

Beneath the Vale

What's this?? It is the very first edition of **Beneath the vale**, a magazine for all who live in our four parishes.

Such a magazine has long been a glint in the eye of our Parish Council and it will be carrying news of what the Council is doing.

But although it is published by the Council, this newsletter is actually run by an independent Editorial Board, set up as a result of the Parish Plan and the public meeting that followed its publication.

Not a Council mouthpiece?

An unusual arrangement, this is because paid-for papers such as 'Your Dorset' published by Dorset County Council and 'Community Link', the West Dorset District Council periodical, are seen by many residents as glossily promoting their parent organisation rather than bringing news to their readers. They are also very expensive to prepare, print and distribute, so **Beneath the vale** is an attempt to steer clear of council self-promotion and to reduce costs to a minimum, even the printing.



Do we need another local newsletter?

Our parish-wide survey and the Parish Plan that followed found that no single periodical focussed on the whole parish, so it is hard to communicate with all the four main villages, let alone the hamlets. Nowadays, Parishes are encouraged to develop newsletters such as Symondsbury's 'Symene Voice'; the **Beneath the vale** team hopes to catch up with this neighbour so all of Upper Marshwood can talk to all of Upper Marshwood.

A hybrid beast

Beneath the vale is a hybrid beast - part a quarterly local magazine printed locally and distributed to resident's homes and part an internet-distributed newsletter. For those we know have internet access it will be sent out to you in full colour by e-mail and for those who do not, we will be posting you your copy.

Now this complication reduces our printing costs and, as more residents get access to the internet and let us know, we believe that the numbers of copies that need to be printed will steadily reduce.

To do this we need a master list of postal addresses (which is relatively easy) and e-mail addresses (does that make it an e-ddress?).

Who Pays?

To be entirely transparent, the Council pays the printing bill and arranges for the distribution to those who want the printed version - save for minor layout changes and photos being black and white, the printed version is identical to the e-mail newsletter and the issues which will build up on your Parish Council's website.

We will take advertising or accept sponsorship to offset this cost, so if you have something of a commercial nature to say, we will have a rate card soon. Ordinary or personal announcements are, of course, free.

Copy and share?

Those of you of a neighbourly disposition and with a computer can help us out. If your neighbour doesn't have internet access, why not print out the latest issue for them as soon as you get it. If you do, please don't forget to let us know so we can update the distribution list and slowly reduce the printing bill.

Can I make my views known in *Beneath the Vale*?

Yes please!

Subject only to the usual publishing restrictions, your contribution is a very important part of improving the future communications of the Vale. If it is controversial, that's fine since your ideas will reach every resident in Upper Marshwood, one way or another.

Who are running *Beneath the Vale*?

An editorial board has been set up in conjunction with the Parish Council and members are listed on page 14 - you may know some of them so if you don't like what you see, tell them.

Better still tell everyone else in the next *Beneath the Vale*.

I'm your first editor, I live in Marshwood, and I'm bespectacled, bald and bearded. I have worked in TV and on both the Marshwood Vale Magazine and the Bridport News; now I enjoy contributing to Real West Dorset the internet local paper.

I'm a councillor and the Parish Council has asked me to start a parish-wide news-letter. I have made it clear that I am happy to edit the first 4 quarterly issues and then I will seek to hand this over to someone else.

I'm *Ali Cameron*
Good Day to everyone.

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**A SALE of
books, bric-a-brac, household goods, jumble and cakes
from 10am Saturday 30th July at Marshalsea Farm
to raise money for next years Diamond Jubilee celebrations**

To sustain your buying enthusiasm
Bacon Butties & Coffee (am) and Cream Teas (pm)
will be provided

For donations of items and more details contact Ann Studley 01297 678370

Council News

Council careful with your money

Council finances are OK

according to the Annual Returns for the year to March 2011 just submitted. They show the same income from rates (precept) £6,000 as last year and other income used largely to pay for the lengthsman.

