

**Working Together for a Better Community**

# **NEROCHE VILLAGES**

## **Newsletter**

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

**Issue 30 - Winter 2018**



Thanks again to our friends at Taunton Racecourse for their continued support of this newsletter by sponsoring this issue. As ever, there's lots going on at the beautiful course in our parish - turn to pages 26-31 for your winter update.

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.



# Save Our Signposts

*By Jane Hole*

*Neroche Local History Group*

A project is underway to ensure we don't lose our historic and characterful signposts, but support is needed to renovate and repair them if they are to remain part of our unique landscape into the future.

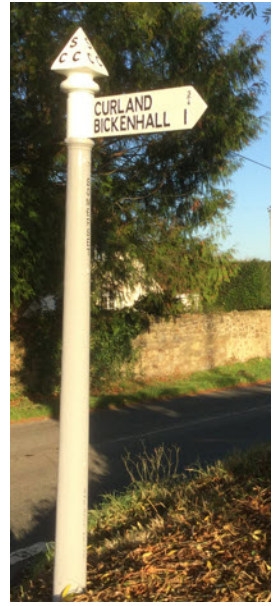
These familiar grey, black and white cast iron fingerposts have been part of our village scenery for generations. But Somerset County Council is no longer maintaining these iconic signs. As the posts deteriorate, they will be removed by the county council and replaced with modern, uniform plastic ones like the one shown below, unless something is done to restore them.



Our local posts are in desperate need of attention. Once restored and maintained, they will last for many generations. Neroche Local History Group, in partnership with Neroche Parish Council, is embarking on The Neroche Parish Fingerpost Project to restore and maintain the fingerposts in our parish for the foreseeable future.



There are eight existing fingerposts and one missing from near Neroche Hall. A group of local volunteers has already finished renovating the first fingerpost. We will start work on more of the fingerposts next spring. Once finished they will surely enhance the parish.



*Before, during and after restoration*

The volunteers will be able to restore about 70% of the posts, while a contractor will be needed for those on dangerous roads such as the Thurlbear straight.

Most of the original cast iron arms remain on our fingerposts but over the years Somerset County Council has replaced damaged arms with plastic arms. These have a short lifespan, are now degrading and will need to be replaced with cast iron ones.

We are applying for external charitable funding. But it is scarce and since we are one of the last local parishes to get going, this sort of fundraising will be difficult.

We need to raise in the region of £3,500 to cover costs of materials needed for the work of the volunteers, for the replacement arms and for the contractor's costs.

A representative survey of Curland households showed overwhelming support for the project and a willingness to pay more

through the parish precept. In addition, householders surveyed have already committed to donate more than £800.

The idea of the Parish Council making a contribution through either a temporarily increased annual precept and/or from its reserves was discussed on 15 November. A decision was made to defer to an extraordinary general public meeting in December (date tbc) whilst wider views are canvassed.

In the meantime, we need your help to support the fundraising. If you would like to donate please send a cheque made out to Neroche Local History Group and send to Dianne Hood, Treasurer, Neroche History Group, Goddards Orchard, Staple Fitzpaine, Taunton TA3 5SP.

If you would like to donate via BACS, please email Dianne for details: [Dianne-Hood@outlook.com](mailto:Dianne-Hood@outlook.com)

For information to join the volunteer team contact [Jane.hole@outlook.com](mailto:Jane.hole@outlook.com)

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## News from Neroche Parish Council

*By Gillian Midworth*

### **Fingerpost Restoration Project**

The Parish Council is working with Neroche History Group to maintain and restore the fingerposts within the Parish.

In the 1960s, county councils were advised to remove all fingerposts and replace them with modern, standardised road signs which are now found all over the country. Somerset County Council ignored this advice and as a result these historic signs can still be found in many parishes. Until recently, SCC has maintained the fingerposts but in view of the current budgetary constraints, it can no longer spend its resources on non-mandatory services.



Responsibility has now fallen upon individual communities to care for the signs and here in Neroche a working party of volunteers led by Jane Hole and Dianne Hood are endeavouring to restore the fingerposts to their original condition where possible and so preserve another piece of English heritage.

### **Bickenhall Notice Board**

You may have noticed that the Bickenhall Notice Board has been given a new lease of life. The Parish Council is very grateful to Carole Wensley-Dodd who has kindly repainted and renovated the board.

### **Library Service Redesign Recommendations**

Following the consultation earlier this year, recommendations for a future library service have now been published. As I write, these are yet to be formally approved by Cabinet but if the recommendations are adopted, it is good news for libraries locally.

The libraries at Taunton, Chard, Crewkerne will remain open and will continue to be fully funded by Somerset County Council. Ilminster Library will also remain open, but the County Council is looking to run this on a reduced cost basis, which may result in other organisations either contributing to the costs or sharing the premises.

Countywide however, it is not so good news with 15 libraries likely to close unless a Community Library Partnership can be formed in individual communities which will assume responsibility for the running of the library.

### **Bulk Buy Fuel Loan Scheme**

Did you know that if you live in Somerset, are a homeowner or private tenant with an income of less than £35000 and rely solely on oil, Calor gas, LPG, wood or coal to heat your home, you may be entitled to an interest free loan of up to £500 to help spread the cost?

The scheme is administered by Wessex Resolutions, a Community Interest Company (CIC) and the loan scheme is financed by Somerset District Councils.

## Community spirit to battle budget cuts

*By County Councillor John Thorne*

I am not a psychic who can see into the future, although it might have seemed so when, in the previous newsletter, I predicted county councillors were soon going to have to make some tough financial decisions.

So it has proven, with an emergency round of £13 million of budget savings being rushed through during September.

‘Tough’ does not describe it. ‘Gut-wrenching’ is a better description of how hard it was to sit there and acquiesce as service after service was being cut back. You name it, we’re taking it away’, seemed to be the theme of the day.

We had little choice, or so we were told by our expert financial officers.

The one and only piece of ‘good news’ was Taunton Deane’s decision to pick up the cost of the Park and Ride service and fund it for a year until next September.

For that, great thanks go to our borough councillor John Williams, who, of course, has some influence at Deane House because he is the council leader.

There is no argument about many of the factors which have led the county council to this position: We now have 90 per cent less Government grant than we did eight years ago, and this will fall to zero in the next two years. At the same time the demand for adult social care and support for vulnerable children has been skyrocketing to the point where these two services together account for two-thirds of the council’s entire budget.



However, I cannot help asking the question:

*How on earth can we go from approving a robust budget in February when we had to make £13 million of tough savings without which we would have been in trouble... to six months later, when we have our emergency budget-cutting exercise where the savings are effectively doubled?*

It is a question to which I have not yet heard a satisfactory answer.

