

Beneath the Vale

Published on behalf of the Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council

Summer 2016: Issue 20



Wednesday is an exciting day in Stoke Abbott. That's when the village email goes out from Richard and Danielle Wright listing the bread and cakes on offer that week from The Wobbly Cottage Bakery.

Everyone emails in their orders and on Friday morning, Rich gets baking. He'll work right through Friday night until the early hours of Saturday morning, handmaking delicious sourdough loaves, seasonal savouries and tempting sweet pastries.

The loaves go in the oven last, two at a time, one in the electric oven and one in the Aga. Come Saturday morning villagers queue to collect the results, the bread still warm and smelling of heaven.

'Sourdough is the king of breads, it's the best,' says Rich. 'It's taken us a couple of years experimenting and getting the recipe right. Sourdough can be tricky, but it's worth it.'

The Wrights started their micro-bakery in their home four years ago. They both had backgrounds in the catering industry – Rich has been a chef at several local cafes. The couple had a year-old son and the arrival of their daughter prompted them to make the leap they'd been dreaming of for years and set up their own business.

'Olivia coming along was the turning point,' says Rich. 'I had to decide whether to go back to cheffing full-time but I'd never have got to see the children.'

'We started out with the aim of making and selling preserves and doing bread and cakes as an extra,' explains Danni.

'But the bread was so popular that they flipped and now the bread's the main thing. We still make preserves but in small batches of six at a time when there's fruit in season.'

The 'village bake' is a new development, started this spring.

Baking for the village

'We were booked to do a food festival on Easter Sunday but the weather was so bad, they cancelled at the last minute, on Good Friday. We had already started baking and bought all the ingredients,' says Danni.

'I thought, "what on earth are we going to do?" I sent out an email around the village – and we sold the lot in two hours. It just rolled on from there.'

When Beneath the Vale visited, the Wrights had just heard they'd won two Taste of

the West Gold awards – one for their olive sourdough and the other for their Scotch eggs. Coincidentally, the news came on Rich's birthday.

'We're thrilled with that, it's a mark of success,' says Danni. She handles sales and marketing while Rich does the baking.

The Wrights are full of plans for the future: 'We want to expand our production. Ideally we'd like to run a café and bakery separate from our home, but it's hard to find those places. For now we hope to expand what we do from home,' says Rich.

'We'd like to widen the village bake and include other nearby villages as well as Stoke Abbott – so get in touch!'

To join in The Wobbly Cottage weekly village bake, email your address to the Wrights on info@thewobblycottage.co.uk



Another batch on the way - Fridays are busy days for the Wrights.

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Deadline for autumn issue is the end of August. Next parish council meetings are 21 July and 15 September at 7.30pm in Bettiscombe Village Hall. See the website at www.uppermarshwoodcouncil.org for minutes and further details.

Sadborrow solar farm refused

After a widely promoted campaign to stop Sadbrow's proposed solar farm, planning officer Bob Burden refused the plans under delegated powers on 28 April.

The scheme was refused on the grounds that it would harm the character and special qualities of the site.

Clarification

In a letter about Rights of Way addressed to our council and reprinted on page 12 in issue 19 of Beneath the Vale, the writer mentions Prime Farm as the location of a long-standing obstruction. There was no intention to imply that the owner of Prime Farm was the owner of the land concerned and we are happy to apologise for any confusion caused.

Planners decided that the energy and economic benefits of the farm did not outweigh the harm to the natural beauty which would be inflicted on this remote and cherished landscape.

They said: 'It is considered that the scheme, by reason of its extent and scale, comprising dark coloured PV panel arrays in linear repetitive rows, together with the ancillary infrastructure would result in a geometric industrial type development visible from public rights of way. This would harm the character and special qualities of the site, the Axe Valley Hills Landscape Character Area, the setting of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the local landscape.'

The pressure group Stop Sadbrow Solar raised many letters and played a strong part in persuading planners that the local view was generally against the project.

