



MERTON MONTHLY

APRIL 2010



The Clinton Hall

Bill Brown – Chair Jan Sharpe - Secretary Janet Nancekivell– Treasurer
Judi Higton – Bookings Secretary John Luxton – Caretaker Telephone 01805 603300
E-mail: clintonhall2004@yahoo.co.uk Website: www.clintonhallmerton.co.uk

The Clinton Hall

THE CLINTON HALL A.G.M

To be held on Tuesday 27th April

@ 7.30 pm in The Clinton Hall

Everybody is welcome to attend.
Please consider joining us on the Committee

WHAT'S ON DIARY – further info in newsletter

*If you
why no*

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|----------------------|---|
| Friday 2 April | - Easter Egg Hunt, Clinton Hall, 10am |
| Tuesday 13 April | - Flower Arranging Group, Clinton Hall, 7pm |
| Sunday 18 April | - Roller Disco, Clinton Hall |
| Sunday 25 April | - Netball & Football Rally |
| Friday 4 June | - Wine & Wisdom, Clinton Hall |
| Sunday 20 June | - Father's Day Lunch, Clinton Hall – <i>further details to come</i> |
| Saturday 17 July | - Vintage Rally and Summer Fair, Clinton Hall |
| Thursday 18 November | - Return of Johnny Cowling Clinton Hall |

Just to let you know, there won't be a coffee morning in May - the hall is booked out for the week. But we'll be back again in June.

The Football & Netball rally will be taking place on **SUNDAY 25th April**; please be careful as there will be extra traffic in the village.

Netball and Football Rally and The Friends of The Clinton School

Sunday, yes Sunday 25th April is the Netball and Football Rally. Teams from local schools come to Merton to take part in the rally. The Friends of The Clinton School fundraise by selling refreshments. This year being a Sunday morning they are going to do Bacon Sandwiches as well as all the usual tea, coffee, cake, sweets etc. So instead of cooking breakfast or making your own coffee and cake mid-morning come on over to the School kitchen or the Hall kitchen where we will be pleased to see you. The children from the school will value your support.

See you on Sunday 25th April.



Bryan & Di Hancock would like to thank everyone for their good wishes, phone calls & prayers at the time of their leaving Merton. We will be coming back to visit from time to time.

Sorry if we didn't get to say goodbye to you .

We haven't gone abroad. Please feel free to visit us in Halwill.

God Bless

*We are really sorry to say 'au revoir' (**not** goodbye!) to Di and Bryan – they will be very much missed from village life and the community. We wish them a stress-free move and much happiness in their new home.*

All Saints Church, Merton Clergy: Rev. Martin Warren, Tel.: 01409 281424.

Services for April

3 rd Apr	9.00pm	Easter Vigil and first communion of Easter (Saturday)
<i>Please note there are services elsewhere in the Team on the Sunday</i>		
11 th Apr	11.00am	No service
18 th Apr	9.30am	Holy Communion
25 th Apr	11.00am	Morning Prayer

Easter Services

There will be services around the villages through Holy Week, the week before Easter. Here are those from 1st April. Check in church for any earlier in the week.

Maundy Thursday: Apr 1 st	7.30pm	Maundy Communion (Buckland Filleigh)
Good Friday: Apr 2 nd	2.00pm	Good Friday Worship (Merton)
	7.00pm	Good Friday Worship (Petrockstowe)
Easter Eve: Apr 3 rd	9.00pm	Easter Vigil (Merton)
Easter Day: Apr 4 th	6.00am	Dawn Communion (Thornhillhead)
	8.30am	Holy Communion (Huish)
	9.30am	Holy Communion (Peters Marland)
	11.00am	Holy Communion (Petrockstowe)

Church Annual Meeting: April 15th, 4.00pm **in All Saints' Church**

At this meeting, we report on the past year, including presenting accounts. Elections are made to the Church Council. It is also an opportunity to reflect on where God is taking us from here, and for issues of concern to be aired.

The meeting is an open one. All are very welcome. Don't worry, you won't get automatically elected to something!

From the Team Rector

I guess it doesn't take too much insight to predict that in the next few weeks we will be deep in a general election campaign. All guesses are on May 6th for the election: halls are booked and staff summoned. I hope they are right! And what about us? Election ...yawn, yawn. They're all a bunch of rogues with their snouts in the trough. Politicians – who needs them? Ditch the lot. And we turn over and watch the football – or the latest antics of Eastenders – or just go to sleep! Who cares?

