

BAVLAP Report to West Dorset Partnership

Beaminster and Villages Local Area Partnership (BAVLAP) is made up of Thorncombe to the west, Seaborough, Broadwindsor, Burstock, Mosterton, South Perrott, Chedington, Beaminster, furthest south, Mapperton, furthest north, Halstock, Corscombe, East Chelborough, West Chelborough and furthest east, Melbury Sampford and Evershot.

BAVLAP ACTION PLAN 2015- 2018 Review

HOUSING

In Beaminster there is a planning application for 30 affordable homes on an exception site at Flaxfield Road. We are expecting this to be approved soon and work will hopefully start this year.

There is an active Community Land Trust in Broadwindsor Parish with plans for 15 houses being a mix of 1,2 and 3 bedrooms. We are hoping they will submit a planning application for a site in Drimpton soon; they have carried out public consultation.

In Mosterton, Stone water has just started work on a site that will deliver 36 affordable homes of various tenures.

Marshwood have a Community Land Trust that built 8 affordable homes a while ago.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSABILITY

Retain local bus services and Community Transport Schemes, including ring and ride Excellent Community car scheme provision, Efficient schools transport, Good inter-Urban bus services, Ensure rail connections continue, Provision of car share or taxi schemes all of these schemes are ongoing and need to continue. The Local community and WATAG have been really active in making sure that transport provision in the BAVLAP area keeps going.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Recycling has become something that everyone does now with the help of Dorset Waste Partnership. Villages organise litter picks to keep their villages looking pristine and many villages have entered the annual Dorset Best Village competition which celebrates village life and community.

LOCAL PROSPERITY

Wyvern Savings and Loans is a credit union which is run by volunteers at Yarn Barton once a week. It is part of a Dorset and Somerset community based Credit Union, staffed by four paid staff and over 100 local volunteers. They provide their members with a safe and ethical place to save (up to £15,000), as well as providing affordable loans. Loans can range from £100 to £7,500 depending on your circumstances. Their repayment schedules are negotiable and they will agree payment details with you – even if you don't have a bank account or can't get credit with high street banks. You must be over 18 and living or working in the Dorset/Somerset Area. This scheme helps those on a low income, has branches locally and is helping people avoid payday loans.

Superfast Broadband is improving. In 2015 in West Dorset, Superfast Broadband (over 24Mbps) was running at 75.3% coverage with fibre installation at 81.4%.

In 2018 Superfast Broadband over 24Megabits per second is now at 91.3% and fibre installation is at 97.6% with Corscombe being one of the latest villages to benefit from this.

Superfast Digital Champion Volunteers have been trained to come and help people with basic online skills such as applying for Universal Credit, applying for jobs or shopping on line.

SAFER COMMUNITIES

Citizens Advice run an outreach surgery in Beaminster which has meant that in 2015/16 they saw 173 clients, 2016/17: 162 clients and in 2017-2018, 134 clients. The advice that Citizens Advice gives ranges from Benefits advice, housing advice, debt advice, fuel poverty, benefit appeals, employment and much more. They are able to refer people to the foodbank in Beaminster which is a lifeline to many families.

Beaminster Food Bank distributed 75 food parcels in 2015, 71 food parcels in 2016, and 65 food parcels in 2017. It appears food parcel numbers are going down but in reality, in 2016, 185 people were helped and in 2017, 193 were helped. They also received donated meat, fruit and veg vouchers.

Since returning to Beaminster, PC Alex Bishop has started up/restarted some of the police surgeries they held across the area. Regarding Home Watch and other watch schemes, there are some areas with a good active Home Watch scheme; however Beaminster has often suffered with very few people being interested. He has previously held meetings that have had very poor turn outs. But anyone can register with Dorset Alert (www.dorsetalert.co.uk) to receive news about what has been going on in the area. You can sign up to become a member of a watch scheme, or just receive the messages as you want, so if people feel they don't want to join a scheme, they can still receive messages. They also have a Facebook page for the section; if you wish to follow them it is called Bridport Police. They use these means of communication to send out alerts, crime prevention advice or appeals for information. He also sends reports to each Town/Parish Council advising on what has been going on locally and to inform people wanting crime prevention advice. If there are any community groups that are setting up an event and would like to include a crime prevention stand, they have a crime prevention panel that are more than happy to assist and can accommodate for different types of crime if needed. They also have a rural crime team happy to assist with stalls at events (if specific to rural communities).

