



# **5ALIVE**

**April 2024**

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at last**

**News from  
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Great Elm, Mells with Vobster and  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

LIKE HAZELL IN HER JOTTINGS for this issue of 5Alive, I ain't gonna comment on the weather except to say ... no, I won't say what I had intended. It would probably have offended everyone anyway!

One thing I do need to do is apologise for a whoopsie in the last issue of the magazine. In the story about the table that had been found in a cottage near Mellis I used the wrong photo. The photo I used showed a similar table but the wrong one. So here's the right one. Ring any bells? Let me know if it does.



Have an eggstastic Easter and good luck if you're taking part in the Mellis Easter Egg rolling competition.

Peter

## FROM THE RECTORY, WELL ALMOST!

MY FRIEND SIMON HAS BEEN RECORDING for *Frome FM* a programme about his 650-kilometre walk along the *Via Transylvanica*. As well as talking about his six weeks in Rumania, Simon reflects on the nature and varieties of walking itself. Mike, who produces the programme, is interested in the phenomenon of travel as well as its instances.

While on the one hand the programme has reminded me how sedentary I've become, it has, on the other hand, prompted me to think about those daily excursions that don't appear to be about getting anywhere – the stroll down to the post box, along to the pub, up to the field with the stile – and back again. Always back again. The feeling of never leaving, never arriving, is encouraged by the familiarity of figures encountered along the way – another dogwalker, a mum taking kids to school, someone knocking on the door of an elderly neighbour.

The last couple of decades have seen a surge of enthusiasm for pilgrimage – the testing of our capacity for solitariness, the externalisation of the inner

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**Deadline** for May 2024 is Friday, April 19th but do check!

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## CONTACTS

Mells Group of churches is currently in a vacancy. For any enquiries please contact the church warden in your parish. For weddings contact the benefice administrator, Mrs Catherine Brown, email [catmellsgroup@gmail.com](mailto:catmellsgroup@gmail.com). She works on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

### Church laymen and women Church wardens

Buckland Dinham Jenny Waller,  
07887 556936

Chantry Hazel Tovey 836384  
David Rawlins 836252

Great Elm Sally Rosa 07833  
900947

Mells/ Vobster Mrs Diana  
Sylvester 812386

Whatley Mrs K Gay 836175

### Parish council chairs and clerks

John Reckless 01373 461841  
Diane Sleight 07907 156735  
[parishclerk@bucklanddinham.org](mailto:parishclerk@bucklanddinham.org)

John Earl 01373 812450  
Joy Book 07704 584953

Andrew Bramston 01373 836513  
Rachel Nash  
[clerk.whatleyparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.whatleyparishcouncil@gmail.com)

### Roman Catholic Services

Mells: Sundays at 11.30am Frome: Saturdays 5.30pm.  
Wednesdays 11.30am Sundays 10.00am

**Somerset Councillor:** Philip Ham 01373 812152

### Others to be confirmed

Chantry and Whatley Francis Hayden 07970 839532

**Police:** PCSO Louise Perry, 07874 893777

journey. My pottering out for a jar of marmalade doesn't seem to have much to do with those epic treks along ancient highways.

On our bedroom wall there's a photo of our granddaughter, scooting down her street on a misty autumn morning, leaving wheel tracks on the cold, damp pavement. A reminder that though we don't usually notice it, we do leave a trail. I think of Ronald Blythe's badgers, who 'hump and trundle themselves through the orchard to the cold-running stream, leaving a highway through the shooting grass'. A particular love of mine is the ragged trail of westering crows at sunset. My daily tread may make even less mark than the silent passage of these birds, but there's some gratification in imagining that my footprint in the sand of time is more than merely my digital signature, my credit card history, my Waitrose favourites.

Wednesday. Morning Prayer in St Andrew's. Here we are again.

