



Hemyock Parish Council

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

Held on Wednesday, 15 May 2024

At the Parish Hall

Present: Councillors P Doble (Chairman), S Clist, A Doble, Lawrence, Moon, Talbot, Summers and Ward together with Mrs McGeever (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors Matthews and Povah

Councillor P Doble (Chairman) opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed all those present from the parish including representatives from local organisations and groups to the meeting.

The Parish Council wished to recognise individuals in the parish who had made a significant input to village life. Presentations were made to:

Heather Stallard for her work as a Parish Councillor

Karen Pinder for her work at the Garages which was used by the Youth Club, Scouts and other village organisations and

Sara Carpenter for her work in setting up the Community Fridge.

The Chairman then thanked Ellishayes Burger Van for providing the refreshments.

Chairman's Report

It was with great sadness our Clerk, Donna was taken very ill and passed away earlier this year after battling with cancer. We had to rally around and find a new Clerk. We found Sue, who is a great asset to us. She has kept us on the straight and narrow, advising and helping us when we are unsure of process. We are grateful that she has taken us on!! Penny and Kelly were a huge help working as a team to sort out problems and to help keep us functioning, so thank you. Also, Stuart has been changing the Parish Council to a digital system for the finances, so a big thank you there too. Another thank you to all the other Councillors for everything they do, we all work well as a team to do the best for our village, we are all volunteers and give our time for free for Hemyock.

Projects this year

- We have done emergency drainage at Longmead which needed to be done to prevent the building from flooding, plus a floodgate was fitted to solve the problem.
- We are having cameras fitted at Culmbridge and the Old Milk Factory bridge, which is being paid for by the AONB. Thank you to Lucy for all your support with this project. When fitted, there will be an App that the general public will be able to access to check water levels and to see live streaming of the areas which will make planning journeys easier.
- The community land at Cavanna will hopefully be handed to Hemyock by the end of September 2024, we look forward to working with the village to use the land in the best way possible for all.
- We have dealt with the trees beside the river at BHLAC to improve safety around the area and prevent damage to the building and we will be reseeded the area shortly.
- The decking on the footbridge has been repaired with some additional work still to do
- We have continued to maintain the footpaths through the village
- We continue to support the various groups and clubs in the village, the Cricket club, Senior and Junior Football clubs, Twinning, Blackdown Healthy Living Centre.
- Supporting the Community Larder

Unfortunately, vandalism is becoming a problem in the village. Recently the public toilets were set alight which resulted in the Fire Brigade being called put the fire out. A big thank you to Emma for cleaning the toilets and Ian who helps repair some of the damage.

Longmead is another place we are seeing vandalism with graffiti on the football boards and damage to the building.

The Youth Club has re-opened with good success and well attended. It's great to see somewhere for the young people of the village to meet, and we are grateful to the volunteers who support this.

One of the big success stories is the food larder, started by Sarah Bitmead. The popularity and need for this soon outgrew its location and we were pleased to help relocate it to BHLAC, working with the charity Foodsave to reduce food waste. This project has really taken off and is well used by the whole village, so far 2.2 tons of food has been used by residents preventing this going to landfill.

A highlight of the year, which the Council were happy to support was the King's Coronation celebrations organised by Sue Scantlebury and her team. A wonderful weekend was had by all with something for everyone. A date for your diaries is 29th June this year where Sue and her team are putting together Hemyock Day at Longmead. Again, the Council are fully behind this and we are sure it will be a huge success.

Following the reports that were presented (see Appendix), Councillor P Doble, Chairman, asked for questions from those present.

Councillor Lawrence reminded residents that volunteers were required for the new weather warning app that was being developed by Connecting the Culm.

A request was made for the Village Noticeboard to be repaired.

Councillor P Doble then thanked everyone for attending commenting that it was good to see such good community spirit.

