

August 2020

The Bickleigh Bugle



We do not usually have an August copy but as this is an non-paper edition we thought we would go ahead. There is still not a lot of content but the Parish Council wishes to keep everyone up to date.

At the last Village Hall meeting it was decided to start planning ahead as it can be opened again - subject to Government guidelines which may change. So if anyone wishes to make a booking do let the committee know.

Proposed events are:

- Picnic 22 August in the field at 3pm.

- Film evening 18 September at 6.30pm - more information to follow.
- Working group at the hall 5 September 10 to 12
- Another working group on 5 December.

Look at for other events either via the village website, messenger or on the notice board.

Whatever you are doing let's hope we get some decent weather whilst the children are on holiday.

**Your editors,
Steve and Michael**

Parish Council News

I know it's become a bit a cliché to consider what your 'July 2019 self' would never have believed about the state of the world 12 months later. If someone had told you that there would be a global shutdown, cancelled events and holidays, world-wide demonstrations, and a 'new normal' you just wouldn't believe it.

But amongst all the turmoil there is one issue that appears to have divided the nation like no other – just what has BBC weatherman Tomasz Schafernaker done with his hair?

His usual closely cropped barnet has turned into something way beyond a Sixties moptop and even now he's refusing to do anything about it and seems determined to keep the look.

I must admit I was quite keen to get my limited amount of hair trimmed when the barbers re-opened although I was grateful to my wife, Judith, who had made, what I thought was a reasonable effort during lockdown. I even asked my barber what she thought of my wife's efforts and was told that she needed to work more on 'layering, tapering, and in particular blending' – needless to say I have not passed this on to my wife – until now that is!!

I'm sure most of us will welcome the easing of lockdown and the opportunity to meet up with family and friends, play golf, and even go to Church albeit with significant limitations, although the 'to mask or not to mask' question remains a legal and social minefield.

During the gradual easing of lockdown Bickleigh has seen the re-opening of The Mill and The Fisherman's Cot and it's great to see so many locals doing their best to support local business by drinking as much coffee (and in some cases beer!) and eating as much cake as possible. I'm all for it! And who'd have thought

that the reopening of the recycling centre would be met with such excitement!

Whilst it's unlikely that other areas such as the Village Hall or the Gardening Club will be opening anytime soon, we all very much hope that it won't be too long before I actually have some activity to report on.

The Bickleigh Coronavirus Response Team has now stood down but remains ready to leap into action should the need arise. A heartfelt thanks goes to the over 20 volunteers who undertook shopping trips and prescription collecting for those unable to do so, and gratitude also to members of the volunteer team for all their organisational and logistics work. One of the few benefits of the lockdown has been that I, along with others I'm sure, have got to know a number of villagers where, for one reason or another, our paths haven't crossed until now. Overall the whole lockdown experience has been a terrific example of a village coming together during unprecedented times.

In Parish Council news I'm pleased to report that we have made some progress in sorting out the surface rainwater issues that impact a number of properties on the hill leading to the Church. Our lengthsman, Robin Maynard, has been busy clearing gullies, gutters and under-road pipes at the top of the hill which has already reduced the volume of water that cascades down the hill, especially during heavy downpours. There is still much to do, and we are hoping to meet with representatives from the Highways Department shortly to discuss what can be done about the blocked drains further down the hill including instances where the rainwater bypasses the drain completely.

I wonder how many of you have heard of West Exe Halt, Cadeleigh (Bickleigh), Burn Halt, Up Exe Halt, and Thorveton? If so, you are

recalling stations on the old Exe Valley Railway Line that used to run from Exeter to Dulverton, but which was closed in 1963, although much of the track bed remains.

The Exe Valley Cycle Way Development Group made a presentation to the Parish Council at the July meeting about a proposed cycle way from Tiverton to Exeter using the old railway line route. Phase 1 would involve a route from Bickleigh to Tiverton and Phase 2 from Bickleigh to Up Exe near Thorveton.

