

Beneath the vale

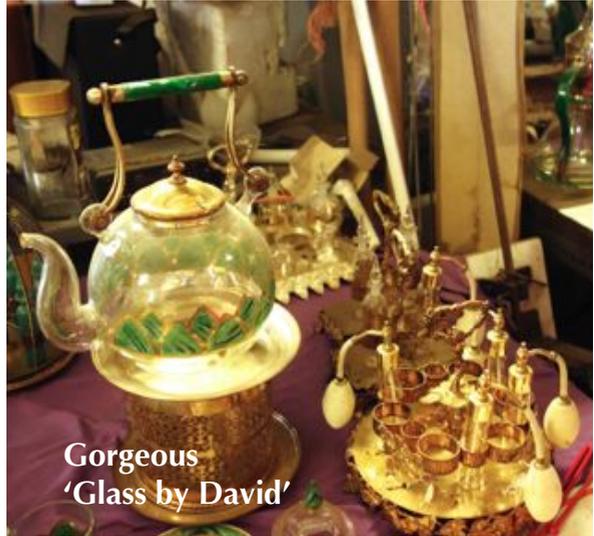
Published on behalf of Upper Marshwood vale
Parish Council

Master of Glass

Beneath the Vale has heard rumours of a few of David Smith's abilities for some time, but has now caught up with this quiet, softly-spoken gentleman in order to find out more. Belying his name is an extraordinary man, whose abilities - in ascending order of importance - are entrepreneurial, scientific and creative.

As a child he learned his basic skills from his father who had taken up glassblowing as a profession, taking to this with a vengeance, so soon David was producing a variety of his own models. These were the standard glass images that were so popular at that time and although not expensive he was able to produce them in sufficient quantities yet were attractive enough to go on sale to the public where they sold well enough. Since David was 'word-blind' now called dyslexia, his handy gift was greatly appreciated by his family as a talent.

Before the first world war, glass making had developed in Germany but the collapse of industry there caused many skilled men to go to the UK. Even so and with the extra skills needed to make radio valves, a dearth of skilled workers developed during World War 2, hence working glass seemed a good calling for the future.



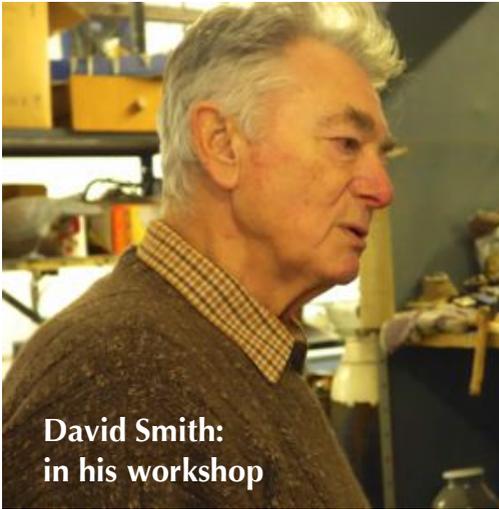
Gorgeous
'Glass by David'

David applied for a job in glass manufacture, joining a specialist company that was producing valves for transmitters and what turned out to be lasers. In principal these are simple devices but making them efficient and long-lasting was a complex art.

Essentially a glass tube with connections to internal electrodes, these devices were once seen as the future death ray weapons and funding for development was easily available.

As a young man, David was now in his element bringing to fruition what scientists and engineers had designed. But although the science was becoming clearer how could glass be shaped and sealed to the standards required? It was all down to the fabricator of these devices and their skill in manipulating the glass.

Some tubes would have one type of glass through which the metal electrodes were sealed, then another kind of glass surrounding it, before a third kind of glass sealed both into the main tube. Skill in glasswork was essential as David's success showed.



**David Smith:
in his workshop**

With a bright future, David who is a fair man soon found himself taking sides on behalf of more lowly paid workers. He became involved as a trade unionist, resulting in him being unfairly black-listed by the companies who might employ him. But as one door closed, an earlier door re-opened, one that better suited David's politics, that using his personality and his creativity.

Glass comes in many sizes, shapes and durability. It all starts with sand, which makes up 75% of 'soda-lime' glass and is mixed with sodium and calcium oxides melted together. Plate glass for windows and bottles and jars use this kind of glass but with many different surface treatment to better suit the use.

As well as the many basic kinds of glass, the newest is a special oxide glass used for fibre-optic cables now making their way through the Vale. Now independent and working as his own master, he launched once more into glass artefacts, but his scientific background stood him in good stead.

As well as being a master of glass manipulation, David's particular skill was to match the kind of glass to the job in hand and, of course, the techniques needed to work the material.

