

LOPEN EYE

Lopen Parish
Newsletter
FEBRUARY
2014



LOPEN IS A VERY PLEASANT PLACE TO LIVE. THREE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HELP TO KEEP IT SO.

ONE. ALL dog owners to clear up properly after their pets.

The vast majority do act responsibly, of course, but here is part of a letter received from a Lopen parent:

“Along with our young children, we are frequent walkers around the village and local countryside. It is a lovely village with some really great walks. We get to see all kinds of wildlife, our children thoroughly enjoy themselves and at the same time get some of the fresh air and exercise we want for them. It is with much dismay that I have finally decided to ask you, through the Lopen Eye, to remind dog owners of their duty to be both responsible for cleaning up their dogs business but also, and more importantly, to take their little sacks of doo dah home with them to be disposed of rather tossing it into the hedgerow to be left there to resemble some kind of disgusting tree decoration!! I hope, through the power of the local newsletter, we can put a stop to this disgusting behaviour rather than for people to fall out in person and the authorities being called. I thank you for your understanding of this problem and trust you will relay this message to the villagers.”

TWO. Make sure that drains in the road close to your home are kept clear so that rainwater can escape freely.

*In weather such as we have recently experienced and are still experiencing, it is essential to keep the drain gullies on our main and side roads open, if we are to avoid the flooding of vulnerable houses. Everyone in the village needs to understand that the pressures on Highways are such that they will only intervene when a gully becomes completely blocked and, even then, not immediately; and our Lengthsman only spends 3.5 hours a week in the village, with lots of other calls on his time and no equipment to un-block gullies. **In short, it is largely up to all of us to help keep these gullies clear, because the blunt truth is that no-one else is going to do so.** If a gully near to your house is covered with leaves (and other less pleasant things), or you see a similarly covered gully when walking round the village, please uncover it - it won't take you very long. If it is completely blocked, please report it to the Parish Council. Above all, don't just walk by and do nothing.*

THREE. Report potholes in the roadway so that all road users can remain safe - pedestrians, cyclists, motor cyclists and horse riders as well as motorists.

Some of you may have read about the man who recently sued his local council for compensation, when he damaged one of his wheels while driving through a pothole. His first attempt was rejected by the council on the grounds that the pothole had not been reported. He was able to prove that it had been reported and the council was required to pay up. The message is plain: if you see a pothole, report it to Highways.

***The number to call at Somerset County Council to report potholes to Highways is
0845 345 9155***

Lopen Eye is sponsored by Chris Pitcher, who can provide all your gardening and home decorating needs, call 01460 240 506 or 07714 631 007. Also Autohouse Cars. If the car you want is not in stock, I will be able to find it through my used car locator service.

Parish Chairman Barry Davolls reports back...

Lopen Parish Council Budget 2014-15

The Parish Council budget for the coming year and therefore precept - that part of your Council Tax that covers Lopen PC's related costs - was considered and agreed at the last PC meeting on January 6th. There are several aspects outside our control that have influenced the budget for the coming year. To our advantage is a small change in the tax base (I assume as a result of an empty property coming back into use) which has the effect of reducing the cost per household if all else remained equal. Also to our benefit is a new scheme of charging for government-appointed external auditors resulting in a saving for Lopen of around £150 for the year. On the flip-side, the grant from SSDC intended to reduce the impact on parish councils of the recently-introduced Local Council Tax Benefits Scheme has been reduced from £370 to £325 for the coming year.

The key items of expenditure remain as last year but adjusted to reflect changes in charges. Two new reserve accounts have been added for both the current year to April (we had surpluses enough to do this) and for the coming financial year. It was considered important to start building a fund for any unforeseen Churchyard expenses and to provide ongoing funds for maintenance and training related to a defibrillator (when it finally arrives).

Taking everything into account, the outcome is an increase in the Lopen precept from £5,220 to £5,350. Although this represents a 2.5% increase, other factors reduce this to about 1% per household for the Lopen part of Council Tax. Or about 48p more for a band D property for the year. The full budget can be viewed on the village website.

