



*Special Edition*

January 2023

# Your Newsletter

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

Published by Peasedown St John Parish Council

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## What's the Purpose of this Newsletter?



In May 2023 there will be a **Parish Council election** to appoint 17 new councillors for Peasedown St John. All residents have the opportunity to put themselves forward as councillors. The aim of this newsletter is to provide some information on the purpose of the Parish Council and what is involved in being a councillor, in the hope of encouraging more local residents to get involved and perhaps to stand in the forthcoming elections.

## What does the Parish Council do?

Peasedown St John Parish Council is the official public body responsible for the day-to-day running of the village. There are 17 councillors and 5 members of staff. The Parish Clerk, who is full time, manages 4 part-time staff from the Parish Office which is in Beacon Hall.

The Parish Council is not a party-political body, but is the tier of local government closest to the electorate, concerned primarily with the running of the village at a "grass roots" level. They are separate from Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) which is the Unitary Authority and has greater legal powers and responsibilities for the wider area (not just Peasedown St John) and have ultimate responsibility for the infrastructure within the village, such as roads and pavements.

The Parish Council is also completely separate from the Parish Churches, although we work alongside them in relation to some civic events, such as Remembrance Day.

The Parish Council's main responsibilities include:

- Grass cutting, hedges, floral and Christmas displays
- Braysdown Allotments
- Ecewiche Green
- Ashgrove Cemetery
- Beacon Hall
- Beacon Field (including the Jubilee Garden, play areas, sports court and dog area)
- Recreation Ground (including the skate park, BMX track, play area, football pitch, changing rooms, canteen, accessible toilet and footpaths)



They set the annual budget/precept which is used to pay for the areas above together with any new projects which they decide will be of benefit to the electorate.

The Parish Council are also a consultee on matters such as planning applications, boundary reviews, highway changes and other areas that may impact the local area.

## What's it like to be a Parish Councillor?

There is a Full Council meeting every 6 weeks, which all councillors are expected to attend. In addition to this, councillors get involved in other committees (such as Planning, Personnel, Finance & Amenities or Cemetery) according to their individual interests. Most meetings are held in Beacon Hall on a Tuesday evening, but some smaller meetings take place online. The amount of time involved in being a parish councillor will vary. Some councillors spend many hours a week and some just a few, depending on how much time they are able/willing to give. It is an unpaid role, but the majority find that being a parish councillor is an enjoyable way to contribute to their community by helping to make it a better place to live and work.



Enthusiasm, passion and patience are really the only skills you need, because you can learn everything else as you go along. You don't need to have loads of money or to be super educated - councillors are just ordinary people. If you are not sure what to do, there is always somebody around to help.

There are lots of tasks to get involved with, from watering the Jubilee Garden, to inspecting the changing rooms at the Recreation Ground, or planting trees. There is much more to being a councillor than just boring meetings!

You do need to be over eighteen to become a councillor but we have had several younger members as councillors in the past, who have made a very valuable contribution.



# What do Parish Councillors do?



**Civic Events:** Jubilee Beacon Lighting



**Meetings:** Annual Village Meeting



**Campaigning:**  
LGBT+ Exhibition, Beacon Hall



**Civic Events:**  
Remembrance - Dressing of War Graves



**Projects:** Opening the Skate Park



**Community:** Delivering Hampers



**Civic Events:**  
Commonwealth Day



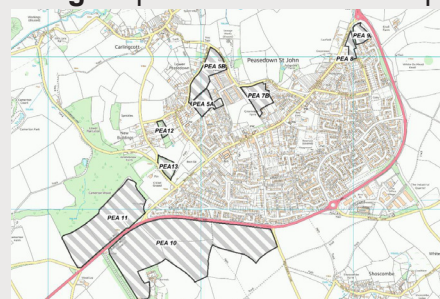
**Environment:** Tree Planting



**Planning:** Input into Future Development



**Facilities:** Management of Ashgrove Cemetery





# ...Lots of different things!



**Projects:** Jubilee Garden



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**Environment:**  
Aquisition of Land from Developers



**Projects:**  
Installation of Multi-Use Games Area



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**Campaigning:**  
Working with Local Doctors' Surgery



