



View from The Chair

The **Maidenbrook Country Park** (MCP) incorporating the World War 1-commemorative Somerset Wood is a project that we have been working on jointly with our neighbours, West Monkton Parish Council, for the common good of both parishes. The two Parish Councils believe the Maidenbrook Country Park represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enhance the quality of life of our community for generations to come. We think the Country Park will make a real and positive difference to the quality of life of our communities. We haven't been able to say much about the MCP as it has taken longer than we expected to put some fundamental aspects of the project in place due largely to circumstances beyond our control. Thankfully, things have moved on and we want to bring you up to date.

So, what exactly is Maidenbrook Country Park?

At present, it is two fields between Cheddon Village and the A3259, in which 3,500 trees have already been planted by volunteers for the Somerset Wood. That's today's reality and indeed, when the project first saw the light of day, that was the full extent of our ambition. However, at an early stage in the life of the project, we were approached by Ben Ashton of Glebe Farm. He told us that he was planning to build residential housing on some of the farm land and felt that co-operation between us could be mutually beneficial. Following some discussion, Ben offered to make over a substantial amount of the farm's land to the Country Park project and to consult with us on an ongoing basis regarding the nature of his residential scheme. In short, Ben presented himself as a like-minded benefactor with a passionate attachment to the community he grew up in.

For the two Parish Councils, the appeal of this approach was that the additional land from Glebe Farm would literally open up the way to delivering a much bigger benefit to the communities we represent. Instead of the original two Country Park fields, we were now potentially looking at a wide-open, green space stretching from the outskirts of Taunton town via our Country Park and Hestercombe out towards the Quantocks. This extensive area could comfortably accommodate a wide range of native trees, wild-flower meadows, and a network of natural-looking tracks for walking, running and cycling

Even with the inclusion of a Visitor Centre, there was more than enough space to create a calm, tranquil place where a community that is being squeezed by residential development can unwind in a more natural environment. Most important of all, we would be saving the Country Park land from the threat of future development and Glebe Farm from the much denser housing schemes favoured by the mainstream developers.

We therefore agreed to share our country-park plans with the Glebe Farm project team and work with them towards achieving a bigger and better Country Park. As part and parcel of our ongoing dialogue, Ben invited our comments as his residential schemes unfolded and made changes to mitigate what we considered to be negative aspects.

At this point, we must stress that, on all Parish Council business – especially a project as large as this one – we are always careful to exercise the impartiality and due diligence that residents expect of their Parish Council. In order to maintain a safe distance between ourselves and Glebe Farm, we made it clear from the outset that, while working towards a shared vision for the Maidenbrook Country Park, we would be travelling along a parallel but separate path.

An unexpected complication arose, when we received expert advice that the best chance of success for a Country Park planning application incorporating land from Glebe Farm would be to roll it into a joint plan that included the Glebe Farm residential schemes. We decided to do this on the basis that we felt that our 'parallel track' independence could still be maintained. To reinforce this, we made our position clear on two key points: first of all, that we would withdraw from the joint approach if we felt unable to support the final Glebe Farm development; and secondly, that any incorporation of the additional Glebe Farm field into the Country Park would be subject to a mutually-acceptable legal agreement. Both parties now feel the urgent need to seek the

(Continued over)

***Contributions for the October 2021
newsletter to the Parish Clerk by
16th September please!***

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views of the local community before moving forward and both the Country Park and the Glebe Farm teams will be carrying out local consultation. By the time you read this, Rural Solutions will already have held their own exhibition put together from the Glebe Farm perspective, and one or more presentations by the two Parish Councils will follow. At this stage, we wish to make it clear that the Vision Document presented by Rural Solutions is not the only option and the final shape of the Country Park has yet to be decided. Some important unknowns have yet to be resolved – the most important of which is the view of the local community, i.e. the residents in the Cheddon Fitzpaine and West Monkton PCs' Joint Neighbourhood Plan area.