Astonishingly, there are eight of us, including faithful Otto, who lies on the floor, shakes his lead when we say, 'Our Father'. Twenty minutes of shared thought in the chapel lit by William Nicholson's magnificent window, where the prayers of St Francis turn fish into birds whose flight is the changing light. 'O God,' says the Breton prayer, 'the sea is very large, and our boat is very small.' We depart, leaving no sign that we were there, but each having worn another particle from the centuries old threshold. *Robin Isherwood*

## JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

WELL, HERE WE ARE IN APRIL (say I, writing this in mid-March). I'm not going to mention the weather this time. I'm going to sulk and look the other

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way. Perhaps if I ignore it, it will go away. According to the old poem "The Months", which I expect many of us remember from early schooldays, "April bring the primrose sweet, scatters daises at our feet." Most of my primroses were out in February and March and at the moment I can't see my daises for mud. But as I mentioned I'm writing tis in mid-March so let's hope...

Further to my grumbles last month that I can't grow crocuses, the other things which will not grow in my garden are winter aconites. I have bought several lots over the years and none survive to reappear the following year. This is sad because I love their cheerful buttercup faces rising out of their green choirboy ruffs.

Every blooming blossoming shrub has flowered ahead of its normal time this year – but what is 'normal' now anyway? Hyacinths are in full bloom already. Why is it that the pink and white ones are devoured by slugs and the blue practically ignored? Do the pink and white taste of strawberry and vanilla? Or are slugs colour conscious? All my April/May flowering camellias are a riot of colour in March in spite of the sudden shock in spite of the sudden shock of a two-inch snowfall overnight. Didn't last, of course. Dripped away in a few hours in the mild air but at least it was a token offering of what we should have had before it was too late.

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I wonder what the early nesting birds thought of the snow. I don't seem to have anything like the variety of birds on my feeders or around the garden as in past year. Part from the welcome sight of the usual nuthatch and the spotted woodpeckers, all I see on the feeders are mainly bluetits and the odd great tit. I used to have coal tits, chaffinches, greenfinches and other occasional visitors such as bramblings and blackcaps but not now. Good old faithful blackbirds, robins and wood pigeons galore around the garden but that's about all. For the first time in 50 years, I don't seem to have resident songthrush which makes me really sad. I heard him briefly around the new year but nothing since. Has anyone else noticed fewer varieties of birds, I wonder.

Conversely, larger birds seem to be doing well locally. As a keen birder friend remarked recently, once the sight of a red kite over the village was a rare and exciting event. Now one merely notes with pleasure, "Ah, a couple of kits. That's nice." Also, I heard with joy last week a raven calling from the churchyard cedar. The ravens seem to be colonising widely around the village area but last year I was not aware of them in the cedar where they have nested for so many years. I answered the one I heard and we held a

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## Church services in April

	7 <sup>th</sup> April	14 <sup>th</sup> April	21 <sup>st</sup> April	28 <sup>th</sup> April	5 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Chantry</b>		11am: Matins Janet Cauldwell	11am Morning Prayer David Clark	11am: Holy Communion Chris Hare	
<b>Great Elm</b>			9.30am Holy Communion Robin Isherwood	9.30am Informal Service Richard King	
<b>Mells</b>	10am: Group Service	9.30am: Holy Communion Robin Isherwood		9.30am Morning Prayer Janet Cauldwell	
<b>Whatley</b>		9.30am: Matins Hazell Tovey		9.30am Holy Communion David Gatliffe	10.00am Group Service: Holy Communion Martin Weymont

**If you want to keep an eye open for any changes to services, you can check the schedule on the Mells Group website, [www.mellsgroup.church/whatson](http://www.mellsgroup.church/whatson).**