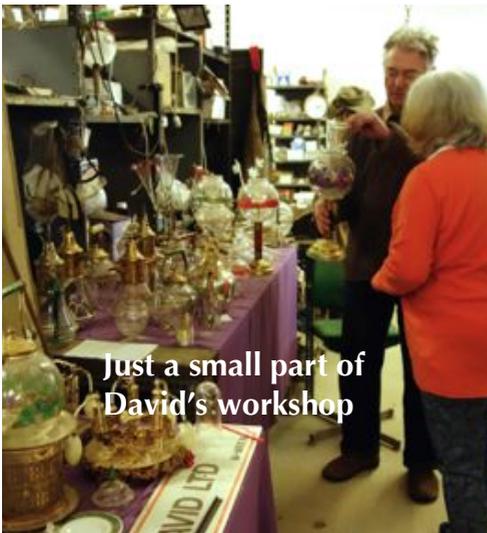
In his early work, he discovered that borosilicate glass, which became popular when kitchenware called Pyrex was launched by Corning in the USA, was far better in decorative use than ordinary glass.

Easier to work, even with its high melting point, it is economical to produce while its superior durability, chemical and heat resistance finds excellent use in laboratory equipment, cookware, lighting, special windows, tiles for Space Shuttles and even guitar slides.

Instead of using the high melting point to produce more durable lasers, he realised that the glasses' ability to make good strong joints was more important. The company that had become 'Glass by David' started to use a much better glass than ordinary soda glass, usually bought as raw material in tube form.

For many years his company produced decorative glassware of great popularity, elegance and soon durability as he introduced borosilicate glass into the market place. Delicate looking glasswork could now be made much tougher without sacrificing any artistic quality. Of course, the standards of skill needed to make such remained very much harder, demanding greater skills of glassblowers.

But all was not straightforward as rivals soon copied his creations for sale in all parts of the art-glass world. Suing those copying did not work since as soon as one cheap copy was taken out others sprang up in replacement. So David decided to concentrate on making models, lamps, cups and jugs from the higher-quality borosilicate glass where the unique properties and precision could be appreciated by users, if not seen by less talented rivals.



One particular market was extraordinarily valuable: the wealthy market for beautiful Arabic glassware. Here the new glass and David's skill allows

- delicate handles to grow out of tiny skinny-thin glass cups finished with burnished gold decoration
- purely decorative, yet entirely practical lamps seemingly far-too dainty to be lit, yet shedding a warm oil-glow
- a working glass teapot which glistens on its stand which it shames with its elegant handle in traditional lines
- a tray-full of golden-glass perfume-sprays.

The list was endless.

Soon David's products graced all the best middle eastern events including tableware for royal visits where his quality glass became de rigour to display the richness and quality espoused by the Arabs.

After ten good years retired to the Marshwood Vale, life became a traumatic time for David when he lost his wife, Rita in tragic circumstances. He acknowledges the help he received from his friends, but running his small farm, his holiday cottage and in particular his workshop, now housed in a barn have helped him.

For a workshop, this is a huge store of machinery, glassware, home brewing activities, raw glass stock and something rarely seen - two substantial glass blowing lathes covered in a variety of butane gas nozzles to heat up the raw stock and keep it up to working temperature.

David still blows glass these days. He could get any amount of work from his contacts - and charge the going price for these, but nowadays he confines his work to items of amusement - like glass crackers, complete with a hole to fill them with gifts.



At the lathe; David prepares to make glasses

These he makes to give to his friends.

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What's a Sminhay?

We have visited Higher Sminhay Farm and Piers Denny before; but meeting with him recently, he told us about his research into what a Sminhay actually comprised.

His first efforts took him Norsewards, but as a language, Norwegian only drew a blank. Back in the UK he turned up an Anglo-Saxon root - it appears that a Sminhay was actually an outdoor meeting place.

Without today's formalities this could well translate as a council-meeting place. So perhaps your council should revert to a perfectly good ancient name Upper Marshwood Vale Sminhay - at least for sunny months of summer.

SBS: a Secret bus Service

It was a bus-using neighbour who drew the attention of Beneath the Vale to what for them was a very serious problem. A new bus service had been secretly set up by Dorset Community Transport, one of Dorsets' many, often uncoordinated, transport delivery organisations.

What seems like a worthy initiative - a new service where the same Thursday school bus with the same driver being tasked to drive from Thorncombe to Marshwood collecting passengers before striking out towards Bridport on a Wednesday - is the cause of concern for the bus users.

Dorset Community Transport is a combination of Ealing Community Transport and now Dorset County Council to provide 'high quality, safe, friendly accessible and affordable transport in local communities'. Other areas where they operate include Cornwall and Cheshire, and Ealing in West London, which included London 2012 where it provided accessible transport for visitors to the Olympic games.

Here they have 45 mini-buses including the local 16-seaters with fully trained drivers and are based in Blandford Forum salthough covering the entire county.

