dementia can cause. These sessions were open to absolutely anyone and everyone, of all ages, in Milborne Port and the surrounding area.

Milborne Port History and Heritage Group – Lyn Harrison, Secretary



The group was set up seven years ago in 2016 and since then we have gone from strength to strength. We now have 40 double and thirty single memberships along with over 150 on our general email list, not to mention our Facebook page and ever-growing website; please have a look at them and feel free to make comments on the Facebook page post and also to ask any local history questions that you may have - we will try and answer them for you.

The Museum will be open again this summer on Sunday afternoons and details will be published on the website, Facebook and in the Village Magazine. Even if you have been before, there are many new artefacts of interest. If there is anything of particular interest that you would like to see, please speak to one of the volunteers.

Our monthly talks continue to be well attended with subjects ranging from Newtown to the history of Shepton Mallet Prison. Last year, we were lucky enough to welcome Tim Medhurst of Antiques Road Trip fame and he will be talking to us again in September. We are organising two trips this summer; one will be a guided tour of Shepton Mallet Prison and either the Twine Works at East Coker or the Thornhill Obelisk.

Since last year, the roof on the museum has been replaced and also the loft has been insulated, thanks to the Milborne Port Parish Council; this work will clearly help in the preservation of the numerous documents and artefacts that we now hold and which are all in the process of being indexed and are available to anyone with a particular interest to be viewed.

A new booklet has been produced on Newtown and is available at the very reasonable cost of £3.00; if you would like to purchase one please contact via the website or Facebook page.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the past year, we are reliant on donations and look forward to your continued support.

Milborne Port Women's Institute – Jan Smith, President



Milborne Port WI are now looking to the future and what we can make of it for all the Ladies of Milborne Port. Our aim is to reform ourselves and be seen in our true light as modern, forward-thinking people. The days of Jam and Jerusalem are gone and in has come the age of balancing the modern with the old. Digital communications, apps for controlling our kitchens, disposable products etc. are starting to control our thinking and working, whilst at the same time we read real books, make craft items from recognised materials and make items of food that has always pleased people. Milborne Port WI are rising to meet the modern order and we welcome all ladies in our village to come and join us in and help us on our way.

Last year, the Milborne Port WI celebrated its 90th Birthday and we reflected on the startup of the original WI and how we had progressed through the years, seeing all sorts of demands both locally for our community and nationally for our country. A lot of those demands have not changed, but how we tackle them has and we have moved with the times to help us solve those problems. The last three years have seen very new demands for which we have had to find ways round to keep us together. We have become good at using Zoom and WhatsApp to reach those who are lonely or experiencing difficulties, and this technology will help us into the future, and we are therefore looking forward to still being here in 10 years' time with a good group of happy, fun-loving ladies.

This year we have already had a good look at how we are functioning and at whether or not we should become an independent ladies' group. After much research, debate and discussion, we have decided to remain as a branch of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. We are now moving forward and looking at how we can meet the needs of the ladies in this village. We are aware that there are a number of ladies who are, perhaps, on their own or wanting something new or interesting to keep themselves in touch with others and we are hoping to help them into our WI world.

We already have a successful Coffee Morning every Friday in the Town Hall, now enhanced by having the village Library in the room. The mornings are open to all in the village. We have a good, well-run craft group, the members of which appear to turn their hands to almost all the events in the village. We run trips to various places and our Christmas shopping trip is always a success. We are hoping over the coming year to build more groups and we also will be looking at special courses which will bring us together and help improve our knowledge. Watch this space.

Keep in touch with us, catch up with us on Face book and watch out for notices or, ladies, come and join our WI branch. Contact us in the town Hall on Fridays or contact the President jan.smith.43@btinternet.com.

ReBorne Community Church – Yvonne Bright



One Church 2 locations
Sherborne & Milborne Port
ReBorne Community Church
Registered Charity no. 1189540 operating as a CIO

We continue to worship as One Church in two locations. In both locations of Milborne Port and Sherborne, we wish to serve the community, helping to encounter the love of Jesus.

We have been thrilled to hold mums' meals, crotchet evenings and a Christmas wreath-making evening. Our skittle alley has been put to good use this year, being enjoyed by all age ranges.

