



Milborne Port

Annual Parish Report – 23rd April 2024

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Minutes of the Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting of Milborne Port was held on Tuesday 23rd April 2024 at 7pm in the Camelot Room at 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: Cllr. Colin Tizzard, Elaine Ennis-Bunt, Yvonne Bright, Linda Mumford

2 – Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 25th April 2023

Cllr. Tim Carty's proposal that the report of Annual Parish Meeting of 25th April 2023 be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting agreed by attendees.

3 – Reports from Parish Council Committees

Cllrs. Carty 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 – 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.

5 – Reports from Somerset Councillors

Somerset Council Cllr. Nicola addressed the meeting, explaining her role, remit and area that she covers as a unitary councillor for Somerset Council. She deals with case work, the Local Community Network working group and takes a particular interest in highways issues. Despite Somerset Council's financial emergency, councillors are determined to get last penny for the work that needs to be done. She receives numerous queries about building, planning and highways. She mentioned that it had been lovely to hear about all of the great community work and activities going on in Milborne Port.

6 – Community Plan (Cllrs. Tim Carty & Rob Lockey)

In November, we were advised that we had been selected to receive County Council funded support to develop a Community Plan for the Parish (this is not the same as what people might know as a Neighbourhood Plan). This would be a statement of how residents see the Parish developing over the mid-term future, highlighting issues that are important and what the preferred direction would be. It does not carry the legal weight of a Neighbourhood Plan (for planning) or an LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for small highways and footpath projects) but it importantly involves surveying residents and taking their responses as the basis for developing a plan, with much of the legwork done by our support team at the Community Council for Somerset (CCS). We have convened a small committee to help adapt the template survey to Milborne's specifics and select the areas where we will do a deeper dive. The process is highly structured, with training available for those involved in creating a logo, the publicity and devising the questions for the survey. If

you are interested in participating at this stage, please let us know as residents' input at this stage would be very much welcomed. Most importantly, please do participate in the actual survey in September. There has not been a survey of Parish opinion since 2018, and it would be very good to get a good understanding of what everyone really thinks, so the Parish Council can be as informed as possible in our decision making and provide the data to other stakeholders as they draw up plans which affect us.

7 - Open Public Parish Forum

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

- A resident commented on the small number of people at the meeting, and this gave rise to a general discussion about the challenges of communicating with all residents.
- One attendee reported that she is new to the village and very happy here, that it is a lovely place to live with great facilities and that she feels privileged to live here.
- Cllr. Capon reported on progress with the Emergency Plan; Phase One is complete, involving registrations of places of safety with Somerset Council. Some local organisations have offered to provide practical help. Critical bleed kits at the 5 defibrillator locations are planned; plans for training at the Village Fete fell through but there are still plans for First Aid and critical bleed training in the village. Cllr. Capon would be grateful for help and advice.
- A volunteer from Milborne Port Primary School who helps with the swimming pool reported that it was hoped to have the pool open for hire next week; it is very popular with the community. SoMP could share information on their Facebook group page.
- There was a general discussion about the challenges of communication in the village.

There were 18 people present at the meeting, which finished at 8.37pm.

Chairman's Report – Councillor Tim Carty

A tricky year on a number of fronts, but with a number of material successes.

Somerset Council

The news that Somerset Council is in financial difficulty has produced a significant amount of concern; this is primarily due to increases in residential and social care costs which are mandatory expenses for the Council. There is limited ability to cover these increased costs



through tax rises because the Council and Districts' historic tax levels have been low, so the five percent increase permitted has less effect, and because much of Somerset's housing stock is in the lower taxed A to C bands, again reducing the practical impact of any percentage rises. The concern at a parish level is that services will be reduced, and that the Parish will have to take on costs and responsibilities previously handled at a District and County level. Milborne Port has historically not received many direct services from the Council, but we may expect reduced

spending on generic items like roads, and changes in services like refuse collection and public transport. Further, Council-provided services that we do consume, but for which we pay, are also impacted. So, for example the Ranger Scheme has been retained but the pricing has more or less doubled, so Milborne has halved the level of support we receive.