Well, we should. Ultimately we get the leadership we deserve. If we don't voice our concerns, then those who shout loudest will get in there. So get out there and vote, if you do nothing else.

But vote for whom? Well, let's not just vote for those that promise us the 'best deal for me'. These are tough times, and we will all have to share the pain somewhere – we can't just leave it to everyone else.

That old principle of Jesus, 'Love your neighbour', still goes a long way. It takes our eyes off ourselves to those who do need support. That includes many in our cities, for whom life can be unbelievably tough. And that includes the so-called 'non-indigenous' community.

But also in the countryside. Who at last will have the courage to do something – anything – about TB on the farms? Who will stand for our village schools, so vital to community life, before they go the way of post offices? And local surgeries and hospitals? And in the (not so) long term, what about the willingness to actually do something about the tough questions around environment concerns? - climate change or no climate change. There are big questions here about community, care for one another and care for creation.

Maybe in the wake of the expenses shenanigans, this is a unique opportunity to change things. It happens every so often. It did in 1945, and again in 1979. It could have in 1997. 2010 could well be another opportunity.

Don't just make it a protest vote or even a party vote; make it a principled vote. And then have a snooze!

Yours,
Martin Warren.

Merton AFC – 150 Club Draw

Winners for February 2010 : £40 – Toby Skinner; £10 – R Elworthy; £10 – N Harris;
£5 – J Hudson; £5 – T Horner

Merton Football Club

Results: Merton 3 Lynton 1
Northam 1 Merton 3
Equalizers 4 Merton 1
Merton 2 Woolsery 3
Bridgerule 5 Merton 2



Both teams maintain their mid-table positions.

**NEXT MALT SCOOP QUIZ –
Saturday 10 April 2010 at 8.15pm**
in aid of Devon Air Ambulance
Draw prizes welcome

Merton Post Office and Shop

Well the new Post Office program has been installed.....teething troubles we have had and may continue to have for a while so please bear with us.

Thank you to everyone who supported our shop for Mother's Day whether you sent flowers, bought a card, a box of chocolates, or did all three - your support is noted and appreciated.

Easter is nearly upon us. We have cards, eggs, chocolate and flowers are available to order so come in and take a look at what we have to offer.

Tracey Laughton

The Clinton School

On Thursday 25th March 2010, The Clinton C of E Primary School held their Annual Coldstream Guard Presentation at the The Clinton Hall, Merton.

The Coldstream Guard Presentation is one of the most important days of our school year. It celebrates our connection to the Coldstream Guards, as the Parish where General Monck the founder, was born.

Every year pupils at the school complete a project on a subject of their choice. The project must be hand written in the main, and prizes are awarded to recognise Outstanding Achievement, Personal Best and Outstanding Presentation. The Coldstream Guards and the Exeter Association of the Coldstream Guards provide prize money. This year Capt. Ben Kendall and Sgt. Simon Hebson talked to the children about the different types of uniform and equipment currently worn by the Coldstream Guardsmen and their role in protecting the Queen. The children found this was extremely fascinating and especially enjoyed trying on the uniforms.

The service was extremely well attended by the by the parents, governors of the school, the Mayor of Torrington, the Exeter Coldstream Guard members, the Councillor for Torrington/rural as well as members of the community. After the service refreshments were served in the school hall with a chance to view the children's projects.

It was very difficult to judge the projects this year as they were all outstanding. Merits for completion of projects went to:

Emma Andrews for 'Horse Breeds, Horse Care and My Horse'

Lauren Askew for 'My Farm Life'

Levi Butler for 'Children of WWII'

Flora Davey for 'The Police Force'

Nathan Hooper for 'The Countries of Northern Europe'

Lilli Marquez for 'Florida'

Richard Skull for 'Gold Rush'

Chantel Thatcher for 'Planets of the Solar System'

Individual awards were given to following children:

George Laughton for 'A Year in the Life of a Taw & Torridge Coach' received 'Outstanding Achievement'

Abby Fletcher for 'Merton' received 'Outstanding Achievement'

Harrison Palmer for 'I Love Liverpool' received 'Personal Best'

Alice Wiseman for 'Arsenal' received 'Personal Best'

Aidan Wright for 'The Tower of London' received 'Outstanding Presentation'

Mrs Rachel Brennan, Headteacher

Rainbow Pre-School

We have lots happening this month starting with our annual **Easter Egg Hunt on Good Friday 2nd April at the Clinton Hall, Merton**. The fun starts at 10am and we have face painting, Chocolate egg and spoon race, Various stalls, Welly wanging, food and drink and lots of chocolate!!! Children of 11 years and under are welcome to do the Easter Egg Hunt.

