

“Working Together for a Better Community”

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Newsletter

Issue No 23

March 2017

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

Keeping You Connected

Welcome to the first edition of the New Year and the first under the new editorial team of Jacq and Mark Wanstall from Bickenhall and Alan and Sarah Hyde from Curland, who have inherited the mantle from founding editor Wally Torrington and designer Alan Perrior.

The newsletter was launched in 2011 as a direct response to community wishes identified during the development of the Parish Plan.

Since then, thanks to Wally, Alan and an army of contributors and distributors, the newsletter has grown in both size and stature, becoming an essential part of the fabric than knits the Neroche community together.



Your Neroche Newsletter delivery team

(Continued on next page)

The aim of this free publication is to improve communication within the Parish by providing news and information on a wide variety of subjects and issues.

(continued from front page)

Keeping You Connected

22 editions later it continues to chronicle the stories of many of the people and events that help to define the historic villages of Curland, Bickenhall, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine in the early part of the 21st century. Copies of past editions can be viewed online at nerochevillages.org.uk

To ensure the newsletter continues to be interesting and relevant the new editorial team is canvassing views via a short reader survey. Printed copies are included in this newsletter and once completed can be dropped off in a box outside Neroche Hall until 28 February. An electronic version has also been sent to recipients of Wally's email alerts. Please take the time to fill in and return. Your views will help to shape the design and content of future editions.

Looking forwards, one of the main events in the community calendar is the Annual Neroche Parish Meeting, which in recent years has covered the continuing saga of broadband provision, the sale of Crown Estate properties and the planned upgrade of the A303/A358. The next meeting is at the Neroche Hall on 20 April from 7pm. All are invited to attend.



Hello From Your New Editorial Team

By Jacq Wanstall

My husband Mark and I moved to Barton Oaks in Bickenhall just over a year ago from Buckinghamshire. We didn't know the area at all, and found the Neroche Newsletter an invaluable source of information to help us learn about our new home.

When we learnt that Wally Torrington and Alan Perrior were stepping down, we were keen to keep the publication going, as we feel it plays an important part of the community, so we offered our services to ensure its continuation. We are now part of a team of four who run, edit and design the Newsletter. The editorial team is:

- Alan Hyde as Content Editor and Sarah Hyde as Designer - both live at Stuckeys Cottage in Curland and moved to the area three years ago. Alan works in Communications for a FTSE 250 company based in Exeter and Sarah is a former local newspaper editor who now works in Communications for the NHS.
- Mark Wanstall, who looks after the budget and is well-qualified to do so as he's a Finance Director, and I'm the Project Manager, who pulls it all together and collects articles from contributors in the community.

There's also a distribution team, organised by Roger Keat, who get out in all weathers to ensure you receive your copy safely.

Wally and Alan have done an amazing job for many years, so we have big shoes to fill and we hope we are up to the task....

If anybody wishes to get in touch, whether it's just to say hello, or if you have an idea about an article or something else, we would love to hear from you. Our new email address is nerochenewsletter@gmail.com



Alan and Sarah Hyde



Mark and Jacq Wanstall

Do you have basic skills in 'desk top publishing' or similar; would you be willing to write articles or take photos of events you attend; could you write features on local topics; if needed, would you be happy to be called upon to help with delivering the Newsletter?

If you can help with any of the above, or assist in any other way, then please contact the editorial team on nerochenewsletter@gmail.com

News from Neroche Hall

by Richard Davies

Despite the fact that this winter our weather may have been fairly benign thus far I know that many people, myself included, have succumbed to the unpleasant virus that has done the rounds. I hope that it did not spoil things too much for you if you were you unlucky enough to be affected.



As always a fresh year brings forth another chapter in the life of our hall, with old favourites coming back as well as hopefully some new. In my last newsletter article, I alluded to the possibility of the hall committee exploring the application for a grant to make improvements in relation to the showing of films. Unfortunately, a review of our 2016 film expenditure indicates a worrying trend of decline in attendance numbers.



It may help if I briefly explain that the hall engages with Moviola, who specialise in rural cinema, to show films at our hall once a month. Moviola produce a list of recently released films from which we select usually three films to be shown over the following three months. We are contracted to pay Moviola a pre-agreed percentage of the door takings and recent low numbers have meant that certain films have either effectively run at a loss or a marginal profit.

The Committee cannot carry on subsidising films at a loss, for obvious reasons, and we would be loath to continue along that path. Choice of films is always difficult in that we are trying to cater for many tastes and preferences, which is not easy. The film nights will continue for the next three months after which we will again review the situation. But in the meantime I would ask that if you wish to retain this excellent community venture you please vote with your feet and give it your full support.

Some of you will have been disappointed to learn that our Safari Supper Evening in January had to be postponed due to insufficient numbers of tickets being sold. There are probably a number of reasons for this, such

as the bugs that have been going around and the closeness to Christmas. Whatever the reasons, we are committed to trying to set a new date that will appeal to more people. There has been some discussion as to the timing and I would be very interested to hear any views on the subject. Would you prefer the event to be in the summer rather than the darker winter evenings for example?

Forthcoming events will, as always, be featured in this Newsletter as well as the hall's website, Parish Magazine and Wally's Alerts, and I am pleased to confirm that our popular Fish and Chip Quiz Night will go ahead on Friday 17th March. As in the past the fish and chip cart will cook to order on site on the night. Teams should consist of a maximum of six persons only. Due to the popularity of this event we have decided to ask that team captains pre-book their table with me in advance to avoid disappointment.



We hope that you will continue to support events at the hall during 2017 and if you are new to the area please come along and meet some new people. You will always be sure of a warm welcome!

£6

Neroche Friday Film Nights

Friday 24th February 2017 at 7.30pm

Bridget Jones's Baby (cert.15)



Starring Renee Zellweger, Colin Firth and Patrick Dempsey

After breaking up with Darcy, Bridget Jones's "happily ever after" life hasn't quite gone according to plan. Fortysomething and single again, she decides to focus on her job. What could possibly go wrong?



Then her love life takes a turn and Bridget meets a dashing American suitor who is everything Darcy is not. She finds herself pregnant, but with one hitch...she can only be fifty percent sure of the identity of her baby's father.

Neroche Parish Council News

by Gillian Midworth (Clerk to Neroche PC)

Although this is the first article for the calendar year 2017, it will be the last of the Parish Council financial year, which ends on 31 March. The new Parish Council year starts with the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.



New vacancy on the Council

The Parish Council was sorry to receive the resignation of Jason Jackson, Councillor for Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, in January.

Jason has been a Councillor for many years,



Jason Jackson

and has fulfilled the role of Chairman for two of these years. His local knowledge and expertise on planning matters will be missed and the Council wish him well for the future.

Jason's resignation has created a vacancy on the Parish Council which the Council will seek to fill by co-option. If anyone reading this has an interest in local affairs and wishes to contribute to community matters, then please consider joining the Council, particularly if you live in Orchard Portman or Thurlbear.

If you'd like to discuss what being a member of the Council involves, then please contact the Clerk or any current member who will be pleased to help. Contact details of all members can be found on the Neroche Villages website: www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Precept for 2017/18

At the January meeting, the Parish Council discussed its budget and precept requirement for 2017/18.

I am pleased to report that the precept will remain at £4446, despite the reduction in financial support from the District Council. This figure equates to £17.95 p.a. per Band D property.

The Parish Council carefully considers whether items of expenditure are necessary or beneficial to the community and wherever possible looks to source outside funding for major items of expenditure. For example, the Housing Needs Survey carried out last year was completely funded by a Lottery Awards For All grant.

Annual Parish Meeting

The date for the Annual Parish meeting has been set for **Thursday 20th April 2017**.

This meeting is entirely separate from a Parish Council meeting, although some members of the Parish Council help to organise it together with other members of the Parish. There will be presentations on matters of interest to the community and a chance to meet local elected representatives such as the County Councillor and District Councillor. The local MP has attended on previous occasions.

