

Autumn  
2012

# Beneath the Vale

Published on behalf of Upper Marshwood Vale  
Parish Council

## Flood Stories

*Ali Edwards, her family and friends beat off the weather – just!*

**J**uly 7th 2012 is a memorable day as rain and the flooding hit Dorset with such relentless vigour.

Many in the county suffered with flooding into their homes or businesses but, thanks to neighbours, not me.

Marshalsea, Marshwood is positioned on a high point looking over the Vale toward Shaves Cross and Bettiscombe you'd assume we are safe from any flood risk, however the rain water runs down the two side of the village and comes straight to MY front door.

On this particular morning the water went from larger puddles to licking the lip of my door in less than an hour. Working hard to clear drains to keep water away was limiting as they were at saturation point there was no way to alleviate this easily; thankfully I have the best neighbours who rallied and gathered materials to build a dam to channel



the water into the fields at the end of the cul-de-sac and down into the valley. Not only did they quickly source and utilise lots of materials including bagged carpet off-cuts from a skip, scaffolding planks, used drain pipes, a few breeze blocks and even an old worktop, but one had years of lots of dam building experience at the beach as a child.

There was a steady and at times heavy flow created down the vale, which would have been in my home and probably at least one of my direct neighbours without the support received.



Your vale  
Newsletter



Community spirit is very much alive and kicking here in Marshalsea and it's a fantastic thing to know that you have. Collectively we are now talking about a more practical flood defence being ready to use quickly in the event of more heavy rain.

Ali Edwards

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Throughout the vale the weather tested all our flood precautions. Parish lengthsman Steve Lee was noted by many residents as he moved from flood to flood ensuring his cleared drains remained unblocked. Over the time he has been the parish lengthsman he has gained an unrivalled knowledge of where flooding may occur and how best to deal with it.

But this was not an easy task and many residents noted our Superhero waist deep in floodwater removing debris to allow water to flow safely away.

In Norway Lane, Stoke Abbott water started to threaten the home of Mr & Mrs Howard. Seeing this elderly couple in such peril, Steve set to and dug deep to build up a protective bank, diverting the water safely away.

Bob Wyatt the parish councillor who co-ordinates Steve's usual efforts claimed several phone calls thanking Steve:

" All the work in clearing both drains and access to the drains has been worthwhile. With rain like last weekend we should have had many roads blocked and bridges down but instead the efforts paid off and I've had calls thanking Steve for all his work."

One only has to see how other neighbouring areas have suffered to appreciate how fortunate Upper Marshwood Vale has been.

No wonder other parishes throughout Dorset want to get involved with the lengthsman idea. Some even want a time-share of ours.

Bob cautions: "It's not the system that should be copied but it's about getting the right person in the first place."

Thanks Steve.

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## Council News

### **New Notice Board**

A smart new notice board for Bettiscombe replaces the old one which was in a very poor state of repair.

The first few weeks in place have certainly tested out the weather resistance design. We hope to replace or repair the one at Marshwood in the near future.

### **Jubilee Celebrations**

We were pleased to be able to assist Marshwood with securing funds for a Diamond Jubilee party for the residents of Marshwood through West Dorset

District Council. West Dorset Council provided the maximum grant of £250 towards this very special event. It is understand that a good time was had by all!

### **Marshwood's Diamond Jubilee party**



Photos by Alastair and Patrick Shapland

## Stoke Abbott Street Fair 2012

The weather leading up to the Street Fair was abysmal. As the rain poured down and the roads flooded we wavered. Should we cancel?

Luckily we held our nerve – the sun shone and the crowds turned out in their hundreds. After all the financial calculations were done, there was a surplus of £4800 – a record, and a fitting tribute to chief organiser, Lucia Borradaile. This is her last year in charge and she has gone out on a high.