These figures have yet to be audited.

Balance bought forward	£4,315
Annual precept	£6,000
Other receipts	£11,756
Staff costs	£2,447
All other payments	£10,106

Balance carried forward £9,518

'Beneath the vale' on Council's Website

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council has a website and you can find this issue on it and every new issue will be added when it is published.

You will be able to read it and print it out anywhere, anytime, simply by typing in to your browser:
uppermarshwoodcouncil.org

Roads to wisdom

Your own pothole

Marshwood's lanes are traditional cattle walks with a thin layer of tarmac smeared onto clay of a very moveable nature. So, much as our visitors find them quaint or even lovely, those of us who use them and in particular those who do not drive hefty 4-wheel drive cars know just how fragile they really are.

It seems that few if any of the network of lanes have any kind of foundations. Not that they would make a great deal of difference if the unfortunate and slippery mixture of blue lias clay and underground watercourses has anything to do with it.

Even our local main roads are twisted and uneven suffering just as much from the damage inflicted by the last two winters as our lanes.

Potholes are caused mostly by water washing out supporting earth and heavier aggregate leaving the tarmac surface unsupported. Or one of the many Vale springs generates enough water pressure to fracture the thin tarmac. And the power of freezing ice speeds up this deterioration.

The void created allows the tarmac to drop in and hence your hole has been created, complete with hard edges, a deep drop and mud.

Now I have my pothole, what do I do with it?

Apart from steering round the yawning cavern, what can be done? Dorset County Council who repair our lanes are in distant Dorchester so they have to know where your pothole has landed.

Easiest way - fire up the computer, type in or if you are on line click
<http://maps.dorsetforyou.com/highways/reportproblem/step1.aspx>

If your car is damaged or the pothole is huge, phone 01305 221020 and report it direct to the Highways Office as dangerous. If it is more of a nuisance than a disaster, approach a Parish Councillor who can pass it to your district or county councillor, or you can call them direct - see page 7 for these contacts.

OK so they've painted a white line round my pothole & it looks very smart – what's next?

Our local lengthsman Steve Lee does not do potholes as these need a larger team such as the Parish



Maintenance Units to repair them. But perhaps some of the cold mix pothole kits could allow him to deal more swiftly with smaller or shallower holes.

Why don't these repairs last?

Lack of adhesion to the side of the pothole, water getting into the cracks and freezing. Surface settling when the repair has not been compacted. Shearing of a poor or inadequately compacted mix leading to delaminating and loss of material from the surface. Poor drainage where water seeps into or under the repair. Other councils blame workmanship caused by pressure to restore traffic flow, but DCC has some new, high tech answers.

Isn't there a new pothole-mending machine?

The County Council hired a Velocity Patcher and liked it so much they bought their own. A lorry with a hopper to carry the aggregate, it has a lot of machinery bolted on the rear and a very large hose pipe slung from a counterbalanced arm. First it clears, cleans and dries the pothole with compressed air. Then it spray blasts bitumen into the crevices before layering in the aggregate and bitumen mix fired through a very special nozzle. These cost up to £200,000 but work so quickly that in six months it had dealt with almost 5,000 defects and reduced the cost to about a quarter of the conventional methods.

Another new toy popular with DCC is the Nupholt Asphalt Cooker, an infrared grill on wheels. A sequence of

short, medium and long wave infrared 'cooks' the existing tarmac right down to the base layer. The soft existing surface is re-worked and may be topped up with fresh tarmac. After rolling, this cooking produces seam-free joints. It too saves noise, traffic interruptions, money, time and carbon footprint.

Round the bend - the drains that don't reach the lane

When Steve Lee started clearing out the lane's drains he found that many of the drains were separated from the tarmac surface by anything up to 2 feet so the water stayed where it fell. Now these drains had not moved, so have the lanes narrowed?