The meeting also provides an opportunity to learn about all the amazing events that regularly take place in the Parish, as many local clubs and organisations are represented. Also, it provides a chance to socialise with neighbours and friends over a glass of wine or piece of cake! Please make a note of the date in your diary so you do not miss this important event.

THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a great home-cooked 2-course lunch for just **£6**.

Meet people from the locality, take time out from your busy daily routine and enjoy conviviality & friendliness at a community lunch.

Lunches take place on Thursdays at 12.30 for 1.00 pm
2nd March, 6th April, 11th May
1st June, 6th July, 3rd August

Please phone or email to book (need to know for catering purposes).
Transport and special diets can be arranged.

Contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441,
Email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk
Organised by Friends of St Peter's Church

Leaving One's Mark

From our Staple Fitzpaine Correspondent

The appellation '*graffiti*' is usually conferred with a negative connotation; denoting a painting or carving which essentially says, '*I was here*', in a form not appreciated by others. One of the earliest examples of the art survives as the silhouette of a hand on a cave wall in Le Chauvet in southern France. It was created thirty thousand years ago by a tall man who spat a mouthful of red ochre over his extended fingers, and can be seen to this day.



*Hand silhouette photo -
Hand from Le Chauvet
Cave c. 28,000 BCE*

The phrase '*Church graffiti*' conjures up a rather more startling image, in which a 'hoodie' armed with a can of aerosol paint wilfully defaces a revered medieval building. We are more familiar with decorations in the form of carved pew ends and colourful stained glass windows which commemorate the Parish elite; commissioned by those able to afford a professionally manufactured representation. Relatively little evidence of the ordinary local folk who worshipped in our churches remain, or of



*Shoe outline from St
Peters, Staple Fitzpaine*

the ringers who called them to services. Church graffiti provides a connection to those parishioners; some of whom simply carved a personal mark, others etched designs with for more complex reasons such as protection against demons.

In Staple Fitzpaine, the tower roof of St Peter's Church bears the outlines of shoes and hands belonging to residents from centuries past; one such foot is shown in the photo below. These carvings offer the contemporary observer a conduit, back through time to their originators. These simple, almost childish artefacts assert, '*I was here*'; perhaps

motivated by an instinct not dissimilar to that of the Le Chauvet cave painter.

The outline of a hand can be seen on the roof of the stairwell turret at the top of St Thomas' Church tower in Thurlbear; its exposed location suggests 'I.R.' was untroubled by vertigo. Many other personal epithets survive on the Thurlbear's tower, but most are unfortunately no longer visible due to the capping of the lead by modern felt.

This newsletter does not seek to encourage queues of penknife-bearing parishioners at the doors of local church towers, or to inspire visitors to attend Wookey Hole Caves, coyly spouting mouthfuls of cochineal. However, if you have 'left your mark' in an interesting location (or left an inscription somewhere to fend off the 'evil eye'), please write in and let us know.



Hand outline from St Thomas's Thurlbear



All photographs courtesy of Paul Hart, except for the 'Hand from Le Chauvet'



Taunton Racecourse

By Bob Young and Wally Torrington



*Report from the Chief Executive,
Bob Young*

We had a great start to the season, followed by an incredibly successful Christmas and New Year programme. All bookable restaurant seating was sold-out

for all race meetings, and on the 30th December there was an extraordinary, unforeseen high attendance of 5,230; I put this down to the success of the recently completed schedule of major improvements to the facilities, and the good weather.



Whilst strolling around the course, catering facilities and bars during recent race meetings, I've been thrilled to spot lots of new faces from the local community. It is a delight to see so many Neroche residents now supporting the course and enjoying the racing. I would encourage any member of the parish to

call-in to the office to say hello. I'd be delighted to see you.

I am blessed with a small but highly motivated, dedicated and hard-working team. As well as myself and Lucy (my secretary), there are just ten permanent staff employed at the racecourse - five who look after the racing, and another five who run the catering. In addition, of course, is an army of 50/60 casual staff who are brought in for racedays and special events. I'm grateful to them all for the excellent work they do.

We have a number of great events coming up soon:

Family Fun race meeting on 6th April

Seven action packed races plus: Ferret Racing; Dog and Duck Display; Fairground Activities; Face Painting; Bar & Refreshments. There will also be a free 'Goody Bag' for the first 300 children under 13- years-old through the gate.

Ladies Day on 27th April

There's a fantastic prize of a weekend in Rome for the winner of the Best Dressed Lady Contest. This is purely a fashion competition, therefore all ages and all dress sizes have an equal chance of winning. Moreover, the names of the top six are placed into a hat and the winner drawn out, making the competition even fairer. So why not come along and have a go?



During the summer, fibre optic cable is being installed around the course, so next season it will be free Wi-Fi for all.

I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Best regards, Bob

Annual Membership (From January to December)

I'm sure that those of you who are members, or considering membership, would agree that Taunton Racecourse

offers tremendous value, with a record-equalling 59 reciprocal race meetings at 47 different courses throughout the country, plus a reciprocal with Hickstead for 3 events (including the Royal International Horse Show), and 2-for-1 Saver Tickets to the Royal Bath and West Show; with



full membership facilities applying to both. At Taunton, annual members and their guests, together with owners and trainers, have exclusive use of the Paddocks Stand, which we believe is unique in this day-and-age. The two course racing lunch, available for £17

in the Paddock Stand Restaurant, continues to be very popular. Members are welcome to bring up to four guests per race meeting into the Paddock Stand. What a wonderful way of reciprocating hospitality, by wining-and-dining your friends in the Members Restaurant whilst enjoying a great day's racing.

Remainder of 2016/17 Fixtures

Thursday	2nd March	2.00pm	5.15pm	Landlords Racemeeting
Monday	20th March	2.20pm	5.20pm	Bathwick Tyres Free Racemeeting
Thursday	30th March	2.00pm	5.15pm	RNLI Racemeeting
Thursday	6th April	2.05pm	5.40pm	Family Race Day
Thursday	20th April	5.35pm	8.05pm	Evening Racemeeting
Thursday	27th April	2.10pm	5.10pm	Ladies Day

Taunton Racecourse Business Club

Offering businesses around the region a range of racecourse benefits alongside social and networking events



Cheltenham Festival Preview Evening

In aid of the MH & WSH Point to Point

At
Taunton Racecourse
Friday 10th March 2017
at 7:00pm

(doors open 6:00pm)

Hosted by: Jim Old

STARSPORTS
THE GENTLEMAN'S BOOKMAKER

Refreshments
and Bar available

Tickets £10
(£12.50 on the door)

www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

Panel includes:

Philip Hobbs, Paul Nicholls & David Pipe
along with other top NH names.

Gold Cup & Grand National Lunches 2017



Enjoy the two most prestigious jump races
of the season with us here at the Racecourse,
The package includes the following..
Welcome drink, 2 course lunch, Afternoon Tea,
In-house Bookmaker, Racing Host and much more...
£30 pp or £50 pp for both events



FREE RACING Monday 20th March 2017

*A LIMITED NUMBER OF FREE GRANDSTAND
TICKETS AVAILABLE IF ORDERED ONLINE NOW!

HURRY BEFORE THEY RUN OUT!

For more details visit www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

*Maximum 4 per household



UB40

FEATURING
ALI CAMPBELL, ASTRO
& MICKEY VIRTUE



TAUNTON RACECOURSE 11th JUNE 2017

Update from our County Councillor

Ross Henley writes his regular column. He is the Liberal Democrat member for the Blackdown and Neroche division of Somerset County Council.

I wanted to start with an update about plans to change our black bin collections from fortnightly to once every three weeks from the autumn.

I am a bit concerned about this as it might be an issue for some households with large families. There's also the prospect of it leading to more fly-tipping which sadly affects our rural



areas where a few thoughtless daytrippers decide to dump their rubbish.

I hope I'm proved wrong. Encouragingly, the weekly collection of recyclables will continue, with a promise of a greater collection of plastic products.

