

SPRING 2021

# Your Newsletter

For residents of Braysdown, Carlingcott,  
Peasedown St John and Woodborough

Published by Peasedown St John Parish Council

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## Resolving Streetlight Faults



(L to R) Councillors Andrew Larcombe, Conor Ogilvie-Davidson, Kathy Thomas and Jonathan Rich, next to one of the upgraded streetlights.

The Parish Council would like to explain some of the issues with faulty streetlights which have taken a long time to resolve, causing frustration for residents in some parts of the village. This has been caused by some major changes which have been largely outside of our control.

Firstly, the Parish Council has upgraded its streetlights to energy-efficient LED lights. This has already resulted in cost-savings for our residents and in the longer-term will be significant. These lights also provide other benefits such as more effective lighting for roads and pavements, darker skies, and a lower environmental impact.

However, we recognise that there have been some problems with the new lights, some of which were taken from a faulty batch, which has unfortunately resulted in a higher failure rate than usual. These problems would normally be resolved by the installation contractor, SSE Contracting Ltd, under warranty. However, SSE Contracting Ltd have recently advised that equipment failures must now be followed up directly with the manufacturer.

The Clerk is currently liaising with the manufacturer for several replacement units, under the terms of the warranty. These units are a long time coming, due to the various impacts on manufacturing and distribution. We are looking to repair the faulty lights swiftly, as well as securing a number of replacement lamps for future repairs to eliminate the delays we have encountered to date. An Advisory Panel of the Parish Council is working hard with Parish Council staff to expedite these repairs and to negotiate a new streetlighting maintenance contract to avoid any similar delays in the future. Councillor Kathy Thomas, Chair of the Advisory Panel, said: "We are very grateful to local residents for their patience whilst our street lighting maintenance process is under review, and we hope that any recent issues will be resolved in the very near future."

## Community Tree Planting

In February, Parish Councillors were assisted by volunteers from the Peasedown Environment Group to plant 150 new trees in the village.

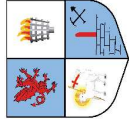
All complied with social distancing and COVID regulations and carried out the task as part of their daily exercise. Volunteers worked together to plant young native trees donated by The Woodland Trust, with biodegradable mulch mats and pegs. The trees were planted on Beacon Field and The Recreation Ground, as part of a succession of planting to help replace trees lost due to issues such as ash dieback disease.

Thank you to all the volunteers and to our Parish Council Staff for enabling us to plant these trees before the Spring!

This is an activity we hope to open to the wider village in the coming years, to further improve our beautiful natural environment for humans and wildlife alike.







## PEASEDOWN ST JOHN PARISH COUNCIL

The Beacon Hall, French Close, Peasedown St John, BA2 8SN

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### Statement of Proposed Financial Activities 2021-22



**T**he Parish Council of Peasedown St John was formed in 1955 and represents the interests of the communities of Peasedown St John, Carlingcott and Braysdown. The current Council consists of seventeen Parish Councillors who are local residents and give their time voluntarily.

The Parish Council's main role is to ensure that the delivery of services to meet local needs is maintained and that the quality of life in the community and the environment of the Parish are improved. To operate effectively, the Parish Council requires an annual income and the majority of this is obtained through a levy on each household - this levy is known as the "Precept" and forms a small part of the Council Tax that each household pays.

The Parish Council ensures that its finances are well managed, by scrutinising the accounts at every meeting of the Finance & Amenities Committee and quarterly at Full Council meetings (all of which are open to the public). Detailed spending plans for the coming year must be provided to Council Tax payers when the precept requirement reaches a certain level.

### What has been achieved in 2020/21?

Some major achievements for 2020/21 have been:

- Accessible allotment plots at Braysdown Allotments
- Christmas Hampers for senior residents of the village instead of the tea party
- Continued maintenance of our open green spaces
- Laptops/devices for some councillors to enable participation at remote meetings
- Installation of additional waste and dog waste bins
- Tree planting project around the village
- Beacon Field Dog Exercise Area and additional bench seating
- Additional gritting machine and grit bins for snow wardens
- New fire doors at Beacon Hall
- New internal lighting at Beacon Hall and Parish Office

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### How is your money spent?

