

OLD CLEEVE PARISH COUNCIL PARISH MAGAZINE

At our Annual Parish Meeting held in April in Roadwater, we were joined by Councillor Bill Revans, the Leader of the new Somerset Council. Councillor Revans is ultimately in charge of all Somerset Council services and we were pleased to see him so soon after the new Council came into being.

Councillor Revans spoke about the recent change to the Unitary Authority and how this had been a process rather than an event. He hoped that by having one Unitary Authority rather than District and County Councils that they would be more approachable, with more joined-up services. Their aspiration is to make local services work better and also have a stronger voice nationally. Their new Council Plan, that sets out what they want to achieve, is a living document and is available on their website (www.somerset.gov.uk). Councillor Revans is particularly interested in improving educational outcomes, and retaining young people in the area as Somerset has an ageing population where the population has increased by 35,000, but the number of young people has decreased by 5,000. He is keen to work with Town and Parish Councils to effect positive change.

Parish Councillors were able to quiz him on a number of issues of local concern including the non-attendance at our meetings of one of our elected Somerset Councillors, lack of responsiveness to the many issues we raised with the previous Councils, planning issues, safety on the seafront at Blue Anchor and the potential devolution of assets and services. Councillors were broadly reassured by his comments and particularly the willingness to listen and change what has happened previously.

We appreciate this will take time. As a small Parish Council, but one that covers a large geographical area, many of the issues that we raise on behalf of residents are not a high priority for Somerset Council bearing in mind their statutory duties and pressures in relation to adult social care and children's services etc. They are however important to us and both our Councils need to find and be receptive to new ways of working so that all local issues can be dealt with in a timely manner.

A couple of important local issues have moved on a bit since my last update. The long awaited coastal protection works at Blue Anchor have now started with the first 4,500 tonnes of rock having been delivered by sea. Further deliveries will take place to get to the 13,500 tonnes required to complete the scheme. All deliveries should be complete within 32 days after which placing of the rock and re-profiling of the cliff face will take place.

We have also made some progress with Somerset Council following our meeting with them and Carhampton Parish Council to introduce some measures to mitigate the effects of the B3191 Cleeve Hill closure. Details are being finalised and we hope to provide more information shortly.

Many of you who look at our noticeboards or view our website will have seen that we have issued several notices over the last few weeks. Firstly, we are still looking for a Councillor in our Washford Ward. We've had this vacancy since December and so far, no applicants have come forward to fill that role. If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor, please do get in touch.

Secondly, we had no interest in our contract for bus shelter cleaning when first advertised, so this has now being re-advertised. If you are, or if you know of anyone who may be, interested in undertaking this work for us, please contact us for further information. The closing date is 10 June.

Finally, we are again looking for a new Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) after receiving the resignation of Ali, our current Clerk & RFO. Ali, who will be moving to a new job, has only been with us for 16 months but has done a sterling job in making sure that the Parish Council has remained responsive, safe and legal. We are very appreciative of everything that Ali has done for us and wish her well for the future. We hope our adverts for a new Clerk & RFO will result in a new appointment without too much delay.

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Our next meeting is on Monday 19th June Washford Memorial Hall at 7.00pm. Full details will be published on our noticeboards and our website: www.oldcleeveparishcouncil.org nearer the time. Our meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend.

Ian Duncan
Chair, Old Cleeve Parish Council