From the Editor(s)

Ali Cameron writes:

A few weeks ago I had a headache. This coincided with my wife Avril's hip replacement, so I put it down to my concerns for her wellbeing, or even preparation of the next *Beneath the Vale*. Normally, I enjoy good health, but this would not go away, so I gave in and went to see the doctor. The upshot is that I have spent time in Dorchester hospital being checked out, tested, scanned – and found wanting.

It is no secret that I am an insulin-dependent diabetic, have had a quadruple heart bypass and have other less important medical conditions, yet I take my pills and am fine. But when I arrived at the hospital accompanied by Charles Somers, I was somewhat incoherent. In my own mind everything was quite clear, but I could not express myself, nor could I find the correct words. Since Charles was with me and knows me well, I was lucky he could translate.

I had 'lost my mind', especially the verbal skills. Without warning I would lose the power of expressing myself, not very useful for an editor. Yet deep inside there was no problem; I just could not communicate the ideas that I needed to get across.

A CT scan takes about five minutes and my problem was soon spotted: I have a small bleed on the brain – which once and for all at least shows that I do have a brain in spite of what they say. I was admitted for 24 hours as a precaution only and Charles was good enough to collect me the very next day. I am improving, but the spring issue of BTV was unavoidably missed.

The best news I am keeping to last. At a meeting in April I indicated to our chairman Matthew Bowditch and the whole editorial team that I would need to stand aside as I could no longer do the job to my own standards. I have vacated the editor's chair, handing over responsibility to Sara Hudston who is now your new editor.

This is a good move on so many fronts. Sara brings to her new role a far greater range of skills than I could claim including social media, which she will introduce in upcoming issues. Without a doubt Sara will bring integrity, determination, sense of humour, commercial sense, and so much more to her new role.

Still it is with the greatest regret that I am leaving what has been a deeply fascinating five years. It has been an honour and a privilege.

Sara Hudston writes:

I was really sorry to hear of Ali's ill health and I'm glad that he's been making a good recovery. I hope to follow his excellent example as editor in bringing you a lively and accurate bulletin about the things that matter in our area.

Beneath the Vale has never been dull and I don't intend it to become so.

I live and work full-time here in the parish and I'm honoured to help in this voluntary role. Please do get in touch if you have an idea for an article, a comment, or even a correction. You can email me on:

sarajhudston@gmail.com

The poster is a large grey triangle pointing downwards, with white text inside. The text is arranged in a central column, with additional details on the left and right sides. At the bottom, there is a line of small text.

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Rural bus services - the villages fight back

A huge amount has been happening with our local bus routes since the last edition of Beneath the Vale in January. Cllr David Marsh of Thorncombe Parish Council gives a summary of events so far.

Dorset County Council gave only 11.5 weeks in total to replace the de-registered routes so there was little time to act. However, much has been achieved and I'd like to thank everyone who has been involved.

Fifty-two people attended a meeting at the Bottle Inn on 17 March, most of them bus users and supporters with good representation from the local parish councils in the area, as well as district and county councillors.



Thorncombe Cllr Sally Welford and Cllr David Marsh, members of the working group. The other members are Cllr Steve Dunford, Cllr Andrew Turpin (Tatworth and Forton), and David's wife, Mary (pictured second from right in the top photo).

Route 688: Thorncombe to Axminster

This popular and well-used route has not been de-registered and is safe for now. Devon County Council is continuing to subsidise the service so that it should be able to run through 2016 and beyond. Concessionary bus passes can be used.

Route 14: Marshwood to Chard via Thorncombe

The timetable for this service was changed in May to reduce costs. The bus now runs every Thursday in conjunction with the 688 to Axminster. This reverts to the original way of running the 14 and 688 as one bus with one driver on the same day. This was how it worked in 2014 before the first round of rural bus cuts.



Above: Route 14 arrives at Marshwood War Memorial. Below left: The same bus in Thorncombe.