It seems that the large lorries with huge tyres did not cut into the verges to widen the lanes but squashed out the earth of the verge onto the roadway. Add in the effect of hedge and verge trimming using a chain flail, so dropping broken branches, vegetation and debris onto the road as well as the verges. All this builds up and soon a strip of land exists well inside the drains holding back water just where it is not wanted.

Steve is busy clearing this by hand, hard work that makes a difference in reducing flooding. But none of this is new. For many years a special plough was fixed to the back of a tractor to slice away encroaching ground and leave a neat dip to carry the water to the drain. No longer in fashion, the plough is not needed and is left to rust in peace.

Whatever happened to that Parish Plan?

You remember the plan for Upper Marshwood that they sent round last autumn? Very colourful, some good ideas but what did it achieve? Is it gathering dust in Dorchester? Or has it disappeared into the mists of time?



Well, no! Parish Council Chairmen Bob Wyatt chaired a public meeting to gauge the reaction of residents, both to the ideas in the Plan, and to follow up the proposals set out. At that meeting and from phone contacts afterwards the following working parties were set up to carry on those ideas by a variety of means. Here the chairman or organiser of each group sets out what has happened since.

Affordable Housing - Michael Robinson

Two sites have been identified for a small development of affordable homes in Marshwood village. Financial terms have been agreed in principle, but no agreements signed. Both sites have pros and cons and differing development costs.

Plans will be drawn up by an architect for Hastoe Housing Association to be examined by the group before a village meeting would discuss the plans. Once agreement has been reached, they would be asked to seek planning approval.

Hastoe will not know whether they have been successful until July. If not, we would consider setting up a Community Land Trust to acquire the land with help and support from Hastoe and

West Dorset District Council as in
has happened in Symondsbury

To make the project financially viable, it may be necessary to include some open market housing. Your Affordable Housing Working Group will be keeping a careful eye on Symondsbury's progress

Roads, lanes and environment

- Mike Sheppard

Recognising the importance of the lengthman project to the lanes, members met with Steve Lee and Parish Council chairman, Bob Wyatt who listed the ways that specific problems such as potholes would best be dealt with.

He also pointed out that attending the open sessions of the PC would be an effective way of getting action. As a result the group will concentrate on more general ideas that need studying a to avoid long terms problems.

Broadband - Charles Somers

Our area is a broadband ‘slow-spot’ because of long copper-cable distances from local BT exchanges to our homes. We have contacted BT to see how, as one solution, optical fibre cables could be extended to our village centres.

We then discovered that Dorset County Council (DCC) planned to bid for Government funding to improve broadband ‘slow-spots’. Funds are due to be approved by end-May when DCC will also choose a new contractor for their Dorset Public Sector Network. The contractor will be tasked additionally to find a solution for all of Dorset’s ‘slow-spot’ areas.

We had meetings with DCC, told them of our local situation, and proposed to work closely with them post-May to seek an early solution using Marshwood as a ‘pilot’ project. We then approached our local MP, Oliver Letwin, who promised his strong support. Once a concrete solution becomes clear we plan to involve everyone here to gain their support

Oaks - Caroline Conran

The first OAK Project meeting is due to take place on May 22nd, 5.00 p.m. at Bettiscombe Manor. All those interested are welcome to come.

Ideas to be discussed include an Oak newsletter, Oak postcards, workshops in the school, research into Oak history, lore and legend, acorn growing, and the possibility of future events to raise awareness such as an Oak tree picnic and an Oak festival.

We will also discuss the state of Oaks in and around the Vale and the causes of their currant decline of such as hedgerow flailing. We hope to interest people in some of the solutions we have identified, such as growing oak saplings and planting them in hedges, gardens and in neglected spots, working with farmers to create small nursery areas and encouraging school oak tree projects.

Our aim is to get at least 1000 oak trees planted in Marshwood Vale.

Energy and longer-term projects - Ali Cameron

This is a small group that is looking at both the way we might generate our power more environmentally, more economically and perhaps more locally.