Council merger proposed

The proposed merger between Taunton Deane and West Somerset councils also concerns me. I think it's always hard for our rural voice to be heard in Taunton anyway so to be part of a much larger council could mean a further diminishing influence for our rural area and having to compete for influence and funding with the whole of west Somerset too.

The Secretary of State will make the final decision in the autumn.

Bus service concerns

I have been contacted by several residents about cuts by the county council to the 99 bus service which travels through our area on its way to either Taunton or Chard.

Rural bus services are important rural lifeline, especially as not everyone has a car, so it's regrettable that the council is continuing to scale back our bus services.



I noted that the council celebrated saving over £1.5 million on concessionary fares this year - not much to celebrate, I think, as this has only happened because the council's cut in bus services has meant that bus pass holders now can't use the bus pass as much or at all.

Well done WI

On a lighter note, I really enjoyed my visit to the local WI Macmillan coffee morning at the Greyhound before Christmas. It was for a fantastic cause. I lost my mum last summer to cancer so I always want to support cancer charities. Well done to the WI for all your efforts and fundraising.



I also attended the Neroche villages lunch at the village hall. It was a fantastic occasion as always with fantastic food and company. There is so much going on at the Neroche Hall. I'm looking forward to the next quiz and its fish and chips.

Thanks to Wally, Alan and the team

Finally, I wanted to publicly thank Wally Torrington and Alan Perrior and the rest the team for all the hard work they have put into making this newsletter such a success - and good luck to the new team too.

A Cracking Christmas Lunch

By Jacq Wanstall



The annual Neroche Christmas Lunch on Thursday 8th December was a cracker - and attended by more than 80 people. Neroche Hall was decorated and looked very festive. The tables all looked wonderful with Christmas crackers and napkins.

The event was run by Tricia Dryden and Jane Hole, assisted by a merry and impressive band of 16 elves, all working incredibly hard in the kitchen and serving the tables.



The Christmas roast dinner smelt and tasted absolutely amazing, and the atmosphere in the hall was friendly, festive and fun. A big well done to everybody involved in making the occasion such a huge success.



Carol Singing around the Neroche Villages

By Mal Lee

The custom of carol singing around the villages was started by Di Grabham and Mark Pope in the 1980s. Back then a tractor would pull a covered trailer. The covers opened rather like the theatre curtains to reveal the smiling faces of the carol singers. In later years custom and excise duty on diesel prompted a change of vehicle and Alison Brown came to the rescue with her lorry.

Last Christmas twenty singers, accompanied by Julie Pope on the accordion, visited Lady Acre, The Alms Houses and The Manor in Staple Fitzpaine; Pooles Farm and Curland Close in Curland; Barton Oaks in Bickenhall; and last but not least The Greyhound in Staple Fitzpaine. Seasonal refreshments were served at all the stops and a great deal of fun was had by both carol singers and hosts.

The village carol singers have always heralded Christmas and this festive fun is almost unique in rural areas. Thank you carol singers for giving us your gifts of time and music; thank you hosts for all the refreshments; and between everyone £342.50 was raised for the Beacon Centre.

St Peter's Carol Service, Staple Fitzpaine

By Mal Lee (Churchwarden)

Advent is a very dark time of year as the nights are at their longest. For Christians it is a time of reflection and growing anticipation as we wait for the light of Jesus to end the darkness. The carol service on 21 December saw the church beautifully decorated with greenery, and candles (owls and cherubs also played a small part in the decorations). Bells rang out to welcome church-goers and candles in jam jars lit the paths. Amongst the 128-strong congregation there was a buzz of anticipation to hear the story of how the birth of Jesus came to pass.

The service was led by Rev Christabel Ager and Phil Albrow. The church lights were dimmed as Christabel read 'What is Christmas'. Then the congregation remained standing and silent as soloist Lottie Michaels movingly sang the first verse of Once in Royal David's City before the lights went up and the congregation all joined in. The story of the birth

of Jesus, from traditional bible readings, was extremely well told by Henry Heath, Kath Michaels, Tricia Dryden, Alison Brown, Magnus Stewart and Mal Lee. An intriguing 17th century poem by Thomas Ford was read superbly by John Lee. Lots of people commented on the thought-provoking poem which finishes as follows:

*Thus if the king were coming would we do,
And 'twere good reason too; For 'tis a duteous thing
To show all honour to an earthly king,
And after all our travail and our cost,
So he be pleas'd, to think no labour lost.*

*But at the coming of the King of Heaven
All's set at six and seven: We wallow in our sin,
Christ cannot find a chamber in the inn.
We entertain him always like a stranger,
And as at first still lodge him in the manger.*

Phil Albrow gave us some 'Thoughts for Christmas', including the lighting of four candles - one for each Sunday in Advent - which reminded him of the Two Ronnies' joke about 'fork 'andles'. He also reminded us that Christmas is about love, children and the birth of a baby who died so that we might have everlasting life.



St Peter's Singers always add an extra dimension to church festival services and this year they were outstanding. Led by conductor and organist Julie Pope, the choir go from strength to strength. The 17 singers delighted the congregation with The Sussex Carol, Lully, Lulla, Lullay and Follow that Wondrous Star.

The congregation's singing was wonderful as everyone enjoyed the familiar carols of Christmas. Before the final blessing, hand knitted gifts of really lovely snowmen and Christmas stockings, all made by Jenny Stewart, were handed to members of the congregation. This was an act of kindness in the true spirit of Christmas. Afterwards there was a retiring collection for the Christian Aid Aleppo Appeal which came to £266.82 and everyone was invited to enjoy seasonal refreshments. It was a memorable evening.

Christmas Tree Day at Staple Farm

by Mark Pope

On the 4th of December we were blessed with a beautiful sunny day for our Christmas tree open day at Staple Farm. The trees looked almost redecorated first thing in the morning with a covering of frost over them.



We had a steady stream of families coming to choose their perfect tree direct from the field. This can prove quite a challenge when confronted with several thousand to choose from. After a tree had been chosen, it was cut down and transported to the customer's car.

Most of the trees will have been growing with us for over 10 years, but some of the larger ones will have been growing for 15 years.



On the day we also had freshly cut trees available in the yard for those families who were short on time. Also in the yard were some warm drinks and mince pies to add to the festive occasion.

We were selling trees right up to late afternoon on Christmas Eve.

We are now starting to prune the trees ready for next year and do this over about 8 weeks in between other jobs.

Thanks for your custom - and I hope you enjoyed decorating your tree!

ADVANCE NOTICE

NEROCHE CRAFT FAIR

All crafts welcome

NEROCHE HALL, BICKENHALL, TAUNTON
TA3 6TY

SUNDAY 29th OCTOBER 2017

11.30am to 4.00pm

Table/pitch £15
Double space (2 tables) £25



For further details of tables/ space & to book

Contact Mrs A Brown Tel 01823 480441

Or email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk

Doors open for setting up from 8.30am 18th October

Refreshments on sale: Ploughman's lunch

Coffee, tea & cakes

Tally Ho!

Some of the 84 mounted followers of the Taunton Vale Foxhounds which met at Battens Farm over the festive period.



Photos courtesy of Alison Brown.

The Farming Calendar

by Daniel Macey

As many of us living in the Parish do not fully comprehend the world of farming, local farmer Daniel Macey has kindly penned a few words to give us an idea as to what he is up to at this time of the year.



Happy New Year everyone. I am writing this on 31st January and so far we have had an exceptionally dry winter period, although the weather has just broken and is becoming damp. The dry weather has helped us so far this season as the ground in this area can turn very “gooey” when wet. Autumn crops are looking exceptional but if they are not germinated before it turns wet the crop usually suffers and we have significant losses.

Our calving season has gone well. Every year we aim to get about 80 dairy female replacements for the herd, which we are now over and above. The rest of the cows would have had male dairy calves or “beef bred” which are sold to Blade Farming to be reared for beef. We currently have 330 milking cows which are milked twice daily.

The next jobs on the farming calendar will be our spring work which includes making the yearly forage stocks. The farm is 600 acres which is split into thirds, 200 acres of grass, 200 acres of maize and 200 acres of winter wheat. The grass and maize will be used to feed the cows and the winter wheat will be sold off the farm.