On **Sunday 18th April we are holding a Roller Disco at the Clinton Hall starting at 2.30pm until 5pm**. Entry is £4 per person and includes skate hire. Food and drink available. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Why not come along and work off some of those Easter Eggs and have some fun. Raising funds for the Pre-school.

We also have two job Vacancies as follows-

Temporary part time Play Assistant. Must have a minimum of level 2 NVQ CCLD or equivalent. Working Thursday and Friday morning from 9am-1pm. Good rates of pay according to experience. Contact Sue on 07831 861225 or Deborah on 01805 804476 evenings. Closing date for applications 10th April

Temporary part time Administrator working up to 5 hours a week. Must be enthusiastic and able to work independently. Variable hourly rate according to experience. Contact Sue on 07831 861225 or Deborah on 01805 804476 evenings. Closing date for applications 10th April.

Lastly, we are looking for new committee members. You do not have to have Children at the Pre-school, Just an interest in how it is run and a few hours a month to spare. Your time would be greatly appreciated. For more information on any of the above please contact the Pre-school on 01805 603119. **Julie Bromhead**



Gold Medals

George Laughton, Abby Fletcher and Becky Hancock recently achieved their Gold Medal for Swimming. They had to swim 32 lengths of Torrington Pool (1/2 mile) in 25 minutes. A fantastic achievement for them.

Well done to you all.

The Friendship Club

Twenty three members attended the talk given by Police Dog Handler / Trainer Mr Alan Hedges and his black Labrador Fern. Alan, who was born and grew up in Torquay, joined the Metropolitan Police in 1969 after seeing an advertisement for Police Dog Handlers on a recruitment van in Shepherds Bush; but he had to spend a full five years pounding the beat before he could begin training. When the five years were up he attended an initial training course followed by three months of night duty patrolling the gardens at Buckingham and Kensington Palaces. Alan told us that as the Queen is not fond of German Shepherds six black Labradors are used instead. At last, in 1975, Alan attended a thirteen week training course and became a Police Dog Handler for the Metropolitan Police. In 1981 Alan, who by this time was married with two young children, transferred to Devon and Cornwall Police for a better quality of life for his family and returned as Police Dog Handler for North Devon, covering the area from Lynton and Lynmouth to Okehampton and Bampton to Bude.

As well as sharing some amusing experiences with us he also explained the more serious side of the job. All police dogs are trained to track, search, chase and bite. A dog's nose is 250 times more sensitive than ours and, when tracking, a dog can sniff fresh footprints for up to three hours after the person has gone, this is because someone who has committed a crime smells differently to a dog, than someone who is innocent, due to adrenaline levels in the body. Dogs can also run at speeds of up to thirty miles per hour. Alan explained that although German Shepherds make the best police dogs for chase and capture, Labradors, Spaniels and Collies are better at sniffing out explosives and drugs. Generally dogs are better than bitches because they will go away from the handler more readily, whereas bitches are too loyal and want to stay close by. Alan also explained that you will rarely see a Police Dog and Handler because they work mainly at night.

While a Police dog is working it belongs to the Chief Constable and all expenses are met by the Police. A dog's working life is seven years and when they retire they stay with their handler who assumes all responsibility for the dog; if this is not possible then the handler will find the dog a good home. It takes about a year for a Police Dog to settle down as a pet. Alan is now retired from the Police and teaches people how to be Police Dog trainers.

The Friendship Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 2pm in the Clinton Hall. If you would like to join us or for more details please contact **Christine Wickett 01805 603258.**

Merton Parish Council

Minutes of January meeting as approved at the meeting on 16th March 2010. A meeting was held in the Clinton Hall on Thursday 28th January 2010 at 8pm. Apologies were received from Councillors Phillips and Down.

Present: Councillor Horner (Chair), Councillors Nancekivell, Laughton, Collins, Sharpe, Scantlebury, PCSO Sandra Brown and two parishioners. The minutes were signed as a true record having been previously circulated. There were no matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda.