Similarly, during my day of acquiescence I heard it said that, provided all the savings were approved, the budget overspend this year would at most be a 'manageable' £2 million.

As I write this, barely six weeks later, I have just been told the budget overspend this year is now expected to be £3.320 million, a 66 per cent increase.

You might expect councillors tasked with scrutinising our budget monitoring would ask how that could happen. I expected it, too, but it didn't happen, so I asked.

I asked how I could have any confidence in financial figures presented to us when they could change so dramatically without any apparent explanation.

I did not receive any real explanation. I expect to receive a rebuke, however, for airing my thoughts!

And it is this aspect of the county's financial position which worries me more than anything else, more than the falling Government grant, more than the increases in demand for adults and children's services.

What I do have confidence in, though, is the ability of our communities to battle through. It is not quite a case of 'you are on



your own now', but much more responsibility is going to fall on local communities and their parish councillors if services are to be maintained.

Parishes will now have to find the funds themselves to salt our roads in winter, to fill our grit bins, to cut back overhanging hedges, to keep drainage ditches clear, to keep bus services running, to keep youth services open, and much more.

It is not a new challenge, as parish councils and volunteer community groups have long been picking up the tab for things the county council can no longer afford to do.

An example has been the excellent work on restoring Somerset's fingerposts, some of which has been done by volunteers and some by parish councils paying contractors.

These iconic countryside landmarks are much treasured by our communities and I have been impressed with the way local people have risen to the challenge when faced with their loss.

It was an ongoing issue when I was elected to the county council last year, and I quickly recognised the cultural importance of our fingerposts - Somerset's collection being described as the best in the country - and went out of my way to attend the first of the county's training workshops to help volunteers who wanted to preserve and restore them.

It is this community spirit which is going to be called upon even more if we are now to come through what our county council leader Cllr David Fothergill has described as 'the sharp end of austerity'.

**Contact Cllr Thorne:** 01823 663146, 07811 675262, or email [JBThorne@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:JBThorne@somerset.gov.uk)





# New 'Hatch & Blackdown' ward in new district council

*By Alan Hyde*

In May, Parliament authorised the creation of a new district council for Somerset to be called Somerset West and Taunton Council. It follows a decision to abolish Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council.



To ensure an orderly transfer of responsibilities, a 'shadow authority' is already in place, with our local councillor John Williams as its Leader. But the new council won't be officially created until 1 April 2019, ahead of the local elections on 2 May 2019.

Following a consultation, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) published its final recommendations for the council's ward boundaries on 23 October. The new council will have 59 councillors.

The villages of Neroche together with Stoke St Mary, Hatch Beauchamp and West Hatch currently form Neroche ward. Under the new arrangements, our ward will be renamed 'Hatch and Blackdown' and Stoke St Mary will leave the ward, to be replaced by the parishes of Churchstanton and Otterford. The new Hatch and Blackdown ward will be represented by one councillor.

The next step is for a Draft Order - the legal document which brings the LGBCE's recommendations into force - to be laid before Parliament. The Draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements for Somerset West and Taunton to be implemented at the local elections next May.

For more details on the Boundary Commission's recommendations visit: [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)



## **Murder Mystery Night success**

*By Sarah Hyde*

There was a murder in the parish this month - but it was a drama rather than a crisis, and all in the name of providing yet another interesting and fun evening for the community at Neroche Hall.

'Who Killed The Director?' murder mystery evening was a sell-out, so the hall was packed for the three-act drama, played out for us by plucky members of our hall committee. The audience, sleuths for the evening, worked in teams to spot the clues woven into the drama, and deduce who did the dastardly deeds.

Teams gave themselves names of TV detectives, so we had Miss Marple, Bergerac and Poirot competing against Cadfael, Dick Tracy and Vera. But it was Kojak who solved the crime and took home the trophy - the team comprising the newsletter team of Mark, Jacq, Sarah and Alan, plus Mark and Becci.

Generous supplies of ploughman's supper goodies and a well-stocked bar helped the little grey cells to function, and we thoroughly enjoyed the interval music featuring theme tunes from detective shows, most of which we recognised!

Huge thanks to the organisers who excelled themselves. Here's hoping for another murder to solve next year!

## Taunton Deane update

*Cllr John Williams, member for Neroche Ward and council leader*

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) has introduced a new system at its Waste Collection Centres to receive plastic Pots, Tubs and Trays (PTT), which previously have not been recyclable in the normal kerbside collection.



Following the recent adverse publicity about British plastic waste being dumped to landfill or illegally dumped overseas I was asked if, having taken the trouble to deliver it to the waste centre, was it being properly recycled into worthwhile products?

I sought the advice of SWP and its reassuring response, in italics below, shows that taking the trouble to visit Priorswood or other waste collection centres is worthwhile as it has a meaningful end-use and, most importantly, it helps reduce pollution of our planet.

### ***Response from Somerset Waste Partnership:***

*The PTT that we/Viridor send to a specialist plastics recycling facility in Rochester is separated and processed in to 'new life' plastic items. Plastic bottles and PTT are sorted, graded and shredded. Pellets are then sold on to manufacturers for recycling into items such as plastic food packaging, plastic strapping, films, pipes, compost bins and fleece jackets.*

*We collect PTT co-mingled with bottles, so I can't tell you specifically how much PTT alone we've collected. The only stat is that for the period May to Aug 2018 we handled 61.32 tonnes of plastic through the sites compared to 37.12 tonnes for the same period in 2017. We estimate that we're going to capture around 70 tonnes of PTT this financial year.*

*Residents of Somerset benefit from being able to recycle such material at minimal cost, thereby avoiding landfill and providing a cost saving to the County Council and resultant Council Tax demand. Of*

*course there is the added benefit that this material will not be held in landfill for future generations to have to deal with*

*There is financial benefit to the County Council through avoiding landfill, operational benefit to the collection service in terms of lower rejection rates at kerbside and social benefit in providing a recycling outlet for PTT earlier than anticipated – enabling our residents to increase the range of household items that they recycle, laying the foundations for the move to Recycle More.*

*We expect to capture much more PTT when we roll it out at the kerbside. The recent composition analysis shows that that average 180L bin in Somerset has 18L of PTT and cartons in it (see below)*

*We'll shortly be publishing the end use register for 2017/18 – we do this every year and it shows exactly what happens to all our recycling. It will show that over 90% of everything we collected stayed in the UK last year. When we publicise it we'll also flag that we've just been independently ranked as the 5th best area in the country for saving carbon from waste – largely thanks to the way we separate our recycling at the kerbside rather than collect it mixed together (co-mingled). Whilst carbon can be a hard thing to communicate, it is a much better measure of our environmental impact (recycling rates are a very blunt measure).*

*It's really encouraging that the public are making such good use of the PTT site facilities, having already increased collection frequency to cope with demand. But of course this is a temporary stop gap- awaiting the roll out of Recycle More, where we will be able to handle substantially more PTT than we can through the sites.*

The breakdown of the actual contents of the average refuse bin across Somerset shows how much more we could improve with a little more care. The average bin contains 42L of normal recycling, 27L of garden waste and 14L of food waste, all of which can be recycled.

