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Bleadon News

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World War II veteran celebrates 100th birthday and talks about his time as a Prisoner of War.

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New look for Bleadon Youth Club.



Welcome

I hope you enjoy the first edition of the Bleadon News of 2020, under the new editorship of Ellie Young. I will tell you more about me in a minute but for now, I hope you enjoy reading the first of hopefully many editions under my penmanship.

There is nothing like a pandemic to put the world into perspective and I hope the past few months have helped everyone come together for their family, friends and even strangers. I urge my readers to remember to 'be kind' and take this opportunity to grasp life by the reins.

*"Be the change
you wish to see
in the world."*

Mahatma Gandhi



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Meet The Editor...



About me

I would like to start by saying how excited I am to be joining Bleadon News and I hope I can do the job justice after the fantastic work of my predecessor, Kirsten Hemingway, who has been a brilliant support during the creation of my first edition.

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little more about me. I am 25 years old and moved to Somerset a little under four years ago from a small village, much like Bleadon, in West Sussex.

I studied Journalism at the University of Sunderland and moved to the area to become a junior reporter at the Weston, Worle and Somerset Mercury and North Somerset Times—for a period of which, Bleadon was in my patch—before my departure in July last year.

I now work full-time at City of Bristol College as a PR and Communications Officer in the Marketing team.

I am obsessed with reading and have too many books to count, enjoy cooking for myself and my boyfriend and love to experiment with cake baking and decorating.

That is really all from me for now but please do get in touch and I would love to meet more of you over the course of my editorship.



Disclaimer

Bleadon Village News is published independently on behalf of Bleadon Parish Council. The views and comments are those of the Editor and contributors and not necessarily of the Parish Council.



Contact me



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P U Z Z L E

P A G E

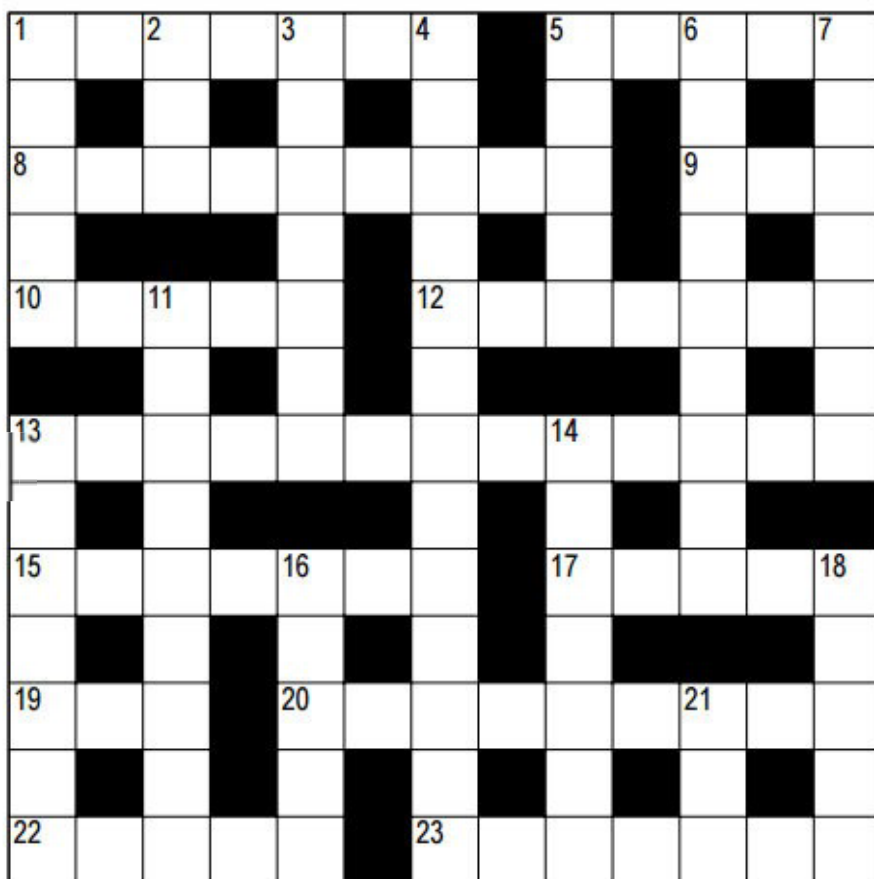
George's crossword

ACROSS

1. Sunday before advent about right for rider's foot (7)
5. She may be difficult both ways (5)
8. Solver, Les, is too enthusiastic with his wares (9)
9. See 15 (3)
10. Game stokes the fire (5)
12. Campaign in a tent reportedly (7)
13. Place to stay in road by 'The Anchor' (15)
15. Forged a cog for heavenly gift (5, 2, 3)
17. Firmly drunk (5)
19. Self found in the go between (3)
20. Single core to identify (9)
22. 'Take a chair, journalist.' In place (5)
23. Supplies tear about the Queen (7)

DOWN

1. Bend! Halt around the circle (3)
2. Anger finally in Devonshire (3)
3. Confusing storm about Rugby Union on platform (7)
4. Maybe I force cop file as a lawman (6, 7)
5. He may be free or stone (5)
6. Dig garden perhaps. It's shameful (9)
7. New York garden is square (7)



11. Boot a boxing match. With a football? (9)
13. Corners are about right for fisherman (7)
14. Take gentian, perhaps, against the virus (7)
16. Mistook offer—reduced price partly (5)
18. Mistress's long hair (5)
21. Diamonds can precede cream or berg (3)

Ellie's sudoku

					4			7
	9	4	2					3
	7							
				8		1		
6	1		9				3	
		8			3			
9			1			4		
3			5		8	9		
	4				6			



Riddle me this?

Riddle one:

What can run but never walks, has a mouth but never talks, has a head but never weeps, has a bed but never sleeps?

Riddle two:

If you drop me, I'm sure to crack, but give me a smile and I'll always smile back. What am I?

Riddle three:

What word is pronounced the same if you take away four of its five letters?

Riddle four:

Two fathers and two sons are in a car, yet there are only three people in the car. How?

Parish Council Snippets...

by Bruce Poole

The Parish Council was delighted when it was approached by Ellie Young who has past publication experience offering to edit and produce the September issue of the Bleadon News.

Undoubtedly she will emphasise elsewhere how the production will only be as good as the articles and news contained within its covers. To ensure this it is simply down to you to provide the information of what you and your group have recently undertaken and also what you are planning for the immediate future. Rest assured it will not happen on its own. So please give the re-introduction of Bleadon News your fullest support.

Like all organisations, and indeed individuals, the Parish Council has been challenged in recent weeks to change the normal approach to many of its procedures. The holding of meetings is just one particular example. Following the Government regulations the annual parish meeting, which was due to be held in April, had to be cancelled, as was the case with the annual meeting

of the Parish Council which was scheduled for May. As a direct result of these restrictions it was recommended by the National Association of Local Councils that where physical meetings were not practical to the current council Chairman should remain in office for a further 12 months.

The Parish Council has invested in securing individual iPads which



It has not been a smooth transition, but through the process we have all learned

means it is now able to hold virtual council meetings while the present challenges remain in place. The councillors will tell you it has not been entirely a smooth transition and amusing at times but through the process we have all learned something new which cannot be all bad.

The council has welcomed a new member, Rob Tyson, whose biography appears on the council's website.

Staying on the subject of the website, please have a look at the Parish Council pages:

www.bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk

which have, over the past few weeks, undergone a complete overhaul.