Route 14 is typically between 75% and 90% full. However, it does not get any subsidies. Although it will need financial support to continue, Dorset Community Transport have chosen not to de-register it. We've set up a working group of Tatworth/Forton and Thorncombe parish councillors to co-ordinate fund-raising activities. The first of these was a special Father's Day breakfast club in Thorncombe on 19 June. We're also speaking to businesses in Chard to see if they are willing to help support the service.

Dorset Community Transport's Plus Bus

The Plus Bus is a new-ish service running on Wednesdays from Thorncombe to Bridport taking in Marshwood and other villages in the Marshwood Vale and Char Valley.

To use this bus you need to register with DCT and then call and book your seat at least 48 hours before travelling. You agree your pick up and drop off points when you book.

There is a fixed fare of £5 return for each passenger. Concessionary bus passes cannot be used. Ring 01258 287 980 to register and book.

Progress being made with the Neighbourhood Plan

We are making steady progress towards putting together a Neighbourhood Plan for the Upper Marshwood Vale. It has been very important that we get a view from as many people as possible, regarding those issues and opportunities, which they feel ought to be included in our plan.



We have held two public consultations so far. The first was in February at Blackdown Village Hall. Forty people came and gave their views as to what we should include. In May we held a well-attended meeting in Stoke Abbott village hall, where residents gave us their views on what they felt was needed for their village.

We have also presented to Marshwood School and they have agreed to carry out two projects – one in which each child will produce an A to Z work-book of those special things which catch their eye around the Vale, and the other where all the children can contribute to a pictorial map of the Parish. We will give a prize to the best A to Z contribution and include some of their work in our plan.

We are analysing the results of the two scoping exercises, and the next step is to publish and send out a questionnaire to all households, covering the key areas, which have been brought up in these exercises. We can then establish the level of support each one has.

We can also identify landowners who would be prepared to make land available for small-scale housing development, a playground or other uses. It is important that we involve as many of the residents in this project and we will have a website developed and launch a Facebook page. Residents will be able to look at all the documentation that has been put together, make comments and add ideas to the plan.



The issues (with the most support) that have been raised so far are:

- **Community use of church (Marshwood) - installation of kitchen and toilet facilities.**
- **Sewage treatment plant(s) (Marshwood).**
- **Playground for children (Marshwood and Stoke Abbott).**
- **Additional affordable housing for local people (Marshwood and Stoke Abbott).**
- **Protecting the future of the shop and post office (Marshwood).**
- **Community Shop selling local produce (Stoke Abbott).**
- **Preserve The New Inn as a pub (Stoke Abbott).**
- **Off-road parking (Stoke Abbott) .**
- **Artisans' workshops - eco and self-sufficient (Marshwood and Stoke Abbott).**
- **'Safe to school' - footpath (Marshwood).**
- **Improved mobile phone coverage (general comment).**

As soon as the questionnaire has been sent out and the results analysed, we will arrange village meetings across the parish to present our findings and get your feedback, before we start to put together the draft plan.

We will need to use an external consultant to assist us with this, as we have to do it according to strict guidelines. We will also need to consult with West Dorset's planning department, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty advisors and other external consultees (CPRE, Natural England, etc.)

We are holding our next consultation meeting in Bettiscombe Village Hall on Wednesday 29 June at 7pm, all welcome.

Mike Robinson

Stephen Lee
Landscape Gardening
 1 Vale View, Salwayash,
 Bridport, DT6 5JB

Hi,
 My team and I do most kinds of gardening from clearing overgrown acres to fixing fences, planning patios and paddocks to looking after your lawn and maintaining landscapes.

Oh yes! We are also the parish lengthsman so we fend off floods by clearing ditches, placing storage bins and looking after public places for your parish council.

So if you have a garden problem, why not give us a call?

Stephen Lee: 07971 116660
stephenlee93@hotmail.co.uk

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email the Editor for details sarajhudston@gmail.com

Public Consultation on a Neighbourhood Plan for the next 20 years

Public Meeting at Bettiscombe Parish Hall Wednesday 29 June (7-9 pm)

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

Following on from public consultation meetings, held in February at Blackdown and in May at Stoke Abbott, we would like to invite residents of Bettiscombe and Pilsdon to give us their views on what should be in our Neighbourhood Plan.