At the post-Street Fair meeting and barbecue, thanks were expressed to her and everyone who put in so much effort, organising stalls, making things, putting up signs and posters and serving teas. It was decided to give £2,100 each to the church and village hall and to make a donation of £500 to the Rex Trevett Band for its charity work with young musicians.

Sue Roberts

Vic Rus, who ran the (very successful) gift tombola, had these thoughts after the day:

“We had a good flow of punters – I wish we could have given everyone a prize. It was heart-wrenching to see the youngsters walk away so disconsolate, but perhaps a little disappointment early in life will leave a message that with games of chance one has to be a little wary.

“My real purpose in writing is to thank all the contributors for their gifts, all delivered and of good merchantable quality too, which saved me a lot of running about and very few were passed on to Granny’s Attic. We took £272, which I’m told is a reasonable amount for this stall. Thank you everyone, without your help it would not have been a success.”

For those of you who like statistics: Following the 95 leaflets delivered, 20 ladies and three gentlemen made donations and we had 164 gifts to offer as prizes.

### **Beneath the Vale now does video reports**

You can see them on the Parish Council website  
<http://www.uppermarshwoodcouncil.org>

**Superfast is coming?**

**Street Fair 2012**

**Bottle opening**

**Nettle Eating**

Now available

On website soon

On website soon

Shot, now editing



## Do something important now - Register for Broadband

### **A**superfast broadband for Dorset would seem to be a year or two away why should we worry about it now?

No contractor has been appointed, so we don't know what we will get or when it will happen.

But one thing is becoming very certain – some parts of Dorset will not get the top level service that has been promised for the majority and it is the rural areas that will loose out in this postcode lottery. For more on this go to the Parish Council website and watch the Superfast video.

But there is something you **can** do right **NOW!** Something which will help all our rural internet users – you, your neighbour and the whole community.

Both contractors, BT and Fujitsu want to know the sort of demand for these better services in each area around every exchange and all villages. Our County Council is running an on-line survey to register the demand for Superfast. It can be found at the second website below.

Put simply, the more people from Upper Marshwood Vale who answer this survey, the better the service we will get because the contractor will know Marshwood has enough people who will use the Superfast service

It doesn't cost you to do this - it is a survey to determine your intentions and wishes, not a form to sign up to the new service. That will be coming from your present service provider and competition should mean it won't cost any more for a substantial improvement in speed and service.



And even if you are lucky and are getting an adequate service for your needs now, think about those in our community who live in black spots and cannot get proper broadband. If we can persuade the contractors to give us all an upgrade, they will get the greatest benefit. Think too of the future and of your children and grand-children.

What you think is good now will not seem so good in a few year's time when those in the towns have got something better and we won't. The contractor will only pass by here once.

So register for yourself, your family, for me, for your neighbour and for Upper Marshwood Vale. Go on line, fill in the survey and do something really important today – and then go and get your neighbours to do the same.

And if you want to help but don't do computers, contact the editor who will ensure your registration counts.

Check out these websites

<http://www.uppermarshwoodcouncil.org>

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/superfast-dorset/register-interest>

## From the Fields – from vet Terry Girling

**T**here is growing evidence of the links between a specific disease in livestock and the presence on grazing land of faeces from infected dogs.

