

ZEALS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - 4 MAY 2023

This has been strange for the country as a whole..

We started last year with the community coming together to celebrate the wonderful Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Who would have guessed that only a few months later we would all be mourning her death. We have come full circle in the calendar year and this weekend sees a new moment in history as we see Charles III crowned. Again, the village will come together on Sunday to enjoy this momentous occasion as a community.

Planning

There were 25 planning applications during the year. Some of which we objected to and some which we had no objection to. We were delighted to see such a strong local turn out for the PL/2022/07519 - the Old Cressbeds on a very cold wet winters evening. We were amazing lucky to have had a wonderful chairman of planning in ex CLLR Hole-Jones and we are very sorry that she has now stepped down.

Green Pastures

The past couple of years have seen a change at Green Pastures with the ending of the Youth Trust tenancy. Seeds 4 Success have now taken over a new tenancy and built their pavilion on site. We will hear from Jaki Farrell in just a moment.

Parish Steward

Cllr Gibbons has taken on the roll of liaising with with our Parish Steward and ensures that we make full use of the time our Steward spends in our parish. We are only allotted a short amount of time each month so any specific requests need to be sent to Cllr Gibbons in plenty of time.

Defibrillator

We have two defibrillators in the village. One is now on the outside wall of the school and is accessible 24/7. The school kindly run the regular checks on it. what three words is **riots.wakes.profit** The other is also accessible 24/7 and is situated at the junction of Tulse Hill and Portnells Lane, next to the notice board. The what3words are **crisps.degragding.budgeted** Cllr Patch now kindly does the monthly checks for this one. We have arranged a training evening from South West Ambulance Service to come and show us the basics of how to use a defibrillator. It will be in the Hall here and not until October 26th so plenty of time to get it in the diary. This will not be onerous and we will open it up to the local villages as any training may one day be useful.

Playground

This year we have refitted the gated on the playground to stop it closing so ferociously, and Cllr Patch has taken over the regular checks to make sure it remains in tiptop condition for the youngsters that use it.

Website

The Parish Council Website is long <https://www.hugofox.com/community/zeals-parish-council-10408/home> but if you search Zeals it should come up. We may look into updating this in the next year or so. All agendas, minutes and financial documents are on this website. Also if we have news or road closures they are added to the site for you to stay up to date.

Finances

In an effort to mitigate the cost of living rises we were able to keep this year's precept the same as last year. With bills going up we may not keep it so low in the coming years but hope to be able to offset some of the rising costs by looking at our own income and expenditure. Following a review and lengthy discussion we have raised the rental received from our tenants at Leaping Frogs only in line with the terms of their lease. We will also be reviewing the rental on our allotments later this evening.

Donations

The Council makes donations to Mere Link Scheme, St Martins PCC, Zeals Village News and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. This year we have also donated towards the coronation lunch.

Councillors

To all our Councillors thank you for all the time and effort put in to support the community. We were very sorry that Cllr Hole-Jones has resigned from the Parish Council but following all the processes required we were able to co-opt a new councillor to bring us up to the full complement again. Paul Thomas will be co-opted at the Annual Parish Council Meeting immediately after this one. I must thank Cllr Gray for stepping into the chair's seat while I was away earlier this year. I knew when I left I was leaving the Parish Council in good hands and I believe her meeting was even shorter than mine. Cllr D'Ambrumenil has done a fantastic job liaising with the Parish Council and the Church over the year and in particular all the arrangements for the Coronation lunch on top of all she does for the Alms Houses. Did you notice the war memorial and how clean it was. Cllr Corbin was the brains behind that and managed to secure a significant share of the cleaning costs. Thanks also for all his work with Zeals Youth Trust over the years.

We are also grateful to our Wiltshire Councillor George Jeans for his work and commitment to our parish and I'd especially like to thank our ex clerk Graham Edgar for putting up with me over the last few years. We wish him a very happy and long retirement looking after his grandchildren and enjoying the garden. We were able to welcome Fran Hill into the role part way through the year.



Whitesheet
CE Primary Academy

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office@whitesheet.dsat.org.uk
Executive Headteacher: Mrs Emily Mullord
Assistant Headteacher: Tamsin Edmed

25th April 2023

Whitesheet Report

School is graded 'Good' by Ofsted in December 2021 and currently has a 'Good' Church School evaluation – due to be re-inspected in the 2023/2024 academic year.

The school currently has 39 pupils on roll, across two classes. The children are taught in 3 phase groups in the morning for core learning time.

End of academic year predictions look excellent with 100% of all Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard or better in reading, writing and maths. Our phonics teaching is excellent, and results are always in line or better than National comparisons.

