

The Bulletin

The Milton Abbas Parish Newsletter

Vol 1 Issue 1

Welcome to this the very first edition of the new parish newsletter, **The Bulletin**, which comes free each month with your copy of the "Village News". It is in response to views expressed in the **Appraisal** that the village could greatly benefit from improved communications.

Each month "**The Bulletin**" will attempt to go some way to meet that need and will concentrate its attention on those matters which are specific to the people who live in the parish of Milton Abbas. It is intended to inform its readers about local happenings, to act as a forum to air village concerns, consider matters of general interest, and no doubt from time to time, allow us to let off a little steam through its letters column.

Its success in meeting these ambitions is going to be dependent on you our readers. Although a certain amount of copy can be generated by volunteer editorial core staff, it is hoped that most of the material published will be generated by the people of Milton Abbas.

We welcome items of news about local people, details of Village Clubs, Societies, local institutions and, of course, information about forthcoming events. If the **Bulletin** can act as an information exchange so much the better.

We welcome also longer articles that reflect village life and are likely to be of general interest, but really the overall make-up and content is largely up to everyone in the village. So in this first issue, if there is something you don't like or you have ideas to make it even more useful and a more enjoyable read, let us know.

The **Bulletin** is a companion to the Village News and is free to those who already subscribe to the News. For those who do not as yet subscribe then £2 per annum will bring you both the News and the **Bulletin**.

If you are not a subscriber, the person who delivers it will be happy to add you to the list for just £2. Which works out at the price of a second class stamp per issue!



Milton Abbas Village Trust

Just over a month ago the parishioners of Milton Abbas were asked to give their response to a proposal for the formation of a Charitable Village Trust. It was neither a referendum nor a secret ballot but a village sounding to see if there would be sufficient support for the idea. At the time of writing there are still 20 or so returns yet to come in but readers will be interested to know that preferences as stated on the returned forms were as follows:-

Approve of setting up trust	164 votes
Do not approve.....	13 votes
Would like to be a member	141 votes
Would not like to be a member	23 votes
Votes Returned.....	177 votes

Even if the votes yet to be returned are all negative, it does seem that there is within this parish plenty of enthusiasm and a substantial majority to justify the next stage. This will be to make an application to the Charity Commissioners for the creation of the Village Charitable Trust. It is intended that membership should be open to everyone in the parish who wishes to join, and a working party from the

Village Appraisal Steering committee has been drafting a possible constitution and preparing the application document. They now feel that a meeting should be called so that potential members can join, agree the application, vote to adopt the constitution and elect trustees to carry out an agreed agenda.

This inaugural meeting will be held by kind permission of the Vicar in St. James Church, Milton Abbas on Tuesday, 22 April, at 7.30p.m., a venue big enough to accommodate all who wish to become members. It is most important that all parishioners wishing to join should attend this meeting. A leaflet outlining the constitution and agenda will be distributed throughout village prior to this meeting.

STOP PRESS

Chairman of P.C. Resigns.

John Kelsall has resigned from the Parish Council as Chairman and councillor. This decision has been forced upon him by new and onerous work schedules which he feels will prevent him carrying out his public duties. His service to the community has been outstanding and everyone will regret his retirement (See page 4).

Car Park At Last

Following a site visit on Thursday, 6th April, the NDDC and Greenalls Breweries have reached an agreement, subject to final legal details, to develop a public car park with toilet facilities, beside and behind the Hambro Arms. The District Council will take a long lease on the car park and will acquire the woodshed for conversion to toilets. This will ease pressure from visitor parking, and also provide space for the cars of staff and parents of the First School. Work is likely to begin in September or October.

A Fair Weather Woman ?

Every effort is being made by your committee to ensure good weather for the Street Fair to held on July 26. They are pleased to report that **Helen Griffen**, B.B.C.'s South Today Weather Girl has agreed to come and open the Street Fair!

NEW VILLAGE GREEN at ST CATHERINE'S WELL

At the end of 1995 and in January/February 1996 the idea of creating a Village Green at Catherine's Well was discussed by Milton Abbas Parish Council. The interest in such a scheme was stimulated by a publication received from the Countryside Commission entitled Millennium Greens. Under this scheme the Countryside Commission was to encourage the creation of 1000 'New Greens for people to enjoy in perpetuity,' by the year 2000.