Maize - Direct Drilling

In late February/March we will start to apply fertiliser to the grassland and the wheat and begin preparations for drilling maize in April. After maize drilling the grass will have grown and we will aim to take out first cut of silage at the beginning of May - hopefully after having had a nice period

of sunshine to bring the sugars up in the grass.

Superfast Broadband on the way, but we may have to wait

by Tim French

Good news - Neroche Parish will be getting the very best type of superfast broadband. But, we may wait up to three years to get it. Meanwhile, there is another option available to those who need faster speed now, though many of us will probably stay with the existing system while waiting.



Superfast Broadband

Lynne Spoor, our lead parish councillor for broadband, reports that the winning bidder for providing superfast broadband to our area, which includes the Blackdown Hills, is **Gigaclear**. The company connects a property directly to the internet by fibre; there is no copper wire line to slow down the speed. The technology, known as fibre to the premises (FTP), is the gold standard and is capable of achieving fantastic speeds. It's the best possible news.



Gigaclear says that it is still working on its roll-out schedule and will not be able to give a scheduled connection date for premises until March/April 2017.

The contract must be completed by 2020 so we could wait three years, but at least we will soon know when. You can go to their website, enter your postcode, find your house and register an interest so as to receive updates. There is information on the cost of different packages of usage, and on installation costs.

Of course, those who are happy with their current broadband speed never need to change from the current system which uses telephone lines connected to the local exchange.

An interim way to get faster Broadband and the Voucher Scheme

Lynne Spoor has found an interim way of getting faster broadband until the fibre network arrives. It is particularly useful for those who obtained a £500 Connecting Devon and Somerset voucher to use in this way. Exmoor Technologies can equip premises with a mounted aerial and a router so that they can receive 4G broadband from existing mobile phone

masts. The system works in many sites where a mobile phone cannot detect a signal. The one-off installation cost is £548, or £48 for those with a CDS voucher. For further information go to www.exmoor-tech.co.uk and click the CDS Broadband Voucher button. The broadband service is provided by the mobile phone company EE, which has various monthly packages available, depending on needs and usage. Lynne arranged a public meeting in January in Neroche Hall to allow interested parties to discuss the proposal with Exmoor Technology; details of this are on the Neroche Villages website. I understand that two households in Neroche Parish have already used their voucher with Exmoor Technologies and get a vastly improved broadband speed and performance.



What Now?

Lynne will continue to monitor progress on CDS Broadband Phase 2 roll-out with Gigaclear and Connecting Devon and Somerset, to track progress for our Parish and will report any significant news via the Email Alert, Neroche Villages website and Neroche Villages Newsletter. And it's probably best not to take on a long term contract with a broadband provider until the time frame for the fibre broadband is clarified.



Neroche Friday Film Nights

Friday 31st March 2017 at 7.30pm

The Girl On The Train (cert.15)

Starring Emily Blunt, Haley Bennett, Rebecca Ferguson



After her divorce, Rachel Watson experiences severe depression but while travelling to work by train, she sees what she believes to be the "perfect" couple. Later, she witnesses the girl kissing another man and the next day, she wakes up with no memory of the night before and discovers that the girl has gone missing, Rachel can't help but get involved in the drama/murder mystery.

Hatch Beauchamp & Neroche Garden Club

'Spring Into Action'

By Wendy Morris

Is the mention of Spring a little optimistic? However, gardeners are nothing if not ever hopeful of: more rain - less rain - more sun etc.... and with lighter and warmer days the lure of the great outdoors is irresistible. Seed sowing, the first lawn cut of the year, general tidying up, it's all good preparation for the summer and dusting off the sun loungers when all the hard work is done.



The Garden Club AGM will be held on Wednesday 22 March at the Neroche Hall at 7.00pm followed by a talk about Herbs by Neil Lovesy of Picket Nursery. We hope to see all our existing members and would welcome any recruits who would like to join up. The programme for the forthcoming year will be unveiled and there will be a general social get-together over refreshments. The annual subs remain at £5.00.

The programme for 2017 will again be based on visits to members' gardens, beginning with a visit to the garden of Sarah Covey on 19 April. Further details of this and other planned visits will be given at the AGM. Last year such visits were really successful and it was interesting to see how our green-fingered friends coped with awkward shapes, shaded areas and so on, and really made the most of their plots. And, of course, all the gardeners are also good cooks, so it was worth going for the teas alone!

Come along to the AGM and as many other meetings as you can. It's a great way to share experiences and tips. Whether you have a window box or an acre, there is something here for you.



The Garden Club will have a Plant Stall at St Peter's Fete, Staple Fitzpaine on 17 June and we would be grateful for the donation of plants for this event.

“Be sure to keep the date”

Church Fete

17 June 2017, 2pm

The Manor, Staple Fitzpaine

Contributions for the following stalls are needed – please help if you can.

Books contact Anthony Brown 01823 480441

Bric-a-brac contact Rob Larkman 01460 234237

Cakes contact Wynne Balance 01823 480955

Posh Hats contact Christine Heath 01823 480289

Plants Lots of contributions are required to continue to make this stall a success so please think of the Fete when you are planting seeds, taking cuttings or rationalising your gardens. Contact Wendy Morris tel: 01460 234445

Produce please bring contributions before noon on 17/6/2017

Bottles please bring contributions before noon on 17/6/2017

Bible Stories - 'Open the Book' at Thurlbear School

By Jo Moore (Thurlbear School Business Manager)

All over the country, 'Open the Book' teams are going into schools and bringing stories from the Bible to life by acting them out for the children. Each dramatisation lasts between five and ten minutes. The team which comes to Thurlbear School has ten actors, who come from different churches in the Seven Sowers group of parishes.

The cast for the week meets at 8.30am in Thurlbear School hall to rehearse the day's story, bringing their props and costumes with them - stripey tea towels are must haves! - and then, at 9am, act it for the children. A narrator 'Opens the Book' and links the actions of the story together, while the actors move around and take their parts. Stories come from the Old Testament and the New Testament, so that over a three year cycle, the children can get an overview of the events recorded in the Bible. It's a highlight of the week for the Open the Book team and the children appear to enjoy it too!

Last Christmas, Thurlbear Primary School went further than before and proposed an ambitious idea that would bring together the School's Christmas Fair with the fundamental message of this Christian school: *"Standing Out in the Community with its Christian values"*. The school and the 'Open the Book Team' devised a brilliant 10-minute Living Nativity. Pupils, animals



and the Team brought the birth of Jesus to life in front of a school audience of around 150 pupils and parents. It was a truly magical experience and everyone who watched felt that it had added that extra moment of reflection to an already wonderful Christmas occasion run by Thurlbear PTA.

NEROCHE TAKE ART BRING YOU REAL ENTERTAINMENT

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES

Morgan & West in PARLOUR TRICKS



Magicians, Time Travellers and All Round Spiffing Chaps!

FRIDAY 3rd MARCH

7.45pm

£10 adults

£8 kids (under 16)

Bar, raffle, nibbles

Tickets from Sheila
sfgreen@btinternet.com

01823 480758

Check them out on

www.morganandwest.co.uk/

Update From Your Village Agent

By Gary Larsen

New Year - New You? Did you make a New Year's Resolution? Stop Smoking? Get Fit? Move House? Get Married? Learn Spanish?

I hope you are keeping to it, whatever it is!

SS&L

SS&L, a Somerset-based social enterprise focused on learning and development opportunities, offer everything from art classes to languages, yoga to photography, and computer, IT and business skills - as well as Apprenticeships & Traineeships for those aged over 16.



SS&L provide communities and individuals with a way to meet new people, form friendships, learn a new hobby or skill, or take up a course for wellbeing or fitness. "We Change Lives Through Learning" is their motto.

Many of the courses are government subsidised and are accessible to everyone. They are also offering free Saturday taster sessions in selected locations in Somerset, and free longer-term courses as part of a government research project into the connection between learning & wellbeing. So, lots on offer!

