

Working Together for a Better Community

NEROCHE VILLAGES Newsletter

For the parishes of Staple Fitzpaine, Bickenhall, Curland
and Orchard Portman with Thurlbear

Issue 48 - Summer 2023



Welcome to the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, a quarterly publication delivered free to every household in Neroche Parish, helping the community to stay connected and up-to-date on local issues.

Please Support your Neroche Newsletter

Dear Readers

We hope you are continuing to enjoy receiving the newsletter on a quarterly basis, and that the variety of topics and events sparks your interest! We also feel it's a useful tool to spread information from the various organisations, within and around our parish.

While we have great support with funding from the Parish Council and Neroche Hall, as well as our friends at Taunton Racecourse, we do rely on the generosity of reader donations to help us maintain this as a free publication. We are currently spending around £2000 per year on the four editions, primarily in design and printing costs, which have increased along with everything else over the last 12 months.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to support us through a donation, either online (our bank details are below), or via the form accompanying this edition. If you would like us to acknowledge receipt of your gift, please add your email address to the form or email me at nerochenewsletter@gmail.com.

Bank: Santander
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Please make cheques payable to: 'Neroche Communication Action Group' and send to: Karen Learoyd, Seaforde Grange, Bickenhall, Taunton TA3 6TY.

Many thanks for your support, as always. From your Newsletter Team

Benefice Birthday Barn Dance

By Rebecca George, CBE

Joanna's inspired idea was to get people from across the Benefice together, outside of religious meetings, to have fun and build relationships, and get to know each other better. Happily, she had a useful special birthday coming up; and she also wished to raise money for Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in memory of our dear friend Julie Pope. We started planning the snappily titled 'Reverend Joanna's 50th Birthday Bash Barn Dance' in December



and quickly realised two things. Firstly, we needed a group of people who were expert in their areas who would get on with what they were responsible for with minimal intervention and ensure smooth delivery; and if it was to be a happy and enjoyable occasion for Joanna, she shouldn't be working hard to create it. So, she was dropped from the committee early on, though we kept Neill who was the provider of cake, and very delicious it was too.

Sue McKen stepped up to provide all the catering and run the kitchen; Karen and John Learoyd, supported by Richard Davies and Ben Witt, took on the bar; Mark Porter provided the PA system; Marianne Townrow 'volunteered' to manage the money, which turned into including the relationship with MND, the tickets, and all the inevitable changes in the days before the dance; the Baxters took on communications, publicity, and everything to do with the auction; and the Badger Street Band started practising with increasing urgency as the date drew near, to provide the music. I procured an unexpectedly large amount of pink 50th birthday decorations. We had a few meetings, swapped a lot of emails, got to know each other very well and had fun, so that worked.

On the day, a great group of volunteers including members of the band, Neill, Sue and Godfrey, and the redoubtable Peter Hounsell who knows Hatch Beauchamp Hall inside and out, turned up to decorate the hall



and get everything ready. We returned in the evening before the ticket holders, to prep food, get the bar ready, set up the band on stage, and get introduced to Ali Highfield, our wonderful caller, and Mike her husband. We have been trying

to organise a barn dance with them for nearly two years, and it was great finally to work together.

The barn dance was over-subscribed, we sadly had to turn some people on the waitlist away, and everyone who said they would come, did, plus a few extra. By 7.30pm the hall was full, buzzing with conversation, incidental music and the clink of glasses. We started dancing and I have never seen so many people get up to join in the first dance, there was barely room to move. Luckily, except for 4 children under the age of 5, the average age of dancers meant that not everyone danced every dance and so there was more room to move. At half time we had a game involving heads and tails, delicious shepherd's pie (with vegetarian, vegan and gluten free options) followed by cake with candles and 'Happy Birthday', a toast to Julie (who would have loved it), and an exciting and quite nail-biting auction led by Chris Baxter.



Then more dancing and a lot of chatting... and many willing hands helping to clear up afterwards. The evening raised over £6,100 for MND and they, and we, are delighted. It was fantastic to meet so many people from across the benefice, eat and drink, sing and dance together, and have a lot of fun. A huge thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make it such a great evening.



motor neurone disease
association



24th April 2023

Dear Marianne, Rebecca & Friends,

On behalf of the MND Association, I would like to say thank you for organising a charity Barn Dance and raising an incredible £6,113.20 in memory of your friend Julie Pope. It is such a special tribute to Julie that you have organised this event to help others in her name. Please pass on our special thanks to everyone involved in making the event such a huge success. We are truly grateful for your commitment and dedication in raising funds to bring hope to other families affected by MND.

We rely almost entirely upon donations from supporters like you to continue our work. With your help we can improve care and support for people with MND, their families and carers across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We also fund and promote research, and campaign to raise awareness so the needs of those affected by the disease are addressed by wider society. As you are aware, few conditions are as devastating as MND and that's why we are so determined to achieve our vision of a world free from MND.

If you have any questions at all or want to let us know what you're planning to do next, please get in touch. I'd love to hear from you.

Thank you again for making a difference in the fight against MND - it has been a pleasure supporting you with your fundraising.

With best wishes

Kelly Boston
Community Fundraiser
Email: kelly.boston@mndassociation.org
Telephone: 01604611823

Royal Patron
HRH The Princess Royal

Francis Crick House
6 Summerhouse Road
Moulton Park
Northampton NN3 6BJ
Tel 01604 250505
Fax 01604 624726

enquiries@mndassociation.org
www.mndassociation.org
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Chris Broad
Rob Burrow MBE
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Kevin Sinfield OBE
Jeremy Vine

News from Neroche Hall

By Karen Learoyd

After a difficult start to the year, we are all feeling a little more positive on the Hall Committee. Thankfully, our regular hirers have continued to use the Hall despite the need to raise the hire charges, for which we thank them. Regular use of the Hall remains the life blood for our finances, so please keep coming – all those badminton groups, Tai Chi, Pilates and Dog Training classes. We are also the regular meeting place for the Parish Council (who have now changed their meetings to the second Tuesday of the month), the WI and the monthly Community Lunch Club. If you check the calendar, you will see that most evenings, there is something regularly happening.