This is just part of our work ensuring we get the future we want and the future that we agree to. We want to check on those things that we wanted are being delivered and that those agreements reached are fulfilled.

Last & least this newsletter - also Ali Cameron

If you are reading this Beneath the Vale then this group has reached its initial objective!

First Responders first

UMU Editor observed First Responders in action

The sun was hot and bright – far more so than the date or time would indicate: 24 minutes and 42 seconds after noon on Friday 25th of March. The emergency mobile phone rang.

A Responder drove steadily south through Marshwood; Jacqui Sewell knew where she needed to go. Seven minutes after the call, she arrived. This was up to the limit applied to First Responders - to get to the scene in just eight minutes. Not bad from Broadwindsor.

It doesn't matter who the patient was nor what was wrong with him – as it happens he is fine after checkups in Dorchester – what matters is that a call for someone "feeling unwell" had been actioned so swiftly. Heart problems benefit most from prompt treatment and Jacqui had all but completed the primary checks when, three minutes later, a paramedic arrived by road.

I had seen Jacqui not speeding through Marshwood and then I heard the helicopter. At first a yellow glint in the sunlight, the Eurocopter EC 135 T2+ reached 150 mph en route from Henstridge Airfield but was now slowing to circle the house of the patient. It swung into a fast, tight orbit looking for a landing site. A field Beneath the house was possible but across the road with easier access was the Strawbridge's Foxdown Farm.

Pulling back on the cyclic stick, pilot Phil Merritt killed the speed, slowing as the downwash hit the ground, cushioning the descent. Comfortably on the ground less than 50 meters from the victim, the air medic joined the others 6 minutes after the First Responder responded. A Honda steered with local knowledge had beaten the state of the art technology crammed into the glistening airframe.



One lady had beaten the three-man crew. Really there should have been two First Responders but Broadwindsor's team is thin on the ground and Marshwood's volunteers are working hard to get clearance for take off.

When the highly skilled paramedic took charge and made headway, Jacqui now did what every medic hates, she started on the paperwork.

What the air paramedic bought to the party was as high-tech as the rest of his mission. Switching on the heart monitor soon told the team that the patient needed further examination in hospital surroundings.



By now a ground ambulance had arrived so and could head into Dorchester with the patient, but the helicopter would be faster and more comfortable.

The 53-plate First Responder Honda was 4-wheel drive so was able to take the patient the short distance across the field to the helicopter. Everyone retired to a safe distance as the pilot spooled up both engines and the rotors turned. Phil Merrit lifted his team into the air and swung to

head northeast before dipping the Eurocopter's nose and pushing on the power to swoop forwards, upwards and Dorchester-wards.

Within minutes the patient would be in the hands of some of the best cardio specialists in the country. I know this as I could have been that patient, but they got to me first!

This was a near-perfect example of all the different disciplines - air and ground ambulance teams, paramedic and your local First Responders working together for one person's benefit.

Makes you feel good doesn't it.

Could you respond too?

Join in - if you live in Marshwood or Bettiscombe call co-ordinator

Annemieke Blondeel

annemieke.blondeel@bluebottle.com

01308 868543,

if not call **Jacqui Sewell**

jacquisewell@btinternet.com

01308 867145

Editorial

Four individual parishes each largely comprised of residents themselves proud of their individuality. Given the group name ‘Upper Marshwood Vale’, we have to make it work. And that’s what we - council and many residents alike - are trying to do. All four parishes are different in looks, social life, work, size and, obviously, those who live in each. We are a diverse lot. But from that very diversity, strengths can spring.

Those officials that drew pointless lines on their maps gave us little help.

A large chunk of Marshwood including the iconic village shop is actually in Bettiscombe and, in turn, the larger population of ‘south’ Bettiscombe is in Marshwood.