We have expressed interest in looking at some of Somerset Council's capital assets in the parish, especially with regard to Council plots of land which the parish might benefit from owning directly. This process will take time.

Planning

Decisions regarding the two major planning applications within the parish came to a head this spring. The application at Court Lane, which was opposed by the Parish Council, has been rejected, partly on the basis of setting, and partly due to concerns over drainage. That on Wheathill Lane, which the Parish Council cautiously supported, has been given Outline permission. We have asked to be involved in the s.106 agreement before it is finalized so that the community projects component focuses on items that are most needed. This application successfully navigated the Phosphate Mitigation issue which has put most Somerset development on hold for the past few years, through an offset scheme in a farm near Yeovil. This may see an increase in applications going forward.

There has also been a number of smaller applications, usually for single residences or for extensions and similar. The Council has supported the overwhelming majority of these, and most have been approved where a decision has been made.

Residents will have followed the construction of the new residences off Wheathill Lane this year, and there have continued to be concerns around the issue of the Community Hub, which was a component item of the s.106 signed in 2019, and planned for use by the Library and the History and Heritage Society. We have taken legal opinion and this confirms that the Parish Council did comply with the obligations placed upon it (albeit not communicated to it) in connection with the Hub. We have worked closely with Somerset Council Planning and Legal teams, who are the actual party to the s.106 contract, and they have stated their agreement that the Hub must be built. We are now entered into discussions with the developer, which seem to be constructive, and we shall see how this proceeds.

Local Community Network (LCN)

We have been active within the South East Somerset Local Community Network, which forms the bridge between Towns and Parishes and the County Council. Having been a pilot for a year, we are significantly further down the line than much of the county. We have seen some positive developments coming out of the meetings and, in particular, the Committee meetings on issues such as Highways and Flood Defences. It is clear that a collective approach can help as compared to each community taking its own path, but much of the process remains in its infancy.

Youth Project

Arising out of the LCN concept, and after considerable work, we have commenced the Milborne Port component of the South East Somerset Youth Project. Eventually this will come under a joint agreement between ourselves, Wincanton, Castle Cary, and Bruton, supported by a significant grant from SALC. The main difficulty has been in hiring an appropriate senior Youth Worker, despite two rounds of recruitment, but in the interim YCSW (our provider) are covering with existing staff and looking to develop some of the more junior members of the team.

This meets at the Camelot Room at the Village Hall on Thursdays. Attendance has been a little thin over the first few weeks, but an awareness campaign is planned through to the summer.

The Village Hall

The Village Hall has been steered by a committed group of volunteers over many years, with a tremendous amount of the legwork being done by Martin Lancaster, who has been Treasurer, Manager and Booking Officer. Martin has gone well above and beyond what any community could reasonably expect, but has reached the point where focusing upon his health, his family and frankly himself has become more the priority. Despite a search, it was not possible to find a volunteer to replace Martin, and on this basis the Trustees and the Village Hall Committee have decided to pass the Hall to the Parish Council. Formally this will take place at the AGM this summer, but in practice the process of transition has been going on gradually for a couple of months.

Importantly within this, the Council has taken on an additional officer, Chris Sheeran, who has taken on the role of manager as of April and will gradually pick up all of Martin's portfolio, with Martin moving to an advisory role for a year or so. Those who have met Chris will have seen his commitment and desire to see the Hall succeed. He will continue to be supported by the excellent team at the Village Hall, Paul and Michelle, who formally help with the cleaning, but in reality do so much more. Inevitably things will change as we move from a volunteer arrangement to that of an officer as manager, but we hope that the Community will continue to benefit from this wonderful asset, for both society and club style meetings, and also as a venue for set-piece events.