We have also been delighted to welcome Nom Nom pizzas to our carpark every other Monday evening – if you haven't tried them yet, you really must! Delicious wood fired pizzas at a great price. Who could resist...

On another positive note, our Treasurer, Jacq Wanstall, has been doing a sterling job of reviewing our electricity usage and charges. With the help of an independent company, Utility Aid, she has identified that our supplier had been overcharging us (by not using actuals supplied but estimates), and we have now received a refund to our account, which will certainly help with our funds going forward, despite the increase in charges. A stark warning to us all to 'keep an eye on the ha'pennies'. We will be using the same company to help us find the best prices when our contract renewal comes around next year.

We are continuing to investigate the most appropriate heating solution for the Hall – we've visited a couple of other places with alternative solutions, and have an assessment taking place in June, which, we hope, will provide a credible recommendation. In addition, we are getting quotes for some key work that's needed to our emergency lighting and air conditioning (so much outlay!!)

A busy March as we held the Spring Fish 'n' Chip quiz, followed a week later by the Easter Family Bingo. Appealing to different ages within our community, both events were very successful. Many many thanks to the WI who donated all the profits from the bingo night to us – we are truly grateful.

So, what's coming up? We have decided to hold another quiz on Friday, July 7th – food will not be available at this one, so please bring food or nibbles, and there will also be a bar. We are also hoping to hold another fish 'n' chip quiz later in the year, potentially in November. On Friday, 15th September, we will be holding a Barn Dance, so please save the date for this, as we know this will be extremely popular. Music will be provided by the Badger Street Band, and food will be provided as part of the ticket price. This year's Craft Fair will probably be 21st October, although the date is still to be confirmed.

Sadly, Mary Palmer, our Booking Secretary, has left the Committee, so we are very keen to welcome anyone new to join our merry band. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month – that's really the main commitment, other than a sense of enthusiasm for the ongoing use of the Hall as a community venue. If you would like to chat about being a member, please do contact me at karen.wensley@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you...

Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you at the Hall soon.

CORONATION CAFÉ CAKES





Nom Nom Pizza at Neroche Hall

**Every other Monday
(22nd May onwards)**

5pm - 8pm

**Delicious wood fired pizzas - full menu
at**

www.nomnompizza.co.uk

**Phone or text the hotline between
10am and 4pm to pre-order
(07950 254427)**

Spring Quizzing

Another fun and fiendishly clever set of questions faced our quizzers at the Spring edition of the Fish 'n' Chip quiz at Neroche Hall in March. Another eight rounds of challenge, heated debate, laughter and sighs of recognition when the right answers were finally revealed.

Andrew Morgan, who once again played a 'blinder' as our Quiz Master, kept us all on our toes during the early rounds - firstly General Knowledge, followed by True or False. Honestly, with only 2 answers to choose from, how could it have been so difficult for so many of the teams! A more successful round of Food and Drink, and then Famous Firsts (not so successful) took us into the food break, where we again enjoyed the repast served up by Layzricks. It was touch and go whether there would be food as the A358 was closed due to an accident, and they had to take a rather large detour to make it to us in time - phew! A Fish 'n' Chip quiz without food may not have been such a success.

Scores were pretty close at this point in the evening, so there was still all to play for.

Over the food interval the teams pored over photographs of hit TV shows from yesteryear - the higher scoring teams definitely showing their Gogglebox credentials. The next rounds were Politics, Where in the World, and a very tough Music round (songs from musicals) - these three rounds started to create quite a gap in the overall scores!

Our scorers, Anne Perry and Brenda Crossley, did a great job keeping on top of all the answer sheets and verifying the scores, until the winners were announced. The Salt Bush Miners won by a single point! Congratulations to the winning team - David Spears, Pat and Colin Croad, Barbara and Stephen Meads, and Robbie Bail. By this time, the scores ranged from 60 to 80 points, so more homework is needed from some of the teams next time...





Quiz Winners

Great event organisation ensured that the evening ran smoothly - thanks to the Hall Committee for everything involved in staging another fun evening. Special thanks to Andrew for putting in all the hard work needed to stretch and stress our brains over the course of a couple of hours and of course to Layzricks for the great food.

We are planning another quiz in July - so get revising!

SCHOOL TERM DATES

- Term 5: 17 April to 26 May 2023**
- Holiday 5: 27 May to 4 June 2023**
- Term 6: 5 June to 21 July 2023**
- Holiday 6: 22 July to 3 September 2023**

100 Mile Cycle Ride for MNDA

7th and 8th June



Three veteran cyclists are setting out on a hundred-mile traverse of Somerset and Devon to raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association. John Kirby, Alan Ranger and Tim Frazer are inspired by the memory of two friends, Duncan Wardle and Julie Pope, who both died last year from MND. Their trip (a detailed breakdown is given below) will take them over some of the highest land in Somerset and Devon, beginning in Bath and then crossing the Mendips and the Polden Hills to arrive in Fivehead, where Duncan lived for many years with his wife Jill. In Fivehead there will be a grand reception with local cyclists joining the cavalcade and a barbecue with cakes and music to welcome them.

After a much-needed overnight rest the intrepid three will set out again, cycling through Curry Mallet and on to Julie Pope's home in Staple Fitzpaine. Then over the Blackdown Hills to Combe Raleigh which was home to Jill and Duncan from 2020. After a lunchbreak the trio will be joined by local cyclists for the final leg of the journey to the coast at Budleigh Salterton.

Speaking about their trip Alan Ranger said: "Duncan was my friend for over 40 years. When he died, I wanted to do something to commemorate his memory and to raise funds to help research into this cruel disease. Linking the places that were important in his life seemed like a good way to do this. It is great to have John and Tim on board, and also to be able to commemorate Tim's friend, Julie Pope.