Anyone else who missed the Blackdown or Stoke Abbott meetings is also welcome. We will make a presentation on what issues have been identified so far and invite you to add to them by giving us your thoughts on:

What is missing that we will need in the future?

What do we want to preserve?

Where exactly could new things be located?

The team looks forward to meeting you and hearing your views

The outcome of this consultation process will allow us to produce 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 you 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 Community Land Trust 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 be taken into account in making planning decisions

Recipe: Raspberry cinnamon torte

This recipe from Joy McClellan has been tried and tested over many years. It can be served warm or cold, is quick to make and always popular. Serves six.

Ingredients:

150g butter or soft margarine
150g caster sugar
150g ground almonds
150g white self-raising flour
1 egg
Ground cinnamon
225g fresh raspberries
Icing sugar
Flaked almonds

Method:

Set the oven to 180°C/350°F
Gas Mark 4.

Grease and base line a 21.5cm spring-release cake tin.

Place the softened butter, caster sugar, ground almonds, flour and egg in a bowl or processor with 5ml ground cinnamon and beat well.

Spread half the almond mixture into the tin, using a fork to flatten lightly. Sprinkle over the raspberries then dot over the remaining almond



mixture so it almost covers the fruit. Finally sprinkle over the flaked almonds.

Stand the tin on a baking sheet, then bake for about 1 hour, covering lightly with paper when well browned.

The torte should feel just firm to the touch, with a springy texture. Cool in the tin for about 1 hour.

Dust with sieved cinnamon and icing sugar and serve with whipped cream folded through a little natural Greek yogurt.

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish

Council meeting: 16 March

As our Parish Council clerk John Vanderwolfe had an important event requiring his presence elsewhere on the third Thursday of the month, the date for this council was moved to the previous day. But then it was realised Bettiscombe Village Hall was already booked for that evening.

After a late change of venue we finally agreed to meet at Stoke Abbott on Wednesday 16th of March. This late change proved very satisfactory as no fewer than six members of the public found their way to the village hall to join our discussions.

Bus services

Speaking during the democratic period, Caroline Dilke from Marshwood was much aggrieved about threatened cuts to the already infrequent bus services. She made it clear that she felt let down by your council's apparent uninterest in these services, especially as some of the people we represent do not have cars. She claimed the matter was being ignored.

Your district councillor, Jacqui Sewell, and I did attend a meeting at Mosterton for which I was later strongly criticised by Ms Dilke for not speaking up on the subject. It is the first occasion I have been criticised for not being verbose enough!

County councillor Rebecca Knox had called the meeting at Mosterton to discuss the sudden withdrawal of bus services in rural areas, leaving the public stranded and confused. With more than 70 transport services in the county there does seem to be little or no coordination of such services, something that needs improvement.

At a well-attended meeting at the Bottle Inn on the 19 March, Caroline generously offered to subsidise a weekly service from her mother's

legacy, calling the proposed service 'the Alice bus' after her. The offer has since been superseded by a more conventional service.

Back to the parish council meeting – another member of the public was unhappy at the dangerous parking at Marshwood School, especially when mothers are dropping off their children. He felt that the police should step in.

Planning was not a complete surprise as the ideas for Foxdown Farm development in Marshwood had been shown at a recent neighbourhood plan meeting. These relate to adding family attraction in the form of a children's farm, educational facilities and a café to the present traditional farming activities at Foxdown, combining the farming and teaching skills of Adrian and Shelley Strawbridge. They hope to build up and diversify their pets and animals great and small so as to present an attractive and interesting educational experience. Councillors supported the plans, but had concerns over parking access, especially for coaches.

Outline plans for two four-bedroom houses on the Bottle Lane site were refused by West Dorset District Council on 16 February on the grounds that the development 'is considered to be unsustainable and would not contribute to the vitality and viability of the rural community' and is therefore contrary to the local plan.

