



Peasedown St John Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH REPORT



Published by Peasedown St John Parish Council
for the purposes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on
Tuesday 17 April 2012

Dear Residents

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all. Thank you for taking the time to attend our Annual Parish Meeting for 2012. This meeting will provide you with an opportunity to openly discuss things that affect you and your families within the village. This evening you are here with fellow residents, neighbours, councillors and friends.

We formed a new Council in May 2011 following a Parish Council Election which saw 27 candidates stand for election. The turnout was a creditable 45% of the Electorate. We attended last year's Parish meeting as electoral candidates and attend this year's meeting as your elected Councillors.

I would like to thank Peter Duppa-Miller for facilitating our initial meetings. Peter acted as stand in Clerk in the absence of our own Clerk and helped us to form our new Council.

We decided, even before the election, that keeping residents better informed of Parish Council discussions and decisions would be a priority. To this end minutes of meetings are posted on notice boards soon after meetings, regular advice surgeries are now being held throughout the village, regular newsletters are being delivered, the PC website is kept up to date and better links with the local Press have been established. Residents are also encouraged to contact the Parish Office with any questions or concerns they may have. Members of the Public are also welcome to attend Council meetings and many have done so over the past year. I hope you have noticed an improvement.

Councillors are tackling some tricky legacy issues which have been around for some time. These include:

1. Survey and upgrading of Parish Council owned street lights to allow adoption by BANES.
2. Transfer of the Beacon Hall and Beacon Field leases to the Parish Council to safeguard the future of these valuable community facilities.
3. Investment in the Recreation Ground facilities and formalising leases with Peasedown Athletic FC and Peasedown Albion FC.
4. Providing a Garden of Remembrance and a suitable Village Memorial.

One noteworthy success this year saved a valuable local service. I am convinced that the large number of residents that attended the public meeting in the Beacon Hall in February in support of the Mobile Library Service helped to persuade BANES not to cut the service. Well done to those of you who came along.

We have made some progress in improving local winter gritting in the village; Councillors and volunteers are now registered members of BANES pilot "Snow Warden" Scheme. If successful this year it is hoped to expand the village routes gritted in forthcoming years and to possibly increase the number of grit bins.

Carlingcott has particular problems during severe weather and good progress has been made in having this recognised and addressed by BANES.

A "Community Speed Watch" team of volunteers has recently received training from the Police and will "be operating in your area" soon!

The Council has joined the Bath Community Transport Group. The Group provided transport for those needing it to attend the successful "Golden Oldie Christmas Tea Party." Thank you to our very own volunteer driver, Councillor Adi Davis.

Throughout this report you will see more detail of what has been achieved in this, our first year in office.

I would particularly draw your attention to the details on the Council's finances and budgeting on pages 8-14. Those of you involved in the hard work pulling this area back into shape should be thanked by everyone in this village.

Please enjoy your evening.

Best wishes



Neil Hopkins
Chairman
Peasedown St John Parish Council

17 April 2012

Your Councillors



From left to right:

Cllr Michael Abolins, Cllr Garry Abram, Cllr John Bailey, Cllr Calvin Bird, Cllr Amanda Clarke
Cllr Adi Davis, Cllr Jo Davis, Cllr Richard Formby, Cllr Andrew Fraser, Cllr Charlie Harrison
Cllr Sam Hopkins, Cllr Kelly Souter, Cllr David Walker, Cllr Karen Walker, Cllr Jason Wilber
Cllr Neil Hopkins, Cllr Eric Lindsay

Chairman: Cllr Neil Hopkins. Vice-Chairman: Cllr Eric Lindsay

Parish Council Staff

Administration Manager—Mrs Debbie Parish



Debbie is based in the Beacon Hall Office from Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm. She has been employed on a temporary basis since August 2011 to cover the post of Parish Clerk.

“I have really enjoyed the challenge of working for the Parish Council during the last seven months. It has been very satisfying to work with new Councillors who are committed to improving the quality of life in the village. I would like to thank them and the Parish Council staff for their patience and support whilst I have been new to the role.”

Administrative Officer—Emily Wilson



Emily is based in the Beacon Hall Office on most weekday mornings. She provides administrative support in the office and has responsibility for the Braysdown Lane allotments.

“I am pleased with the way that the allotments have been organised this year. Dividing up unwanted plots has made a lot more allotments available and our waiting list is now less than half what it was a year ago. I am pleased to have been a part of this process.”

Caretaker/Groundsman—James Murtagh



Jim works from Monday to Thursday in various locations around the village. He is responsible for grass cutting and maintaining flower beds, footpaths trees and hedges.

“Since the election of the new Parish Councillors, I notice that the village seems to have a renewed sense of community about it, which I am pleased to be a part of”

Caretaker—Chris Champion



Chris works 15 hours per week and is responsible for maintenance of the Parish Council’s play areas, cemetery buildings and litter bins.

“The Parish Council is now much more transparent in all its dealings. I have greatly appreciated the fact that the Councillors make the effort to engage with all the Parish Council staff, asking for their opinions on potential projects. I feel that any contribution I have made has been listened to and I am valued as a staff member”

What our Staff do for us

(a brief list of services)

Administration:

Maintain:

- Council financial records (including Asset Register and Petty Cash)
- Allotment records (including receipt of fees and allocation of available plots)
- Cemetery records
- Planning applications records

Receive funds, make payments and operate a system of financial control; update the Council.
Monitor street lighting maintenance contracts (including liaising with BANES for their lamps)

Prepare for meetings:

- Issuing Agendas within the statutory time scale
- Minute taking
- Posting of minutes on notice boards and website
- Arrange and prepare for Public Meetings
- Liasing with 17 Parish Councillors and external bodies
- Scheduling Caretaker tasks (regular and ad-hoc requests from the Council)
- Receiving communications from residents and directing them to appropriate respondent

Caretakers:

Grass Cutting in the following locations:

- Cemetery
- Peasedown St John Village Green (near Prince of Wales)
- Roundabout and flower basket area at the top of Dunkerton Hill
- Areas by Christmas Tree and flower baskets at South end of village
- Recreation Field
- Ecewiche Green (public open space)

Maintenance of Flower Displays in:

- Hanging baskets (Ashgrove, Bath Road and Orchard Way)
- Pole Baskets (each end of the village)
- Concrete planters (throughout the village)