As are Shaves Cross and even bits of Broadoak & Whitchurch. So much of Pilsden has been annexed by Stoke Abbott that only 28 voters live there

We all agree the boundaries are rubbish and village hall-less Marshwood residents often use Bettiscombe’s for events. Stoke Abbott has more working residents meaning more younger folk than in the other parishes.

It may be big, it is certainly beautiful, but Upper Marshwood Vale can be the best when the four individual parishes get together. This way we are more than the sum of our parts, this way can get our act together.

This is **synergy**.

Letters to the Editor

RT HON OLIVER LETWIN MP



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA**

9 May 2011

Dear Editor

Many congratulations on the launch of “Behind the Vale”. I am delighted to hear about this new newsletter for one of the most beautiful parts of West Dorset, and I look forward to reading your first and subsequent issues. I wish the editorial team good luck with this publication, which I am sure will be a great success.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oliver Letwin".

OLIVER LETWIN

Councillors' comments-bigger than Twitter

Your parish councillors can have their say in 400 words

We are a very small and sparsely distributed country community. An outsider looking in will believe that we lead a bucolic life chained to the comforting past. I have lived the greater part of my life as a country veterinary surgeon. The isolation makes you believe that you are behind in the intellectual and social fashions of the nation. Because of this new ideas that are of use to us are readily taken aboard and put into practice. When we go into the big world we find we are ahead not behind.

As a parish councillor for some years for Stoke Abbott I have seen a very important change in what our council does compared with the past. This council under the leadership of Bob Wyatt and the guidance of Parish Clerk John Vandewolfe is striving to become a “quality council”.

A Quality council is a rare thing which has the respect of the district and county councillors. Few councils in the region are to this standard.

This is why we have had members of the community research and produce the Parish plan. The plan was not just an exercise in community relations, the District and County Council are looking at our work and will be obliged to take our community wishes in to account. If there was no plan Upper Marshwood's needs would be ignored.

I welcome the idea of the parish having its own quarterly news which is to go to every household. Part of the modern way is to keep people informed. The Parish Council is required to do so quarterly. I am fully aware that standing around yarning was the popular and effective way of keeping up to date with the goings on around.

The newsletter is the substitute! Now do not despair. The instructions given to the small team was to produce something different – even unique!

We hope the topics are not like the old council meetings where the only lively parts were personal feuds. Nowadays there is opportunity for the public to participate in certain bits. There are woodlands to manage, lengths men to instruct, gritters, potholes, broadband and the odd planning application.

A meeting on road maintenance with the council roads department had very lively public participation both in Shaves Cross and Stoke Abbott.

I expect more work will be required of the council with new laws. I believe that participation by the public in our meetings will be crucial for us to achieve fair outcomes.

Matthew Bowditch
Vice Chairman, Parish Council

How can I help?

All magazines cost money, even this one. So, in order to reduce the costs of printing and distribution, **Beneath the Vale** was from the outset planned as a hybrid, available both in print as usual and sent to you via the internet.

If you got this through a letterbox not an inbox, please let us know if you are on the internet. Just send an e-mail with your name and address to ali.cameron@talktalk.net saying you want to get your copy by e-mail and the next time it will arrive by wire not by post.

Also let us know if you want to help a neighbour or a friend by printing out their copy so we can add their name to the internet list and delete it from the mailing list. As before, send an e-mail with your name and address to ali.cameron@talktalk.net, tell us you will copy issues of Upper Marshwood Vale to your friend or neighbour and give us their address as well. If you don't we will still send them a copy by post but we won't save on the costs.

As someone often says "every little helps!"

How we can help you?

Are you happy with your broadband? If not, e-mail Charles Somers somers984@btinternet.com or call him on 01297 678178 and let him know.

As Charles tells us in his report on the Broadband working party (page 7), there are real possibilities of both raising the minimal speed of broadband to your home to 2m/bits and getting superfast broadband into some parts of the black hole that is Marshwood's broadband at present.