Toddler Group on a Monday continues to greet new mums with babies and toddlers. We have been able to link up again with the local Health Visitor and set in place visits from her to the group, aiding the care and wellbeing of mums and babies.

We are enjoying having our after-school kids club on a Tuesday straight from school with a walking bus, attended by between 25-35 children weekly. This is a church activity with fun games and stories to help us shape our lives.

This year has seen us start the Youth chill-out; numbers are small with this, but we have a small core group attending. We are very grateful to The Spirit of Milborne Port who have supported us with £500 to update and replenish equipment and craft materials. We will be opening this group up to this year's Year 6 students after the May half term, as they begin their transition to Secondary school in September. We hope that the group will grow as we provide a safe place for young people to hang out and get together.

Our early morning coffee stop continues on a Tuesday and Wednesday from 8.30am to 10am, and we have had a number of well attended coffee and craft mornings in the holidays.

Church activities continue. We run a weekly group on a Wednesday morning 10.30-12; this is called a 'life group' and allows those who attend to study and apply biblical truths to everyday living. We have a monthly prayer meeting held at Milborne Port which involves worship and prayer.

Our contemporary Sunday worship services are held in new Digby Hall in Sherborne and the congregation continues to grow. Everyone is welcome. As a Church, we continue to support the local foodbanks and CAP (Christians against Poverty) and also our mission here in the area through Dorset YFC (youth workers in King Arthur and The Gryphon schools) and other mission strategies abroad.

The process towards our much needed building work continues and following supportive planning permission last year, fund raising has continued and we are well on the way to being able to commence work. As funding comes in from external sources and the congregation, we will be looking to go out to tender shortly for the work to commence this year.

Thank you to the community for its continuing support.



Milborne Port Climate and Nature Action Group – Sarah Warren

The aim of our group is to promote Climate and Nature Action in the village through our activities, and via the magazine and web-site articles, by providing information on the urgency of both climate and nature action, and how we can each help.

Climate

We have taken part in the twice-yearly Global Climate Strikes, supporting the young people's movement 'Fridays for Future'.

Some of us supported the rally for climate action in Hyde Park last spring; to coincide with the COP27 UN Climate Summit happening some of us attended the COP 27 rally in Bristol on November 12th.

We helped with the Sherborne Quakers' 'Love Earth' exhibition in the Methodist Church in Sherborne.

E-bikes: We ran an e-bike trial; only two people took part but both found them a revelation! (So much more than a bike).

We ran two Freecycle events in the village, enabling people to rehome unwanted stuff.

Milborne Port and Sherborne Solar Streets: This scheme was launched two years ago; it is still running, providing a more affordable way for residents and businesses within our community (including surrounding villages) to buy solar panels, helping in the fight against climate change by providing clean, green renewable electricity, whilst generating funds for local projects with every installation.

Thermal imaging our own thermal imaging camera was available for anybody interested in identifying whether and where their homes needed improved insulation. A lot of money and energy can be wasted from a poorly insulated house; knowing where it's leaking is a great start and extra insulation also reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Nature

We completed the planting of the length of native hedge on farmland adjoining the recreation ground with further planting last autumn and watered and weeded the two previous years' planting during the growing season.

We helped with the management of Milborne Port primary school's Wheathill Meadow, their school grounds, Milborne Port's community woodland, East Hill and with other local EuCAN conservation tasks, at Alners Gorse and more recently Osborne chapel. We provided support and advice to the PCC on management to help wildlife in the churchyard.

We continued generally to promote management of verges and grassland that is more sympathetic to biodiversity – basically, cutting and collecting clippings at all times (which gradually reduces both fertility and the frequency of mowing, allowing more time for plants to flower whilst saving fuel, pollution, climate change and money), and preferably also leaving grassland uncut through the spring and summer, or at the least having a No-Mow May. This is because biodiversity is not a luxury it is essential.

We provided a survey and advice to Stourton Parish Council on how to manage their churchyard (more cheaply and) more sympathetically for nature.

We provided advice to Milborne Port Parish Council on suitable sowing and management of what will become an extension to the cemetery in ten years' time.

Litter picking

We litter picked a lengthy stretch of the road to Charlton Horethorne in the winter.