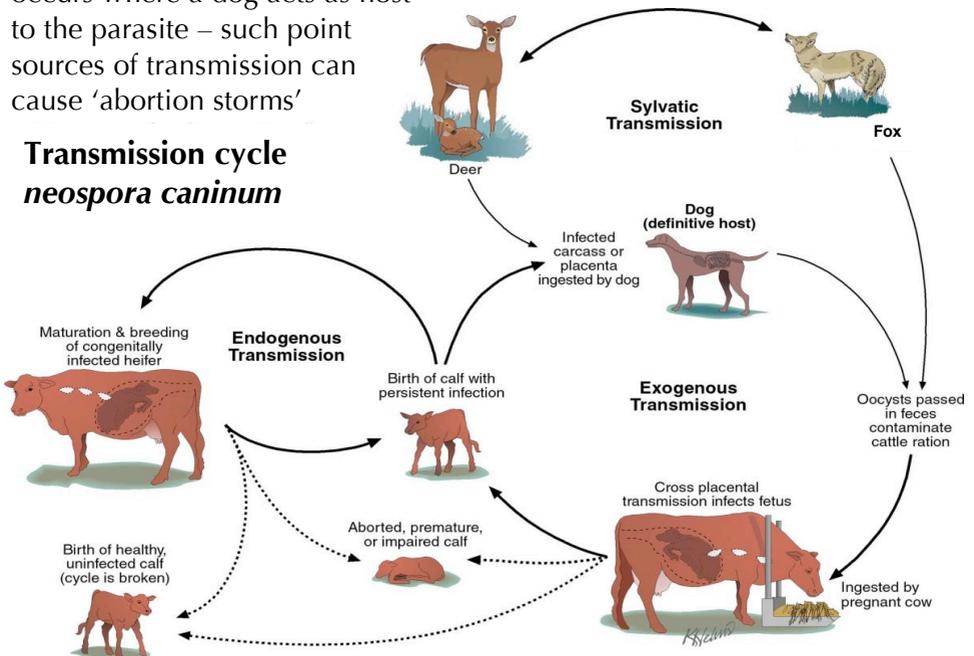
Caused by the parasite *neospora caninum*, the disease is now thought to be responsible for the highest percentage of all cattle abortions reported in the UK. Once neosporosis infection has occurred in a cattle herd it can persist within the herd due to transmission of the parasite between cows and calves.

However spread of the disease between unrelated females only occurs where a dog acts as host to the parasite – such point sources of transmission can cause ‘abortion storms’

within a herd. The parasite can be picked up by dogs through the ingestion of contaminated livestock material, such as placentas from newly calved cows, or by being fed contaminated raw meat.

Neosporosis – which can cause abortions in cattle was not discovered until 1984 in Norway, where it was found in dogs. Now found worldwide, it is highly transmissible and some herds can have up to a 90% prevalence. *Neospora* causes abortions in cattle and up to 33% of pregnancies on a single dairy farm can result in aborted calves.

### **Transmission cycle *neospora caninum***



The prevalence of the disease in herds, and its potential impact on farm economics make this an important disease to try to control.



Dog owners should: **Always remove your dog's waste** from all locations, including grazing land; it may not be a legal requirement as

As there is no way to effectively prevent through vaccination or to treat neosporosis, the farmer's main line of defence is to manage the likelihood of Neospora contamination:

**Feedstuffs, hay, bedding, and water** should be kept free of contamination by dogs and other carnivores as well as vermin.

**Prompt disposal** of placentas, foetuses and stillborn calves will also limit the spread of disease.

**Embryos** from a cow infected with Neospora can be transferred to an uninfected cow.

Dogs are seen as the definitive host of the parasite, as faeces from infected dogs can contaminate pasture, cattle feed, water or bedding. Your pets may develop symptoms of the disease, which include progressive lameness and paralysis in pups less than 6 months of age. Infected bitches can pass the parasite to their puppies during pregnancy by infection. If dogs do develop symptoms, most of these cases are fatal or require euthanasia.

agricultural land is not a public place and there are no £1,000 fines, but by safely disposing of dog waste, you will help minimise the risk of passing on disease to livestock and you could be saving your pet's life.

**Don't let your dog eat remains of dead animals** or leftover birth materials such as placenta whilst out walking. Your dog may be infected by parasites if you allow it to eat animal material such as carrion that it may find whilst out on a walk.

**If you choose to feed your dog raw meat**, make sure that it is parasite-free.

To summarise: There are no drugs currently available to control this disease in cattle or to cure infected animals. No vaccine is currently licensed in the UK to prevent neosporosis in cattle. Current knowledge suggests that Neospora does not cause disease in human beings. But both cattle and dogs are at grave risk so farmers and dog owners alike have a common cause in eliminating this vile disease.

