



PUXTON AND HEWISH COMMUNITY NEWS

Life At the Heart of the North Somerset Levels

AUTUMN 2017

VILLAGE HALL COUNTDOWN



Our Village Hall in Maysgreen Lane relies totally, for its operating funds, on the support of the Parish and its surrounding community of users and fund-raisers. This treasured community asset was hard fought for during the early 1960s. A band of local organisations and individuals got together to form the Hewish Social Committee. The committee beavered away assiduously over some five years to raise the money, acquire a leasehold site, and build the Hall we know today.

The Hall opened in 1965. The present lease runs out in May 2019 – **in just 18 months time**. The lease will not be renewed, but we do have an opportunity to buy the freehold if we can raise the £85000 asking price. If we are not able to raise the purchase price at least, (we will eventually need a bit more for some repairs), the Hall will close in May 2019. With your help, we should be able to reach our initial fund-raising target by next June.

The Hall Committee is able to put £10,000 into the 'Save Our Hall' fund. The Parish Council, having sought the views of residents over the past year, has agreed in principle to contribute £40,000 from the Hewish and Puxton Community Fund (the details of it being a grant, a loan, or a mixture of the two yet to be finalised). The Hewish and District Women's Institute have raised a magnificent £667.50 via a fund-raising Cream Tea. We realistically, therefore, need to urgently raise some £35,000 to secure the Hall's future.

Lynda Redding is leading a stalwart band of fund-raisers in this, and is urgently seeking your help. If you are able to make a financial contribution to the 'Save Our Hall' fund, however small... or however large!... it will be very welcome. Your contribution will be acknowledged and will be logged into the fund. In the (unlikely!) event that the needed amount is not raised, and the Hall closes, your contribution will be returned to you.

Please send cheques, made payable to **Hewish Social Committee**, to Lynda Redding, Chair, Village Hall Fund-raising Committee, at The Grange, Wick Road, West Huish BS24 6RR, or to the Parish Clerk (who is also Secretary & Treasurer of the Village Hall Committee) at 18 Mitford Slade Court, Mendip Road, Yatton BS49 4JG.



MORE HOUSES FOR PUXTON & HEWISH?



Across the nation, central government is pressing for more houses to be built, particularly 'affordable' ones. Whilst some are concerned that new homes will negatively impact upon their way of life and on the efficiency of the local infrastructure and services, others see an opportunity to build a more closely knit and more socially vibrant community that will command a better infrastructure and improved services. This dilemma – largely imposed by central government - is being keenly felt in North Somerset at the moment as it attempts to balance the provision of homes with the provision of employment, in the hope that our area does not simply become a commuter dormitory for Bristol.

With proposals being thrashed out for Yatton, Congresbury, Sandford and Banwell, Puxton and Hewish remain untouched by the pressure to develop a new homes agenda. There is an assumption that, being on a flood plain, such development is not possible in our Parish. There are many landowners within the Parish who have pockets of land that would appear ideal for the building of a few homes - just a few; not vast estates! They may ask why, given years of housing development on flood plains, in Weston-super-Mare and Portishead for example, it is not possible to build on suitable plots of land in the Parish of Puxton.

If we are to have a vision of our Parish – where it is, why it is, what it has and what we, its residents, want for the future – the place of affordable homes, and the provision of adequate infrastructure and services has to be at least considered as a part of developing that vision.

Where do we stand, as a community, on the issue of housing need and its possible future impact on our Parish? Is it something we should ignore, or should a 'Vision for Puxton' be on everyone's lips, on the Parish Council agenda, and the topic of serious debate at Village Hall meetings?

PARISH E-MAIL REGISTER

Older folk often curse those electronics more modern than the telephone, for causing a breakdown in personal communication – one real person with another real person. Nevertheless, texts, e-mails and the internet are facts of modern living and we increasingly have to embrace them. We live in a very dispersed community here in Puxton and Hewish; one that is not easy to get around. When the Parish Council wants to communicate, as with this Newsletter, or the Village Hall wants to communicate as with the Save Our Hall fund raising effort or with events calendars, there is the Parish Council website.

However, to more positively engage with everyone in our community it would be wonderful if we could have, as many parishes already do, a Parish E-mail directory (under the safekeeping of the Parish Council) that would enable the Council and the community to get in touch with each other more pro-actively and more efficiently than we presently can. If you see the benefits of such a directory, please let the Parish Clerk have your e-mail address so that we can make a start on a controlled and considerably used improvement to the means by which we keep in touch.

clerk@puxtonparishcouncil.org.uk



FASTER BROADBAND



It is terrific news that the Parish has now been included in the 2nd phase roll out of fast broadband. After all the uncertainty of recent years we in phase 2 will at least be ending up with a better product than those who benefited from the phase 1 roll-out.