Maintenance of Walls, Fences and Gates:

- Cemetery
- Allotments (gates only)
- Ecewiche Green (public open space)
- Recreation Field

Hedge Cutting (only in the winter – legal requirement):

- Cemetery
- Allotments
- Ecewiche Green (public open space)

Footpath Clearance

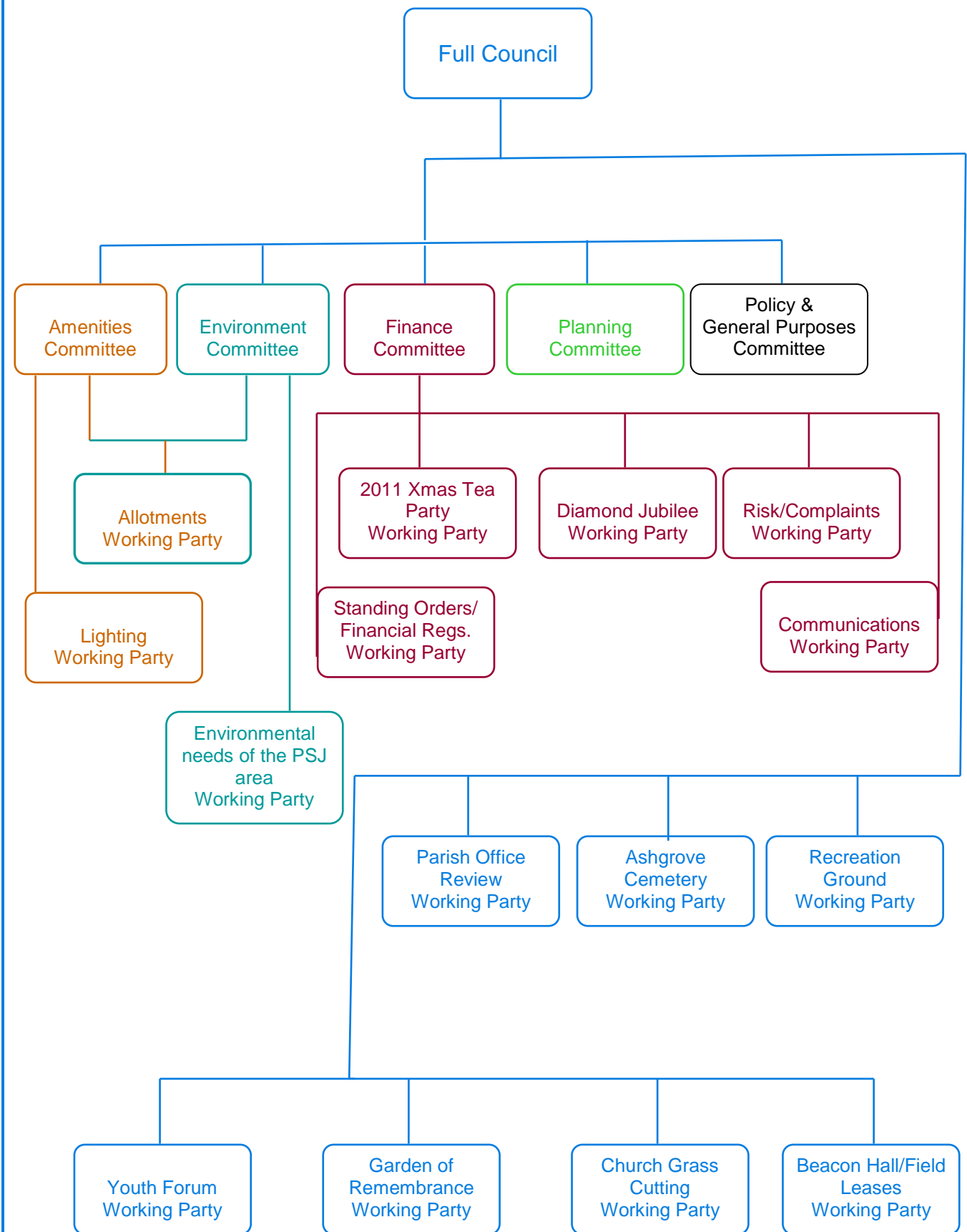
Cemetery Maintenance:

- Opening and Closing Gates
- Maintenance of restroom facilities
- Maintenance of trees and borders

Rubbish and Waste collection from:

- Recreation Field
- Ecewiche Green (public open space)
- Other locations

Committees and Working Parties



Working Party Objectives

As a new Parish Council without the assistance of a Clerk, it was decided to look at all the tasks requiring attention to maintain the village and, rather than leave discussions/decisions until Full Council Meetings, a series of Working Parties were set up.

The flow chart on the previous page shows where each Working Party report to and, until the Parish Council is in a position to consider the re-structure of Standing Committees, it has been decided to continue with the Working Party format.

Below is brief information on the status of the current Working Parties.

Recreation Ground: 5 Councillors have taken on the task of refurbishing the Football Club shower block using S106 money provided from the Sunnyside development. The agreement was re-negotiated and the tender to carry out the work was issued and prices agreed. Due to the lack of an acceptable lease between the Parish Council and the Peasedown Athletic Football Club, this is having to be re-negotiated before any money can be spent on this project. The Working Party will continue to progress this project.

Ashgrove Cemetery: 2 Councillors and the administration staff were tasked with bringing the burial records up to date (there are no formal records since May 2009). After much research and many visits to the Cemetery the records are almost completed. This Working Party will cease once the records and paperwork are up to date.

Parish Office Review: 3 Councillors Investigated the availability of suitable and compliant office space for the Parish Council as the cost of remaining in it's current offices was prohibitive. The Parish Council moved into the Beacon Hall in February 2012 and this Working Party has now been disbanded.

Allotments: 2 Councillors, admin staff and 2 allotment holders were tasked with updating the Allotment Rules and Fees, identifying allotment owners, identifying unkempt plots and considering the management of the allotments being handed over to the allotment holders. This Working Party has achieved all it's goals (and more) and will stay in place to maintain the security of allotments in the future.