There are some extra features on the main page and with the help of the webmaster Webglu, it is now up to date. It is both the Parish Council's intention as well as my own to ensure the website is 'fit for purpose' so the community at large can be kept fully informed, yet at the same time be relevant and immediate. In recent weeks, the Bleadon In Bloom Village Group has been busy again setting out a new planter in the style of an unused large tyre situated on the right hand side as you enter Bleadon Mill.

The Council have also, at long last, reached a licensed agreement with Wessex Water Services Ltd on a peppercorn rent of £1 per annum (if demanded) that it might place a bench and planters on the land immediately in front of the pumping station on Bleadon Road.



An eye on Bleadon's wildlife



A robin having a rest in a tree.



A curious wren.



Photos by Bill Hewitt and Richard Cole.



A dragonfly.



A gatekeeper butterfly.



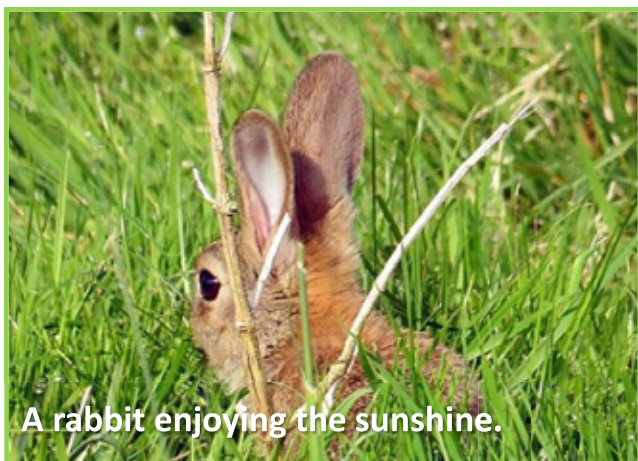
The first steps of a calf.



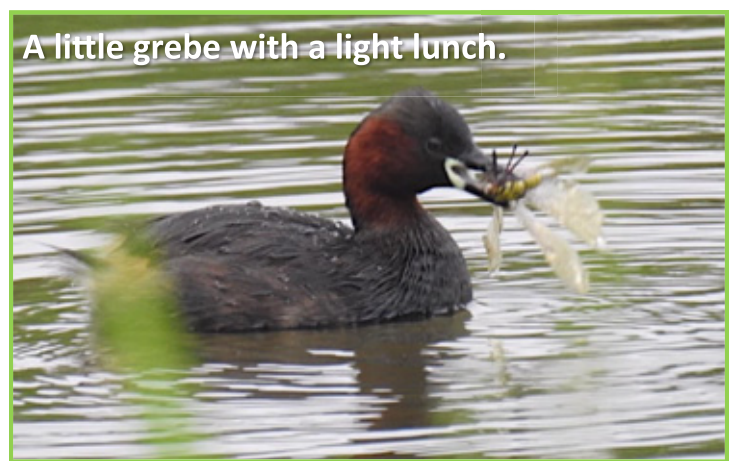
A roe fawn in the field.



A speckled wood butterfly.



A rabbit enjoying the sunshine.



A little grebe with a light lunch.

Look to the sky...

Bleadon is lucky to have good populations of buzzards and kestrels and we do have barn and tawny owls, although a lot more could be done to encourage them.

There are other birds of prey which are more occasional sights. Red kites should become more common to see now they have started breeding in the Mendips and peregrine falcons are breeding in the wider area and its becoming more common to see them in the skies over the village.

Another bird to look out for is the hobby. The hobby is a member of the falcon family. Although they appear about the size of a kestrel, they are actually a much lighter build. The reason for this is they rely of their quick and nimble flight to catch insects such as dragonflies and small birds, on the wing.

They catch dragon flies with their talons and can often be seen munching on a victim in mid air. They are summer visitors, appearing at the same time as the swallows and martins and heading back to Africa at a similar time in the autumn. They are usually seen near water and do turn up near the Axe every now and again.

They are great to watch as they put on fantastic flying displays in pursuit of their prey, often swooping low across the water. If you manage to get a close look, the adults have a dark head, dark streaking on the breast and appear to have orangey red trousers.



Look by the rhyme...

We feared that predation, probably by a male mink, had hit our very special population of water voles quite hard two winters ago.

I am pleased to say the early signs this year were very good, with lots of fresh burrows appearing, and also evidence of feeding and of latrines.

These signs were along the whole of their

known range, from the top of Bridge Road, right along to the continuation of the rhyme by the caravan site towards the Axe.

The signs on Bridge Road were especially encouraging as this seemed to be the worst hit zone.

I am pleased to say that despite large amounts of floating pennywort obscuring much of the area (the pandemic delayed management work) there have been regular sightings, confirming a recovery in numbers.

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A VILLAGE AT WAR

Like most villages during that terrible period of 1939-1945, Bleadon coped with deprivations, bore the worry of aerial attacks and suffered the loss of its sons as they went off to fight. But like everywhere else, those who remained developed a spirit of unity and collectively fought on the 'Home Front'. Here are just some of the memories of Bleadon — A village at war:

- All manner of events took place to aid the war effort in Bleadon. There was a baby show at Whitegates Farm during Salute the Soldier Week and on another occasion there was a fancy dress parade for Warship Week.
- There was a Home Guard unit — yes Bleadon had its own Dad's Army — and together with Lympsham there was an Auxiliary Fire Service group, all ready to do their bit, when and if the call came.



Lympsham and Bleadon's auxiliary fire service

- Bleadon had its heroes, one of whom, was Flight Lieutenant Say. Born and bred in Bleadon, he grew up in Herb Cottage, he joined the RAF as an air gunner/wireless operator and subsequently went on to win the DFM and DFC for his many sorties over Germany. A newspaper cutting of the time shows him outside Buckingham Palace, having received his medals. After his distinguished war service he returned safely and lived in Weston until his death in 1978.
- Bleadon also played a dramatic role being the site of one of the decoys, which were designed to draw German bombers away from Bristol. This was situated on Stroud Pill where the river Axe meets the coast, roughly where the Bleadon Nature Reserve is today.
- At the height of the blitz of 1944 it took over 20 hits, thus saving Bristol, but sorry to report, that the Bournville estate in Weston was badly damaged by incendiaries as a consequence.
- However Bleadon itself did not go entirely unscathed,

Child evacuees enjoying a lunch.



on several occasions incendiaries landed in the village and, according to one account, a calf grazing on land which is now the play area, took a hit one night and was killed outright. It was found the following morning when the farmer took feed to the stock. Another set fire to a haystack, and was put out by one of the evacuees and, on another occasion, a cottage was set alight. It is alleged that the landlord of The Queen's Arms always had a shotgun behind the bar in case a stray German should find his way into the pub!

Report of Spitfire crash — June 1941

This event is well remembered by those still around today; as boys, they rushed to the field alongside Shiplate Road, in the hope of collecting pieces of the wreckage.

The official report indicates that one of two Spitfires was damaged on the way back to Colerne when it became entangled in the cable anchoring the barrage balloon by Devil's Bridge. The balloon detached itself but the plane went on to crash in the field, approximately where Thatcher's orchards are today. The pilot named as Sgt CJ Barton was killed and the aircraft burned out.

There were many children from Bristol who were evacuated to the Somerset countryside and Bleadon took its fair share. Some of our older residents remember this time very well. Some of the evacuees along with their families stayed on after the end of the war, making their homes in Bleadon.