As a team, we want to focus our attention on increasing awareness of MND whilst fundraising as much as possible to help others living with the disease, and to also help fund vital research into treatments. We hope that as many people as possible will come out to support us as we pass through their villages."

Duncan's widow Jill said "I am so grateful to Alan for suggesting this, and to John and Tim for joining him in the challenge. MND is a desperately cruel disease that gradually takes away everything from

those we love. With continued research, we hope that a cure will be found. Until then, the care and support provided by the NHS and the MND Association for people with MND, their families and carers [are so important.](#)”

MND (also known as ALS) has no cure and is a fatal, rapidly progressing disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. The risk of developing MND is 1 in 300, but because it kills a third of people within a year there are only 5000 adults affected in the UK at any one time. A “JustGiving” page has been set up for donations. It can be accessed at <https://www.justgiving.com> and searching on Jill Wardle. There will also be collecting tins at various points along the route.



The cyclists from left to right (Alan Ranger, John Kirby and Tim Frazer) with Jill Wardle outside Fivehead’s Crown Inn. The Crown will host a welcome BBQ on 7th June.

The outline timetable for the trip is as follows:

Wednesday June 7th

9.00	Leave Bath
10.00	Wellow
13.00	Cheddar / Wookey Hole
15.00	Shapwick
16.00	Langport
16.45	Isle Brewers
17.00	Fivehead

Thursday June 8th

10.00	Curry Mallet
10.30	Staple Fitzpaine
11.30	Smeatharpe
12.30	Combe Raleigh
15.00	Ottery St Mary
15.45	Otterton
16.00	Budleigh Salterton

For more information, please contact Jill Wardle at
ineastdevon@gmail.com

Pop-Up Café

St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine
Every Friday, 10am to 12pm

Come along for a cuppa with biscuits and delicious
home-made cakes.

Meet old friends and make new ones

For more information contact

Tricia Dryden
tricia@witchlodge.co.uk





Neroche Summer Quiz

Friday 7th July 2023
Neroche Hall

Doors open 7pm for start at 7.30pm

Tickets £4.00 per person
Max 6 in a team
BYO or Bar available

Tickets from
r.davies507@btinternet.com

Bookings open from 1st June

Life as a Cameraman

By Danny Spencer

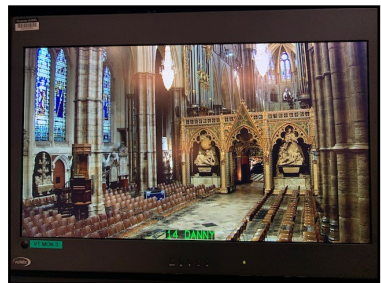
As a freelancer I'm used to answering the phone to unknown numbers not knowing what job and place in the world I could be working in next. There are some numbers I do know, and some I'm very keen to hear from! I am a cameraman and a Shooting PD, a producer director, working mainly in TV and film. I was born in Hatch Beauchamp, moved to London and did a camera apprenticeship at a film equipment facilities house in North London, and became a runner/camera assistant 20 years ago. I moved back to Staple Fitzpaine 9 years ago and have been working from here ever since.



One camera supervisor friend has sent me to the Foo Fighters at the Acropolis in Athens, a Kiss concert in Dubai, and more recently I had the honour of being a part of the State Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II for the BBC. It was one of the most moving and beautiful jobs I have been involved with. The crew was like a who's who of cameramen and I felt privileged to be a part of it.

I have been hoping that I would have a chance of filming the Coronation and finally the message "Danny, your country needs you! Westminster Abbey 4-6th May" came through. There will be lots of rehearsals and the event will be well covered, although I can't help but remember the reassuring words of the director on the morning of the funeral, "Don't worry there are only going to be 6 billion people watching".

As a resident of Staple Fitzpaine, I am proud to be a part of this historical event and I hope you all enjoy the coverage.



Chair's Community Award

Out of the blue in late December, John Learoyd received an email from The Chair of Somerset County Council, Mike Best, inviting him to an awards ceremony at Taunton Rugby Club in February. Nominations for the 'Chair's Award for Service to the Community' had been requested from town and parish councils across Somerset.



Below is a copy of the nomination submission from Jane Hole and John Parsons (Neroche Parish Councillors).

'We would like to nominate Mr John Learoyd for the Chair's Award for Service for his work associated with the Neroche Fingerpost Project. As the person who "got the show on the road" we can almost certainly say it would have been incredibly difficult to run such a successful project without John's input. His skill and ability to make the wooden patterns needed for multiple replacement arms, finials and uprights enormously reduced the overall cost of the project.

We know he would have spent many hundreds of hours making the patterns, finishing off the new arms on their return from the forge and priming them. He also has been an enthusiastic and willing member of the team that renovated the posts still in situ. He is the perfect volunteer and remains committed to the long-term maintenance of the posts.

He has not only put hundreds of hours into the Fingerpost project but has fundraised for good causes by helping in the community. He has refurbished the Hall toilets and is now the caretaker for the Hall. No one has put so much effort into our community over the last 4 years and his labours have produced such fantastic tangible results in so many areas of the community'.

At the ceremony, the winners were given a certificate, tie and pin badge, while the following citation was read out:

'As a master craftsman, John's volunteer work on the Neroche Fingerpost Project has helped ensure these much-loved heritage icons will be part of village life in the future.

His exacting refurbishing of our Victorian Hall likewise protects this important community building.

John may not be a "National Treasure" but he is certainly regarded as a "Parish Treasure" in the Neroche Villages!

Following a photo with the Chair, a rather lovely buffet was enjoyed by John and his guests.

Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood Watch Association

By Frank Simonds, Interim Chair

The role of the organisation is to support approximately 4500 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the region. An example of some of the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch were highlighted in a recent survey conducted by the Neighbourhood Watch Network that received 25,293 replies from both members and non-members from across the country:

- * **NW members are more likely to feel they belong to their immediate neighbourhood.**
- * **NW members are more likely to support the police and local agencies (such as local councils) to solve their problems.**
- * **NW members are much more likely than non-members to be very satisfied with their local area.**
- * **NW members are less likely to experience loneliness than non-members.**

The motto of Avon and Somerset Watch is: "**Empowering Co-ordinators; Supporting Police; Helping Community.**" These principles are the foundation of our organisational strategy and govern the work that we plan to do.