Golden Oldies Christmas Tea Party for older residents: 2 Councillors and 2 residents co-ordinated an event which was eventually attended by 70 guests in the village. This Working Party has now been disbanded and the 2012 Christmas Tea Party will require another Working Party to be established to manage this.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee: 2 Councillors, 1 Ward Councillors and representatives from various groups within the village have started co-ordinating the 4 days of the Jubilee. All events will be listed and a programme will be produced to promote in the local area. This Working Party is on-going until after the Jubilee.

Risk/Complaints: 3 Councillors were tasked with considering how the Parish Council deals with Risk and to create a Complaints Procedure. A robust document will shortly be presented to the Full Council for discussion and adoption. The management of both protocols will be handed to the Full Council for reviewing annually and the Working Party will be disbanded.

Lighting: As a large amount of the street lights in PSJ belong to the Parish Council and other to B&NES Council, 3 Councillors drafted a Parish Council Lighting Policy which was adopted by the Full Council on 24 October 2011. The Working Party is in regular contact with B&NES in a view to moving the street lighting problems forward. The Working Party will continue with this task.

Environmental needs of PSJ and the Surrounding Area: 2 Councillors are working on this long-term project to consider environmental problems which could affect PSJ and surrounding areas. The Working Party anticipate it will take at least 12 months before they will be in a position to bring detailed information to the Full Council.

Standing Orders/Financial Regulations/Committee Structures: 4 Councillors were tasked with reviewing these rules by which the Parish Council operates. A new set of Standing Orders (based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommended document) was adopted by the Full Council on 28 November 2011. Revised Financial Regulations were adopted at a meeting of the Full Council on 20 March 2012. The Committee restructuring is under review and this Working Party will continue until this has been completed.

Communications: Councillors are considering PR within the Parish Council. 2 Councillors co-ordinate the content of the newsletters and editing is being considered. A new website was launched on 23 November 2011. This Working Party is on-going.

St John's Church—Grass Cutting: 2 Councillors plus the Rev. Street are investigating whether the Full Council should fund the cutting of the grass in the Churchyard at the Church.

Garden of Remembrance: 1 Councillor, the Groundsman and various external sources formed this Working Party to move forward plans for a Garden of Remembrance as this had been on the Parish Council agenda since around 1965. This is on-going and the Working Party will aim to have designs to put to residents before the end of 2012.

Youth Forum: 2 Councillors and Youth Workers have formed this Working Party with the aim of finding solutions to help young people in the village. This is on-going.

Beacon Hall and Beacon Field Lease: 4 Councillors are negotiating with B&NES Council with the aim of providing the Full Council with information on the suitability of taking on these Leases. This is progressing well and the Working Party will continue with it's aims.

Finance

Finance Committee & RFO Comments on 2011 / 2012 Accounts

1) The members of the Finance Committee have been busy during the year dealing with important matters raised by the Internal and External Auditors (see page 9) in their respective reports. Issues had been raised concerning serious weaknesses in the systems, procedures and financial governance of the Council and the Committee is confident that such matters have been significantly improved.

2) Residents may recall that during the 2010/11 audit an important matter raised by the Auditors concerned the significant Reserves that the Council had been holding. The Council has agreed to continue to hold **£35,000** as a Contingency Reserve. After careful consideration, the Council agreed to use its remaining Reserves of some **£30,000** and increase the 2012 / 2013 Precept to include a further figure of around **£30,000** to provide a total of some **£60,000** (Village Development Fund) for Projects, Community Grants and Support for Jubilee Celebrations in the 2012 / 2013 Budget Year.

3) The Draft 2011 / 2012 Peasedown St John Parish Council Accounts show an aggregate budget overspend in the region of **£17,000**, primarily caused by the significant additional Staff Costs to provide sickness cover during the year. Other factors include:

- a) Lower than budgeted Income, from Bank Interest and Cemetery fees.
- b) Professional Fees to provide support for Audit, Recreation Field Work, Office Move and Staff Issues.
- c) Costs for Councillors' Training.
- d) Costs of maintaining the Children's Play Area.
- e) Capital Costs incurred in 2010 / 2011, but not paid for until 2011 / 2012.
- f) Provision of replacement combined Litter and Dog Bins.
- g) Extra costs of running and maintaining the Cemetery.

The above were, in part, offset by reductions in Office Rent, Newsletter and Advertising Costs and no expenditure being incurred on the Garden of Remembrance. The potential cost for the Garden of Remembrance has been included in the Budget for 2012 / 2013.

4) To provide a balanced Budget for 2011 / 2012, the Council had earmarked some **£13,000** to be taken from Reserves. As a result of the various budget variances the Council (which has approved all spending in the 2011 / 2012 year), has had to use some **£30,000** from Reserves (i.e. **£17,000** overspend plus **£13,000** previously earmarked from Reserves).

- Total Income (excluding transfer from Reserves) = **£103,470**.
- Total Expenditure = **£133,870**.

The above does not include the figure of some **£44,000**, received by the Parish Council in relation to the Sunnyside S106 monies, earmarked for work on Recreation Facilities including the refurbishment of the Changing Rooms on the Rec.

[Some of the numbers above have been rounded]

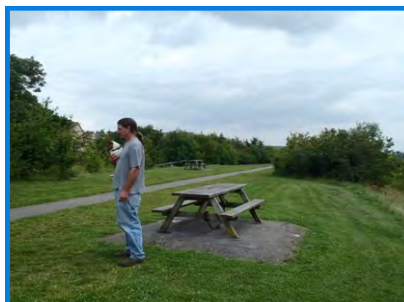
Prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting of the Peasedown St John Parish Council by:

Councillor Richard Formby (Chair of Finance Committee)
Councillor Calvin Bird (Stand In R.F.O.)