But the Marshwood users have very different concerns. No-one in the area had heard of this new Wednesday service; the only people Informed were users of the Thursday bus to Axminster..



"When approached about a Wednesday bus to Bridport a number of us said we would use it, expecting a normal bus working to a timetable."

BTV was told by the user.

"Word of mouth then told us that it would be age restricted. We also grumbled because we would have to book by phoning up 48 hours before the journey".

It would seem that this is a very clumsy attempt to operate a taxi type service and not the bus service so badly needed. Yet it is the same vehicle and the same driver as the Thursday bus

But by not telling anyone else about the new service, how can DCT expect to get the passengers they say they want to serve?

Officially all buses are deemed carry 20 passengers. This includes our local 16-seaters.

So much for statistics.

In fact it seems that although no-one else received notice of the new bus, one of our senior citizens did know of the new service, John Walther at Marshwood Stores.

He was given a bundle of copies of the A5 flier to display in the shop, which he did, along with the myriad of other messages pinned up. He was not asked to promote the service.

DCT claim that the fliers were posted through all local letterboxes, which is not correct. Since then, we understand that this claim has been withdrawn by DCT, and the date for the report extended to end of February. No other action to inform Marshwood residents of either the bus service, nor of the threat to it!

BTV has no wish to interfere with Thorncombe matters but we are assured that most residents did get a copy although we are aware of some residents who did not. Certainly, for Marshwood, it was only bus users who were in on the secret.

More important, the unusual service proffered with its impractical and inconvenient booking arrangements, onerous restrictions and unjustified age qualification makes the service too hard for many to use.

And why can the ubiquitous bus passes not be used?

What is wrong with our advertising service? We would have printed the

news with pleasure. The wider coverage of the Bridport News would have helped.

BTV has heard unofficially that the new service has not been sufficiently used and that the official report will recommend the dropping of the service due to lack of popularity.

We did contact DCT and although they e-mailed to say we would be contacted by their chairman we still await the call. Perhaps this courtesy is typical of those who run these services.

If you add in the complexity of the service compared to the identical Thursday bus service and the secrecy displayed around the whole project, to the history of local bus services, it is hard to conclude that there has ever been a serious effort by DCT to give us an improved service. This movement is just a sop to throw to us villagers before closing it down again, a sop that allows DCT to claim "well we tried."

No you did not.

What are you afraid of Dorset Community Trust?

Offer the same bus service as on Thursday, publicise, promote it properly, work to a timetable, honour the bus passes, give it time for our elderly to get used to the new bus, and **passengers will follow; locals, tourists and visitors alike.**



Slowly but surely

As broadband gets ever closer, Charles Somers brings us up to date with the promised progress:

Roll-out of superfast broadband (SFBB) across the Marshwood Vale is progressing, slowly but surely, towards delivery in the period from June to September of this year and you can see the areas concerned marked in green on the

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/broadband/map>.

A large part of this network upgrade (covering some 400 premises) will comprise new-type fibre optic cable networks to be run overhead on the present poles used to carry existing copper cables plus a few new ones.

These networks will terminate at new fibre optic (FO) cable connection boxes mounted on almost all poles (around 100 in total) from where 'drop cables' can be used to make a final FO connection to individual premises, thus providing a FTTP (Fibre-To-The-Premises) solution.

The remaining parts of our area will have SFBB delivered from new green cabinets (FTTC, Fibre-To-The-Cabinet) with final connection to premises made via existing copper cables; a small part of these to be delivered in 2017, those marked in pink on the map.

BT Openreach has completed detailed planning for three separate FO networks

- **Marshwood village, Fishpond, western Thorncombe plus the western end of the Marshwood Vale;**
- **Parts of Broadwindsor, Burstock, parts of Stoke Abbott, Pilsdon, Bettiscombe and the eastern end of the Marshwood Vale;**
- **Parts of Thorncombe, mostly on the north side.**

Presently only a few Internet Service Providers - we know of BT, Plusnet, Zen - are willing to offer SFBB service via this new all fibre (FTTP) network, and connection will involve the installation of a new FO cable from the nearest pole to two new boxes to be installed inside premises (an article in the Summer issue of the BTV provided detail). Because of the additional work involved, it may take several weeks for an installation to be completed and telephone service will continue to be delivered via the existing copper cable.

For those to be connected instead via FTTC, connection time will be quicker since a simple re-connection at the new FTTC cabinet will allow for an upgrade to SFBB via existing copper cable.



In Marshwood cabinet engineering is out of date!

Monthly charges for the new FTTP or FTTC service should not be much higher than those charged for our existing slow ADSL service. It is also worth shopping around since there are now available many bundled deals at fixed monthly charges, these are cheaper than paying for separate services.

