

BABCARY NEWS AND VIEWS

April is AGM month! The PCC have theirs on Friday 5th April, the Playing Field Committee on Tuesday 9th and the Community Committee on Friday 19th. Please support them if you can.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells is coming to take a service here in Babcary Church on Sunday 14th April. This is an honour, so we hope there will be a good turnout!

Apologies for the ink covered Newsletters which some of you received in both February and March. We had two faulty toners. If you would prefer to receive the Newsletter in electronic form please let us know. It can also be found on the Parish website.

You will see in the Six Pilgrims Magazine that a Men's Breakfast Club is being launched. We already have one of these in Babcary – the men are always to be found congregating round the coffee machine and putting the world to rights at the Saturday Shop!

Many thanks to Jane Brock for another interesting article on Chris Harrison and Wheatlawn Farm – see inside.

Deadline for May contributions: 22nd April

Email: carolehartnell@googlemail.com.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARISH COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the Parish Council meeting on Monday 11th March 2024.

Present: Phil Sketchley (PS) (Chair) Steve Street (SS) , Melinda Terleske,(MT) Glynis Kingston (GK) , Damien Pick (DP) and Graham Hughes (GH)

Henry Hobhouse (HH) Somerset Council .

Apologies, Simon Hoar and Jasmine Tucker.

Matters Arising

1.The 'sink hole " on the Foddington Road continues to show signs of collapse, HH was asked to follow up this temporary fix to get a long-term solution.

2. There was a further report on the issues of the ditches and blocked culverts at the entrance to Olive Farm and other properties. It was apparent that there was a significant administrative muddle at Somerset Council with the job being given no less than three case numbers and the job being lost in the system. HH undertook to follow this up with John Nicholson of Highways. HH also reported that Somerset Council were contracting with a new contractor from 1st April, Kier.

* Following the meeting a lengthy email had been received from John Nicholson shedding some light on this problem. This has been circulated to the PC members for follow-up discussions.

3. 20 Plenty signs, PS reported that he had re-fixed the sign, recovered from North Street hedge to the Chevron sign on the bend at Old School House. He had no joy in identifying who had removed the other signs apart from one (on Church Street) possibly having been removed by British Telecom or Highways contractors on North Street.

HH suggested that an application for funds should be made to Highways England, this could be used for other signs requesting drivers to slow down, rather than the 20 Plenty signs that are not universally liked by residents and seem to have a limited impact.

Finance

Capital Reserve Account stands at £13,173.45 Current Account balance £50.

Planning Consultation

1. Planning Application 24/00515/HOU at the Brambles, Main Street for the erection of a Triple Carport. There had been some representations from neighbouring properties, but these did not qualify as planning objections. The meeting concluded that there was limited visual impact or traffic impact, however in reporting back to the Council a request was to be made to seek some restriction on any further backland development.
2. Newlands Farm - decision awaited.

Correspondence

PS reported on a training course, given by SALC (Somerset Association of Local Councils) that he had attended on the internal and external audit process which suggested a higher degree of involvement by the Parish Councillors, for the protection of the Clerk. It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting when the Clerk and Chair will be present and PS offered assistance in monitoring a spread sheet he had created for the Clerk, showing the budget and variances to budget which, it was agreed, would be a useful reporting tool.

Highways Maintenance Devolution - no action at present although this seemed to be a way that the Council could devolve responsibility to Parish Councils and foist the cost on them.

Flood Cafe - this didn't seem directly relevant to the Parish.

Bristol Medical School looking to do research on flood victims and communities, again not directly relevant to the Parish.

Shepton Mallet Theatre, there was an initiative to take this into Community ownership. It was felt that although the Parish Council support the initiative, we would not be in a position to back this with a financial contribution.

AOB

HH reported that the debate around Council Recycling Sites had been deferred and the most likely outcome was limiting opening times.

The Bonfire on the Playing Field, for the past many years no 'contributions' to the Bonfire were to take place until 1st September. This has been abused and it is not known if this was by a resident or someone outside the village. It was agreed to request the Playing Field Committee remove the rubbish that had been placed on the bonfire and follow this up with signs and/or cameras or possibly a digital lock on the main gate, to deter fly-tippers.

The Parish Council have endeavoured to support local horse riders regarding traffic. There was a request that Horse riders ride in single file around sharp bends, such as outside the Old School House and the Church, where oncoming drivers are unable to see horses.

