

Symondsbury Parish Council

AUTUMN 2024 NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Welcome to the new parish of Symondsbury – particularly to residents formerly of Allington parish in Atrim and Dottery, and the West Mead and Lodge Lane estate. The number of residents is roughly the same as before, since the West Cliff estate in West Bay is now part of the new Bridport.

Symondsbury has become one of the largest parishes in Dorset. In the north west are the headwaters of the rivers Char and Winniford. In the south Eype includes the beach from Thorncombe Beacon to the margins of West Bay. The Simene flows to the east of the village, as it always has. But now the parish reaches round the northwest of Bridport and includes a beautiful stretch of the river Brit where otters are resident and have been known to catch salmon. Our parish has gained the estate of 21st Century houses in West Mead, but it no longer includes all of the Foundry Lea development, where 760 new dwellings are to be built. Symondsbury Parish Council is still monitoring developments on the

old Vearse Farm (see the report overleaf).

With a new government in Westminster, a new unitary authority in Dorchester and new boundaries to the parish, the parish council seeks to serve the interests of residents by steering a path at the local levels through the changes ahead.

The map is taken from the interactive map on dorsetcouncil.gov.uk



Introducing the Parish Council

The Parish Council usually meets on the second Thursday of the month (excluding August) at 7pm at Symondsbury School. If you have an issue that you wish to bring to the attention of the Council, please contact Natalie Bealing, the Parish Clerk. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

There are seven Councillors, each of whom takes on certain areas of responsibility (see list on back cover). The agenda of an upcoming meeting and minutes of the previous meeting can be found on noticeboards around the parish and on the website www.symondsbury-pc.gov.uk

Symondsbury Parish Honours Local Residents

Symondsbury Parish Council (SPC) recently announced the winners of the 2024 Community Champions Awards. The awards were presented at St. John the Baptist Church in Symondsbury on Monday 22 July, as part of an event to recognise some of the pupils at Symondsbury Primary School. It was the perfect event at which to make the awards.

The awards scheme, which was launched in 2023, highlights the outstanding activities of individuals within our local community. The recipients were all nominated for the great work that they do to benefit the community living or working in the parish.

This year's recipients are John West for everything he has done for the West Bay community and for establishing the West Bay Discovery Centre, which attracts tourists and local residents alike; Wendy Lees, for selflessly helping the Ukrainian refugees to settle into our community; and Selwyn Holmes for his long service as a Councillor on the Parish Council and as a Governor of Symondsbury Primary School as well as his work setting up the Dorset Craft Guild.



The three award winners (centre) receiving their gifts in St John The Baptist Church, Symondsbury, from Cllrs Steve Ralph and Steve Evans.

Everyone was presented with a commemorative 'Neil Barnes' photograph of Colmer's Hill, inscribed with a small plaque and a voucher to spend on the garden. Congratulations all.

Do you know anyone who goes the extra mile? Nominations for 2025 will open again in the New Year. The nomination form can be found in the 'News' section of the Symondsbury Parish Council website at <http://www.symondsbury-pc.gov.uk/>

Symondsbury Parish Council Allotments – applications welcome!

Symondsbury Parish Council manages two sets of allotments. The first is at Pine View on the western outskirts of Bridport whilst the second is just off the A35 on West Road. We are fortunate to have an excellent set of plot holders who work together to maintain the plots.

When the allotments are fully allocated, we operate a waiting list. If you are interested in applying for an allotment, contact the clerk@symondsbury-pc.gov.uk We will arrange a preliminary visit with a councillor.

This notice may be of particular interest to residents who have recently joined the parish.

BANP (Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan)

When SPC's Cllr Paul Hartman couldn't attend, new parish councillor Ruth Elwes represented the Council at a meeting of the BANP steering group in the Town Council offices in Bridport in the summer. This is her edited report.

BANP sets out criteria which underpin planning decisions in our area, reflecting the characteristics of our surroundings and perceived needs. Crucially, it fits in with the emerging Dorset Local Plan.

At the meeting it was noted that the

new government will be changing the National Planning Policy Framework, which underpins Local Plans. Central government now expects local authorities (Dorset Council) to approve planning applications for new housing to meet the national need. That makes our local plan, which reflects local needs and preferences, even more important than before.

An enormous amount of work has been carried out by many volunteers, councillors and officers in the formulation of the plan. BANP came into existence in 2019 and its five-year review is now due. The steering group had identified 37

potential amendments. Many of these refer to changes brought about by Symondsbury/Bridport boundary changes and the amalgamation of formerly independent parishes into the new Town Council of an enlarged Bridport, (which now has a population of over 15,000). A detailed list of changes to the document is due to be presented to the Joint Councils Committee in Dorchester in October after it has been reviewed.

Readers unfamiliar with this plan can look it up online.