A few of the 400 premises to be covered by the FTTP solution may be located more than 400 m from the nearest FO connection box and, in these cases, there may need to be a discussion with the ISP and Openreach on a possible additional connection charge.

There will remain some areas (marked in yellow on the map) where neither FTTC nor FTTP will be available and future plans hope to also cover these.

In the meantime a support scheme has been set up to help people find a satellite based broadband solution – see dorsetforyou.com/broadband/satellite.



For those who find our main SFBB article too technical or confusing just remember the main message:

register via the dorsetforyou.com/superfast web-site.

The SFBB team at Dorset County Council will then contact you individually as soon as the new service becomes available to your premises and will also provide advice to you on exactly how to go about requesting with an ISP a changeover to a higher-speed service.

*Your ordinary broadband will continue to be supplied unless **you** ask **your** internet service provider to make the change.*



Openreach makes a connection

Public Consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan for the next 20 years

First Public Meeting at Blackdown Village Hall

Friday 26 Feb (1-5 pm) and Saturday 27 Feb (10:30am to 4:30 pm)

We need you to be involved to give us your views so do please come

An invitation letter has already been sent out to everyone by Mike Robinson, chairman of our Steering Group and that details the main subject areas on which we need your views. A detailed questionnaire will be available as will people from our Steering Group to take your views and to discuss any issues you may have.

The outcome of this consultation process will allow us to move on to producing a first draft of the plan to be presented to you at a further public meeting.

So what can a Neighbourhood Plan do for Upper Marshwood Vale and why should people get involved ?

The Plan Can:

- Clarify aspirations for the future
- Indicate where & what type of development should take place
- Include policies that add detail to the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan
- Build on the work done so far with the CLT and the Parish Plan
- Enable potential for grant aid
- Allow further potential for delivering additional affordable housing
- Provide the opportunity to be proactive in planning...to be positive & creative ...not just reactive and negative
- Enable new funds to flow into the area: once the plan has been approved, 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding secured by West Dorset District Council would become available
- Enable a detailed 'Projects Plan' to be developed so that real local environmental/other improvements can be implemented in future years
- Enable Upper Marshwood Vale to submit coherent and professional representations on future planning applications, linked to Neighbourhood Plan Policies
- When finally adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Statutory Development Plan and thus be taken into account in making planning decisions.

The team looks forward to meeting you and hearing your views



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A yarn about Yarn Magazine



previously set up a much-read blog called “Real West Dorset”. So it was not really very surprising to find them heading up the new Yarn.

Back in the autumn, Yarn Magazine suddenly failed to publish and many who enjoyed the eclectic mix were disappointed.

What happened?

Like so many productions of its kind, the magazine was run on a shoestring. Just as the new enterprise began to pay off as forecasted in the business plan, Sara was unexpectedly admitted to hospital for a sudden emergency operation. The condition was life threatening and she was in hospital for 10 days in August, before returning home for a three-month

Many of the residents of Upper Marshwood Vale were puzzled when their latest copy of Yarn Magazine failed to reach them.

The start-up magazine had made a great impact on our community. It was produced by a team of four working at local firm Watershed PR, plus a number of talented contributors.

Two of the founders were Sara and Jonathan Hudston, who live in our parish of Marshwood. As the MD of Watershed PR, Sara had a great track record as she had created an effective operation, which has helped to market a good number of local enterprises. Jonathan had been BBC Spotlight’s reporter for Dorset and

convalescence. In such circumstances it was impossible to produce the Yarn and publication had to be suspended.

We are happy to report that Sara has made a good and full recovery.

However, prospects are not so bright for Yarn Magazine. It may be that it can be resumed in due course or we may have seen the last of it. Circumstances could and will change so let us hope we can read the next edition of the best magazine for wide distribution in our area.

Letters to the Clerk

Mr Vanderwolfe, Parish Clerk,
Newenham, 5 Halletts Way,
Axminster, EX13 5NB

Valehouse Farm,
Whitchurch Canonicorum,,
Bridport, Dorset, DT 6 6RP
31st December 2015

Dear Mr Vanderwolfe

Rights of Way maintenance

Overall I feel the parish council does a thoroughly good job in looking after our services. For instance the social housing at Bramblehay is a huge success, and the support for Charles Somers campaign for rural broadband shows great understanding of the community's interests. However while focusing on this, the council have let the standards of rights of way maintenance go down, by allowing the farmers to obstruct them.

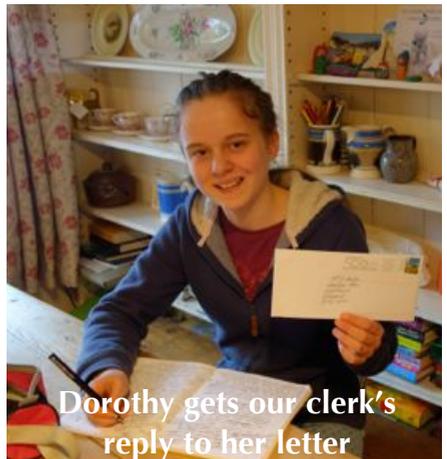
There are several reasons why they should work to bring this back up to standard. One reason is that these obstructions, and if they are not sorted out will cause trouble with the government. This would be time consuming to sort out and might keep the council from being active in the community.

