

OLD CLEEVE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded £14,000 National Lottery grant to help fund new play equipment at Washford Recreation Ground. This is in addition to a £23,000 grant from Somerset Council (funded by developer contributions) so there has been minimal cost to local council taxpayers.

Orders have been placed for a large climbing frame, a new set of swings (including a basket swing), a climber with slide and play tower, plus picnic tables and seating. We are hopeful that the new equipment will be installed before the new year as we know how much, and for how long, local children and their parents have been asking for this. Our thanks go to all those on the council and in the community, and especially our clerk, Andrea, for making this project finally happen.

We are also in the process of applying for a Sports England grant to re-surface the MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) which, if successful, will be a major renovation that will enable new sports such as Pickleball to take place.

The recent Mature Drivers Course, arranged by the parish council, was well attended and provided lots of information to help us continue to drive safely as we age, all presented in an enjoyable format. As well as discussing the causes of accidents and crucially what we can do to avoid them, changes in the law, and general tips for safe driving and awareness were covered.

There were a number of free items to take home, including high-viz jackets, information leaflets and copies of the Highway Code. These road safety events are funded largely through charges levied on Speed Awareness courses and the team visits schools, youth clubs and other organisations through the Avon and Somerset Police area with a number of different presentations available.

We have revised the Parish Plan which sets out our objective to protect and enhance our parish and this will shortly be available on our website. The plan identifies our priorities: Supporting And Improving Safety; Protecting Our Environment; and Building A More Resilient Community. There are detailed activities and targets for each priority, which will be reviewed regularly and updated as new issues arise. Printed copies can also be obtained from the clerk.

Your council continues to press for road safety improvements, one of our identified priorities in the new Parish Plan, and it is clear that some of these will have to be paid for by the parish rather than the County. Changes such as 20mph zones or installation of Speed Indicator Devices, do not happen quickly or cheaply – indeed we have been informed that if Somerset Council send a Highways Engineer to survey or discuss options then we will have to pay for the advice. Implementing a 20mph scheme in parts of Washford is likely to cost in excess of £5000.

The parish council has also resolved to push ahead with the purchase of Puthills Copse, Washford (at the lower end of Bellevue) and to seek ecological and land surveys. The Environment Committee will be looking to involve Somerset Wildlife Trust to see how best the land can be managed to support and enhance biodiversity and will be seeking community views on this project.

During the coming weeks the parish council will be setting its budget against the backdrop of likely increases of county council, fire and police precepts but remaining mindful of the pressures on household budgets.

If you are interested in the work of the parish council, or any of the items mentioned above, please come along to our next meeting on 15th December 7pm at Washford Village Hall or have a look at our website: www.oldcleeveparishcouncil.gov.uk