## Council Annual Report



Photo credit Melissa Edwards

### **U**pper Marshwood Parish Council is one of a number of grouped Councils in Dorset. The

group includes the parishes of Marshwood, Stoke Abbott, Bettiscombe and Pilsdon.

The Council has 12 councillors and one member of staff, being the Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk is John Vanderwolfe who is a fully qualified clerk, having obtained his Certificate in Local Council Administration a number of years ago.

Sadly, towards the end of last year, Councillor John McClellan, who had been the representative for Pilsdon for a number of years, and was a retired Police Officer, passed away following a short illness.

#### *Quality Council update*

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council's application is still being considered by the County Accreditation panel.

There were two candidates to fill the vacancy created by John's sad departure, and the Council were pleased to welcome Mrs Jane Gillingham on board.

Unfortunately, due to poor health, Councillor Wendy Nightingale had to resign from the council, and her position, which was for Marshwood was filled in July by Mrs Sandra Hutchings. It is pleasing to note in these times when it is often difficult to fill rural council seats that there were three candidates for this position.

The Council is in a very rural area; however, it tries to be as active as possible within the local community.



## A message from Matthew Bowditch,

### **Chairman of Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council**

#### **I was elected as Chairman of the Council in May 2011.**

I have enjoyed being chairman but have found it a steep learning curve. I am grateful to the Clerk to the Council for the guidance he has provided to me both at the meetings, and indeed between meetings. There is always so much to learn.

Councillor Robert Wyatt continues to do a wonderful job in co-ordinating the Parish Lengthsman scheme.

I understand that the scheme that we are operating is looked at as a 'flagship', and it is hoped that other schemes will follow that route. We have arranged for our Lengthsman to receive Chapter 8 training, which ensures that they operate in a safe manner whilst on the highway. Both Robert and the clerk also underwent this training.

This scheme is sponsored by Dorset County Council, with our parish and our neighbours in the Char Valley making a financial contribution.

The Lengthsman has been very busy clearing verges and ensuring that our gullies are maintained. With all the wet weather that we have been having this is such an essential task.

The Council is represented on the Affordable Homes project, which is hoping to be able to provide this facility in Marshwood in the very near future. A councillor has also been working with Charles Somers on a project to provide rural Dorset with Superfast Broadband.

The Council now produces four newsletters a year. These are of a very high quality; and once again our thanks to Councillor Cameron for his assistance in the publication of these documents

The council has dealt with a number of planning applications and has been consulted on numerous issues by both the district and the county council.

Finally, I would like to thank all the councillors for their efforts during the year.

Mathew Bowditch  
Chairman

### **Latest News: more democracy for the Marshwood Vale**

Our parish clerk John Vanderwolfe has achieved an upgraded qualification that will allow our council to adopt Power of Competence. Councils are limited in what they can do, but Power of Competence means we can do anything an individual can do that is not actually illegal, if deemed good for our community. This will reduce

many of the pointless restrictions that used to apply.

Flouting planning officers recommendations widely reported locally, district councillors unanimously approved plans for affordable homes in Whitchurch, thus backing both our neighbouring parish council and the majority of resident's wishes.

## A century of Stoke Abbott Characters

Frederick Swaffield tells of a drunk and disorderly past

As transcribed by Dr Stephen Jones - website [www.dorsetbay.plus.com](http://www.dorsetbay.plus.com).

**W**hat times the people used to have at Stoke Club - it was far livelier than it is now. They used to have barrels of beer down in the corners of the passon's lawn and the farmers used to treat their men and have a proper good time together.

The lawn was full of people dancing the old fashioned dances. George Canterbury got hold of somebody's perambulator and started dancing round with it and then all at once he jumped up into it and Jimmy Lansom wheeled him all about the lawn - all in and out the dancers. Two growed up fellers too!