The Playing Fields

The Parish Council owns the land of the Playing Fields, but they are leased by the Playing Fields Trust and run by the Playing Fields Committee. We have been working closely with those bodies to try and assist with capital spending, much of it financed by s.106 and similar grants. Residents will have seen the new Play Equipment in the Play Park, and the resurfacing of the Tennis Courts is now almost complete, with just the security gate yet to be installed, and the final green surface paint and lines to be applied. Less obvious is the drainage work that has been done this spring (thank you Lorenzo Ferrari) which we hope will help with the pitches, though these have stood up pretty well this wet winter compared to those in many other communities.

We continue to examine the lease and governance documents for both the Playing Fields and the Village Hall to see if we can pull these together and update them for the current usage, whilst honouring the intentions of those who originally set them in place.

Summary

I have been asked to try to keep my report short, so I will not touch on a long list of other projects we have undertaken this year and grants we have made to community groups. However, I would like to extend especial thanks to our new councilors John and Glenn, and to Anna, Lyn and Tom who have stepped down. Even greater thanks go to our officers, Simon and Nathalie, who have worked so hard to help both the Council and the wider community, well beyond what we might really expect, to welcome Chris into the team, and to thank you, our residents, for continuing to make this such a wonderful place to live.

Planning and Environment Committee – Vice-Chairman, Councillor Rob Lockey

I stood in as Chair of this committee part way through the year due to Tom Campbell being poorly and hope that we see Tom back as a councillor some time in the future.

Planning

We have had three major developments either in progress or going through the planning process:

1. Redcliffe Site is in progress and has been a disappointing development so far, partly because of the impact it has had on the community in the area and partly because of the developers failing to provide a shop and possibly the Village Hub which were part of the planning application. The Parish Council continues to fight this for the community.
2. Second Wheathill Lane development (next to The Cemetery). This is still going through the planning application process. The last we heard formally was that it was going to committee for review but it has been reported in local news that outline permission has been granted. The PC has been in regular contact with the agent and Somerset Planning to attempt to improve the highway and pavements from the development and up Wheathill Lane.
3. Court Lane development has recently been rejected by Somerset Planning. The Parish Council did not support this application due to the access to/from the site, concerns over drainage and sewerage, along with the impact on neighbouring properties.

Developments such as the second Wheathill Lane development have been delayed due to the phosphate issue where too much phosphate is entering the river system from human waste. This now seems to be easing with various workarounds being devised.

We have had a number of planning applications for house extensions, the majority of which we have supported. There have also been a handful of applications for tree works on trees with preservation orders or within conservation areas.

Highways

We were disappointed to hear that the pedestrian crossing at Crackmore has been halted due to the financial mess at County. There is a real risk that somebody is going to get badly hurt or killed as a result of this decision.

The Speed Indicator Device (SID) continues to be sited at various locations with three additional sites added this year. We are looking at the possibility of adding a location in Gainsborough/Combe Hill following contact by a resident.

The safety of the East Street junction with the A30 has been improved by the addition of mirrors opposite East Street.

Work has been carried out to mitigate the flooding of the road just past White House Farm; the recent high rainfall has not caused an issue so hopefully this has been resolved.

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 Chapel Museum.



The main activities this year have been the completion of the extension of Springfield Play Area; the users seem to enjoy to additional equipment.

New fencing has been provided both at the Memorial Playing Fields and at Gainsborough Play Area.

An extension to the cemetery was created last year, although it will not be needed for this purpose for several years. It was agreed to prepare the land and if possible use it as another Mini-league football pitch until the ground is needed.

Last year, Somerset Council advised that they were no longer able to supply or water the hanging baskets along the high street and therefore we did not have hanging baskets last Spring/Summer. Our Clerk has identified an alternative source for the baskets and High St residents are going to water them. Look forward to seeing the High Street in colour again.

We have recently had the windows on the Town Hall painted; unfortunately traffic lights had to be deployed due to scaffolding encroaching into the road.