64. Public Speaking: PCSO Brown spoke of recent crime which amounted to one theft in Merton. The question of drugs and drink in Torrington was discussed after reports in the North Devon Journal and this is being monitored. There will be a neighbourhood watch meeting next week and details of a parishioner keen to take on the role will be passed to the co-ordinators for the area.

65. Village Square: This issue was again discussed and ideas for pounding down the stones with a vibrator was discussed but felt might cause damage to nearby houses. It was agreed to ask Councillor Phillips to look at prices for individual areas and get some remedial work done with the funds that are available. The clerk was asked to set up a meeting with the Probation Department on whether offenders could be used to do some of this work.

66. Land Registry: Councillor Collins is still in discussions with the solicitor on the next stage to verify the boundary of the square and register this. Councillor Scantlebury will look into the documents of his house to see if there is anything relevant there. Although Councillor Collins has copies of many of the legal documents a detailed plan showing exact boundary line is not available. There will be a cost of approximately £100 to get this registered.

67. Village Entrances: Still no further on this matter. Councillor Collins will follow this up.

68. Grit Bins: Following the recent severe weather a Councillor and a parishioner have asked for grit bins to be placed around vulnerable areas in the village. It was proposed by Councillor Horner, seconded by Councillor Sharpe and agreed by Councillors with one abstention to write to Devon Highways asking for grit bins to be placed at Clinton Gardens, junction to the Beaford Road, Whiteland's Hill and Meadow Vale.

69. Website: Correspondence was received from Colin Jones re the renewal of the website contract. He was requiring £250 per year to continue with hosting the website. Much discussion took place and Councillor Collins left the meeting while this was in progress. It was proposed by Councillor Sharpe, seconded by Councillor Laughton and agreed by those councillors present to ask Colin Jones to clarify what charges will be for the next year and how many hits there had been on this site. The Merton Monthly is at present put onto the website with the adverts included. It was suggested that the adverts could be removed and advertisers pay the Parish Council to have them included on the website. As soon as more information is to hand a decision will be made as to how to proceed. Councillor Collins returned to the meeting.

70. Planning Application; A planning application for an extension at Myrtle Cottage was approved by majority of the Councillors with one no comment. It was agreed plans would be circulated to some of councillors and the application number of the plans will be e mailed to councillors so that they may view plans on line.

71. Correspondence: A letter received from Mrs Gray with requests to find out when the last election was held for the Parish Council had been delayed from the last meeting due to extended length of last meeting and also due to these facts not being to hand. The clerk had replied provisionally to the parishioner that the matter would be

dealt with. The clerk had contacted Torrington District Council election office for these figures which had not yet been received; these queries need to be found in the archives. Parish Councils send all old minute books etc to be archived and these details would have been sent there. However a Councillor believes the last election for Parish Councillors took place in 1991. Since then there have never been more applicants than places open on the council therefore there has been no need to hold an election. It was also requested by the Councillors to find out the cost of holding an election which now falls to the Parish Council to fund rather than previously being paid for by the District Council budget. Provision will need to be made to budget for this cost in the future. A letter will be sent to Mrs Gray with this information. It was pointed out that any correspondence to the Parish Council cannot be replied to until it has been discussed by councillors at a council meeting and future letters will not get acknowledgement until that time.

72. A letter had been received from the Highways Department informing the Councillors of a Highways Maintenance Surgery to be held at the Clinton Hall on Wednesday 10th February between 10 -12 noon for Parish Councillors only.

73. Correspondence was received concerning the Winkleigh Development Site.

74. A document was received concerning the Core Strategy Plans.

75. More information was received about the Boundary Committee proposals. The decision on whether Devon will become Unitary with the exclusion of Plymouth and Torbay or whether the areas will remain the same with the District Councils still in place will be made by the Government soon.

