

Beneath the Vale

Supported by the Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council

Autumn 2019: Issue 33



Parish council chairperson Matthew Bowditch examines affected trees in Little Giant Wood in Stoke Abbott.

Ash tree disease is here

First it was called *Chalara fraxinea*, and then science showed it was just one stage of a fungus, *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*, so the name was changed. Gardeners know *Fraxinus* as the ash, so this is now the proper name of a very serious threat to UK's countryside – ash dieback. Worse, it is here now, spread through our Vale.

A fungal infection, it affects young trees most of all, but European experience

shows many healthy mature trees will eventually succumb. Spores are released from fruiting bodies and can be wind-spread for tens of kilometres. First noted in Polish forests, it was first recorded in our lands in 2012, prompting swift action by the authorities; sadly even this was too late.

Parish council chairperson Matthew Bowditch showed us examples of ash

Marshwood, Stoke Abbott, Pilsdon and Bettiscombe



Ash trees suffering from ash dieback, clockwise from above: A dead sapling near Marshwood, close-up of ash leaves, a young tree in Little Giant Wood.

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Beneath the Vale is published four times a year with support from the Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council and posted to homes in the combined parishes of Marshwood, Stoke Abbott, Pilsdon and Bettiscombe. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the parish council and advertising in the magazine does not imply council endorsement of any goods or services.

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dieback in Little Giant Wood, where many ash trees were planted when this community wood was created. Some of the less vigorous are already dead or dying – and releasing the infecting spores to further destroy our woodlands.

Experts claim there are 60 million ash trees in the UK. According to the Woodland Trust, up to 95% of these will die. This is going to have a devastating impact on the landscape and the biodiversity of our woodlands, as well as a major loss in connections between habitats as we lose hedges and individual trees outside of woods.

Ash dieback is thought to have been accidentally imported via nursery stock rather than on spores blown across the Channel.

Spreading ever westward, wind-borne distribution has reached our parishes as the photos show.

All is not lost; some ashes seem to be naturally unaffected by dieback. Asian species are immune to ash dieback. There are over 60 species of ash worldwide and others seem to tolerate the disease, showing leaf damage alone.

Government officials calculate the social and environmental value of ashes as in excess of £230 million annually. So substantial research by DEFRA, the Forestry Commission and others here in the UK and abroad is investigating ways of mitigating the impact of ash dieback as well as finding unaffected variants.

Marshwood's number 1 pothole mended after 3 years of damage

Just as we were planning a special celebration of one of our most vicious potholes, Dorset Highways spoilt the sad story by repairing the offensive Hole just before the third anniversary of the first reporting of said Hole.

Initially reported in 2016 via the old county council's website for road complaints, it had been left unrepaired for a decent, but unspectacular length of time enabling our Hole to slowly grow in order to trap unwary cyclists, bend car wheels, damage vehicles' front suspension, inflict injury to travellers and cause manual mayhem on the Marshwood main road, the B3165.

Rather than getting larger, the Holy one decided to become deeper. Estimates of the number of Mentions In Despatches to the Authorities, along with other Complaints to the Council have not been revealed, but this small pothole filled with rainwater and assumed the disguise as a puddle.

It also featured at our parish council meeting, when injury to a cyclist and his velocipede were discussed. Unfortunately this coincided with the absence of the sole representative of our senior council, Cllr Simon Christopher, whose predecessor, Cllr Turner, so often praised the reporting system, defending it when it failed.

In another recorded incident, oncoming traffic prevented a young driver from dodging the obstruction, resulting in a

puncture when he reached Beaminster and caused possible damage to the car.

Locals decided to take action to celebrate the Hole's third birthday, set for the upcoming anniversary. It is very doubtful that news of the happy event had reached the ears of the Highways Authorities; it is more likely that enough points had been registered to Marshwood to justify real action, but on 15 August no fewer than six operatives gathered outside the Bottle Inn as the Hole, just down the road, had been officially marked and an authorised traffic cone placed thereon.

Less than an hour later the repair was complete and even the all-important warning signs removed, leaving the slightly raised hump to subside back level to the surrounding road surface with only a slight splatter of tarmacked particles to indicate the demise of the Marshwood Hole.

