

Beneath the Vale

Published on behalf of the Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council

Spring 2017: Issue 23



New bridge a 'lifeline' for wood

A new bridge installed on one of the bridleways at Prime Coppice in Marshwood parish is 'a lifeline for the woodland,' according to landowners Kit Vaughan and Ruth Fuller.

The bridge replaces a dilapidated 1950s' structure, which had long been unsafe for walkers and riders. It has taken nearly five years for the replacement to be agreed with Dorset County Council's Rights of Way department. Complications arose as the old map route across the river was no longer viable and the bridleway had to be officially moved a few metres east.

Prime Coppice is home to Ruth, Kit and their two sons Alfred, aged five, and Arran, aged two. The family moved there five years ago and are working to restore and regenerate the woodland. They sell firewood, coppice products and timber harvested from the trees (see their website www.primecoppice.com).

The bridge is needed because in wet weather the river is too high to ford on foot or horseback. It has been paid for jointly by the landowners and the county council. 'It opens up access to the wood all year round,' said Kit.



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Recognise anyone? Runners at Shave Cross in the 1980s. Photo from John Green's archive.

Seventy years of the Shave Cross Mini Marathon

'On a Saturday night in June 1947 some local men felt in a contemplative mood after a few drinks at the Shave Cross Inn. They started taking bets as to who could run the fastest. The mood became infectious and the running went on until 2am ... People living nearby wondered what was going on as the still peaceful night was disturbed by a constant "Are you ready - Go"

... clobber, clobber, clobber (from the hobnailed boots).' (Taken from *Dorset's Western Vale* by Sylvia Creed-Castle.)

From this midnight race meeting was born the Shave Cross Sports, which included a 'marathon' of four and three-tenths of a mile. The event was held on 5 June 1948 in a field near the inn called Big Bomer, which was owned by Jack Rendell. It also featured children's events, 100-yard sprints, tug of war, sack race, obstacle race, slow cycle

race, long jump, egg and spoon race and skittles.

In 1949 the event gained in prestige when it received its first report in *The Bridport News*. The marathon was restricted to local runners living within three miles of the pub. The programme consisted of some 27 events, mostly fun races for ladies, gentlemen and children.

Skittling contest

During the 1950s, the event became an established highlight of the local calendar. It went on into the evening and there was a fun fair with swing boats, a coconut shy and hoopla. In 1954 the marathon was opened to all comers.

Skittling was a major part of the sports day. It took place in the Shave Cross Inn during the week with an outdoor alley set out for

The Shave Cross Inn. Picture courtesy of Bill Slade.



the Saturday finals. In 1955 the prizes for the skittle competition were as follows: first prize: a pig, second prize: a load of firewood, third prize: a bottle of scotch.

Other 'sporting events' included a pipe smoking contest in which contestants had to smoke a clay pipe crammed with black shag tobacco. According to John Green, entrants could use as many boxes of matches and drink as much farm cider as they liked to achieve the objective of finishing the pipe.

In 1956 proceeds were officially donated to charity for the first time. In 1958 a flower show was added. The sports and flower show continued during the 1960s with coaches bringing runners from Yeovil, Weymouth and Salisbury. Marathons were uncommon events in those days, even short ones, and Shave Cross attracted considerable interest. At its height, the event had up to 150 runners.



Runners in the 1980s with Pilsdon Pen in the background. Photo from John Green's archive.

The general sports and the flower show ended in 1977. The organising committee had been involved for 28 years and found it difficult to get the helpers needed. Also, the access to the original sports field was lost.

New era in 1970s

In 1977 all equipment for the side shows was sold and that was thought to be the end of the entire event. But one summer afternoon, locals were surprised to see a number of people collecting in the pub car park. When asked, they said they had come to run the marathon. Arrangements were hastily made and the first marathon of the next era took place. The course was extended to five miles, with a route going up towards Pilsdon via Pilsdon and returning to Shave Cross by Gerrards Farm. In the years since 1980

the event has been enlarged to include a dog show, coffee morning and treasure hunt.

John and Allison Green hosted the event at Bomerhayes Farm from 1979 until, due to ill health, it was relocated to Kittys Farm, then owned by George Rendell. The current owner, Fiona Burkeman, hosted the event in 2015 and 2016.

This year's race will be on Saturday 5 August. Look out for details of the supporting events in the Summer edition of *Beneath The Vale*. This year will be the 70th anniversary of that first midnight run. If anyone has any anecdotes or photographs from the very early days, Beneath The Vale would be delighted to receive them.