**Governance:** Signing to serve the  
Electorate and keep to the Code of Conduct



**Maintenance:**  
Street Lighting Inspection



**Maintenance:**  
Play Surfaces on Beacon Field



**Community:** Grants to Support Community



**Community Engagement:** Stall at Party in the Park



**Councillor Training:**  
Training session in Beacon Hall



**Allotment Management:**  
Regular Allotment Inspection



## Gill - Our Newest Councillor



Our newest councillor, Gill Auld, has been keeping a blog about her experience starting on the Parish Council. She explains in her blog: "When I first found out there was a vacancy I was immediately interested. I moved here only last year and would very much like to be involved in this lovely community. If Covid showed us anything positive it is surely that strong communities do the best for everyone. So as a newbie I wanted to get to know my village and the people and contribute what I can." **To read more of Gill's insightful blog, please visit our website.**

## Conor - Our Youngest Councillor



"I stood for co-option in late 2018 when I was 24, and then stood for election in May 2019. I wanted to be part of the Parish Council after levelling criticism at some of the past decisions, so wanted to have my say and put my money where my mouth was (in the proverbial sense). Standing as an individual, independent Councillor, has been hugely rewarding. I have enjoyed making a positive contribution to our village and getting involved in projects like the Recreation Ground paths, even leading on the Coal Mining Cart and Telephone Kiosk planter projects. There is so much scope if you're able to spare the time and unwavering enthusiasm! I would encourage anyone with an interest in and passion for the village to consider being a Parish Councillor. Come along to some of our meetings before the Election and get to know us and the work of the Parish Council."

## Kathy - Our Longest-Serving Councillor



"In a few words, why for most of my adult life I have been an elected Parish Councillor, an unpaid position, and continue to serve the residents of this parish.

It all started when Esme Latchem was sent to find 3 likely residents to be co-opted to vacancies on the Parish Council. I was one of a few who were persuaded, none of us had any aspirations to be parish councillors. Peasedown St John was a smaller village then, divided by the A367. At busy times of day it could take 5 minutes to cross the road as cars, tractors and heavy goods vehicles thundered by. The facilities were abysmal, a few broken swings on the recreation ground, a dilapidated building where our children attended a playschool. Some older residents like to reminisce about how good it was then, but that is not my recollection of the village I came to live in 50 years ago.

Our village is so different these days and I am proud of the part I have played in the transformation. As a Parish Council we have taken risks and spent your money on projects we believe you appreciate. We upgraded our footway lighting to LED, the open spaces are a credit to us, Beacon Field, Ecewiche Green, and the Recreation Ground all with accessible gates. I am particularly proud of the Garden of Remembrance, children's play areas, games area and skate park, the dog exercise area and our recently opened Jubilee Garden. Beacon Hall and the Canteen on the Recreation Ground are available for council meetings and for hire by the public. We also support good causes with grants, including the firework display at the Cricket Club.

If you feel that you too can contribute to our magnificent parish then now is the time to start thinking about it."

## Navigating the Election Process

Don't be scared to stand for election! There are only a few qualifications you need to meet. You must be:

- At least 18 years old
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union.
- After this you must EITHER be on the electoral register for Peasedown St John OR live or work within a three mile radius of the parish.

For further details, including any disqualifying criteria, please go to [www.electoralcommission.org.uk](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk) or get in touch with the Parish Office (01761) 433686.

There are three simple forms to complete to stand as a candidate: a nomination form, a home address form and your consent to nomination. The deadline to submit nomination papers will be approximately a month before the election, which is due to be held on 4th May 2023. There's plenty of time to find out more!

## How can I find out more?

**We currently have two vacancies on the Parish Council which can be filled by co-option. This is an ideal opportunity to see if being a Parish Councillor is something for you... you can try it for a few months to see if you think it's something you would like to do for a longer term before putting yourself forward for a 4-year term from May 2023.**

If you would like to find out more about the co-option process or about any aspect of standing as a Parish Councillor or the work of the Parish Council, please come along to a meeting or to one of our special Councillor Surgeries, where we can give you all the information you need. Dates and locations are as follows:

**Committee Meetings, Beacon Hall, 7.00pm:** Feb 7th 2023 - Planning Committee; Feb 21st - Personnel Committee; Feb 28th - Full Council; Mar 7th - Planning Committee; April 4th - Planning Committee; April 11th - Cemetery Committee; April 18th - Full Council; April 25th - Finance & Amenities Committee.

**Councillor Surgeries, Beacon Hall 6.00pm:** Fri 17th February 2023; Fri 17th March; Fri 21st April.

**Councillor Surgeries, Recreation Ground Canteen:** **Wed 9th Feb**, 9.30am until 12noon; **Thur 2nd March** 3pm until 5.30pm; **Wed 29th March**, 3pm until 5.30pm.