Home Guard

VE-Day 75th Anniversary!

May 8th 2020 should have been a day of celebration, the 75th anniversary of VE Day, the end of the war in Europe. Plans had been laid for a village party with colourful bunting, music and good food to be shared with all our neighbours in Bleadon... but then came COVID-19 and instead of a knees up we were in a lockdown situation. Undaunted, many people got together two meters apart of course, and still managed to have some fun, the first socially distanced street parties in history!

The war time spirit lived on!



World War Two Prisoner of War celebrates centennial birthday

A former Prisoner of War turned Bleadon Bridge Club founder, Don Gardner, celebrated his 100th birthday on December 24th.

Bleadon News editor, **Ellie Young**, sat down with Don to find out about his incredible life and to share his story.

Early years

Don is the third-born son of a Methodist minister William Gardner and his wife Agnes. He outlives his two older brothers—principal lecturer Arthur and electrical engineer worker Norman.

Growing up under the Methodist Church, Don and his brothers all attended Kingswood School in Bath, where Don spent six 'very happy years' from 1930 to 1936.

Don said: "I got an Engineering apprenticeship at Austin Motors in Birmingham which would lead to a degree in five years."

Meeting Betty

As a 'lost soul' in Birmingham, Don gravitated towards the church as a

place to meet new people.

Don said: "I was 17 years old at the time and sat myself down in the church one Sunday morning and began to look around. In the choir was the most beautiful girl who was singing her head off."

After the service, Don introduced himself to Betty and they 'got along famously'.

Joining the war

As war seemed inevitable, Don began to consider joining the forces and made up part of the Royal Engineers Mechanical Engineers in the Army field workshop unit.

He signed up one Saturday morning, received his calling up papers the following Thursday before the war started on the Sunday.

Don added: "Betty was no fool. She was two years younger than me, she was learning to drive and while I was away she joined the Mechanised Transport Corps. She passed her driving test and she spent five years with them.

"In the meantime, I was shuffled off to France. The war started in September and I had a bit of compassionate leave and I took Betty to meet my parents. In the years to come, while I was away, she had more freedom on the road and would often visit them."

Time as a Prisoner of War

While in France, Don became part of the 51st Highland Division. He was due to be moving off to Calais to get out, but Don ran into a German ambush while in a truck with 20 other men.

He explained: "Our driver was



hit and our truck ended up in the ditch. I had been hit and had some shrapnel through my leg and became a Prisoner of War (PoW) in May 1940.

"I was moved from one hospital to another. I was in a line of stretchers, and was put on the operating table where my surgeon stopped to have a cigarette break before he got down to it."

Don spoke adequate French and German and acted as an interpreter and was given the identification number 19606 when he was moved to a permanent camp.

He said: "We were starving hungry and bartering when we could. I saw many a wedding ring go for a loaf of bread. They first moved us by barge and then by a goods train. It said on the side of it 'eight horses or 40 men'. However 95 men were loaded to a wagon.

"Life was pretty horrendous for the three or four days we travelled."

Upon arrival in the camp in Torun, Poland, where Don and his fellow troops attempted to make



the best out of a bad situation.

Don and his group created a theatrical group and commandeered a small hut to put on weekly productions for other prisoners, starting out with Journey's End, styled as Jerney's End.

During his time at the camp, Don was able to keep in touch with Betty through the occasional letter.

He secured himself a position working with a civilian engineer, who was responsible for all the machinery at the site.

He explained: "The German principle was you had to be working. The first job I did was to create a skeleton key but then after that I would do what I could, with the occasional bit of sabotage here and there. My next bit of fun was to make a 'still' which used surplus fruit to make alcohol."

Two years later, Don had a good relationship with his employer who gifted him with some additional rations including meat from his pig.

Don had two-year stints at various camps which he 'made the best of' as a prisoner. One memory he shared was how he and his bunkmates shared an elaborate feast of cakes, treats and the stillled alcohol one Christmas, which was



A young Don.

interrupted by an officer raid who were 'flabbergasted' by the sight.

Coming home

Following the Russian invasion of Poland, Don and his friend Peter Howe were able to escape from a PoW hospital and started making their way across Europe towards home.

The pair got as far as Warsaw and, after walking into a restaurant, were approached by a man who helped them secure a 'przepustka' (passport).

The pair hopped on a lorry who took them from village to village through Poland and into Russia before being dropped off at Lublin, Poland, and, with the support of two Americans, were helped onto a train to the Ukraine and boarded the ship, the Highland Princess

heading back to England, via Egypt, Italy and Gibraltar.

Don and Peter arrived in England and were de-briefed and 'de-loused' before Don made his way home. He said: "Being home after all those years was wonderful. I was 25 years old by the time I made it home — at the start of my 25th year I was a prisoner and at the end I was married to Betty.

"She came over that evening and as we were talking we started to realise that things were the same as when I left five years before. We were alone in the kitchen and I sat her on the kitchen table and told her I felt exactly as I used to and asked her to marry me!"

Family

Don and Betty were married by his father in the church where they had met seven years before on August 18th, 1945. The pair were happily married for 73 years.

Don went on to work alongside his father-in-law's successful woodworking company in Birmingham, creating everything from clocks to barometers. Most notably he created the popular starburst clock and the cake stand used at Princess Margaret's wedding.

The pair had one son, Christopher, who was born in December 1946. Don now has two granddaughters and the family has recently welcomed Don's great grandson Alfie, who was born a year and a day before Don's 100th birthday.

Moving to Bleadon

Don and Betty moved to Bleadon, after falling in love with their bungalow in Rectory Lane, when they retired in 1985.

Soon after they moved to the area, they founded the Bleadon Bridge Club which is still running today.



Don and his Prisoner of War theatrical company.

What is new at the Queens?

On June 2nd, we would have been at the Queens for a year – unfortunately we weren't able to celebrate and, like everyone, the last few months have been difficult.

Lockdown wasn't without its challenges with health problems and the worry about keeping the pub going. Butcombe have been really supportive and we are pleased to say we are back with a fresh new paint job in the pub which was done by two of our lovely regulars, Nick and Simon.

The back courtyard has been covered and jet washed so we now have more outside seating space. We are just working on putting up some pretty lighting and heating to finish it off - it is already proving popular.

The front of the pub is also looking lovely again with hanging baskets which David Chinn obtained for us and the tubs of beautiful flowers which Ruth Burrows planted.

We have done everything we can to keep all our customers safe, including sanitizers at the entrances and in the toilets, safe distance lines on the floors, more regular cleaning and we take every customer's name and telephone number for 'Track and Trace'. This is all working well and we have

been lucky the weather has been nice so people have been using the outside spaces. It has been lovely to welcome everyone back.

We have a new chef called Pete who is working alongside Danielle so the food offering is picking up and they have great plans for some theme nights.

The Sunday lunches are really popular and booking is advised as we do not have as many indoor tables as we did. The feedback on the food has been amazing and really complimentary and if you want anything special or have any dietary requirements, they will be happy to help.

We have sadly had to say goodbye to Kelly, but we are pleased to welcome Jane who has a lot of experience of working in the hospitality trade.

We have now started a Friday night meat raffle. Tickets are £2 for a strip of five and the draw takes place at 9pm. The meat is purchased from Barry the butcher at the Bleadon Country Store and the feedback from the lucky winners is that the meat is amazing. The list of weekly winners is posted on the noticeboard inside the front door.