We had a stall at the village fete.

We have held a number of public meetings, which has resulted in new members joining our group.

Provision of information on helping tackle the climate and biodiversity emergencies

Our Facebook page provides informative articles; we currently have 27 members and would welcome many more: Milborne Port Climate and Nature Action, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/597148725354915>

We have contributed monthly articles to the village magazine and the community website on the following topics:

- The need for and tips on taking incisive climate action now
- The geopolitical dangers on continuing to rely on fossil fuels
- Tackling the cost of living and energy bills
- Where to find wildlife locally and how to help support nature
- How to help the government's aim of tripling the low percentage of the country with thriving wildlife (we are one of the most nature-depleted and deprived countries in the world)
- Information on Green Homes Somerset – how to reduce your reliance on fossil fuels with insulation and switch away from them altogether
- The injustice to younger generations of ignoring the climate emergency
- The importance of ensuring that hedges flower: How to cut hedges so that they flower the following spring (incrementally, leaving some of the previous year's growth)
- How we get what we picture; the importance of imagining a green, clean, carbon-free future
- The cause of the global energy crisis – not moving sooner and much faster away from fossil fuels and invest much more and more quickly in cheaper renewable energy
- Facts and advice on insulation of our homes
- What a sustainable diet looks like, and why; plus the added benefits to our health and making space for nature recovery
- Comparison of the carbon footprint of different forms of travel: how to reduce our travel footprint



Friends of Milborne Port Library – Rick Jones

In 2010, The Friends of Milborne Port Library (FoMPL) formed to protest against the planned closure of Milborne Port and 10 other Somerset Libraries. We succeeded in keeping all Libraries open.

In 2018, Thirteen County Libraries were moved into Community Library Partnerships by the County Council, their latest money saving scheme. The Friends changed to a Registered Charity so we could be the village part of the partnership, Somerset County Council being the other party. The county passed various costs down to village level such as staff and building costs. The Friends have meetings with the Library Service to discuss day to day operations and Quarterly Performance, footfall, complaints and incidents.

The current situation: Under the Partnership the County gave the Friends an outgoing mobile Library as a temporary Library, whilst awaiting the build of a community hub. It was parked in East Street car park but the Library moved into the Town Hall downstairs Community Room late last year to save on power costs. This Community Room is used three times a week by the Library, also by the WI and Craft Group.

The future: The build of the Community Hub off Wheathill Lane is a Parish Council Initiative, the hub to be rented to the Parish Council under a peppercorn rent but built and owned by a property developer as part of approval for the housing estate adjacent to Wheathill Way. Administration of this building is being organised by the Parish Council, FoMPL and Milborne Port History and Heritage Group, who plan to run the hub as a library while displaying village artefacts. This move may be a couple of years away and is far from guaranteed. The important thing is to maintain a Library in the village.

We keep the whole community informed via a monthly report in the monthly Village Magazine, on the village website (www.milborneport.org.uk), on Noticeboards, Facebook and in the Library.

The Library itself is a basic book lending organisation, but you can order books from several counties, and on Saturdays there is often a variety of children's activities: Lego, games, seed swap, colouring, story-time and crafts. Also, on Fridays the WI offers coffee at the same time as the Library is open.

Thanks to other village organisations for their support.



Milborne Port in Bloom Group 2022 – Karen Gough

First and foremost, I wish to take this opportunity to thank Philip Lock for his many years of being the driving force behind the group. Philip has worked tirelessly around the village carrying out numerous tasks with Maureen, supplying the excellent refreshments for everyone on the day of judging.

As you may know, we made the decision not to enter the SW Bloom competition; the expectations and standards are substantial and as a small group we struggled to keep the standards expected of us, many of them out of our hands.

But Milborne Port in Bloom thrives; the group is still dedicated to keeping areas looking good: the Ball Court, the Grove Garden, the cemetery and the bus shelter and seat area by the garage. We have recently a planter at the Pump House on the corner of Gainsborough. Clive is currently liaising with Somerset Council to plant some flowers in front of the stone at the entrance to the village, and we are going to buy some plants to put in the phone box by the Co-op.

Lastly, thank you to our volunteers; without their dedication, these areas would not be of the high standard in which they are kept.