Avon and Somerset Watch has several projects planned, and we are keen to engage with town and parish councils as partners to see these come to completion.

The national Neighbourhood Watch Network is preparing to launch the BETTER PLACES TO LIVE campaign which will launch in March and run for the remainder of 2023. This is the largest recruitment drive that Neighbourhood Watch has undertaken in some years.

If you would like to know more, please follow this link
<https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/AvonandSomerset>

STAPLE FITZPAINE, BICKENHALL, CURLAND, THURLBEAR SCARECROW FESTIVAL 2023

22nd July - 30th July



Theme "Saints and Sinners"

Maps (£1) & Voting
forms in St Peter's
Church, Staple Fitzpaine
during the festival

Voting closes 11am on Sunday 30th July

1st prize £50, 2nd prize £25, 3rd prize £10 &
children's prizes

Vote for your favourite!

Teas at Battens Green Fm Bickenhall Wed 26th
July from 3pm
please bring your own chair!

BBQ and to hear the results will take place
Sunday 30th July
From 6pm-8pm £6 pp Booking essential on list
in church porch or phone as below

Alison Brown 01823 480441 or
aabrown.battens@gmail.com
All Proceeds to St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church Loo

The church I attend is St Peter's, Staple Fitzpaine. It's one of seven churches in the Seven Sowers Benefice, presided over by our excellent Rector, Joanna Porter. To my eyes it's gorgeous, about 1000 years old, proudly overlooking the village and surrounding countryside, its newly automated clock chiming the quarters and hours as it has done for 100 years. It's one of a few churches in this part of Somerset with a special tower - a crenelated three-stage tower with merlons pierced with trefoil headed arches set on a quatrefoil pierced parapet. On the stonework are hunky punks which show heraldic features. It has 6 bells, the oldest dates from 1480.

Our church is very important to the community. Really, too few people attend services regularly, and we are working to get more, although there's always a lot going on, mainly due to the imagination, organisational capability and infectious energy of Alison Brown, one of the church wardens. My husband is the other one, Mark Porter, and due to his hard work, the church is well maintained inside and out on a voluntary basis.

We have a pop-up cafe every Friday, the local community choir, the St Peter's Singers, are based at the church and sing regularly, there's a group of bell ringers, flower arrangers, regular services including periodically for the whole benefice, messy church and regular craft activities for children, and special services to celebrate marriage or birth, or to say goodbye to our local friends.

The church acts as a sort of fulcrum - there are lots of other activities going on involving people at the church and in the community - the annual scarecrow competition, biannual fete, skittles team, folk band, picnics and BBQs.



To my knowledge the church has never had a loo. I've seen plans and proposals going back to 2003. Mal Lee, our previous Church Warden, worked extremely hard to find a workable, affordable and acceptable solution. However, it's really complicated and expensive to put a loo into a church, even in a self-contained box. The most recent plan and quote was estimated at around £120,000. Brave efforts had been made to raise money and there was a fund, although it wasn't anything like enough, and the paperwork, bureaucracy and approvals had proved too much for further progress.

I have an elderly and much-loved mother who was one of the first priests to be ordained in the Church of England, and I wanted her to be able to come to my church, although she didn't feel confident without a handy loo. So, with permission, I ordered a portaloos which was installed down near the Mission Hut, about 100 yards from the church. This was just a temporary solution and proved very popular. Suddenly the Pop-Up Cafe got more popular, more people like my mum came to services, and it became possible to put on more events for a wider range of people.

However, it wasn't pretty, had a strong chemical smell, and cost around £100 a month to service. We are all agreed that our ideal long-term solution is to have a permanent loo inside the church, with disabled facilities. However, it is going to be many more years of hard work and fund raising to get that, and it became clear to me that we needed a different, more suitable interim solution, nearer the church.

I did some research and found Natsol, a company who provide a range of compost loos for different circumstances, and one of them looked like it would be ideal for us. It required no foundations, water supply, or access for machinery to install it, and although utilitarian- it looks like a garden shed - it's certainly more attractive than a portaloos.

I knew nothing about compost loos and assumed they would be basic and rather smelly. However, I visited one in Mapledierwell in Hampshire, and was immediately very impressed. It was a fully fitted out disabled loo with a separate urinal, not smelly at all. Note - the separate urinal is a good idea as otherwise men have to sit to pee which apparently is not popular!

The previous church warden had done all the work to get it and was very generous with his time, explaining the process, giving an idea of the costs, and talking me through the practicalities of creating the compost. This turns out not to be nearly as daunting as I thought. There's a biodegradable bag under the loo, and the Natsol system separates out fluids from solids. Sawdust is provided to cover solids which also soak up smells. Periodically, and in their situation - a rural country church very similar to ours - they change the bag 3 or 4 times a year. The bag goes into a receptacle built of old tyres behind the loo where it turns into compost over time. The compost can be used for anything except growing food for humans. In the 5 years they had had their loo, they had only started to fill one receptacle, and it was about a third full. They provided sanitiser in the loo, and as they have water in the church, people can also wash their hands in there. We have that facility too.

I started working on getting our compost loo in October 2021, and it was finished and ready to use in January 2023. I could have gone a bit quicker although getting planning permission and the faculty takes time for the processes to complete. I used a local architect technician to manage the planning permission process, and I obtained the faculty, excellently supported by Sarah Harris in the DAC, who was extremely helpful. We needed an archaeological report to make sure we weren't disturbing anything in our church yard. However as this really is an interim solution, there is nothing permanent, and like a garden shed, it can all be removed in the future.