So we need to do more to ensure we put the 'right stuff in the right bin'. Recycling more is good for the environment and reduces the cost of disposal.

# An Update from the Village Agent

*By Linda Burton*

Winter can be an expensive time. It is a task to keep the house warm, children fed and entertained and keeping yourself healthy, safe and happy.

**Go outside or volunteer** Going out of the house means you don't have to pay to heat it! Going outside is known to be good for warding off depression and of course the winter sun on our skin is necessary for vitamin D absorption.



Going for walks helps us to connect with people, it is great for keeping depression at bay too. Isolation is a real problem as the weather turns inclement. Could you give up an hour a week to chat to an elderly neighbour? Volunteering helps keeping you outward, energised and in touch with people! See the local papers or try local charities and ask us about volunteering with CCS and Somerset Carers Service. Garden for the National Trust and you have managed to do both! Taking the children to the playground keeps everyone happy and the energy you use will keep you warm!

**Work that economy** 7 Night Storage heaters have become more efficient over the last few years but they can be difficult to run effectively. Make sure that you know when your economy 7 starts so you charge at the cheapest tariff. There are videos and publications available to maximise your efficiency and it is worth taking the time to do this because lots of people don't run them correctly. Order a leaflet from the Centre for Sustainable Energy Home energy Advice Line **0800 0822 234**

**Keep safe** Have you swept your chimney or serviced the boiler? Have you got a carbon monoxide monitor? Do you open your windows to change the air? Plants will draw out the carbon dioxide and give you fresh oxygen too. Fire safety checks are available from

[www.dsfire.gov.uk](http://www.dsfire.gov.uk). Don't forget to have your free NHS flu vaccination from your surgery if you are eligible. You can also buy one from pharmacies if you do not qualify.

**Boiler and Insulation grants** The Affordable Warmth Obligation provides help with boiler installation and insulation for your home if you are on benefits or live in social housing. Look at

[www.eachhomecounts.org.uk](http://www.eachhomecounts.org.uk) for up to date information. A phone number is due to follow. E.on affordable warmth [www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/home-improvements](http://www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/home-improvements) has similar information and there is a range of phone numbers too. Start with **0330 400 1083**.



[www.npower.com/home-and-heating/oil-boilers/](http://www.npower.com/home-and-heating/oil-boilers/)

An unexpected telephone sales call is likely to be a scam.

**Help with bills** Phone your energy company to see if you are eligible for warmer homes discount (benefits and those with ill health) and install a free SMART meter so you can see exactly how much energy you are using. Ask me about our Surviving Winter fund if you are over 60. Buy oil in a group such as Somerset Community Oil Scheme or set up a village scheme and use a comparison site such as boilerjuice.

**Heat where you need it** Use the thermostat setting on your individual radiators to heat each room as needed. Use a room thermometer (free from me or the library and talking cafe) to see if the air is really cold, or whether you just need to move around a bit to fire up your body.

If you are the only person in the house, heat yourself with a hot water bottle in your jumper rather than paying to heat the whole house. Drink warm drinks and wear slippers – cold feet make you miserable! Call the CSE advice line 0800 0822 234 for energy saving tips.

**Children** School holidays stretch many families' food budgets. Can you help by popping something in the food bank donation box? Ask at your local church or me about accessing your local foodbank.

Get the children out of the house so you can turn off the heating and keep them entertained all in one go. Children under 12 can go to the cinema cheaply with mini morning tickets - ask at your Cineworld or Odeon for information.

Look for events at the museum or library or teach a card game to keep them occupied. Using the imagination to go monster spotting will keep them entertained on a walk, or join the geocaching website. Borrow a neighbour's dog or check [borrowmydoggy.com](http://borrowmydoggy.com)

Join forces with friends and you can share childcare duties and reduce the heating bill by staying at one house!

**You can contact me by phone : 07931 018019 and email: [linda@somerset.org.uk](mailto:linda@somerset.org.uk)**

I offer free and confidential practical support to local people and community groups. For more information please visit [www.somersetccc.org.uk](http://www.somersetccc.org.uk) and [www.somersetcarers.org](http://www.somersetcarers.org)

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## Neroche Film Night

**November 30 - The Hatton Garden Job**

In April 2015, the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit Company, an underground safe deposit facility in London's Hatton Garden, was burgled by four elderly men. The total stolen may have a value of up to £200 million, and the crime has been called the "largest burglary in English history".



**All films are at Neroche Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Bar and snacks. Tickets £6 on the door or in advance from Karen Learoyd on 01823 480886**



# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

at Neroche Hall, Bickenhall.  
Come and celebrate with us

**Bar - Music - Food**  
Badger Street Band (guest)  
**DISCO - DJ Dan**  
**8.30 till late**

Tickets £17.50 (under 10 free)  
from Nicky 07843 790073  
Marianne 01823 480888  
or [nerochehall.org.uk](http://nerochehall.org.uk)



## News from Neroche Hall

*By Richard Davies, Chairman*

As winter bites I am reminded that it is not long before we stage our New Year's Eve Party, following the success of the inaugural event last year.

Planning has just begun in earnest as time tends to run out with amazing speed when organising our larger events. We have once again retained the services of Dan who successfully provided the music for last year's party and, as those of you who came then will recall, his lighting systems really contributed to an excellent atmosphere.

The Badger Street Band has kindly also agreed to take a spot during the festivities with some suitable dance music and traditional tunes.

Tickets will soon be on sale and I suspect will be snapped up so please keep an eye out for the advertising in the usual circulations and on our website to avoid disappointment.

By the time this article reaches you we will have held our Murder Mystery Evening and I hope that all goes well, as a lot of effort has gone into producing it. This is our first production and is therefore somewhat uncharted waters, but if successful we may consider similar events in the future.

Our Fish and Chip Quiz in mid-October was a great success although numbers were slightly down on our usual turnout. Several of our usual supporters were away for various reasons and some sickness added to a small drop in numbers.

Questions were set by Mike Michaels and Andrew Morgan and as usual were challenging and interesting. The winners were the "Bar Boys" who scored 102.5 from a possible 120 points. It is likely that our next quiz will fall in Spring 2019 and once a date is confirmed we will be able to circulate as 'a date for your diary' item.



The monthly film nights are now in full swing with a couple of screenings having taken place already.