In March 1996 your Parish Council made a firm decision to explore the possibilities for the creation of a new village green at Catherine's Well to coincide with the Millennium. It proposed that the village green would comprise a permanent open space area for the enjoyment of everyone, with the local community having a large input into its design.

The land which was considered most suitable was that adjacent to the existing childrens playground, an area extending to approximately two acres and it would be bounded by the existing hedges and fence line. The land belongs to the North Dorset District Council land the garages and the land on which the garages stand belong to the Signpost Housing Association.

In 1996 representatives from the Parish Council had discussions with NDDC and Signpost regarding the proposed village green and both organisations received the proposals with enthusiasm and helpful guidance. In March/April 1996 the Parish Council made an application through the Countryside Commission, to the Millennium Greens Fund, for a grant to assist in the creation of the proposed village green.

In September, 1996, there was a site visit by two advisors from the Countryside Commission who were met by members of the Parish Council. In the same month we received a letter from the Countryside Commission advising us that our village green scheme would only receive consideration for a grant if

the vehicle access to and across the land was removed.

The Parish Council were of course aware that the vehicle access and indeed the garages would present problems, and sought a solution with the NDDC. Our subsequent discussions with them and Signpost during 1996 and to date have led us to a point where we hope it may be possible for the five/six garages in use to be relocated to another part of Catherine's Well possibly on land close to the Surgery, existing garages to be demolished, and for the vehicle access to be discontinued. The matter is currently in the hands of the NDDC and Signpost and we are hopeful of a positive reply in the near future.

An inaugural meeting of some of the residents of Catherine's Well took place on Wednesday, 12th March, 1997, and shortly a committee will be formed to discuss the eventual design of the village green at Catherine's Well, the supervision of its creation, and the onward going maintenance.

A large amount of time and energy has been expended by your Parish Council to date and undoubtedly there will be a considerable amount of work to be undertaken by everyone concerned in the next two years. The scheme has already been enthusiastically endorsed by a good number of residents and we are sure that more will come forward to donate their support and expertise in this very worthwhile project.

Anyone wishing to offer help or to assist in any way can register their names with the following Parish Councillors:-

Michael McAvoy	880333
Ian Maxwell	880019
Tony Hopson	881247
John Fifield	880639

Announcements regarding the progress of the Village Green Scheme will be made as and when further information is available.

Tony Hopson.

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

So much interest was shown in response to questions in the Village Appraisal that the Steering Group has asked the Milton Abbas Conservation Group to co-ordinate the Best Kept Village Competition this year, as they did in 1994 and 1995.

What the judges look for primarily is evidence of community effort, and marks are awarded for:

- *no litter
- *well-kept playing fields and pavilions, village greens, village halls, pubs, shops and schools
- *clean bus shelters and telephone kiosks
- *tidy, churchyards, cemeteries and war memorials
- *trim hedges, private verges, fences and gardens

Judging takes place in June and again later in the summer, to make sure standards are kept up – and no, they don't tell us when they're coming! **Ann Ford** would like to hear from anyone interested in doing their bit in 1997 – 'phone her on 880089.

Street Trees

John Fifield, Tree Warden writes:

In March Conservation Group volunteers planted a crab apple between two houses in the village street as part of the continuing programme to replace the deteriorating rowan trees.

A whitebeam was also planted at Catherine's Well to replace a dead beech sapling that did not survive the dry summer. If you live in the vicinity of a newly planted tree, could you spare a little time in dry periods to throw the occasional bucket of water at the base of the tree. Removal of grass and competing plants at the base also benefits newly planted trees.

We are also looking for a small parcel of land, say up to about 100 sq. metres, to use as a tree nursery. Anyone removing unwanted trees, saplings or seedlings from their garden could have them planted in the nursery. They would then be available to others who might require them for hedging or special planting.

Phone John on 880639

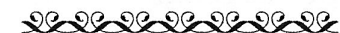
NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

18-27 April 1997

'National Spring Clean' is your opportunity to take action against litter, and improve your local environment. The largest clean-up in the UK, this is an annual campaign which attracts over 2 million people of all ages.

Anyone can get involved and North Dorset District Council is offering assistance, for example by providing sacks and removing any rubbish collected. Contact **Mr. Paul Deakin**, principal waste management officer, on 484340.