Our toilet is near the church, I think looks nice, just look at the pictures and see for yourselves. As with so many of our churches, the toilet is more of an insurance policy for most people rather than a facility we expect to be used very often. I don't think it's been used at all yet since it was opened. Having it there is so important, there are many people, old and with young, who feel they can come and take part in religious or community activities at St Peter's, and they just wouldn't come without a loo.



Lessons learned:

- Talk to everyone about what you want to do, and make sure you have support.
- It is essential to go and visit a loo and see it for yourself. Take the most cynical and unsure people with you. Come and see me, I'd be delighted to show you ours!
- Having a portaloo first turned out to be useful as people were grateful for that and could see that a compost loo was going to be a much nicer looking and cost-effective interim solution.
- Keep all the documents both hard and soft copy - survey, statement of need and statement of significance can be repurposed for other faculties as we found as we automated the clock at the same time.
- Don't get side tracked with ideas about running water or electricity. Focus on getting the loo installed and working. You can add other things later if it turns out you really want to.
- Twin your toilet - the lovely people at Griffin Toilets who had supplied our portaloo organised this for us and we proudly display our picture of a latrine in Malawi.

Costs and key activities:

- Architect fees of around £2,250 including fees for planning permission. Could be reduced if you managed your own planning permission process. Included architect drawings for planning and the faculty.
- Faculty - includes a survey, statement of need, statement of significance, PCC resolution, support of the Rector.
- Archaeological report about £800.
- Loo £8,400 plus VAT which we may be able to get back. Includes bags and sawdust to get us started, and handrails and grips for disabled people. Toilet and separate urinal.
- Bonded path to match our other existing paths £2,590 plus VAT, also possibly can be reclaimed.
- Various small items - loo roll holder, loo roll, scoop for the sawdust, replacement sanitiser, loo brush, shelf, mirror.
- Contact – Rebecca George, rebecca@indinet.net 07711 228606

SOMERSET



COUNTY SHOW

TAUNTON RACECOURSE

September 16th and 17th

Pony Racing

Pygmy Goats

Dog Trials

British Scurry

Classic Cars

Live Music

Artisan Stalls

Gun Dog Demonstrations

Miniature Horse Show

Ferret Racing

Falconry

Meet the Beagles and
Hounds

Cider and Beer Festival

Cookery Demos

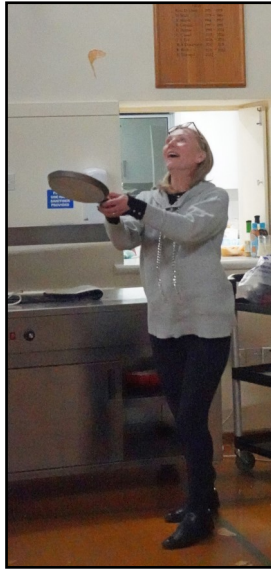
Early bird Tickets available

www.somersetcountyshow.co.uk

Pancake Supper

Another fun evening was had by all in February at the annual Pancake Supper, held at Neroche Hall, in aid of St Peter's Church. Around 40 people attended and enjoyed a light supper and the thrill of the 'toss'.

You can tell from the photos how entertaining it was!!





KFEC

Knitting / Faith & Friendship / Crochet

Meeting Monthly
starting Tuesday
21st February 2 - 4
pm at The Rectory,
Ash Road Stoke St
Mary. TA3 5BX.

ALL LEVELS OF
SKILLS
WELCOME AND
BEGINNERS
WILL BE
SUPPORTED



Contact Rev'd Joanna 01823 974716 or Nicky
07843 790073

News from your County Councillor

By Ross Henley

It's lovely to be back and able to write a piece for the latest newsletter. I'm so sorry I didn't submit an article last time as I was recovering from an operation for a detached retina in my right eye. Thankfully all is fine now although I had to rest for several weeks. The whole incident was really scary as I was misdiagnosed by 2 GPs and the Boots acute eye clinic, none of whom picked up the problem. By the time I did see a specialist in November at Musgrove, I was virtually blind in my right eye. Finally, I was in the right hands, and he operated on me the next day and performed laser surgery which thankfully restored my eyesight. I was very lucky and I'm so grateful to my surgeon. It was ironic that he was trained at Cambridge Addenbrookes Hospital where in February I was running autism awareness courses for doctors, nurses and support staff in my day job as an Autism advisor for Cambridge University.



So, what's been going on at the Council? Well, on 1st April all of Somerset's existing councils, including Somerset West and Taunton, disappeared and we now have one new council which is called Somerset Council. This whole new venture is going to be challenging as Somerset Council is geographically the third largest council in the country, stretching from Porlock to Wincanton, and all places in between. On the new Council I'm the Associate Cabinet Member for Public Health, and I'm pleased to also be joining the Planning Committee. I'm especially pleased about this as I'm on a personal mission to increase the level of resources for planning enforcement officers, which in the last 4 years has not been enough.

Locally, I'm also concerned about the number of potholes which have opened and have reported a string of them on the main drag in the Badger Street area.

I've also been closely following the A358 issue which has reached a bit of a lull now. National Highways as they are now called, still intend to submit full plans for the road, although not just yet. They originally said they would give us clarity last autumn, and we are still waiting. I questioned them at the latest briefing about what type of environmental

mitigation measures they planned, although they were a little vague saying they needed to run this by government first. As soon as I hear more, I will update you on the various Facebook community sites.

Finally, I'm looking forward to seeing lots of you at various community events in the summer. I enjoyed seeing lots of people at the quiz in March, and also enjoyed the Annual Parish Meeting which was well attended and very well organised.

Best wishes to you all.

Neroche Community Review: Sharpening the Focus!



A big thank you for all of those who completed the Community Review Questionnaire.

The results are now being analysed and the Neroche Review Steering Group are in the process of writing up the report. The finalised report goes to Neroche Parish Council in July and the results made available to all parishioners.

The questionnaire results gives us a snapshot of what is important to parishioners.

To help us get a fuller understanding of what you would like to see happening we are holding a focus group meeting on 3rd June.

