

Working Together for a Better Community

NEROCHE VILLAGES

Newsletter

For the parishes of Staple Fitzpaine, Bickenhall, Curland
and Orchard Portman with Thurlbear

Issue 53 - Autumn 2024



Somerset Apples © [@DavidFitzpaine](#)

Welcome to the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, a quarterly publication delivered free to every household in Neroche Parish, helping the community to stay connected and up-to-date on local issues.

Vacancy - Editor Neroche Newsletter

Only four months left to save our
Neroche Newsletter!

After six years at the helm, Karen Learoyd will be stepping down as Editor after publishing the Winter edition in November.

The popular Newsletter is published four times a year and distributed free of charge to every household in the parish.

The role of the Editor is to source input from local contributors and co-ordinate with our professional designer and publisher to meet quarterly deadlines.

The position could potentially be shared between prospective candidates.

If you would like to take on this important role in our Communications Team or would like more information, please feel free to contact me at

mike.aspray@gmail.com
or on 07484 890284

St Peter's Fete and Family Dog Show

By Rebecca George, CBE

Two years passed frighteningly fast and in June, we found ourselves once again hosting the St Peter's Fete, with the added attraction of a much larger family dog show. We moved the date from early July to June as many people advised us that 'the Fete has always been in June and the weather has always been marvellous'. True to form, it rained on and off until the morning of the fete, accompanied by strong and blustery wind. So once again our plans to get all the marquees and gazebos up and chairs and tables in place beforehand, were scuppered. We did as much as we could, sorting piles of bric a brac in the garage, storing masses of food in the fridge and freezer, getting the equipment for the games ready in the barn and putting out rather sad piles of chairs with dumpy bags on them to keep them dry.

A team led by Mark Porter worked for several weeks beforehand mowing, laying out the welly wanging, parking, and two dog arenas, trimming hedges, strimming, clearing piles of wood and slate and grass, planting flowers in tubs and putting out all the garden furniture we possess.

We were blessed with amazing volunteers throughout – on the committee doing the planning, sorting publicity and online advertising (especially for the dog show), helping source tables and chairs, making signs and banners, assembling all the floats, running the stalls and games, providing food and drink and tractors and stocks – and much else besides. We simply could not put on a fete without the people who gave their time, donated to the cause,

contributed their ideas and cheerfully carried out random instructions at short notice before,



Punch and Judy



Jane's Puzzle

Continued on next page



Chris and Nicky Baxter

during and after the day. Special thanks to Kath Michaels who did so much organising in the weeks leading up to the big day.

On the morning of the fete, a team assembled, wrapped up warm, and went forth into the fields to put up marquees, put out tables, set up the bar, lay out all the games, put up signage, double check the Sumup machines were working, and ferry car load after car load of bric a brac, plants, cakes, preserves, bottles for the tombola, the Scaletrix Hill Climb, and make sure that everyone who needed one had a chair. The Wellington Silver Band and Thurlbear School choir arrived along with Professor Gary with Punch and Judy and all their friends. The wonderful ladies of the WI arrived, led by Pauline Phelps, and took over the kitchen, preparing the cream teas and cheerfully making cups of tea for random volunteers and the occasional early visitor.

At 2pm the Silver Band struck up and we were open for business. Chris Baxter started his commentary of the event, letting everyone know what was going on. People started queuing to register their dogs for the various classes and the first balls were thrown at coconuts.



The weather, in the end, was more or less very kind. We had one downpour for a few minutes, although the rest of the afternoon was dry, not too cold, and not too windy. We were terribly relieved.

The bar was busy all afternoon, along with the BBQ and ice cream sales. People started buying their cream teas and sitting on the terrace.

The dog show was a big attraction and excellent addition to the fete. Nicky Baxter organised it, preparing for months beforehand – finding the judge, booking Hoopers, and advertising far and wide. Many, many people turned up with dogs of all shapes and sizes who were very well behaved. Some of the classes had as many as 20 entries, with the winner receiving rosettes. Best in show won a portrait by Jill Perrior.

We had three stalls – Bits and Bobs, where Mark Pope encouraged people to buy four or more things for the price of one as often as possible, Cakes and Bakes, which sold out long before the end of the day, and Plants and Preserves, with a wide selection of goods. All the stalls were enhanced by beautiful new shelving which will be widely used in the years to come.

The bottle tombola was very popular, especially as people who didn't win very exciting bottles got a raffle ticket thrown in. The games stalls were popular with young and old – skittles, Splat the Rat, hoopla, coconut shy, electric buzz, treasure patch, pig racing, Scalextrix hill climb, welly wanging, the human fruit machine and 'bagoo'. Punch and Judy was as popular as ever with children and grown-ups, as were the children's races.

The raffle was, as ever, an important contributor to the fund raising. Prizes included a week in Woolacombe, two nights in a luxury Shepherd's Hunt, champagne, whiskey, an MOT and tickets on the bus to London. Special thanks to all of you who bought the raffle tickets inserted into the Neroche Newsletter.



Mark Pope



Karen and John Learoyd

The Badger Street Band took a turn playing folk tunes and singing, and the Thurlbear School Choir did brilliantly, especially as some of them hadn't performed in public before.

