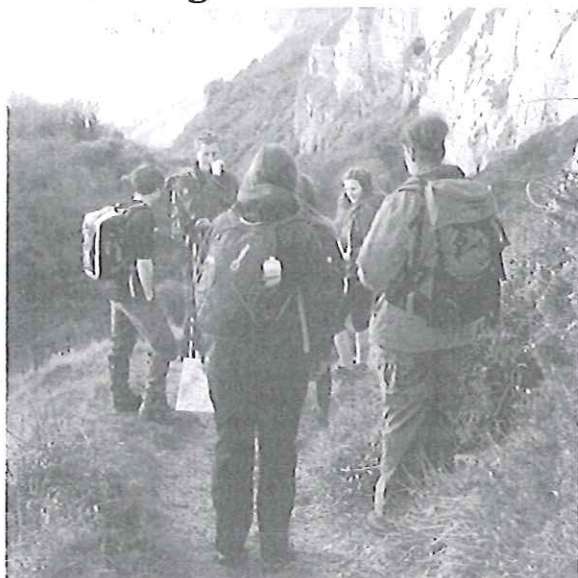


Sixth Formers take on the great outdoors



Midsomer Norton Sixth Formers.

Glorious sunshine and unusually warm weather greeted the candidates on a Lowland Walking Leader Training Course organised by Midsomer Norton Sixth Form's Outdoor Education Department.

Two members of staff joined the Y13 students to undertake the new course, administered by the Mountain Leader Training Board – mountaineering and climbing's National Governing Body.

Day One of the course started in the classroom, looking at navigation techniques, weather forecasting, route planning and group management strategies amongst other topics and was concluded with a local night walk to give some additional challenges. An early start on Sunday and a drive down to the Dorset coast gave further opportunity to discuss and develop leadership skills. This summer, a two-day Outdoor First Aid Course is being arranged during term time which will complement the training.

Mr Chandler said: "This is an exciting addition to the range of opportunities we now offer. It's great to see the students demonstrate skills learned through our Duke of Edinburgh and Ten Tors programmes and start on the pathway to a full NGB qualification. There are many hundreds of miles of fabulous walking in our countryside and lots of groups looking for leaders in either a paid or voluntary capacity. I am confident that this training will stand the candidates in good stead for a variety of reasons."

Westfield to begin its Plan

At its meeting this week, Westfield Parish Council agreed to embark upon its Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council would like to promote the identity of Westfield as a Parish in its own right, with its own history, needs and aspirations. A Neighbourhood Plan to lay the foundations for the future looks like a very positive way forward.

Chairman of Westfield Parish Council, Cllr Geoff Fuller, said: "This is a multi-person task, beyond the reaches of the Parish Council alone and recruitment from the community is absolutely essential."

Would you be interested in taking part in working on the Neighbourhood Plan? The process is well structured with six-weekly meetings facilitated by a B&NES Planning Officer. For more information, please talk to the Chair of the Council, Geoff Fuller, on 07540 998603 or the Parish Clerk, Lesley Welch, on 01761410669 or email: Lesley.welch@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Councillors also expressed their disappointment at the recent Placemaking Consultation Event held by B&NES at Norton Radstock College, saying more should have been done to promote it. Chairman of Westfield Parish Council, Cllr Geoff Fuller, said: "It is vital that B&NES Council consults properly and listens to what the community is saying. Its current policy of cramming housing of just one type into Westfield is damaging the infrastructure of our Parish and I feel our community is being ignored and overlooked."

Residents awarded at Chairman's Awards

Volunteers and groups who make a positive difference to their communities have been recognised in the Bath and North East Somerset Council Chairman's Community Awards.

An award ceremony, attended by 200 people, was held at The Guildhall, in Bath, on Thursday, 29th January. Foodcycle volunteers made and served food at the event, with ingredients provided by Sainsbury's, Odd Down.

The awards are organised annually in partnership with the Volunteer Centre, Bath and North East Somerset, social housing provider, CURO, and the Student Community Partnership. They highlight the contributions made by local people, their efforts to involve others and impact they make on their communities.

The Chairman of B&NES Council, Cllr Martin Veal, said: "We received 79 nominations from which eight individuals and eight teams have been selected as winners. I would like to congratulate all of them for the work they do in their communities for the benefit of others."

