

PUXTON AND HEWISH COMMUNITY NEWS

Life At the Heart of the North Somerset Levels

SPRING 2017

Former London Co-operative Society creamery at Puxton station - by the St Georges Level Crossing

HEWISH & PUXTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held in the Village Hall, at 8pm on Thursday May 4th. It will follow immediately after the Parish Council meeting and AGM, which will start at 7pm

rather than the usual 7.30pm. The agenda will include reports from the various interest groups in the Parish, and an open discussion session covering whatever relevant

Parish topics attendees wish to raise. If there is a topic you want to see on the agenda before the general discussion session please let the Clerk know.

PARISH MAINTENANCE



The sign at the junction of Puxton Lane and Puxton Road: now refurbished.

The Localism Act 2011 provided a seemingly attractive opportunity for parish councils to take over responsibility from Principal Authorities (North Somerset Council in our case) for services they thought of as critical to their community... so that the parish could do them better and be in control of when they were carried out. In reality, Central Government has, year-on-year since 2011, been cutting it's

grants to Principal Authorities so significantly, that those of them who are financially astute are simply cutting services we small parishes take for granted - litter picking, weed spraying, etc.

There are many things we cannot afford to fund ourselves, but some which we can. The Parish Council has made a start by engaging a contractor to provide 8 days a year of village maintenance services - cleaning signs, bus shelter areas and lay-bys, keeping signage clean - for example.

Eight days is not a lot - but it is a start. The contractor is vastly experienced, and we should certainly notice the difference his work makes to our community over the coming months. If this contract works, we will be able to increase the number of days of contracted work, and feel more in control of how our Parish looks.

HEWISH AND PUXTON COMMUNITY FUND

This £41,000 fund represents a hugely exciting opportunity for the Parish. There are three key community assets - St Anne's School, our fabulous Grade 1 listed church of St Saviour and our heavily fought for Village Hall.

The asset that relies totally for its operating funding on the support of the Parish and its surrounding community is, of course, the Hewish & Puxton Village Hall in Maysgreen Lane. This treasure of the community was hugely hard fought for during the early 1960s.

Since the Community Fund was secured for the Parish, the Parish Council has sought ideas as to how it might best be utilised. The Village Hall has come forward as the only practical candidate for support. It emerged late last year that the Hall's lease is about to expire and that the Charity which runs it has an opportunity to buy the freehold of the Hall and its site.

Whilst we wait for proposals from the Hall Committee as to how, and on what basis - loans, shares, grants - it plans to raise funds to purchase its freehold,

the Parish Council needs to be sure of the support of the community if it is to become involved in any form of significant support for the Hall, as against any competing calls on the fund from other organisations, or towards other deserving community needs.

Others will almost certainly have some alternative ideas for using the fund! If you are one of those people, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk (who's contact details appear at the bottom of page 2) in the first instance.

HEWISH & PUXTON VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall has been a wonderful asset to Hewish and Puxton since it was built in 1963 on land that was leased to the community. Unfortunately the lease for the Hall and the land it occupies, runs out in 2019 and the current landlord does not want to renew the lease. He would rather sell the Hall and the land to the local community.

Great energy and effort must have been made by the local community to build the Hall, which many people have enjoyed over the years.

Now it is our turn to raise enough money to save the Hall for future generations. We need to raise about £100,000 to save the Hall and start an improvement programme. We only have two years, and the management committee needs your help to raise this money. Many of the groups that use the Hall are willing to hold events to raise funds but your help is crucial too.

Initially, we would like to hear your thoughts and ideas on raising this money and on the Hall's future. We are holding a meeting in the Hall

on the 9th of May at 8pm, which is open to everyone in the parish, and to any other interested parties. Please come along. This is your hall and with your help we can save it.



LIFE ALONG THE A370



Speed: This major North Somerset link road has become a fast, congested and increasingly stressful reality for those living alongside it and striving to retain a cohesive community.

Cleanliness: The A370 can get conspicuously unclean - a problem the Parish Council are trying to mitigate, to what extent can be afforded, by the employment of a parish maintenance contractor. This contractor will periodically clean the bus stop areas and keep the lay-bys in good order.

Community: There is no viable continuous footway on the Bristol to Weston side of the road. There are no satisfactory provisions for crossing this dangerous road - even to catch a bus, let alone for normal purposes of local conviviality. The road presents a brute of a social problem for those living along it who might seek neighbourly concourse, or decide to pop on the bus from a stop on the other side of the road. The A370 provides a hideously unfriendly inhibition to local people's freedom of movement!

Crime: Proximity to the M5 junction means everyone has to be sensitive to opportunistic crime. Most reported crime in the Parish is in lay-bys and tends to be concentrated on incidents such as assaults related to vehicle occupants.

Progress: Are our worries about the problems of 'community' along the A370 significant? Is 'community' what the residents of Hewish want, or given the problems raised above, is life along the A370 relatively ok? Let us know what you think.

FASTER BROADBAND

It is terrific news that the Parish has now been included in the 2nd phase roll out of fast broadband. However, the organisation running the roll-out still has to appoint a contractor for North Somerset, and we will not know exactly what is on

offer, or what financial incentives to property owners might be available, until that contractor is appointed. At that time, Parish Councillors will be represented at a workshop, planned via North Somerset Council, that will hopefully explain all.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Sadly, especially as we hear regular complaints about traffic speed on the A370 and through the lanes, we only had three volunteers for a re-start of SpeedWatch. As one of those volunteers is now leaving the district, the Parish Council has reluctantly decided to hold in abeyance its plan to re-introduce Community SpeedWatch to the Parish.

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