We raised £4500 for St Peter's Church and are delighted. It was a happy, busy day, filled with children

and dogs and people who came looking for a good day out for the family, and found it.



Bickenhall and District WI

After our August break, our W.I. will resume its regular monthly meetings with speakers, and you are very welcome to join us. For a small fee of £5, you can enjoy one of the various topics covered, plus tea and biscuits.

We welcome guests who are interested in joining our group and would like a taster of what we get up to during our meetings. These take place the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm at Neroche Hall.

We also welcome guests who are interested to hear a particular speaker.

Speakers

September 11th	Make Me A Winner by Sally Kershaw
October 9th	Trees and Their Very Special World by Paul Rutter
November 13th	Craft Evening for our Members
December 12th	Food For Thought by Brian Wright

For further information about the WI or our programme, please contact Frances Alford at 01460 234245 or fran.alford@hotmail.co.uk

This Farming Life

By Tom Pope

Well, what a year of weather we've had this year so far! The wet weather has certainly made many aspects of farming very challenging. We have been lucky that we only have spring barley being grown on the farm this year which meant that we luckily didn't have any crops in the ground over the horrible winter we endured earlier. Many farmers weren't so fortunate and lost large areas of crops to either the wet or to slug damage. The wet spring we had did make planting our spring barley extremely challenging this year though, and because of this it was planted about one month later than normal. We're hoping that this won't impact the yields too much, but there will inevitably be some effect.

We are fortunate though that we have been less affected by the weather than some farms due to a relatively large amount of the farm being put into environment schemes. You'll see some of these schemes opposite the farm and on the right-hand side as you head uphill out of the village. These schemes pay us to grow crops for the environment, and we also use them with the aim of managing our major weed problem on the farm which is a weed called blackgrass. The first year we establish the environment scheme we are allowed to mow it as many times as we like with the aim of killing blackgrass before the seeds are viable. In the second year of the scheme, we don't mow the fields which allows more flowers to encourage pollinators. Unfortunately, when the field above the village was planted it was very dry so it didn't establish as well as it should have, leaving many gaps. These gaps have now been taken up by thistles and ragwort, so we may have reduced one weed problem although created another one, although hopefully one easier to manage.

As far as our chickens go, we are in the easy part of the flock where the chickens have gotten used to the shed and have relaxed into laying well. We're packing approximately 30,000 eggs a day at present which is a largely automated process run by one person and takes about 2.5hrs. This leaves us more time to monitor the health and welfare of the birds. This flock don't appear to be very keen to leave the shed and explore the range, so we've been trying to encourage them out by placing old Christmas trees outside for them to play with, we will see how successful this is!



Breakfast FUNDRAISER

£5
PER
Bap



Saturday 2nd November 9.30am - 11 last order

**West Country farm produced Bacon / Sausage baps
. Toast and Marmalade and bottomless tea or
coffee. What's not to like!**

Please book via Nicky 01823 480675

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Thurlbear Wood

By David Lloyd, Beat Forester

For a small wood, Thurlbear has a lot going on: Ancient Semi Natural Wood (ASNW), a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), European Protected Species (EPS), and 'new' woodland planted after World War II.

The northern half of Thurlbear contains the Ancient Woodland SSSI, under the care of Somerset Wildlife Trust, where management aims to maintain a variety of important habitats such as rides, glades, and different aged coppice coupes. The southern half was planted after World War II. This was in response to the dramatic decline in UK woodland cover (to just 5%), to ensure the nation's future timber demands could be met. This planting included some areas that were previously Ancient Woodland which we now refer to as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

Whilst the two halves of the woodland are distinctly different in their appearance and management, they complement each other, providing a wide range of habitats and landscape connectivity.

Sustainable woodland management



A - NS group fells

Woodlands in the UK have been actively 'managed' for over 4,000 years and the timber they produce is one of the most sustainable resources we have, if harvested responsibly.

Over time, competition for light, nutrients, and water, results in reduced tree growth, shading, death, and can lead to a reduction in woodland diversity. Woodlands are initially planted with more trees than will be needed at maturity. By removing a percentage of the

trees at regular intervals we can ensure optimal growth and maximise carbon storage. This process is known as 'thinning'.

We use statistical models and field surveying to ensure timber is removed in sustainable amounts. Thinning also creates a varied mosaic of habitats, allowing light to reach the forest floor and increasing biodiversity. It provides an opportunity to improve woodland resilience to climate change, pests, diseases, and adverse weather events, so we can continue providing safe woodlands for the nation to visit well into the future. As Foresters, we think about what a woodland might be in 100 years' time, not just a year down the line.

Income generated by the timber is re-invested into managing the woodlands and helps maintain formal trails, car parks, and access points.

Management in action

We've recently thinned areas of the southern half of Thurlbear Wood. Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) approaches are used to develop woodlands that are structurally, visually, and biologically diverse. Most of this area is managed under shelterwood systems, where we grow the next generation of trees underneath the existing canopy, ideally using seed within the woodland to regenerate it naturally.

