**Clerks Report 9th January 2023**

**Town Councillor of the Year**

Congratulations to our very own Councillor Steve Plumley, who was awarded The Peter Duppa-Miller Award for Town Councillor of the Year at the B&NES Community Awards. B&NES was quoted as saying:

“Steve Plumley deserves recognition because he is one of those people who works quietly and unassumingly behind the scenes across dozens of community groups in Midsomer Norton. He shares his wealth of knowledge, links people and ideas and in short oils the wheels so that the community can achieve great things – and he’s been doing it for decades in a quiet and unassuming way giving thousands of hours of his time. Steve grew up in Midsomer Norton and Radstock and so he knows everyone. He was a Councillor on the old Norton Radstock Town Council and was instrumental in building bridges when the new Midsomer Norton Town Council was created in 2011 and has served on it ever since. He also works tirelessly for local residents – one example is how he worked with B&NES to get kerbs lowered and barriers moved to improve access for the disabled. There are now more areas in the Town residents in wheelchairs can access. Whatever the project, Steve brings people together. He’s a Midsomer Norton Treasure.”

**Allotments - Burst Water Pipe**

Following the stretch of cold weather, we were notified of a burst water pipe at the allotments – pictures below. This was isolated and has now been repaired.

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**Children’s and Senior’s Christmas Parties**

The third free Midsomer Norton Town Council Children’s Christmas Party took place on Sunday 4th December 2022, with the initial batch of tickets being snapped up in a couple of hours, leading the Town Council to increase the numbers to 80. The extra tickets also went very quickly.

Council staff arrived early to set up and decorate the halls, and box up all the food for lunch. Food and drink was provided by local business – Pure Taste. Party goers arrived from 12, and the event got underway with entertainment from Rocky’s Magic Parties. Festive face painting was provided by Hayley’s Braids and Faces and the festive arts and crafts activities tables were supported by Youth Connect South West. The Town Council would like to take the opportunity to thank all of these local businesses.

At the end of the party, Father Christmas gave each child a chocolate selection box and a reindeer pack to take home. We would also like to thank Midsomer Norton and Paulton Tesco, for their very kind donation of 20 selection boxes and packets of pens and pencils. Thanks too, to Councillor Mike Moxham for the mince pies.

The 11th Midsomer Norton Free Senior Citizens Christmas Party was held on Friday 16th December 2022, for residents to enjoy an afternoon of music and food. The event took place at Welton Rovers Football Club from 2.00 – 6.00pm and was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended.

Music was provided by Hotdog Jackson a popular band playing 50’s, 60’s and 70’s music for a sing along and a dance. Food was again provided by Pure Taste. Thanks again to both for their services.

**Men’s Shed Reindeer Kits**

Huge thanks to all the volunteers at Men’s Shed for their hard work in creating 100 wooden reindeer kits for the children of Midsomer Norton for the third year running.

The kits consisted of a head, neck, body and four legs, and the Town Council added a pack containing ribbon, a pipe cleaner, bell, pom poms and stickers. Eighty reindeer packs were given out by Father Christmas at the Town Council Children’s Christmas Party on December 4th, and the rest went to the Community Trust Christmas Grotto on December 10th at Unit 14.

**Garden of Friendship**

The Town Warden has been busy planting in the Garden of Friendship. The old hedge was removed, and new gate and fence installed this summer, creating a new entrance from the Sainsbury’s car park side. A new hornbeam hedge has been planted along with ground cover. The hedge will be kept lower than before, as so many people have commented on the lovely view that has been opened up. The garden is a quiet place to sit just off the High Street next to the Catholic Church.

**New Bins and Benches**

New bins and benches have been installed by the Town Council at three sites in Midsomer Norton. A bench, bin and picnic table have been fitted near the MUGA and play area, and another bin in the car park at West Clewes. At the Town Park there are new bins by the amphitheatre, the ‘beach’ by the River Somer, one at the top of the zig-zag path next to the Greenway and one on the top of the batch. The last bin has gone to Wellow Brook Walk. We hope the bins go some way to helping to keep Midsomer Norton tidy. Our thanks to the Town Warden Dave Paisey, who now has more bins to empty on his rounds, and to those Town Councillors who are on the bin emptying rota. We would also like to thank the Womble volunteers who collect so often and are so passionate about keeping Midsomer Norton litter free.