<https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/projects/neighbourhood-plan/>

Footpaths/Bridleways

Footpaths and bridleways run all through Symondsbury Parish and are there for the enjoyment of everyone. Footpaths are usually soft surface while bridleways have a hard surface. There are a few rules ie shut gates, keep dogs on leads when walking through livestock, take litter home, only foot traffic on footpaths and coastal paths, horses and mountain bikers should **only** use bridleways **NOT FOOTPATHS** as hooves and tyres do a lot of damage to the soft surface during wet conditions, turning them to mud for walkers.

Sadly we are noticing a lot of dog waste left on footpaths/bridleways by irresponsible dog owners. The waste is either left, picked up in a poo bag then the bag thrown into the bushes or the bag left neatly tied on the side of the path to pick up on the owners return but is forgotten and sits there for weeks! Please, pick up your dogs waste and take it home or put it in a bin. If you don't wish to carry it with you, you can pick up the poo in a bag then throw the contents into the bushes and take the empty bag home. You can always have the decency to flick the dog waste off the path using a stick not leave it for others to tread in!

During Spring and early Summer bracken brambles and grasses shoot up and with bracken lower leaf span of over a metre they soon block paths. The lower bracken fronds can house ticks and fleas and also hide adders – if you are planning a nice walk it would be beneficial to carry a stout stick, with little effort you can flick off the bracken fronds thus helping to clear paths for others. If a path is badly overgrown or blocked by a fallen tree etc then you can report it

to the Parish Council who will inform the Ranger team at Dorset Council, but with the thousands of paths throughout Dorset and only one team it may take a while for them to get round to that particular path.

Steve Ralph

Dorset Council – Kerbside Recycling Bins

Dorset Council is now accepting the following items in household recycling bins:

- Food cartons and drinks cartons (e.g. soup, milk, juice, etc.)
- Cardboard tube-shaped containers (e.g. curved crisps, hot chocolate, gravy granules)
- Foil containers (e.g. pie trays, take-away dishes)
- Foil sheets (e.g. to cover food or wrap sandwiches)
- Foil lids (e.g. yoghurts, noodles)

Find out more at: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/cartons-and-foil-now-accepted-in-kerbside-recycling-bins-across-dorset>



Foundry Lea, Vearse Farm

The first phase of construction is well advanced on Foundry Lea, where 760 houses are to be built. Richard Patch, an employee of MJL Constructions explained that they are the lead contractors for the first year, while the infrastructure is being put in. They are following the advice of RSK Geoscience Consultants to minimise harm to the environment. Only when the groundwork has been completed can the building of houses begin.

Large 'attenuation ponds' have been dug. In the completed development these are designed to collect run-off from impervious roofs and roads. Without these measures, the increased speed of the run-off would cause greater river turbidity (bad for wildlife) and threaten floods downstream. During the early stages the contractors are pumping out groundwater into these reservoirs to dry out the soil and thus allow a sewer network to be built below the normal water table deep underground. These pipes will flow into a giant subterranean sump at the downstream end of the site, which

will hold sewage back in times of high rainfall, to be released when the river system isn't under so much pressure. The contractors are putting measures in place to minimise the effect of unpleasant odours.

During construction the Environment Agency is monitoring the water quality in the Simene every three months to see if any sediment in the run-off from the site is clouding the river. But that isn't the only way for soil to leave the site. Mud on West Road and dust in the air are issues flagged up by residents. Mitigation measures have met with varying degrees of success. Lorries leaving the site are cleaned with a pressure washer. Construction traffic is another concern. Lorry drivers coming through Bridport, rather than on the designated route, have been reprimanded, and two repeat offenders have been banned from the site.

When people move into the new homes, their exit route will be by way of a bridge and then a causeway across the water meadow between the Simene and West Road. The 65-metre causeway, which has to

be 1.6 metres above the highest previous flood level, will have eleven 900mm pipes running through, which is considered adequate to allow floodwater in the meadow to drain.

A start date for a roundabout to replace the dangerous junction on the A35 has not been announced. The Section 106 legal agreement confirms that the occupation of any dwelling will not be permitted until there is a provisional completion of the Miles Cross Junction Works. However, the agreement does allow for the construction of houses at the same time as the junction works are underway. National Highways has confirmed that the overall design of the roundabout and its safety audit has now been agreed. However, it is also confirmed that the construction management plan for the creation of the roundabout is yet to be agreed. It is hoped that the roundabout will be completed as speedily as possible. There is no provision for a pedestrian crossing for users of the footpath between Symondsbury and Higher Eype.

Bob Hamblett

Reflections

I was surprised to have been asked to write something for the parish newsletter – I had thought those days were over. Having retired after forty-one years representing Broadoak on Symondsbury Parish Council, I saw it as an opportunity to reflect a little on changes. Having kept most parish council minutes over those years, I decided – on moving house – that this was something that did not need to be held on to and I now have regrets as they were a document of history to which I could have referred, and also a reminder of colleagues over those years – hey ho!

