

OLD CLEEVE PARISH COUNCIL PARISH MAGAZINE

We were pleased to hear recently that our nomination for the Somerset County Council Chair's Award for Service to the Community was successful. We nominated Parish Councillor Keith Hunt for the award and he received this, for service to the community of Old Cleeve, at a ceremony on 17 February. Many of you who know Keith will know that he is a keen supporter of many campaigns and charities that look after our environment or that help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. As the former site manager at Old Cleeve School he was a particular inspiration to generations of youngsters who benefitted from his enthusiasm and dedication to green issues both locally and globally. Our congratulations go to Keith on receiving this well-deserved award.

Keith's award is recognition of all the time and energy that volunteers contribute to our community life. We seem to be seeing a longer list of things that now need to be done by volunteers, and at the same time, the number of volunteers appears to be dwindling. This is perhaps not surprising with all the other priorities that many people have in their lives. Our own Parish Councillors also undertake their role as volunteers and as we approach the end of another financial year, it is timely to thank them for their continued work to represent their communities around the Parish.

Despite our best efforts, we are still trying to fill our vacancy for a Parish Councillor in the Washford Ward. If there are any volunteers out there who would like to become a Parish Councillor, please do get in touch or look at our website for further information.

As we start the new financial year on 1 April, we will do so with the new Unitary Authority, Somerset Council. The new authority replaces the existing County and District Councils and should simplify the provision of services going forward. The end of the District Council means we will be saying goodbye to our Somerset West & Taunton District Councillor Steve Griffiths. Councillor Griffiths has been with us since June 2021 and has been a regular attendee at our Parish Council meetings. During that time he has been able to update us on all the latest District news and has been happy to deal with our issues of concern and to try and resolve them for us. We will be sorry to see him go as one of our elected representatives and wish him all the best for the future.

This means that from 1 April, our two Unitary Councillors will be our only elected representatives. Our Unitary Councillors, who are paid an allowance to represent us, are Christine Lawrence and Marcus Kravis. Councillor Lawrence is a great help to the Parish Council, attending virtually all our meetings and pursuing matters on our behalf. We really appreciate her support especially recently, when she understandably had other personal priorities to attend to.

Unfortunately, Councillor Kravis remains absent and has not attended any of our meetings since December 2019, nor has he provided any support to us on any issues since then. We did hold 'clear the air' talks in November 2022 when it was agreed that it would be in our mutual interest to have a working relationship again, but this has not resulted in him attending our meetings or providing any assistance on many issues of concern.

The main issue of concern at the moment is the now indefinite closure of the B3191 Cleeve Hill. When this was announced at the end of February, following further investigation works, it was the worst possible news. We were all hoping for a quick resolution and the re-opening of the road in time for the holiday traffic, car boot traffic and extra traffic associated with the cliff stabilisation works. All this extra traffic will be with us in the coming months and the roads and lanes around Old Cleeve are not suitable for it. The Parish Council have no powers to deal with this matter directly but we are pressing for action to be taken in the short term to deal with the extra traffic; and for a rapid solution that will allow the road, or an alternative road to be re-opened.

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By the time you read this, we will have hopefully chosen a new logo for our Parish Council following our recent competition. All being well, we'll be able to include that in the next update and over time, you should see that being used on all Parish Council assets and correspondence.

Our next meeting is on Monday 17th April in Roadwater Village Hall at 7.00pm. This will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting when we will be able to report back on the work of the Parish Council over the last year. Full details of both meetings will be published on our noticeboards and our website: www.oldcleeveparishcouncil.org nearer the time. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Ian Duncan
Chair, Old Cleeve Parish Council