

“What does it take to get sense into Dorset County Council, - the death of one of our kids?” said one Marshwood mum.

Parents of Marshwood youngsters are threatened by Dorset County Council as their all-powerful bean counters swing their latest axe.

The new target is the school taxi service which is to be secretly severed, as one young mother has discovered when her son Alex was ignored by council officials. Now attending Marshwood school, no offer of transport arrived; it seems he has been turned down by DCC in a secret ruling; no-one had bothered to contact Ann-Marie Chapman.

A paramedic based at Ilminster, so her working time is clearly highly valued by the whole community, Ann-Marie lives in Marshalsea with husband Phil and their two children, Alex and Sam.

“I had originally sent an application at the end of July 2014, requesting transport to start on 9th September. This and the second application failed to submit due to WDDC’s poor website.” she tells us.

Eventually, Ann-Marie discovered the ruling against her child so she appealed.

In his assessment at the hearing Technician Alan Proctor claims 6 separate visits at school, two of which he was seen to have been present. He walked the route and showed a video he had taken when the pouring rain had slowed traffic to far less than normal, and when he performed a speed check that allowed him



Marie Winnett checks the road as our MP checks the route

to assert that that neither Mrs Chapman nor her children would be in any danger.

However he had chosen to assess one mother with one child, which in fact was not the case as he well knew. Mrs Chapman will now have to waste her far more valuable professional time on a second appeal as she has also a buggy-bound 18-month old second son Sam to contend with.

Mr Proctor claims no one has been hurt at the pinchpoint; this is true, a team of us walked the path and no-one was hurt, but none of us was a mum with several kids and a pram. There are numerous

examples of near accidents: Jacqui Sewell, now a district councillor, taking her children to school had to jump for her life to avoid a vehicle. Most other mothers who have a car have tried the walk but have been scared back onto 4 wheels. Now no-one dares to walk this particular route; hence the lack of fatalities.

And what about the car that smashed into the school wall at 80 mph? No one was hurt in that accident, more by good luck than judgement. The reason we have no accidents is because the problems are so well known that we use our cars (or had access to the council paid-for taxis). Now the council chasing budget cuts has upset our precautions and will put in jeopardy the youngsters they are pledged to protect.

In an inaccurate e-mail DCC caseworker Mellisa Ashdown-Hoff claims that there are no other concerns about the B3165, completely ignoring the remedial work planned by the same council to deal with the Foxdown Farm pinch point. So that particular committee has found that it is in fact dangerous even though Ms Ashdown-Hoff and Mr Proctor (conveniently) claim otherwise.

Others who have found the road to be highly dangerous include the police who had reduced the speed limit, although it is conceded that this has not reduced the traffic speed at school times.

Possibly as a result of this complaint, the police are paying great attention to speeding within Marshwood. In recent swoops they clocked no less than 17

peeding cars although some were going to fast to be stopped.

But in the Upper Marshwood Parish Plan sent to, but apparently ignored by this part of the council, the B3165 was rated by residents as 10 times as dangerous as other parts of their Vale.

Oliver walks the Walk

Our MP, Oliver Letwin as usual busy with constituency matters, found time and managed to walk the walk with Marie Winnett and now fronts the campaign.

Marie, who attended the wasted appeal so knew the history, was standing in for an on-duty Ann-Marie who was saving lives elsewhere. She has 3 school-aged children, two of whom accompanied her and the buggy. Arriving at 8 am on a crisp, damp Saturday morning he, Marie Winnett with two of her children and a buggy walked down the hill from the school as he sought the background to the problem.

With far less traffic on the early-morning Saturday road, the open aspects allow if not encouraged cars to speed; most were estimated at around 40 mph during the walk, a safe speed for all except pedestrians. The walk was easily accomplished as traffic was so light and all concerned were taking great care.

Afterwards Oliver summed up: "My advice is to get the road reconsidered and to decide if it is dangerous or not. This would impact on the maximum numbers of those who walk this route, not just mums getting their younger children to school. I will be looking into what can be done."