Schools will also receive a FREE education Pack



National Trust South Dorset Association

The next illustrated talk will be given in the Reading Room, Milton Abbas, on the 12th April at 2.30p.m., when Doris Butcher will relate some of the exciting moments of "A Journey through the Land of Sheba". Refreshments will be served and entrance costs £1 for members and £1.50 for non-members.

This local association was established in 1994 to cater for members in the region and to enable them to enjoy a wider and fuller benefit of their membership. It encourages friendship between like-minded people and acts to support the trust in its endeavours.

The principal activities of the association is to provide outings by coach to historic sites, guided walks, lectures and illustrated talks. Milton Abbas is used as one of the venues for the meetings of the association.

Details of summer events will be available shortly and a special summer party will be held at the Manor House, Hinton St., Mary in July.

The annual subscription to the association is £3 per person or £5 per couple.

If you wish to join contact **Jim Dick** on 880998 for further information.



Milton Abbas Parish Council

Tuesday, 18 March, 1997 – report by Ann Ford

1 The NDDC Concessionary Travel Leaflet is to go on display in the Post Office.

2. Two new litter bins have been provided by NDDC, one by the Playground and one by the Church.

3. County Councillor Fox attended the meeting and produced petition forms asking the County Council to provide a safe pavement up the hill to Catherine's Well. Ann Ford is arranging for these to be circulated throughout the village.

4. Work recently completed in the Playground included removing old chippings, replacing with two lorry loads of chippings, and repairing – including welding – equipment that had been vandalised. With the hire of the digger, and wet weather doubling the time and labour estimates, the bill came to £700+, which wipes out the £600 or so remaining in the Playground Fund. Parents and neighbours are asked to be vigilant, to prevent wilful damage recurring.

5. The Parish Council unanimously voted to apply for funding for a feasibility study for a Village Hall.

6. 100m² planting of pine/beech and pine/oak in 8 or 9 blocks, with protective fencing, is due to take place shortly in the 7-acre field behind the new houses at Catherine's Well.

Planning.

(A) 0058 – NDDC has granted permission to Mr & Mrs J Wright, Parkwood, to replace an existing extension to the house, and to replace an existing prefabricated concrete garage with a traditional one.

(B) 0127 – The Parish Council had no objections to the application by The Surgery to add a 720 m² extension to the surgery, when the Portacabin would be removed.

8. NDDC have made a grant of £19,000 towards repairs at the almshouses, costing overall £30,000.

9. Meeting dates are: 17th April, normal PC meeting, 15th May, AGM followed by normal PC meeting, 12th June, normal PC meeting.

All are at 7.30 pm in the Reading Room, and all parishioners are invited to attend.

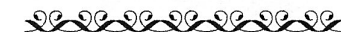
The Bulletin April FARM NOTES

by Robert Bagwell

Here at Delcombe Farm with about 360 head of cattle to feed and clean out and 150 cows to milk twice a day, there is always plenty of work to do. We also have 450 sheep on winter keep from the Welsh hills from October to March. Sheep are not such fussy grazers as cattle so they eat all the grass the cows tend to reject. About eighty per cent of the cows calve between July and November and we rear between 40-50 heifer calves from the cows that calve in this period as replacement for the dairy herd. From mid February onwards we spread fertilisers on the fields to promote the growth of grass for the cows to graze, but the wet and windy weather has been holding things up recently.

Its almost a year since the B.S.E. crisis and it has been reported to have cost Dorset farmers between £7-9 million after compensation during this period. There is a lot of German beef being imported into Britain at present, so check with your butcher and only buy British!

Robert Bagwell is Farm Manager at Delcombe Manor



WATCH THE SHED

Now is the time to start to think about the security of your garden shed. To remind you of the need to secure your shed, just take a look at what you store in it. Lawn mowers, strimmers and tools all have their value and will cost hundreds to replace. Late February, March and April is the time when the thief will be actively seeking to target sheds for tools to steal so that they can be sold in the Spring. Please remind everyone to put a good lock on the shed (a closed shackled padlock and hasp), and to property mark all their tools.

BURGLARIES DOWN

House burglaries in the Dorchester Division are down by 29% as compared to the same period last year. This reduction has been contributed to by Watch schemes working in Partnership with Police. Thank you for all your efforts - HomeWatch Schemes do work.

Dorset Police.

Page 4

The following interview took place just before the announcement of John's forced retirement from the Parish Council and now serves as a record of his attitude and views on serving this community over the past eight years. He will be missed.