Milborne Port Parish Magazine - Linda Mumford

The village magazine has had another steady year, selling around 600 copies each month, and, we hope, providing a useful service to the village. The magazine is the place to find monthly reports from the Parish Council, forthcoming events of all sorts, church services and reports from many village organisations which show just how much goes on in the village. We also publish informative articles on a range of topics from ecology to legal and financial topics from the Citizens' Advice Bureau. In

addition, we have a brilliant collection of small ads putting you straight in touch with local services.

Although printing costs have, like everything else, increased in the past year, we have been able to keep the cost of the magazine down to 45p per month. Profits go back to the community and other charities, and this year we have been able to donate to the PCC, the DEC Ukraine appeal, the Food Share, the Spirit of Milborne Port, and to provide the cash prize for the church's Grand Draw.

Readers continue to send in an excellent range of photographs for the front cover, and those chosen are also used for the Milborne Port Calendar for the following year.

Thanks to a great team of volunteers, you can have the magazine delivered to your home each month at no extra charge. If you would like a magazine delivered, please contact Richard and Liz Redman on 01963 251145



Milborne Port Opera - Linda Mumford

Eagle eyed followers of Milborne Port Opera may have noted that our 2023 show was initially advertised as *The Yeomen of the Guard*. Unfortunately, not enough men came forward for us to be able to put on this classic, but good news was to follow when Karen Pankhurst, one of our members, devised a new show for us.

Everything Goes! celebrated a century of showbiz, including iconic numbers from many well-known and less well-known shows and set in the MPO rehearsal rooms. This was a resounding success and proved very popular with our audiences.

It was great to be able to get back to our regular rehearsal space in the Primary School and to work without Covid restrictions once more.

We are still looking for new men to join us! If you can sing a bit but you've never been on a stage before, don't worry – we will teach you. We are a fun and friendly group, rehearsing on Thursday evenings from September, and enjoying a good social side too. If you are interested in knowing more, have a look at our website, www.milborneportopera.co.uk, our Facebook page, or contact our secre



Tuesday Luncheon Club – Anne Salkeld

I took over from Maureen Lock and Sue Scott in August 2022, with Lyn Harrison [finance] and Aly Flynn [IT]. As Maureen reported last year, there was a fall in membership during the pandemic, but since then there has been a fresh influx of members and we average around 20 members per week. We had a Christmas lunch last December with a visit from the Milborne Port school choir to sing carols; this was greatly appreciated by all. An August Treat is also planned for this summer.

We meet weekly in Church House, 12:30-2pm. We provide a two-course meal with tea/coffee for £5, which is great value, but it is the friendship and mutual support which our members really appreciate.

We are still in need of more volunteers to join our five teams. Anyone interested in joining as a member or a helper please contact me (01963 250259).



The Spirit of Milborne Port – Claire Andrews

We are a community-led group founded in 2012; we fund-raise for village projects and have helped numerous groups and organisations over the years, including St. John's Church, Milborne Port Primary School, toddler groups and the Tuesday Lunch Club.

We were the first to organise the village's hanging baskets and entry into the South West in Bloom competitions. We run the village fete and Party@The Port, held annually on the first Saturday in June; numbers are growing with last year's event seeing approximately 2000 attending during the day and up to 1000 in the evening. As you can imagine, the overheads involved are high – around £13000 – covered by ticket sales for the Party@ThePort and by local sponsors, to whom we are very

grateful. Tickets for this event can be bought online from Eventbrite and from Crackmore Garage. Under 12s must be accompanied by an adult. If you would like to volunteer to help out, please get in touch!

We also run the Christmas lights switch-on, supplying the Christmas tree and lights for the High Street; last year we installed the lights in the large beech tree on The Clump, and supplied the trees for the St. John's Christmas Tree Festival.

With monies raised from last year's events, we have donated £500 to the ReBorne Community Church to help with the setting up of youth club, £1000 to Milborne Port Primary School to help with the outdoor play equipment, £200 for a new desk for the Library and £1000 to support Ukraine via Churches Together at The Gateway Community Church in Yeovil.

We purchased Union Jack bunting for the High Street in celebration of the coronation in June and cleaned the welcome stone at the western edge of the village.