Other remedies were put to him such as an appeal on the grounds of Ann-Marie's two children and a buggy. Those in the know feel that this could be successful but such a verdict would leave the rest of the school children at risk of being denied their school transport.

It is the politics that so trouble the village.

Is this an attempt for the council once again to ride roughshod over their own rules and procedures and to discard inconvenient facts to save a few pounds?

Or is this just another example of poor decision-making born of incompetence?

Put simply, why was Mrs Chapman not told of the decision before she fell

victim to council secrecy and had to fight for a reason, let alone a result.

Why was the reason given so perverse as to be quite so self-contradictory?

Why is a 6 year old living next door given a seat when a younger child has to walk?

And why are the council using 1954 legislation to ban this practice?

Is the traffic the same as when these rules were bought in.

Self evidently not.

Or do the council officials concerned want us to wait for an accident and the possible death of a child before they will act to prevent further disasters?

Alan Proctor, his boss Robert Smith, backed up by Denise Hunt and Mellisa Ashdown-Hoff will have a lot to answer for if that is true.

And do any of the above named have responsibility for life and limb at any hour of the day or night?

Ann-Marie Chapman does.



No cars so Oliver and Marie are safe - this time

Here is a copy of Oliver's letter to Mike Harries DCC's environment boss.

Dear Mike,

I am writing to you about the recent decision by the County Council to classify the B3165 between the centre of Marshwood and the school at Marshwood as a safe route to school.

I walked this route with a mother and two children on Saturday morning. The mother in question was pushing a buggy with her younger child in it.

I have to say that I do not think any parent could possibly come to the conclusion that that this route is safe for a young child walking on their own or for a mother or father bringing several children along the road, especially when one of the children needs to be in a buggy or pushchair.

My understanding is that councillors at all levels representing Marshwood have also walked the route, and have also come to the conclusion that it is not safe for young children.

I recognise, of course, the considerable pressures under which the County Council operates and I recognise, also, that there has to be some realism about what parents and children can manage safely. But I really don't think that this particular route can sensibly be classed as safe for these purposes.

I would be very grateful if you could let me know what process we would need to go through in order to get this decision reconsidered. I hope that this might also involve a time when I could ask members of the relevant Committee to come with me and with local parents and children along this road, so that they can see for themselves what I have seen with my own eyes.

Yours ever,



OLIVER LETWIN



Mr Letwin rightly mentions financial pressures. Let us look at a controversial decision to move a coast path estimated to cost us all £150,000.

Lester Cowling points out that DCC officers want to spend that money - even though West Bexington villagers would prefer to do it themselves.

Path to profligacy



Last winter, for about 30 minutes, freak waves crashed over Chesil Beach and swept pebbles over the South West Coastal Path near West Bexington. The path has been used for centuries and this sort of thing has occurred about once every 30 years – the last time in 1979. The pebble-covered path deterred mainly elderly walkers who enjoyed the path and business fell at the village’s hotel and café. Visitors to the local caravan site complained of ruined holidays. Some walkers found the path too much and arrived in the village in a state of distress.

When Dorset County Council deferred taking action, villagers wanted to take matters into their own hands and raise the £1,000 necessary to clear the path themselves.

But DCC banned the work. It and Natural England insisted there had to be a new inland path costing goodness knows how many tens of thousands of pounds. Their justification was that climate change means there’ll be more such “washover events” than in the past.

There probably will be, but villagers questioned whether that justify such drastic action; - surely DCC has more important calls on any funds to prepare for climate change?

Meanwhile, the cost of site meetings, of holding talks with landowners and of preparing documents already far exceeds the cost of restoring the path – although it’s doubtful if anybody at County Hall is even bothering counting. ***So why not drop this scheme and let Alex go to school with his friends; together that would save £149,500!***

Stop Press A letter has been sent to the parents involved withdrawing all Marshwood taxi seats with effect from February 13th. This has led to other mums joining in the battle.