Furthermore, it is highly inconvenient to dodge or avoid these obstructions. For instance there is often electric fence strung across the rights of way with no built-in gate to get through. In the case of riders, it would be almost impossible to get a nervous horse to jump the fence and they would have to turn around and go a different way.

While this may seem petty and based on rare occurrences, that is not the case. For example, at Prime Farm there is a deep, long trench with excess dirt piled at the side, running right across the bridleway. It has been there for nearly a year and was originally dug to put in a water pipe. Having obstructions like this will cause holiday makers to post bad reviews on places such as Trip Adviser, and will deter others from visiting. Given the large number of holiday cottages in the Marshwood Vale, this would have a negative effect on the local economy.

As I have said, the parish council already does an excellent job and this would only be a small, easy to achieve improvement. I hope you will take my letter into consideration.

Yours sincerely,
Dorothy Hudston



Dorothy gets our clerk's
reply to her letter

It is not usual to hear about a young girl writing to her local council to complain and to compliment their work, so we are pleased to reproduce her letter - and the prompt reply she received from John Vanderwolfe, our parish clerk. What started as a school project to write a letter of complaint to a company, has become based on a real incident, with genuine consequences, requiring a proper answer.

Beneath the Vale does not usually print ages - for most of us that would be an unnecessary infringement on our privacy - but as her 12th birthday will fall as this issue is distributed, Dorothy is a well warranted exception. We have always printed reasonable or justifiable letters to the editor, a letter to our parish clerk complete with reply is even more welcome

UPPER MARSHWOOD VALE PARISH COUNCIL

Dear Ms Hudston,

Thank you for your letter dated the 31st December 2015 which was received on the 4th January 2016. Thank you also for your kind comments regarding the Council's efforts regarding social housing and broadband.

In relation to your comment that you feel that the parish council has let the standard of public rights of way decline I feel needs some clarification.

The responsibility for the maintenance of public rights of way sits with the County Council as they are the highway authority. Having said that had a report been forwarded to me that a public right of way was being obstructed I would have endeavoured to report it to the relevant officer on the Rights of Way section, however, I can find no record of a complaint having been submitted to me or to any of my councillors other than a bridleway that connected with the adjoining parish, to which I attended a meeting of that parish where the matter was discussed.

With regards to your comments regarding Prime Farm I will ask the lengthsman to look into this, but it is the first I have heard about it. With respect the council is not in the position of being able to regularly walk all the footpaths and bridleways in the parish, so we have to rely on feedback from walkers before we become aware that there is a problem. You can also of course use the facilities of the Dorset-for-you website to report such incidents, or can contact the County Council ROW department.

Sadly, unlike Devon parishes, the County Council does not provide the parish council with any funding to support the upkeep of Rights of Way and of course has in recent years had its budgets cut, so that often there can be a long wait for action, however, they will deal with obstructions on public rights of way, and of course have the power and duty to do so.

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Yours sincerely

John Vanderwolfe FILCM
Clerk to the Council

Marshwood CLT news - Bramblehay January 2016

David Hitchcock welcomes new occupiers



Rob Asprey and David Hitchcock get the keys to Bramblehay

At last the houses at Bramblehay are completed and I am pleased to say that all the houses have been let and the first tenants have started to move in. In the last BTV I asked for suggestions as to what your CLT could do next. The Board will have some £1400 to spend each year and some people have asked me where the money will come from.

Your CLT owns the land on which the Affordable Houses have been built. However just to make it clear, we do not own the plot on which No 8 is built.

We agreed with Hastoe Housing Association at the outset to lease them the land for 125 years and in return we receive a ground rent of £4 per house per week on the 7 houses which will be paid annually.

At the Trusts AGM held at the end of November a number of suggestions were put forward and amongst these were the following. To help pay for some First Aid training for a few willing locals in case of need, a playing field for the local children,

a bus shelter for those waiting for the bus particularly the school children in the morning, and help with some form of sewage system for the village of Marshwood.

Your Board did not think that main drainage was an item we should get involved with as it was something that the Council and Wessex Water would have to be responsible for. However any such system will impose a cost on each house holder and we felt here is a subject that the Neighbourhood Plan could address.

But before Wessex Water are approached for their opinion the village will have an opportunity to make their views known at the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan presentation at Blackdown Hall on 26 and 27th February 2016 .