Somebody challenged Tom Swaffield that he wodn as spry as he used to was. Tom was getting on for seventy. He chucked down his stick and started climbing a tree. When he got someway up, the limb broke. Down comes Tom, limb and all, right down across the tables - upset all the cups and glasses beer all over the place.

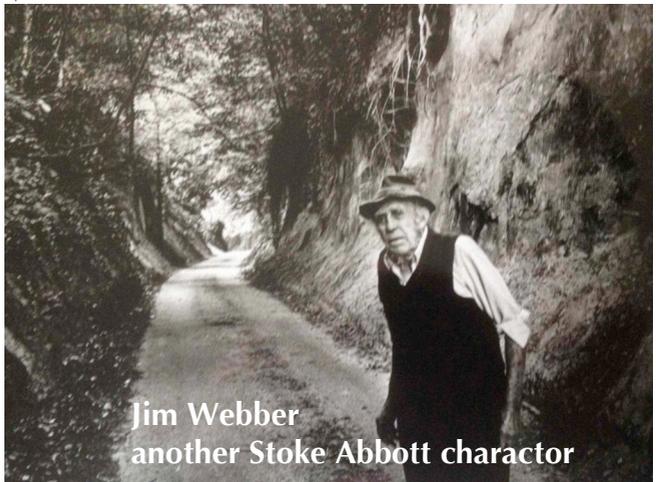
Poor Tom had a nasty jar.

Then there was Old Dick Day from Beaminster he used to go to all the fairs and clubs selling nuts.

He used to come to our club with a big basket full. Somebody would give him so much money and he would throw the nuts all over the lawn. There was a rare scrabble for the children.

The pubs were full of people singing and dancing, accordians and tambourines playing. In front of the Anchor was several standings. In the New Inn yard swingboats and different amusements. Old Fred Winter always had a standing there from Beaminster. Mr Trump used to be a caterer at one time and then Mr H Weaver of Beaminster. Mr Edward Smith used to do a great deal towards making our club a success. We used to get a good number of visitors. A lot of the men didn't do much work the day after club - it was very lively on the Saturday.

Of course the pubs were open all day then. I could tell of some lively goings on.



Jim Webber  
another Stoke Abbott charactor

**L**ester was a teetolar. He only drank gin. He used to send me up to the Greyhound two or three times a day after a so much in a medicine bottle. The boys used to very often those days fetch drink for the men. Gin was only about fivepence halfpenny a quarter pint then.

When I came back with it I always had to go to the pump at the back and fill the rest of the bottle with water and then take it up on the scaffold to him.

One day when I came back and going through to the pump, I met John Canterbury the boss. He said "Less see the bottle Fred." So I gave it to him. He had a drink out of it so I went on out and filled it with water.

When I came back John said "Less have en." So he had another good swig so I went back an filled it again with water and took it up to Lester. He had a drink never said nothing only looked at me and made a face at me. As much as to say that's good and I didn't know how to keep from laughing.

When I went up with some mortar just after he was leaning up against the wall and wiping the sweat off his forehead. I said "Wassa madder wi thee?"

He said "Go beant I bad, I dunno whatever da do." I said "Well, wass gon wrong wi thee?" "Ah!" he said "tis the drink.

When you go up there ader any more gin, tell the landlady I want the ordinary gin. I don't want none of that strong stuff what her sent smarning - us I shall take my custom elsewhere.

And when you go out to the pump go a bit quicker us there going to be a shortage of water." And that was all he said about it.

Once there was a furniture sale in the village, so in the New Inn Yard there was a lot of men with horses and traps - when a strange woman came in round and drunk as a lord. What a going on there was!

After a time they tried to get her to go on but she wouldn't go. She said she wanted a ride - so she got up in Alb H trap and sat back in the bottom of the cart with her head hanging out over the tail board - "Gie me a ride".

So Alb said "I'll gie thee a ride."

