Parish Council Report – November 2026

This month the Parish Council had a very interesting presentation from Steve Williams and Mike Thompson of the **West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust**. They presented a Vision for a new Bishops Lydeard experience at Bishops Lydeard Railway Station. They explained that they are planning to develop a new visitor experience that will knit together several potential heritage themes. Their goal is to make the station an attraction in its own right, rather than just a hopping on point for people taking the train. The largest of these ideas is to build a brand-new visitor centre on the main approach to the railway, on the east side of the station. They provided a comprehensive overview of all of their ideas and progress to date. The slides are available on the Parish Council website. This is an exciting opportunity for the village, and the ideas were warmly welcomed by the Parish Council.

Councillor Pattemore gave an overview of the Library quarterly review held with Somerset Council. Some of the highlighted are as follows:

Visitors- / Footfall- up by a staggering 22% over the same period last year. To put into context the average figure across all the Community Library Partners was down 1%.

Physical issues- Up 5% over same period last year.

Events - Up 62% on the same time last year with an increase in attendance of a whopping 186%.

Public network / computer usage - up a staggering 95%, which again shows the need for a computer within the library.

Summer Reading Challenge - We had 68 children participating this year with a very impressive completion rate of 78%. This was much higher than last year.

The Parish Council wanted to say a huge **Thank You** to the Library team and especially, Rebecca Hill (Librarian), Iain Hunter (lead volunteer) and all of the volunteers without whom the library would not run or achieve these outstanding results.

The **Sandhill Park Woodland** was discussed at some length. It is clear that the Parish Council have a lot of work ahead to make the woodland safe for visitors.

The draft **Parish Council budget for 2027/28** was reviewed. Amendments were agreed and this will be presented again next month for final approval ahead of the end of the year.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th December 2026 at 7pm in the village hall (new small hall).

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