You Told Us What Was Most Important were

The environment and climate change
Rights of Way
Road Speed and the state of ditches and verges
Community Life

Please come along and join the debate and enjoy a homemade cream tea!

Saturday 3rd June

Neroche Hall 2.30pm

RSVP jane.hole@outlook.com

A Cuckoo in the Distance

Wildlife notes from Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood

For us at Young Wood, it's not truly the Spring until we hear what we call 'the Curland Cuckoo'. For as long as we can remember, at some point in April, a cuckoo announces its presence to the Neroche community, usually seeming to come from somewhere in the Curland or Bickenhall area. It did so again this year, initially calling from its usual direction and then circling round to the Pickeridge side for a while. Whether it stays to breed, or is just passing through, we don't know, although it's a special moment when that unmistakable sound drifts across the fields and woods.

Of course, cuckoos don't in fact raise their own young: they get another, unsuspecting species to do that for them. Instead of building their own nest, they use the nests of 'host' birds, such as dunnocks, wrens and meadow pipits. When a female cuckoo finds a suitable nest, and the hosts aren't looking, she removes one of their eggs and lays her own egg in its place.



Common Cuckoo by Mike McKenzie

The young cuckoo hatches after only 12 days and quickly pushes the hosts' eggs or babies out of the nest. After 19 days it leaves the nest, but the hosts continue to feed it for two more weeks, by which time it has grown much bigger than them.

Because the adult birds have no parental duties, they leave our shores earlier than most summer visitors, with most gone from the UK before the end of June. Young cuckoos leave later, when they are fully fledged – and they never see their parents.

Cuckoos spend the winter months in Central Africa, as far south as the Congo Basin, flying over 5000 miles there and back each year, and take a different migratory route in autumn from their spring journey. The British Trust for Ornithology has been tracking cuckoo migration since 2011 by tagging cuckoos with tiny satellite transmitters and following their progress. This has yielded information which is helping throw light on why cuckoos are declining – their numbers have halved in the last 25 years – by providing detail on the routes they follow, how their movements relate to weather patterns, and where they meet their end.

Travelling such a long distance across such a wide spectrum of climate and latitude is fraught with many dangers, and climate change is undoubtedly adding to the risks for these remarkable birds. Like so much else in our environment, the quintessentially British sound of a cuckoo on a spring day is intimately linked to the state of our whole planet.

Meanwhile, as the cuckoos call, and a myriad of other birds busy themselves with nesting and egg laying, we too are busy as always at Young Wood, with parent and toddler sessions on Fridays, adult wellbeing sessions on Wednesdays, and volunteering on Wednesdays, with new activities in the pipeline. We've recently hosted groups of NHS staff who have come to gain some personal respite from their pressured working lives, while experiencing how being amongst wild nature can be a great medicine for their patients.

Gavin, Jenny, Sarah and the team at Neroche Woodlanders

New Neroche Villages Website

By Andrew Morgan

Users of the Neroche Villages website (www.nerochevillages.org.uk) will shortly (within the next month) notice that it has undergone some changes. The original website was getting a little long in the tooth and unfortunately, our Webmaster retired, meaning that no further development of it could take place. Members of the Neroche Communication Action Group (NCAG) have been working with TEEC Ltd, a Newbury based software solutions company to give the original site something of a facelift.



The content is very much the same as before, though slightly rearranged for a better user experience. The site is still shared with Neroche Parish Council and all Council information can be found under the relevant heading in the Main Menu. The biggest difference in terms of usability is that the new website is compliant with the Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). This means there are tools available to make the content more accessible to those with disabilities, particularly visual impairment, with the ability to change font size, type and contrast. The new website has been tested on devices such as laptops, iPads, phones (iPhones and Android) and appears to work as expected on these devices. If users do experience any difficulties, then please contact NCAG at NCAGwebsite@gmail.com

St Peter's Church Flower Guild

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

For Easter we invited the families to come along and help decorate the church and we were not disappointed. They decorated wooden crosses, flowers and window pictures. They even made pompom chicks, all of which were displayed on Easter trees and on the pots filled with their flower displays.

Of course, a craft day would not be the same without the cafe and decorate your own cupcake! How do they get so many sprinkles on a cupcake!!!! It was super to have the Badger Street Band come along to



Peta & Candy's Pedestal

entertain us.

The Flower Guild also produced some stunning displays. Peta and Candy created the beautiful pedestal, and Karen's two window displays along with Carole's tomb scene in the porch, greatly enhanced the floral Easter displays.

The church smelt wonderful when you entered as the main displays included many lilies donated in memory of a loved one or friend.



Hard at Work

Thanks to all who helped so much in making this day fun for us all especially Peta and Candy, Karen, Carole, Alison, Kath and Di, for all her greenery and flowers, and of course the Badger Street Band.

If you are interested in joining the Flower Guild do please contact me, Jacqueline.Kolkowski@btinternet.com



Willow & Daisy



Joseph

Neroche Thursday Lunch Club

**Neroche Hall
12.30pm for 1pm**

1st June & 6th July. No lunch in August.

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a superb home-cooked lunch in wonderful company for just £8pp (transport and special diets can be arranged). Meet old friends and make new acquaintances - ideal for both long term residents and those who have recently arrived in the community. A wonderful way to spend a weekday lunchtime.

Advance booking is essential by the Monday prior to the lunch to book for catering purposes. Contact Alison Brown 01823 480441 or aabrown.battens@gmail.com



Your Help is needed at Mount Fancy

We are entering the bracken growing season. The Mount Fancy (butterfly) Reserve needs willing hands to contain its vigour. Starting on 11th July, then every following second Tuesday of the month, we will meet up for a 9:30 start, and work through till 15:00. The work is simple, using manual hand tools (instruction will be given if needed), just cutting young bracken with a scythe or a slasher, billhook (or tool of your preference), then raking the bracken up into rows. Or we might be following up behind a contractor raking up the bracken they have cut.