As a result of a comment from the County Council Tree Officer we agreed to contact Western Power regarding a tree in Stoke Abbott. The crown is dying and branches might well contact the power cables.

Ali Cameron

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish

Council Annual Meeting: 19 April

Matthew Bowditch sent his apologies for absence and Eddie Rowe chaired the meeting in Bettiscombe Village Hall. Cllr Bowditch was re-elected unopposed in his absence as chairman for the next year with Eddie Rowe as vice-chairman. There were no reports from outside bodies and Cllr Jane Gillingham declared a pecuniary interest in a planning application to be discussed later in the meeting. The minutes of the last meeting were amended to add district Cllr Mark Roberts' name and then approved. It was noted that the tree in Stoke Abbott requiring trimming had been found to belong to the county council, who had notified Western Power.

County Councillor Daryl Turner said there was now more than £800,000 extra government funding for mending potholes. He urged people to log any potholes on www.dorsetforyou.com/travel-dorset/contact-dorset-highways so they were in the system and could be mended. Later in the meeting, Cllr Roy Warburton complained that the site was impossible to use given the broadband speed currently available at Shave Cross. He also reported that two drains have been covered over between Kittys Farm and the river, so that the road is prone to flooding.

The issue of parking at Marshwood School was raised once again and various ideas were debated. A car park would be the best solution, but there is no land available for one. A possible solution might be to move the school entrance to the front and create a supervised drop off zone so children could be taken straight from the car into school without the parents pausing for more than a few moments. The idea of a footpath from the village was dismissed as there is no budget and it is likely to take too long to succeed – Salway Ash waited 25 years for a path.

Councillors approved adoption of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016.

The precept received in the year was £8,712 compared to £8,500 for the previous year.

Other receipts totalled £956, considerably down on the previous year of £5,336.

Staff costs were £3,151 compared to £3,122.

The balance carried forward at the end of the year was £2,103, compared to £5,194.

Under planning matters, Cllr Gillingham left the room while an application for a log cabin at Mabeys Cottage was discussed. The cabin would be intended as accommodation for a family member. A previous application had been submitted and withdrawn. Councillors agreed to support approval of the application.

Other planning matters settled since the last meeting were an application for a two-storey extension at Greenacres in Marshwood and permission to retain two shepherds' huts at Laverstock Farm. The huts were granted permission by the district council but the house extension was refused on the grounds that it exceeded 40% of the existing building.

Councillors then examined plans for development of the Clipper Teas site, which is just over the parish boundary in Beaminster. They agreed to support Beaminster Town Council in whatever its decision will be.

Next meeting will be Thursday 21 July at 7.30pm in Bettiscombe Village Hall.

Sara Hudston

Superfast broadband is nearly here! What you need to do next

Charles Somers explains

In 2013 we ran a local public support campaign in the Marshwood Vale area seeking additional Government support funds for superfast broadband in our very rural areas. Additional funds of some £1m were granted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in 2014 and BT Openreach has recently started works aimed at completing a network upgrade by the end of September this year.

Local towns and villages including Charmouth, Broadwindsor, Wootton Fitzpaine, Whitchurch Canonorum and Hawkchurch (in Devon) have already had a superfast broadband upgrade delivered using fibre-to-the-cabinet (FTTC) technology where new fibre optic (FO) connected cabinets have been installed with final connection to premises using the existing copper cables.

FTTC technology was not however found suitable for use in the very rural parts of the Marshwood Vale. Instead, we will have fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) with FO cables installed throughout the area, mostly on existing poles. This is brilliant news for

those involved. By bringing a fibre cable into the premise directly from the telephone exchange, speeds of up-to-300Mbps can be enjoyed, much faster than the up-to-80Mbps available to those supplied with an FTTC solution.

No automatic change

You'll only get access to the new service if you request it. Installation involves adding a new FO cable into your home and the installation of two new wall-mounted boxes; a FO termination unit and a new wireless router. This installation will require two visits, the first to run the new FO cable to the outside wall of your premises and the second to make the internal installation.