The letter to Mike Harries has had a disappointing reply, merely repeating many pages of known facts but conceding that the council is in fact looking at remedial work at the pinch point. Mr Letwin will now meet with even more mums, at which the speed checks undertaken by the police will be available.

Through her contacts district councillor Jacquie Sewell has found that the average speed through the pinch point is 38.5 mph but with 85% doing over 45 mph. The highest speed was recorded as 72 mph. Food for thought!

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Council News

A new recycling orientated waste collection service is going to reach Marshwood Vale in July. Other parts of Dorset have already tried the system so most of the problems have been ironed out.

Based on five containers, the problem of food waste is addressed. So no more plastic bags, no more birds raiding for leftovers and no more free meals for sundry vermin.



Service	What is taken	Collection	Bin
Recycling	paper, cardboard, plastic tubs & bottles, tins	Fortnightly	Large wheelie bin
Rubbish	non-recyclable household waste	Fortnightly	Thin wheely bin
Glass	only glass	Fortnightly	Present bin
Food Waste	cooked and raw food placed in compostable bags	Weekly	Large Caddy

... and for your kitchen

Not collected **Small Caddy**

For more information including collection dates, contact Dorset Waste Partnership, 01305 221040 or via dorsetforyou.com/recycle

Pub Updates

Shave Cross Inn

Sean Williams WDDC's Senior Planning and Enforcement Officer says:

"The accommodation block is tied to the pub via a planning condition, in that its use should not be used for purposes other than ancillary to the Shave Cross Inn (1/D/2007/002238).

The Bottle

Nigel Blake has been in contact with the pub's owner, Michael Brooks and feels that there are grounds for hope.

He and his wife Chrissie are happy to exchange their status of being the incumbents for a formal owner/landlord relationship for the Bottle, and to get a proper kitchen, a feature that Nigel budgets as costing £30,000.

This would allow meals to be presented effectively and make a substantial improvement to cash flow.

However without a proper formal agreement he will not proceed with this important project for the pub. It seems that he and Chrissie can make the pub pay even without the kitchen, so is content to leave matters as they are and wait until the Brooks come to agree.

"In effect they can sell the pub independent of the accommodation block but then can't use the accommodation block without a further planning permission allowing independent use."

A substantial list of faults that need the Brooks' attention have been listed by planners. They are also well adrift in their estimate of the value of the pub which they set at £450,000 - for this one could have acquired the Shave Cross Inn, a far better prospect with excellent kitchen, comfortable dining area, a chef and of course the skittle alley.

Nigel's concentration on the high-quality beers many of local origin that he sells would seem to be paying-off, attracting both the real ales aficionados, and the valuable passing trade.

He reports that Mark Van de Weyer continues to hope to get another deal in which his 'Friends of the Bottle' group can play a part.

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Progress to mid January

During November the builders of our Affordable Houses were on schedule having lost only 3 or 4 days due to bad weather since they started. However during December it was hard to see much in the way of progress and with a fortnight off for Christmas some are beginning to question if they will complete by the agreed date in middle of March.

My inquiries tell me that they had to finish another development in Axminster and moved the workforce there during December but would be back at Bramblehay in January to complete by mid March.

Towards the end of November our properties were advertised so that those on the housing register could “Bid” for them – Bid - this really means putting their name down for a particular house. With some 30 bids one might have thought that we were “home and dry” but no, due to a policy change requiring all on the

housing register to re-register in order that Dorset could reevaluate the list and reduce the number on it to make things appear better, it was not to be.

However, I had seen a letter which said that all who were on the register could bid up until mid December for houses. This did not prove to be the case as Dorset Home Choice said only those who had re-registered would be considered.

What a mess up!!!

My information is that 4 or 5 of the houses have names pencilled in against them and the remaining houses will be advertised again in January and hopefully by the end of the month all will be well.

John Walther, who gives such good service to the community at the Shop and Post Office has asked for some help in order that he could take an hour or two off during the week but to date there have only been two offers made. I asked myself what would happen if John was taken ill or unable to continue and what would happen to the shop. Could we as a community run a shop?

