

Annual Town Forum 20 May 2026

Properties and Infrastructure report

For anyone new to the town or not already aware, we do as a Town Council have a considerable number of buildings to manage and maintain in comparison to the number of houses and population bringing in our precept. The Cemetery, Millbrook Hub, Market House, Pavilion, Donald Pither Memorial Field, play areas, the Round House and Fairfield all come within our remit. Old listed buildings certainly do take some looking after!!

This is in comparison to our neighbours in the Parish of Ansford, not having a single building to maintain explains why our precept is slightly higher. Our amenities of course, are for the use of both communities and we make no extra charge or exclusion for using them.

So, this year we have made great progress with our large projects. Neither the Pavilion nor the Market house Projects are being paid for out of the precept. These large projects come out of Grant funds applied for from out- of -town, so to speak and any local fundraising through our clubs and groups so in no way impacting our rates.

Importantly, the Football and Cricket Clubs are busy raising funds supporting the work of the grant funders. With S106 and fundraising we currently have £400k+ towards the Pavilion project. Both Cricket and Football teams with increasing numbers put extra demands on the existing not -fit- for- purpose Pavilion which is requiring constant maintenance and replacements.

Secondly our Market House project has seen the opening of the Billiard Room on the top floor with the addition of a kitchen, ideal for meetings, hot desking, parties, wakes, exhibitions, displays, talks, yoga, dance etc. It is a bespoke area with character and can be easily personalised to reflect an intimate setting for events. An additional toilet has been added to the building and plans are in hand to install a stair lift for individuals less able to access the three floors. The long-term project is to add an internal lift but as this is currently a while a way the stair lift will be a temporary solution.

We have had costly repairs to the Market house roof and are hoping now following several attempts, that the leaks in both the Shambles and the Billiard Room mean our leak collecting buckets can finally be put away.

97 trees have been planted throughout since March on both Fairfield and the Donald Pither field. This 3-year project with planting and watering has been paid for in its entirety by DEFRA in conjunction with Somerset Council.

Sadly, vandalism continues to be a battle to maintain the facilities in good working order. The Millbrook toilet seems to be the target currently. Replacement to the baby

changing facilities, and the hand drier and repairs to the toilet have been necessary. This is an important space for our town as they are one of a very few public amenities between Bristol and Weymouth which attract and encourage visitors into town.

Ongoing maintenance repairs and replacements are required throughout Fairfield and the Donald Pither field and play areas. Fencing and aging equipment all need to be safe. All these being essential green spaces for our communities to enjoy. Both are inspected on a weekly basis and have strict regulations to adhere to.

The Pavements throughout town continue to require frequent repairs. Any unsafe ones need to be reported to Somerset Council through their website as do any blocked gulleys. The more they are reported the more likely they are to get done.

We have a team of Speed Watch Volunteers out on North and South Street monitoring the speeds of traffic during daylight hours. This primarily raises awareness of the newly imposed 20mph. Any speeders are reported and anyone who is reported 3 times is then visited by the Police! Unfortunately, we cannot have Speed indicator devices within the town due to restrictions and legal requirements for the siting and fitting of them.

Our footpaths volunteer is out walking the footpaths and reporting any problems on-line to Somerset Council who then eventually send out a team to make repairs. Again, please report any of these either to the Town Council or to Somerset Council directly.

We cannot thank and praise our teams of Volunteers who quietly collect litter, chop down brambles and weeds, clean out the Horsepond, check speeding cars, paint our road signs etc. and jointly make the town a very special place to live and visit.

Another project we have quietly been working on throughout the year is preparing for an emergency which many affect the whole community. Fire, floods, electrical or water outages, train or helicopter crashes are just the types of emergencies we hope will never happen, but who knows, we just need to be prepared in the case of the unexpected ever happening.

We have engaged with many partners serving our community to support us with this such as the Fire Brigade, Police, The Newt, local pubs, schools, Caryford Hall, Rotary Club, Water authority to name just a few. We are all ready for any eventuality in the hope this is never called upon.

In the meantime we continue to maintain and promote our very special town in which we are all so lucky to live.