As soon as we are safely allowed to have live music outside, we will rein-

state the fortnightly Open Mic sessions which we are really missing.

We are going to set up a pairs crib night on Mondays at 8pm. We have already had some interest so if you would like to join in please contact the pub. All ages and experience welcome – both male and female.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported the pub and have come back. It means a lot to us and we have really enjoyed welcoming you all back.

Kerrie Jones



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WI groups support vulnerable villagers during COVID lockdown

by Bleadon WI

We are delighted to say that, here at Bleadon WI, we are still going strong — 100-strong actually. Many of our members have been volunteering in the village during this Coronavirus lockdown to get information out to all our residents collecting shopping and essentials for those in need, and keeping in contact with vulnerable and isolated villagers.

Our monthly meetings have transferred to the virtual Zoom platform, a steep learning curve for a lot of us. Our speakers have happily managed to Zoom in and we have learned about medical detection dogs, participated in a Zumba class and had a great talk from the local Air Ambulance — for whom we are fundraising this year.

Our third WI ball at the Winter Gardens has been moved to next year and details will follow nearer the time. WI President Michelle Harper, despite working from home and homeschooling her two

boys, has become a self-taught whizz with Zoom and has made the transition painless.

We have added a social virtual meeting in between our regular meetings and have been able to demonstrate from members homes how to make elderflower cordial, lemon curd and jam, participate in smaller chat rooms, hold quizzes and conduct surveys.

Our choir, the Bleadon Belles, has continued to rehearse online, some of our book club members have met virtually, but sadly all our other clubs are on hold.

The 'chat bench' to mark our 10-year anniversary has been approved by the Parish Council and will be situated halfway along Bleadon Road near the water pumping station.

We are hoping to have it in situ by the end of the summer. Finally many of our members have been knitting or crocheting poppies to make an installation in the village for Remembrance Sunday this November. All the extra time on our hands has been good for something!

Karen Orme

Belles continue choir practice thanks to online Zoom meetings

What a first year it has been for our new Musical Director, Naomi Hickman. We were settling in nicely, had performed at the WI Carol Service in the Village Church in December, and were looking forward to singing for the village VE Day Celebrations, joining the Worle Wind Band for a concert this spring, as well as planning a charity fundraising event in the village in the summer. Sadly it was not to be.

But the Belles were not to be bowed. Determined to continue in some form, the Choir Committee, Naomi and members signed up to the now ubiquitous Zoom and excitedly gathered for our first virtual choir rehearsal in March. After a noisy first session with everyone learning Zoom protocol and catching up on the news, we have now settled into regular two-hour Tuesday evening rehearsals. We have a mid-session break for 'refreshments', when we divide into different 'rooms' for a good natter and catch up.

The rehearsals have taken some getting used to. We can sing but only with Naomi, maybe not a bad thing! We cannot be allowed to hear each other due to the vagaries of



differing internet connections. We must thank Naomi who has mastered the technical challenges of running a Zoom rehearsal, and become an excellent multi tasker.

We have learned many new songs during this unusual time, celebrated VE-Day in song and had a lovely evening remembering Vera Lynn. We **WILL** meet again, we don't know when, but until then we will keep singing.

Joanne Jones

Bleadon Youth Centre

REFURBISHED AND READY WHEN YOU ARE

The last five months of Covid has at least brought Bleadon some benefit. It has given the management volunteers at Bleadon Youth Centre the opportunity to undertake some serious improvements and a general spruce up of the 52 year old building. All that's needed now is for the customers to return and to start enjoying this bright new space.



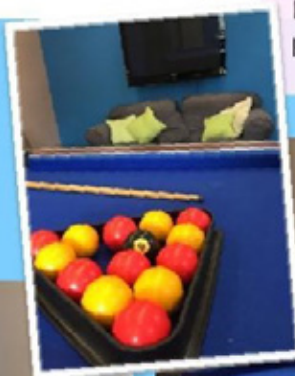
The improvements start at the front door. The old roller shutter is gone, creating a more welcoming approach to the building. A new UPVC self-closing door, rubber matting and steel handrail make for easier access. New LED motion sensor porch light. Inside, the lobby has had a fresh coat of paint.

Bleadon Youth Club hopes to restart its Thursday evening sessions in September - Covid permitting



The female washroom has had a much needed make-over. A pair of new ceramic sinks complete with self-closing taps sit on a grey worktop. There's even room for baby changing. A new colour scheme, brighter lighting and new wall tiles add a softer look. Smoother painted floors should make for easier cleaning.

Fresh paintwork and a radical clear-out of redundant equipment has helped create a more comfortable and practical chill-out space in the **Sports Lounge**. Our saggy old sofa has had a thorough clean and should be good for a few years yet.



The management committee of volunteers had planned to take down the sad old suspended ceiling in the main hall over the Easter holiday break. Replacing it with UPVC and much needed loft insulation.

Then Covid shut the youth centre down on March 19th and social distancing meant that we could no longer work as a sizeable team.

However, the months of lockdown allowed us to quietly get on with many of the repairs and improvements that have been on the wish list for many years. Work could continue without interrupting any of the social activities that would usually be taking place in the youth centre

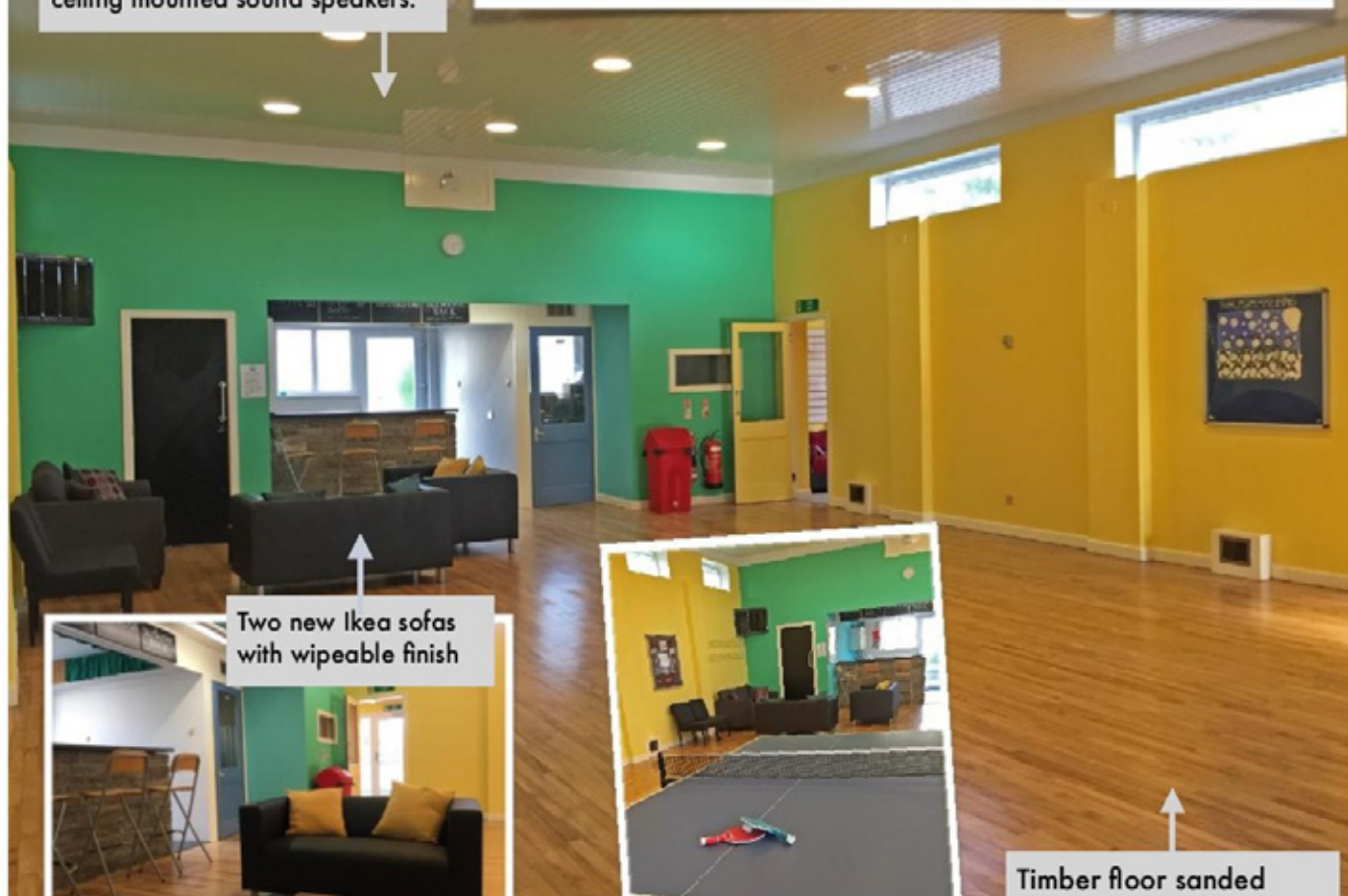
We had set aside over £9000 from fundraising over the past