I have carried out some work, with John being kept informed, looking into alternatives which I fully understand may never be required. For instance I was able to

Speak to Post Office Ltd and was told that they were happy to maintain a Post Office in Marshwood providing the same opening hours were kept.

Finding out this information does not just happen over night and so now all my findings can be put in a file and are to hand should the need arise in the future.

May I wish you a happy New Year and I hope that 2015 will bring a new home for seven families.

David Hitchcock
Chairman,
Marshwood Community Land Trust



Neighbourhood plan

District Councillor and chairman of our Neighborhood Plan, Mike Robinson brings us up to date.

Upper Marshwood Vale, Hawkchurch and Netherbury Parish Councils have already agreed to work together on producing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Thorncombe Parish Council have also agreed, in principle to join in, but are waiting for a public meeting early in February, before making their final decision.

So that the stakeholders and other interested parties could understand what a NP involves, and the potential benefits that could be achieved, a training session at Bettiscombe was given by a consultant (Alison Eardley). She has wide experience in the preparation of NP plans and this session was particularly useful as it answered many of the questions raised by attendees from the parishes.

It was agreed that specific events would be arranged for each parish, where members of the public could voice their opinions on local issues as part of a necessary community engagement process.



The main questions to be asked at such meetings are:-

- What are the key issues that affect the area?
- What opportunities are there to improve the area?
- What do you want the area to be like in the future?
- What aims could be achieved with a plan?

From the findings from these public meetings, we can put together a report on the state of villages within the defined area.

The existing Parish Plans will help with this exercise and we already have formed a preliminary Steering Group and have agreed the designated boundary for the NP area, pending a decision from Thorncombe PC.

Funding has already been negotiated with “Locality” for the preparatory work and arranging the community engagement sessions.

A general scope for the plan has already been established. After reviewing the existing Parish Plans for UMV, Hawkchurch and Thorncombe; it can be seen that they have many issues in common and some issues specific to individual parishes.

Common issues:-

- Housing - elderly and affordable
- Roads maintenance
- Drainage & Flooding
- Schools
- Community Shops (not Netherbury)
- Care of elderly
- Farming - Diversification, Hedge maintenance and Redundant buildings
- Broadband
- Eco energy - Solar, Wind and Wood
- Protecting green spaces and AONB
- Small business development

Issues specific to Parishes

- Conservation areas (Stoke Abbott & Netherbury)
- Safe to school (Marshwood)
- Speeding (Marshwood)
- Pub closures (UMV)
- Sewage treatment (Marshwood)

We will use the public engagement exercise in Thorncombe as a “dry run” for subsequent events with the other Parishes.

We need to have established the designated area for the NP before the end of March at the latest, so that we can get approval from WDDC to proceed with the project and apply for funding from “Locality” before it is used up.



Little Giant progress

Matthew Bowditch reports on the future of this new wood

Previous editions of **Beneath the Vale** have carried articles on the community wood at **Stoke Abbott** which is the responsibility of the Upper Marshwood Parish council, so Councillor Cassian Gray and I have been looking into a way to manage the wood.

We have made considerable progress in our aim to manage Little Giant Wood as a community asset. Initially this will be volunteer assistance at forestry work once a month through the season and countryside knowledge events taking place in the wood or in Village hall.

The excellent Bat event, held in the autumn by Emily Newton of the Dorset Wildlife Trust was a taste of the things to come.

There are to be seasonal themes: autumn/winter and spring/summer. Initially we will concentrate on woodland management, logging and hedgerows.

Next spring we will have country knowledge - themed sleepovers looking at butterflies and moths, small mammals, and birds.

As Emily will be involved in some of these your interest will be assured. All from other parts of Upper Marshwood Vale are particularly welcome.

Ian Rees of the Dorset AONB has been a great help; he has secured a substantial grant of £2,500 for the wood that will enable us to have a professional management plan produced, some training and assistance with buying tools.