A video is available showing what is involved in the installation, see: www.dorsetforyou.com/broadband/fttp (providing you have the capacity to view it!)

Changeover is not automatic and will require a discussion with your ISP (internet service provider). Not all ISPs may be willing initially to offer a FTTP service so you may need to shop around and maybe change ISP in order to get the best deal.

The parishes covered by the new FTTP network are Marshwood (most of it), Bettiscombe, Pilsdon, Fishpond, the southern end of Thorncombe, the western end of Stoke Abbott, and the south western side of Broadwindsor, including Burstock.

Addresses on the Whitchurch edge of Marshwood parish who are on the Chideock exchange are not covered by this FTTP network. They will be covered instead with FTTC technology using a new cabinet scheduled for installation in Whitchurch next year. They will not require the two-stage installation process of FTTP and will be able to obtain the new service directly by asking for it from their ISP: superfast broadband speeds of 24 Mbps or more will be available.



Don't miss out! Register

If you want to know when the new service will be available to you please register on:

www.dorsetforyou.com

Go to 'broadband' and click on 'keep me informed'.

This superfast broadband upgrade is part of the Superfast Dorset programme whose overall coverage can be seen at www.mapping.dorsetforyou.com/superfast/Map

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How would you spend £2,000 on Marshwood? Ideas please

Bramblehay has received many favourable comments from both locals and visitors to our area. After all the problems that we had during the building process and with the houses now filled with new people it is easy to sit back and say 'thank goodness it is finished.' But there is more to do.

Your CLT Board have now received the first ground rent of £2,000 from Hastoe and are considering how to spend it. We feel it should be a benefit to as much of the community as possible.

Suggestions include a bus shelter down in the Marshalsea area, a children's play area, a car

park area for the school as it seems an accident is waiting to happen with so many cars now involved, repairs to some of the finger signposts and an orchard.

Training some locals in First Aid was also put forward and we are happy to hear of other suggestions from you but please remember that you do need to find a piece of land with the landowner's agreement before the idea can be considered.

What's next? That's up to you; we are your CLT, so tell us! We are still looking for a new secretary following Emma's retirement, so does anyone feel they could give a little back to the community and help?

David Hitchcock, chairman CLT

Rainfall readings during 2015

David Hitchcock tells us just how wet the weather was last year.

(These notes were going to run in our January issue but were held back for reasons of space.)

To read a newspaper or see reports on the television one would believe that December was the wettest and warmest on record and you might think that has to be true. Warmest, yes, but wettest?

This would depend on where you live. December here in Marshwood was only a little wetter than the monthly average over the last 20 odd years. The year as a whole was nearly an inch below the average.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	Monthly Average (mm)
January	48	57	337	82	130
February	13	73	194	110	88.6
March	9	110	58	52	69
April	203	56	97	14	71
May	50	79	106	78	71.6
June	218	54	45	13	64
July	239	72	10	53	68
August	182	42	183	173	90
September	73	56	27	65	76
October	175	227	106	168	123
November	250	67	133	137	136
December	217	241	38	144	122.6

The yearly average here is 1,112mm or 44.5 inches.

Your Community Land Trust: Officers

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**Your Community Land Trust website: www.marshwoodclt.org.uk
Facebook Page: Marshwood CLT**

Your District Councillors

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Your County Councillors

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The gardens open daily; the house is open until 30th October.

Events all year round include:

Pick-Your-Own Fruit Farm

delicious soft fruits until the end of July—or even later!

Sweet Pea Fortnight 9th - 24th July

80+ varieties delight the senses

Summer Fair Thursday 28th July

a fun day out for all the family

“As You Like It” Tuesday 2nd August

theatre in the gardens

Monmouth Rebellion Re-enactment

August Bank Holiday Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th

Autumn Splendour Flower Festival

16th - 18th September

Hardy Plants Society Plant Fair

Saturday 24th September

with even more events to come...

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