## Hardington Vale Church Services – APRIL 2024

DATE	TIME	SERVICE	LEADER
<b>Tuesday 2 April</b>	9.45 am 5.00 pm	<b>Rode Chapel</b> , Ecumenical Holy Communion <b>Tellisford</b> , Evening Prayer	
<b>Wednesday 3 April</b>	8.30 am 5.00 pm	<b>Hemington</b> , Morning Prayer <b>Rode Chapel</b> , Ecumenical Informal Prayer	
<b>Thursday 4 April</b>	6.00 pm	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Silent Prayer	
<b>Sunday 7 April</b>	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Informal Breakfast <b>Rode St Lawrence</b> , Holy Communion <b>Laverton</b> , Holy Communion <b>Rode Chapel</b> , Meeting Place	A & S Filkins C Walker D Gatliffe
<b>Monday 8 April</b>	9.00 am	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Morning Prayer	
<b>Tuesday 9 April</b>	5.00 pm	<b>Laverton</b> , Evening Prayer	
<b>Wednesday 10 April</b>	8.30 am 5.00 pm	<b>Hemington</b> , Morning Prayer <b>Rode Chapel</b> , Ecumenical Informal Prayer	
<b>Thursday 11 April</b>	6.00 pm	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Silent Prayer	
<b>Sunday 14 April</b>	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	<b>Rode St Lawrence</b> , Informal Breakfast <b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Holy Communion <b>Laverton</b> , Matins <b>Buckland Dinham</b> , Iona Service	A & S Filkins J Robinson/M Harrison
<b>Monday 15 April</b>	9.00 am	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Morning Prayer	
<b>Tuesday 16 April</b>	5.00 pm	<b>Tellisford</b> , Evening Prayer	
<b>Wednesday 19 April</b>	8.30 am 5.00 pm	<b>Hemington</b> , Morning Prayer <b>Rode Chapel</b> , Informal Prayer	
<b>Thursday 20 April</b>	6.00 pm	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Silent Prayer	
<b>Sunday 21 April</b>	9.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	<b>Farleigh Hungerford</b> , Holy Communion <b>Rode St Lawrence</b> , Holy Communion <b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Informal Worship <b>Laverton</b> , Matins <b>Buckland Dinham</b> , Holy Communion	C Walker/B Day C Walker/H Day F & R Stewart J Robinson
<b>Monday 22 April</b>	9.00 am	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Morning Prayer	
<b>Tuesday 23 April</b>	5.00 pm	<b>Laverton</b> , Evening Prayer	
<b>Wednesday 24 April</b>	8.30 am 4.00 pm	<b>Hemington</b> , Morning Prayer <b>Rode Chapel</b> , Informal Prayer	
<b>Thursday 25 April</b>	6.00 pm	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Silent Prayer	
<b>Sunday 28 April</b>	10.30 am 6.00 pm	<b>Rode St Lawrence</b> , United Holy Communion <b>Buckland Dinham</b> , Evening Service	C Walker/J Robinson C Walker
<b>Monday 29 April</b>	9.00 am	<b>Norton St Phillip</b> , Morning Prayer	
<b>Tuesday 30 April</b>	5.00 pm	<b>Tellisford</b> , Evening Prayer	

one-caw conversation but for many years the old boy who claimed the tree could, apparently, count. I would tease him by “kaaarking” different numbers of times and he would reply with the correct number of “kaaarks”. I presume that, as with crows, the greater the number of consecutive calls, the stronger and fitter is the bird as it takes great lung capacity and strength to call consecutively. This helps the females to choose a strong mate. My dear old lame tame crow was a 5-caller, possibly because he didn’t have to hunt for his food or suffer the hazards and rigours of life in the wild. I have heard that there is a lame raven in the village which has been “adopted” by several local householders who feed him regularly. But far from being grateful I heard that he had repaid their kindness by ripping the tiles of the shed roof of one of his benefactors. For a wonder, the sun is shining at the moment so I have taken the chance to have a wander around the churchyard. The daffodils are all opening and the lovely patch of lavender-mauve crocus that appear annually are still beautiful. Odd ones crop up in quite distant spots so I hope they will eventually build up other small colonies here and there. I looked for signs on the windflowers/wood anemones that appear under the conker tree – tiny leaves so similar to the covering of Queen Anne’s lace but just discernible as slightly flatter darker and less frondy at the edges. Amazingly not only were the leaves appearing but quite a few little star faces were already open among lots of buds heralding their main show. The whole churchyard looks more spacious and well cared for – without being excessively “manicured” – thanks to the willing hands and generous time of volunteer gardeners. The clearing of some spaces around the boundary walls makes a lovely framework for the “wilded” area, producing our flower meadows as the season progresses. And it certainly is progressing. By the time this is circulated, it will be Easter and, as a bonus, the first weekend of the clocks going forward. A happy, joyful and peaceful Easter to all. See you in May. *Hazell*