Our first film "The Bromley Boys" was a last minute substitute after the planned film was withdrawn by the distributors. It was not well attended and, although a comedy based on a true story, it did not appeal to those who are not football aficionados.

The second showing, "The Guernsey Potato Peel Pie and Literary Society", attracted an audience of 62 and was very popular. Film choices are unfortunately restricted to those on offer through Moviola and are not always what we would wish given a free rein, so it is always gratifying when we pick a winner. Our film sub-committee continues to make every effort to select popular crowd pullers.

The next screening is "The Hatton Garden Job" from 7.30pm on Friday, 30 November, with drinks and refreshments available beforehand.

Most supporters of our 100 Club monthly draw have now renewed their subscription for the forthcoming year, but if you have not yet done so please get in touch if you wish to remain in the draw.

Anyone wanting to increase their chances may subscribe to additional numbers and, similarly, anyone who is not currently a member may still join.

Some households will be receiving the Newsletter for the first time as they have recently moved into the area and I would invite those people to come to the hall and try out one of our many events.

There is usually something to interest or suit everyone at one time or another so please don't be shy in coming forward. You will always find a friendly welcome and may wish to get involved in some of the events held by the committee or others. We are interested to recruit younger members of our community onto the committee to ensure that we remain in tune with their needs and the best use for the hall and facilities.

# Farming Update

*By Mark Pope*

2018 will be a year to remember, that's for sure. We started with one of the wettest and coldest springs for a long time, followed by one of the driest and hottest summer and autumns. This made for a relatively easy harvest but not as much crop as we would have liked.



Also this was the year that Staple farm was no longer a Crown Estate farm. We finally completed our purchase of Staple farm and 168 acres of land. It's a huge change from being a 700 acre tenant farm. However we are committed to Staple farm and making it work going forward.

All the other Crown Estate farms in the area were also in the process of being sold, but at the time of writing we do not know who has bought what.

At Staple farm, all the crops have been planted again in 2018. This season we have planted winter wheat and oilseed rape and some grass. We plan to plant some spring barley next year. This year all our crops were planted with a technique called strip till planting. Instead of ploughing and cultivating the fields, then planting the crop, the whole operation is done in one pass with the ground only being cultivated in the strip of ground the seed is planted into.

We have been trying this for a number years on a small scale but this was the first year we will have planted all our crops this way. So far the crops look good but it is still early days. I will keep you posted.

The livestock farmers are short of feed due to the late spring and then the very dry summer not giving them as much winter feed as they would have liked. A mainly dry winter, followed by an early spring will really help.

The next job on the farm will be hedge cutting and we hope that Graham will be able to come back and do that for us. We aim to cut about half of the fields each year and all the roadside hedges.

By the time the newsletter arrives with you Christmas will be just around the corner. The older trees are looking well, however the trees we planted back in February suffered badly from the drought and we have lost about 40% of them due to the clay soil just tearing the roots out of the ground. Next year these areas will have to be replanted.

We look forward to seeing some of you when you come to Staple farm to choose your Christmas tree.

## **Pick Your Own Christmas Tree**

Staple Farm, Staple Fitzpaine TA3 5BE

Sunday December 2, 10am to  
3pm



Stroll through the plantation with your family, select a Christmas tree, then it will be cut for you while-you-wait - the freshest tree you will ever buy.

Take it home yourself or, for a small charge, have it delivered

Dogs-on-leads welcome | Mince pies, small eats and warm drinks available all day | Ready cut trees also available on the day, and throughout December

**Don't Forget Your Wellies!**

## Broadband Update

**County Councillor John Thorne** has provided this briefing for all Blackdown and Neroche parishes, copied to Deane councillors

### Traffic Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS)

The County Council will no longer go ahead with its SIDS programme whereby parishes would pay £100 per installation.



The reason is two-fold: Not enough of the 500-plus parishes in Somerset have decided to join the scheme, so it is not viable; and the two members of staff who would have run the programme have recently both left the council.

This leaves parish councils with a range of options, including:

- Buy your own SID at a cost of around £2,500/£3,000
- Join with one or more other parishes to buy and share a SID
- Hire one from another parish that has its own and is willing to rent it out
- Go without

For some parish councils, it may be a potential income stream if you want to buy one and hire it out to other parishes.

If you use your own SID, you will still need to comply with the county's regulations, ie, suitable locations will have to be approved, a qualified technician will have to be used to erect them and take them down; locations should be rotated, etc.

Previously, the county was offering to meet half of the cost of training a volunteer from each parish to achieve the certificate necessary to work on the highway when putting up and taking down SIDS. This is one of the detailed points that is still being worked on, so I do not know if that will now happen.

The county can, I believe, still offer help in pointing parishes in the right direction to buy their own SIDS and with the different equipment specifications. More to come, as soon as I have it.

### **Superfast broadband roll-out**

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) and Gigaclear have essentially confirmed that they have failed to deliver the roll-out in Somerset and have little hope now of doing so under the current contract.



CDS refers to 'significant delay' in the roll-out and says it is contacting all MPs whose constituencies are affected and describes the admission by Gigaclear as 'deeply disappointing'.

Gigaclear's new chief executive says he is 'sorry' for the delays and accepts the fault lies with the company and that it will put matters right.

Gigaclear says steps already taken include recruiting and training a significant number of new employees in a variety of roles; restructuring the roll-out to make use of new construction techniques; and changing its plans so there is less disruption on key transport routes.

Gigaclear will be contacting parish councils about the impact of the delays and that there will be 'ongoing communications'. It will now put a 'remedial plan' to a meeting with CDS at 'the end of October', and CDS will have a choice of accepting that plan or rejecting it.

CDS says Gigaclear is in default in three of the five contract areas, but it has not yet served default notices on the company because it does not think that will help.

CDS now says it does not know when/if the roll-out will be completed, nor whether every premises that was going to be

connected will now be, nor whether it will still be a full-fibre network, nor whether it will lose key funding because several of the grants have dates by which the money has to be spent.

CDS says it is looking at all the options and is working up an alternative plan of its own in case the Gigaclear 'remedial plan' is not accepted.

CDS admits that there are no financial penalties in the contract with Gigaclear for missing its targets and failing to deliver on the contract, and says the first it knew of the problems was when it met the new Gigaclear management team in September and the 'gravity of the situation' was explained to them.

CDS says it is negotiating with key funding sources to see if there is flexibility on the dates by which the funds have to be used.

CDS says it will keep communities updated through their elected representatives and that they will post updates on its website and social media.

Gigaclear has updated its postcode tracker web page to reflect the latest position. The link is here <https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/connectingdevonandsomerset>. If you look at it, you will see that all but a handful of communities are now shown as 'to be confirmed' and none in our division have been started.