Appendix

Reports from clubs and organisations

Community Larder

It had started as a small operation and now ran out of the BHLAC and since its opening at the Community Larder had moved 4 tons of food worth £15,000. The Community Fridge was a huge asset to residents and saved a significant amount of food waste. The Community Larder were grateful for the grant from the Parish Council that paid the rent of the room required to house the larder and its fridges. Thanks, were also given to all the volunteers. The Community Larder would be operating summer hours shortly from 6-7pm.

The Garages

The Garages continue to provide a home for several organisations including the newly formed Youth Club which has eighteen (18) members and the Scouts which welcomes around one hundred (100) members each week.

It is a well-used village asset and there are some ongoing maintenance issues including the floor which need to be resolved.

Hemyock Youth Football Club Report – March 2024

Our Teams and Members

Currently, Hemyock Youth Football Club proudly boasts a total of 79 registered children, demonstrating a thriving community of young football enthusiasts. The club offers training sessions for U14s, providing valuable opportunities for skill development and camaraderie.

Training sessions and matches are available for U9s, U11s, and U16s, catering to a diverse range of age groups within the club.

U9s Performance - The U9s team has seen significant growth with the addition of new players, including 5 girls. We now have 26 players signed on and a regular attendance of 20+ at training sessions. Our performance this season includes 5 wins, 14 losses, and 3 draws.

U11s Performance - The U11s team has demonstrated notable progression throughout the season, displaying an improved understanding of tactics and skill execution. With 7 wins, 4 losses, and 3 draws, the team has shown promising results and has advanced to the final of the Devon Plate competition.

U14s - The U14s training group consists of 4-8 children, with some utilizing the sessions for their schools Duke of Edinburgh program. However, concerns arise regarding the availability of coaching staff for this age group in the upcoming season.

U16s Performance - The U16s team has enjoyed remarkable success, maintained a consistent cohort and focusing on a possession-based style of play. With 5 wins, 1 loss, and 3 draws, they currently hold the 2nd position in the table.

Positive Culture

The club emphasizes the importance of a supportive and encouraging culture, evident in the players and parent's attitudes during matches. This positive environment contributes significantly to the players development and enjoyment of the sport.

Coaching Recruitment

Looking towards the next season, there is a need to attract additional coaches, particularly to support the training of U7s due to increased interest. Moreover, additional coaching staff across all age groups would facilitate the club's growth and development.

Finances

Despite increased costs the club's finances are stable thanks to the high level of player sign ups and through initiatives such as running a café during home matches for the U11s. Efforts are also underway to secure funding for essential infrastructure improvements, such as line marker storage and a permanent respect barrier around the pitch. Additionally, plans to enhance the playing surface aim to address recurring issues of game cancellations due to flooding.

Welfare

There are no club welfare issues to report, indicating a safe and supportive environment for all members. We regularly invite anonymous feedback from players and parents/guardians.

Communications

The club is actively engaged in gathering photos and video footage for an end-of-season video, showcasing the vibrant atmosphere and sense of community at Hemyock. This initiative aims to attract new children and coaches, highlighting the club as an inclusive and welcoming place to play football.

Player Survey - A recent survey of our players determined the following information:

- 69% of respondents live within 3 miles of the village centre
- For 50% of respondents the club is there only sporting activity outside of school
- 96% of respondents would like better training facilities that are local
- 85% of respondents have been with the club for less than 4 years

In conclusion, the season so far for Hemyock Youth Football Club has been marked by positive achievements and there are many opportunities for growth. With a dedicated team of players, coaches, and supporters, the club continues to foster a positive environment for youth football development while striving for excellence on and off the pitch. To make our next strides forwards we need to attract coaches and improve the playing and training surfaces.

Dan Lyus, Chairman Hemyock Youth Football Club

HEMYOCK TENNIS CLUB

LONGMEAD, HEMYOCK, DEVON, EX15 3SG

LTA MEMBER NO: DEV 418

Annual Report for the season 2023 / 2024 ending 31st March 2024

In April 2023, our courts finally, finally got a fresh coat of paint. It all happened rather quickly and at short notice, but thankfully without disruption to the beginning of the league matches. The contractors worked very hard and even left a small batch of each colour for retouching in the event of minor damage.