Although in its early stages, with much work to be done, the group already has significant

support, and should you wish to know more or get involved I'm sure Richard Somerwill would be pleased to hear from you. We wish them every success in their endeavours for what would be a tremendous facility for our area.

Finally, I'm sure many of you will have had summer holiday plans disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic but if, like me, you are staying at home this summer, I'm sure I don't really need to remind anyone that if you have to be stuck somewhere in the world, we are so blessed to be stuck in Devon.

Clive Williams

Letter from the Rector

Noel Coward's film 'Brief Encounter' was made during the Second World War but the story is set in peacetime in a time without rationing, blackout, restrictions on movement and bombed out buildings. In that respect the doomed love affair between the characters played by Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson was played out in a world returned to the normality of life before the war. However, by the time the film was released, in November 1945, that was pure nostalgia. The world that was emerging was very different with the new government's plans for nationalisation, the creation of the NHS, independence for India and beginning to rebuild the economy and housing – part of which would involve immigration from the Commonwealth. A very different country would grow from the devastation of war.

Watching, in recent weeks, some television programmes set in pre-Covid 19 times has been a similarly nostalgic experience for the lifestyle we so recently enjoyed. Just being able to go to a pub and restaurant freely, move about shops, go to the cinema or theatre, chat with neighbours at a coffee morning, enjoy the activities of a village fete, just drop in on one another and so much more.

We are now beginning to return to old familiar ways – return 'home' as it were, but still in a very restricted way. In some respects, the relaxation has only emphasised how much we still cannot do. We can worship, have a wedding or funeral in church but we cannot sing. Our church bells can ring out but only half of them. It's beginning to be more familiar but it's not the same.

As the world that was emerging in 1945 was so different from that of 1939, so will be the world that eventually emerges in the next months and years, even when restrictions no longer exist. Some businesses, clubs, societies and so on will not survive or re-open. New ones will emerge. Attitudes may be very different. We have already seen an emerging awareness that we are probably not as inclusive and free from prejudice as we thought we had become – and much needs to be done. We have also seen great concerns about our security emerge and also issues about social justice and how poverty, as globally we have become poorer, will affect the most vulnerable.

There has been an increasing interest in and concern for the natural world – enthusiasm for gardening and walking and cycling. A

rethinking of what it is to be a neighbour and re-evaluation of the value given to workers in the health sector and others who do work essential to our wellbeing and every day life.

Whenever there has been a severe and dramatic shake up to our lives, whether from war or 'plague' or whatever, what follows can never be the same as before. We are all changed. What is important is the decisions that we now make for the new and different world.

The Bible stories we often return to at such times concern the people of Israel suffering long years of enforced exile in a very strange and foreign land – Babylon. When they were permitted to return to their homeland they had to think about how they could re-build the devastated Jerusalem. The story that we read is of a people looking back to their heritage – searching the old manuscripts they could find

about their history, both good and bad, the complex characters and events that had shaped who they were. In doing so they sought to find a way to re-build a new community and new relationship with God.

Eventually the people started building a new temple. Some people wept when they saw it because they had known the old one. But overwhelmingly there were shouts of joy with songs praising and giving thanks to the Lord 'for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.' (Ezra 3.11)

It is now essential that we look back, not with tears that those times cannot be re-created, but in a willingness to be honest about what has made us who we are – warts and all. Only then can we start planning for our 'brave' new world – and start building 'Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'.

Paul

Bickleigh Sunflowers

You may recall that a few months ago the Bickleigh Coronavirus Response Team distributed some sunflower seeds and I know that at least some of you have been growing them successfully.

It would be great to see how they've grown so please send any photos to the village hall email account bickleighvillagehall@gmail.com where all entries will be judged by a member of the Bickleigh Gardening club and a prize awarded to the winner. Closing date 31 August 2020.

Tiverton Mobile library returns

Tiverton Mobile Library will be returning to Bickleigh on Thursdays between 09:50 and 10:20 on Aug 20, Sep 17, Oct 15, Nov 12 and Dec 10.