We have a higher than average percentage of children with Special Educational Needs (although partly due to small numbers) who are well supported through a nurturing approach and specific targets. The school works well with external professionals and agencies. The backlog of assessments at Local Authority level is causing a delay in some children getting the assessments or diagnosis they need.

We are well supported by our Trust, DSAT, who provide excellent training for all staff across curriculum areas and monitor our quality of teaching and learning.

We have positive relationships with our families and are working closely with our PTA who are raising funds to support curriculum enrichment opportunities. Last term they contributed to 6 music workshops across different music genres, and we have booked a company to teach the children how to use green screens as part of their computing education. Each week the children also have 2 hours of specialist PE provision delivered by trained coaches. We pay into the Gillingham school sports scheme to enable pupils in all years to compete or play with other schools, for example, next week Woodpeckers are going to be attending a gymnastics event.

We have a local Governing Body who support and challenge leadership across the school and meet 6 times a year and would welcome other people from the wider community who may be interested in school Governance.

We are currently developing our 'Secret Garden' to include zones for the children to use as part of their outdoor forest school experience. This includes renovating the pond, installing a mud kitchen, and creating four flower beds for all children to grow their own produce and flowers.

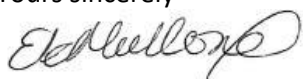


We also have our swimming pool to use during the Summer. In the Summer holidays, we enabled local families to open the pool and swim at a discounted rate which we intend to repeat this coming Summer.

The school has managed to maintain a balanced budget even though there have been pay rises and increase in fuel costs. We are also increasingly offering the school for use by different organisations for local events.

Advertising is a challenge and we would like to add a road sign to the main road to indicate our school is here and would appreciate any help with this.

Yours sincerely



Emily Mullord

Executive Headteacher

[#climbingtonewheightstogether](#)

Zeals P.C. meeting 4-5-23

As I'm sure you know, St.Martin's church (and the PCC) lost yet another priest a year ago. And you might also be aware that the Diocese has recently decided to appoint a new Rector (when someone suitable can be found) for the Benefice of Upper Stour to include the Parish of Maiden Bradley. The two PCCs will remain independent, but I am already working with some of their PCC to help arrange their finances.

Regarding Zeals church: obviously during Covid we lost much of the monthly incomes and sadly also lost most of our larger, regular benefactor/donors. Our 'volunteer/support team' has been working very hard with catering events etc, to try to replenish our funds but, along with St Mary's, Kilmington, Zeals is struggling the most.

We appreciate the £250 churchyard-grant annually from the Parish Council, but would welcome an upward review after so many static years please, if that would be possible? Or at least could it be paid during the mowing season rather than each November, as cash-flow is tight?

You maybe aware that Sue Evans, who has done a brilliant Churchwarden job during the last few years, had to step down due to a severe medical problem. I visited her in hospital yesterday and, although she isn't yet fully mobile, she seems to be regaining her positive attitude. A few weeks ago, Ross Coad was voted onto the PCC at the APCM, as Zeals churchwarden, but we have vacancy for a second churchwarden volunteer.

No doubt Ross will be encouraging some regular donors to support St Martins, as due to the sad demise of a number of it's main supporters during 2020-2022, we urgently need new donors please.

I have some donation forms, if anyone would like to help us maintain the church, for Zeals during the next hundred + years, or information is on the website www.upperstour.co.uk

Some Search engines try offer upperstour.net, which was an old website from about 10 years ago.

Thank you



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END OF YEAR REPORT.

Dear Parish Council,

3rd May 2023

Leaping Frogs is now in its 11th year at its current site and during this period we have developed the site into an asset for the local community. We care for 80 children per day and have currently 27 staff on role. We currently have over 70 children on our waiting list with calls daily for places. We have become so popular that we have children being registered for a place before they are born and this year the first before they have even been conceived!

Leaping Frogs is extremely popular because it is a unique nursery experience for young children and their families. We have our petting farm with animals, such as goats and ponies and our 'Old School' ethos of learning through play indoors and outdoors, without modern day screens, with a hands-on approach. Children are nurtured to become independent, confident and happy individuals, regardless of their background and abilities.

