

Working Together for a Better Community

NEROCHE VILLAGES Newsletter

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

Issue 25 - Autumn 2017



All the fun of the fete!

The sun shone down on a successful and fun-filled event raising funds for St Peter's Church. Turn to pages 2-3 for photos and details.

Welcome to the Neroche Villages' Newsletter, a quarterly publication delivered free to every household in Neroche Parish, providing news and information on a wide variety of subjects and issues.





‘TO THE MANOR LAWN’ STAPLE FITZPAINE CHURCH FETE

By Alan Hyde & Wally Torrington

The beautiful grounds of The Manor in Staple Fitzpaine again provided the perfect setting for the St Peter’s Church Fete, which was attended by hundreds of members of the Neroche community.

More than £5,000 was raised for the church during the course of a sunny Saturday afternoon in June, helping to offset some of its £23,000 annual expenditure.



The fete, which is held every three years, was opened by the Revd Paul Reynolds and musical accompaniment from the Wellington Silver Band and country & western band 'Double Dealin' ensured the event went with a swing.

Attractions included: a dog show; teas in the walled garden; a Punch & Judy show; a raffle and auction of church pews and logs; stalls for posh hats, books, bottles, bric a brac and arts; a coconut shy; china plate



smash; clock golf; a Garden Club plant sale; games such as skittles and Guess the Name of the Bear; and bar and burger stands.

All in all, a lot of fun in the sun and for a great cause. Many thanks to everyone who contributed.



Highways England announces supplementary consultation on A358 upgrade

By Alan Hyde

In the words of the Somerset County Gazette, the Highways Agency 'backs down and re-opens consultation' on proposals to upgrade the A358 between West Hatch Lane and the M5 at Taunton.

Highways England said it has analysed feedback, listened to comments made and has taken the decision to gain further public opinion on its proposals for this particular section of the proposed A358 development.

A supplementary six-week public consultation will be held in the autumn, and dates for the public exhibition events will be announced shortly.

Highways England project manager David Stock said: "We have listened to all the feedback received from the initial consultation and we feel that more work is needed to find the best option for the section of the scheme between West Hatch and the M5.

"Details of the proposals to be consulted on will be made available when we launch the consultation, and we again invite everybody to come along to the events and have their say."



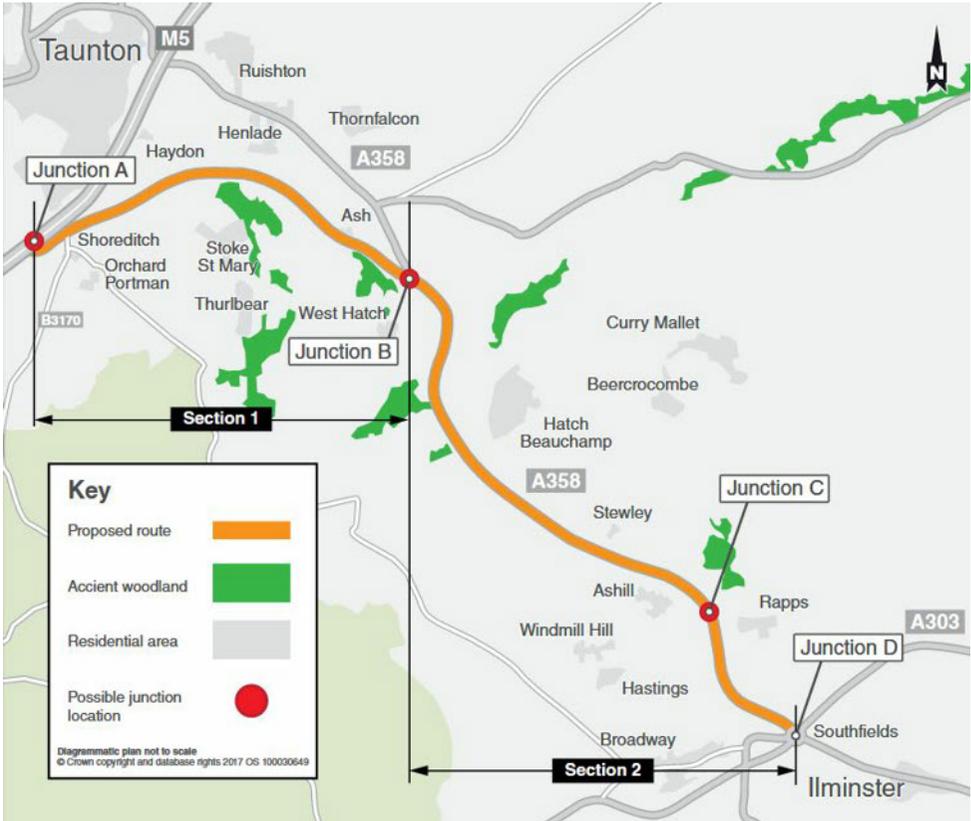
No further consultation is proposed on the section of the A358 between Southfields roundabout, Ilminster and West Hatch Lane.