As most of my comments seem to be about Marshwood may I make things clear, the CLT covers the whole of the Upper Marshwood Vale area so please do not think that Marshwood is all that matters. It is up to you to tell us what you would wish the Board to consider. I know little of what goes on in Pilsdon or Bettiscombe.

David Hitchcock
Chairman Marshwood CLT

Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations

Ann Studley has news of the summer's festivities

We are sure by now that you all know Her Majesty The Queen is this year celebrating her 90th Birthday.

Besides all the celebrations that go on in London, all communities are being asked to have a Community Lunch on Sunday 12th June.

We are planning to hold what is being called "A Hamper Lunch" where everyone brings their own food.

This will be held in Bettiscombe Hall from 12.30 p.m.

Soft drinks, wine, and a "toast" and Birthday cake will be provided by us
Numbers are limited so please book early.

To help fund this, we will be holding a 50/50 Auction at Bettiscombe Hall on Saturday 30 April at 7 p.m.

Mr James Rowe has kindly agreed to be our Auctioneer, so please let us have any unwanted goods for the Auction (sorry, no electrical goods).

Light refreshments will be available on the evening.

The Hall will be open on Friday 29th April from 10 a.m until 4 p.m to receive goods, and again from 2 p.m on the Saturday for viewing .

For further details regarding both events, please contact
Ann Studley on 01297 678370
or Jo Pillinger on 01297 678319

In addition to the "Hamper Lunch", there will be a Village Bonfire on Saturday 11th June at The Dungeon, Marshwood at 8.30 p.m

if you have anything suitable for the bonfire please contact Tony Studley on 01297 678370 beforehand.

Soup, rolls, etc will be provided.

We do hope as many of you can join us to Celebrate.

Haunch of Venison

1¹/₂kg piece haunch of Venison

Marinade:

280ml red wine
140ml port
Medium onion, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
peppercorns
1 bayleaf



To complete:

16 g lard
30 g butter
2 onions finely chopped
140 ml venison or beef stock
Salt and pepper
15g flour
3 tablespoons double cream

The haunch should be layered in fat and tied into a neat joint, which can be done by the butcher. Put into a deep bowl with all the marinade ingredients. Cover and leave to marinade for three days in the fridge.

When ready to cook, set oven to Gas 3, 325 F or 170 C. Heat the lard and half the butter in a heatproof casserole. Add the onions and cook slowly until softened. Lift the meat out of the marinade and drain thoroughly. Add to the onions and cook over a high heat until brown on all sides.

Strain the marinade and add the liquid to the casserole with the stock and a little seasoning. Bring to the boil. Cover, transfer to the oven and cook gently for 2¹/₂-3 hours until tender.

Near the end of the cooking time mix the remaining butter and the flour to a paste and whisk into the bubbling venison juices. Cook, stirring gently, until the sauce thickens. Taste the sauce for seasoning and stir in the cream just before serving the meat thickly sliced. 16

Silly page

How did it all start?

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a young wife by the name of Dorothy. And Dot Com was a comely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when you canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she was several saddle bags short of a camel load, but did say, "How dear?"

And Dot did reply, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable - UPS."

Now Abraham did think long and he decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price, without leaving his tent.

To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew, and she called it Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS). Now she also did develop a language to transmit ideas and pictures. And this she named Hebrew To The People or HTTP.

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horse fly take to camel dung. They became known as Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites or NERDS.

And lo, the land was so fevered with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of the drums that no one noticed that the real riches did go to the enterprising drum maker Brother William of Gates, who did buy off every drum maker in the land. Indeed he did insist on drums that would only work with Brother Gates drumheads and drum sticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we started is being taken over by others."

And Abraham did look out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or eBay as it came to be known. He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are." And Dot did reply, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." YAHOO said Abraham. And because it was Dots idea, they named it YAHOO DOT COM.

Then did Abraham's cousin Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid - GEEK - that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate ¹⁷ things around the countryside.

So it was that it soon became called God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything or GOOGLE.

And you can look it up if you want.

Wild life in the Woods

Love Little Giant Wood?

Come and lend a hand...
Start the new year off on the right foot!

Dorset Wildlife Trust are leading
conservation work parties at Little Giant Wood

- Learn some new skills
- Meet like-minded people
- Coffee, cake & baked potatoes provided

Next work party: Thursday, 3rd March

Come along and build a nest box as part of
National Nest Box Week...

- Family friendly
- Help the birds of
Little Giant Wood
- Tea and cake



Dorset Wildlife Trust workshop on
Saturday, 20th February

For more details and to book, contact Matthew Bowditch on
Tel: 07970 016736 E-mail: m1bowditch@virgin.net



Parish Council Meeting November 19th

This meeting at Bettiscombe Village Hall promised to be a corker. No less than 4 planning applications were on the agenda; then it was announced the Council had two more to discuss. In fact just two of the applications could be described as contentious.