five years. The money was ring-fenced specifically for building repairs and improvements. Which is just as well, because since mid March the centre has had no income at all. Thank goodness for all the volunteers and contributors that have helped us raise this significant amount of money. Without you we wouldn't have a bright and welcoming youth centre at the heart of Bleadon.

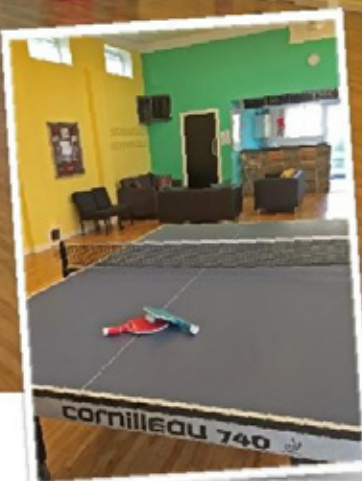


When you feel ready we are here to welcome you for all sorts of young-at-heart activities. Call Keith on 01934 813127 for booking enquiries

New ceiling with 200mm of mineral + foil insulation above it. 15 new LED downlights and four ceiling mounted sound speakers.



Two new Ikea sofas with wipeable finish



Timber floor sanded back and resurfaced with six coats of varnish.

Bleadon continues to bloom despite lockdown measures



by Kirsten Hemingway

Bleadon was able to continue to Bloom in 2020 even through the Covid-19 Lockdown period. Our innovative 'Tub Parent' scheme means each tub or planting scheme is looked after by one household in the village.

The households were given plants and they went out and planted their specific area. A core team worked within social distancing regulations to take the plants out safely and to plant up the bigger areas.

We had teams working on the Post Office and shop area who were not even connected to their other neighbouring teams and they never met but we all stayed in touch using WhatsApp and this allowed us to organise how to plant and what we were aiming to do.

The scheme was going to be about the Eternal Olympic Flame in the torch and we had spent time with growers and garden centres picking yellow, orange and red flowers to make up the scheme.

However, when the pandemic hit us many of our suppliers were unable to help. We were so lucky to be working with WestCroft Garden Centre in Berrow who stepped in valiantly and helped us add colour.



Design leaders Val Hart, Rose Benjamin and Libby Boucher immediately changed each planting plan and we took on a new scheme: 'The NHS Rainbow'.

Dave Sharman and Kirsten Hemingway continued with the plans for a new cross planter at the church for the 75th anniversary celebrations and they achieved this by leaving the right amount of time between their visits.

Bleadon in Bloom organizer, Kirsten Hemingway said: "It was a well co-ordinated team effort."

Bruce Poole, Parish Clerk, added: "The innovative 'Tub Parent' scheme saved our plans this year. We are lucky to have such a committed community who really care about the look of our village. The Parish Council sends its thanks to all the people who took the time to plant their designated area and to those who donated vessels to put plants in the village."

Technics Sound E44 keyboard complete with stool and earphones. FREE TO COLLECT.

Seems in good condition to this non-musician. Rosewood finish with lots of lights and sounds. 68cm wide x 114cm wide X 62cm high.

It's in the music room at the Bleadon Youth Centre. We need the space. Call Keith on 01934 813127

FREE to anyone who wishes to discover the Andy Lloyd Webber in their soul.



New homes for owls thanks to work of Bleadon in Bloom

by Kirsten Hemingway

As part of Bleadon in Bloom 2019, our team were focused on our local wildlife.

As well as indirectly supporting the Water Vole, we wanted to directly impact one other wildlife species in the area. Our ecologist and wildlife photographers noticed owl numbers had been declining locally and we felt there was a lack of spaces for little owls to nest in the parish.

We spoke to Kitto Construction who we know through a local carpenter, Steve Smith. We knew that Steve was a brilliant carpenter and we asked him if he would be able to make us some Owl Boxes.

He was enthusiastic and spoke to Kitto who donated the wood immediately. Steve built five boxes, two little owl boxes, two tawny owl boxes and a barn owl box.



Bleadon Horticultural Society

We hope to resume our programme of events with the Spring Flower Show on Saturday 6th March 2021.

Rose Benjamin and Libby Boucher

Wildlife conservationist Chris Sperring came to the village and picked sites for the boxes which were built last Autumn, ready for the nesting season.

We got special permission from landowners to site these boxes. Bill Hewitt volunteers at Secret World Wild Animal Rescue, in East Huntspill, and they may be able to use our sites as release sites for owls taken in over the period.

One of the boxes (a Tawny Owl Box) was well used over winter. All of these found homes except one – a little owl box. The little owl used to be a Somerset regular, but they have declined recently around Bleadon, so it was important to find the right place for one.

Avon Wildlife Trust were exactly that place, who are committed to enabling wildlife to survive and thrive across the region. The charity has more than 18,000 members, 3,500 volunteers and a dedicated staff team work together to make our local area wilder and make nature part of life, for everyone.

They have access to many habitats which will be great for this box and they happily received the donation.

To find out more about Bleadon in Bloom, and to get involved, contact Kirsten Hemingway writer@kirstenhemingway.co.uk



The VETS Table Tennis Club meet and play in the Bleadon Youth Centre on a Wednesday evening. If you are an experienced player, but possibly a bit rusty and fancy joining this sociable group of ball bashers contact Ann Sandford on 01934 812339 or email: ann@sandford-ca.co.uk

Busy lockdown for Whitehouse Kennels

Whitehouse Kennels and Cattery

Well what a time it has been! We hope this finds you all well and we very much hope you all will stay safe and well.

When the pandemic started, all our bookings were cancelled and we thought we would be closing but the three Local Authorities, the police and social services advised we would need to stay open to provide essential services.