South Somerset Local Plan

The Local Plan covering the period 2006-2028 has just completed a further round of public consultation which covered the main modifications proposed to address concerns raised by the plan inspector who considered some aspects of the original plan as 'not sound'. Lopen PC has made various representations on your behalf. These include reclaiming the Lopen Head industrial site which, despite being located within our parish, has been allocated to South Petherton in the emerging plan. Our village is not very large in area as it is and if we do not fight against what is, in effect, land-grabbing, where will it end?

Lopen Head Industrial Site

During December 2013 South Somerset District Council gave permission for what was to be a fifth industrial building, known as Building B, at Lopen Head to be erected just behind Lift West's new building. The following day Mr Justice Lewis, in a case held at the Royal Courts of Justice, quashed planning permission for another proposed building, a huge Building E, which SSDC had approved last year on adjacent un-allocated land. This followed a challenge by local resident and Parish Councillor Teresa Sienkiewicz OBE who, like many before her, took exception to the numerous breaches of planning law and complete absence of enforcement measures on the site. Through her determined efforts the views of many local people have been endorsed at the very highest level. This was supported by an award of her costs. For full details, please visit the village website.

Lopen Parish Council Vacancy

I am pleased to report that we have received contact from potential applicants interested in the Parish Council-Councillor vacancy and we are hopeful this will lead to firm applications in the coming days. We are required to have a clear closing deadline for formal applications which, given the already extended period of advertising, is 5pm on the 10th February 2014.

Lopen Village Website

Do visit the village's very own website at www.lopen.btck.co.uk where you will find much to interest and inform. Including a great deal of important information that cannot be included in LOPEN EYE for lack of space. Our website, the envy of much larger places than Lopen, is managed by Kim McDonald, our Parish Clerk.

DAVID PEARSON

1940 - 2013

It is with sadness that the death is announced of David Pearson, former Lopen parish councillor, after suffering from Parkinson's Disease for many years.

David, who had managed a chain of chemist shops in south London in his professional life, lived at Paddock House in Frog Street. He died in December, his wife Jackie having pre-deceased him by two years.

RAINFALL REPORT by Jeremy Rook



An exciting time for us rainfall recorders - in the 31 days between 18th December and 17th January I have recorded 305 mm of rain i.e. 12 inches - more than one third of our annual average rainfall. No wonder that Muchelney is cut off in the middle of Somerset and the Levels are flooded.

CALLING ALL SNAPPERS!



Following the success of previous competitions, the Somerset Hedge Group 2014 Photo Competition is now open.

The theme for photos is:
Hedgerow landscapes through the seasons

So take your camera into the Somerset countryside and try to capture some of the wonderful hedgerow landscapes - in autumn colours, winter frost and snow, spring growth and summer sunshine.

There are Open and Junior (under 15) categories and generous cash prizes. The competition is open to amateur photographers only. Up to three digital images (preferably in jpg format) may be submitted.

For more details and an entry form please visit our website at

www.somerset-hedgegroup.org.uk

The closing date for entries is

1st October 2014

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?



It is hoped to set up an informal group of people to meet monthly in the Schoolroom to sing a wide variety of secular and sacred music. Ability to read music is not essential. Those interested should contact Angela (240 921) or Joan (242 254)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN WRITING, READ ON...



Have you ever dreamed of being a published author with a readership of 250,000 people? Siren short stories is giving you the chance! We are publishing the best fictional stories sent to us. Stories must be fictional and between 900 and 1,000 words. So give it a go and discover your inner talents.

This competition is sponsored by a newsletter published by Avon & Somerset Police called SENIOR SIREN.

They can be contacted for further details by calling 07879 116009, by emailing Ashley.Jones@avonand-somersetpolice.co.uk or by visiting the website www.sclt.us.

Lopen Parish Clerk Kim McDonald writes...