We have added a Youth Shelter in the Memorial Playing Fields; this was provided using s106 money from recent housing developments.

We have recently had the tennis courts resurfaced and await better weather so that the surface painting can be carried out. The costs of this were covered by a County grant and by s106 funding.

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 2024. We still have sufficient reserves and our annual income covers the annual expenditure. Our regular users continue to provide a steady stream of income for the Hall as well.

• One new venture which started in August 2023 was the Indoor Market on Saturday mornings. This initially started in the Camelot Room but after extra requests for stalls it was moved to the main Hall.

• Sherborne Vale Dog Training club, who hire the Hall on a weekly basis, booked the Hall and playing field to host a National Kennel Club weekend event in September 2023 providing four display arenas.

• Monthly Film nights started again in September with a new supplier, Filmflixs, with ‘A Man called Otto’. This is valuable service for the village allowing those who do not want to go far at night to enjoy films here in the village.

- During most of the year we have had a reasonable number of children's parties but the cost-of-living crisis has meant that sadly many future bookings for weddings and parties have been cancelled.
- The Committee has continued to improve the Hall facilities during the last year to make the Hall an even better and safer venue for all the users. A new storage rack for the Zarges ladder by the stage has allowed the large ladder to be stored safely away.
- The Committee have also had the chance to buy a good upright piano for the Hall in cooperation with the Opera.
- The online booking system with Hall Wizard has been a great success. The company has been extremely 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 enquire about a booking if they want.
- The card machines for taking card payments have been successfully used at various events including the latest Milborne Port Opera production 'The Drowsy Chaperone'.
- The bar at the Opera this year run by members of the Committee was very successful and early indications are that it raised over £1000 for Hall funds.
- The Hall was very fortunate to have a fixed rate electricity deal at 14p per unit until 30/09/2023. At that point a new fixed rate deal at a little over twice that amount was put in place with Scottish Power and finishes in January 2025. This doubling of electricity costs would have meant a very large increase in rates for the users which may well have reduced the income for the Hall because of cancelled bookings. This large cost increase combined with the lack of volunteers joining the Committee in recent years led the Committee to approach the Parish Council for help in October 2023 to create a sustainable future for Village Hall. We are very grateful that they were able to help us.
- We all know that the Hall is a wonderful facility for the village and needs to be maintained for the village in the future. However, the lack of volunteers has led to more work for fewer people on the committee which is unsustainable. The Parish Council agreed to help with a grant of £3000 towards the extra electricity costs which has allowed the Committee to keep the user rates down for users. The Parish Council has also agreed to become the sole trustee and a group of parish councillors have kindly joined the Committee. Finally, the Parish Council has employed a Hall Manager on a part-time basis who will be responsible for the efficient running of the Hall on a day-to-day basis.
- The Committee has put together a priority list of further upgrades to the building and top of the list are the Ladies toilets and upgrading the foyer area followed by building extra storage space. We are starting to look for funding for these projects to further enhance the 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 also maintained a special COVID cleaning routine to make sure every user is kept safe.
- So, 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. 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.

Foodshare Milborne Port – Elaine Ennis (Jacquie Hall attended on the night)

The Foodshare Project in Milborne Port is now well-established and operates on Thursday afternoons out of Church House in Bathwell Lane between 1.30 and 3 pm.

The Project is supported by the Parish Council which has recently provided a further welcome and generous grant to buy frozen food. In the past year, the project also received £900 from Somerset Council specifically for the purchase of toiletries and household cleaning products. Sherborne Food Bank continues to support the project with a monthly grant with which food items such as tins, packets and cartons are bought and also provides some supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables each week. Additionally, on three nights a week, food products are collected from the Co-op store on Gainsborough. These are items which have ‘use by’ or ‘best by’ date stamps. All items are frozen or stored in compliance with food safety regulations.