Asset List

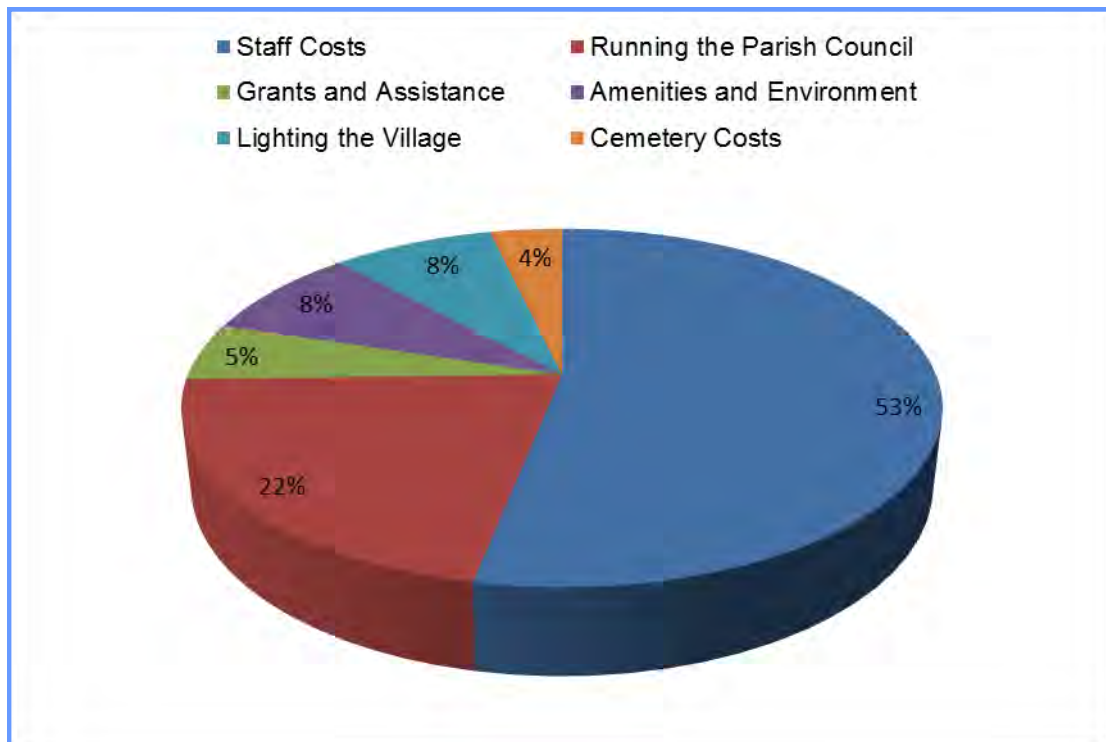


Community Assets			
Cemetery	£1.00	Allotments [Braysdown	£0.00
Ecewiche Green [P.O.S]	£1.00	Beacon Hall [Parish Of-	£0.00
Village Green (Carlingcott)	£1.00	CISWO Recreation Field	£0.00
Village Green (Prince of	£1.00		
Buildings			
Beacon and Plinth	£2,000.00	Cemetery Gates and	£2,845.00
Carlingcott Phone Box	£1.00	Cemetery Shelter	£50,078.00
Cemetery Caretaker's Hut	£5,007.00		
Roadside Furniture			
Allotment Gates	£300.00	Fences & Gates in Rec.	£14,015.66
3 Bus Shelters [Replaced	£0.00	8 Combined Litter & Dog	£1,120.00
2 Cemetery Benches	£992.00	5 Notice Boards	£2,188.00
Christmas Lights (Papyrus)	£669.75	Gate in White Ox Mead	£1,185.00
Christmas Lights (Star)	£246.75	9 Baskets on Poles	£805.00
Christmas Lights (Tree)	£0.00	24 Hanging Baskets and	£1,380.00
Christmas Lights (Tree)	£924.80	4 Picnic Benches	£1,500.00
Children's Play Area	£30,000.00	2 Power Pillars	£250.00
15 Large Concrete	£1,496.25	15 Roadside Seats	£3,885.00
5 Small Concrete Planters	£498.75	120 Street Lights	£21,000.00
5 Dog Litter Bins	£0.00	2 Stone Village Signs	£800.00
Equipment			
Ceremonial Chain of Office	£500.00	Office Furniture	£2,425.64
Sectional Table & 18 Bentwood arm chairs	£1,493.76	Office General Equipment (inc. Phones)	£250.00
Computer Equipment	£1,350.00	Ride On Mower	£7,147.00
ACER AS7741 Laptop	£525.00	Trailer	£1,200.00
ACER AS7741 Laptop	£525.00	Tools and Maintenance	£2,684.60
Overall Asset Totals:			£161,292.96



How funds have been used

From 1 April 2011 to 30 March 2012



What it means...

Staff Costs: (£71,119) During 2011/12 there have been extra staff costs. The Parish Council Employs 4 part-time staff.

The Parish Council also supports the School Crossing Patrol via a grant payment.

Although it is a statutory body, members of the Parish Council give their time without charge.

Running the Parish Council: (£28,753) This is the cost of administering the Council and includes insurance, IT/telephones, Business Rates, rent, utilities printing, stationery/postage, newsletters, website, professional fees, bank charges, subscriptions and other day to day expenses.

Grants and Assistance: (£6,963) This provides contributions to projects within the village including School Crossing Patrol, Play Rangers, Dial-A-Ride and The Christmas Tea Party.

Amenities and Environment: (£11,200) This covers the upkeep of assets owned by the Parish Council and the maintenance of open spaces and play parks within the village; including flower displays, rent on allotment land, Christmas trees and lighting. In fact, all the things which make Peasedown St John a pleasant place to live.

Lighting the Village: (£10,913) This covers the consumption of electricity used to power the street lighting together with maintenance.

Cemetery Costs: (£4,923) The cost of keeping the cemetery as everyone would like to see it; includes the upkeep of the buildings, grass cutting, machinery maintenance, waste emptying, general maintenance and management of the site.