"I always post the SENIOR SIREN onto the village website, but I don't know how many people get to see it. There are sure to be items of interest to some Lopen people - and it is free. It covers such diverse subjects as keeping yourself and your home secure, recipes, keep fit, crosswords and other puzzles and seasonal gardening tips. Plus local information from the police and highways authorities.

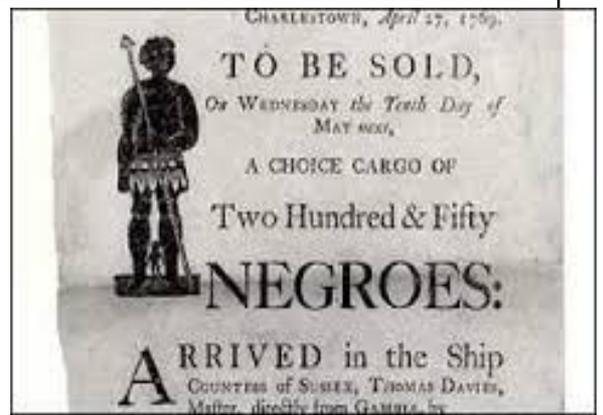
By the way, we have had over 10,000 visitors to the village website www.lopen.btck.co.uk over the past two years. I am always happy to receive ideas for content at mcdonald.lopenpc@btinternet.com



Guests are always welcome.
Further information from
Andrew Kearney
240 287

TUESDAY 18th FEBRUARY
at 7.30 in the Schoolroom

Dr. Mick Atkinson will give
a talk on
THE SLAVE TRADE



Lopen JUST WOMEN

For further information
please call
Margaret Linton
Tele 241 162

TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY
at 7.30 in the Schoolroom
Annual General Meeting followed by
Steve Chapman with a talk about
the **HISTORY & MANUFACTURE**
of **CHOCOLATE**
accompanied by a 'Tutored Tasting'!



CONTACTS [Village website http://lopen.btck.co.uk](http://lopen.btck.co.uk)

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman	Barry Davolls	242 297	b.davolls.lopenpc@btinternet.com
Vice Chairman	Nicola Norman	240 458	n.norman.lopenpc@btinternet.com
	Stephen Crane	241 412	scrane1@hotmail.co.uk
	Teresa Sienkiewicz	241 363	tslopenpc1@btinternet.com

Parish Clerk	Kim McDonald	242 297	mcdonald.lopenpc@btinternet.com
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DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cllr Barry Walker	242 894	barry.walker@southsomerset.gov.uk
Cllr Paul Thompson	240 510	paul.thompson@southsomerset.gov.uk

COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr Christopher Le Hardy	01935 850 212	clehardy@somerset.gov.uk
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MEMBER of PARLIAMENT

The Rt Hon David Laws	01935 423 284	david.laws.mp@parliament.uk
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ALL SAINTS CHURCH Benefice Office 73226 Issy Welsh
Rectors Rev. Julia Hicks, Rev. Bob Hicks 76406
Churchwarden Angela Naunton Davies 240 921

Services are listed on the Church noticebo:

LOPEN HISTORY GROUP

Chairman	Joan Farris	242 254	joanfarrisuk@googlemail.co.uk
Archivist	Nigel Potts	240 369	nigelpotts@talktalk.net

JUST WOMEN

Chairman	Lynn Benfield	929 205	lynn.ian@virgin.net
Treasurer	Zena Morgan	77259	zenam1@hotmail.co.uk
Secretary	Margaret Linton	241 162	margaretlinton79@yahoo.com

POLICE CSO Ceara Sturt **101 and ask for PCSO 8340**
ceara.sturt@avonandsomerset.police.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Martin Howell	241 765	samhowell2@talktalk.net
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LOPEN EYE

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COFFEE MORNINGS at the SCHOOLROOM



in February

Wednesdays 12th & 26th
10.30 until 12.00 midday.
Only £1 for a hot drink
(and refill) plus a slice of
home-made cake.

*The views expressed in Lopen Eye
are not necessarily those held by
Lopen Parish Council and its
members*