CDS has included a FAQs page on its website, the link to which is here <https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/gigaclear-delays/>

Personally, I foresee a situation where either Gigaclear walks away, or CDS cannot accept the 'remedial plans', and I suspect that it will all have to start over again.

In the meantime, I have sent the County Council's cabinet member a comprehensive list of questions and will, of course, keep parish councils informed once I hear more.

## Neroche Thursday Lunch Club

Neroche Hall 12.30pm for 1pm

**December 6 - Christmas Lunch**

Then January 3, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 9

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a superb home-cooked lunch in wonderful company for just £6 per head (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.

Please phone or email by the Monday prior to the lunch to book for catering purposes. Contact Alison Brown 01823 480441 or [aabrown.battens@gmail.com](mailto:aabrown.battens@gmail.com)

## Pop-Up Café

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

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](mailto:tricia@witchlodge.co.uk)





## Preferred route for A358 upgrade due

*by Alan Hyde*

At the time of writing, the Highways Agency has yet to announce the preferred route for the proposed A358 upgrade between

Southfields roundabout near

Ilminster and a new M5 junction near Taunton. The preferred route was due to be published this 'autumn' or by 'late 2018', according to the Highways Agency website.



Three options were put forward in a six-week consultation earlier this year. The consultation events were attended by 1,700 people. Since then the Highways Agency has been reviewing all the feedback received, coupled with information from surveys.

Neroche Parish Council expressed a preference for the pink route, while raising issues about connections and cross-overs for local residents and the agricultural community.

Highways England says that after the preferred route announcement there will be a further round of public consultation looking at the more detailed design for the route that has been chosen. The outcome of that will inform the application Highways England makes for a Development Consent Order (DCO). A DCO is a special type of planning application, which is needed for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

Following the submission of the DCO application, the Planning Inspectorate will hold a public examination before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide whether or not the project should go ahead.

If you'd like to keep up-to-date with developments, you can register for updates at the Highways Agency website - [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a358-Taunton-to-Southfields](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a358-Taunton-to-Southfields)



## **Taunton Racecourse**

*By Wally Torrington & Jacqueline Wanstall*

Set in the heart of the Somerset countryside, and sited within our parish of Neroche, Taunton Racecourse is England's youngest jumps racecourse and stages around 15 race-meetings each season. Its visitors enjoy national hunt racing, featuring some of the biggest names in the sport; but Taunton Racecourse is not just about racing, it boasts excellent facilities for conferences, meetings, concerts, parties and events. It is also the perfect venue for a wedding reception.

### **Report from Bob Young, chief executive**

*Some of you will know we were forced to abandon the race meeting we were due to stage on October 31 as we still had hard patches in the ground.*

*We all know it has been an exceptional summer but, of course, the downside to that is the resultant condition of the ground. The course has been verti-drained and watered but has only received 50ml of recordable rainfall since September 25. Our watering system is*

*designed to maintain the ground in the spring following the winter rain; we simply do not have enough water to change the going without help from above, even with the installation of a second reservoir in the summer.*

*We are obviously disappointed to lose any fixture but especially the first as everyone looks forward so much to the start of the season. The boxes and restaurants were all fully booked and, being in the middle of half-term, we would have expected a very healthy crowd in attendance. When you lose the opening fixture it is difficult to recapture the momentum as the next two meetings are both working days in the middle of the week.*

*Highlights of the season ahead include a pre-festive meeting on December 13 with the Kings College Brass Band playing Christmas carols and a few themed trade stands on site. The December 30 Christmas meeting falls on a Sunday this year and we have our Saturday fixture in January which will see the inaugural running of the Class 2 £50,000 Portman Cup – a steeplechase over 3 miles 4 furlongs.*



*With a half-term meeting in February, followed by a Ladies Day and an evening meeting in April, we hope there is something for everyone.*



*Membership renewal will be available from our race-meeting on November 29 at £175 per head – the same price as last year.*

*We hope you continue to agree that membership provides tremendous value, with a record-equalling 59 reciprocal race-meetings at 47 different courses throughout the country, plus free entry to Hickstead for their Derby meeting and the Royal International Horse Show and a 2-for-1 Saver Ticket for the Royal Bath & West Show, with full membership facilities applying to all.*

*At Taunton, owners, trainers, annual members and up to four guests have exclusive use of the Paddock Stand which we believe is quite unique in this day and age. All 2018 annual members who renew for 2019 will receive two guest tickets to bring a friend racing to a meeting of your choice.*

*Here's hoping for another exciting season ahead with some thrilling racing for us all to enjoy!*

### **Forthcoming fixtures - mark your card**

Thursday November 29: Autumn fixture  
Thursday December 13: Dave Criddle Travel Festive fixture  
Sunday December 30: Christmas Meeting  
Wednesday, January 9: Somerset Sight Charity Raceday - 2 for 1  
Saturday 19 January: Portman Cup Day  
Monday February 4: Winter Meeting  
Tuesday February 19: Bath & West Raceday  
Thursday February 28: Winter meeting

## **New Season, new horse for Taunton Racecourse Owners' Club**

We now enter our sixth year of the TROC and are delighted to have our first Club horse with Philip Hobbs at Sandhill Racing stables, Bilbrook. Philip, Sarah and the team have trained over 2,500 winners from there and have Champion jockey Richard Johnson as part of their well-established operation. The horse this season is At Its Own Expense, pictured right, an imposing four-year-old who ran in an Irish Point to Point before having a summer break and joining Philip.



He was surrounded by some valuable individuals that day and has benefitted for the extra time to develop and is pleasing at home. His breeding suggests that 3 miles was stretching his stamina and he is showing plenty of speed. We have ear-marked a National Hunt Flat race at Wincanton on Badger Ales Day, November 10, and then the plan is to go hurdling. As in previous years we are looking to race locally and give our members plenty of fun over the winter.

### **Club benefits include:**

- Sandhill Stable visits
- O&T ticket when the horse runs (subject to racecourse restrictions)
- Limited Membership so a personal experience guaranteed
- Four complimentary entry tickets to Taunton Racecourse for the 2018-19 season
- Share of prize money (after leasing, training & racing costs)
- Regular updates

Membership costs £575 for six months and will run until April 30, 2019. Full details from Martin Higgs on 07831 752056 or email [businessclub@tauntonracecourse.co.uk](mailto:businessclub@tauntonracecourse.co.uk)

# CRYSTAL & ICE CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHTS

An extra Christmas Party date has been added after the events on December 7, 8, 14 and 15 sold out. Tickets are now available for December 20, when the Racecourse function room will be transformed into an icy wonderland to get Christmas off to a truly memorable start.