This harvesting operation delivered several forest management objectives, including:

- Create gaps in dense Norway spruce to provide early successional habitat
- Help better quality Norway Spruce to develop



B - irregular structure

and give space to minor components, such as Scots pine, Oak, and Beech

- Remove Larch at risk from a highly destructive fungus-like organism called *Phytophthora ramorum*

- Reduce the impact of *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Ash Dieback) and addressing visitor safety issues

- Provide space so the canopy of broadleaf trees can develop, increasing natural seed loads, leading to greater natural regeneration

- Begin the gradual process of restoring areas of Ancient Woodland planted with conifers after World War II.

A balancing act

Managing forests involves juggling a number of considerations, including public safety, health and safety legislation, delivering Forest Design Plan objectives, species and habitat regulations, and heritage feature management (to name a few!).

The presence of European Protected Species, such as dormice, means that working windows are limited, although purpose-built harvesting equipment means we can work efficiently and avoid the highly sensitive periods for our most at-risk species.

We also use mitigations to minimise impacts on the woodland, including leaving unworked areas as refugia, restricting machine access to specific routes, laying down branches to protect soils from machinery, and provide deadwood habitat once work is completed.



C - post harvesting

Safety first

Forestry remains one of the most dangerous industries to be employed in. Although the development of purpose-built harvesting equipment has made high risk operations, such as dealing with diseased trees, much safer. The machines themselves have large risk zones. Razor sharp pieces of metal can fly through the woodland at 700mph if a saw chain breaks, and logs weighing over 100kg can fall from cranes, crushing anyone underneath. This means that sometimes we must close woodlands to ensure our visitors, contractors, and staff are safe. Once harvesting is complete, we reinstate roads and official tracks within the woodland, and open the site back up for public use as soon as it's safe to do so.

So, what happens next?

Tree planting will be completed this winter. Seed regeneration and tree growth will be monitored to see how the woodland is responding, which will inform future management. We'll work with our civil engineer to improve existing infrastructure to make best use of the re-established access routes.

Several ideas are already being considered for the next harvesting intervention, including ride and track edge alterations to provide more open space and better habitat connectivity; coppice management; ways to better integrate Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites with the Ancient Woodland SSSI; and using areas with better soils for growing high value hardwood (broadleaves). You can read our full management plan for Thurlbear online at <https://www.forestryengland.uk/forest-planning/blackdown-hills-forest-plan>.

If you have any questions about our work the local Forestry England team can be reached via westengland@forestryengland.uk.



ANNUAL VILLAGE CRICKET MATCH

**Stoke St Mary Cricket Ground
Sunday, 1st September 2024
from 2pm**

**The annual competition between Staple
Fitzpaine, Thurlbear, Curland, Orchard
Portman and Stoke St Mary for the
Walker Cup**

**A great afternoon's entertainment with
some very competitive cricket!**

St Peter's Church Flower Guild

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

Displays in the church are always made special by the use of flowers and greenery foraged from the hedgerows or created with flowers grown in our gardens. This is shown so well in Peta's display for D-Day and Karen's colourful display.

The first weekend in August is when the Taunton Flower Show takes place and five of us from the flower guild are now volunteers at this event, carrying out various roles within the show. Carole, Kath and Karen are stewards with Peta being a judge in the children's crafts.

In the children's section of the flower show we run 'fun with flowers' where children of various ages come along to have a go at flower arranging. All the flowers, foliage, containers and accessories are provided, with the theme for this year being fun and games. The age group 11 years and under were given the theme of the egg and spoon race.

We were very lucky as John Learoyd designed and made the eggs on his 3D printer. A big thank you to him and to Karen for putting up with the noise of the printer as they took 11 hours each to produce. The children thought they were really cool, and the grown-ups were pretty impressed too.

The last part of the year is a wonderful time for decorating the Church for



Peta's Display



Karen's Flowers

Continued on next page



Ready for Contestants



Wonderful Displays

Harvest and Christmas, along with great excitement for next year when we will be holding our Music and Flower Festival. If you are interested in being part of our team, do please contact me.



Pop-Up Café

**St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine
Every Friday, 10am to 12pm**

Come along for a cuppa with biscuits and delicious home-made cakes.

Meet old friends and make new ones



Young Saplings at Neroche Woodlanders

There are plenty of young sapling trees finding their way to the light in the woods at Young Wood. Oaks, including those buried and forgotten by squirrels or jays, or planted by us from acorns gathered from our largest oak trees; wild service trees growing from suckers which grow many metres from the parent tree; field maples which seed freely to increase the chance their seedlings will germinate where there's enough light to grow beyond a first pair of leaves; and ash, which germinates like mustard and cress in some places, although which succumbs for the most part to Ash Dieback before the seedlings reach much more than ankle height.

There's another kind of sapling at Young Wood - a kind which runs about and makes quite a lot of noise: because that's the name of our parent and toddler group - Young Saplings.

Based on Forest School principles, our Young Sapling sessions run all year round, supporting child development through nature connection, social interaction and good old-fashioned play. Each Friday morning (term time only) there is a seasonal theme, and we follow the interests of the children. For parents or carers, it's a chance to be outdoors with like-minded people in a non-judgemental setting. We have compost loos with baby changing space, a car park, and a camp kitchen.

Sessions run from 9.30am-11.00am on Fridays and take place in all weathers so that children can get the full benefits of being outdoors, with shelter in our roundhouse or under our big umbrella tarp on rainy days. Young Saplings is led by experienced Forest School leaders, each with a wealth of knowledge and a passion for nature. Our volunteers are all DBS-checked and have relevant experience.