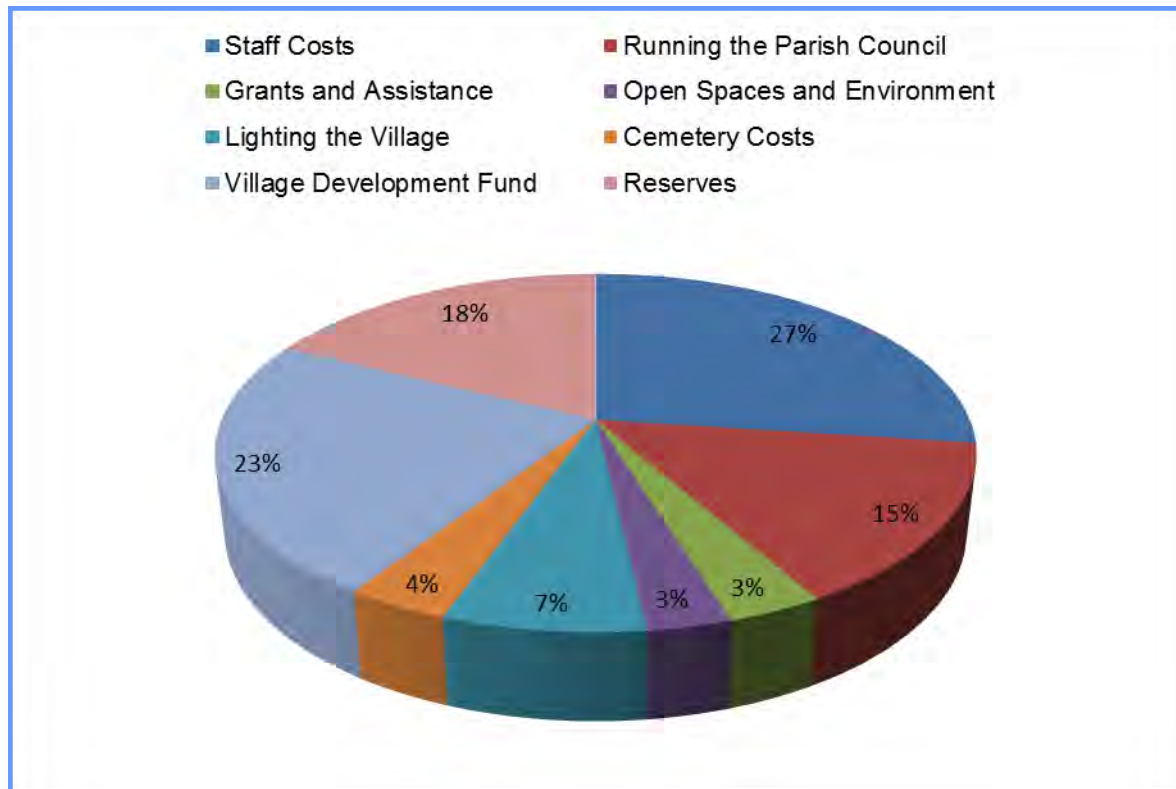
Total Expenditure: £133,871*

*Figures extracted from DRAFT and un-audited accounts.

*The above does not include the figure of some £44,000 received by the Parish Council in relation to the Sunnyside S106 monies which is earmarked for work on Recreation Facilities including the refurbishment of the Changing Rooms on the Rec.

Where funds will be used

Budget 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013



What it means...

Staff Costs: £58,400 (4 part-time employees)

Running the Parish Council: £25,360 (all administration costs)

Grants and Assistance: £3,560 (contributions towards village enterprises; more to be made available from the 'projects' pot if appropriate)

Amenities and Environment: £8,450 (everything from street lights to flowers)

Lighting the Village: £13,400 (street and footpath lighting—maintenance and energy used)

Cemetery Costs: £4,860 (upkeep and improvement of the cemetery)

Village Development Fund—£60,000

An amount of money to be spent on large and small projects throughout the village (see page 19)

Parish Council Reserves—£35,000

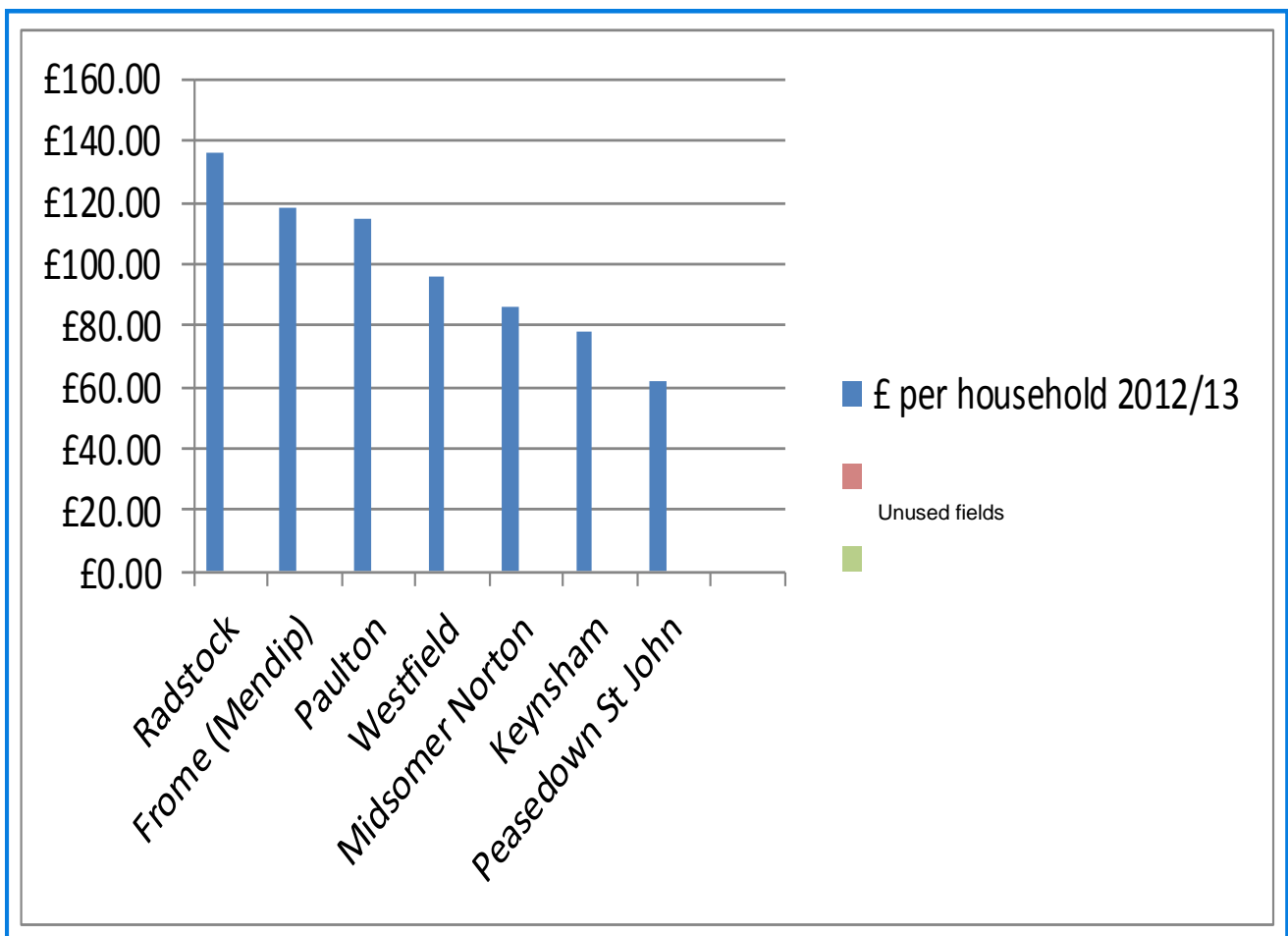
An amount held to cover any emergency or non--budgeted spending (see page 19)

The 1012/2013 budget was adopted at a meeting of the Full Council held on 23 January 2012

Neighbouring Towns and Villages

The following chart shows the contribution being paid by residents in neighbouring towns and villages.