David Corneloues

Superfast broadband delayed, but BT says it will be ready soon

Everyone has been waiting a very long time for a broadband improvement to be delivered to us here in the Upper Marshwood Vale parishes. From an initial plan to complete these works by September of last year, things slipped to Christmas and then into this year.

You will have seen bits and pieces of the work going on all over our area and we were told in early February that it would all be completed by the end of March, which would have allowed us to give you the good news in this issue of the *Beneath The Vale*. We were informed however on 27 March that there would be a further month of delay, this through a note provided by the Superfast Dorset team at Dorset County Council.

As soon as we get confirmation that the network has been completed and that orders can be placed, we will announce that on the *Beneath The Vale* website. The Superfast Dorset team will be sending out fibre-to-the-premises flyers to all addresses concerned.

Your patience is appreciated, here is the note from Superfast Dorset:

‘The delivery of some of the fastest broadband speeds to the most rural parts of Dorset has proved even more challenging for the engineers than anticipated. Homes and businesses from Seaborough to Marshwood, Bettiscombe and Fishponds Bottom and from Pilsdon to Synderford have been anticipating the arrival of fibre

to their premises (FTTP) since the autumn. But BT Openreach engineers have so far been unable to provide a reliable service to any of these communities.

‘Far west Dorset was originally excluded from Superfast Dorset plans because of the costs to reach the small communities in rural, hilly area. But locals worked together to attract additional funding into the programme so the relatively expensive FTTP technology could be installed. This technology has only been implemented in a few parts of Dorset towards the end of the programme so engineers are still finding ways around the challenges it presents.

‘The West Dorset cluster of FTTP is the biggest in the county. It has thrown up the most challenges and has over-run the delivery date of Christmas 2016.

Engineering challenge

‘BT says: “BT is working hard to complete the major engineering task of rolling out superfast fibre broadband across the Marshwood Vale area. Building a fibre broadband network for this remote and sparsely populated area has undoubtedly been the greatest single engineering challenge for the Superfast Dorset programme. The work has included the installation of more than 75,000 metres of fibre, 40 new poles, the laying of nearly 5 kilometres of underground ducting and road closures. The vast majority of the work



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has now been carried out. The remainder is due to be completed by the end of April.”

‘Some residents in Broadwindsor, Drimpton, Stoke Abbot and Thorncombe can already take up a superfast service thanks to a different technology: FTTC, fibre-to-the-cabinet. To benefit, people there should contact their service provider and ask to be upgraded to a fibre service.

‘Please sign up at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/broadband/registration> so we can let you know when we have data showing service is available. Plus we’ll be out with leaflets and updates in parish magazines to let you know the good news and how to take up the service.’

Charles Somers



As we went to press, engineers were in Marshwood working on installing superfast connections.

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council: December budget setting

Council meeting 15th December 2016: voted to adopt the budget before moving on to planning, which turned out to be very straightforward.
Parishes get a minimal increase on the precept.

Your chairman, Matthew Bowditch began by asking the clerk, John Vanderwolfe, to Two applications to fell a tree, and others to allow the siting of rubbish skip, provision

Upper Marshwood Vale draft budget 2017/18

Expenditure	Budget	Income	Budget
Salaries	£3,240	LCTS Grant	£ 78
Insurance	£ 300	Precept	£9,502
Lengthsman	£4,000	Advertising	£ 650
Office Allowance	£ 120		
Room Hire	£ 120		£10,230
Subscriptions	£ 280		
Stationery	£ 60		
Post & Telephone	£ 30		
Training	£ 100	Proposed D rate	£30.24
Website	£ 250	Last year's D rate	£29.76
Newsletter	£1,100	Difference (increase)	£00.48
Audit	£ 100	Percentage increase	1.60%
Travel Costs	£ 130		
Fingerposts	£ 300		
Grants	£ 100		
	£10,230		

talk about his suggested budget. This held no surprises although it had been expanded to give a better picture of what is happening. For example the improved income from advertising in *Beneath the Vale* is now shown more fully.

These figures result in a 48p increase for houses in council tax band D. They will go up to £30.24 from £29.76. Councillors

of dairy cow accommodation and extra storage at Pilsdon Dairy Farm were proposed. Councillors agreed to recommend acceptance of each application.