Along with many other respondents, Neroche Parish Council replied to the initial consultation, pointing out its flaws and lack of detail, especially relating to cross-over routes on the A358 for local commercial, agricultural and residential traffic.

Further updates and perspectives on this important topic are given elsewhere in this newsletter from our elected representatives.

Highways England still expects to start work in 2020, following an announcement on a preferred route.

For updates and further information visit the Highways England website at: www.roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/A358-taunton-to-southfields



News from Neroche Hall

By Richard Davies

During the Summer the number of larger events at the Hall tends to reduce as we all look forward to enjoying outside activities, better weather and holidays. Regular users, however, often continue using it throughout the year, meeting monthly or weekly.

Our monthly series of **Film Nights** has taken a well-earned rest and will return in the Autumn to run through to Spring 2018. The list of available films has been scrutinised by those who pick our selections and they have viewed the official trailers. A good variety of films has been chosen and we have bid for these with Moviola. The films are advertised in this newsletter and on our website (www.nerochehall.org.uk/events).



The Committee will be promoting four main events:

On **Friday 6 October** it's the **Neroche Hall Fish and Chip Quiz** with Mike Michaels as our quizmaster. As before we will be asking you to book your



table in advance to avoid disappointment given that we can only have a maximum of 20 tables, each consisting of no more than six people.

We have a **Craft Fair** planned for **Sunday 29 October** and as usual a wide variety of stall holders will be present to tempt you with their wares. Hopefully for those who tend to plan well in advance it will be an early opportunity to look for a Christmas bargain and it will not clash with other events that seem to proliferate in the run up to Christmas.

Saturday 9 December sees the return of the very popular **Take Art** productions with, on this occasion, a presentation entitled “Brilliance” by the theatrical group Farnham Maltings, which is suitable for all ages and is set in the Winter of 1963. More details regarding tickets and ‘early-bird’ discounts will be advertised on our website nearer the time. Another Take Art production is also planned for March 2018.

Finally, the Hall Committee is staging an event on **New Year’s Eve**, which will be a party night with music, food and a bar, starting around 8.30pm until 12.30am. We hope that as many of our community will take this opportunity to see in the New Year with us, plus any friends and family who would also like to join the celebrations.

An evening of wintry Brilliance courtesy of Take Art

1963, winter. Everyone is gathering in the village hall.

Martha places her hand on the switch, presses it down, and life is never the same again.

Long after its arrival in the city, the slow process of rural electrification is illuminating every corner and crevice of village life. As the dark evenings hold us in, 240 volts of alternating current and the humble electric light bulb allows us to gather and sing long into the night.



Brilliance is a 90-minute theatrical event that celebrates progress and change in a bright new world.

Catch it at Neroche Hall on December 9

NEWS FROM NEROCHE PARISH COUNCIL

By Gillian Midworth

At the Annual Parish Council Meeting held in May, Jon Bell was elected as Chairman for another year. John Parsons remains as Vice-Chairman. A new member, Caroline Parsons, has been co-opted onto the Council and represents the ward of Orchard Portman with Thurlbear.



A358 upgrade proposals

The initial consultation on the A358 improvements has now finished. After a lengthy period of deliberation and several meetings at which the proposals were discussed, the Parish Council has now submitted its formal initial response to Highways England and this is available online at nerochevillages.org.uk. Further consultation is planned.

Public Footpaths

Mark Palmer, a member of the Council, has recently undertaken training to enable him to cut back seasonal growth along the footpaths of the Parish. He will be working alongside the Somerset County Council Rights of Way team to keep the footpaths as clear of vegetation as possible.

I would like to remind parishioners that there is no public right to ride or lead a horse along a public **footpath**, although you may do so with the permission of the landowner who may be required to repair any damage caused through this use.