If you or a family member or friend has young children who might benefit from coming to Young Saplings sessions, please contact Sarah - sarah@nerochewoodlanders.org.

Young Saplings

get out and explore

www.nerochewoodlanders.org



Young Saplings

Forest School

Parent and Toddler Group

0-5 year olds

Friday morning 09.30 - 11.00
Young Wood, Badger Street, Staple
Fitzplain, Taunton

£9 per child
[Block bookings ONLY]
£5 sibling or extra child
[babes-in-arms free]

Sessions are term time only and take
place all year round.
Hot chocolate and a snack for the children
will be cooked on an open fire

Young Wood has its own facilities
compost loo, car parking and a covered
baby-changing space are all close by. We
are Buggy friendly and we have waterproofs
you can borrow if needed.

We have shelter in our roundhouse for rainy
days, plenty of tarps and hot stones on cold
days, so you can enjoy the great outdoors
whatever the weather.

Hot drinks, tea or coffee for adults are
included in the price.

For more details
Contact: Christine
admin@nerochewoodlanders.org

News from Neroche Hall

By Karen Learoyd, Chair

It seems as though there is never a day when the Hall isn't being used for something, whether it be the regular sports groups, church gatherings, lunch club, dog training, elections (!) or children's parties. We even had a last-minute booking for a giant inflatable bouncy obstacle course late on a Friday afternoon as the weather forecast for the Saturday was dire. Apparently, it only just fitted in the main hall. Thankfully, we have great facilities which are becoming increasingly known about across the wider neighbourhood.

Some of you may have noticed a rather large cupboard in the committee room – we agreed with our Sunday church group that they could have a lockable space for some of their equipment. Hopefully, this won't be in the way for anyone.

The repairs to the North side of the roof have now been completed, along with replacement of all the guttering and downpipes, and painting of the fascias. We used a company who have experience of renovating old buildings, and maintaining churches, and are very happy with the outcome – the roof has also been thoroughly cleaned. We have just decided to go ahead with the South side – ideally before the winter, although this will require scaffolding to be erected as well. The builders think we may still have 7-10 years of life left in the roof, providing we keep the maintenance going as needed. In the last few days, two extractors have been installed in the kitchen to help with steam generated from the dishwasher, and any cooking smells. The kitchen will then be given a makeover, including painting the ceiling, walls and skirting boards, as well as new plates on the doors, and potentially some new cupboard doors. A big thanks to our caretaker who provides his labour at no cost for all these improvements.

Thanks to everyone who attended our inaugural breakfast fundraiser, it was a great success and we have been asked to run this event again – you will see an advert for the next one on 2nd November. We also have our next quiz scheduled for Friday, October 4th, which will be hosted by the inimitable Mike Michaels (watch out for the kazoo).

Enjoy the rest of the summer and we hope to see you all soon.

My three Sourdough Sensations!!

By Mike Michaels

It was a pleasure for Sourdough Sensations, your friendly local artisan sourdough bread and viennoiserie provider, to host a sourdough making workshop on Wednesday 31st July. Gill Dalley was the lucky winner of one of the raffle prizes from the Staple Fitzpaine fete. She was invited to bring along two friends to join in the doughy fun to come and make some sourdough bread under the “expert” guidance of Mike Michaels from Sourdough Sensations. Gill was joined by her neighbour Wyn Balance and her granddaughter Dana.



The event began with some background about the principles of sourdough and the sourdough making process, and how it differs from modern yeasted methods. Next, it was time to get messy! Water was added to flour to hydrate it. Then, the all-important “starter/mother” followed by the salt. We had a lot of questions and discussion about the mysterious starter.

How to, well.. start it? How to feed it? How to look after it? How to use it? And what to do to avoid wasting it as so many recipes suggest discarding a lot of it at intervals during the starter feeding and making process.

Once all the ingredients were incorporated, we moved on to the skill of



stretching and folding the dough. This is the equivalent of kneading which many regular bread makers will be familiar with. Both methods develop the gluten strands just as well, although the benefits of stretching and folding, over kneading, include it being less hard work, and less messy! It makes for more gentle development of the gluten strands which



benefits some flours like spelt and wholemeal. Either way, developing the gluten makes the dough more elastic and encourages it to form a nice skin on the outside, to provide the bread with a good crust, a smooth soft consistency inside and decent air bubbles to give a good rise to the loaf.

After 3 sets of stretches and folds it was time for a sit down and a nice cup of tea and a slice of Kath's courgette cake with lime frosting while we discussed the bread making art some more and allowed the dough to rest a while. Time to ditch the mixing bowls now! Our smooth elasticky doughs were tipped on to the bench and shaped (my favourite bit!) by turning and tucking and gently pulling the dough to stretch the outer skin to make it even more compact and smooth. After a final shape, the rounded dough is tipped into floured bannetons – rattan or bamboo baskets – which help to make the swirly pattern you might see on some artisan sourdoughs. Then it's off to the fridge overnight before baking the next morning. Sourdough might be a slow process, although it is so worth it!