He got up in cart and drove out round yard so hard as his pony could gallop and from one end of the village to the other. Her head was swinging from one side to tother as if he was on a swivel, but she wouldn't get out.

The policeman said "Better drive her on down Union." Nobody knew who she was nor where she came from.

*According to long-standing Stoke Abbott residents, 'Union' refers to Stokewater House which was once the old Beaminster Union workhouse.*



**M**ay it be recorded that, on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012, Chrissie and Nigel Blake along with Chris Thomas gave Marshwood residents back their pub. Not content with that, the very next day they returned the World Nettle Eating Championship to its home in our Bottle Inn.

Residents had watched the restoration, as first the thatch was made if not perfect, 'pretty darnn good'. Then Tommy - landlady Chrissie's daughter's father in-law from Sunderland - set to with the paint-pot. Slowly things happened – the licence was restored and even extended to 24 hours, extra permits now allow beverages such as coffee after midnight, kitchens cleared refitted and finally the hall was cleared. But still glitches remained and supplies stuttered.

But with the tourists seeing progress and stopping to see if they were open a key part of their market was slipping away. Add in

the Nettle Eaters led by Simon Slee who wanted their world championship back and the date for that was fixed for Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>.

Sensibly they had hoped to open quietly a few days before this so as to get things sorted and settled down. Plans to for a quiet opening by changing the signs and swinging wide the doors

on the Wednesday but things slipped and the trio were let down once more.

By now stalls, marquees and the beer tent were erected and no less than 24 different beers and ales racked up ready for refreshment, enjoyment or both. Your reporter saw no smoke signals, while the internet did its bit, TV crews from Germany, Mexico, national ITV and Marshwood arrived and, most important of all, something primeval told Marshwood residents that their Bottle was OPEN.

So after 20 months of decay and degradation on the Friday the Bottle was back and better than ever before.

In the hall Steve Black and Dean Barnes struck a chord and the people came.



The weather held and the avant-garde of Marshwood arrived to see, sample and enjoy their pub once again. One immediate consensus was that it had never looked so good nor felt so welcoming – smiles all round then. Soon our Bottle was full to overflowing.

Next day was even better; more people plenty of food - burgers, hot dogs and roasted hog - and the four cameramen filmed everyone, everything especially the stylish lady Mexican reporter for posterity and the Nettle Eating.

Luke from ITV told us that he was shooting for a new series next spring provisionally called Harbour Lives. No not Harbour Lights - the one shot at West Bay with Nick Berry as the harbourmaster, a sort of Eastenders meets Summer Holiday. ITV have grabbed the new name for a series of events around the UK rumoured to be linked by local star Martin Clunes.

At a little after 6 pm the Simon Slee took up the mike to start the Nettle Eating. Two top nettle eaters soon drew the crowds; Eleanor Slee - a striking young lady of the gothic persuasion was accompanied in the competition by her mum. For a while she kept pace with Tony Wellman of Axminster whose supporters and family dominated the cheering.

Both had a similar approach- strip the 20" stalk of leaves, fold them into a compact ball and, dunk in beer for lubrication and swallow. Both slowed towards the end of the happy hour when Tony had cleared 64 feet of nettle stalks to win the overall prize. Second overall came Eleanor who took the ladies prize by a country mile to keep the prize in the family.

Behind the busy scenes the dispute over the lease rumbles on as their landlord, still absent in Australia, has failed to make the promised repairs leaving Nigel and Chris to pay for that as well as the considerable extra costs in getting the pub open **and** running the World Nettle Eating championships more or less simultaneously. Nigel though is adamant, they have shrugged off this setback, turned the Bottle into a real pub and are looking forward to getting in the passing tourists and the locals dropping in for their favourite brew.

And from September, when the kitchens are up and running, for anyone after good pub food.