As part of planning, the future of Marshwood village's unused telephone kiosk was briefly considered, but was put on the agenda for future meetings to allow new ideas to come forward.

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End of an era at The Bottle Inn, Marshwood

As *Beneath The Vale* went to press, landlords Nigel and Chrissy Blake had just moved out of The Bottle Inn at Marshwood. The Blakes were evicted after the pub's owner, Michael Brookes, was granted a possession order by Weymouth County Court.

Under the Blakes' stewardship, the pub gained a wide reputation for the range and quality of its ales and was named Wessex Regional Pub of the Year by the Campaign

for Real Ale. CAMRA has removed the accolade now that the Blakes have left.

The building needs extensive repairs and it is uncertain when it will reopen. It is listed as an asset of community value, which may help protect its future as a pub.

Feelings ran high about The Bottle's closure, with more than 6,000 people reacting to a post on *Beneath The Vale's* Facebook page.

Hedge-laying day at Little Giant Wood, Stoke Abbott

It's the last volunteer hedge-laying session of this season at Little Giant Wood on Thursday 13 April.

The day starts at 10am and ends at 4pm, but don't feel you have to stay for the whole day. Parking, if needed, is at Stokewater Farm, and coffee and flapjacks will be provided. Bring your own lunch.

Nick Gray from Dorset Wildlife Trust will be there to give guidance on hedge-laying for those who have not experienced this ancient craft before. For more details, ring Nick on 07824 438974.

Looking ahead: Parish Council meeting dates

Next parish council meetings are:

18 May (annual council meeting and annual parish meeting). 20 July, 21 September, 16 November. 14 December (precept setting.) All meetings at 7.30pm

in Bettiscombe Village Hall. See www.uppermarshwoodcouncil.org for minutes.

Deadline for the Summer issue of Beneath The Vale is the end of May for publication in June.

Parish Council: February

Councillors met briefly at Shave Cross on 16 February. The main item on the agenda was a new application for outline planning consent to build two detached houses on land at Bottle Lane in Marshwood.

Councillors agreed there was no substantial difference between this application and a previous one, which had been rejected by planners. Parish council clerk, John Vanderwolfe, said that the land was outside any agreed development area. Councillors were unanimous in recommending refusal for the latest application. West Dorset District Council subsequently refused the application on 22 February.

Recipe: Quick and easy soups for spring

By Joy McClellan

Carrot and orange soup

Serves 4-6

25g butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium tin carrots
250ml orange juice
250ml chicken stock
Up to 250ml single cream
Salt and pepper

Sweat the onion in butter. Drain carrots and liquidise with onions. Mix in orange juice, stock, seasoning and then cream. Heat through gently and serve.

Stilton soup

Serves 4-6

50g butter
1-2 onions, finely sliced
175g Stilton, crumbled
50g plain flour
1 litre chicken stock
1 bay leaf
250ml single cream
Salt and pepper

Sweat onion in butter until soft. Add stilton. Stir with wooden spoon until the cheese melts to form a smooth cream. Add the flour and cook for a further 5 mins, stirring continuously. Add stock, bay leaf and seasoning and bring to the boil, stirring. Simmer for 15 minutes. Remove the bay leaf, taste and check seasoning. Add the cream and serve immediately.

Stephen Lee
Landscape Gardening
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Neighbourhood Plan latest

NP questionnaires were sent out with the Winter issue of *Beneath The Vale* and by mid-February we had received just over 100 replies (of 300 sent out). We are presently working on analysing the results and should complete that task soon.

You can still add your views by filling out a NP questionnaire. These are available on the website: www.uppermarshwoodvale.org/home/neighbourhood-plan. Copies will be also be available at the public meeting below.

Public Meeting in Marshwood Church

Saturday 6 May, 10am-12pm

We will present the NP questionnaire findings, discuss a proposed 'vision and goals' for the plan and consider how to proceed towards producing a first draft of the document.

Please come to the meeting and join in - this is **YOUR** plan!

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee: Members

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Secretary	John Vanderwolfe, UMV parish council clerk	
Members	Jacqui Sewell, West Dorset District Council councillor	
	David Hitchcock, chairman of Marshwood CLT	
	Ali Cameron, UMV parish councillor	
	Ali Edwards, UMV parish councillor	
	David French	
	Sara Hudston, Editor, <i>Beneath the Vale</i>	

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Community Land Trust website: www.marshwoodclt.org.uk

Facebook Page: Marshwood CLT

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