Gigaclear will be installing a new Fibre To The Premises broadband network in our area over the next 3 years bringing speeds from 50Mbps (£41.30 per month) up to 1000Mbps (£76.60 per month). There is an activation fee of £100 and a charge (£130) for taking fibre from your front door to your router. This may not be a cheap option, but you do end up with genuine fibre to home super fast broadband, rather than the half way house of fibre to cabinet that BT have rolled out in the first phase.

Gigaclear and CDS are currently finalising the rollout schedule for the coverage area and will send out communications to the properties involved as soon as the scheduling process is complete. In the meantime you may register your interest by visiting <https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/connectingdevonandsomerset> and typing in your postcode. This does not commit you to anything, it just allows Gigaclear to keep you informed on progress with the rollout. You can find out more about 'Connecting Devon and Somerset' by going to www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk.



The band, long time Hall hirers for practice sessions, are giving a Christmas Concert in the Hall, at 7:30pm, on Friday December 8th next.

Do come to this Save-Our-Hall fund-raising event - it will be huge fun.

Tickets are £7.50 each and include a glass of mulled wine and mince pie (*provided by Woodspring Dog Club*) & refreshments to purchase. **They and can be obtained by an e-mailed order to:** clerk@puxtonparishcouncil.org.uk with pre-payment being made online via Nat West Bank: to: **Hewish Social Committee:** sort code 60-23-32, account number 72305258. **Please be sure to include your name and initials in the payment reference.**

Alternatively, pay by cheque, made payable to **Hewish Social Committee** and post it to **The Clerk, Puxton Parish Council, 18 Mitford Slade Court, Mendip Road, Yatton BS49 4JG.**

PUXTON MOOR

Puxton Moor, can be accessed down Puxton Moor Lane, an unmade track just past the 'posted' narrows, as you approach the long straight stretch of road to Nye. The Moor is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is some 72 hectares of pasture, networked with species-rich rhynes under the management of Avon Wildlife Trust.

The rhynes are full of rare plants such as frogbit and rootless duckweed, along with many scarce invertebrates such as hairy dragonfly and water scorpion. Reed and sedge warblers are found in the rhynes, and migrating whimbrel are often seen here in the spring. During the spring and summer, ground nesting birds such as skylark are found in the fields, and lesser whitethroat and reed bunting can be heard in areas of wet scrub. The site also contains evidence of Roman habitation and Medieval earthwork.



QUIET LANES



Various parish councils in North Somerset are investigating the possibility of establishing a network of Quiet Lanes. We have been asked to look at what might be possible for Puxton, so the topic was an agenda item at the September 7th Parish Council meeting. There is a brief description of Quiet Lanes below, culled from a Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) brochure.

For free brochure download visit: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads>. The supporting Department of Transport Quiet Lane regulations are at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100303233328/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/homezones/>

Country Lanes are an integral part of our rural environment, but the volume and speed of traffic, and the presence of heavy lorries can make them uninviting and intimidating. Via the 'Transport Act 2000' and the Department of Transport's 'The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006', Local authorities can designate country lanes as Quiet Lanes. These lanes can promote environmentally sustainable transport and lower speed limits. Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads catering for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and the mobility-impaired, encouraging drivers to respect other road users. They can encourage journeys on foot or bicycle, and for recreation. Lower speed limits (ideally to 20mph) and discrete signage can encourage drivers to slow down and promote a more tranquil rural environment. Quiet Lanes can be single roads or a network of lanes which can provide alternative, more tranquil routes, and also links to public rights of way. By reducing the intimidating effects of traffic on rural roads, building community links and encouraging healthy, recreational activities, Quiet Lanes play a key role in improving quality of life. A successful Quiet Lane looks similar to the existing lane; it should protect and enhance local character and distinctiveness, perhaps with the help of soft landscaping and engineered methods. Signs should be discrete, (the ones pictured are the official Quiet Lane signs) whilst indicating clearly that road users are in a Quiet Lane. Approach signage could route traffic away from a Quiet Lane, which might have a narrow lane entrance to deter through traffic. Currently, no user group has priority on any lane. CPRE believes motorised traffic should respect the presence of walkers, cyclists and horse riders who should have priority on a Quiet Lane. Quiet Lanes are essentially self-enforcing. Enforcement largely depends on advertising, and maintaining public awareness.



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. One volunteer has left the district, so the Parish Council has reluctantly decided to hold in abeyance its plan to re-introduce Community SpeedWatch to the Parish.



MENDIP VALE MEDICAL PRACTICE

During the past year, there have been a great number of changes to our medical services and it has been a little difficult to keep up! To get the latest information on how it affects you, visit: <http://www.mendipvale.nhs.uk/info.aspx?p=9> and click on '2017' to download the latest 'Patient Information Leaflet': it details the full range of services on offer.

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