76. A mobile Library survey was received and the clerk was asked to fill this out and return it.

77. AOB:

- 1) Councillor Laughton asked for an update on the Church Bells. Councillor Nancekivell is liaising with Rev. Warren. The Councillors queried whether a Bell Fund Committee meeting should be arranged. Councillor Nancekivell will report back as soon as he has information from Rev. Warren.
 - 2) Councillor Nancekivell noted there had been signs erected around local bye-roads "Not suitable for HGV's". He proposed the Council request a sign be erected on the Beaford to Merton road. This was seconded by Councillor Sharpe and all agreed. A letter will be sent to the Highways Department.
 - 3) It was agreed to put Footpaths and the Round Seat on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting.
- There was no further business to discuss; the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Next Parish Council meeting will be **Tuesday 11th May at 8pm** which will be the **Annual Parish meeting, AGM and ordinary Parish Council meeting.**

A Community Emergency Plan is being compiled by the Parish Council for use in case of any unforeseen circumstances. If you have any skills i.e. nurse, doctor, driver, caterer etc or equipment such as diggers, tractors, generators etc please contact the clerk. A list of buildings suitable as emergency centres etc will also be made with key holders etc.

Merton Parish Council - Handy person required to tidy and do maintenance to the village square approx. 8 hours per month at £10 per hour.

Please apply to the clerk Mrs Wendy Askew on 01805603425 for more details.

TFG Youth Group will be organising a trip to see Aladdin at the Queen's theatre, Barnstaple on Friday 17th December 2010 for a 7pm performance. Following on from requests last December we are opening this up to anyone who wants to come along and hope to fill a 53 seater coach. We are hoping to organise pick-up and drop-off at Petrockstowe, Merton and Little Torrington but can probably arrange stops as necessary if the demand is there. The cost to TFG members will be the normal £5 and for non-members will be £13 per person. If you are interested, please let Fiona or any TFG leaders know so that we can anticipate numbers. You can contact Fiona on tfgyouth@gmail.com or 01837 811749,



TFG

On Friday 5th March, we made Mother's Day cards. The cards were beautiful with a lot of imagination and hard work going into them. I am sure that all the mothers loved them!

The chocolate themed evening on 19th March was a great success with 3 new members turning up to have a go at our dastardly chocolate games. A great time was had by all.

As 2nd April is Good Friday, there will not be a meeting.

We are going to Waves Leisure Pool in Torquay on 16th April for a Dip 'n' Dine session. Consent forms and £5 should have been returned by now, but if you have missed the deadline, contact Fiona to see if there are any spaces left.

On Friday 7th May, we are having a chill out evening at Baxter Hall from 7-9pm with table tennis, snooker, Wii games and tuck shop.

On Friday 21st May, Melissa Baker, our local PCSO has agreed to come and talk to us about drugs, alcohol and related issues affecting teenagers. She will also answer any questions that you may have on these subjects. After the talk, the tuck shop will be open and the normal games out.

We will be making Father's Day cards on Friday 4th June by request.

Advance Notice: There will not be a meeting on Friday 17th September as all leaders have other commitments.

Any queries contact Fiona on tfgyouth@gmail.com or 01837 811749



Strictly Ballroom ...

Anyone who would like to join our ballroom dancing group at the Merton hall at 6.45 pm on Wednesdays is welcome to come along. This is not a dance class as we're not teachers, more a dancing club where we can help people who can't do as much as us. Also there are probably people out there who know a lot more than we do and can help us. There will be no charge but naturally donations to help towards the hire of the hall will be welcome and any surplus will go in a pot to be used to finance an occasional ball if there are enough people interested. For more info ring Bob Harrod on 01805 623485.

Torrington Rotary Club - Next Business and Networking Breakfast on Saturday, 24th April, 2010 at 8.00 a.m. at The Black Horse, The Square, Torrington Cost: £5 If you run your own business, work from home or are simply interested in expanding your business and professional contacts, do come along to our next **Business and Networking Breakfast on Saturday, 24th April at 8.00 am at The Black Horse, Torrington.** Our recent Breakfasts have been highly successful and appreciated by local businesses. We run these as a local community service and there are no charges or commitments other than paying for breakfast. If this interests you, please register or ask for further information by e-mail on torringtonrotary1.btinternet.com or from **David Nainby 01271 379016 or 07817 000586** or **Charles Moore (01805 601319 or 07796 306879)**. David Nainby Torrington Rotary Club

Many thanks for the jam jars – we now have enough for the moment. Trevor & Judi

If you would like to include anything in the Merton Monthly, please let Tracey Laughton have copy by the 20th of the month or send direct to the editor, Trevor Higton at The Old Vineyard, Merton or by email – jtt@downeshouse.freeserve.co.uk

Entries received after the 20th of the month may be refused. All articles or advertisements submitted for publication should be supplied with a name and contact number.

We would love to have contributions from the village – recipes, holiday stories,