The price includes a glass of Prosecco on arrival, four course dinner, a bottle of wine for every five guests, disco and two free tickets to the race meeting of your choice for the organiser.

For more information on Christmas parties go to <http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk> To book call 01823 337172 option 2 and talk to Troy or Ryan. A £15 per person, non-refundable deposit required on booking, and final payment due one week before the event.

◆◆◆◆  
THE JOCKEY CLUB

**RACE 18  
-TO-  
PASS 24**

HORSERACING HALF-PRICE,  
EXCLUSIVE TO 18-24'S

RACE ON

# Taunton Racecourse Rocks!

*By Jacqueline Wanstall*

On September 2 Taunton Racecourse hosted a fabulous line-up of talent to entertain both locals and people travelling from far and wide.

Singer KT Tunstall kicked off the evening with a wonderful set which really got the audience warmed up, not that it was needed with the sun still shining into the evening after a beautiful late summer afternoon.



Next on were The Pretenders, fronted as ever by Chrissie Hynde, who rocked the stage with their classic hits. They were followed by the finale act,



Simple Minds who were truly brilliant in every way.

What a wonderful treat to have such an amazing event on our doorstep. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly, and the beautiful Blackdowns provided a glorious backdrop in the evening sunshine. The organisation of the event was perfect, as were the performers. I can't wait to book my tickets for the next Racecourse concert.

## Briefing from Westminster

*Rebecca Pow MP*

It's been a busy autumn in the constituency and in Westminster and, whilst Brexit is inevitably in the background, there has been a great deal to attend to besides and I've kept abreast of what really concerns people at many of my 'outdoor surgeries', including at Waitrose in Wellington and Sainsburys in Taunton.



### **Park and Ride**

Responding to local views I was pleased to play my part in ensuring that the two park and rides for Taunton, at Henlade and Silk Mills, will stay open for the time being with Taunton Deane Borough Council taking over the running of them from Somerset County Council (which was subsidising to the tune of £120,000 a year.) This seems eminently sensible given TDBC runs the car parks in town and now a fully integrated system can be developed. With room for approximately 1,600 cars the park and rides are an important element in reducing traffic congestion (and therefore pollution) in the urban area. The next step is to work out to develop a commercially-viable service.

I've also been much involved in meetings regarding Somerset County Council's funding cuts. The County provides adult social care, disability learning and children's services, which take up 70% of its funding, with demands escalating dramatically, exacerbated by the rural nature of the county where services are much more costly to deliver than in urban areas.

I joined with three other Somerset MPs to put forward some suggestions to the Prime Minister about how the situation in Somerset might be improved for the future.



## Getting to grips with Gigaclear

Although 300,000 homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset now have access to superfast broadband, there are still too many homes and businesses with an unacceptable service for what is now considered an essential utility. Gigaclear was awarded the contract by Connecting Devon and Somerset to deliver the final 5% rollout in the area but have been beset by problems and have singularly failed so far.

At the time of writing I've been in urgent meetings with Infracapital (the overarching organisation with the contract), and CDS as well as the Secretary of State for Digital, Jeremy Wright, who has responsibility for BDUK (the Government's broadband agency) to ensure a remedial plan is put into place urgently.

## Arts & Culture

I was delighted to welcome Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP to The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre recently to discuss exciting new plans to create a multi-purpose arts centre with an enlarged main auditorium and a variety of new spaces including a cinema, café and gallery.



Arts and culture can make a significant contribution to the economy locally as well as playing such an important health and well being role not to mention of course the enjoyment aspect. The whole Brewhouse team should be congratulated on the progress they are making. Interestingly Jeremy Wright went to school in Taunton and the Brewhouse was the first theatre he ever visited, so it brought back fond memories for him.

## **New role**

I've recently been appointed as the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Secretary of State in the Department for Work and Pensions - Esther McVey at the time of writing - the largest Government department with a budget of £179 billion (that's the size of Portugal's entire economy).



This means that I am now immersed in the likes of Universal Credit, the pensions dashboard and disability confident. Taunton Deane was one of the early Universal Credit roll-out areas and JobCentre staff have been involved in feedback enabling improvements to the system. I am keeping a close eye on how this is going but reports from staff so far are positive.

## **Agriculture Bill**

I spoke in the second reading of the Agriculture Bill, the legislation that will enable us to completely re-think our land use policy on exiting the EU and leaving the Common Agricultural Policy. For too many years we have been tied into a system, together with 27 other countries, that has not necessarily been best-suited to UK food production and environmental priorities, with farmers simply paid for the privilege of owning land. Now, we have the opportunity to change this, with an emphasis on paying those on the land for public services delivered.

## **Foraging map**

Finally, when I get time I love to be out in our wonderful natural places and we are blessed with so many as this wonderful foraging map produced by Transition Town Wellington highlights!

As ever, do contact me should you need to via my Taunton office, or Facebook:

[fb.com/rebeccapow](https://www.facebook.com/rebeccapow) or Twitter:

[@pow\\_rebecca](https://twitter.com/pow_rebecca)



# Blackdown Hills Community Bus

*By Brenda Baker*

The Blackdown Hills Community Bus is now well and truly operating in the area. The aim of the bus is to provide affordable transport for residents of the Blackdown Hills, which suffers from a lack of public passenger services.



To date it has been used by WI groups, cricket teams, trips to rugby matches, and venues such as Otter Brewery, Otter Nursery and many other individual uses such as weddings.

In some cases the parties have provided their own drivers but in many cases they have called upon the small group of volunteer drivers. This is an area which the charity responsible for the running of the bus would now like to address by increasing this block of drivers.

The purpose of the bus is to serve the whole of the Blackdown Hills and not just Churchinford, Blagdon and Otterford, as was the case with the old CBO bus. We are getting bookings from the other areas so it is now our aim to build up a team of drivers from other areas.

The idea is to find a willing volunteer from each area of the Blackdowns who will, in turn, coerce a small team who can be called upon if the bus is hired out within that area. We are therefore appealing to anyone over the age of 18 and under 70, with a full, clean driving licence to get in touch if they are willing to be part of this team.

After all the hard work that has been put in to provide this invaluable service, the charity needs your help to make this project succeed. Contact on Facebook – search for Blackdowns Community Bus or [blackdownbus@gmail.com](mailto:blackdownbus@gmail.com) or phone 07762 813967. Please note, bookings for the bus can also be made via the above.

# News from Bickenhall and District WI

*by Jacqueline Kolkowski*

## Meetings

Our August meeting was an outing to Wellhayes Vineyard in Clayhanger, Devon. The vineyard is owned by Simon and Alison Routh who started planting their vineyard in 2008. Their first full harvest was 2014 from which they produced 2,000 bottles of sparkling wine which were launched in September 2016.