**Speed Camera Locations**

Upcoming locations for our speed camera are as follows:

* Radstock Road: 3rd January 2023
* Thicket Road/West Road: 14th February 2023
* Northmead Road: 28th March 2023

**Grant funding to Improve Greenspaces in Midsomer Norton**

Ambitious plans to improve wildlife habitat and create accessible greenspace for local communities to enjoy will go ahead thanks to a £923,246 grant.

Somer Valley Rediscovered, a strategic green infrastructure project led by Bath and North East Somerset Council, Wessex Water, B&NES Public Health and Natural England, has secured funding from the West of England Combined Authority Green Recovery Fund.

The funding will be used for nature recovery projects such as grassland restoration and the management of woodlands and watercourses which will benefit a whole host of wildlife including insect pollinators, bats and wild orchids at five key sites: Haydon Batch in Radstock, Waterside Valley in Westfield, Midsomer Norton Town Park, Wellow Brook Walk and Staddlestones Open Space in Midsomer Norton.

Councillor Sarah Warren, deputy leader and cabinet member for Climate and Sustainable Travel said: “Securing this funding will allow us to improve biodiversity in support of our ecological emergency commitment. The five sites will make it easier for residents to access greenspaces within walking distance of their home, which has proven benefits for mental and physical health.

“The grant will also fund improvements to make the sites more accessible including welcoming entrances and better paths which will enable more people to enjoy the sites and to spend more time in nature.”

The scheme proposes to set up a new volunteer group to carry out practical conservation tasks across all the sites and will also work with Natural England and the local primary care network to provide Green Social Prescribing activities. There will be opportunities for all to learn more about local wildlife with events running throughout the seasons.

Metro Mayor Dan Norris said: “The climate and ecological emergency is the single biggest challenge facing our region. I’m pleased over £900,000 of new funding from the West of England Combined Authority I lead means we can get on with improving our green spaces and not just stemming but reversing the loss of wildlife, like our precious pollinators, and their habitats. This in turn is absolutely vital if we are going to reduce the impacts of pollution in and around Radstock, Westfield and Midsomer Norton, and reach our super-ambitious net-zero-by-2030 targets locally.”

Councillor Geoff Fuller, chair of Westfield Parish Council, said: The parish council highly values the work of Somer Valley Re-discovered in facilitating these improvements and we have worked with them from the outset to set in place a sustainable plan to improve biodiversity and accessibility.”

Councillor Nick Toogood, mayor of Radstock Town Council, said: “This funding will allow us to start work on the project immediately and help to fund the provision of much needed expertise, resources and opportunities. It will allow further enhancement and preservation of these special green spaces and helps to support many of the council’s current initiatives and projects including green social prescribing and green transport networks.”

Councillor Lynda Robertson, mayor of Midsomer Norton Town Council said: “It’s great news to hear that the Somer Valley Rediscovered Greenspaces Project has been approved. This follows a bid to WECA for a 3-year project focusing on greenspaces which will include the Town Park and Wellow Brook in Midsomer Norton. We are very excited to see how the project proceeds and look forward to seeing the benefits it will bring to the Town.”

Somer Valley Rediscovered includes Radstock, Midsomer Norton, and Westfield, the large villages of Paulton and Peasedown St John and the surrounding smaller villages and countryside. It’s an area that has been profoundly influenced by the former coal mining industry.

You can find out more about the Somer Valley Rediscovered project on the B&NES council website.

**HS HAZ Manager**

Edward Heritage has now left B&NES Council, and has been replaced by David Gosset, the new Project Manager for the HS HAZ programme. David started in post on 12th December 2022.

**Town Park Bins**

One of the newly installed bins at the Town Park was set on fire on Saturday 31st December 2022, causing irreparable damage. Investigations are underway.

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**FILCA – Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration**

At the Meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee held in the Assembly Room on Monday 11th October 2021 at 5.30pm, Members approved Financial Introduction to Local Council Administration (FILCA) SLCC course for both the Deputy Clerk and Senior Admin Assistant. Both have now completed and passed the course.

**Midas – Street Marshals**

Due to staff sickness there was no Street Marshal cover over the weekend of 23rd/24th December 2022.

**Environment Agency – Town Park**

The Environment Agency visited the Town Park on Tuesday 3rd January 2023. Whilst there, they accidentally collided with one of the posts, rendering it unstable. They also took the lock. We have the name of a witness to the incident. The Agency returned the following day to have a look at the post and implement repairs, which will now be carried out in due course.