Riding horses along footpaths can cause considerable damage to the surface which poses a danger to pedestrians using the path.

Village Gateway Scheme

Following representations from two concerned parishioners, the Parish Council has been engaging with John Thorne, our new County

Councillor, to discuss ways in which road safety can be improved through Staple Fitzpaine.

One possibility is to install a Village Gateway at either end of the main road through the village, alerting motorists to the fact that they are entering a place of habitation and may encounter pedestrians and riders etc on the road. This scheme would either be agreed through the Somerset County Council Small Improvements Scheme which may take several years, or could be self-financed.

Jasmine's hair-raising expedition

By Karen Street

Jasmine Street from Chapel Cottage, Curland, has a head for heights and it's all for a great cause. The 20-year-old is putting her hairdressing talents to good use to raise funds for a three-week trip to Kilimanjaro in July 2018 with Coco's Foundation to help to build a home for a family (www.cocosfoundation.co.uk).

She's raising funds through her work at The Mount Hair Salon in Wellington as part of her personal enhancement and charity work. In addition, Jasmine is selling jams and chutney, plus small crafts, at the gate to Chapel Cottage.



People can book a haircut with Jasmine by texting or calling her on 07388 040796 and there will also be a board at the gate when appointments are available. The costs are: Gents barbering £10; Ladies dry cut £10; Ladies cut and blow dry £20.

All proceeds to the charity as she needs to raise £2,500 to go next year. You can also donate at www.justgiving.com/Jasmine-Street

Taunton Deane Borough Council News

*John Williams, Borough Councillor, Neroche Ward and
Leader of the Council*



CDS Phase 2 Gigaclear Ultrafast Broadband Installation

Gigaclear has been appointed and has now carried out necessary surveys and identified the areas in which it will commence its installation. This is through Corfe to the commercial rollout area of Churchstanton/Churchinford, linking with the areas already being installed in the Blackdown Hills.

The service provided is 'Fibre to the Premises' (FTTP) which can deliver speeds from 50mbs up to 1,000 mbs, subject to subscriber's requirements. It is a completely new system with all fibre placed underground. This will be a tremendous asset for the rural areas which should start going live later this year, with all works scheduled for completion by the end of 2019.

Connecting Devon & Somerset has already connected 320,000 homes and businesses to better broadband and by 2019 aims to raise that to at least 380,000 as part of Phase 2. The Government target is to increase coverage to at least 95% of properties in the area.

For those in rural areas that have not already done so please do register an interest on 'Gigaclear Post Code checker'. This will tell you when coverage to your post code may be expected or when it is likely to be known.

A358 Upgrade - Southfields, Ilminster to the M5 near Taunton

This has certainly been the hottest subject in the area. In responding to the Highways England consultation, Taunton Deane Borough Council prepared a detailed report identifying many shortcomings.

This was well received by Parish Councils and individuals who agreed with the concerns highlighted. Our officers have worked with Somerset County Council and shared information so, helpfully, the two Councils are raising similar issues.

Your Parish Councils and many individuals have worked tremendously hard on presenting what are near universal concerns to Highways England for which I congratulate them. Combined with the County and Borough response it is a strong and unified voice that hopefully will be heeded.

The Brewhouse Theatre, Taunton

Just over four years ago the future of The Brewhouse Theatre looked bleak. It was forced to close after going into administration. Taunton Deane stepped in to buy back the remaining years of the lease from the administrators and Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) was formed to run the theatre.

It is now fully operational and delivering an excellent and varied programme of shows that is being well received by the community, including here in Neroche.

An artist's impression of the future Brewhouse



Now, the Council, TTA and Arts Taunton are looking at how The Brewhouse can expand and become a regional 21st century arts centre. The plans for expansion were unveiled in June.

The revitalised theatre will wrap around the existing, enlarged auditorium with an impressive frontage to the River Tone. It will provide a range of new and modern spaces such as studios, cinema and gallery, also creating the potential for pop-up performances in a proposed riverside amphitheatre with space around for outdoor markets and events.