Peasedown St John Parish Council provides, manages and maintains a number of facilities and services in the village, including:

- Public open spaces (the Village Green, the Tump and Ecewiche Green)
- Ashgrove Cemetery
- The Recreation Field, including the football changing rooms and play areas
- Braysdown Lane Allotments
- Street lighting (126 lights are owned and funded by the Parish Council)
- Maintenance of footpaths
- The Council Office
- Parish newsletters
- Maintenance of roundabouts and flower beds
- Floral displays in hanging baskets and planters
- Festive lights and decorations
- Funding for the School Crossing Patrol
- BMX track and skate park
- Parish Council website and Facebook page
- Winter support for all residents - grit bins and the snow warden scheme
- Beacon Field and Beacon Field play areas
- Beacon Hall
- Litter picking around the village



### Council Staff

The Parish Council currently employs 1 full-time and 5 part-time members of staff. Staff work closely with the Councillors to deliver:

- Day to day running of all the Parish Council facilities and services (see above list);
- Attending all Council meetings to provide administrative support and to ensure that all legislation and policies are complied with;
- Up-dating financial records and preparation of financial reports;
- Providing the first point of contact for enquiries from residents of the village;
- Maintaining and filing all parish administrative records;
- Beacon Hall bookings, invoicing, caretaking and cleaning;
- Implementation of projects agreed by the Parish Council.

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## What is different this year?

This year has been unprecedented. Coronavirus has had such a big impact on activities that would usually have taken place and this, in turn, has had an impact on the Parish Council's finances. The estimated £20,000 income generated from the hire of Beacon Hall has simply not happened as the hall has been closed for the majority of the year. Likewise, village events that the Parish Council would normally host or support have also not taken place so the expenditure has not been as high as usual which has helped to offset the loss of income.

The Parish Council continually reviews services, budgets and suppliers to make reductions within the day to day running costs, when possible, and this year has been no exception. The financial impact of Coronavirus has meant that fewer households are contributing to the Parish Council element [the precept] of your Council Tax bill this year. Taking all factors into consideration, including the long-term view of the Council's finances, the precept will remain the same for 2021/22.



## Forthcoming Projects and Ear-marked Reserves

In addition to its normal activities and routine expenditure, the Parish Council also needs to raise finance for the long-term development and enhancement of the facilities in the village. This is done by allocating funds from the precept, which can be used during the same year, or built up over a number of years (Ear-marked Reserves).

Some of the additional projects being considered for the coming year and beyond, are:

- "Philosopher's" quiet seating area at Beacon Field;
- Recreation Ground - pathway extension;
- Recreation Ground - formalise Bath Road entrance to link with pathways;
- Recreation Ground - install an area of reinforced ground for parking;
- Beacon Hall - install audio-visual equipment for streaming meetings and events;
- Additional streetlights at Hillcrest and Eckweek Gardens;
- Extension of the Community Grant Scheme to help local groups recover from the impact of Covid.

We will be carrying out feasibility studies on the following longer-term projects, to plan for future funding:

- Ashgrove Cemetery Pathways;
- Ashgrove Cemetery Irrigation;
- Beacon Hall Development - Storage and Painting;
- Outdoor Adult Gym Equipment.