If nationwide publicity is to be believed, a new hole is registered every 46 seconds so we are indeed fortunate to get our serious potholes filled in and road repaired at all. But a three-year wait for a repair that took less than an hour to complete does indicate a issue with our reporting of such problems and even more with the assessment of just how severe is the damage to all who use our roads. To report a fault use:

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/report-a-problem-on-the-road-or-pavement.aspx

Parish council meeting: July

Following the eventful May meetings, councillors gathered at Bettiscombe Village Hall to be greeted with a distinct lack of access keys. A new number had been adopted for the key receptacle, which no one knew – save for Cllr John Brown who looks after the hall.

With the number noted and the door unlocked, everyone was delighted to find the tables and chairs properly placed for councillors and public alike. John had fully prepared the hall for the event.

Only one absence was recorded when Cllr Matthew Bowditch as chairperson gavelled the meeting into action. Minutes of the last meeting rarely excite interest but this time Cllr Jacqui Sewell complained of being misreported.

However there was no doubt about what our new Dorset Council councillor Simon Christopher wished to impart as he had sent a written statement of what he had done for UMVPC, including meetings with Dorset Council officers. He had a more pressing engagement, but it would be a pity if Cllr Christopher's diary were so full as to miss these meeting since we now have but a single senior councillor not the four we have enjoyed previously.

During the democratic period we heard comments from the public concerning a planning application for change of use of the old post office at Marshwood. 'Bash' (Sebastian) Walther was proposing to develop the site into a substantial downstairs

flat for his dad, John W, and adding a second floor to accommodate a carer.

It turns out this application is being made now to obviate long delays should John ever have need of this arrangement. John has assured councillors that his present facilities are entirely acceptable, with a stair-lift and strong grab handles to enable him to get around the old milk parlour. This application was opposed by two members of the public who were neighbours since it would overlook their back garden.

Recommended refusal

Councillors felt that, sympathetic as they were towards John and the work he had done in running the shop for all those years, the plans before them would represent overdevelopment, take up too much room and would interfere with the privacy of the neighbours. So they recommended refusal. Sadly this discussion had an emotional effect on one neighbour who left the meeting in tears.

Finance was next on the agenda as councillors agreed payments and accepted clerk John Vanderwolfe's report.

The next highlight was placing the draft Neighbourhood Plan before the council to approve for onward presentation to Dorset Council and the appointment of an inspector to critique our draft Plan. NP chairman Charles Somers told the council that this would lead to a referendum probably early

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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? **07971 116660**

Stephen Lee: stephen@stephen-lee.co.uk

in 2020, which if approved by local voters would mandate the whole plan.

He and Matthew Bowditch both thanked the NP team especially their consultant, Jo Witherden.

The final item on the agenda relate to a private matter so cannot be reported.

Subjects to be discussed

What started as a rather fractious meeting was actually very useful and illustrated the skills of councillors. A small but particularly welcome addition to the minutes by John Vanderwolfe the parish clerk, now shows the subjects to be discussed in future meetings which will allow councillors to find out what people in the parishes – YOU – think on a given subject.



Members of Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council in Bettiscombe Village Hall in July.

Parish council meeting: Sept

After a cloud-free Indian summer's day, eight of your councillors and eight members of the public gathered at Bettiscombe Village Hall. Newly-retired vet and current council chairperson Matthew Bowditch called time on the opening chitchat to declare the session open as agricultural machinery deployed behind a towing tractor descended on the adjacent fields outside.

In spite of this ongoing distraction, events within the hall swiftly moved towards the democratic period when the public can address the council. Stoke Abbott resident John Quarm who objected to his neighbour's plans for Woodlands Cottage, but it seems that they are in discussion over the changes and a suitable compromise can be expected.

Two other applications were supported in principle by the council. These applications now go before Dorset Council's planning committee for approval.

Our new Dorset councillor, Simon Christopher gave his report on events at Dorchester and around, saying that the new make-up of the planning committee with Lib Dems, Greens and an independent representation is working well.

Additionally, he has held a wide variety of meetings with council officials on our behalf, but appealed to us all for emails on all our outstanding problems so he can deal with them effectively. The fact that councillors weighed in with copious verbal reports indicates the need for his support. Cllr Christopher contrasted the old way with the newly joined-up single council's efforts

'where all actions are taking place under one hat.'