It was a lovely afternoon - they gave us a very informative talk about the vineyard, the grape varieties used and how the wine is made. The afternoon was rounded off with a cream tea and a glass of their lovely sparkling wine. Lovely bubbly!



The September meeting ended with a blast from the past, for me anyway: a beetle drive! It was enjoyed by all, bring back the plastic beetles!

The October meeting had us all thinking as our speaker was Linda Fisher from Invest South West based in Taunton. She gave us lots of advice on wills, paying care home costs and how not to pay too much inheritance tax. I think some of us may take up the offer of free advice on a Friday.

## Events

**Pop Up Café** This is held every Friday in St Peter's Church, 10am - noon and has been a great success. Locals, walkers, cyclists and tourists have all sampled our wonderful home-made cakes and

savouries. They have enjoyed the chats and friendship found at these busy Friday mornings. Do come along - we would love to see you. (And we now have the heating on!)

### **Macmillan Coffee Morning**

Members along with others from the local community supported this very successful event at the Greyhound in September - see photos on Page 38.



Two members attended the 65th birthday bash for Horton and District WI.

### **Walking Netball, helping the WI get a Wiggle on!**

Our trained members are now running the sessions. Netball England has supplied us with balls, bibs and cones. We are improving and with that the competitive spirit is getting stronger (firmer umpiring required). We are still playing at St George's School, Taunton, along with other WI members from North Curry, Wellington and Taunton Divas, and we get a lot of aerobic exercise from laughing!

### **Skittles**

After an enjoyable evening of practice games in the Greyhound (nice to be back playing there again), we picked our strongest team to play in our first round of the county knockout cup. We were drawn against Taunton Divas at the White Harte in Corfe. After a good fight back **we lost!** The chips and sandwiches were nice, though! We look forward to playing some friendlies in the New Year.

### **Diary date**

Christmas family bingo and raffle, Friday, December 8 at The Greyhound Staple Fitzpaine. Booking is essential - email [tricia@witchlodge.co.uk](mailto:tricia@witchlodge.co.uk)

*Bickenhall and District WI usually meet the second Wednesday of each month, we have a full programme of speakers and events and would be delighted to welcome new members to our meetings. Please contact Tricia Dryden at [tricia@witchlodge.co.uk](mailto:tricia@witchlodge.co.uk)*



*Brenda on sales duty*



*An amazing rum and coke cake by Carole Wensley-Dodd*

## **WI's Macmillan coffee morning success**



*Appreciation!*



*Trish at the pumps!*



*What a choice!*



*Dianne and Karen enjoy a cuppa*

## New editor for newsletter

*By Alan Hyde*

I'm delighted to confirm that Karen Learoyd, from Bickenhall, who moved to Neroche in autumn last year, has kindly agreed to become the next editor of this community newsletter and will take up the reins with the next edition in Spring.



This is fantastic news as it secures the future of this important publication, which helps the community to stay connected. However, Karen would appreciate offers of support, especially as she has also taken on the editorship of the Neroche Email Alerts, launched by community stalwart Wally Torrington.

After two years the current newsletter editorial team, of Jacq and Mark Wanstall, my wife Sarah and I, are stepping down, but we'll be ensuring a smooth handover to Karen and will continue to support the Neroche Communications Action Group, chaired by Tim French. Indeed, Mark will remain as Treasurer to the Group.

Roger Keat and his band of distributors will continue to organise deliveries of this free publication to your doorstep.

Any successful community is reliant on its volunteers. We're proud to have played our part in getting this newsletter out over the past two years, ensuring that its content reflects what you've said you want to read about. It's now time to hand over the baton.

Neroche is lucky to have a number of communications channels to keep people informed - the newsletter, the Email Alerts and the website - and long may that continue.

If you would like to offer support to Karen in her new editorial roles please email [nerochenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:nerochenewsletter@gmail.com)



Neroche Knitting, Crochet and Stitching Group  
@ Neroche Hall, Bickenhall



Come and join us for a friendly group of people  
enjoying these traditional crafts

Monday afternoons  
2pm to 4pm  
Commencing 14 January 2019

All levels of skills welcome from beginners to advanced.  
Starter help for crochet. Most levels of help for knitting.

Cost £2 per session to include coffee/ tea and biscuits

For details phone Nicky 01823 480675  
Or Brenda 01823 480218.





## **Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood**

*By Gavin Saunders*

The long hot, dry summer combined with some cool autumn weeks without high winds, have combined to give us a good show on the trees this season, with some intense colours on the beeches and maples in particular.

The gales earlier in October brought down a few trees, as well as a lot of debris on the roads, and a glance at the root plates of some of the fallen trees leaves you wondering just how they managed to stay upright so long, given how little root they seemed to have. Being a tree is a challenge, what with drought, high winds, squirrels and disease, not to mention coping with the vagaries of human beings.

Ash Dieback disease now has a firm hold across much of the Neroche Forest, and the wider Blackdown Hills. We began to notice some bare twigs on mature ashes in Young Wood in the spring, and latterly the characteristic ragged look, with some bunching of foliage below the dying-off tips, became a common sight. How quickly the disease will spread to remaining trees – and how many of those may hold some resistance – remains to be seen.

Recent word from Denmark, where Ash Dieback has been a feature of the landscape for many years, suggests up to 20% of trees are naturally resistant, but the figure may be considerably lower in the UK. We won't know for some time to come, but what is certain is that this fungus is set to change the appearance of our woods very significantly.

Trees are adaptable though, and we've still a lot to learn about their way of life. In our short lifespans it's difficult to get a sense of how trees change through the centuries. For example, new saplings growing up in woodland clearings can show extraordinary patience.

A beech sapling which is overshadowed by mature trees may sit tight, without putting on any growth at all, for decades while it waits

for a canopy tree to fall and create some light, when all of a sudden it will accelerate its growth to take advantage of the opportunity. We were able to participate in a national programme this autumn designed to ensure our native trees will never be lost. The UK National Tree Seed Programme, which is part of the Millennium Seedbank project, is collecting seed from all our tree species, to form a long-term repository of viable seed. They approached us for seed from our Wild Service Trees, which occur in some number in Young Wood – and which fortunately produced a great crop of berries this year.



While the trees hold their spaces and continue their subtle growth, we at Young Wood continue to enjoy their company and help others to enjoy it with us. We've recently begun the seventh year of our flagship programme, Wild Learning, working again with residents from Taunton's homeless shelters, and a range of other adults with mental health or other life challenges, who spend Tuesdays with us, contributing to caring for the woods while finding peace, new skills, good company and a connection to nature.

We were pleased to gain some national recognition by winning a Silver award in the Royal Forestry Society's 'Excellence in Forestry 2018' Awards, with support from the Forestry Commission.