## **BUCKLAND DINHAM**

### **CHURCH NEWS**

As these notes are written on March 15th, we shall hopefully have news of the Sun Rise and Easter Sunday Services in the May magazine. The April Services in St. Michael’s will be as listed in the Rota.

## **Flowers**

We are very fortunate in having such talented ladies arranging the flowers and are very grateful to Peggy Harris, Ros Bradbury and Debbie Worsfold (and to Trevor who keeps them supplied with hot drinks).

## **Coffee Morning**

The next coffee morning will be held on April 20th, usual time 10.00 – 12.00. look forward to seeing you all.

## **REMEMBERING DOREEN AND BARRY PITCHER**

Doreen Pitcher (1934-2024), Barry Pitcher (1937-2020)

On Tuesday February 20th, St Michael's church in Buckland Dinham was full to overflowing, as family and friends gathered to celebrate the lives of Doreen and Barry Pitcher.

Doreen loved her church and would have been delighted to see how beautiful it looked, decorated with spring flowers and lilies.

The service was conducted by the Reverend Robin Isherwood. Hymns were *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, *Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us* and *We Plough the Fields and Scatter*. The scripture reading was Matthew 25:31-40, read by Paul Cary.

In his opening remarks, Robin reminded us of the circumstances of Barry's funeral in 2020 at the height of Covid, when only a handful of family members could attend, and at a distance. This service was now an opportunity to celebrate the lives of Doreen and Barry properly.

Memories of Doreen and Barry were provided by their children and grandchildren. Clare Pitcher took us through the couple's history, with farming a central theme. The couple met through Young Farmers and were fortunate to find their farm *Newlands* in Beckington just as they were contemplating moving to Australia. Farming was a dedicated way of life for them both, with Barry's interest in farming best practice taking him across Europe. Sport was another recurring theme, with cricket and football firm favourites.

After selling *Newlands* in 1985, Doreen and Barry travelled the world with their good friends the Mellors, reflecting their keen interest in history and other cultures.

From the memories of their grandchildren, we were given a picture of a loving and fun-loving couple who passed on not only their tall genes but

an inspiring example of how to deal positively with life's ups and downs and to enjoy and cherish family. It is evident that they will be sorely missed.

Donations were shared between the Alzheimer's Society and St Michael's.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Doreen and Barry at this time.

*Churchwarden*

*Jenny Waller,*

## VILLAGE NEWS

The meeting in the Village Hall on Tuesday March 5th marked the end of the Buckland Dinham W.I. which started in 1918. However, like a Phoenix arising from the ashes rose up the Buckland Buddies. We hope this new group, who will meet monthly, starting on Tuesday April 2nd April at 7.30 in the Village Hall, will attract many ladies, young and not so young, for an evening of fun and chat. Please come and support this new venture, bring fresh ideas of things you would like to do and perhaps this will continue for the next 100 years or so. We shall charge just £3.00 per person a visit to cover the cost of using the Hall and the occasional speaker.



**Short Mat Bowls.** Have you tried this fun game? At the moment, just seven players meet in the Village Hall on a Wednesday from 2.30 to 4.30 and would really like to see a few more joining this group. Please come along and have a go.

**KEEP THIS DATE! May 11th 2024** The Plant and Cake sale in the Village Hall. Once again, this event will be held and full details of the time for bringing your plants and cakes for sale will be in the May edition of this magazine. So please start sowing seeds and splitting plants for this date.

## CHANTRY

The Mothering Sunday Service on March 10th was led by Rev. Chris Hare. It was a very enjoyable service and quite well attended. During the service bowls of narcissi were blessed and distributed to all present. As usual the service was followed by cakes, coffee and a chat.