High speed broadband could affect almost all aspects of our lives from your work to your entertainment, your child's education to talking to your grandchildren half a world away.

So let us know what is wrong with your present broadband - and what is needed to put it right. Tell us what you could do with increased speed and how that would affect you, your work or your families.

And if there are business or other advantages for you, tell us how much more would you be prepared to pay for such a service.

This would give the group a feel for both for the needs of Upper Marshwood internet consumers and of market requirements.

High-Speed Broadband – where high speed is good for you

Announcements

Your New Parish Council *Pilsdon*

Chairman

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roy.warburton@virgin.net
Marshwood

Your New District Council

Marshwood Vale -	Mike Robinson cclrm.robinson@westdorset-dc.gov.uk	01308 868979
Broadwindsor -	Jacqui Sewell cclrj.sewell@westdorset-dc.gov.uk	01308 867760

Your County Council

Marshwood Vale -	Geoffrey Brierley g.j.brierley@dorsetcc.gov.uk	01297 560660
Beaminster -	Rebecca Knox r.knox@dorsetcc.gov.uk	01308 863365

Working parties: chairman/co-ordinator

Affordable Housing	Cclr. Mike Robinson cclrm.robinson@westdorset-dc.gov.uk	01308 868979
Lanes Action Group	Mike Sheppard mike.shepherd3@virgin.net	01308 868315
First Responders	Annemieke Blondeel annemieke.blondeel@bluebottle.com	01308 868543
Broadband	Charles Somers somers984@btinternet.com	01297 678178
Oaks Action	Caroline Conran c.conran@mac.com	01308 868010
Energy & long term projects	Ali Cameron ali.cameron@talktalk.net	01297 678546

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Peter Nightingale	nightech@toucansurf.com	01297 678165
Newsletter Editor	Ali Cameron ali.cameron@talktalk.net	01297 678546

useful numbers

Public Transport:

Bus services:	Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring and Ride	01404 46520
	Mike Halford MiniCoaches	01308 421106
	Sewards Coaches	01404 881343
	Stagecoach South West	01823 672247
Western Area Transport Action Group		
Secretary:	joy.michaud@btinternet.com	01308 897892

Health and Welfare:

Dorchester Hospital Governor	Wendy Nightingale	01297 678165
	wendy_nightingale@hotmail.co.uk	

Wayfinders, Partnership for Older People's Project (POPP)	Rose Bird	07971 338398
	wayfinderrose@btconnect.com	
	Carol Pearce	07971 338622
	wayfindercarol@btconnect.com	
Rural Housing Officer	Rob Asprey	01305 252447
	R.Aspray@westdorset-dc.gov.uk	

Environment:

Flytipping, Graffiti & Abandoned Cars (WDDC)	01305 251010
Dorset AONB	www.dorsetaonb.org.uk 01305 228239

Safety and Security:

Police	Non Emergency	01305 222222
	enquiries.bridport@dorset.pnn.police.uk	
Marshwood Vale Safer Neighbourhood Team	01305 226912	
	marshwoodvalesnt@dorset.pnn.police.uk	

Others

Dorset County Council	Switchboard dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk	01305 221000
BREG - Bridport Renewable Energy Group		
	www.breg.org.uk	
Highways Office		01305 221020
Highways Agency		01203 358300
	www.highways.gov	

Emergency numbers

Childline	Abuse, bullying, worries www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
Electricity	Western Power Distribution www.westernpower.co.uk	0800 365 900
Floodline	Environment Agency www.environment-agency.gov.uk	0845 988 1188
NHS Direct	We're here 24 hours a day www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk	0845 4647
RSPCA	Cruelty line www.rspca.org.uk	0300 1234 999
Local Hospitals	Axminster Bridport Community Crewkerne Dorset County	01297 630400 01308 422371 01460 72491 01305 251150
Samaritans	Talk To Someone www.samaritans.org	08457 909090
Women's Refuge	West Dorset www.womensaid.org	01305 262444