Eleanor Slee congratulated by Nigel and Chrissie Blake

## Beaminster Job Club starts work

A special kind of club has opened in Beaminster; it is designed to help local people find work, whether they are school leavers just starting out, or anybody people looking for employment in the town and surrounding area.

Beaminster Job Club is a charity manned by local volunteers from all walks of life, the club will provide free advice, practical help and moral support to jobseekers at a difficult time in their lives – and especially difficult in the present economic climate.

“We want to make sure anyone who wants to live and work in their home area can do so,” said Rebecca Knox, County

Councillor and a co-founder of the club. “And we see ourselves as part of the longer-term economic regeneration of west Dorset.”

The club, the third to be set up in west Dorset, has strong backing from Beaminster and District Business Chamber, Beaminster School, and local MP Oliver Letwin. It will help jobseekers identify their strengths and interests, search on-line for vacancies or work experience, write their CVs, prepare for interview, or seek further training if they need it.

Starting on 20th June, Beaminster Job Club opens for your business every Wednesday from 12.30 – 2.30 p.m at the Yarn Barton Centre

### **Bettiscombe Village Hall**

## **Curry Night**

Friday 5 OCTOBER 2012 7.30 pm

Why bother to cook at home tonight. Come & join us for a curry

Selection of curries available from mild to medium hot with accompaniments

Drinks available or bring your own

Table quiz

Raffle

£6 per head

## Editorial

### **Ch...Ch...Ch...Ch...Changes**

(David Bowie)

#### **We have colour**

Not obvious to those who receive BTV via their computer as we have always used colour in preparing for publication, but, thanks to our first advertiser, we now have a colour printed outer cover on the posted copies. Support from other community-minded businesses is also expected, so further changes, even improvements, are possible.

#### **We have the content**

Once again some material has been dropped from this issue! And in the pipeline are new stories that may just knock your socks off. So perhaps we need more pages. A jump from 20 pages to 24 is practical but is not cheap even with the valued support of Creeds our printers.

#### **We have the video**

Its only a Sony camera and some clever Chinese bits along with a very basic computer edit programme but it lets BTV make video shorts about local events and to dig a little deeper into subjects that affect us all. And if you have a story for us to cover, get in touch. For more details see page 4

#### **We aim for a lighter touch**

Some of the events we have reported have been solid news stories of our community. But important as these are, life needs to be a bit funny so perhaps BTV needs to be a bit sillier!

Now if we have a budding cartoonist amongst us...

#### **We will have the events**

When the Bottle set the date for the Nettle Eating World Championship it was the earliest date they could open – but this coincided with the Vale's long standing Mini Marathon and only a stalwart few were able to attend both.

Bottle landlord, Nigel Blake is happy to move next year's trial by nettle to its traditional dates and avoid such a conflict of local highlights.

Most magazines do have an events page to keep the readers informed. But with a three-month publication cycle, BTV would need to look at events up to 6 months in advance.

So why doesn't someone compile a calendar of events that happen in the Vale every year? That way new or occasional events could avoid a clash of dates as we tell residents from all the four parishes what's happening.

We can build up a database of dates events and contacts and draw on this for each issue. But we need organisers to get their event on that database. And if you want to find a clear date just ask us. Please contact me.

OK that sounds like another job for the BTV team.

No longer just advisers and community representatives, each member of the editorial team has directly contributed in some way to this magazine and its ethos.

And that's very welcome change - so thanks from your editor.

Ali Cameron  
Editor, Beneath the Vale

## Announcement

### **Community land trust to be formed**

An application has been submitted to the Financial Services Authority to authorise the formation of the Marshwood Community Land Trust (CLT).

The decision to create the CLT was taken at a public meeting held at Blackdown Village Hall on June 28. It will have the power to bid for funds to build affordable housing and could in the future be used to create other community facilities.

It was agreed that the CLT should have the same catchment area as Marshwood School. The communities it will cover are the villages and hamlets of Bettiscombe, Birdsmoorgate, Blackdown, Fishpond, Kittwhistle, Marshwood, Monkwood, Newnham Farm, Pilsdon, Racedown and Templeman's Ash.