The grant is a follow up to the similar AONB grant towards the replacement of oaks in the Vale.

This project is in its infancy. If you use wood in your home and you fancy a sociable day in the woods doing light timber work, with the reward of a car boot full of logs, this is what we are offering to volunteers. Chain saws are allowed but please remember to bring clothing such as protective trousers, gloves and goggles.



The photo is of the meeting with the Woodland Manager John Bell, AONB West Dorset's Ian Rees and Chris Gibbard of the Forestry Commission,

and Stoke Abbott Councillor Cassian Grey.

Cassian sets what is being done in a historical perspective.

“With the cost of fuel going up we are looking at a new era of gathering what is a community asset. In medieval times everyone would go out to their woods and gather in wood to fuel cooking and heating. Around here we are lucky and have even got a new wood. As the wood matures, more and more will be available to those who are prepared to go out and collect it.”

The plan is to have a pair of two .back to back days The first was a ‘chain saw days’ to keep the health and back to back aspect separate.

On the day which dawned bright and very temporarily cold, stalwarts set to clearing back disposed plastic rolls which were used to prevented aggressive deer damage, grass and most of all small branches and tidying up the hedges

As the weather became mild, even pleasant, the several fires kept all us all comfortable as we swigged coffee and eventually did some work.

The second pair of days will be for volunteers to clear ground, hand sawing and chopping using tools that can be supplied by the group.

Upcoming dates are:
Friday, 30th January and
Saturday 31st January.

Please phone, text or email:
Matthew Bowditch : 01308862758 or
07970016736
m1bowditch.vets@virgin.net
or Cassian Gray: 01308862448
cassian@montmeru.com



Stoke Abbott community woodland is part of the CLS in Dorset Community Woodland Project, led by the Dorset AONB and funded by the Big Lottery Fun



**Communities
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Marshwood Rainfall 2013/14

As well as chairing our CLT, David Hitchcock keeps an eye on our weather.

A couple of years ago I wrote a short article on the rainfall in Marshwood and a few people were kind enough to say they had found it interesting. The BTV editor has asked me to update the item covering the next two years.



However 2013 followed the normal pattern with 9 inches (227mm) in October and just over 9 inches in December but little could have prepared

us for what fell in January.

You may recall that I commented on 2012 being the wettest year I had recorded in the last 20 years and whilst early 2013 continued to be wet, in the spring and summer we had only light rain with some heavy downpours in August but most of us felt that we had had a good summer.

I recorded 13.5 inches (337mm) with nearly a further 8 inches in February. The pictures of the Somerset Levels and the disruption to transport will be remembered for many a year with many of the poor people still not back in their houses a year on.

In most years our heaviest rain falls between October and end of February but there is always an exception to any rule as was the case in 2012.

From what I see on the television it will be many months yet before they do get home.

	2012	2013	2014	Monthly average
January	48	157	337	132 mm
February	13	73	194	87.6 mm
March	9	110	58	70 mm
April	203	56	97	74 mm
May	50	79	106	71.3 mm
June	218	54	45	66.8 mm
July	239	72	10	68.8 mm
August	182	42	183	87.3 mm
September	73	56	27	76 mm
October	175	227	106	121.5 mm
November	250	67	133	136 mm
December	217	241	38	121.6 mm

The average yearly rainfall here is 1113 mm.

Fricasee Of Squirrel

As this writer has never killed, prepared cooked or even tasted squirrel, this information is from a poacher's cookbook as set down by a gamekeeper's wife!

The flavour of squirrel is rich and succulent, not surprising since they live on nuts and berries and of course, in spring the eggs of song and game birds.

Considering the squirrel is such a nuisance in the garden, it is surprising that such a free and delicious meat is not more popular. Perhaps one reason for this is that it is difficult to skin (even more so than rabbit) so a young squirrel is a better option. Like rabbits, squirrels should be de-gutted as soon as possible after killing.