While I was taking them through these steps, the oven was on, and I brought out a couple of pre prepared loaves I made the day before for us to bake and give the ladies a taste of what they were in for! After some controlled "slashing" with a serrated knife and razor blade to allow the bread to rise in a controlled fashion, it was straight into the oven for the loaves. 40 minutes later the kitchen was smelling heavenly. We took the loaves outside with a good few thick slabs of butter and a couple of pots of jam, spreading those on to the warm freshly baked bread – YUM!

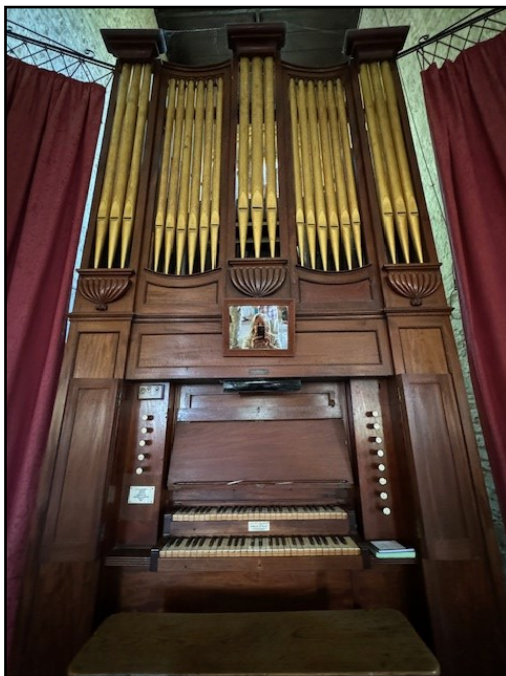


The rise, fall and rise again of St Peter's Organ

By Rebecca George, CBE

St Peter's Church has a lovely and unique organ. It was built by G & H Buckwell, probably between 1833 and 1840. There are only 7 known organs built by G&H Buckwell, and only two in their original condition, which are both small single manual organs. The instrument at Staple Fitzpaine is a two manual of thirteen stops in original condition – and so is unique. We have previously been advised by the Diocese that because of this, it is important that it is competently restored and preserved. They said, 'it is considered to be a most attractive instrument visually, has a most pleasing sound and is a remarkable find'. It was restored at an unknown date by George

Osmond of Taunton and again in 1980 by Eustace and Alldridge of Exeter. Unusually for both restorations, it has survived in its original specification and the original maker's nameplate is still present. It is a fine example of mid-19th century chamber organ building.



It may well have started life in a manor house – though not our local one - and was transferred to St Peter's at some point. It was installed in probably the only possible position, at the back of the church in front of the West Door. This has meant that we don't have the use of the West Door and the area behind the organ has become a useful storage area. However, blocking the major entrance and exit to the church has inevitably caused discussion over the years. Around 15 years ago the then Church Warden and PCC made plans to put in a kitchen servery and toilet. They applied for the necessary permissions and got them for our kitchen servery which is a fantastic asset. However, the Diocese were concerned about moving the organ and specified that it had to be moved somewhere appropriate, preferably a new home or failing that the right kind of storage. The project ground to a halt as efforts were



made to find a new home or affordable storage to no avail. Eventually a decision was made to abandon the idea of an internal toilet for the time being as unaffordable. This decision was quite separate to the discussions about the organ. Now St Peter's has a compost loo as an interim solution and so the decision has been made to keep the organ in the church. During the last few years, David Bidgood has emerged as our lovely local organist, and he comes to play on a regular basis. We are lucky to have him.

We are now turning our attention to organ restoration. Michael Farley has been in and checked the organ over. He seems to think it might have been built for the church, although I guess we might never know that for sure. He thinks the upper manual was added later, accounting for the stiff touch when the coupler is engaged. We don't think this would change the organ's claim to being in almost original condition. He has given it a good clean and tuned it, and initially recommends replacing the blower unit altogether, which would resolve the issues of asbestos and noise. He is in the process of putting other recommendations together.

It is, on the whole, in remarkable condition and we are hoping that we might be able to get some grant funding to complete remedial work. In the meantime, it is played regularly and continues to be an asset to St Peter's.



Want to be part of an Outstanding volunteer service? Then Route1 is looking for you!

Route1 Advocacy and Independent Visitors service supports children and young people who are in care or have a social worker. They do this by matching volunteers with young people as either short term Advocates, or longer-term Independent Visitors.

The service recently had an independent internal review and was graded as Outstanding; and was shortlisted to the final 3 in the Frontline National Award 2024 'Team of the Year'

Route1 helps children have happy childhood memories, and ensures their views are listened to and acted upon.

- Independent Visitors: These volunteers make a long-term commitment to one child in care. They visit the child once or twice each month to build a trusting, supportive relationship and friendship that can sometimes last many years. This can bring life-changing experiences and opportunities to the child or young person – and their Independent Visitor!
- Advocates: volunteers work alongside individual children to ensure their voices are heard, and their wishes and feelings are taken into account when decisions are being made which affect them. Each child's support is usually short term and there is no expectation of a long-term commitment to any particular child.



A recent trainee volunteer said "I started out thinking 'what on earth can require 5 days of training?' I now know why and think you have it just right."