This has enabled us to maintain a core of key staff and has sent us on some very unusual calls. We have uncut a dog tied with a metal chain to a farm gate after mauling its new owner, collected pets where owners have been taken into hospital, and the most upsetting has been collecting pets from owners not coping in lockdown and having to seek help.

We have taken the quieter times to reflect and spent more time talking to our neighbours and shopping locally, the Brent House Farm Shop and Wick Heritage Workshops being our favourites.

We have been looking after pets belonging to key workers including staff at our local hospital and, in the early days, we embarrassed them no doubt being emotional about their daily job and the risks they were exposed to.

Not knowing how we could express how we cared about them and thought about them every day, we made blue NHS wooden hearts out of an old felled tree and fixed them down our entrance driveway in an attempt to tell them how much we were thinking of them and all those people who have risked their lives daily to protect all of us.

Pets in this time have for many been a lifeline and we have been hearing amazing stories of how much support they have given their owners.

But knowing the work our cuddle buddies do this does not surprise us as they have missed their visits to the nursing homes & schools but they have been writing letters in (with a little help!) and have even persuaded Gerard to read stories to them and send videos in to the homes.

Some have used the down time to purchase a new puppy and we hope as many return to work these puppies will continue to get the attention they

so need and will not be discarded.

Abandoned dogs in the lockdown didn't stop and we did get some sad cases where perhaps knowing they were ill owners made the decision to get rid of them.

Usually it is just being left in a public place but on several occasions they actually took them into vets alleging they had found them when the vets were certain they were their dogs.

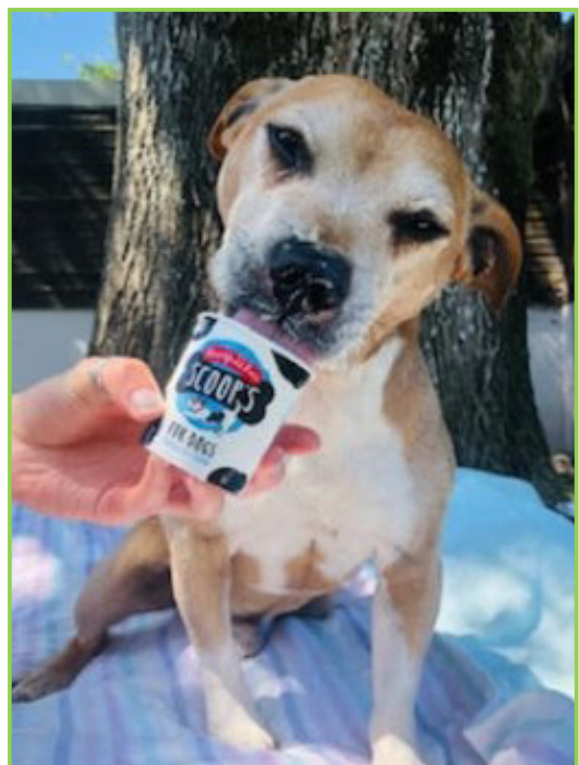
One elderly Staffy was deaf and had an array of growths but we found he just loved to be cuddled and eat doggie ice cream.

Dog Friends, a local dog charity, helped us find him a home for his retirement years and he went complete with a picnic bag stuffed full of ice creams.

The little Chihuahua abandoned wouldn't get out of his bed and this is where he wet and sat in. The girls here soon realised he had been scolded and probably smacked for messing but they hadn't taken the time to toilet train him so he had worked out if he showed his teeth to them they wouldn't scold him or hurt him.

With a lot of patience the girls here helped him learn how to toilet away from his bed and how better life was to not be sat in a dirty bed all alone and how really special cuddles are.

We will never be the same as we were before the pandemic but we hope the good things that we have learnt particularly the caring & looking out for others will continue forever.



The show MUST go on!

Bleadon Players

It seems such a long time since we were on stage in January for Treasure Island (oh no it isn't) and we have missed our hobby so much.

It's been such an empty experience not meeting up with our friends for fun and messing about at rehearsals every Wednesday.

However, we have kept busy having a Players Quiz every Wednesday courtesy of Scott Morris.

We have also had online group get togethers each week watching our previous plays on YouTube which has been great fun taking the Mickey out of everyone.

As a group we have a 'buddy system' to make sure that we keep in touch and keep spirits up and that's been a great comfort in many ways. Unfortunately our next play has been postponed until next May and as for the Panto in January- well we still don't know if that can go ahead at the time of writing this.



However if you follow us on Facebook we shall update you as soon as we have news.

In the meantime we have a few players social events 'ready to go' and working on other Dramatic options to entertain the village when we get the green light.

We miss our audiences so much and look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Peter Gibbon

Mark Howe

Gardening Services

9 Malvern Road, Weston-super-Mare

01943 413594 — 07773 272003

Regular grass cutting

Hedges and trees cut

Sheds erected or repaired

Fencing erected or repainted

Patios and paths pressure washed

Decking erected or repaired

Fence painting

Turfing

Patios and

chipping laid

Café supports villagers during lockdown

Bleadon Café

Back in March when Gill Williams invited me to a meeting in the church to establish a village help group, nobody could have visualised how long we would need to be making arrangements to organise how we at the café could help.

My first thought was I could provide villagers with home cooked meals delivered to their doors. I was already cooking Sunday lunch at the café so it would just be a case of upping the numbers and I could deliver them myself. This I did and right from the first week the process went well.

Six months later I am still doing this and although it has been going well I

would like it if there were a few more each week who would like a home cooked Sunday lunch delivered.

The actual delivery process has caused no problems. I keep strict social distancing with each customer and payment can be contactless or cash depending on customer preference.

Now, of course, we are open again during the week although under careful conditions. We have fewer tables inside so we can socially distance and while the weather is so good we are making use of outside and the grass verge.

We have set up a track and trace system and, if they require it, temperature readings for each customer. Although our menu is not as large as it was, it still has customer favourites and daily specials.

It has been lovely to see my regular customers returning again and enjoying some sense of normality.

I am part of the Government's Eat Out To Help Out scheme. This means from Monday to Wednesday each week until August 31st villagers can come and enjoy good food for half price! So far we have had a really positive response and I would like to welcome you all back to enjoy what we can provide.

Since that meeting in church way back in March we have all come a long way and I know the village Covid group has done a great job. I am still able to deliver Sunday lunches and still able to welcome you all to the cafe.

Hope to see you soon.

Zoe Solomon.

PCSO report

If you would like to find out more about crime in your area, you can visit the Avon and Somerset Constabulary Beat pages: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk

Once on the website, scroll down the page to 'What is happening in your area?' Here you can enter a specific address.

You will then reach the beat pages where you can see the top three priorities in the beat, provides you with the name and pictures of your local neighbourhood team, local information and provide you with the Beat Statistics.

From this page, you can also use the 'Contact Us' form and send an email directly to your local beat team.

PCSO Michael Benfield



Village Market

It was a sad decision to cancel the March Market, but it had to be.

The Bleadon Village Market volunteers and stallholders are looking forward to reopening again, but only when it is safe for everyone. However, all is not lost! You can still contact many of our traders using the links on www.bleadon.org.uk/market

Also, if you are a Facebook user, follow Bleadon Village Market's Facebook page for regular updates on trad-

ers, local small businesses and farm shops. You can order for collection from the Coronation Hall Car Park (Mike's Pork), delivery to your door or by post.

If you need more information call Jo on 01934 812370. Until we meet again please support our local small traders!