The last few years have been extremely challenging for many early year's settings and unfortunately, we have seen many close their doors because they cannot afford to run. Covid was a difficult period, Leaping Frogs managed to stay open during all the lockdowns, with a few members of key staff, providing care for key workers so they could continue to work. However, it was a difficult time financially. Government funding is also a reason why many nurseries have struggled to survive. Unfortunately, Early Years is not a very well supported group and although the 30hrs free childcare funding is very good for families it makes things very difficult for nurseries. This is because they do not give enough money per child an hour and nurseries are not allowed to charge a top up fee. Many nurseries are having to charge for extras to try and make up some money. Because, of this it is very hard to hire qualified staff because the hourly rates nurseries can afford to pay staff are minimum wage. This is another reason nurseries have been closing because they cannot find qualified staffing. We have found a way around this by training our own. We have 6 members of staff training for Early Years qualifications at present, either developing their skills further or doing their initial training. We are very proud to have trained 3 members of staff to complete their Early years teacher qualification whilst working at Leaping Frogs. This does involve a great deal of commitment by the staff who are training, other staff mentoring and does present lots of difficulties managing staffing, ratios and the financial commitments which arise from this. The budget in April 2023 will bring some more challenges this year regarding funding as they have announced that they are going to offer younger children 15hrs free funding, increasing to 30hrs, meaning that nurseries are going to have a reduced hourly rate than they have been charging for this age group. Again, wonderful for parents but very difficult for nurseries. We are unsure how this will be rolled out yet and hope we will be able to overcome the financial problems this could incur. Our aim continues to keep the fees as low as possible so that all local families can afford to send their children. This we have achieved, even with a necessary fee increase in April we are still extremely competitive, without lots of added on hidden extra charges that other nurseries are charging. We are proud of this, considering the fact that we do offer a lot of unique extras, such as our animals.

The animals at Leaping Frogs are a wonderful and are an extremely popular asset. The goats play with the children on the field, jumping in and out of the boats and the ponies are often groomed to look like unicorns! We currently have 7 chicken eggs in our incubator due to hatch the week of May 15th. The children are very excited and have been counting the days down using a visual calendar, so fingers crossed! We also have some new turtles living in tanks in two of our playrooms that were donated to us by local families. The children love to watch them playing in the water and everyone got very excited recently when one laid an egg!

At Leaping Frogs, we have a very strong special educational needs department. We employ a full time Special Educational Needs Coordinator who works very closely with staff, children with additional needs and their families. The level of support we provide is above and beyond what would usually be offered. This includes 1:1 support and special facilities and equipment which we do not charge extra for and do not receive funding for. This year we created two special sensory rooms to support children with Autism and other needs. We fitted sensory lights and equipment based on a space and under water theme.

We are very community conscious and always encourage Whitesheet school and other local schools to have links with us. As you already know from previous years, we feed to approximately 12 different primary schools each year and we have a wide catchment, but we continue to prioritise any families that live in Zeals when allocating places.

At the end of last year, we held fundraisers to buy a defibrillator which is now fitted to the outside of our building, it can be used by us and the local community. This was important to us, following a sudden event last summer with a member of our family. We have registered the defibrillator on the network, it is mounted on the outside of our building in a heated/lit up box. Key staff members were trained recently on site in emergency first aid, including CPR and Defib training as an extra to their regular first aid training.

We have strong links with Bramley House Care Home in Mere and regularly take children to visit them in the Seeds for Success minibus which we hire. We also invite them to the setting for special occasions, such as next Tuesday when we are having a Coronation tea party on the playground for all the children. We also send them videos of our Christmas production which we hold in the Lecture Hall in Mere every year.

We have lots of fun events planned to celebrate the Kings coronation in addition to our tea party. We have invited children to bake cakes with their families at home as part of a baking and decorating contest and as we say at the nursery 'The process and learning opportunities are always more important than the end product'! We are all dressing up as Kings and Queens one day and the children are taking part in a special royal themed drama sessions with Victoria.

Parents and families are welcomed into to the setting often. We recently had a fabulous tea party when we invited the children's Mums into the setting to be served cakes and tea by their children. Father's Day is just around the corner and plans for a special event for them is being discussed. We had a big Easter egg hunt on our field (with the Easter Bunny) for all the children in each room and their families. Sports Day is planned in June (on Green Pastures field) when all the families come to cheer their children on in traditional sports day races and a special graduation ceremony and party for the children leaving to start school in September.

The children in the pre-school rooms have started voting for their next topic/themes between two choices. Recently they chose South Africa and Under the Sea. Children's parents and family members are encouraged to come in to talk about subjects related to our themes. We also have a VIP of the week in each room, this involves a child being chosen to be the VIP for the week, they are invited to bring in special things from home to show their friends. This sometimes also includes dad's coming with tractors, parents, siblings and pets. We even had a grandparent ride to nursery on his horse to show the children. This also helps children to understand different cultures and family set ups.