No prior experience required, stout footwear, waterproofs, a packed lunch are all you need to bring, as long as you are over sixteen years and able to move easily over rough, uneven ground. Working alongside others, out in the open in good company, a few willing hands can make an enormous difference, helping to keep this important reserve in good health.

Left to itself the bracken will continue to expand, get ever stronger and outgrowing and stealing the light from all the important ground cover plants that our butterflies and other wildlife are so desperately short of. By cutting it when it is young, we deprive it of some of its core energy, and by raking into rows we create fantastic micro-climates where all sorts of smaller wildlife can flourish, not just during summer but over winter as well. This is important work, but, because of the rich variety of habitats and terrain, not all parts of the reserve are suitable for contractors to work with their machine.

This is where we really do need YOU. Join us the **Fancy Volunteers** (you can find us at www.fancyvolunteers.weebly.com). Working together we can help keep the reserve in good health for all of nature and us to enjoy. Come along and join us on 11th July at Shute Farmhouse, far end of Underhill Lane (beware the worst road in Somerset). Preferably do let me know at tonybcwarden@gmail.com before that you intend to come (so we don't move off without you) or text me on 07745 976806. As there is no signal at home, if you



have anything you would like to ask or check up about, it is best to call me on our landline at 01823 421423.

Tony Spiess (Hon Warden for Mount Fancy Reserve)



Delivering the Newsletter

Would you be able to help with the distribution of the Neroche Newsletter?

We are looking for someone who could deliver the newsletter each quarter to 20 homes around the Badger Street and Winterwell area.

If you can help with this, please contact Roger Keat on 01460 234380

News from Your MP

By Rebecca Pow

CORONATION

By now the spectacular Coronation event will have taken place with communities right across the constituency celebrating in myriad creative ways, including in my own village and I was delighted to be fully involved. In the run up to the Coronation I had the memorable privilege of meeting His Majesty himself at a celebratory coronation reception held in the ancient Westminster Hall in Parliament. In his own inimitable style, he conveyed his best wishes to everyone in the constituency which I am pleased to pass on and we also shared some conversation about the importance of farming and caring for our precious environment, something that both he and I share a passion for.

KEY LOCAL HEALTH ISSUES

As ever I have been working closely with health representatives in Somerset to ensure we have the health services we all need locally.

In this vein I instigated a meeting with Social Care Minister, Helen Whately MP and Chairman of Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Colin Drummond, to highlight the importance of unblocking beds in Musgrove Park Hospital with a view to unlocking a clear pipeline of provision within the county to move those who are ready to be discharged back into the community with suitable care packages. I helped secure £2million of government funding for Somerset County Council to help with this unblocking of beds. What we particularly asked for was greater transparency from the local authority so that it's clear how and where these beds are being unblocked. I was very pleased to hear that the Minister is requiring the local authority to report back on the pipeline of transfers to social care, and similarly the NHS will be reporting on discharges to the local authority.

I also invited key representatives from the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust including from maternity, digital, and mental health to a roundtable with Health and Secondary Care Minister, Will Quince MP. The Trust received formal endorsement from the Secretary of State for Health recently and we wanted to highlight this excellent model which

is putting patient health front and centre and thereby minimising bureaucracy by amalgamating acute, community and mental health services. We were pleased to update the Minister regarding a range of the Trust's success stories as well as stressing to him the need to continue with plans for the upgrade of the whole hospital site, including the antiquated maternity unit.

KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE FOR WELLINGTON RAIL STATION

I pledged to work to bring a rail station to Wellington when I was first elected to Parliament in 2015 and I'm keeping up the pressure, working closely with stakeholders and chairing the local rail group. I've been reporting direct to Rail Minister, Huw Merriman, in Westminster on a regular basis, and we are awaiting feedback on the next phase of progress soon.

LOCAL CHAMPIONS EVENTS AT DOWNING STREET

In recent months I have had the opportunity to welcome several of my nominated local champions to Number 10 Downing Street in recognition of the valuable work they do in our local community.

One such was Revd Sam Griffiths who has worked so hard together with the army of volunteers running the Wellington Warm Refuge right in the heart of Wellington, providing a hot meal and a relaxed place for those needing it to meet with others. When I visited, I could see what a valuable service this is providing for many people who are finding times challenging and I wanted this to be recognised and to say a big thank you to everyone involved

Similarly, I nominated Andy Price, as a local charity champion. Andy is Chief Executive of charity Arc Inspire, a charitable organisation for the homeless supporting over 350 people per year. Formerly known as Taunton Association for the Homeless they have been in existence for more than 40 years, now with 16 properties housing 166 people. I have visited the charity and seen for myself the valuable work they are doing in Taunton.

My 'Local Business Champion' nominee was Colin Barrell, Executive Member of the Taunton Chamber of Commerce and former President. Colin is an enterprising and successful local businessman who will be



Tim Lethaby

known to many of you for running 'Miles Tea Room', which serves as an important hub in the heart of the community.

And finally, I was pleased to invite Tim Lethaby, Editor of Newsquest Somerset, which includes the Somerset County Gazette to No 10 for the Local Media Champions' event to thank him and his team for the contribution they make locally to keep my constituents informed of key issues.

BLACKDOWN HILLS PARISH NETWORK

A range of rural issues were raised with me in my regular catch up with the Blackdown Hills Parish Network team. Top of the list was the increase in speeding traffic through our county lanes and the thorny issue of the lack of public transport. I shall be working with the network's representatives on a potential UBER scheme that might offer some opportunities.



WATER QUALITY

More widely on the issue of water quality and sewage overflows, I stressed yet again in a debate in Parliament recently that sewage in our rivers is completely unacceptable, and through our game changing Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan, we have set out the

stringent targets and up to £56bn of capital investment plus £1.6bn of fast-forwarded infrastructure, that will deal with sewage and improve water quality. We are also consulting on unlimited fines for water companies that break the rules. South West Water was fined £2.1m earlier this year for serious water quality breaches, demonstrating there is no escape.