Jerry will cover membership specifics in his report, but it's good to see adult numbers holding up quite well, and especially good to see a number of new members on the courts.

Junior membership numbers continue to be very encouraging, keeping Dan Sizer very busy, and the youngsters know they have to get their names down very quickly for the junior camps that Dan runs in the Easter and Summer breaks. Dan has also been well occupied coaching seniors, both one to one and group sessions.

Malcolm and Karen have done a great job captaining their respective league teams. Hemyock A maintained their Division 3 status with a successful play-off match versus the team that came second in Division 4. Hemyock B were pipped to an automatic promotion spot by just half a point and were narrowly beaten by Elms in the play-off match. The quality of tennis and competitive spirit is a credit to

all those who've taken part and of course to Malcolm & Karen. I can vouch for the fact that being captain is occasionally er... slightly stressful, so well done both and well done everyone.

Despite some unfavourable weather conditions, a number of friendly matches have been played v Upottery and Upottery have also had the use of the courts throughout the winter months on Wednesday evenings. Efforts to arrange winter league came to nothing and anyone who's travelled to Minehead on a fine summers evening will be very pleased about not having to make the journey in winter.

Perhaps competition tennis is as good a time as any to mention how nice it is to once more have full use of Longmead kitchen area again.

We held 2 social events this year - the strawberries & tennis event in August, and the skittles evening just after Christmas. Both well attended and enjoyed by all, and thank you to Julie's hard work arranging the summer event, and to Ian for bringing along a quiz to the skittles evening.

Committee membership will be dealt with formally later on in the meeting, but Rachel Bussell is standing down this year after some 16 years on the committee, the last number of years as club welfare officer. We have been very fortunate to have Rachel as a committee member to be willing to fill this important role. Welfare officer is one of those jobs one hopes not to need but is very thankful to have someone in post when one does. Indeed, the LTA have made it clear that a club can expect to be audited occasionally - so we are very pleased to be able to say that Grant has agreed to step into the role, something we are very pleased about.

The Thursday and Saturday social tennis sessions seem to continue to be well attended, and despite the best efforts of the weather to deter mid-week tennis, the courts have been busy throughout the year. Finally, I'd like to thank the entire membership for continuing to support Hemyock Tennis Club, but particularly the committee members for their dedication and hard work in keeping the club ticking along.

Annual Report of The Blackdown Community Shed for the Hemyock Parish Council, 15/5/2024
2023/2024 has been a very good year for the Blackdown Community Shed.

We started the year in April 2023 with approximately 6 fully active members and have ended the year with 12 active members.

We opened two mornings a week, Sunday and Monday, 9-1, and since September 2023 have now opened a third session on a Thursday morning. Again, 9-1.

Our weekly visits have increased accordingly over the year, with members visiting the Shed approximately 20-22 times a week. Some members attend one day a week, others may come to all three sessions. Approximately a third of our current members are women.

In April 2023 our annual subscriptions were £18 a year and £3 a visit and, since April 2024, this has increased to £24 a year and £3 a visit.

Over the last year we have contributed to Village causes in the following manner:

- Moved and refurbished the Wendy House from the Parish Hall playground to the Primary school.
- Created racking for the Parish Stores in The Garages for the storage of road signs.
- Created more Soldier silhouettes for the Churchyard Remembrance Day display.
- Created new and repaired old Notice boards for Longmead and the Healthy Living Centre.
- Assisted in creating the 'Field' signage for the Lights Parade.

We have received donations for some of the above work. In addition, we received a grant of £210 from the Church Rooms Committee in March of this year.