Your participation in – and feedback from – the consultation process is essential, as your input will help determine the final shape of our Maidenbrook Country Park and what goes on around it.

So: talk to us about your Country Park; and talk to Ben about the Glebe Farm residential schemes – nothing is finalised yet!

Denise Webber, Chair, Cheddon Fitzpaine PC

Tel: 01823 451720; Mobile: 07788 522266

Church Window

Cheddon Fitzpaine Church is part of the South Quantock Benefice with West Monkton, Kingston St. Mary & Broomfield. The Benefice Office is open every week-day (except Thursdays) from 9am to 2pm. For enquiries about marriages and baptisms, please contact Administrator, Michele Hardiman, on 01823 451257 or at office@southquantockbenefice.org.uk

Little Seedlings is a friendly place to meet at Cheddon Memorial Hall every Monday. You can drop in anytime between 1:30 and 3.15pm with your babies and toddlers. We are keen to encourage friendship in our local community and offer an informal space for little-ones to interact with other children and for families to get to know each other. For more information, please contact **Reverend Tracey** on 07854 489753.

CHURCH CONTACTS

RECTOR: Rev. Mary Styles

Tel. 01823 451189; e-mail revmarye@gmail.com

Rev Jim Cox

Tel. 07967 817337; e-mail: jimcox11@gmail.com

Rev Tracey Hallett, Church in Community Pioneer

Tel. 07854 489753; e-mail: tracey.hallett@icloud.com

Churchwarden: Diana Taylor, Tel. 07808 158616

Covid-19 regulations are constantly changing, so please contact us or visit the benefice website for up-to-date information on our Church Services.

Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Church '100 Club'

The '100 Club' raises funds to help maintain the Parish Church. We are pleased to announce that the winners of the latest draws are:

June	£50 Liz Thompson	£15 Simon Stone
July	£50 Linda Jenkins	£15 Christine Winter

If you wish to join the 100 Club, please

Contact one of the organisers:

Pauline Stone Tel. 01823 277637

Joan Osmond Tel. 01823 321829

Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall

This is the last newsletter before our up-coming fundraiser event on Saturday, 2nd October, so my message this time is short and sweet: please **PLEASE** support this event (see last page for details). As well as helping your village hall to boost our funds depleted by the pandemic, this will be an excellent opportunity for you to “put on your dancing shoes and dance away the blues” – or just sit and listen to some classic rock music (nothing too heavy!).

We are particularly hoping to attract new residents from our side of Nerrols Drive, many of whom may not yet have seen our wonderful village hall in its rural woodland setting. For you and other first-timers, our post code is TA2 8JY and you access our driveway through the large gate next to the old Hestercombe south-lodge house.

Malcolm Lown, Chairman, Cheddon Fitzpaine

Memorial Hall Trustees Tel. 01823 412750

Email: info@cheddonfitzpainevillagehall.co.uk

Bill Rigby, Hall Manager

Tel. 01823 413925 (*messages answered within 2 working days*) Mobile: 07586 413290;

e-mail: memorialhall@hotmail.co.uk

Somerset Wood report

Discussions continue with the SWT District Council and WM & CF Parish Councils over the management of the fields. The grass has been taken for silage with some areas left uncut for wildlife. The core group of volunteers has continued to visit during the past few months to keep the site tidy. The new saplings planted this year appear to have taken well, and we really are overjoyed at seeing the growth rate of

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others. The site has become a place for respectful commemoration and a refuge from the stresses and strains of daily life.

Pictured below: Happy volunteers; and new growth on two-and-a-half-year saplings.