It is hoped that approval for the CLT to come into force will be obtained within a month. Mike Robinson, the district councillor for Marshwood Vale, Mark Van de Weyer and Rob England have agreed to be the founder directors with Emma Turner as the secretary.

Everyone living in the catchment area will have the opportunity to join and a special general meeting has to be held within six months when all members will have the opportunity to choose who they want to run the CLT in the future. In the meantime, the affordable housing steering committee, which was formed in 2010, will act as the management team.

A number of potential sites for affordable housing in Marshwood have been considered and the meeting at Blackdown accepted a recommendation from the steering committee that a site at Thane Farm, about halfway between the school and the main part of the village, was the most suitable. Up to seven properties are planned, which will be offered only to people with strong local connections and who are on the Housing Register.

A decision was also made that the new CLT would work in partnership with Hastoe Housing Association. Representatives for Hastoe are currently in negotiations with the owner of Thane Farm and providing these are successful, approval will then be sought from the Homes and Communities Agency which is responsible for agreeing funding from a budget it has specifically for community-led affordable housing projects.

Before planning permission is sought from West Dorset District Council, a further public meeting will be held to enable everyone in the community to comment on the proposed designs of the properties.

## Bettiscombe Parish Hall

*Joy McClellan writes*

Over the last year or so the hall committee have been working hard to make our hall more comfortable and attractive.

A new large cooker and kitchen units have now given users a clean and spacious environment to work in. A water filter system has been installed and the Social Group, which meets on the third Friday of each month during the winter months has kindly bought a microwave for the use of all who use the hall. The kitchen has also been painted and smartened up.

Bridport Round Table have kindly donated money to enable us to replace some rotting flooring at the main entrance. Also at the main entrance there are new double doors and a tongue and groove wall has been built. An unused side door has been filled in.

We have obtained a large grant from The Big Lottery Fund (thanks to John McClellan) to enable us to

have installed an efficient, and hopefully less expensive, heating system in the hall itself, the store room, kitchen and cloakrooms (including hand dryers in both cloakrooms). Those who have used the hall have been impressed with how much more comfortable they feel. So we are now fully prepared for a cold winter 2012/2013.

The outside walls have been re-stained and the outside is generally much smarter. We also have a sensor light in the car park area to help visibility after dark.

The Parish Council have arranged for a new notice board to be erected outside so that we can advertise functions and messages clearly.

The hall is now a very pleasant venue for anyone who wishes to hold a private function for around 100 people or less and we hope that it will be put to good use for many years to come.

## Bettiscombe Social Group

During the dark winter months of October through to April the Bettiscombe Social Group meets on the second Friday of each month for a drink and a chat in the cosy newly heated and renovated hall. We play cards or darts or whatever takes our fancy.

Sometimes we just chat.

Occasionally we arrange a function. Whatever we do we all enjoy it and would love to see some new faces.

The first meeting will be on Friday 12th October from 8pm. Bring a bottle and some nibbles and any games you think we would enjoy.

If you would like further details, please phone Joy on 01308 867410.

## Events for your diary - Council meetings

### **This year**

September 20th	Full Council	Stoke Abbott
October 18th	Planning	Shave Cross
November 29th	Full Council	Bettiscombe

### **Next Year**

January 17th 2013	Full Council	Stoke Abbott
February 21st	Planning	Shave Cross
March 21st	Full Council	Bettiscombe
April 18th	Planning	Shave Cross
May 16th	Full Council	Bettiscombe

### **No Secret**

All council meetings are open to the public and we start at 7.30pm. As well as parish matters, District and County councillors give their reports on matters affecting Upper Marshwood Vale. Members of the public are invited to have their say and to hear the councillors' debate. Agendas and minutes are displayed on notice boards or can be downloaded from the PC's website.

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