Securing the funds needed, of around £20 million, to deliver these ambitious expansion plans will not be easy, but having a viable and deliverable plan is a vital first step. The Council is now committed to working closely with TTA, Arts Taunton and others to develop the final plans and secure the necessary funds to bring our ambitions to reality.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like more information on any of the above or have any other queries in respect of Council services

01823 480058

Email: cllr.j.williams@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Cycling couple in epic charity ride

by Nicky Baxter

Public-spirited husband and wife Mike and Kath Michaels recently cycled 100 miles in the gruelling Prudential London to Surrey 100, raising almost £1,000, so far, for The British Red Cross.

The event arose out of the 2012 Olympic Games as one of the ways to encourage people to get fit and get out on their bikes. Mike and Kath's bikes are appropriately named Jason and Laura, after the Olympic Champions!

What is so inspiring about this achievement is that Kath only took up cycling 11 months ago, having never cycled before! Mike started cycling about five years ago and it's the third time he has taken part in this ride, having previously raised money for The Parkinson's Disease Society.



Their journey was not without incident. Poor Mike was knocked off his bike 23 miles into the ride, sustaining a shoulder injury as a result. But he soldiered on and gave Kath support. Peddling with every ounce of determination and willpower, they completed the ride in seven and a quarter hours.

After the ride Kath said: "It was an amazing experience and the local support spurred me on when the going got tough."



When asked what they enjoy about cycling Mike and Kath said it was seeing the beautiful county in which they live at close quarters. They see so much more of Somerset, love being physically fit and find cycling very companionable as they are often joined by friends.

You can support Mike and Kath by donating to The British Red Cross via Virgin Just Giving. You can donate via Virgin Money giving and search for Mike Michaels.



Some of the great entries on show during this year's Scarecrow Festival.





Scarecrow Festival 2017 – a sight for straw eyes!

by Mal Lee

There is a great deal of work involved in organising community events, and for the Scarecrow Festival it is always a nerve-racking time wondering if there will be enough entries.

This year we had 16 entries and it has been one of the best ever for their quality and the imagination and skill of the designers. I would like to thank everyone who entered into the spirit of Scarecrow mayhem and gave such a lot of fun and delight to a great many people.

Thanks also go to our sponsors AES Building Services, Bickenhall Farm Livery and The Greyhound Inn whose support is gratefully appreciated.

Generally the scarecrows are put in place on the Friday evening but this year we had gales and rain which made it very difficult. After a slow start the scarecrows started to appear and what a delight they were. Teas were served in the church on Saturday and Sunday, courtesy of Alison and Anthony Brown. On Wednesday and Thursday traditional



English teas were served at Woodcott – the weather was much gentler and lots of local people, some young and others more senior, enjoyed a variety of teatime treats.

Unusually the scarecrows did seem to take on a life of their own. The weekend weather was atrocious and Little Miss Naughty took advantage of a brisk wind to go skipping off down the lane while at the same time Mr Strong lost his hat and gloves. The Ghostbuster did not bust the ghost in time to stop it scaring car drivers at night as they passed Batten’s Farm. The Mad Hatter’s tea party was so riotous the tent fell down three times. There were reports of dramatic incidents

near the church as someone was hanging from a tree, a man was climbing the church tower and also that an alien had landed at Whitty. The scarecrows make people smile and everyone has really enjoyed looking at them.

All sorts of different people get involved – family traditions seem to have been established even though the children are now teenagers: they like to get their maps and meander round the villages looking at the creations and wondering what sorts of people come up with ideas like these!

The Festival finished with a barbecue held at the church. The tent went up on Friday evening and once again the weather was wet and windy. The tent putters-up were delighted to find it still in place on Saturday!

About 40 people enjoyed the barbecue – magnificently cooked by Jon Bell with food provided by Alison Brown, Jacky Kolkowski and Mal Lee. Anthony Brown was on the gate and John Lee ran the bars. Weather wise it was a challenging evening with steady rain. However everyone enjoyed the food and the company before the results were announced.

On being presented with his prize, Archie Young aged 6, delighted everyone by thanking them for all their hard work.

Winners:

1st 'Mary Poppins', Archie and Poppy Young; 2nd 'Terminator', John Cooney; 3rd 'Rhett Butler has Gone With The Wind', Jacky Kolkowski.



Rebecca's Round-up

Rebecca Pow MP

Following an intense period in Westminster after the election I am back in the constituency for the summer period. Back here I am much enjoying getting out and about catching up with people throughout the patch from the Blackdowns and the Neroche parish to the Quantocks and right across the Vale of Taunton. Just recently I've met with businesses in Wellington, (including a tour of the museum to see the fascinating archive on the Wellington Monument,) seen some of the enterprising activities filling the town for Taunton Live and stopped off at the charming community run café in North Curry. Totally run by volunteers, this café raises £10,000 a year for charities as well as providing a valuable focal point for local people. Well worth a visit!