Although the precept was increased in 2012-13, residents of Peasedown St John will make the lowest local contribution per household to maintain services throughout the village.



Example of annual payments for local Band D properties

Annual Return (part 1—Internal Audit)

01/04/2010 TO 31/03/2011

When the new Parish Council was formed on **23 May 2011**, one of the first jobs to be undertaken was to prepare for an internal audit of the previous Council's accounts and governance. As the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) was unavailable, the Finance Committee had to bring together all the items required to facilitate this audit which would, in turn, provide the information required to submit the accounts to a statutory external auditor. Progress with this was hampered by the lack of effectual administration protocols being in place in the Parish Office. Cllr Calvin Bird was appointed as acting RFO and remains the Financial Controller of the Council.

Internal Audit

It was decided to use a professional, independent auditor to carry out the internal audit; the following highlights some of the areas in which the Parish Council then in office did not meet the statutory requirements laid down in the 1972 Local Government Act.

These comments have been taken verbatim from the Internal Auditor's report.

"The budget for 2010-11 was approved on 14th June 2010 **after** the precept was set on 25th Jan 2010. There is no evidence that the precept resulted from 'an adequate budgetary process'. It appears that the precept was determined by reference to the previous years precept rather than as a result of a budget prepared based on the requirements of 2010-11.

The council uses the Alpha accounting system for accounting purposes and budgets are maintained on this system. There was no evidence from the council minutes that financial reports had been presented or that progress against budget was being monitored.

The council maintains 'Earmarked' Reserves under account number 320. The balance on this account at March 2011 is £94,203.91. It was noted during the audit that this balance had remained unchanged since 2009. There is no evidence that the council has reviewed the level of its reserves to ensure that they are appropriate.

It was not possible during the audit visit to reconcile the petty cash held at 31st March 2011.

It was not possible during the audit visit to examine the contracts of employment of two council staff. As a consequence I was unable to verify that the rates of pay for these two staff was correct.

It was noted that payments had been made to a staff member who left the council during the year and that no payroll computation (including tax and NI) was available for this payment.

The council does not maintain a formal asset register however a listing of assets is presented in the annual report. It was noted during the audit visit that this listing had not been updated with additions made during 2010-11.

It was further noted that the existence of assets had not been physically verified.

Council assets have been valued on the basis of current insurance valuations. This is not in compliance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations which require assets to be valued at cost, where known, or at first available insurance valuation."

Annual Return (part 2—External Audit)

01/04/2010 TO 31/03/2011

External Audit:

Due to the additional processes employed in completing the internal audit, the submission to the external auditors (Mazars Ltd) was delayed. Cllr Richard Formby kept in touch with the external auditors and informed them of the situation in Peasedown St John.

The Finance Committee sent the documentation to Mazars together with a long, explanatory letter outlining the robustness of the internal audit and a plan on how to improve upon all the areas which did not meet Audit Commission requirements.

The following comments have been taken verbatim from the published, External Auditor's report.

“Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review, in our opinion the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with the Audit Commission's requirements and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

1. The Council failed to approve the Annual Return by 30 June 2011, the date required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.
2. The internal auditor has highlighted significant weaknesses in internal control and governance arrangements. This has been acknowledged by the Council in the completion of the Annual Governance Statement. It is important that the Council takes appropriate action to address these matters in 2011/12. We recommend that reference is made to the advice provided in the publication ‘Governance and accountability for Local Councils in England—A Practitioners' Guide’ which is available from NALC and SLCC and is downloadable free of charge. In addition, please note that model standing orders and financial regulations are available from NALC, which can be tailored to the Council's circumstances.”

The guidance publications noted in 2. are available in the Parish Office.

Looking Forward:

Even before the paperwork had been despatched to the Mazars, many of the problems identified in the internal auditor's report were well on the way to being rectified.

Requests for information from the Parish Office are now dealt with quickly and efficiently and every procedure is regularly monitored.

Information is understandable to those with little knowledge of local Government and Councillors are engaged with the day to day governance of the village.

The Asset list is now up to date and a Zero-based budget has been set for 2012-1313 (see page 11).

Preparations are in hand for the 2011-12 internal audit which will again be carried out by a professional, independent auditor and the Finance Committee is confident that they now know exactly how the Parish Council functions on a daily, weekly, monthly and annual basis.

At the time of going to print, the Parish Council is actively recruiting for a Parish Clerk and it is anticipated that the administration and governance of the village can only go from strength to strength in the coming months.

Focus on Carlingcott 'Tump'

The Tump is the Village Green in the centre of the hamlet of Carlingcott and is the responsibility of the Peasedown St John Parish Council.

Over the past twelve months some necessary refurbishment work has been carried out on the Notice Board and it is hoped that the bench will soon be looking as smart.

In March 2012 the Parish Council agreed to buy the telephone box from BT for £1.00 and hand this over to the residents of Carlingcott to continue using as a book exchange. The box is in need of some maintenance but it is a charming centre piece to the Tump.

Whilst Carlingcott is a beautiful community to live in, life is not always easy; during severe weather conditions, the 70 or so homes become cut off from the outside world. The Parish Council provided extra grit and equipment to help with Winter 2011/12 and discussions regarding a future gritting route through Carlingcott are still continuing with Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The problems of flooding due to a blocked water culvert have now been resolved due to numerous meetings with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Peasedown St John Parish Councillors including Cllr Richard Formby who, as a resident of Carlingcott, knows only too well the difficulties faced by residents in extreme weather.