Jan and Andy Baston celebrated the Baptism of Riley Elizabeth, their granddaughter, on Saturday March 2nd here in Holy Trinity Church.

We had the surprise of snow on Saturday morning but it seemed to only add to the general excitement of the day. Family from the States were here along with some closer relatives, Libby and John her parents, godparents, aunts and uncles. The sun shone for some beautiful photographs



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before lunch at Orr Farm. Thank you to Barry Davies, our vicar, for leading the proceedings and to Andrew for playing the organ and getting us all singing a rousing version of *Morning Has Broken* and *Lord of All Hopefulness*.

**Condolences to the family of Tristram Powell**, the eldest son of Anthony and Lady Violet Powell who died in March. Tristram was a film and television director/producer. He was born in Oxfordshire but the family moved to Chantry in the early 1950s so he was quite a familiar figure among us older residents.

### Maintenance

Date	Cleaning	Flowers
06-04-24	Sue	Laureen
13-04-24	Dolly & Val	Val
20-04-24	Claire	Hazel
27-04-24	Sue	Hazel



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# GREAT ELM

## GREAT ELM CHURCH NEWS

**SPRING CHURCHYARD CLEAN UP** will be on Saturday April 13th starting at 10.00am. Please bring your own tools. Coffee and cake will be provided for the workforce. Thank you to all volunteers who have come in the past and we look forward to another day's productive work together.

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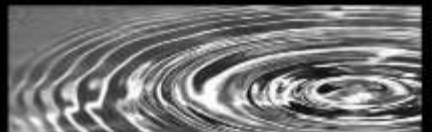


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## **'HEART WARMING' PROJECT TO RE-INTRODUCE TREES**

As I sit watching the contractors taking out 300 trees on the banks of the River Mells in Great Elm, many of them healthy specimens of indigenous trees under the excuse of removing 'ash die back'. There is no promise to replace these trees at the moment.

It is heartwarming to describe the project at Court Farm where the Forest of Avon trust and the Wildlife Trust are supporting a scheme to re-introduce trees, ponds, hedgerows and new habitats for wildlife. Increasing the biodiversity and the carbon footprint of the village.

On the 40-acre Court Farm in Buckland Lane in Great Elm there are some nine thousand trees going into that space. The majority of them local species including English oak, crack willow, aspen, black poplar, birch, alder, hazel and dogwood.

It will entail replacing hedges where they once divided fields and provide wildlife ponds to encourage the wildlife to return, as well as digging out ditches to assist the flood planning in the area.

There are already signs of more than one set of barn owls raise their offspring annually, the daily kites are also circulating the fields. We have put up numerous barn owl boxes, bat boxes and door mice tubs all have signs of being used already.



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This may not immediately replace the carbon footprint of the removal of the trees in Great Elm but as we watch the project grow and the farm change and naturalise it certainly will help.

*Stephen Bradshaw*

## JACKDAWS MUSIC EDUCATION TRUST IN GREAT ELM IS LOOKING FOR A LAWN MOWER - CAN YOU HELP?

Our trusty petrol lawn mower has seen better days...if you're replacing your lawn mower and have one which you'd consider donating to us, please get in touch! (It does need to be petrol powered). [music@jackdaws.org](mailto:music@jackdaws.org) 01373 812383

Many thanks - the Jackdaws Team

## MELLS WITH VOBSTER

Visitors to the church may have noticed, and wondered at, the absence of flowers in the church during March. This was because we were in the season of Lent. No flowers until Easter Saturday.

On Mothering Sunday though, following a short informal service, we made posies to give to our mothers, friends or neighbours, at our joint service with the congregation at Great Elm.



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On March 12th bellringers from Leigh-on-Mendip held a practice at St. Andrew's between 7.30 and 9.00pm, and the following week a quarter peal was rung on by another visiting team of bellringers. Our bells are very popular with the bellringing fraternity!

The Memorial Service commemorating the lives of Bryon and Audrey Axford was due to be held as this issue of 5Alive was going to press. A full report will be included in the May magazine.