A358

A good deal of my time over past months both locally and in Westminster has been devoted to discussions and meetings relating to the proposed A358 road scheme. This has included much liaison with Highways England during the consultation process, with local stakeholders and community groups and with the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling himself, as well as a reference to the project in a Prime Minister's Question.

I was pleased to be able to persuade Highways England to extend the consultation period to make allowances for the general election clash and to hold an extra open meeting which had previously not been on the cards. Early in the proceeding I was also heartened that Chris Grayling took up my invitation to visit the area to gain more insight into the Highways England proposal on the ground. I have made it quite clear to him that there has been much dissatisfaction with the consultation process itself, in particular the fact that only one preferred route was proposed.



I have also pointed out that, whilst there are mixed feelings about the route, there is an overriding concern that the option offered does not deliver anything for Taunton and whilst it may cost the least to build it also delivers the least benefits locally. It is likely to have a relatively high accident rate and to do little to reduce pollution or relieve congestion through Henlade with only 30% of traffic likely to use it.

Local people have called for this upgrade for over 20 years (I remember reporting on this as a local TV reporter) and I welcome the fact that it is finally being funded, but it is crucial now that the right road is put in the right place to deliver not just strategically but for the people of Taunton.

Cheque presentation

Demonstrating yet again what can be achieved when a community pulls together, I was delighted to attend the cheque presentation event for the charities

benefiting from the hugely successful and entertaining Soapbox Derby held in Stoke St Mary. Thousands of people from all over the area attended the event to watch the novelty contraptions racing down the village street thanks to a dedicated team of



local organisers. I was honoured to be asked to open the event and my husband did the commentary in his usual inimitable (and slightly irreverent style). The event raised an incredible £4,000, which was shared between the RNLI, Help for Heroes and the local church.

Positive move on plastics

It has been confirmed that legislation will be introduced this year to ban the sale and manufacture of microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products.

The announcement was part of a wider speech on the environment and the future of farming delivered by Michael Gove in which he said

Brexit offered a once in a lifetime opportunity to reform how we care for our land, rivers and seas. I have been feeding views and ideas from local farmers, environmental groups and many of those with links to the land to inform this process and shall continue to do so. Staple Fitzpaine farmer and Neroche Parish Councillor, Mark Pope, who heads up the NFU Environment team, has also been to meet me in Westminster.



Mark Pope

Fairer funding for schools

The introduction of a national funding formula for schools, which I together with others locally worked hard for in order to right the historic injustice whereby pupils in Somerset get almost £2,000 less per pupil than the best funded nationally, will begin to ensure we can distribute this funding fairly and transparently. The full response to the comprehensive consultation is due to be announced in September.



Recycling

Not everyone is fortunate enough to be able to afford sports kit that is so often a prerequisite for taking part in a range of sports. So I was delighted to discover that the Lord's Taverners charity collects unwanted sports kit for re-distribution to disadvantaged children at home and abroad.

I've just taken all my sons' old kit to their collection point at the County Ground in Taunton and am pleased that it might be usefully re-used.

To donate kit, or for more information, please visit their website:
www.lordstaverners.org



Welly Monument Big Day - October 21 2017

On October 20, 1817 a procession of 10,000 people wound their way up to the Wellington Monument site for the laying of the foundation stone.

The Monument commemorates the remarkable success achieved by the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Wellington is regarded as one of our top three greatest war heroes and the structure is the fifth tallest three-sided obelisk in the world.

In recognition of this, a 200th anniversary commemorative walk is being staged from the town to the site during the afternoon of 21 October this year.

This will link to a series of activities around the monument in the early evening. As well as a guided walk for those wishing to retrace the procession route taken by people from Wellington to the monument site back in 1817 there will be a celebration and performance at the monument itself.

It promises to be a really memorable experience and it would be great to see you there!

Check out my website www.rebeccapow.org.uk for updates.