We have improved facilities within the Shed itself and now have new larger Drill Press and Chop Saw in addition to a new Woodturning Lathe. These new pieces of equipment have been provided by members of the Shed Committee themselves. We now have three woodturning lathes in operation almost every session and they are proving very popular. We sold some old equipment, such as the older drill press and chop saw, and other donated items and have raised over £400 over the last year.

Safety training and safe use of machinery has been paramount throughout the year and newcomers are made aware of all safety procedures relating to each tool and piece of equipment in the Shed.

However, the Keyholders are not instructors, we are facilitators and fellow members and whilst we have run various 'courses' throughout the year, such as box making run by Paul Steed, we operate as a members club, where members help and assist other members.

Looking to the future, we believe £24 a year to join is still a reasonably affordable sum and, combined with £3 a visit, should enable us to continue to fund the shed for the coming year. However, any contributions towards our increasing running costs will obviously be sought out and welcomed. We are reaching the visit level where, governed by safe numbers in the Shed, we may either have to open another session during the week or start to limit numbers on particular days.

However, opening another session is dependent on finding willing volunteers to become keyholders and reduce the strain on our current staff. Presently all sessions are facilitated by Jon and Richard and we are actively trying to limit them to two sessions week. They are volunteers not employees.

In closing, 2023/2024 has been a very good year for the Shed and we hope to continue to assist with projects in the village but more importantly to provide somewhere for our members to try something new, practice old skills or just relax and chat. To be a member of our Shed, you don't have to make anything, except maybe the occasional tea.

Longmead Environmental Area Report for the Parish AGM

It has been another busy year at Longmead environmental area, with an increasing number of people involved in the project, and some exciting developments.

The year has been dogged by the vagaries of the British weather and the feeling that yes, we are in the midst of climate change. Last Spring was unseasonably dry, this one, so far, incredibly wet. The start of Summer was hot and the Autumn and Winter mild and very wet.

Great to see the pond once again fill, but even in this small area we can see the change in wildlife numbers - what was good for early emerging butterflies was not great for the resident frog populations.

Progress made this year

- Refurbished and additional bird boxes made by the Community Shedders.
- The tree hub where over 55 people were provided with tree whips courtesy of DWT Saving Britain's Treescapes initiative.
- Community tidy ups
- Regular visits from Green Days adult day care charity who do all sorts of practical environmental work.
- Visits of the Hemyock Beavers who started to fill a 'bug hotel'.

Challenges

- Finding enough volunteers.
- Managing the petty vandalism that has seen debris thrown in the pond, littering and wood 'repurposed'.
- Striking the right balance between managing the area and ensuring that it is wildlife friendly.
- Sourcing funds for future projects.

Looking forward

- Himalayan balsam control.
- Seeking advice for how to enrich the grassland which is mostly devoid of variety and native wildflowers.
- Using the money in account with HPC to provide willow structure courses and the possibility of a sculpture.
- Completion of the bug hotel.
- Session with the Scouts to do field craft skills and environmental management session.

I would like to thank all who have been involved in and supported the project this year: the parish council, the AONB, the Longmead Management Committee, Devon Wildlife Trust, volunteers from Green Days and the marvellous local volunteers who turn up to cut, weed, plant and generally help out when asked. Your input is invaluable!

Trish Slater
May, 2024

Skatepark

Please see the slides that accompany this report on the Parish Council website.

The Skatepark design has now been approved by Mid Devon District Council and the task of fundraising begins with applications going to the lottery, national governing bodies and through crowdfunding.

Community events have been held to progress to this stage and over 1200 people have attended. There have also been 12 people trained in emergency first aid and 200 free coaching sessions.

Ongoing community involvement with local groups such as the school and the youth club are planned and with 15 skateboards, 10 scooters and the required safety gear coaching lessons will be provided at the summer fete. It is hoped that skateboarding will become a PE activity at the school in the future and locally-based fund raising activities will continue to support the community.