For more details visit: www.sslcourses.co.uk

Nuisance Calls

Many people have been absolutely PESTERED by nuisance phone calls recently - up to 8 in a day. From memory, the call can go like this ...

"This is an important announcement for people on benefits. Did you know that people on benefits can have their boiler replaced for free? Press 2

to be connected to a case worker, or 9 if you do not want to receive any calls.”

Is anyone else suffering in the same way?

I have had so many calls like this - all seem to come from different numbers when I do 1471, but are an STD code and a 5 digit number, whereas most phone numbers are 6 digits these days.

I have reported the problem to the Information Commissioner's Office – tel: 0303 123 1113 or www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public/nuisance-calls/

I would urge everyone to report any nuisance calls by phone or online at the ICO website. Each complaint has to be done individually, but it does not take long. If the ICO get enough numbers logged they can trace the fraudsters and put a stop to this criminal activity.

If you know someone who is not online, why not help them to log these nuisance calls? Also, check they are registered with the Telephone Preference Service, 0345 07 0707. This is a free service, which can also cover mobile phones.

If you have any problems or issues with which you feel I can help, perhaps by directing you to the right people, services or agencies, or if you have any other queries, please contact me. All calls and advice given are treated in strict confidence. Please give me a call on 01823 331222 or 07931 018019, or email me at gary@somersetccc.org.uk”

Somerset
VILLAGE
Agents



CCS
COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOR SOMERSET
SUPPORTING ACTION
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Check out the CCS website:
www.somersetccc.org.uk
and see the variety of work
we are doing.

Rebecca's Round-up

By Rebecca Pow MP



The year began with all the demands that triggering Article 50 entailed, with no let-up in related activities subsequently. Similarly, the new incumbent at the White House in the U.S. has brought plenty of food for thought.

My priority locally continues to be ensuring that Taunton Deane is at the forefront of all that I do, fighting our corner and endeavouring to get the best for our area.

One success, in which I have played my part together with dedicated input from Taunton Deane Council, has been securing Green Town status for Taunton, one of only three towns in the country to gain this status. Whilst this will not solve all the issues that are inevitably associated with proposed new housing developments in the area, the allocated funding (£350,000) will help towards a more sustainable future and will make it possible to bid for other funds with which to build essential infrastructure and facilities.

Regional Emphasis

I am working increasingly with colleagues in the region to gain the South West the attention it needs to raise productivity and growth levels here. Sadly decades of underinvestment in the region, have taken their toll and I am working to address this.

To this end I was delighted to get a Prime Minister's Question in (all that 'bobbing' up and down was worth it) on this very subject. I cited the recent takeover of excellent local business, The Ministry of Cake, by a successful French company, as an example of how outside companies are viewing the South West as a good place in which to invest. Our SW MPs group is emphasising the importance of developing the infrastructure framework that will allow



business to thrive. This includes road, rail and a suitable digital infrastructure.

I am delighted that Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling has reconfirmed his commitment to the upgrade of the A358. I'm aware that



some members of Neroche Parish Council have already had some interaction with Highways England and with government funding for the Taunton Rail transformation project signed off, GWR need to move ahead with their side of the bargain.

(left to right) John Williams (TDBC), David Fothergill (SCC), Rebecca Pow (MP), David Hall (SCC) and Chris Grayling (MP)

With 85% of businesses in the SW being micro businesses (employing 0 – 9 people) and many based in rural areas, adequate digital connection is essential. The recent signing of one final phases of Connecting Devon and Somerset's' super-fast broadband programme by Gigaclear, should deliver this essential service to thousands of additional households and businesses by 2019 providing speeds up to 33 times faster than the UK average.

Skills are another key to progress and I am continuing to highlight the benefits of the government apprenticeship schemes which are becoming more focused to deliver what business wants. The prospect of a University of Somerset here at the Bridgwater and Taunton University Centre is also edging forward.

Fairer Funding

Many of you will have signed my petition calling for fairer funding for our schools. Historically, pupils in this area have received on average £2000

less per pupil than the average for the country with rural areas being particularly hard hit. Having campaigned long and hard on this, together with thousands of local parents and teachers I am pleased that after consulting widely the government has proposed a fairer system. This means that on average Somerset schools will receive 4.5% more funding. There are still some anomalies to iron out, and there will be a few losers but on the whole this should benefit our children and help our hard working teachers.

Cultural Opportunities

I am always mindful that having a great cultural offer is as important as getting the economy on a firm footing. ArtsTaunton, of which I am a patron, is focusing on exactly this. A specific aim is to create a top class arts venue in the county town building on



existing strengths, such as the Brewhouse. Securing Creech Barrow Hill (behind the Hydrographic) as the location for an eye catching piece of sculpture, visible to all entering the town, is another ArtsTaunton ambition with a completion being staged to choose the artist. Already up and running is the biennial Somerset Song Prize a high calibre national competition placing a special importance on the relationship between the singer and their pianist. I much enjoyed the launch and look forward to the final which is to be staged at Queens College.

Let's not forget the enjoyment we get from touring theatre companies that perform in many of our local village halls together with much entertainment communities generate themselves, including pantos and Wassailing events. Many people turned out to resurrect the Stoke St Mary wassail. This ancient tradition of blessing the apple trees came complete with the singing of original Somerset wassailing songs (care of Tom Mayberry, of the Somerset Heritage Museum), hanging burnt toast in the trees for the robins, firing a shotgun and, of course, the quaffing of copious quantities of cider.

Helping The Homeless

In Parliament, as a Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Communities and Local Government, I have been increasingly involved in the legislative side of business, which after all is the key role of government. I have been on the committee to enable the National Citizen Service to receive Royal Assent, putting it on a firm footing that

will enable thousands of 15 – 17 year olds to take part in this excellent community programme. Students gain skills, confidence and contribute to society, all of which should benefit them in later life as well as benefiting our communities. For more details visit: www.ncsyas.co.uk

I was also proud to be part of the Committee working on my colleague Bob Blackman's Private Members Bill to reduce homelessness. Sadly homelessness is all too common in Taunton and the surrounding area, and even one rough sleeper or homeless person is one too many. Many volunteers and charities locally already do excellent work to help those in this unfortunate position but this Bill, backed by funding of £48m, should go some way to helping further. It ensures all homeless people can access meaningful support to resolve their homelessness, whilst introducing measures to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place.

The Bill (which has passed its third reading in the Commons and goes to the Lords) had cross party support and really constructive input from local government, housing associations, and charities including Shelter and Crisis. It's good news.

Representing

I spend much time meeting with Ministers on an individual basis to feed in ideas from constituents, on all manner of subjects, whether it be calling for the dermatology department at Musgrove hospital to remain open, for understand of the demands on nurses and GPs, for the right climate for our farmers to thrive in the post EU world and much more besides. In addition, whenever I can, I speak in relevant debates on such diverse topics as: Violence against girls and women; the rural economy and exiting the EU; a complete ban on elephant ivory; and a call for the right digital platforms to enable small, local and community radio station, like Tone fm and 10Radio in Wiveliscombe to be able to transmit digitally without prohibitive cost. Life is very varied with never a dull moment. My door is always open should you need to contact me.

*You can look back at any of my speeches on
www.hansard.parliament.uk*

*And don't forget to follow me on Twitter ([@pow_rebecca](https://twitter.com/pow_rebecca)) and
Facebook (www.fb.com/rebeccapow)*

Neroche Local History Group Visit to the Somerset Heritage Centre

By Jane Hole



A small group of amateur researchers recently visited the Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton. It was a first visit for some and a return one for several of us. There is always something new to find out, different sources, documents, maps, censuses and so on.

The ever-helpful staff showed us how to access the many resources available, from the old fashioned microfiche, through to online articles, maps and pictures. The extensive archive has documents from the medieval period through to the present day. In fact one of the real treasures of the archive is much earlier than the medieval - it is a Charter signed by King Ina of Wessex dating back to the early 700s.