Easter Sunday service (March 31st at 9.30), to follow the pattern of the Mothering Sunday service – a short informal time of worship, followed by refreshments (after which those taking part in the Egg-rolling competition will be able to dash off!), and a service of Holy Communion will take place after the refreshments. The Group service (Benefice, Chantry, Great Elm, Mells and Whatley) will be held on April 7th at St. Andrew's at 10.00am – it would be good to see you there as well!

And just a reminder – mid-week soul refreshment available on Wednesday mornings at 9.30! A time of quiet reflection, in the Lady Chapel.

*Diana*



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## Coffee with an Architect?

Thinking about a project?

An Architect with over 20 years' experience and a genuine love of historic buildings and coffee, I would be happy to meet and discuss your plans and ideas. For a free initial chat please contact:

Anna Hammond  
BA DipArch MSc ARB  
e: [annahammond@ymail.com](mailto:annahammond@ymail.com)  
m: 0772 941 1360  
t: 01373 834439





**Monday 6th May**  
**12pm – 5pm**

Join us to celebrate the village of Mells through time.

Talk to the Clerk on the issues of Mells.  
Antiques stall, D.I.Y. and food.  
Local people discuss village events and clubs.  
Activities for adults and children alike, including:  
A quiz, a game, craft and crafts, free games,  
and treasure, rags & rags, free painting and more.

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A concert with the Church at the end of day.

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The St Andrews Young Art Open 2024 is an Art Competition taking place this Spring between April 15th and May 25th for all ages up to 13 years. It seeks to encourage creativity in young people and to foster a sense of community. All mediums are encouraged. The theme for 2024 is "The Spaces In-Between".

There will be a Prize Giving Picnic on Saturday June 15th at St Andrews Church, where the artworks will be exhibited. A Mells 2025 calendar with the winning images is planned. Entry by application form with terms and conditions available from April 15th via the Mells C of E First School website, from the Mells Village shop noticeboard, or by emailing saartopen@gmail.com. Instagram sa\_youngartopen.

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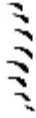
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**MELLS PARISH COUNCIL** (full minutes available on  
mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

Notes of meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Quarry noise: Member of public presented an article which appeared to show a photo of Whatley Quarry and referred to a survey carried out on behalf of a quarry. The article reports that 'Residents of several villages surrounding a large quarry complained about the quarry noise. So the quarry owner consulted a noise survey company. They carried out a noise survey at five village locations over several days and nights. This concluded that noise levels exceeded the night time planning noise limit at four of the village locations.' The article, if based on *Whatley Quarry*, appears to contradict the quarry's stance that the noise levels are within planning limits. It is understood that Whatley Quarry has recently commissioned an independent noise survey, but the results have not been made public and therefore there is a possible lack of transparency. Clerk and Cllr West to follow up with Somerset Council and the quarry.

**SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:**

**2024/5 Council Budget:** Council Members unanimously agreed a range of measures to bridge a funding gap of £100m for 2024/25, including cost cuttings, increasing Council Tax by 5percent, and using £36.8 millions of reserves. The proposals also include a 'capitalisation direction' request





of £36.9m – seeking permission from Government to borrow money or sell assets to pay for day-to-day running costs. Around 1,200 jobs are expected to go at Somerset Council over the next three years (about a quarter of the workforce). As a result of the cuts, some Town Councils have stepped in to save services (CCTV, public toilets etc) but this has resulted in a 179percent council tax increase in Taunton, 90percent in Yeovil and 164percent in Bridgewater. Council papers are still predicting a further £103 million budget gap in 2025/26.

**Healthy Somerset:** A new website has been launched by Public Health to help people in Somerset lead a healthier life [www.healthysomerset.co.uk](http://www.healthysomerset.co.uk) – features health and wellbeing resources tailored to all age ranges – making it even easier for users to find the information and support they are looking for.