Alan Hall, Project Leader Tel. 01823 410068
e-mail alanhall@westmonkton.net

Jo Pearson, Volunteer Co-ordinator
Tel. 01823 259478

Area updates

MAIDENBROOK Life for residents having to use Maidenbrook Lane has been fraught of late – a nightmare, some would say – and we feel a few words of explanation would be in order. It all started when the Yallands Hill diversion was badly thought-out by SCC Highways Dept. and drivers who never normally use the lane were apparently being directed along it. Your Parish Council quickly intervened and both signage and barriers were substantially improved. However, items were later wrongly removed by the clean-up gang of a SCC sub-contractor, who had been carrying out other work further down the road. Once again, mayhem ensued and it took another urgent intervention from us to get everything reinstated. Then, on July 23rd – the day the West Monkton road was due to re-open at 6pm – the signs and barriers were wrongly removed early in the morning. No prizes for guessing what happened along the lane and through the village during the day. While we must admit that our contact at SCC's Highways Dept. reacted quickly to fix these problems, it must be said that, on this occasion, communications between them and their sub-contractors have been poor.

NERROLS Northwalls Grange play area The Clerk has contacted the developers on several occasions about

the poor state of the area and the lack of bin emptying. They say they wanted to open the area without further delay and are now addressing all the outstanding quality issues, which they feel are cosmetic in nature (see examples pictures below). Re emptying of bins, it's not clear who's responsible for this. The developer and SWT are currently discussing resolution of the problem.



ROWFORD

On Saturday July 3rd, the area around the Church School was badly hit by flooding, witness this snapshot passed on to Cllr. Woollacott by a local resident. As we all know, extreme weather events



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appear to be on the increase world-wide. To deal with flooding across our county, the Somerset Highways team has a 24/7 emergency response system in place. In the event of flooded roads, you should contact the County Council's Highways Department on 0300 123 2224. This is an office-hours only number. For out of hours response use 101. The 101 police call handlers have direct contact with the Highways Duty Escalation Officer and will inform them of any flood incident.

It's time to get outside again!

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) has launched its new 'Get Outside in Somerset' project to help people regain the confidence to enjoy an active, outdoor life following the easing of covid restrictions. Funded by Somerset County Council Public Health, the project is a joint initiative between SASP, The Community Council for Somerset (CCS), Spark Somerset, and Somerset Wildlife Trust. There's little doubt that being out in the open air brings huge benefits for physical and mental health – which is what we all need due to the pandemic. For more information on the project and to get involved, please visit www.GetOutsideInSomerset.co.uk

Photo competition

We spotted in the last newsletter published by the Quantock Hills team that they are running a photographic competition to find the best images within each of the following categories:

Village Life; People of the Quantocks; and Quantocks Working.

This seems to us like the perfect excuse for anyone with a decent camera and an eye for a good image to head for this Area of Natural Beauty that we are privileged to have not far from our door-steps. Please don't be deterred by the thought that your photographic skills may not be up to it. As the professionals know, it's often down to just being in the right place at the right time. The entry deadline is 31st March, 2022, and you can find full details at:

www.qlps.org/qlps-photo-competition

Parish Council Meetings – 2021

Held at 7pm in the Committee Room at Cheddon Fitzpaine Memorial Hall on the second Monday of the month, these meetings are open to everyone. At time of going to print, covid regulations are once again allowing Parish Council members to meet face-to-face with members of the public in attendance.

**9th August, 13th September, 11th October,
8th November, 13th December.**

CHEDDON FITZPAINE PARISH COUNCILLORS

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PARISH CLERK

Sammie Millard-Jones 07465 405533

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LIVE MUSIC FUNDRAISER!

**CHEDDON FITZPAINE MEMORIAL HALL
at 7:30pm on Saturday, 2nd October**

*Come along, have some fun – and
support your village hall!*

- Live music featuring top local classic-rock covers band

SILVERBACK

- Licenced bar •Raffle •Pop quiz with prizes
The £10 admission price includes a free drink!

The hall will be laid out with cabaret seating and dance-floor so attendance will be limited.

Tickets will go on sale from the beginning of August and can be reserved in advance and purchased nearer the time from:

**Chair of Trustees, Malcolm Lown, on
01823 412750**

or

**Hall Treasurer, Stuart Triggol, on
01823 413459**