Two new categories of discussion were next: both established policy to guide future debates by councillor. The first was a resolution to declare a climate and ecological emergency, the other on council trust funds (covered in a separate article on page 15).

During the democratic time, Sara Hudston spoke in support of the resolution to declare a climate and ecological emergency in our parishes. She emphasised that she was not speaking as editor of *Beneath the Vale*, but on behalf of the Bridport Extinction Rebellion group.

When councillors considered the resolution, Cllr Jacqui Sewell spoke in support of the call for action. She referred to the rural nature of our parish and listed biodiversity loss, damage to the environment, and cuts to bus services as challenges we face.

Cllr Sewell suggested we should have more solar panels for village halls, charging points for electric vehicles and appeal to other areas to work together and to publicise sources of funding. The resolution to declare a climate and ecological emergency was passed.

With no fewer than 18 items on the agenda, the usual date of the next meeting – **21 November, 7.30pm**, also at Bettiscombe – completed this council meeting.

Peppermint slices

This is a recipe from way back. It was passed on from my mother who was well-known for her cakes. At my kids' school functions, the teachers always asked me to make these!

5oz margarine
4oz self-raising flour
2oz soft brown sugar
2 level tsp cocoa
1 level tsp baking powder
Pinch of salt
3oz crushed corn flakes or Rice Crispies

Icing:
8oz icing sugar
3-4 tsp tepid water

Peppermint essence - about 1 tsp
Green colouring - about 3/4 tsp

Half a slab cooking chocolate

Sieve dry ingredients. Melt marg and add dry ingredients. Mix well and press into a greased Swiss roll tin. Bake 15-20 minutes at 180-190 degrees centigrade just above the centre of oven. Cool well. Cover with peppermint icing and cool completely. Melt chocolate and pour over the top, spreading up to edges and mark into squares before absolutely hard. Store in fridge.

Joy McClellan



Your local sweep: Glyn Yorke

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Local bus timetable and funding updates for Marswood Vale area

Wednesday PlusBus (Bridport) and Thursday Routes 14, 688, (Chard and Axminster)

Service 14 continues to have the greatest footfall but with more support needed for the 688. This is also particularly true for the PlusBus. All three of these buses continue to run on the back of the Beaminster Secondary School Contract. Dorset Community Transport have said that so long as this contract continues, these three bus services will be sustainable along with financial help, as detailed below.

Funds raised for 2019-20

We were successful in obtaining another grant from Tatworth and Forton Parish Council. This grant of £400 was deposited in September 2018, and is a very welcome boost to the rural bus funds.

Thorncombe Parish Council remains the custodian of our earmarked funds for the rural buses and we continue to be very grateful for this support. The rural buses account stands at a healthy £3,921 (N.B. this figure includes contributions from

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council meeting dates

21 November
16 January

Meetings start at 7.30pm in Bettiscombe Village Hall. Everyone welcome.

Thorncombe Parish Council's precept).

Fundraising events

Coffee Morning and table top sale in Thorncombe Village Hall has been re-scheduled to Saturday 9 November. The Breakfast Club and Raffle in Thorncombe Village Hall has also been re-scheduled and will now take place on Sunday 17 November between 9 and 11am. Enjoy a slap-up breakfast for a reasonable price. All proceeds will go to support the buses. All are very welcome to attend these events.

Thorncombe and villages schedules

Wednesdays:

PlusBus – Thorncombe to Bridport. £5 return fare. This bus route remains unchanged.

Thursdays:

No. 14 – Regular scheduled bus service. Thorncombe to Chard via Chard Junction, Perry Street, Tatworth, with a £4 return fare for adults without a Concessionary Bus Pass. The revised timetable for this bus remains unchanged.

No. 688 – Regular scheduled bus service. Thorncombe to Axminster via Marshwood and Hawkchurch, with a £3.80 return fare for adults without a Concessionary Bus Pass. The timetable for this bus remains unchanged.