Becky and Andy Brooke

Blackdown Hills Parish Network

The group was formed in 2009 when it was first mooted that Devon County Council would become an unitary authority to ensure that the rural Blackdown communities had a voice as, for example, Hemyock was considered to be a part of Cullompton.

It was considered a pilot scheme at the time but is now a recognised body that allows the 39 parishes of the Blackdown Hills to speak with one voice on important issues and it has three members on the Blackdown Hills National Landscape committee as it is now known.

The Parish Network meets with local MPs on a regular basis to raise awareness of the key issues faced by residents.

The Parish Network has worked on or is campaigning for a number of projects including:

- High speed broadband
- Planning guidelines
- Design guidelines
- Sustainability
- Light pollution
- Highways and litter
- Use of commercial SATNAVs

- Water quality
- Thermal imaging cameras
- EV point funding
- Potential for an UBER type facility whereby local residents would be able to contact other residents via an app with a view to journey sharing

The Parish Network is grateful for the support it receives from Parish Council.

Heather Stallard

Blackdown Hills Repair Café

The slides accompanying this report are available on the Parish Council website.

The presentation covered:

- Blackdown Hills Repair Café
- Apple Pressing
- Eco-hub Group
- BioChar

The Repair Café was launched in 2018 and since then had received 4160 items for repair with 3697 being repairable which had saved a significant number of items (4 tons) being sent to landfill sites. The repairs are carried out for a donation and, if applicable, the cost of parts. There is a large team of volunteers who turn up to repair items from televisions to glass vases and garden equipment to wooden ornaments.

Through funding, the group has been able to take out a lease on a workshop which allows items brought the Repair Café to be stored awaiting parts.

The Apple Pressing section has equipment that can be lent out to allow local communities to make apple juice or cider.

The Eco-hub is a half (1/2) acre of land at Combe Raleigh that is used to produce vegetables for local community larders. Visitors to the Eco-hub are most welcome on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

BioChar is a particular type of charcoal that has water holding properties and trials are ongoing alongside Plymouth University to ascertain which plants flourish in that environment.

The Repair Café is grateful for the support it receives from the Parish Council.

Stephan Lehner

Report from the Parish's Mid Devon District Councillors

Councillor Bradshaw had the Cabinet portfolio for Climate Change and this encompassed the Blackdown Hills National Landscape, grants for bio-diversity, EV charging points, solar panels and wind turbines and the key aim of achieving Net Zero by 2030. A key point in this was that planning now required a 10% net gain.

Councillor Clist reported that MDDC were looking to provide a total of 500 affordable or social-rent homes during the next five (5) years and would be working with Community Land Trusts to make this happen.

The need for housing was very apparent and in part dependent upon the Cullompton Relief Road without which the Culm Garden Village to the east of Cullompton could not be built. Progress on the Eastern Urban extension at Tiverton was being made and MDDC believed it had a 5-year land supply.

The State of the District Debate had been opportunity to encourage town, parish, and community engagement and MDDC were actively seeking such involvement.

Another key aim of MDDC was to balance the books and maintain services.

It was hoped funding would be available from the devolution deal with included Devon County Council and Torbay with Plymouth abstaining from the deal.

The District Councillors thanked the Parish Council for their support.

Hemyock Day

With six weeks to go Hemyock Day will be a day of celebrating just being Hemyock at Longmead on Saturday 29th June. The planning is done.

Starting at midday with the Big Picnic - attendees are encouraged to walk or bike to Longmead - bring a picnic, a chair, a gazebo even. Food outlets will be there providing BBQ, grill, pizza, ice cream and cakes. There will be a bar to purchase soft and alcoholic drinks, teas and coffees.

For children there will be a magician and balloon modeller and bouncy castles, one for younger children the other for everyone.

Entertainment starts at 3pm with several bands playing sets til 10pm.

Sporty kids can have a kick about with Hemyock Youth Football Club and Hemyock Tennis Club will have their ball machine up and running in the tennis courts.

We will have the first Hemyock Dog Show.

Everything is in place - except the weather!