## Where does the money come from?

Budget 2020/21		Budget 2021/22	
Income	£	Income	£
Precept*	251,452	Precept*	251,452
Interest	201	Interest	100
Donations	2,000	Donations	1000
Environment	562	Environment	562
Allotments (rents)	796	Allotments (rents)	826
Cemetery (burial & memorial fees)	2,363	Cemetery (burial & memorial fees)	3,663
Beacon Hall (hire fees)	20,000	Beacon Hall (hire fees)	12,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>277,374</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>270,103</b>
Expenditure	£	Expenditure	£
Staff Costs**	134,539	Staff Costs**	122,939
General admin	21,200	General admin	24,523
Community Grants/Village Events	16,093	Community Grants/Village Events	11,093
Newsletters/Website	3,500	Newsletters/Website	3,000
Amenities	9,130	Amenities	7,780
Lighting	8,200	Lighting	5,000
Environment	7,650	Environment	7,400
Cemetery	6,445	Cemetery	7,641
Recreation Ground	9,550	Recreation Ground	11,000
Beacon Hall & Field	19,940	Beacon Hall & Field	19,471
Infrequent Operational Expenditure	8,500	Infrequent Operational Expenditure	15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>244,747</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>234,847</b>
<b>Income less expenditure ***</b>	<b>32,627</b>	<b>Income less expenditure***</b>	<b>35,256</b>

\* For explanation of the precept, see front page.

\*\* Staff costs have reduced due to a one-off pension deficit payment in 2020/21

\*\*\* This balance is used for projects and Ear-Marked Reserves. For a full explanation see left.

For further details of the Parish Council's plans and activities and actual spend against budget reports, please refer to its website and look out for the regular newsletters.



## Contingency Reserves

In addition to the above listed figures the Parish Council is obliged to maintain funds in reserve for emergency/contingency purposes. The Parish Council's contingency reserves are £65,000 which is in line with the Auditor's recommendations and to provide sufficient cover for any staff sickness. This level has been maintained and will continue to be monitored.

# Thoughts from the Chair



Today the sun is shining and the end of this period of lockdown is in sight. Many of us will be looking forward to late May when we may be able to meet a few friends.

I pay tribute to our Parish Council staff and fellow councillors for keeping the council on track as the pandemic raged. Working at the RUH it was sobering to witness the terrible effects of the virus and how devastating the infection can be to the human body.

Our plans for the coming year are shown in the Precept Leaflet. I wish to highlight two projects which will enhance the amenities in the parish enabling more residents to enjoy our open spaces.

Firstly, improving access to the Recreation Ground: the path will be extended to join Whitebrook Lane with a new section so that all residents can walk, run, push a buggy or ride on a mobility scooter around the field on a good surface. It will ensure that all the access gates lead onto a hard surface.

Another exciting project is the development of a "Philosopher's" quiet seating area, next to Beacon Hall. Beacon Field can be very busy, and sometimes a quiet space away from the hustle and bustle is what is required. It is likely to be similar to the Memorial Garden at Ashgrove Cemetery. Strange as it may seem, it was inspired by a similar area in a busy London park near to my daughter's home.

Take care, keep well and look out for your friends and neighbours. With best wishes, Kathy



## Virtual Annual Village Meeting

For all residents of Peasedown St John,  
Braysdown and Carlingcott

**30 March 2021**  
**7.00pm**

Online access via our  
website or Facebook page

The Village Meeting is an opportunity to raise any ideas or questions about your parish (Peasedown St John, Braysdown and Carlingcott). Please send these by email before 23rd March 2021, or contact the Parish Office on (01761) 433686.

Due to time constraints, we may not respond at the meeting unless you send your query in advance, but we will respond by email as soon as possible after the meeting.

**All welcome - we look forward to meeting you!**

## Census 2021

Households across Bath and North East Somerset will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941, and is run by the Office for National Statistics.

This year is the first census run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at Office for National Statistics, said: "A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed."

"This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That's why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them."

Census day will be on March 21, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit <https://census.gov.uk/>

## Community Grants and Covid Recovery Fund



This year the majority of our Community Grants have not been issued due to restrictions on community activities during the COVID pandemic.

Because of this, we have rolled-over last year's Community Grants fund to 2021 and, in addition to our usual grants, community groups can apply for help from our new "COVID Recovery Fund". The purpose of this is to get groups/organisations back on their feet following the pandemic, or perhaps to hold an extra event to give people something to look forward to in the summer, once restrictions are lifted.

Please take a look at our website and Facebook page for further details and an application form or contact the Parish Office. **Applications will open on 17th March 2021 and must be submitted by 12 noon on 19th April 2021.**