Schools Transport, by First Wessex, (Staged Carriage Service):

The A2 Holditch to Woodroffe via Marshwood service continues to be fulfilled by a single-deck bus, but with decreased pupil numbers travelling this academic year, it is now available for use by the general public. It is very important to note that this service runs on school days only, so has to be viewed along The Woodroffe School term dates. Since travel starts before 9.30am, Concessionary Bus Passes cannot be used, on single outward journeys. The fare structure is available from First Wessex.

A2 Holditch to Woodroffe School:

Holditch	0723
Chard Junction	0733
Forde Abbey	0737
Thorncombe Village	0744
Maudlin Cross	0753
Kittwhistle	0758
Blackdown Triangle	0804

Birdsmoorgate	0808
Marshwood	0811
Hawkchurch Turn	0816
Woodroffe School	0830

A02 Woodroffe School - Holditch

Woodroffe School	1550
Hawkchurch Turn	1604
Marshwood	1609
Birdsmoorgate	1612
Blackdown Triangle	1616
Kittwhistle	1622
Maudlin Cross	1627
Thorncombe Village	1636
Forde Abbey	1643
Chard Junction	1647
Holditch	1657

Cllr David Marsh and Mrs Mary Marsh, Thorncombe And Villages Bus Users & Supporters



WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM?

Volunteers are an essential part of what we do at **Lyme Regis Museum** and we are looking for new people to join our team. Training and support is given and volunteering with us will give you the opportunity to:

- Meet our visitors from all around the world
- Make new friends & enjoy social events
- Share your skills & experience
- Acquire new knowledge about Lyme & its history
- Give support to a local organisation

If you enjoy meeting people and would like to find out more then we would be delighted to hear from you.

Contact Cara Jenkins T: 01297 443370 E: cjenkins@lymeregismuseum.co.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1041201

Marshwood Community Land Trust: Officers

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Marshwood Shop sub-committee

Chairman	Helen Golding (marshwoodsc@gmail.com)
Vice-chair	(Currently vacant)
Treasurer	John Piper

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

Facebook Page: Marshwood CLT

Interested in renting affordable housing?

Are you registered with Dorset Home Choice?

Would you, or someone you know, be interested in moving into one of the houses at Bramblehay, Marshwood, should a property become available? Allocation of these properties, and similar schemes in neighbouring villages, is handled by Dorset Home Choice. To be considered as a tenant, you need to be on the housing register. Be prepared by registering now at www.dorsethomechoice.org

When registering, please make sure you put the following statement on your application to show you qualify for Marshwood CLT housing:

'Have local connection required to qualify for CLT housing'

These houses are for those in our community. Please register, even if Dorset Home Choice would normally regard you as adequately housed.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee: Members

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Members	Jacqui Sewell, UMV parish councillor Ali Cameron, UMV parish councillor Ali Edwards, UMV parish councillor Rob England, Marshwood CLT chairman David French, Stoke Abbott resident John Piper, UMV parish councillor Sara Hudston, Editor, <i>Beneath the Vale</i>	

Address: NP Steering Committee, c/o The Old Rectory, Marshwood, Dorset DT6 5Q
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A trust fund for our council?

There are plenty of areas where our council is different; we are a quality council, we still run a lengthsman service, we have a magazine run by group of parishioners independently from the council. All are what we are or have but what is still missing? The answer is: a Trust Fund.

occupied elsewhere, the GR never lets up in his visit to elderly communities such as ours. And these visits are a great opportunity to spread your generosity. With the family provided for why not offer your permanent thanks to the community – and encourage something really worthwhile in doing so?

Researching for the background to the Neighbourhood Plan, we noticed that, as BTV attended other councils seeking to co-operate on a joint plan, some councillors were referring to the ‘Trust’ as a source of further funds. So what is a trust fund, and does the council really need one?

What is needed to set up a trust fund? Firstly, the availability of money – someone of goodwill who wants to be remembered by our community. Secondly, a project or an idea. It is up to the trustees who would implement your wishes to decide how your money is spent.

There are many kinds of trust funds, but in this context, a trust fund is a way of leaving your money to your community in general when you shuffle off this mortal coil. Recently, the Grim Reaper has worked overtime with the loss of members of the Marshwood family, but although often

Recent changes in the council’s makeup have given us the experience of setting up and running such trusts. Perhaps this alone could be the justification for someone to change their will – and in doing so gain the permanent gratitude of our four villages.





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