Traditionally, fly fishermen say squirrel tails make good flies; a pinch of some of the long tail hairs makes excellent flies, so it could be said that nothing much goes to waste.

Ingredients:

- 2 squirrels, skinned, paunched and jointed
- 1 onion stuck with 2 cloves
- 1 carrot
- 1 bay leaf
- 50g butter
- 50g flour
- 600ml game or chicken stock
- Salt and pepper
- Fromage frais



Method:

Stew the squirrels in the stock with the onion, carrot, bay leaf and seasoning until very tender - about 1½ hours

Make a béchamel sauce with the butter, flour the stock from the stew, and add the squirrel meat which you will have taken off the bone.

Stir in a little fromage frais to counteract the richness.

Serve with basmati rice and a green salad dressed with lemon juice and hazelnut oil.

A quiet council meeting.

A gap of 2½ months since the last council meeting meant that most councillors expected a long and tedious meeting full of complex details. But this simply did not happen.

At Shave Cross bowling alley and under the chairmanship of Matthew Bowditch, standing in for Roland Bugler who was absent on business, the agenda moved swiftly with short comments from senior councillors.

Kicking off the council meeting proper, our clerk John Vanderwolfe explained the new arrangements for rubbish disposal. This is dealt with elsewhere in this issue. We are the last area in Dorset so problems should have been ironed out and results elsewhere seem to be favourable.

Next came the democratic period, when members of the public can address councillors with their own concerns. Cassian Gray, a councillor representing Stoke Abbott used this to bring up a campaign by Jo Stover and had read a short part of her note when the lady herself came in, having been delayed at the station.

She wants to get initial funding for replacement fingerposts and to have a co-ordinated campaign. Her researches showed that a Bridport company still holds castings for the original metal versions. The council will add her request to the next meeting that will discuss council finances.

Finance followed, concluding with the announcement of an increase in the salary of council workers including our clerk. He calculates this as just £9.80, although this will no doubt be shown by critics as a huge percentage deal.

Bob Wyatt assured the council that he had minimised the work done by the lengthsman, Steve Lee, ahead of the winter weather. He was confident that there would be sufficient funding to pay Steve as he had built up reserves.

The clerk drew attention to the late January closure of the road from Broad Orchard to Shave Cross for a new water main; landlord Roy Warburton complained strenuously about this, and that no action was ever taken to deal with flooding in this area, either.

Fred Bailey reported on the continuing progress of the affordable homes at the Thane Farm site. This is also featured in David Hitchcock's article in this Beneath the Vale. Comments on the high quality of the work done were received.

On the following day Neighbourhood Plan held a training/workshop meeting.

Work should start on converting to superfast broadband in September. Both these are also reported on in this issue.

Our next meeting is on January 15th but, reflecting the hard work of the summer months, thereafter we are reverting to a meeting every 2 months mostly at Bettiscombe village hall, but with provision

to hold extra meetings to cover planning needs to take place at Shaves Cross.

So, at just over the hour, councillors found the council meeting finishing, which only goes to show how, without contentious issues to discuss, how quickly your council can move!

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Editorial

A s a concerted campaign to change the nature of local government

is launched in Dorchester, it seems that we are being dragged into an argument that should not concern us. But we better get used to it, unitary local government is firmly on the agenda.

Highly vociferous and more highly motivated proponents of this move seem determined to try to drag this idea into all areas of debate in an attempt to pre-empt the discussion and persuade us unitary is a good idea.

The idea is that instead of the shire - Dorset County Council - *and* the district council, we get rid of one whole tier of officials.

Sounds good idea: think of how much money you could save - all those officials that won't get duplicated!

After all, DCC alone comprises the biggest corporate structure in the area. So, subject to the efficient performance of the many duties of the council, why not cut staff substantially, to eliminate doubling up and to achieve those huge savings.

If you listen to those keen to rewrite the way we do things, you will hear many other good reasons to change, mostly concerning efficiency and democracy.

But hang on a moment, aren't Dorset Waste going unitary?