In recent years Community Speed Watch has become active across the patch. Alex has set teams up in Beaminster, Broadwindsor, Drimpton, Mosterton, Corscombe and Halstock, Melplash (set up by Dave Ash), and Chideock.

In January 2018, Children and staff at St Mary's Academy Beaminster and local residents took part in a road safety street trial and Christmas celebration event, organised by charity Sustrans. Sustrans is working with residents and school pupils in Beaminster to come up with ways to make the area around the school a nicer, safer place to move around.

Thorncombe have recently celebrated First Responders 20th anniversary. Thorncombe was the first scheme in the country. Defibrillators are becoming more common in rural communities and Drimpton, Broadwindsor and the Children's Centre in Beaminster have them. The latest defibrillator has been installed in Thorncombe village.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Beaminster Dementia Friendly Group was set up with events to publicise the condition, volunteers trained to become Dementia Friendly champions and newsletters are being produced now to raise further awareness of activities, information and guidance. There are copies here this evening.

The Children's Centre in Beaminster is well known to all as many activities have been held there over the years. The way it is run is changing with the West Family Partnership Zone now in existence. They will still be working proactively with partners to make sure that children and families receive early help to prevent crisis happening. You will hear more about this later on.

ACTIVITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

BAAD has secured money from Leader to create a new play area in Beaminster. This has taken a few years of hard work by the BAAD committee and work has begun! The Skate Park won't be funded by Leader.

Village halls have been making use of the service that DCA offer regarding funding, trustee and charitable status information to make sure they have all the right policies and procedures in place to run safely. Funding streams are becoming harder to tap into particularly for capital costs which means village halls have to look at more than one funding pot and understand that it can take longer to raise the money. Funding sources state that feasibility studies are needed more than ever to show there is a community need and that the community have been consulted.

Yarn Barton has proved to be an incredibly useful local centre with tourist information, advice, computers for local use, outreach surgeries, box office and much, much more with an amazing troop of volunteers and what is really remarkable is that the centre is self-funding. A real tribute to Mick Read and his team for all the work they do so successfully.

Local shops in villagers are a lifeline to many people who find it hard to travel further than where they live. Sadly Marshwood Post Office has closed recently but Thorncombe and Broadwindsor have picked up many customers. Marshwood is still running a prescription service with people able to pick up their prescriptions from the local garage. Community shops are reliant on local volunteers to remain open.

St Marys in Beaminster has celebrated its 5th anniversary of walk in Wednesday which is proving to be popular for all age groups, from young families to older people. Young mums have been coming in to this event for the last six months.

This report wouldn't have been possible to draw together if it hadn't been for members of BAVLAP being committed to the local area partnership. Thank you all for this. I would also like to thank Rosemary Beeny for her years of service as Chair of BAVLAP and for her continuing support and advice.

I would also like to say that BAVLAP has achieved many great things while it has been in existence. If BAVLAP wasn't here, the reduction or cessation of community planning activity could present the following key risks:

- Loss of a district-wide collaborative forum that brings communities and service delivery organisations together
- Consequent reduction or loss of collaborative action to meet agreed priorities
- Diminished or lost opportunity for council to gain qualitative community information to inform council priorities and service delivery
- Diminished or lost wider community networks with whom the council can engage and consult on service delivery and wider matters
- Breakdown of existing relationships with networks /community – leading to loss of trust & respect for the council and its partners. This would take years to rebuild.
- Diminished or lost communication network into parishes
- Reduced community capacity and volunteering
- Diminished or no community activity into local projects
- Duplication of activity or lack of co-ordinated activity at community level
- Potential loss of or diminished potential for collaborative funding bids bringing money into the district to fund community projects.

Given the amount of work that BAVLAP has done over the last few years, it shows that having an organisation that pulls in community, collaborative working, and networking with local communities, and statutory authorities, local experience makes projects work. Let's celebrate this and be proud of what has been done and what can be done in the future.