The Tump



Looking north across the Cam Valley



Carlingcott Book Exchange



*Re-vamped Notice Board
(thanks to Cllr Richard Formby and Chris Champion)*



On a summer's evening why not take a walk to Carlingcott?
Peasedown is lucky to be surrounded by beautiful countryside —
Carlingcott is an extra special part of that countryside.

Images courtesy of Cllr Charlie Harrison

Snapshot...

A year in the life of a new Parish Council (part 1)

In May 2011 seventeen newly elected Councillors voluntarily took over the administration of the Parish—they became your Parish Councillors.

As so often bemoaned in political circles, the new Parish Council inherited many on-going issues; some of which required urgent attention (insurance renewal being the most pressing).

In the run-up to the election, there had been much maligning of those wishing to be elected and support the village, we hope that through our hard work and enthusiasm we have proved that, as a body, we can tackle the difficult areas and engage with everyone in the village—after all, we all live here and still have the ambition to enhance our environment and make Peasedown St John a village people will want to live in.

Here's a snapshot of our first year....

May/June 2011

17 New Councillors elected - at the very first Full Council meeting it was agreed to communicate electronically where possible and it was noted that this would instantly make a saving of at least £1,000 per year. Without the support of a Clerk the new Councillors had several administration tasks to undertake before they could begin to tackle the job of being Councillors! Just a few of the problems encountered are: signatories had to be changed at the Bank (not easy to achieve without a Clerk to sign the mandates) before any of the outstanding accounts could be settled, day to day office duties, accounts needed to be brought up to date and administration processes investigated prior to an internal audit. A poor internal audit necessitated many adjustments in the office prior to the external audit. Burial records for Ashgrove Cemetery from May 2009 were not maintained and work started on rectifying this. The allotments records were not up to date with varying subscriptions being paid by allotment holders.

All in all a frustrating couple of months! The Planning Committee took the bull by the horns and managed to sort out a back-log of planning applications, make site visits and recommendations to B&NES.

July 2011

Negotiations start on the problem with lighting throughout the village. Peasedown St John owns around 120 street lights and it is planned that these become the responsibility of B&NES. The cost of updating these lights to an acceptable, compliant standard is considerable and the various options are being considered.

First Advice Surgery was held in the Coffee Hut where five members of the public discussed village issues with four Councillors.

Gritting Surveys were carried out in Old England Way and Carlingcott; results to be analysed.

Temporary Administration Manager appointed.

Working Parties set up to deal with the many issues affecting the village. To report back to Full Council.

August 2011

The results of the internal audit were presented to the Full Council and steps were put in place to rectify the many problems highlighted prior to sending in the Annual Return to the external auditors.

10' Christmas Tree donated to the village by resident.

Allotments Working Party makes good progress.

Beacon Lighting registered with Buckingham Palace for 4 June 2012.

Advice Surgery held by Councillors.

September 2011

Asset Register almost complete with an 'Asset Walk' round the village planned.

Bad Weather working party set up to redress village access problems.

Beacon Hall lease negotiations well underway and the Office Relocation working party set to make their recommendations to Full Council.

Young people of the village welcomed to form a Youth Parish Council.

Preparations for the Christmas Tea Party for older residents get under way.

Refurbishment of Notice board and Bench in Carlingcott.

Advice Surgery held by Councillors.

/Continued

Snapshot...

A year in the life of a new Parish Council (part 2)

October 2011

Full Council accept: Annual Return/Asset Register/Allotment Rules/Lighting Policy.
Work commenced on determining a Zero Based Budget.
New bins ordered to replace missing or damaged bins in the village.
10' Christmas tree planted at the western end of the village.
Advice Surgery held by Councillors.

November/December 2011

Full Council agrees to relocate to Beacon Hall. The Parish Council will have to leave it's current office by 24 February 2012 and a project of renovation is prepared. This relocation will save residents around £17,000 per annum in rent/rates/apportionment of costs for the office block.
New Standing Orders adopted. New Website goes live.
Street naming on the new Wellow Lane development advertised for public suggestions.
New names chosen: Miners Walk and Jubilee Road.
Councillors attend Remembrance Service at St Johns Church.
Grants Awarded to:

- Bath Stroke Support Group - £90.00
- Cruse Bereavement Care (Bath District) - £175.00
- Midsomer Norton & Radstock Community Service Vehicle Trust - £90.00
- Peasedown Albion Football Club - £300.00
- Peasedown St John Brownies and Guides - £146.00
- Peasedown St John Centenary Celebration - £145.00
- Peasedown St John Community Association - £425.00
- Peasedown St John Lunch Club - £120.00
- Peasedown St John Methodist Church – Gift of a Fridge (value £200)
- Peasedown St John Scout Group - £200.00
- Working in Support of the Handicapped - £120.00

Additional grants are given to support the School Crossing Patrol, Play Rangers, Dial-a-Ride and the Christmas Tea Party.
Christmas Tea Party for around 70 older residents held at Beacon Hall and received very good feedback.

January 2012

Full Council accept budget for 2012/13
Precept is set for 2012/13
Sunnyside S106 contribution now agreed for release by B&NES
Peasedown St John part of the B&NES Snow Warden pilot scheme.

February 2012

Planting around the village designed and plants ordered.
Plans drawn up for the Annual Parish Meeting and preparations underway for Annual Council Meeting
Move to Beacon Hall!!

March 2012

The Parish Council resolve to facilitate the transfer of the Beacon Hall Lease and to take on the future management of the Hall. This resolution will remove the responsibility from the current Trustees.
It was agreed that applications would be considered for small grants to acknowledge the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
The Parish Council agreed to contribute to the grass-cutting at St John's Church.
The Parish Council will be contacting B&NES regarding the urgency of traffic control on the eastern edge of the village once occupation of the Wellow Lane development begins.

The above is a flavour of what your Parish Councillors have been doing, there is much more going on and we are always very keen to welcome other volunteers to become involved with the activities within the village.

[Contact the Parish Office for further information](#)

Extras

The Parish Office



The Parish Council is very pleased to have an office in Beacon Hall. A fair amount of work was required to improve the environment within the office and a further small office was built to allow the PSJCA to have their own representative space within Beacon Hall.

Administration of the Parish Council will be carried out in the Parish Office; it will not generally be open to the public. Residents can contact the office between 9 and 12, Monday to Friday and Councillors will make themselves available at street/advice surgeries throughout the village.