Linking up finance departments, won't that be unitary? Cornwall is a unitary council and it seems has far too many senior councillors. And our own link up with other district councils now under way should bring substantial efficiencies?



There are fundamental democratic problems.

All council building would get unchecked approval - how can a planning department stop senior officials determined to pursue their own favourite project?

And how do councillors actually stop such projects going ahead, especially if a miniscule cabinet actually makes decisions on everyone else?

With a three-tier system, the planning department is entirely separate; and a creative, friendly tension between councils is not a bad thing.

And would all those council officers be shown the door. Some officers have indeed gone, but history does not agree, especially when the cost of retiring council officials is taken into account. It can be very expensive to make redundancies.

Far more importantly, under pressure from government cuts our councils are in the process of sharing key resources. Weymouth and Portland and now North Dorset are rationalising how we are governed as the operation of each council gets closer to its colleagues. So as our existing councils get slimmer, their work becomes more unitary in nature.

Yet they retain the essential democracy of three tiers of councils.



Unitary local government may well be the future, certainly according to those who seek alternative kinds of local government, but is change for the sake of change a good reason?

Let's get the present changes through and the economies working for us before we do anything rash.

Cabinet-led local government?
Now that is another issue!



Updates: Road closures

Sufficient notice has been given on these road closures to become worth while publishing them.

Due to re-laying the water main, all vehicles will be prohibited from proceeding between Broad Orchard and Shave Cross Inn with effect from 5th January. However this has now been delayed until 26th Jan.

All vehicles will be prohibited from proceeding along Wootton Hill, Fishpond from outside Woodmans to approximatley outside the access road to Bridles Place Farm, a distance of approximately 170 metres. Valid 22nd January for 1 day

Superfast Broadband

Superfast broadband is still on target to be started in September 2015. Before then - April /May is likely, BT will complete a detail survey of the whole area which will become a plan for Marshwood. It is hoped that as well as the green boxes in villages, this will include smaller, pole-mounted boxes which will be used in smaller communities.

Silly Page

Too bad all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxis and cutting hair. - *George Burns*

I won't say ours was a tough school, but we had our own coroner. - *Lenny Bruce*

I have a gravel path in my garden while my neighbour's is concrete. I think mine wins on aggregate. - *Unknown*

"'Employee of the month' is a good example of how somebody can be both a winner and a loser at the same time." - *Demetri Martin*.

An ice cream seller was today found on the floor of his van covered in hundreds and thousands. Police said he topped himself. - *Unknown*

I play all my Country and Western music backwards – your lover returns, your dog comes back and you cease to be an alcoholic. - *Linda Smith*

Two silkworms had a race – it ended in a tie. - *Unknown*

Kill my boss? Do I dare live out the American dream? - *Homer Simpson*

We had gay burglars last night. They broke in and rearranged the furniture. - *Robin Williams*

A photon checks into a hotel and the porter asks him if he has any luggage. The photon replies: "No, I'm travelling light." - *Unknown*

Money can't buy you friends, but you get a better class of enemy. - *Spike Milligan*

The pen is mightier than the sword and considerably easier to write with. - *Marty Feldman*

A Centurion walks into a pub and asks for a Martinus. "Don't you mean a Martini?" says the barman. "No," says the Centurion, "If I want a double I'll ask for one." - *Unknown*

There was a fire at the main Inland Revenue office in London today, but it was put out before any serious good was done. - *Ronnie Corbett*

The Beach Boys walk into a bar. One says to the other "Round? Round? Get a round? I get a round?" - *Unknown*

I want to die peacefully in my sleep like my father, not screaming in terror like his passengers. - *Bob Monkhouse*

I have a nut allergy. When I was at school the other children used to make me play Russian roulette by force-feeding me a packet of Revels." - *Milton Jones*

They say cheese gives you nightmares. Ridiculous! I'm not scared of cheese.

- *Ross Noble*

These are my principles. If you don't like them, I have others. - *Groucho Marks*

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