Foodshare customers are all living in the Milborne Port area. Numbers fluctuate from week to week however are usually in the range of 17-25 adults visiting the project who in turn are catering for between 30-45 adults and between 5 and 23 children aged between a few months and 17 years. Some visitors are regular users of the project while others use it less frequently depending on their particular needs.

The project is staffed entirely by volunteers. Unfortunately, in recent months some volunteers have not been able to participate because of health issues and so other volunteers have had additional demands placed on them. The project welcomes new volunteers and anyone who is interested in helping this project is asked to contact foodshareadmin@milborneportchurches.org.uk for more information.

Milborne Port Football Club – Rob Lockey



It has been another good season, apart from the weather causing many fixtures to be cancelled which is resulting in the Youth season extending to well into May. Our reserves team, who were promoted to the Yeovil & District Premier Division this season (after being promoted to Division 1 last year), are in a very good position to win the league. We have not won this Division for many years.

Our Under 14s team has reached the cup final and it looks as though it is going to finish second in the league. 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, 10s, 11s, 13s, 14s, 15s, along with 3 adult teams.

The pavilion extension project is progressing with planning permission approved this year. We now need to procure quotations for the work and apply for grants.

We would like to thank the Parish Council and Playing Fields committee for providing the pitches. We will be working with them to facilitate the pitch maintenance activity so that the pitches can be improved following the horrendous weather.

Milborne Port History and Heritage Group – Nathalie Hetherington, Secretary

We have probably had our busiest year ever, with our usual calendar of talks but also in preparing for our first ever Milborne Port History Day on Saturday 11th May, about which we are very excited and hope that it will be a great community event.



Our Monday evening talks have covered a wide range of topics: religion, poverty, Pinford Lane, antiques with Tim Medhurst, Stalbridge House, Sherborne Abbey, Heroes and Villains of Milborne Port, the Sherborne Bombings and thatching. Many thanks to all of our speakers who take such time and care to prepare their material for us. Also, in August we held a fund-raising social evening with a quiz and raffle, and in early April we showed people around the ancient borough complex that is bordered by South Street, Brook Street, Bathwell Lane and the High Street.

We are very proud of our Facebook following, currently standing at 386 members, and there are regular visits to our website. Local research findings are published and celebrated. Our monthly Village Magazine article aims to spread the word about how exciting local history can be!

Our small but beautifully formed Chapel Museum goes from strength to strength, regularly reorganised to maximise the space and make it appealing to our summertime visitors. Many thanks to teenager Grace for helping with the cataloguing for her Duke of Edinburgh award.

Milborne Port Parish Council has continued in its support of our group by maintaining the Chapel Museum building and providing a grant towards our History Day, and local draughtsman and architect Paul Heath donated five lovely drawings of buildings of interest – and turned them into the *Paul Heath Collection* – to help us to raise funds.

Long-time stalwart and secretary of the group, Lyn Harrison, left for fresh fields last October but is still in touch and helping out when she can.

There are still so many treasures mined from the rich seam of local history and we encourage anyone with an interest in Milborne Port's past to start their own lines of research.

ReBorne Community Church – Yvonne Bright (Adrian Bright attended on the night)



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

Building commenced just before Christmas and planned timings remain on target for a summer building completion. We apologise for the inconvenience caused to local residents and the school; every attempt is made to minimise the impact of the works on the neighbourhood.

We were able to hire Church House for our annual wreath making evening and it was lovely that some of the mums of the village worked hard to make this such a fun evening.

We are very grateful to the Primary school as they have allowed us to hire space for mums and tots and ReBorne kids and youth club.

This last year we have been able to partner with Dorset Youth for Christ and employ a youth worker. Lydia runs the youth club and attendance there is a regular 30 young people from Year 6 through to Year 11 students. Our oldest young people at the moment are in Year 9. Kids Club accommodates 30 young people from Year 1 – Year 6 and is regularly booked up.

These activities will resume and carry on in the ReBorne building. This summer we are taking young people on a fun weekend away 'Spree' and 4 children from the village are coming with us. We are looking forward to a great time.