Joanne Jones





We care about you

ESCAPE

HAIR AND BEAUTY



Thank you to all our wonderful loyal clients who have supported us through these unprecedented times.

We have done everything we can to make Escape as safe as possible, our bays have been individually petitioned for clients safety, we clean before and after each client and we deep clean continuously.

Visors & masks are worn by all our staff, their temperatures checked daily and equipment sterilised between each client.

If you still feel apprehensive, we have a private room for our more vulnerable clients.

Debbie is still looking after our OAPs on Thursdays and will be using the private room at all times.

And finally, Beth Hooper is now back from maternity leave and is looking forward to seeing both past and new clients.



PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SALON



Bleadon Farm Shop thrives during lockdown



Bleadon Farm Shop and Post Office

Despite the obvious disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we at Bleadon Farm Shop have been pushing hard to buck the trend of small businesses 'going under'. Far from it, we have thrived - thanks to the support of our wonderful customers and the hard work of our employees. Here's a taste of what we've been up to:

- Jaz, our Brodericks Fine Foods Manager, has been diverted from ice cream deliveries to shopping and supplying a home delivery service to those shielding or isolating at home. Many happy and grateful customers have found this an invaluable lifeline in worrying times.
- We have opened a Butchery, with experienced butcher Barry at the helm. We supply only locally pro-

duced meat, reared to the highest standards. Feedback so far has been glowing, so if you haven't visited us yet, you're missing out!

- Our Fruit and Veg selection has been increased to include a much wider range of produce, so combined with the meat, you can put together a first class meal!
- In line with our aim to become more sustainable and environmentally friendly, we have introduced a milk vending service with reusable glass bottles supplied by Chew Valley Dairies. For just £1 you can refill your milk bottle...cheaper AND more eco-aware than 'plastic milk'...it's the obvious swap to make, isn't it?!
- We are stocking more locally-produced goods, such as cheese from Lye Cross Farm, relishes and chutneys from Bumblees of Taunton and preserves from Rose Farm, as well as homemade cakes.

- Our new logo, designed by employee and artist Ellen, encapsulates our traditional-contemporary blend, and you'll see this re-branding increasingly featured throughout the shop.

- Joining existing Post Masters Amanda and Manshu, we have introduced Izzy and Rachael to the team. And in the shop, we have taken on Kelly, Ellen, Georgia, Jay and James...so you see we are expanding considerably! Not forgetting the invaluable 'behind the scenes' support of Mandy, our A&R House Ltd Office Manager.

Alistair and Charlotte House



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A letter from the Parish Council Chairman

How nice to be able to write to you all again. It was way back in 2019 that I wrote my first letter as Chairman of the Parish Council and then we lost the editor of our Village News magazine and then, of course, the pandemic and lockdown.

I have to say that the beginning of the village Covid group, a meeting held in church in early March, has developed into a group doing a magnificent job during lockdown.

They were able to identify all the individuals in the village who needed help and they also joined with individuals on Bleadon Hill too so the whole of our Bleadon dis-

trict was covered.

Volunteers came forward and all the jobs needing to be done were done. If I thank individuals I might leave someone out so I offer my sincere thanks to everyone in the village or on the Hill who in any way, big or small, has shopped, walked dogs, collected prescriptions, just given a phone call to individuals living alone, or in any way possible has made this friendly village even friendlier.

The Covid group has also been having thoughts about remaining in existence even when the pandemic is over so that a village 'help group' might continue.

On another positive note some of us have been forced to develop fantastic technological skills. My iPad has never been so busy and as for Zoom meetings...

Before March many of us had never even heard of them, now they are two or three times a week occurrences and we can mute or unmute with the best of them! Of course, things are now beginning to look up.

People who have been shielding since March are now beginning to venture out and become part of the world again. Local firms are back at work again, the cafe is back serving great meals. It is hoped that the church will be opening for services in September and the Coronation Hall hopes to start being available for hire from October.

Maybe by Christmas things could almost be back to normal or is that too much to wish for?

My very best wishes to you all.
Gill Williams



Marion serenades clappers for charity

A street in Bleadon has been serenaded over the past few weeks, every Thursday night as part of their Clap for Carers event.

Marion Dare describes herself as a 'practically retired professional singer', while neighbours call her their own Gracie Fields.

Since the Government's lockdown was imposed, members of the public have taken to their doorsteps at 8pm

on every Thursday to applaud the work that NHS workers are carrying out during the coronavirus pandemic.

Marion has been going the extra mile and putting on a show, PA system included, for her street. She said: "On Thursday night, I would usually sing at the Grosvenor Hotel in Weston. After the first time, I went out and clapped for the NHS I thought next time I might go out and sing a few songs.

"I told a few neighbours and they said 'that would be fabulous' and it has gone from there really. It is for everyone, all carers."

Marion's neighbours take to the streets, around 7.30pm each Thursday, some in their deckchairs, some with a glass of wine, and enjoy her show. Each night Marion ends with Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again'.

She added: "I record the performances on Facebook Live, and put them up on a local Facebook group to cheer them up. I record videos for my family too."

These shows are just one of the many examples of how Weston is showing its gratitude for NHS work-

ers.

Marion said: "It is keeping me going (through the lockdown) as well, to be honest. I've been singing for 20 years and I'm practically retired.

"I was starting to not enjoy it so much and this has just given me a new lease of life. A purpose." The set list may differ slightly from week to week, but each song has a meaning to either Marion or her neighbours.

She said: "I sing some Dolly Parton for one neighbour who's husband is ill at the moment, and the lady two doors down was rushed to hospital and returned on the Thursday night I was singing, so I sang a song they liked."

"I've got an older clientele, but there are a few young ones in the street so I add some ABBA and songs that are more upbeat."

"It is lovely to see the singing put a smile on people's faces. It also makes an event of it, although after 8pm I have to pull the plug because it's freezing and I'm a real cruel creature."

Kirsten Hemingway



Bleadon Church in lockdown... and beyond

The life and activities of Bleadon Church in the last few months, alongside so many areas of all our lives, have been very strange, sometimes inspirational, but often difficult.

I would love to be able to publish dates and times for services and events, and we do hope soon to have some safely organised face to face activities and some times when the church is open again simply as a quiet space. A number of us are now working hard to put all the necessary arrangements in place, but at the time of writing all I can say on that front is "watch this space".



In this strange time, some of us have discovered how helpful online church services can be, even though some of us have got very frustrated with technology that won't do what we want it to do!

Some of us have discovered how we can share prayer and worship over the telephone, in a way we would never have dreamed of a few months ago, and for a while, some of us were very struck by how uplifting even a very brief moment of singing a hymn together outside could be, till it became clear that the emerging regulations required us to stop!

Many of us have made new or deeper friendships, though lots of us have seen far less of people who we usually see quite often and at points the ban on gathering face to face in groups has made it hard to resolve difficulties that we would usually have sorted out together in this way.

All in all, a very mixed bag, but not one where hope is absent. As we often hear at Christmas, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

One piece of very good news in recent weeks is that we were awarded a grant of £48,251 by Viridor Credits (which also includes a 10% contribution from the Clarks Foundation).

This will enable us to carry out long needed refurbishment on the Church Room (behind the bus stop by the end of Rectory Lane). This will include a new entrance opening on to Coronation Road and much enhanced and accessible facilities inside. We are very thankful to both grant giving bodies. We are keen for this renewed facility to complement the other gathering places available in Bleadon. It will be available for hire when completed and we will make full details available soon.