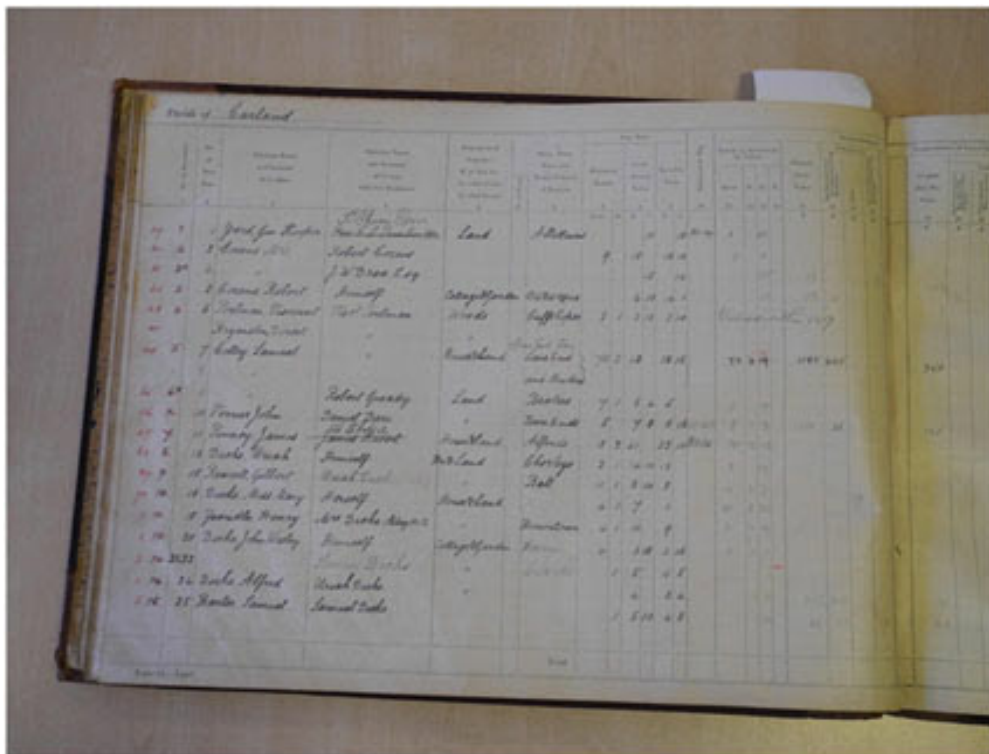
We were researching a variety of themes, which the Centre was able to help with, including:

- A history of a local house
- A special window in a local church
- The ongoing quest to find more about the 'Lost Houses' of our villages
- Kelly's Directory for the villages
- Village information in the 'History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset' by Rev John Collinson printed in 1791
- The Sanfords of Nynhead and their relationship to our villages

During my research on the Lost Houses of our villages I was referred to the 1910 Inland Revenue record. It is a great document for anyone

researching on local houses because it confirms many details: christian and surname of occupier and owner, a description, a street number place or house name, estimated extent, gross annual value and rateable value.

The Duties on Land Values from the Inland Revenue 1910: page 6 of the record for the parish of Curland



Using our house as an example, the page above shows the number 67 of the assessment, giving the following details:

It was occupied by James Pinney, was owned by A. Shire, was a house with land, the house name was Alford's, there were 18 acres of land, its gross annual value was £31, the rateable value was £22 and 10 shillings (if only....).

For more information you can arrange a visit by phoning the Heritage Centre on 01823 278805 or look on line at www.swheritage.org.uk/somerset-archives

Jane Hole, Chair,

Neroche Local History Group, email: jane.hole@outlook.com

Legal Blow for Crown Estate in Landmark Case

Some of you may have spotted a story in The Times newspaper just before Christmas. It was reported that, after a prolonged legal case, Ian and Judith Wakley of Staple Park Farm had been awarded substantial compensation “in a landmark case that strikes a blow for thousands who are tenants of the Crown Estate.”



The Times says that Ian and Judith moved from Aberdeen to Somerset “only to find that the condition of the farm they were renting had been significantly misrepresented.”

The newspaper went on to report that “the couple were persuaded to take on the tenancy of the farm in 2007 after being told that the parlour and the slurry/dirty water storage and disposal were “right up to date”, Oliver Radley-Gardner, their lawyer, said.

In addition they were told that the farm had an effective freshwater supply and distribution system.

But none of that turned out to be true, he said. Silage on the farm, which the Wakleys had to purchase when they took over and was said to be of a “high quality”, turned out to be contaminated with wire, which caused cattle to become seriously ill and die.

The judge decided in the couple’s favour, finding that there had been multiple tenancy breaches and misrepresentations by their landlord, said The Times. The Crown Estate was expected to seek leave to appeal.

It's been a busy and challenging time for the Crown Estate and its tenants in Neroche and the surrounding area. Separately, readers will remember the recent travails of the 'Forced Out Action Group' and concerns over the treatment of tenants being evicted from properties in the area.

Fact or fiction?

As a footnote, readers might be interested to know that the Crown Estate website states that "we are a business driven by a strong set of values (Commercialism, Integrity & Stewardship). We mean them, we are proud of them and we are respected for them by the people we work with and in the wider community."

The Crown Estate's vision is "to be the UK's most respected property business."



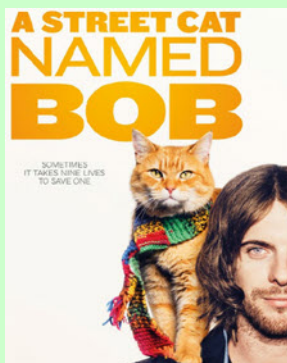
£6

Neroche Friday Film Nights

Friday 28th April 2017 at 7.30pm

A Street Cat Named Bob (cert. 12a)

Starring Luke Treadaway, Bob the Cat, Ruta Gedmintas



'A Street Cat Named Bob', is the film adaptation of James Bowen's much-loved, best-selling book.

'A Street Cat Named Bob' tells the moving and life-affirming true story of the unlikely friendship between a young homeless busker, James Bowen, and the stray ginger cat named Bob who changed his life.

The Friday Film Night selection for May 2017 will be announced nearer the date via the websites (see back page) and the Email Alert system.

Taunton Deane Borough Council News

*John Williams, Borough Councillor,
Neroche Ward and Leader of the
Council.*

I write regarding a number of topical issues:

Creating a New Council Covering the TDBC and WSC Geographical Area

The proposal is to form a single new council that will replace both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council by April 2019. If this proposal is adopted it will not affect or change Somerset County Council and existing towns and Parishes remain unchanged. What will change is the ward boundaries for elected Councillors. These will be reviewed by the Boundary Commission with a view to reducing the number of Councillors from 84 at present to around 53, but this will be subject to recommendations from the Boundary Commission.



These proposed changes are about reducing the cost of administration and back office costs so we can continue, in the face of inevitable reduction in Government grant funding, delivering virtually all the services that we know you as the community so value. It is all about working more efficiently, but maintaining most of the services we deliver now.

This has not just arisen. West Somerset first approached TDBC in 2012 as they realised then they were too small to remain viable and we considered joint working which had the potential to deliver savings for Taunton Deane as well allowing us to continue investing in growth and development. A business case was prepared which showed savings of £1.8 million per annum across both Councils. This was first implemented in 2013 so we have had three years of operation as the “one officer

team” across both Councils and the £1.8 million per annum has been achieved since then. This gives us confidence that the business case was sound and predicted savings are achievable for when we look at the next steps as we are now.

At that stage it was a commitment that the two Councils remained democratically separate and that there would be no cross subsidisation of costs either way. This was and remains the case.

In 2016 in the face of ever reducing grant funding from central Government, over 40% since 2012 and continuing down, we considered alternative ways of working that again delivered a similar level of services for our community in a more economical and efficient manner. Both Councils concluded that the most efficient way forward was to form one new single Council based on the geographical area of the two Councils. The business case for this indicates a £3.1 million saving per annum, which based on present Government funding forecasts, it allows the new Council to remain viable into the future.