It's never a dull day at Leaping Frogs and as always learning through play and having great fun is always our motto!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Becky and Victoria

Leaping Frogs Day Nursery CIC

Report from Cllr George Jeans for Annual Parish Meeting 2023

I with the help of others are erecting around 60 flags around Mere as my part with Mere Town Council to celebrate The Coronation of Charles 111 and Queen Camila. I am very pleased the other parishes in the Mere Division of Wiltshire Council are well underway with their celebratory events, that is West Knoyle, Kilmington have joined with Stourton and Gasper plus Zeals all having organized events, well done to all.

The Wiltshire Strategic Planning Committee occasionally decide planning applications rather than the more local Southern Area Planning Committee which I sit on. Recently an application for a proposal in Mere for a Gypsy and Travellers site has been put before the Strategic Committee rather than the Southern Area planning Committee. The planning process can be complicated. Wiltshire has no DPD (Development Plan Document) to include a 5 year land supply for Market Housing or Gypsy and Travellers sites, it finds itself harder to refuse sites than it would if it had specified sites. This lack of DPD was one of the reasons a development of 4 Gypsy and Travellers pitches were allowed yesterday in the open countryside where most development would not be agreed.

I get many complaints regarding highway condition. Wiltshire Council has been awarded £22,924,000 from the Government's Highways Maintenance Fund for 2023/24 to pay for a range of highways maintenance and improvement programmes including resurfacing, new road markings, replacing traffic signs and signals, and filling potholes. The council has also received an additional £3,684,800 from the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Pothole Fund which will be used to target pothole hotspots around the county. Some say the Mere Division's potholes could use most of the £3.5 million.

Highways of Wiltshire in many areas are in a poor condition in my opinion. Wiltshire Council is working with a new local highways maintenance contractor from Saturday 1 April, as Milestone Infrastructure begins its £80m, five-year contract to help make the county's highways more resilient. Milestone Infrastructure will also employ the council's Parish Stewards, who work closely with Wiltshire's town and parish councils to fix small highways issues in their communities. Focusing on Wiltshire's carbon and social value commitments will be a key driver for Milestone. People with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and care leavers, will be offered employment and training opportunities.

I understand eventually Wiltshire possibly could get an overprovision of school places as the projections allow for over 55 accommodation etc., this category does not usually produce very many children.

Wiltshire Council encourage their councillors to continually ask, have you or someone you know considered fostering. Wiltshire Council still campaign to find more foster carers for children in Wiltshire. Fostering with your local council means all money is spent on frontline services and the child is more likely to be able to stay close to their school, friends and family networks. On my travels I note this campaign is not just limited to Wiltshire.

I am happy to try and answer any questions on any Wiltshire Councillor subject.

Report from PCSO for Annual Parish Meeting 2023

Good afternoon,

Firstly, I hope you are doing well.

Secondly, please find below the policing report we have from JAN 2023 – APRIL 2023

- We have had no reports for your area in regard to RTC's

I have been made aware of local concerns around vehicles speeding PCSO HUNT and PC OBERN who are now covering your area will try and get out on speeding enquires in the near future to address this concern. Also, I have been approached by a few residents in the WESTFIELDS area in regard to Anti-social behaviour taking place, Patrols will be increased of that area and residents will be engaged with to determine what is occurring.

- We had one report of a catalytic converter being stolen, this was a single incident and there is no pattern or themes around this incident.
- We have had one report of windows being damaged to a caravan in the area again this was a single report with no pattern or themes to the incident.
- We have had one report of a vehicle keys and vehicle stolen this was reported to Dorset Police and is being looked in to by them as it falls just into their area.
- We have had no reports involving antisocial behaviour, owing to the concerns of some resident's patrols will be upped in the concerning areas and we encourage any concerns to be reported via 101/999.
- Lastly there have been a couple of Domestic related incidents reported to Wiltshire police but there are no patterns or themes around these incidents.

Furthermore, I end on speaking about the Bobby Van that Wiltshire police offer which is a free service. If you are not already aware; Anyone can refer someone to the Bobby Van so any residents (anywhere in Wiltshire) can book an appointment if they are over 60 (or over 18 and over and registered disabled) or you can book an appointment for a friend, family member or neighbour etc. Their contact number is: 01225 256867, their email address is: bobbyvan@wiltshire.police.uk and their website link is: [Bobby Van \(wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk\)](http://Bobby Van (wiltshirebobbyvan.org.uk))

The Bobby Van are an amazing tool to assist Wiltshire police, they offer a free home security service as well as a stay safe online service which will hopefully prevent any fraud related offences occurring. They will be easily identified and have valid ID on them to prevent any concerns for the local resident.

I hope this information finds you well and assists in your meeting this evening. Again, apologies I am unable to attend but if you require anything further, please do not hesitate to email me.

Hope this info finds you well and assisting in your local meeting

Kind Regards