Date and time of next meeting 8 pm Monday 8th April in the Hut

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

Services

Sunday	7 th April	10.30	N. Barrow	Family service	
Sunday	14th April	10.30	Babcary	Communion	With the Bishop of Bath & Wells
Sunday	21 st April	10.30	Alford	Matins	
Sunday	28 th April	10.30	Hornblotton	Communion	& baptism
Sunday	5 th May	10.30	Lovington	family service	

CHURCH ROTAS

	Cleaning	Flowers	Coffee	Sidesmen
7 th April	Simon & Shirley	Elisabeth	Mary and Sally	
14 th April	Jan and Lucy	Lucy		
21 st April	Sarah and Sarah	Su		
28 th April	Elisabeth & Mary	Karen		
5 th May	Judy and Sally	Rita		

Bell ringers

The current team of ringers have reached a state of perfection (in their view) and are now ready to teach some new ringers. If you'd like to give ringing a try just come along 6pm on a Tuesday and give it a go. Suitable for age 9 to 90, excellent upper body exercise but no great strength required – it's all in the timing.

Bishop of Bath & Wells visiting Babcary

On **Sunday 14th April** the Rt Rev Michael Beasley, the Bishop of Bath & Wells, will be coming to the 10.30 service here to preach and join us for coffee and cake afterwards. You will almost certainly have seen him escorting the King during the coronation and you may recall his predecessor on Blackadder. It is a great honour to have the Bishop with us and we hope everyone will come along to meet him.



Churchyard clear up

On Saturday 6th April we'll have a spring clean tidy up in the churchyard to prepare for the Bishop. Please come along from 10am onwards, bring assorted gardening implements and mow, strim, weed, prune and generally titivate the churchyard. There will be a list of tasks on the church door. Everyone welcome. Coffee & cake at half time.

PCC AGM

The annual meeting of the Parochial Church Council will be held at 7pm on Friday 5th April in the church. Everyone is welcome - especially if you could spare it bit of time to help look after this beautiful old building.

PLAYING FIELD COMMITTEE

Bonfire site

Please note that the bonfire site is NOT open for depositing combustible waste (or non combustible!) until 1st September. If you see anyone dumping material on the bonfire please take a note (and a picture) of their registration number and pass it on to the Playing Field Committee.

Tennis Subs

The annual tennis subs are now due please. £50 for families, £25 for adults or £10 for children. Please send a BACS payment to Babcary Playing Field Committee, sort code 09 01 55 account number 7452 5181 and add you surname as the reference. The padlock combination will be changed shortly.

Playing Field AGM

The playing field AGM is at 7pm on Tuesday 9th April in the hut. If you have any thoughts on the running of the playing field, the upkeep of the Hut, the playground facilities and events such as the Road Race, Sports Day or Bonfire Night please come along.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

If you have any thoughts or suggestions as to how our Summer Fete, Harvest Supper, Christmas Bazaar or Community Shop should be run, then please come along to our AGM on Friday 19th April at 7pm in the Hut. Any offers of help would be most welcome.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Shop Rota

6 th April	Rita and Carole	4 th May	Gilli and Shirley
13 th April	Judy and Jane	11 th May	Sally and Vee
20 th April	Jan and Karen	18 th May	Jules and Caroline R
27 th April	Caroline and TracyAnne	25 th May	Helen and Teresa
		1 st June	Lucy and Jenny

SCH

Mobile Library

Calls at the bus shelter from 12.55 – 1.15pm on the 11th April.

BABCARY LITTER PICK

SATURDAY 9TH MARCH 2024

Thanks to Lucy and her twenty or so valiant helpers the lanes were litter free – for a day or two at least

NEWS VIEWS AND COMMENTS

Congratulations to Lynda and Roger Lamb who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary on the 6th April.

Sad to note that Sycamore Farm butchers at Keinton Mandeville have closed. Jonathan hopes to reopen at a new location - if he can find somewhere suitable.

Life at Wheatlawn Farm

Last month we read of home life for Chris and his parents and that theme is carried on with a bit of insight into dairy farming back then.

Sadly, in the early 1950s, Edith (Chris's grandmother) developed what would today be termed dementia. And it fell to Mary, for several years, to look after her and deal with some worrying and upsetting behaviour as well as her own arduous and laborious work of running the house with none of the modern conveniences that we nowadays take for granted, in this country, at least.