At the time of writing this full consultation is being carried out in both Council areas and the results, along with the proposed business case and democratic arrangements, will be submitted to the Secretary of State, DCLG, for a final decision. It is planned to submit our application by late March and the S of S decision is anticipated by late 2017. If our proposals are approved it is intended the new Council will be elected in the 2019 elections and operational from that date.

As your Borough Councillor I will be very disappointed if, from these changes, you notice any significant difference in the level of services delivered but what it does do is save substantial amounts in management and administrative costs so funding can be re-directed to the front line services.

Recently Awarded Garden Town Status to Taunton

This is a tremendous achievement for Taunton as it, not only confirms Taunton as an area of strategic growth that is delivering much needed homes and jobs, but also provides us with grant funding of £350,000 to properly plan and develop well designed homes with good connectivity ensuring we maintain vital travel links from the town centre to the surrounding countryside, the green lung linking town and country.

For those that I know are concerned at the possibility, it does not include any additional housing to that planned already, our last Local Plan, painstakingly finalised in 2012, still determines housing numbers and Garden Town Status does not increase this. Associated with that plan was a review of all the essential services to support the level of new housing planned and of course we continue to work with the various service providers but as housing numbers are not increasing this should not unduly impact on the development planned.

Improvements to the existing roads and transport networks are recognised as being key to any successful development and every effort is being made to bring improvements forward. Key to this is investment in our roads, buses, train station, footpaths and cycleways. Some of these are being progressed such as the NIDR, upgrade of J25 on the M5, dualling of the A358 from Ilminster to J25 including a much needed bypass for Henlade, the Rail Station alterations and Western Relief Road to ease traffic at the Creech Castle junction on Toneway. Much is planned but there's still much more to do.

Finally, flooding is a major concern relating to new housing development. I can offer reassurance that all new development now has to incorporate "sustainable urban drainage" requirements. This means in Taunton Deane we expect the storm water drainage to be designed to reduce the rate of flow into our waterways by 20% when compared to the previous run off rate of the land. Hence we ensure we improve the situation, not worsen it.

A358 Upgrade Southfields, Ilminster to J25 of the M5


I appreciate there is much scepticism about the current plans to deliver this much needed road improvement. It has been "talked about", I am told, since 1948, so I am aware of several false starts! However, I believe that this time it really is going to be achieved and the promise of a start on site in 2020 is still confirmed as the commencement of work. Options for consideration and comments before the final design is prepared should be available shortly.

Highways England have already been carrying out considerable surveys to identify how side roads and rights of way are being used. They have

also started ecological surveys to establish any real constraints on their proposals. All good preparatory work for what will be a major project. Eventually it should cover construction of a new dual carriageway from the A303 at Ilminster to link to the M5 at or near J25 and including a much needed bypass for Henlade. I say much needed because at present the A358 carries traffic at the rate of around 30,000 vehicle movements per day when it has been designed for around 18,000. From this it is obvious that improvement is needed to reduce noise, congestion and worst of all, pollution for those so badly affected.


Superfast broadband Planned Installation Programme

When checking availability on my own home postcode on the Gigaclear web site (www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker) the following came up which I thought I would share;

 Progress in Buckland St. Mary (South West)

Under Review Network Build Live

Congratulations, Gigaclear and Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) are working together to bring the UK's fastest broadband to your community. Gigaclear will be installing a new, pure fibre-to-the-premises broadband network in your area over the next 3 years bringing speeds from 50Mbps up to 1000Mbps to properties in the area. Currently, Gigaclear and CDS are finalising the coverage area and the rollout schedule which should be confirmed during March/April 2017. In the meantime, you may register your interest by clicking the button below. This does not commit you to anything it just allows Gigaclear, who will be building the network, to keep you informed on progress with the rollout.

[Register Interest](#) 

If of interest, please try the link to the post code checker above for your own property and check the position for your home or business and do register an interest. It is without commitment!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information on any of the above or have any other queries in respect of Council services.

Annual Parish Meetings for Bickenhall, Curland, Orchard Portman with Thurlbear, and Staple Fitzpaine

Thursday 20th April 2017

Neroche Village Hall – Doors Open 7.00pm

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, every English Parish must hold an Annual Parish Meeting between 1st March and 1st June each year, and it must take place after 6.00pm



The Annual Parish Meetings is one of the most important local events of the year. An occasion when: residents can make their voices heard; meet their Parish, Borough and County Councillors; learn more about local, social and sporting activities; and be updated on the progress being made by local Action Groups. It is also an opportunity to find out about all the excellent work going on in the parishes and the wide variety of activities that are taking place, and, more importantly, become involved if you so wish. There will be guest speakers, and stands for all the clubs and social organisations in the parishes to advertise their activities. Free

refreshments, including wine and cheese, will be provided for everybody attending. It is most important that as many local residents as possible attend. This year's event will be taking place during the evening of Thursday 20th April 2017 in Neroche Hall; **please put the date in your diary.**

**YOUR ATTENDANCE AND SUPPORT IS
ESSENTIAL; PLEASE BE THERE!!!**

Neroche Annual Parish Meetings

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

Thursday 20th April 2017 - Neroche Hall
Open 7.00pm - Formal Presentations Start 7.30pm

Jon Bell, Parish Council Chairman
Presenting the Annual Report

**THE EVENING WILL ALSO INCLUDE A NUMBER
OF PRESENTATIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST; THE
SUBJECTS OF WHICH WILL BE ANNOUNCED
CLOSER TO THE EVENT IN THE NEROCHE
EMAIL ALERT**

**Stroll around the stands (representing numerous local
clubs, organisations and groups), speak with club
representatives, event organisers, Action Group
members, and meet your Parish, Taunton Deane and
Somerset County Councillors.**

**This is the most important local event of the
year. Your support is essential; please be there.**



*Cheese and wine plus a variety of other
cakes, pastries, beverages and refreshments
served **FREE-of-CHARGE** all evening*



News from Bickenhall and District WI

by Jacqueline Kolkowski



There has been lots going on over the last few months.

Our visiting speaker in October was Emma Duke, a driftwood artist from Somerset who works locally. She spoke about the journey of driftwood, especially in the Bristol Channel.

She handed round very tactile examples driftwood and then explained how she sourced and selected her wood for shape and colour to create her beautiful designs of furniture, wall art and gifts.



In December, Petra Trott and her assistant Rosie showed us how to make a small Christmas wreath and table decorations, with excellent results. Some of us needed more help than others, but it was an evening enjoyed by all.

Our second round in the knockout skittle competition was a close fought match! We played very well and were winning in the first half of the match and had the opposition rattled (in fact they were quite grumpy), but we had to change alleys due to the men's league match taking priority (!) due to a double booking. Obviously the change in the alley did not suit us and we narrowly lost the match.



Members have attended various events. Tricia Dryden and Pauline Phelps attended an excellent County Federation Meeting at Wellsprings that included two good speakers, Simon Dawson, with his tales from his smallholding in Devon after a complete career change, and Val Bugden-Cawsey spoke with energy and enthusiasm on Growing Old Disgracefully!

Other events included a Christmas-themed Craft Day at Long Suttton, and the Cerdic Group Carol Concert at Horton Church. The Somerset County Federation Carol Festival was held in Wells Cathedral, a wonderful venue with excellent singing by the choir and soloists.

To start the year off in a competitive mood some of us attended the ten-pin bowling competition at the Hollywood Bowl in Taunton. Although we did not win we had some excellent coaching from ex-league player Pauline and enjoyed meeting other WI members from around Somerset.

Our first speaker for the new year was Rod Sinclair. He gave us an excellent powerpoint presentation with a short film on the 'Blood Bikers' know as Freewheelers.

These are highly-trained motorcyclists from many walks of life, who support this charity, founded in 1990 and run entirely by volunteers. They deliver a FREE service to the NHS and the wider community within Somerset, Bristol, Bath, West Wiltshire, and South Gloucestershire, they are one of a number of groups that cover almost the entire country.