To find out more about what we are doing as we move forwards through this strange year please go to our website or do contact me directly using the details below. We want to find new ways to "Connect, Interact and Encourage". If you have



ideas, please do pass them on.

I want to say a very big thank you to everyone who has helped with church activities and other activities that have kept us all going recently. I look forward to continuing to share in the life of our community and I pray that all of us will discover more nuggets of inspiration, in amongst all that the coming weeks will bring. For more information, visit bleadonchurch.co.uk or contact Tim on 01934 815404 or via revtimerridge@gmail.com

May we all find good and unexpected blessings in amongst the strangeness of this time.



The Bleadon COVID story - or part of it at least!



by Tim

Erridge

So much needed and so much offered - Helping each other in Bleadon and Bleadon Hill.

On 18th March, in the opening moments of COVID restrictions in the UK, a small group of Bleadon people, members of different organisations, sat down together to see what we could do to help. It was clear that many local people were going to lead very restricted lives in the coming weeks.

Five unprecedented months later, when the global and local news has been and still is often very hard to hear, there are many many precious stories to tell too. Here, we barely scratch the surface, but it is a surface worth scratching, so here we go!

Very quickly, getting food and medication to people who suddenly couldn't go and get it themselves was a pressing need. Who needed it? Who could help? There was no pre set plan, but quickly, lots of offers of help rolled in. Ian offered to take calls requesting help. A leaflet was circulated, a WhatsApp group appeared. Janice started taking calls for Bleadon Hill, and so we were off. Lots of requests for help and lots of volunteers. Lots of deliveries and lots of conversations. So often people were helping others they had never spoken to before. Even as the virus spread rapidly and national anxiety was growing, new friendships were forming and our community was coming alive in a new way.

And it wasn't just happening here. By 1st April, "North Somerset Together" was born with weekly

Zoom calls, bringing together people from similar groups all over North Somerset. It was a gift to share thoughts, plans and ideas, giving each other confidence and a boost, and with North Somerset Council very much listening and encouraging.

The people we helped often remarked that they were touched by the friendship in all that happened, at points some were reluctant to ask, but here are some comments from just a few of our helpers:

"I have loved being part of the help group and feel privileged to have been able to support some members of the village. I am pleased to say that I can now call them friends. Thank you for the opportunity!"

"We have had some lovely moments supporting people. It's been good to have time to spend with neighbours and listen to the stories of their lives. Some said they used to feel quite isolated but now feel 'looked after'. Muffin has been a visiting dog with Phil, to a gentleman who lost his dog early in lockdown. There has been a great spirit of friendship. A great blessing!"

"I've really enjoyed being part of the Bleadon Help Group. I have been ringing three residents regularly throughout lockdown and feel I have made new friends. They have been so grateful for the calls and it has been wonderful to get to know them and hear their life stories. I hope to meet them face to face one day to put faces to voices. Thank you for the opportunity to help my local community."

"We were so impressed how quickly the group was up and running and the speed at which people came forward to volunteer. We enjoyed helping out fellow villages dur-

ing this very difficult time."

"As we did shopping and picked up prescriptions we made friends with some lovely people that we might never have met."

"I had some lovely memories. Generally folk were very grateful and couldn't thank us enough. There were the odd extreme requests but we worked our way through it. I made more friends and of course big thanks to Ruth for introducing me to "The swop table"

"My favourite recollection was helping an older gentleman who had served in the RAF as young man. We exchanged military stories (my service was much more recent) and he enjoyed meeting my new puppy."

"I was very active at the beginning of COVID and felt it helped me as much as it helped the vulnerable and elderly. My lovely memory was delivering a prescription on Bleadon Hill; they had left a note in the window saying Thank you!"

For some weeks now the pace has slowed down. Thankfully, there are signs of hope and so many of us can do more for ourselves again. We hope this goes on, though we know there is a risk of more infection and tighter restrictions again.

As we go forward, we must hope for the best, but keep the worst on our radar too. I wonder what the next issue of Bleadon News will be saying about all this? Please stay in touch. We can do it all again and more if we need to. Lets hope we don't need to, but let's cherish the friendship and hope we have found. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

To offer or request help, please visit www.bleadonhelpline.com



Weston

Croquet Club

What a year! It is with regret that we have had to decline to take new members in 2020.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee have taken the decision to have all our lawns used by members at booked times only to facilitate social distancing.

We are not holding any competitions or social events this season and are only slowly getting back to a new normal. Our members are enthusiastically returning to the lawns as we move forwards.

Our motivation and our overall concern

has been and remains, to keep our members and their loved ones safe.

The club looks forward to welcoming new members next year, when hopefully we will be able to enjoy a full calendar of events.

We sincerely hope the residents of Bleadon have all been spared the problems associated with coronavirus.

Jeanette Stuchbery



Coronation Halls Committee

When and how will the Coronation Halls re-open? The Management Committee discussed these questions on 5th August and the answers are decidedly tentative, being possibly out-of-date by the time you read this.

WHEN? Provisionally in the second half of October. A great deal of preparation is needed and the committee felt this is not a process to be rushed.

We want to make sure we get it right and avoid having to shut again because of a mistake or oversight.

HOW? This is where it becomes complicated. Obviously we have to follow all the many guidelines about hygiene, distancing, track and trace and so on, which means the halls have to be provided with a variety of equipment, notices etc. such as you find in other establishments, after a risk assessment is carried out.

Then we have to check very carefully with our hirers to make clear the changed terms under which the halls are let in these circumstances.

It will have to be a case-by-case approach depending on number of factors. Hirings which involve only small numbers with no strenuous activity would clearly be the easiest to manage, but responsibility for ensuring that the rules are followed would fall on the hirer, who would also be expected to have a record and contact details of those attending.

Under present guidelines large gatherings are simply not possible, and whatever the numbers involved use of the kitchens would be tightly restricted according to the rules set by the Committee. Private bookings for meetings or parties, even for small numbers, cannot be accepted.

By mid-October the situation and rules could easily have changed, as I am sure readers will agree. We would love to have the facilities up and running again, but safety has to come first.

Les Masters

Strawberry Line Tea Rooms

Contact Jacci on 07748 155491



Dog friendly

Vintage tea rooms, serving lunch, brunch, afternoon tea plus outside catering.

Puzzle Page answers and thanks



Riddle me this?

Riddle one:

A river

Riddle two:

A mirror

Riddle three:

Queue

Riddle four:

A grandfather, father and son

1	8	6	3	5	4	2	9	7
5	9	4	2	7	1	6	8	3
2	7	3	8	6	9	5	4	1
7	3	9	4	8	5	1	2	6
6	1	5	9	2	7	8	3	4
4	2	8	6	1	3	7	5	9
9	5	7	1	3	2	4	6	8
3	6	1	5	4	8	9	7	2
8	4	2	7	9	6	3	1	5



With thanks to...

Kirsten Hemingway Peter Williams

Les Masters George Scott

Rose Benjamin Richard Cole

Joanne Jones Marion Dare

Penny Robinson Peter Gibbon

Bill Hewitt Gill Williams

Jeanette Stuchbery Ray Durston

Libby Lockyer Don Gardner

Kerrie Jones Christine King

Bruce Poole Zoe Solomon

Rob Tyson Karen Orme

Tim Erridge Keith Pyke

PCSO Michael Benfield

Thank you to those who contributed photos and information on VE-Day at for the 'village at war' piece.

Thank you to everyone who has advertised with us for this edition.

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