As a thirty-year old (still sadly a rare thing for a Councillor), I was in awe of my responsibility and attended with diligence our bi-monthly meetings, lasting not much more than an hour. Planning was the main thing on the agenda, as with now, but there was no National Planning Policy Framework to which to refer, and applications were judged on a basic code and common sense views of the local community.

At that time, there were two local charities which yielded a payment of only a few pounds each per annum. One was for the relief of the poor of the parish – difficult to identify in this day and age, and one for educational purposes – the Bilshay and Bonham Meadow charities. We eventually folded those and invested the remaining cash in similar projects; in a way it was a shame to dispense with these historic institutions, established over one hundred years ago, but the administration was potentially more than the value of the bequests. They had served their purpose over the years. Now we have funds that can be used for community projects such as improving our allotments, supporting the churches and School, and enhancing the environment.

We have had few dramatic incidences, and a couple of enquiries, both related to land and footpaths. No need for police to be called to meetings, or financial irregularities



to be investigated, but simple solid work. So why bother being a Parish Councillor? Though we often consider ourselves ignored by those in authority above us, we are always there, now month after month, caring for the areas we represent, be it getting potholes filled, planning details checked, small projects funded. With our links with other local parishes, thanks to the Bridport Local Area Partnership, we have the opportunity to put forward concerns that then require notice from those higher up the governmental ladder, and that is no small achievement.

Amanda Streatfeild

River Brit Catchment Natural Flood Management Project – REWIGGLING THE SIMENE

Dorset National Landscape* is the body channelling £0.673 billion of central government funds to an ambitious flood mitigation project in the Brit catchment, much on the Simene. These measures were developed with input from West Dorset Wilding and Dorset Wildlife Trust.

The aim is to reduce flood risk in our area by slowing down the run-off from fields when it rains. We had nine named storms last winter. Houses were flooded, cars got stranded and huge quantities of topsoil were washed out to sea. These measures taken upstream on the Simene should relieve pressure on the whole catchment, thereby reducing floods and the loss of topsoil.

The Project website reads in part: “In February we learned the bid was successful and a fully costed programme is being submitted. Delivery will take place between October 2024 and March 2027. The project includes a range of solutions: storage of excess rainfall in the field, including reversion of arable and intensively managed grassland to semi-natural grassland and wetlands; One hectare of in-field flood storage, through the creation of small bunds that will hold back water on high-risk overland flow routes; 12 km of leaky dams to slow the flow of water through the catchment, trapping sediment along the way; Five hectares of floodplain reconnection, lowering riverbanks to allow more water onto the floodplain, and stored in wetland areas, scrapes, and ponds.



This increases storage capacity of floodwaters in time of need. (Edited extract)

This is a partnership between national government, local government, charities, and landowners. Ian Rees of Dorset Natural Landscape wrote: “From September onwards, we will be looking to install the Natural Flood Management measures throughout the Brit catchment, including on the River Simene. The exact timings of when this will happen have yet to be confirmed, but we hope that citizen scientists will be a part of monitoring their effectiveness.” The Simene accounts for 45% of the locations.

If you want to get involved in checking on the health of the river(s) Bob Hamblett can put you in touch with the bodies monitoring the health of our waterways and the creatures that inhabit our rivers.

**Dorset National Landscape was formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)*

Flood Wardens

The Environment Agency, the government body tasked with looking after our rivers and streams, is recruiting Flood Wardens to keep an eye on the local watercourses and to leap into action in times of flood. If you are interested, contact the Parish Clerk.

Bob Hamblett

Parish Council Personnel

Steve Ralph

Councillor and Chair – Eype

01308 424645

dorset.baggie@gmail.com

Responsibilities:

Footpaths, Planning

Barry Bates

Councillor – West Allington

barrycbates@outlook.com

Responsibilities:

Allotments

Bob Hamblett

Councillor – West Allington

cllr.bob@outlook.com

Responsibilities:

Resilience, Parish Newsletter, Waste Disposal, Coastal Matters, Climate and Waterways

Ruth Elwes

Councillor – North Chideock

ruthelwes@aol.com

Responsibilities:

Planning

Steve Evans

Councillor – Eype

Responsibilities:

Climate and Waterways, Planning, BLAP Steering Group, Community Awards, DAPTC Western Area Committee

Sir Philip Colfox

Councillor – Symondsburry

philip@colfox.eu

Responsibilities:

Trees and Ancient Monuments

Paul Hartmann

Councillor – Watton

paulgileshartmann@gmail.com

Responsibilities:

Foundry Lea/Vearse Farm Working Group, Planning, Community Governance Review, Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan – JCC, Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan – Steering Group

Natalie Bealing

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

clerk@symondsburry-pc.gov.uk

Responsibilities: BLAP Parish Liaison, Newsletter (deputy), Lengthsman Link; Community Awards (deputy)