The evening also saw the launch of a new song, called *You give it all*, to raise money for the Volunteer Centre. It has been written and produced by Cllr Simon Allen and is performed by him and a group of local volunteers. It can be downloaded from all major retailers for 79p, with proceeds going to the centre.

Several awards were handed out to local organisations and volunteers. There were two awards for Young Volunteer of the Year, one for Nancy Appleton, from Pease-down St John, who volunteers

at Merriman Dance Academy and Teenage Rampage, is a Cheerleader at Beacon Hall and is involved in the Bath Area Play Project summer activities.

Kathryn Jeanes, a student at Bath Spa University, also received the award. She uses her own experience of suffering from anxiety to help other students. She is an active member of the Stamp Out Stigma campaign, talking to students about mental health.

The Volunteer Leader award went to Judith Chubb Whittle, from Stanton Drew. She is the Chair of Stanton Drew Parish Council, governor of the local primary school, a prominent member of the neighbourhood planning team and a member of the Pensford, Publow and Stanton's Community Trust. She is the Grounds Maintenance Manager for Stanton Court Nursing Home and has involved the local primary school in managing their own plot to grow vegetables and flowers.

The Hive, Clutton, was awarded Volunteer Team Award. The social enterprise supports young people recovering from addiction, depression and social problems. Many of the young people have moved on to further education, employment and some are now mentoring others.

Paulton Library Hub volunteers were given the Neighbourhood Team accolade. It provides the opportu-

nity for community organisations to deliver their services in an accessible, central village location, as well as housing a library, coffee bar and meeting space. This work is supported by over thirty volunteers who give up their time to support the community.

There were also wins for the Youth Café, in Twerton, organisations in Bath and volunteers at Bath Spa University.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Squadron Leader (Ret'd) Brian Higgins MBE, from Bath, who has volunteered for over sixty years. He not only volunteers with the Bath Air Cadets, but is also the Chairman of Bath Children in Need, Vice-Chair of Friends of Southdown Youth Hub and Vice-Chair of Wessex MS Therapy Centre.

His wife, Christine, nominated him, saying: "He has devoted his life to young people and the community, as well as caring for me for the last twenty years. He has raised significant funds for all the organisations he has worked for. I think he deserves that award, as he is now 74-years-old and still going strong."

Two Chairman's Special Awards were awarded to Richard Cox and Matt Humberstone, also from Bath, for their work to improve the lives of those around them through their voluntary work.

Keynsham to have first outdoor gym

Bath and North East Somerset Council is planning on creating its first outdoor gym at Keynsham Memorial Park.

This will include outdoor fitness kit and three new measured and marked park trails for running, jogging and walking.

This is part of a series of improvements to the park, which will include widening the entrance from the High Street with an extended hard surface put in, linking it to the existing path.

Those interested in finding out more are invited along to a drop-in event at the One Stop Shop at the Civic Centre on Thursday, 5th February, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Visitors will be able to view the plans and see a photographic display of the new equipment.

Cllr David Dixon (Lib-Dem, Oldfield), Bath and North East Somerset Council's Cabinet Member for

Neighbourhoods, said: "Keynsham Memorial Park is already a vibrant park with two children's play areas, a small skate park, picnic area, bowling green, multi-sport courts and café. We've also recently put in brand-new toilets at the park. This fantastic project will really add to the facilities in the park, as well as encouraging healthier lifestyles. These improvements will encourage adults to enjoy fitness regimes in the open air and provide new challenging play equipment for teenagers."

Councillor Ben Stevens (Lib-Dem, Widcombe), Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, said: "We are using £30,000 of regeneration funding for this exciting project, following consultation with town and ward

Councillors. This is part of our overall investment to revitalise the town with new jobs, new homes and a revamped town centre."

During the event on February 5th, there will also be an opportunity to find out about the old boundary stone seat and give your ideas on where to put it in the park. This stone seat used to be on the old County Bridge and will be reinstated in the park.

The work is expected to be completed by the end of March. The Council's Active Lifestyles and Health Improvement Team will then provide an outdoor Fitness Coach and Running Leader to run sessions on the new equipment and park trails. This would include Run Fit Classes and Run Start Beginner Running Courses.