With all 4 district and county councillors present as well as Mike Robinson who would tell us about updates to the Neighbourhood Plan, councillors seemed to be in for the long haul. Fortunately the senior councillors kept their comments to a minimum leaving Mike to relaunch the plan, now with agreed boundaries following the parish bounds.

In fact Hawkchurch has also agreed their boundaries with East Devon authorities so all co-operation will be at a local level. In this way the income to both villages would be optimised. In dealing with the financial package, John Vanderwolfe advised that we should call down available funds only when needed. The next meeting will be at Axminster Conservative Club, 7.30 pm Wednesday 2nd of December, when Mike hoped to welcome others joining in the project.

A unanimous vote for John Brown welcomed another councillor to represent Bettiscombe. As an vice-chair of the Village Hall committee his appointment completes a full council so is very welcome.

However with the upcoming applications it was decided to complete the formalities of appointment at the next council meeting.

Under Finance, John Vanderwolfe proposed a new format and more regular reporting of the council's position at each council meeting. The improvements in the overall finances of the council compared to the last year was noted.

An outline application to build 2 homes on the Bottle Lane site was next. In this application it was noted that the houses, already pushed for space, took up the whole width of the site including the old green lane still in a very good condition.

It was pointed out that to have a brick wall across the lane would limit the farmers and public access that clearly has existed for 700 years. Coupled with concerns about allowed pollution from the neighbouring Bottle Inn, this gave the council serious problems. In documents this discharge was both legal and agreed and relates to ancient sewage from the Bottle according to one councillor. The density of the build was also criticised. As such this could by itself preclude development of the site but it was the access problem that upset councillors.

Cllr. Sewell pointed out that this was an example of unsustainable and unnecessary development now or supported in the new Local Plan.

However it was a 'member of the public' - Community Land Trust chairman, David Hitchcock - who had earlier spoken, when he had summarised the position for councillors. The dispute is principally between two farmers who use the lane, Robert Langford and Steven Bowditch and Mr and Mrs Mears who have bought the site and want to build on it. Villagers in general have also recorded their long-term access as well as a recent walk by school children down the Lane.

David Hitchcock reported that the dispute has been escalated to 'First tier' of Land Registry and that the CLT was seeking to represent the whole community's interest, since the Mears have claimed Adverse Possession - a procedure more often used to gain rights when these may have lapsed, not the case in this instance. Mr & Mrs Mears have claimed the whole width of the green lane to allow them to build their four-bedroom houses on the narrow width of land. It appears that the representative of the previous owner has signed a note that the land was sold without mention of existing rights.

Now the Sadborow Solar Farm had its turn, led by opposition from Cllr Bob Wyatt. Much of the land in the Vale is of a similar agricultural category as the land of the site,

a point disputed by Marshwood village farmers, that there is no reason for another solar farm and that the farm damages the environment and hence tourism.

This seemed to gain support of other councillors including several farmers.

Mention of any community benefit payment of up to £50,000 was firmly discounted by Bob Wyatt as an improper suggestion from your editor.

With such strong opposition including the effect on some residents for whom the height of the land means the farm will be in their view, the proposal to reject the application was carried 10-1, to join Hawkcherch's rejection so this now goes to planners and District Council to decide.

Other planning applications including 2 applications for tree surgery were all passed.

Golden Cap View, whose tenant is unreasonably threatened with loss of his home, was the subject of complaint that the planners had ignored our own meetings in order to avoid any discussion on the subject. At the previous meeting, as we reported in the last issue, no information was available for us to act upon. By this meeting it was too late for our support of our villager.

Cllr Sewell has raised this matter with officials.

A request from our Young Farmers Club for a suitable site for a defibrillator - or two! - given from the Clubs's own funds, has been received.

Since a similar unit already resides at Kitwhistle Garage, it was felt that the logical place for Marshwood, at the village stores or Marshwood Garage was too near so the Shave Cross Inn was

recommended, with an alternative site at Marshwood School.

So a complex series of decisions, completed in a little over 2½ hours had been achieved in a quiet yet effective way.

Our next meeting also at Bettiscombe, was at 7.30 on 3rd December 2015.



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Parish Council Meeting, December 3rd

After the extended November Parish Council meeting, it was somewhat surprising for Upper Marshwood Vale's councillors to have a second meeting just two weeks later. An abbreviated agenda showed no planning applications - normally a potentially delaying event - and only the item 7.3: to agree the budget and precept for 2016/17, held any sign of needing councillors total attention.

It turned out that this precaution set out by our clerk, John Vanderwolfe, was hardly necessary.

As Chairman, Matthew Bowditch started promptly and rapidly reached the financial item.

As it transpired there was little to note in the budget, save the drastically improved position the Council now occupies.