Your life experience will be highly valued, and you will be trained and supported in developing key skills. Your volunteering can be arranged to suit your availability.

For more information about Route 1 Advocacy and Independent Visitors, you can contact us by emailing: route1advocacy@somerset.gov.uk, calling 01749 822801 and our website is www.route1advocacy.co.uk



follow us on social media



Let's do something amazing

Let's do a Macmillan Coffee Morning

Come along and help us do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer.

Place: St. Peter's ^{Staple} Fitzpaine

Date: September 27

Time: 10 - 12 noon

Contact: _____

Pop-up cafe
(any Friday 10-12.)



Scan me to donate

Simply scan this QR code with your phone to donate direct to your host's Coffee Morning.

It's easy, quick and secure.

Thank you.

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT



Headline partner





Neroche Autumn Quiz

Friday, 4th October 2024
Neroche Hall

Doors open 7pm for start at 7.30pm

Entry £4.00 per person
Max 6 in a team

BYO / Raffle

Book your table via
r.davies507@btinternet.com
01823 480286



ARE YOU NEW TO THE AREA?

Here are the different ways you can find out what's happening in Neroche from the
Communication Action Group:-

Neroche Newsletter is delivered free to every household each quarter – full of upcoming events, articles on recent events, and updates from local Groups and leaders. Contact us at nerochenewsletter@gmail.com

Neroche Villages Website - the place for information from the Parish Council including planning applications, meeting minutes etc. You will also find information on local groups and clubs, events, News, local businesses, and details of the Blackdown Hills and Neroche Woodlanders.

www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Neroche Email communication – distributed every 3 to 4 weeks, bringing you information about local events, information from the Parish Council, and details of what's happening in our neighbouring villages. To sign up for the Email communication, just send your details to nerochemail@gmail.com.

Welcome to Neroche

Neroche Thursday Lunch Club

Neroche Hall
12.30pm for 1pm

5th September, 3rd October, 7th November
- £8 per head



Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a superb home-cooked lunch in wonderful company (transport and special diets can be arranged). Meet old friends and make new acquaintances - ideal for both long term residents and those who have recently arrived in the community. A wonderful way to spend a weekday lunchtime.

**Advance booking is essential by the Monday prior to the lunch to book for catering purposes. Contact Alison Brown
01823 480441 or aabrown.battens@gmail.com**



RSPCA WEST HATCH

Conservation & Grounds Maintenance

Volunteer Days

Are you a keen gardener interested in conservation?

Are you an experienced groundsperson or just have some hours to spare each month and are interested in giving it a go? Could you help us to enhance the appearance and the habitat value of our 22 acre site alongside like minded people?



RSPCA West Hatch are hosting monthly Conservation and Grounds Maintenance Volunteering Team Days on the first Saturday of every month from 10am to 3pm.



We're looking for practical volunteers with a passion for both the outdoors and for animals, who can help us with various gardening and groundwork tasks such as weeding, bramble clearance, pruning, keeping fencing tidy and clear of vegetation, designing wildlife friendly gardens and areas, and general maintenance of garden areas and borders.



You will also be helping with projects such as preparing, restoring and enhancing habitats for wildlife rehabilitation such as our paddocks, woodlands and meadows, which will help nature and maximise the benefits that this brings to the animals we care for.

No previous knowledge or experience needed, just the desire to get stuck in and have a willingness to help and get your hands dirty. Join us if you want to keep active, make new friends and use your skills to benefit the animals!

RSPCA.



Email tina.huntington@rspca.org.uk for more information!

Hedgehogs are a gardener's friend as they eat beetles, caterpillars, worms and other invertebrates. Did you know as many as 10 different hedgehogs may visit a garden over several nights? This could mean 'your hedgehog' is actually a number of different ones visiting at different times!

Here's what you can do to help encourage hedgehogs into your garden and keep them happy throughout the year

Make a hedgehog a home

Leave areas of the garden wild, with piles of leaves, logs or compost. These make an attractive nest, as well as a home for the invertebrates that hedgehogs like to eat.

Making an artificial home can be as simple as placing a piece of board against a wall. Or you can buy a purpose-built hedgehog house - find out how to build your own. <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/garden/pledge/hedgehog>

Create hedgehog highways

Hedgehogs can travel around a mile every night, so they may need help to get into and out of your garden. Try cutting holes in fences, removing bricks from walls, or digging tunnels under the garden boundary. Hedgehogs can travel through gaps as small as 13x13cm, so these gaps don't need to be large.

Replacing garden fencing for native hedgerows provides access through your garden for hedgehogs. Hedgerows also provide shelter for other wildlife too. Remember to check with your neighbour before making a highway.

Feeding hedgehogs

You can encourage hedgehogs into your garden by providing food and fresh water.

Tips for leaving out food and water:

- Leave out foods like tinned dog or cat food and crushed cat or dog biscuits.
- Supply good quality, meaty hedgehog food from wildlife food suppliers.
- Never feed hedgehogs milk or bread - milk can cause diarrhoea and bread isn't very nutritious.
- Check the food and water bowls each day to top them up with fresh water and food and remove any food that hasn't been eaten.
- Always clean the dishes - do this outside (not in the kitchen) every day using hot, soapy water and rinse well. This will help to reduce the risks of spreading disease between different hedgehogs that might eat from the same dish.