As ever, anyone is welcome to join us on volunteer days at Young Wood, on the fourth Wednesday of the month, and we have volunteering opportunities on our Tuesday Wild Learning days too.

We also run volunteer days on local nature reserves on the second and third Wednesdays. As well as that, we're on the look out for potential new recruits to our board of directors, to help us with finance, marketing and IT. And you can support Woodlanders' work by becoming a shareholder member – see [www.youngwood.org.uk](http://www.youngwood.org.uk) for details.

*Gavin, Jenny and the team at Neroche Woodlanders*

# News from RSPCA West Hatch

*By Bel Deering, centre manager*

2018 has been an incredibly busy year so far at the centre, with over 500 domestic animals rehomed, and more than 3,500 wild animals admitted for care and rehabilitation. With all this work to do there has scarcely been time to file an article for the Neroche Newsletter, but we hope that this brief update and photos will give you a sense of what we have been up to.

**Seal Pool build** – this summer we had a building project on site to create a new pool for grey seals being rehabilitated at the centre. Last winter over 100 came into the centre so this was identified as a much-needed resource.



The first stage was knocking down what had been a fox pen, and next came the creation of a pool and enclosure around it. The final photo shows the first occupant - a female grey seal pup, admitted to the centre on 14 September from South Wales. Meerkat, as she is known, has enjoyed having all this space to swim and dive and practice all the skills she will need to survive back in the wild.

**Sponsored Cat cuddle** - we held our Big Cat Cuddle in September. Our wonderful supporters were given the challenge of raising a minimum of £50 each, and in return they had the pleasure of being locked in a cat pen for one and a half hours with a friendly cat. We also asked for cakes on the day so that we could run a cake sale alongside the event.

Cats and volunteers all had an amazing time - particularly the kittens who charged around playing with toys until they were so tired they eventually fell asleep on laps.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part, and we will definitely hold more Cat Cuddles next year.

**Manx shearwaters** – we admitted a number of newly-fledged birds

Manx shearwaters to the centre. These birds had been found storm-blown and struggling on the beaches of Wales and the West Country. At the centre their care regime included up to three fish soup feeds a day, and treatment for those with sore feet and other injuries. Many had to be washed to get their feathers clean and then allowed to dry in a warm room. After that they were put out onto one of our specialised oiled bird pools to check their waterproofing and buoyancy.



Fortunately many of them progressed quickly and so were ready to return to the wild within a matter of days. This meant they could then continue their seasonal migration to the south, some potentially even heading as far away as South America.

**New Chief Inspector** – we also wanted to take this opportunity to introduce our new Chief Inspector, Jenny Ride, *pictured right*. Before she took up the post in February this year she had been an Inspector in the Hampshire group for 17 years, so brings a wealth of experience to the role.



## Greyhound Inn improvements planned

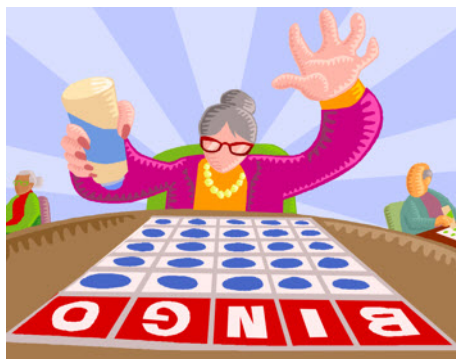
Veronique and Jan at the Greyhound are settling into life in the parish, and are excited to report they have now applied for planning permission for their refurbishment of the pub.

Veronique said: "It will include a brand new bar area, extra seating and three new guest rooms located in the old skittle alley. Of course we'll be keeping the authentic character of this wonderful building intact.

"Work should commence some time in January (fingers crossed) and we hope to avoid any closures. As we know more we will keep everyone updated as we are very aware of the importance of our community pub."

Meanwhile, they look forward to welcoming everyone over the Christmas and New year period. Phone 01823 480227 for more!

### **CHRISTMAS FAMILY BINGO**



**FRIDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018**  
**(6.30pm FOR EYES DOWN 7pm)**

**The Greyhound, Staple Fitzpaine**  
**RAFFLE**

*Booking essential Email [tricia@witchlodge.co.uk](mailto:tricia@witchlodge.co.uk)*

*Organised by Bickenhall and District WI*

## **Do you run a local business?**

**You could help the running of your Neroche Newsletter by advertising with us.**

**For a small fee, we will place your business flyer or card in with each edition, which is then hand delivered to 250 local houses and businesses.**

**If you are interested please drop us an email to chat about it on [nerochenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:nerochenewsletter@gmail.com)**

**Many thanks for your support, from your Newsletter Team.**

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## **School Holidays**

Schools finish for Christmas on Friday, December 21, 2018 and return for the Spring Term on Monday, January 7, 2019

Half-term starts Monday, February 18, 2019

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## **Household Recycling & Refuse Collections**

Christmas refuse collection dates:

Christmas week collection will be on Friday, December 28

New Year week collection will be on Thursday, January 3

To check collection dates go to:

<http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/asp/webpages/waste/pdf/RefuseWednesdayB.pdf>





## Events for your calendar

(Venue is Neroche Hall unless stated)

### November 2018

- 28 - Local History Group talk - see advert below
- 30 - Film Night: The Hatton Garden Job, see Page 15

### December 2018

- 2 - Christmas Tree event, Staple Farm, see page 20
- 6 - Thursday lunch club, see page 24
- 8 - WI Christmas Bingo at the Greyhound, see page 45
- 31 - New Year's Eve Party, see Page 16

### January 2019

- 14 - Knitting, Stitch and Crochet Group, see page 40

For latest updates visit [www.nerochevillages.org.uk/events-calendar](http://www.nerochevillages.org.uk/events-calendar)



### **Neroche Local History Group**

As the Portman lands and properties in our parish are sold on the open market the theme of our next meeting is:

### **The Rise and Fall of the Portman Estates in Somerset and Dorset**

Guest speaker: Tom Mayberry, Chief Executive of the South West Heritage Trust

November 28 | 7.30pm | Neroche Hall

All welcome | Non members £3

## Local Communication and Information

### **Websites:**

#### **Neroche Villages** [www.nerochevillages.org.uk](http://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](http://www.nerochehall.org.uk)

A new-look website which 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](http://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 there is a new address to contact the email alert: [nerocheemail@gmail.com](mailto:nerocheemail@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 Kate Reynolds on 01823 444023.

### ***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.*

**Newsletter coordinator: Jacq Wanstall - [nerochenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:nerochenewsletter@gmail.com)**

**Editor: Alan Hyde; Designer: Sarah Hyde; Treasurer: Mark Wanstall**

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