ENGAGING WITH LOCAL FARMERS

Environmental issues linked to food and farming were raised in my recent meeting with farmers and growers held at Cutsey Farm, Trull recently. Of particular concern is the slow progress in obtaining planning permissions for simple farm facility improvements many of which will benefit the environment such as new slurry stores. Poor connectivity is another testing issue for some farming businesses, this was starkly raised, and I am following up. It is essential that our farmers have adequate signals so they can conduct their relevant applications for various grants and apply for the new farming schemes. I will be taking part in a Rural Summit in Westminster, ensuring we have thriving rural areas where our farmers can grow the food we need, care for the environment and that we have the right infrastructure for other business to thrive.

CHARLES CLARK MEMORIAL NOVICES STEEPLECHASE

Finally, I was involved in a poignant evening at Taunton Racecourse where I proudly presented a Cup in my late husbands' name for the Charles Clark Memorial Novices steeplechase. I was deeply honoured that a race had been named after him and thank you to all involved and to the many who attended and shared memories of Charles' work in the agricultural community and of his (infamous) fundraising auctions for local charities - he is sorely missed but leaves a wonderful legacy.



As ever please get in touch if I can be of any help.

RSPCA West Hatch Animal Wildlife Centre

Last month our Prevention and Education team visited seven local primary schools to raise awareness of the perils of litter as part of the Great British Spring Clean campaign. Over 1,500 local primary school pupils and staff took part in local litter picks. Did you take part in The Great British Spring Clean? If not, it isn't too late. Check out Keep Britain Tidy's website for more information about how to go about this safely (<https://www.keepbritaintidy.org>)



We have recently had the pleasure of having a team from Medtronics volunteering at West Hatch. They built a fantastic bug hotel and devised a wildlife garden. These activities will encourage more wildlife into our gardens. Thank you to Medtronic for all their hard work and also to our local garden centre,

Greenshutters at Fivehead, who donated so many wonderful wildlife friendly plants for our garden. We were blown away by their kindness and so very grateful for their generosity.

(<https://greenshuttersgardencentre.com>) Thank you Greenshutters Garden Centre!



Be an RSPCA Wildlife Friend

If you're inspired by the work of Medtronics, local primary schools and our RSPCA staff and volunteers. then why not become a #WildlifeFriend by signing up and making pledges for what you will do to help your local wildlife flourish. Scan the QR code below to find out more:



How wildlife friendly is your garden?

Ever wondered how wildlife friendly your own outdoor spaces might be? Take our interactive wildlife friendly gardening quiz by scanning the QR code below to find out your score. Then join us and make a pledge to do more. We have lots of ideas for outdoor spaces of all shapes and sizes.





Telephone: 01823 33 71 72

Email: info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk



ARE YOU NEW TO THE AREA?

Here are the different ways you can find out what's happening in Neroche from the **Communication Action Group**:-

Neroche Newsletter is delivered free to every household each quarter – full of upcoming events, articles on recent events, and updates from local Groups and leaders. Contact us at nerochenewsletter@gmail.com

Neroche Villages Website - the place for information from the Parish Council including planning applications, meeting minutes etc. You will also find information on local groups and clubs, events, News, local businesses, and details of the Blackdown Hills and Neroche Woodlanders.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Neroche Email alert – distributed every 3 to 4 weeks, bringing you information about local events, information from the Parish Council, and details of what's happening in our neighbouring villages. To sign up for the Email alert, just send your details to nerocheemail@gmail.com.

Welcome to Neroche

YogaNess Yoga

My name is Vanessa Bourne.
I live in Bickenhall and I am a
Hatha Yoga Teacher, specialising in
slow, mindful yoga, designed to suit
everyone, to reduce stress and
create ease in mind and body.

I currently have 2 classes running at
West Hatch Village Hall
Mondays 11-12pm – Chair Class
Tuesdays 7-8pm – Mat Class

I am looking to start a class at
Neroche Village Hall
Please contact me if you are interested

ness@yoganessyoga.co.uk
www.yoganessyoga.co.uk

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*subject to eligibility

Events for your calendar

(Venue is Neroche Hall unless stated)

May

Wednesday, 17th - The Greyhound Quiz

June

Thursday, 1st - Community Lunch

Tuesday, 13th - Parish Council Meeting (note new day)

Wednesday, 14th - WI Meeting

Wednesday, 21st - The Greyhound Quiz

July

Thursday, 6th - Community Lunch

Friday, 7th - Summer Quiz

Tuesday, 11th - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, 12th - WI Meeting

Wednesday, 19th - The Greyhound Quiz

Wednesday, 26th - Scarecrow Tea at Battens Farm

Sunday, 30th - Scarecrow BBQ & Results at St Peter's Church

August

Tuesday, 8th - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, 16th - The Greyhound Quiz

For latest updates visit www.nerochevillages.org.uk/events-calendar

Local Communication and Information

Websites:

Neroche Villages www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Community website run by the Neroche Communication Action Group. It has an up-to-date calendar of events; a news section; information about residents' action groups, including broadband, traffic; a business section and advertisements.

The website features a comprehensive list of clubs and organisations, including details of those in neighbouring parishes. It is also the website of Neroche Parish Council and lists its activities, agenda, minutes and reports.

Neroche Hall www.nerochehall.org.uk

The website lists the coming events, facilities and availability for hire of our village hall, and has an online booking form.

Church of England Seven Sowers Benefice www.sevensowers.org.uk

Has a calendar of events and church service times for Staple Fitzpaine and Orchard Portman churches, as well as other churches in the benefice.

Email Information:

The Neroche Communication Action Group runs an Email Alert System for sending information to those wishing to receive it. **Please note the email address for the EMail Alert:** nerochemail@gmail.com

The Parish Magazine:

Full information on benefice matters, a great source of news, coming events and general information, and details of many local businesses and services. For new subscriptions phone Alison Brown on 01823 480441.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this Newsletter.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Neroche Communication Action Group. Publication of an advertisement in, or with, the newsletter does not imply the Action Group's approval of the goods or services.

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