Through Toddlers we work closely with the Health Visitor and support families in various ways that they identify and signpost to us.

Our regular Sunday services continue at New Digby Hall on a Sunday. Christmas saw us have a Christmas Eve service at Laycock Cider farm - we will be having a bbq and fun Sunday July 21st at the same venue.

We are looking forward to the church building being completed providing a safe and pleasant venue for Church and community gatherings.

Friends of Milborne Port Library – Rick Jones, Chairman

In 2010 The Friends of Milborne Port Library (FOMPL) formed to protest against the planned closure of Milborne Port's 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: The Library moved into the Town Hall Downstairs Community Room late 2022 from the Mobile Library in East Street Car Park to save on power costs. This Community Room is used 3 times a week by the Library, also by the Glovelies (ex W.I.) 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 PC 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 PC, Friends and Milborne Port History & Heritage, who plan to run the hub as a library while displaying village historical 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 Notice Boards, Facebook and in the Library.

The Library itself is a basic book lending organisation, but you can order books from several counties, and there are often a variety of staff initiatives: children's activities, Lego, Easter Games, seed swap, games, colouring, story-time & craft. Also, on Fridays The Glovelies offer coffee, biscuits and cake at the same time as the Library is open, an increasingly popular event.

Our thanks to other village organisations for their support.



Milborne Port Village Magazine - Linda Mumford, Editor

We are proud of our Village Magazine, which we aim to be a representation of the whole community for interest, current information and reference. The Milborne Port Magazine is run by volunteers from St John's Church as a service to the village. While it has unmistakable Church elements - opening each month with a letter from our Priest-in-Charge or other voices from St John's, and including a full list of services for the month on the central pages - it is completely open to community groups and individuals to supply information and articles of interest.

We host the latest information from the Parish Council and the Milborne Port Primary School, the Library, ReBorne Church, and have recently added a non-party political round-up of the parliamentary activities of our local MP. Many other community groups publish reports of their activities: the Gardening Club, the History & Heritage Group, the Glovelies (formerly the WI), the MP Climate and Nature Action Group, the Royal British Legion and the Spirit of Milborne Port. We were delighted to receive contributions recently from the MP Football and Cricket Clubs to add to occasional reports from the Short Mat Bowls Group. Regular articles on Birding and Astronomy attract a lot of interest, and of course there is always a host of forthcoming events from village groups, notably Village Hall Movies and Milborne Port Opera in recent months.

Print media, as we all know, has a struggle these days against online. Maybe 'mature' people do still tend to prefer traditional magazines – as evidenced by the fact that we shift about 600 copies per month. We are grateful to all the outlets who sell copies for us, and to the dedicated team of distributors who deliver copies around the village to subscribers (no delivery charge, just the cover price of 45p). We are very keen to convince others in the village that it can be so convenient – and even quicker than Googling! – to grab a magazine from your coffee table to look up forthcoming events, get a phone number from our Village Contacts page or find a service person from the comprehensive range of advertisers who support our magazine. If you have a new neighbour, do show them a copy and encourage them to buy. The first issue is free for new delivery subscribers.

For new deliveries please contact Mr and Mrs Redman, 251145

Tuesday Luncheon Club – Anne Salkeld

Tuesday Lunch Club meets weekly in Church House 12-2pm. We are still managing to provide a 2-course meal with tea/coffee for £5. We have 2 volunteers who provide lifts to the club.



During 2023 the numbers have grown and we average around 24 per lunch. Lyn Harrison has moved away and Chris Chiswell has taken over the finances which she is trying to make more internet based. Alison Flynn continues as our IT expert.

Milborne Port Primary School now brings 4 of their Year 6 pupils down every 5 weeks to wait at tables and chat to the members. Once again, the School choir sang carols at our Christmas 2023 celebration and Rebecca de Pelet played some carols on the keyboard during the lunch. Alison Flynn is in negotiation with some of our village clubs and societies about coming to talk about what they do during lunch.