Parish Council Meetings will normally be held on the third Tuesday of each month (with the exception of August) and residents are most welcome at these meetings.

Repaired Track at the Rec.



The well-used children's bike track in the Recreation Ground was re-surfaced in November 2011. It is good to see so many youngsters using the play equipment and more repairs and refurbishments will be carried out during 2012.

And Finally...



The not so young in the village had an enjoyable afternoon at the Parish Council Christmas Tea Party held in the Beacon Hall. Supported by the Golden Oldies and the primary school choir, Parish Councillors, family and friends welcomed 70 guests and a good time was had by all. Many thanks to everyone; the afternoon was well worth it!

Village Projects

Since the year 2000 the Parish Council has held money to spend on projects around the village. Whilst £5,000 was earmarked for constructing a Garden of Remembrance, the initial stages of the project were not completed and the money remains on reserve (see comment page 14).

One of the Auditor's criticisms of the previous administration during 2010/11 was the amount of money held on reserve for many years without a plan of how to improve the village.

When the budget was set for 2012/13 a 'Long Project List' was drawn up with rough costs and it was decided to allocate amounts to the most popular or pressing projects: whilst a final list hasn't yet been adopted by the time of going to print, some of the projects put forward are listed below:

Village Development Fund can contribute to:

- Beacon Hall Car Park
- Defibrillators at key locations
- Youth Shelter/s
- New Grass Cutting Machine
- Ramps for Mower
- Water Bowser
- Personal access gate for Allotments
- Grit Bins
- Refurbishment of the Carlingcott Tump
- Training Circuit at the Recreation Ground
- Major village show
- PSJ Flag—designed by the children at the Primary School
- Presentation to the Primary School to mark their centenary in 2013
- Contribution to hanging baskets outside of each of the shops
- Queens Diamond Jubilee Grants

The aim of the Village Development Fund is to enhance the environment in which we all live. This Parish Council intends to act upon this aim and make a visible difference for residents.

Parish Council Reserves:

It is recommended that Parish Councils hold at least one third of their income on reserve to cover such things as banking problems within B&NES resulting in lack of funds, stand-in staff wages, Health & Safety issues. In fact, anything which creates a non-budgeted spend.

The Parish Council Reserve is not available for spending on projects around the village.

Contact Details

Should you require any information regarding the Parish Council please use the following to get in touch:

By telephone: 01761 433686
(Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm)
By email: clerk@peasedownstjohnparishcouncil.gov.uk
By Mail:
The Clerk
Peasedown St John Parish Council
French Close
Peasedown St John
Bath BA2 8NS

The Parish Council

The Parish Council exists *solely* to represent the interests of the whole Peasedown St John, Carlingcott and Braysdown community. The current Council is *non-party political* and is made up of seventeen Parish Councillors who are local residents and give their time voluntarily.

Parish Councils were established as the first tier of local government in 1894 to take over local oversight of civic duties in rural towns and villages. Peasedown St John Parish Council discharges its duties and powers within the law and according to its governance policies. These policies are reviewed annually.

Parish Councillors serve a four year term, with the next election due in the spring of 2015. People on the electoral role can be co-opted on to the Parish Council if there are insufficient candidates at an election for all the seats to be filled or if a vacancy occurs during a four-year term.

The Parish Council's main roles are to ensure that the delivery of services to meet local needs is maintained (and, ideally, enhanced) and that the quality of life in the community and the environment of the Parish are improved. The Parish Council undertakes to perform a wide range of tasks at its own hand in partnership with a number of local and regional organisations, principally Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES). To operate effectively, the Parish Council requires an annual income and this is obtainable through a levy on each household—this levy is known as the 'Precept' and forms part of the Council Tax each household pays.

Listening to everyone's concerns, needs and aspirations and effective communication, within and beyond the Parish, goes to the heart of the Parish Council's work. If we can get this right, we shall be well placed to represent the village effectively in discussions and negotiations with other organisations, (for example our MP, other service providers and neighbouring Parish Councils) and especially with B&NES. The Parish Council, therefore, very much welcomes questions, opinions or concerns from parishioners and values their presence at its Parish Council meetings.

We communicate via regular newsletters, four notice boards within the village and the web site which was rebuilt in 2011. Councillors can also be contacted via the Clerk and are always pleased to meet with residents.

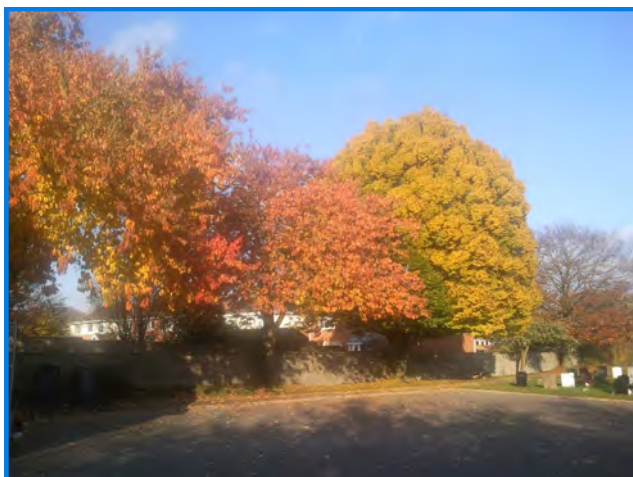
Statutory Meetings

Full Council meetings are held monthly, normally at Beacon Hall. These meetings discuss the day to day matters arising in the village and decisions are made based on updates from the various committees and working parties. Residents are welcome to attend and there is a ten minute session where questions can be put by members of the public regarding agenda items.

The Annual Parish Meeting, which is normally held in April, is NOT a Parish Council meeting. Its purpose is for the Parish Council to summarise its activities over the last year and indicate the main plans for the coming year. This meeting enables all registered electors to ask questions and discuss/have their say on anything which they consider is important to them within the village.

The Annual Meeting of the Council is held in May and, in a non-election year, new officers and committees are elected. A full review of Council is carried out around the Annual Meeting of the Council..

Draft minutes of all the meetings held are put on the notice boards and the website. These are formally accepted at the following meeting as a true and legal representation of the work undertaken and carried out by the Parish Council.



Ashgrove Cemetery