Joe, Chris's father, had gradually bought some cows following his arrival at Wheatlawn with no livestock whatsoever. He originally bought a mixture of Shorthorns, Ayrshires, Jerseys, Guernseys and Friesians but eventually favoured Guernsey cattle because there was a 25% premium for their creamier milk back then (all milk being purchased by the Milk Marketing Board -created in 1933 to deal with a farming depression and prices in freefall).* Sometimes Joe would go to Sparkford cattle market to buy cows (the market was behind the Sparkford Inn) and simply walk them home! Farmers who lived further afield who had purchased cows would just walk them down the road to the station at Sparkford and put them on the train. The auctioneer's sticker on the animal's back would help identify that the cattle went to the correct owner at the other end of the journey. Cattle were loaded at pens in the station yard on the Babcary side of the main Sparkford road whereas milk would be loaded on the opposite side of the road, there being a lane down between the Haynes Manuals building and the bridge.

The first of the utilities arrived at Wheatlawn at the end of the 1940s and surprisingly, it was the telephone. Back then the General Post Office (GPO) was responsible for all letters and communications (including the telephone). The phone wasn't installed with the primary aim of phoning for the doctor or the vet in an emergency – for that you would have gone to a phone box down in Babcary or the one at South Barrow by the Church – no – this was for AI. Obviously not Artificial Intelligence back then but artificial insemination to impregnate the cows as Joe wasn't fond of bulls around the place and, as time was of the essence, he had to phone for this service. The GPO told him the installation of a phone line would be a waste because they would never see their installation costs back, but Joe went ahead anyway. It cost him £46 per annum. Chris believes that all the utilities; the water, telephone and the rates cost about £25 every 6 months when he left school in 1963.

In 1954 mains water came to Wheatlawn Farm. This meant no more pumping water up from the well and lugging heavy buckets around. Mary could now have a Rayburn installed (it's still there today) which produced hot water and was better to cook on than a paraffin stove. The cows, when out to grass, would previously have had to drink from ponds and when housed in the winter, they would have to drink from a pond in the yard.

Electricity, was still a few years away. They had managed to supplement the Aladdin lamp and a Tilley lamp (a small paraffin lamp with a metal handle that made it portable) with a 110v small battery generator which powered a few lights but it wasn't sufficient to boil a kettle.

In 1958 they invested in the first of four diesel generators to supply them with electric. The distance of the farm from the lane at the top of the hill made the installation of an electricity supply prohibitively expensive. The first generator was a single cylinder and they progressed through to double cylinder models in future years. Life still wasn't completely plain sailing with the generator – if you wanted to boil a kettle you put a light on first to make the generator start up and Chris could tell from the note of its engine when a problem was about to occur and he would rush out to the shed where it was stored if he was able to; it would spit O rings out and the rods would push oil out onto the floor. One generator would stick shut and another wouldn't stop. Chris, inevitably, ended up being more in tune with the generators' problems than the engineer who maintained it.

Mains electricity was finally installed in 2014 – they managed with a fridge powered by gas until then.

More next month.

*The Milk Marketing Board, which had been set up to stabilise milk prices and to guarantee every farmer's milk was purchased, collected and marketed, was disbanded in 1994 in the name of deregulation. There were 35,000 dairy farms in the UK in the mid-1990s. Now there are around 7,500.

WEATHER REPORT

After a slightly drier January the wet weather returned to Babcary in February with 125.9mm of rain falling during the month. There were hardly any dry days. For Babcary this was the third wettest February since 1980. If there is any consolation this station consistently measures monthly rainfall below the regional average which for February was 171mm making it regionally the second wettest since records began in 1871 and the wettest for over 100 years.

Steve Street

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday 5 th April	PCC AGM	7pm Babcary church
Saturday 6 th April	Churchyard Spring Clean	10pm onwards
Monday 8 th April	PC Meeting	8pm in the Hut
Tuesday 9 th April	PF AGM	7pm in the Hut
Thursday 11 th April	Mobile Library	12.55 – 1.15pm Bus shelter
Sunday 14 th April	Service with the Bishop	10.30am Babcary church
Friday 18 th April	Comm Comm AGM	7pm in the Hut
Every Tuesday	Bell Ringing	6pm in the church
Every Saturday	Community Shop	9.30 – 11am in the hut