Hedgehog-friendly gardening tips

Here's what you can do to keep your garden hedgehogs safe.

- Cover holes: hedgehogs can easily fall into uncovered drains or holes in your garden. Cover holes or check them every day to make sure no hedgehogs have become trapped.
- Provide an exit route from ponds and pools. Use bricks or stones at the side of the pond. Create a sloped edge on part of the pond to help hedgehogs to climb out if they fall in. Cover swimming pools overnight and when they're not in use.
- Check for hedgehogs before using strimmers or mowers - particularly under hedges, where they might be resting during the day. If you're forking over a compost heap, check them for any nesting hogs first.
- Always thoroughly disturb bonfires immediately before you light them, as there could be hedgehogs nesting or hiding inside. Moving the whole bonfire by hand before setting it alight is the best way of ensuring that hedgehogs and other wildlife aren't sleeping in there.

- Litter is a real hazard to hedgehogs - they can get their heads stuck in tins, plastic bags, binders from drinks cans or discarded yoghurt pots. Make sure you dispose of your rubbish safely and check there's no litter in your garden. Any plastic rings should be cut up, however small they are.
- Raise any netting: if you have any netting or wire in your garden, make sure it's at least a foot above ground level, as hedgehogs can easily become tangled up in it. Pack away or roll up fruit nets, tennis and goal nets when they're not in use. Replace any netting in your garden with solid metal mesh, as it's less likely to entangle hedgehogs.
- Don't close your shed doors if you usually keep them open, as there might be hedgehogs nesting inside. Keep any dangerous chemicals or tools well off the ground. If you need to dismantle your shed, check carefully underneath the floor first for nesting or hibernating hedgehogs.
- Avoid slug pellets and pesticides - these can poison hedgehogs and should only be used as a last resort. Instead, try using one of many natural alternatives, like sprinkling crushed eggshells or coffee grounds around the plants you need to protect. If you must use pellets, place them under a slate that's inaccessible to hedgehogs. The outdoor use of slug pellets containing metaldehyde was banned in Great Britain from March 2022.

What to do if you disturb a hedgehog

If the hedgehog is hibernating, gently put it back into its nest, re-cover it with the nest material and leave it alone. If this isn't possible - for example, because the nesting site has already been destroyed - then place the hedgehog in a part of the garden where it will be safe and sheltered, with as much of the original nest as possible. If there's not much natural shelter available, you could use a large box instead, although make sure the hedgehog will be able to get out of the box easily when it next wakes up.

If the hedgehog isn't hibernating and has young hoglets, re-cover them with the nesting material and leave them alone. If this isn't possible, please contact us for more advice.

Find out what to do if you've found an injured or sick hedgehog <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/wildlife/hedgehogs/injured> or an orphaned hoglet <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/wildlife/hedgehogs/baby> in your garden.

Cats, dogs and hedgehogs

Cats aren't normally a problem, as they'll usually leave hedgehogs alone after an initial investigation.

Dogs can attack hedgehogs, so try to keep them away from hedgehogs and monitor or keep your dog on a lead in the garden at dusk or night, when you know the hedgehogs will be out.

You can also 'warn' any hedgehog before you come outside by turning a light on first.

Hedgehogs do carry fleas. However, pet owners don't need to worry as these fleas can only survive on hedgehogs and not on other species.

Photos from the Fete



Choir



Wellington Silver Band



*Mark with a
splat rat*



*Paul with a
scalextric*

Christmas Wreath-Making Workshop

Led by Holly-Jane Harris of Blostma @Frogmary Farm

St. Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine
Saturday December 7th
10:00-12:30



Limited tickets available - £35pp - Don't delay, book today!
All materials provided; ticket price includes light refreshments

All profits to go towards the flower costs for the festival in 2025
Contact- katherine.michaels@icloud.com



ST. PETER'S CHURCH
STAPLE FITZPAINE

- *Carnival* -
A Festival of
Music &
Flowers

20TH - 22ND JUNE 2025

A celebration of our church and community

Music for all - Beautiful floral displays
- Refreshments.

For more information contact Katherine Michaels
katherine.michaels@icloud.com

Advance Notice - The Return of St Peter's Flower and Music Festival 2025 - June 20th-22nd

Following the success of the last festival in 2018 and with energy levels restored, Jacqueline, Shreya and I have put ourselves forward to deliver another vibrant, joyful festival celebrating everything that is special in our community.

The main legacies of the last festival are the very popular and delicious weekly pop-up café plus we raised almost enough money to have an on-site compostable loo!

Next year, we hope to go bigger and better than ever! The scale and variety of floral arrangements in 2018 resulted in a magnificent display, and, in its own right, brought lots of visitors to St Peter's although it was the variety of music that seemed to attract the most attention. Taking that into account, even more musical acts have been booked to provide free music for all during each day of the festival with ticketed evening concerts on Friday and Saturday.

The theme for the festival in 2025 is Carnival - a celebration of our church and community. The church promises to be a riot of colour as varied floral displays reflect the spirit of carnival be that in a religious or secular sense. There might even be a competitive element this time, plus we hope to engage the talents of the children and young people living in our community. Watch this space!