Freewheelers operate a fleet of motorcycles each equipped with high-visibility markings, blue lights and sirens for emergency use, purchased by donations and sponsorship.



They run their service from 7pm - 7am Monday to Friday, 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays. If their service did not exist hospitals would be forced to use taxis or commercial couriers.

They transport blood, pathology and microbiology specimens, patient notes, X-rays, breast milk, and other medical supplies. The Freewheelers also work with both the Great Western Air Ambulance and the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, delivering fresh whole bloods to both organisations every night, returning any unused bloods to the Southmead Hospital blood bank.

At our January meeting we also discussed the loss of the telephone box at Curland Green. The installation of this box was due to the lobbying of our WI and we are very sad to see it go, but we hope to mark its loss with some sort of memorial in the future.



We have an excellent programme of speakers for the coming year along with visits and events organised by the Somerset County Federation Teams.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month and we would be delighted to welcome new members to our meetings.

Please contact Tricia Dryden at tricia@witchlodge.co.uk if you would like more information.

Dates for your diary

Saturday 25th February Table Top Sale at Neroche Hall 10.00- 14.00

Friday 7th April evening EASTER BINGO at the GREYHOUND

ST PETER'S CHURCH STAPLE FITZPAINE

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Pancake Tossing and Other Exciting Entertainments



Neroche Hall

7.15 for 7.30 pm

Tuesday 28 February 2017

Adults £10 Children (under 16) £5

Tickets from Alison Brown 01823 480441

Please bring your own favourite tipples and glasses

Neroche Housing Needs Survey - **Results**

Thank you to those who responded to the Housing Needs Survey, which aimed to capture views on what kind of community we'd like to be and how future housing requirements can best be met.

Who responded and what kind of homes do they have?

- 62 people, representing 111 household members
- 22% response rate, from 1 in 5 parishioners
- Nearly 3 in 4 respondents have lived in the parish for over 15 years (73%).
- 1 in 3 are between 45-64 years old and almost a quarter are 65-74 years old
- Most live in a two person household (65%). And although 1 in 5 are two parent families, further analysis shows that just 1 in 10 are families with children aged 15 or under (10%).
- Over 4 in 5 respondents live in 3+ bed properties (80%), and two thirds of these homes have 2 occupants or less (69% - 27 homes).

Report headlines

- Over 4 in 5 respondents would support **future development** if it met the specific needs of Neroche parishioners or those with a genuine local connection. Nearly 2 in 3 people feel 3 bedroom homes are needed the most, although a similar number also see a need for small homes as well (up to 2 bed).
- Those with a view on the **tenure of houses** felt the greatest need in Neroche parish was for affordable homes to rent (77%). Additionally around 1 in 3 feel there is a need for shared ownership housing association homes.
- **New homes built on small sites of 10 or fewer homes** would be supported by the majority (67%). Conversion of existing buildings, to a lesser extent, would also receive the support of the majority (57%). There is no support for large development sites (+ 20 homes).

- Staple Fitzpaine was **preferred location for affordable housing**
- The majority of **people have concerns** about future development (60% - 37 people). Emerging themes are:
 - changes to the rural character of the parish and its villages
 - current lack of affordable housing in the parish
 - new affordable development would fail to address the real needs of local people, and that social diversity will be lost if the needs of younger families, or lower income groups are not met
- Additionally, comments were made regarding the lack of infrastructure, amenities and services to support new residents
- 8 residents would be interested in **moving to a purpose-built or converted older people's home** in the next 10 years
- 8 households indicated **a need for affordable housing** in the next 5 years. 6 people are seeking Local Authority rental housing.

*More detailed results are available to view at
www.nerochevillages.org.uk*

The survey results will be the subject of further consultation and discussion at the Annual Parish Meeting in April.

Neroche Parish Council Meetings

Dates of 2017 Council Meetings for your Diary

Thursday 9th March

Thursday 11th May

Thursday 13th July

Thursday 14th September

Thursday 9th November

Neroche Hall Quiz



FUN QUIZ (with fish'n'chips)

Buy beer / wine on night or BYO

Max 6 in team

£2.50 per person (food extra)

Friday 17th March 2017 at 7.00pm

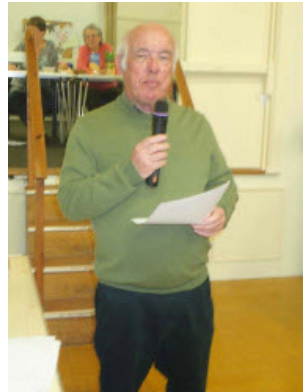
If you want to reserve a table for the quiz, please contact Richard Davies via the Neroche Hall website: www.nerochehall.org.uk

Goodbye Colin, Hello Richard

After two quizzes a year for many years, and literally hundreds of questions on subjects as diverse as Swiss motor racing circuits to Oscar winners; from Line dancing to the Tolpuddle Martyrs, Colin has decided to call his quizmastering career to an end. He's handed the baton to Richard Garbett.

However Colin can't quite relinquish the quiz altogether; he's decided to enter a team of his own in the March quiz. A matter of the gamekeeper

turned poacher?



Last October's winning team

If you want to see how Colin gets on, and to see if you can topple the reigning champions, why not enter a team? At the very least you'll have a great evening; you may even end the night with the winner's Crown.

Email Alert Parish Notices

If you wish to be kept informed of all that is happening in the community (including: crime alerts; road closures; community activities; local events; important meetings etc etc)

then why not add your email address to the 400 plus individuals that have already signed-up to the service.

Your details will be kept secure, as all Email Alerts use the BCC address system so that nobody sees the full list.

If you are not on the list, then you are missing-out on 'up-to-the-minute' information on all that is important and happening in the immediate area in which you live.

To join, send an email to: wallytorrington@hotmail.com with the message "please add me to the list".

School Holidays

It is always useful to know the school holidays dates. The dates below include, where appropriate, the weekends either side, as these are equally affected by school breaks, especially regarding family holidays and road traffic.

Saturday 1st April to Monday 17th April (Easter Monday)

Saturday 27th May to Sunday 4th June

**Household Recycling & Refuse Collections
for March 2017 to May 2017**



Recycling - 19th April change to 20th April
Recycling - 3rd May change to 4th May

Go to www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc/sites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf

Events For Your Calendar

February

- 24 *Friday Film Night - Bridget Jones's Baby (see page 5)*
- 25 *WI Table Top Sale (see page 46)*
- 28 *Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (see page 46)*
- 28 *Deadline for Newsletter Reader Survey replies(see page 2)*

March

- 1 *Greyhound Pub Quiz*
- 2 *Taunton Racecourse Landlords RaceMeeting (see page 12)*
- 2 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 7)*
- 3 *Take Art - Morgan and West (see page 27)*
- 9 *Parish Council Meeting (see page 48)*
- 17 *Fish'n'Chips Quiz Night (see page 49)*
- 20 *Taunton Racecourse Bathwick Tyres Racemeeting (see page 12)*
- 22 *HB & N Garden Club AGM (see page 24)*
- 30 *Taunton Racecourse RNLi Racemeeting (see page 12)*
- 31 *Friday Film Night - The Girl On The Train (see page 23)*

April

- 5 *Greyhound Pub Quiz*
- 6 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 7)*
- 7 *WI Easter Bingo (see page 46)*
- 20 *Annual Parish Meeting (see page 42)*
- 28 *Friday Film Night - A Street Cat Named Bob (see page 37)*

May

- 3 *Greyhound Pub Quiz*
- 11 *Thursday Lunch Club (see page 7)*
- 11 *Parish Council Meeting (see page 48)*

June

- 7 *Greyhound Pub Quiz*
- 17 *Staple Fitzpaine Church Fete (see page 25)*



For further information go to the parish website: www.nerochevillages.org.uk

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, e.g. on 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 official documents.

Neroche Hall – www.nerochehall.org.uk

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

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

This website 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. It forwards information about events and issues - please contact Wally Torrington at wallytorrington@hotmail.com if you would like your name added.

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 Kate Reynolds on 01823 444023.

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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