John Kelsall

Chairman of the Parish Council

Our subject this month has so little spare time that at one point it seemed quite likely that the only way to achieve this interview was via electronic Email. John Kelsall, rather conveniently in this respect, spends long hours working for British Telecom, uncrossing wires and sorting out customer problems. So if all else failed then one certain way of getting his attention would be as they say 'on line'. However, he is known to enjoy, and indulges himself occasionally with a glass or two of the red stuff. Your reporter believes that it was the temptation of testing - tasting even - a bottle of Australian Shiraz that secured his agreement to this **Bulletin** interview.



John Kelsall, Chairman M.A.P.C.

For the past 25 years, John has been happily married to schoolteacher Paula and they have two grown-up children. Son Matthew is now 22 and away at university and daughter Julia, 19 is at Poole College. Any spare time, when John is not playing his electric bass guitar in his folk dance band "Reckin' Reels", is spent socialising here or, whenever possible, visiting France. What remains is taken up with fulfilling his duties as a parish councillor. Currently he is Chairman of the Milton Abbas Parish Council and because of his affinity for all things French, including a 2CV car, he is known to his friends as

'Monsieur Le Maire'. With spare time at such a premium, what made him seek a seat on the Parish Council?

"I suppose because I want to do something to preserve the idyllic quality of this village, and to take an active part in its future. One way to do that is to serve on the Parish Council."

John really means it. This is his third term as a councillor and second as Chairman. Nevertheless Parish Councils operate under severe restraints - they are only advisory - and their members can only hope that the District and County Councils listen to what they have to say. So do they?

"In so far as they can I believe they do. Although not always as much as they should". Does he think then that Parish Councils should have more clout? More power?

"No, on balance, I don't think they should. This is the first rung of the democratic ladder, and we all live in the parish. Consequently, we need to think quite hard about the decisions we arrive at because they affect the people here. I would not want to be a District or County councillor, even when, unlike us, they are paid for their time. So much of their decision taking is made a long way away from the people it's going to impinge on."

I suggested that this apparent remoteness may have to do with the fact that further up the ladder of local government, party politics come into play. I asked John if he felt there was a place for similar party political commitment at parish level? He paused for a moment and then said:

"Absolutely not."

He looked annoyed at the suggestion.

"We are here to listen to the people who don't talk to us, which is the majority of the parish probably. It is their hopes and views that we have to discover, and then let that become the basis for our policies. It is not just the articulate and noisy who should determine the future. As for party politics, I wouldn't have party officials telling me what to support or how I should vote."

As he looked rather upset at that possibility I refilled his glass and changed the subject to ask him if during this present term as Chairman there was anything that the Council had achieved that had particularly pleased him.

The Bulletin April

"Yes, there are one or two things that we have got moving. For instance, as long as I can remember, even when my father-in-law George Dickins was chairman, there were endless arguments as to whether or not the village needed public toilets. Well, at long last I am pleased to say that work is soon to begin on the provision of toilets and extra parking for visitors behind the 'Hambro Arms'. I admit it is something I have always believed the village needed".

Anything else?

"Yes, I am keen to explore the proposal to set up a Village Trust. I know some people fear that a Trust may in some way supersede the Parish Council. I don't believe that. In fact there will be members of the council sitting as trustees. Don't forget, when appropriate, part of the business of the trust could be to complement Parish Council initiatives. A village Trust is something I would welcome if it also became a vehicle for letting the village speak with one voice on issues beyond the remit of the council".

And regrets?

"I wish more people in the parish would attend our meetings. Time is set aside - The Democratic Half Hour - for any parishioner to have their say. I wish more would make use of it. And of course they are welcome to attend the whole meeting if they wish"

Lastly I asked John if he thought there were any advantages to being Chairman. Without hesitation he smiled and said:

"There is a deep and wonderful satisfaction in having, and using, your casting vote!" He lapsed into silence, as befits a man at peace with himself; then, as an after-thought he enquired:

"Any more of that red left?"

interviewed by Peter Chafer



The Bulletin

Published as a free supplement with the 'Village News'. Articles, news, information and letters to the Editors please not later than the 18th of the month. Written contributions can be left at the Post Office marked for the 'Bulletin', or when closed, opposite at number 26.

Tel: 880983 or 880333
Fax: 881166 or 880812