**Take the Pressure Off:** Over half of all strokes and heart attacks in Somerset are caused by high blood pressure. The “Take the Pressure Off” campaign is designed to encourage residents, particularly those aged 40plus, to regularly check their blood pressure and take necessary steps towards managing their health. Residents are also encouraged to borrow a free blood pressure monitor from their library to test their own blood pressure in the comfort of their home or visit their local pharmacy for a check.

## MATTERS ARISING

**Silt under Vobster bridge:** Cllr Seviour to follow up with Somerset Rivers Authority.

**Old GPO box on verge – road to Leigh on Mendip:** Cllr West has re-contacted Openreach as their claim that the cabinet is still in use is incorrect as the cabinet is clearly obsolete.

## HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

**Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane and area in front of Vobster Inn:** Works to flatten and seed the area will start in the next month. Barrels to be purchased for placement in front of the inn.

**HGVs – Top Road:** Highways have suggested the placement of two signs at the top of the hill.

**Stone baskets on Park Corner:** The land is not owned by Highways but the matter has been passed onto the Area Manager to seek advice as to whether any enforcement action needs to be taken.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Highway maintenance devolution:** As Somerset Council face significant service reductions they are looking at several options for local parishes to be able to continue the current level of service i.e. local self-delivery, purchasing highways services direct from Somerset Council's contractor, 'buying back' by raising the precept to buy back the level of service or employing a highways steward.

**Sarah Dyke MP - zebra crossing by village shop:** Due to the lack of pavements, several junctions merging in the area and the hill, the location would not meet the basic safety standards so it would be highly unlikely to be considered and the costs would be prohibitive to put in the necessary infrastructure.

**Life buoy by the White bridge:** It was felt that at times of most need i.e. during a flood, a lifebuoy at this location would be ineffective due to the fast-flowing water a person would be swept away before the lifebuoy could be deployed. If a lifebuoy was to be funded, Woodlands End would be the most sensible location for one.

**ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

**Crates obstructing defib at the shop/post office:** Small crates are nearly always blocking the small area that is available to access the defibrillator and would need to be removed before the defib could be accessed in an emergency. This is likely to cause further distress to anyone already in an agitated state. The shop has stated that it does not have anywhere else to place the crates and has suggested that the defib should be moved. Its current position was agreed by the Estate and their approval would need to be sought to move it to another location on the building. Moving the unit and electrics would cost in the region of £250-£300 which the PC is not willing to fund without good justification.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday April 9th 2024 at the later time of 7.15pm in the Barn.

**Annual Parish Meeting:** Tuesday May 14th 7.00pm in the Barn. Everyone is welcome to attend. *Joy Book, Clerk to Mells Parish Council*

**VOBSTER** folks: a magazine deliverer is needed to distribute about 20 magazines in Lower Vobster each month (can be shared, of course). Please do get in touch if you are able to help: Phillie 07804 782 970. Thank you!

## WHATLEY

Congratulations to Debbie and David Norris on the birth of Millie, 9lb 10oz! She arrived on February 22nd, after the deadline for the March 5Alive so these greetings are a little late but nevertheless heartfelt. Welcome to Whatley, Millie!

Mary Scott thanks Alice Kettle for joining the cleaning rota for St. George's church. Every new member is a great help as it reduces the number of occasions on which it's one's turn. At the moment, it's approximately once every two months but at the moment none of us is needed because the builders are still working on the interior conversion. Mary will let us know when we need to resume duties.



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The villages of Whatley and Chantry had a happy evening of skittles on March 2nd at Tucker's Grave Inn, Faulkland. It was fun! There was a mix of novice and experienced players who were managed brilliantly by Giles Lunt. He even provided a trophy, which was won by team Dekker. It was good to have a real family occasion, ages ranging from very young to...older. The teenagers kindly handled the sticking up well. More experienced players gave the younger ones a bit of tuition and I think that the evening gave all those new to the game an enthusiasm for this old Somerset tradition. Thank you so much Giles and Rosie!

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- Country property, farms and land
- Commercial
- Development
- Auctions
- Antiques, collectables and household effects
- Surveys and valuations
- Equestrian

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