Friday evening, June 20th, we will be hosting our local, exceptionally talented musician, Rosie May with The St Peter's Singers as her warm-up act! Rosie May will perform live electronic vocal and harmonic manipulation to explore themes of nature and folklore in the Somerset landscape. Joined by powerfully composed vocal accompaniment, the trio presents an elegant, woozy and sometimes unsettling modern soundscape of the county.

We have been fortunate to secure Amici for Saturday evening, June 21st, assuring to delight with a programme of popular classical pieces as well as from stage and screen. Their concert was an early sell-out last time.

We will be closing the festival with a Sung Evensong on Sunday, led by our Rector, Joanna Porter, and featuring the musical talents of In Ecclesia, led by John Young and organist Simon Forrester.

Other music planned for the festival includes, so far, a drumming workshop by organic rhythm, Thurlbear School Choir, Singsational, an award-winning ladies a capella 4 part harmony singing group, Hapless Sailors Shanty Singers, local talented soprano, Sarah Wynne, and our very own Badger Street Band. We also hope to have Taunton Rock Choir.

Although the main dates of the festival are June 20th-22nd we have also planned 2 other events to kickstart the festivities. For one night only, Paul Hart's very popular pub quiz will move to St Peter's on Wednesday June 18th - more details nearer the time. On Thursday June 19th local historical expert, Tom Mayberry, has very kindly agreed to deliver a presentation on the history of Staple Fitzpaine, St Peter's Church and the surrounding area. Anyone who was fortunate to go along to his recent presentation on the history of Thurlbear will know that Tom has a wealth of knowledge which he conveys in a very accessible way.

Throughout the festival the pop-up café will be serving light refreshments during the day and there will be a licensed bar in the evening.

A festival of this scale is costly although with fundraising and sponsorship we hope to cover most costs ahead of the doors opening. A number of local businesses very generously supported the festival last time. We hope you will consider supporting us again, we will be in touch! If there's anyone else in our community who would like to sponsor the festival, please contact us. We have gold, silver and bronze sponsorship packages available.

Katherine Michaels, Jacqueline Kolkowski, Shreya Patel
katherine.michaels@icloud.com

2024 Fixtures

Fixture	First Race	Last Race
Thursday 14th November	12.40pm	3.53pm
Thursday 28th November	12.50pm	3.45pm
Thursday 12th December	12.20pm	3.50pm
Monday 30th December	12.25pm	3.58pm

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Yoga

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4th & 14th September

10am-5pm

at Bridge House Cottage, Bickenhall, TA3 6TU

A day of nurturing, discussion & information for Women,
Holistic Health info for Hormone changes and improved
Wellbeing,

Slow Mindful Yoga – accessible to Everyone - Mat or Chair
Breathing Practices, Mindfulness & Vibrational Sound for
Stress Reduction

Essential Oil making Mini-Workshop – make beautiful
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SCHOOL DATES

Term 1:

**3 September to 25
October 2024**

**Holiday 1: 26 October to
3 November 2024**

Term 2:

**4 November to 20
December 2024**

**Holiday 2: 21 December
2024 to 5 January 2025**

Events for your calendar

(Venue is Neroche Hall unless stated)

September

Sunday, 1st - Inter Village Cricket Match at Stoke
St Mary Cricket Ground

Thursday, 5th - Community Lunch

Tuesday, 10th - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, 11th - WI Meeting

Wednesday, 18th - Quiz at The Greyhound

Friday, 27th - Macmillan Coffee Morning at
St Peter's Church

October

Thursday, 3rd - Community Lunch

Friday, 4th - Autumn Quiz

Tuesday, 8th - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, 9th - WI Meeting

Wednesday, 16th - Quiz at The Greyhound

November

Saturday, 2nd - Breakfast Fundraiser

Thursday, 7th - Community Lunch

Tuesday, 12th - Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, 13th - WI Meeting

Wednesday, 20th - Quiz at The Greyhound

For latest updates visit www.nerochevillages.org.uk/events-calendar

Local Communication and Information

Websites:

Neroche Villages www.nerochevillages.org.uk

Community website run by the Neroche Communication Action Group. It has an up-to-date calendar of events; a news section; information about residents' action groups, including broadband, traffic; a business section and advertisements.

The website features a comprehensive list of clubs and organisations, including details of those in neighbouring parishes. It is also the website of Neroche Parish Council and lists its activities, agenda, minutes and reports.

Neroche Hall www.nerochehall.org.uk

The website lists the coming events, facilities and availability for hire of our village hall, and has an online booking form.

Church of England Seven Sowers Benefice www.sevensowers.org.uk

Has a calendar of events and church service times for Staple Fitzpaine and Orchard Portman churches, as well as other churches in the benefice.

Email Information:

The Neroche Communication Action Group runs an Email Alert System for sending information to those wishing to receive it. **Please note the email address for the Email Communication:** nerocheemail@gmail.com

The Parish Magazine:

Full information on benefice matters, a great source of news, coming events and general information, and details of many local businesses and services. For new subscriptions phone Alison Brown on 01823 480441.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this Newsletter.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Neroche Communication Action Group. Publication of an advertisement in, or with, the newsletter does not imply the Action Group's approval of the goods or services.

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