The largest item of council expenditure is the cost of our lengthsman, now without any support from Dorset County Council, however unjustified this pointless cost-cutting remains. Your council has adopted a policy of limiting the work to about 50% of previous levels, allowing for unfortunate winter weather. So far, as performed by Stephen Lee, under the control of Cllr Bob Wyatt, this has proved a satisfactory level of commitment.

Another key cost for councillors has been the cost of this magazine. Here we had good news for councillors as the campaign for advertisers conducted by the editorial group

has generated more income. For next year we expect costs of £1,400, less an income of £950.

As Beneath the Vale is sponsored by the council, it has to remain a nett cost for the council so we do have plans to improve the product - more colour, more pages, greater printing costs, should our income improve.

Important as all of the details and other changes are, the effect on the total budget is only a 2.5% increase in cost to the community.

However there was a slight extra item to consider, a pre-application for alterations to a footpath through Higher Sminhay Farm. This is a tryout before the authorities allow changes so all parties can agree alterations which are then applied - and paid for. Councillors felt there was a better way of getting the same effect so we will make contact with the family to sort this out.

But this was dealt with swiftly allowing councillors to leave Bettiscombe Village Hall a little over half an hour after the meeting started.

Time well spent.

Parish Council Meeting, January 21st

As cold rain poured down, parish, district and a county councillor assembled at a nicely pre-warmed Bettiscombe Village Hall for the first of 2016's meetings. A number of councillors had indicated their absence leaving a small but valid group to start the meeting.

However the weather had delayed some more councillors who were able to join in as Chairman Matthew Bowditch excluded himself from an upcoming planning consent on behalf of a relative.

Four members of the public were present and Caroline Dilke started her appeal for the bus services as reflected in the Bridport News' Marshwood village item of the current week. Seeking all-round support against the proposed cuts, she cited the problems for many elderly residents, often too elderly to drive their own car.

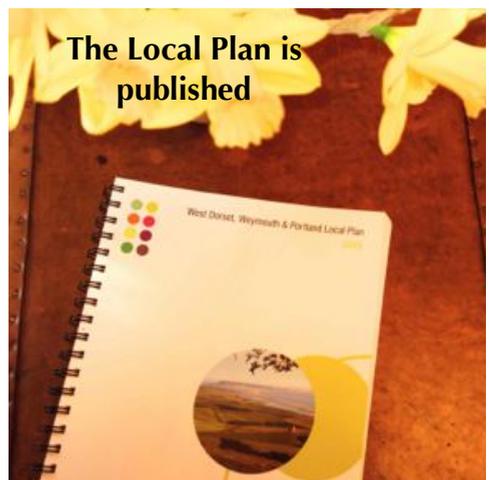
There followed a general debate in which the Thorncombe car service was discussed as one solution, while Caroline suggested that the problem could be alleviated if passengers' bus passes were ignored. For the record the bus is a 16-seater with 14 seats already used so lack of capacity is not the problem.

Mike Robinson who is chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan spoke from the floor. The details are reported elsewhere, but as his house is up for sale and he is to move out of the area, he told us that his replacement would be Charles Somers whose broadband efforts are reaching completion.

County and District councillors then reported their progress with County's Daryl Turner turning to the unwanted referendum foisted on the council by a co-ordinated campaign estimated to cost £100,000 for no good reason.

As the end goals of greater effectiveness without losing democracy have been agreed and are in progress, such a waste is very hard to justify in these frugal times. Daryl also introduced the concept of double devolution as both District and County councils would be involved

District Councillor Jacqui Sewell supported his referendum comments adding that one member of the new partnership, Weymouth and Portland held annual elections of one third of councillors thereby wasting 2/3rd of the costs.



She discussed one aspect of the Local Plan, the need to provide for 15,000 new homes, but we are still short of what would be required. Dorchester and Sherborne have been marked out for such expansion (thank goodness) and the Policy Scrutiny committee will be getting ahead of progress in setting up working parties to better meet the Plan's deadlines.

What seems like an arcane committee decision would have huge effects to the Local Plan should it not succeed. This is something that our Neighbourhood Plan will feed into.

Under planning applications, 2 shepherds huts and a garage conversion for holiday lets were approved. Ironically Matthew Bowditch having excused himself found that missing local councillors meant that he was the only one present who knew about these huts.

Councillor's reports have largely been covered, so this left just the date, time and place for next meeting. Mention was made of an affidavit from the owners of the field off Bottle lane. As this repeats their claim to the whole of Bottle Lane, this was pointed out.

It seems that difficulties in parking at Stoke Abbott have reduced the use of this village hall, so just one meeting in the summer will be scheduled.

In the meantime the next meeting will be at the now easy-to-park and mud-free Bettiscombe village hall on the 17th March at 7.30 pm.

Stephen Lee

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Stephen Lee

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