We have recently had an influx of new volunteers and thanks to donations from the Co-op and the Parish council, we are arranging internet-based food handling and hygiene courses for everyone.

We are still in need of more volunteers to join our 5 teams.

Anyone interested in joining as a member or a helper please contact me, Aly or Chris; my number is 250529.

Milborne Port Gardening Club – Samantha Dean and Kirsty Farthing



Milborne Port Gardening club is a friendly group of garden enthusiasts, who meet at The Village Hall. We welcome everyone from keen amateurs to seasoned Gardeners. 2023 was a good year for the club and this year we have 48 members. This year we have some new committee members, and we are currently working on the programme for 2025.

We continue to offer a varied programme of talks, visits and workshops. Recent talks have included a presentation from

The Newt (where we welcomed many non-members) and Kingston Lacey. We usually organise our garden visits for June, July and August. Last year we went to The American Museum in Bath, Yews Farm in Martock, as well as Glenholme Herbs near Sherborne. We rounded off the year with an evening of activities with many members making their own Christmas wreath.

The Club is always looking to increase our membership and welcome visitors to our talks, which are advertised in the Parish Magazine. Our once-a-year discount shopping evening at Castle Gardens (members only) is always very well attended and 2024's was no exception! This summer club members will be enjoying a trip to Frith House, Ven House and Kilver Court.

Prior to the Covid restrictions, we held a very popular annual plant sale outside the Town Hall. The last couple of years we have taken a pitch at the weekly market in the Weighbridge carpark (thanks to Pam Alexander for doing this and caring for the plants). This year we will

have our one-off sale again on 18th May, this time to be held in the Grove Garden, Church Street and hope to see you there.

The Spirit of Milborne Port – Claire Andrews

Our end-of-year accounts showed an overall deficit for the year of £1,423 and funds as at the 31st December stood at £6,276, which are held at Lloyds Bank.



The Spirit of Milborne Port
'Working together for our Community'

The events held during 2023 comprised the Summer Fete and Party @ the Port held in June and the Christmas Light Switch-on held at the end of November.

The Summer event generated a surplus of £2,162; this compared with £6,667 in 2022 which was an extremely successful event following the barren Covid years. The 2023 was more in line with events of earlier years but was nevertheless disappointing. Income from the Party @ the Port element of the day was well down and although it is not possible to split the results between the Party and the Fete - as many of the costs overlap - it is clear that the Party made a significant loss which was offset by the surplus on the Fete.

The Christmas light switch-on proved extremely successful at its new location at St John's Church and Church House, with approximately 200 children visiting Santa in his Grotto inside the Church, and in excess of 1,000 people attending the event which generated income of £2,373, making a small surplus in what has historically been at best a break-even event due to the cost of the trees and the lighting requirements.

Insurance costs continue to increase and this year a card reader was purchased for the Fete which also increased admin costs.

Donations totalling £3,060 were made during the year as detailed in the attached statement. Since its inception in 2012, the Spirit of Milborne Port has generated nearly £70,000 in surpluses and provided over £35,000 to community projects and events and nearly £18,000 to local charities and organisations.

This year saw our first Easter event, working alongside Milborne Primary School and St John's Church; the Easter Egg Hunt was held at Church House, with over 40 children taking part and enjoying Easter themed crafts and refreshments; this was a free event advertised on Facebook and tickets made available on Eventbrite, which made the planning easier. We hope to use this system for this year's light switch on.

We were delighted to hear from the Parish Council that the hanging baskets will be back this year, and have contacted all homes and businesses through the High Street asking if they would be happy to water them throughout the summer; so far we have 26 volunteers.

Next year we are hoping to run the Village Summer Fete again but have not yet made a decision regarding the Party @ The Port; opinion is leaning towards a more laid-back music event, running throughout from the Fete into the early evening.

Report compiled by Nathalie Hetherington, May 2024