News from Taunton Racecourse *By Wally Torrington*



Even though horse racing doesn't start again until November, there's lots going on at Taunton Racecourse, which is great news for the Neroche Villages because it is all happening within our parish! Taunton Racecourse is not just about racing, it boasts excellent facilities for conferences, meetings, parties and events. It is also the perfect venue for your wedding reception. Moreover, it is just the place for your office, club or family Christmas party; but make sure you book early so as not to be disappointed (more details on page 24)



If you have ever considered joining the racecourse as a member, to enjoy all the wonderful facilities of the newly extended and refurbished members' stand, but, for whatever reason, hesitated; well here is a fantastic offer to 'give it a try' at half price (£85) for the remainder of 2017. This membership offer also

includes free entry to meetings at Bath, Exeter, Chepstow, Cheltenham and many others.

Members and their guests, together with owners and trainers, have exclusive use of the Paddock Stand Members' Restaurants and the Members' Car Park. Wearing their badges, members enjoy free entry to Taunton Racecourse and to numerous reciprocal racecourses shown on the opposite page.

Apply at the Racecourse Office: 01823 337172 or info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk The application form can be found at <http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk>

Reciprocal Racecourse Meetings and Dates
(Free entry when wearing Taunton Membership Badge)

September

Sedgefield - Thursday 7th, **Newcastle** - Friday 8th, **Bath** -
Saturday 16th, **Great Yarmouth** - Tuesday 19th, **Plumpton** -
Sunday 24th

October

Southwell - Tuesday 3rd, **Hexham** - Friday 6th, **Exeter** -
Thursday 12th, **Kempton** - Sunday 22nd, **Ludlow** - Thursday
26th

November

Newbury - Thursday 9th, **Fontwell** - Friday 10th, **Sandown** -
Sunday 12th, **Lingfield** - Tuesday 14th, **Cheltenham** - Sunday
19th, **Fakenham** - Tuesday 21st

December

Leicester - Sunday 3rd, **Chepstow** - Saturday 9th, **Musselburgh**
- Monday 11th

Also: Kelso, Ayr and Perth: Any one (non-festival) meeting
during the year, on a day of your choosing; tickets must be
requested in advance through Taunton Racecourse.

Taunton Race Meeting Dates for Remainder of 2017

November 1, 16 and 30

December 14 and 30



Christmas celebrations at Taunton Racecourse

The Racecourse is Celebrating Christmas 2017 with two very different Party Themes.

On 15 and 16 December the racecourse is giving you the chance to adorn yourselves in Lycra and capes



(completely optional of course) to celebrate Christmas a little differently. The room will be adorned with memorabilia of all your favourite superheroes, and the tables will also be themed for a bit of fun.

The price includes a superhero cocktail on arrival, four-course dinner, bottle of wine for every five guests, disco until the early hours, plus two free tickets to a race meeting of your choice for the organiser.

If Lycra is not your thing, the racecourse is offering two 'Christmas by Candlelight' evenings on December 8 and 9. You can get in to the spirit with a glass of Prosecco on arrival and then indulge



yourselves with their scrumptious four-course dinner before finishing the evening by dancing the night away with our in-house disco. Again, the price will include a bottle of wine for every five guests and there will be two free tickets for the organiser for the race meeting of his/her choice. Ticket price is £32.95.

Book now by emailing troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk or calling 01823 337172 option 2 or go to www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk £15pp non-refundable deposit required on booking and final payment due one week before the event.

Forthcoming Events at the Racecourse

Parent and Toddler Show, 2 September

A new concept for parents, toddlers and babies to come to a show which is offering education, learning activities and the chance to find out more about local clubs and organisations.

ECO Awareness Show, 28 October

A chance to find out more about the environment and the ways in which you can help protect our planet and its endangered species. Supporting local wildlife and learning what we do and how this impacts on habitats and ourselves is vitally important. Find out more about how we can make a difference. This will appeal to all ages and is a chance to meet and learn from the experts, who will be available throughout the day.

Christmas Fayre, 25 & 26 November (10am to 5pm)

Christmas is a time to celebrate and enjoy our family and friends but present hunting can be a nightmare. This event will bring together a range of gift ideas for everyone on your list and makes present-buying a lot more exciting. So, if shopping at Christmas is something that you dread, step into our Wonderland at Christmas, take a look at the wide range of crafts and food and meet Father Christmas in his grotto.

Admission to events is FREE but children must be accompanied by an adult. Go to <http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk> for more details.



Friday Film Nights – see you there!

By Nicky Baxter

Hello all from Neroche Film Nights.

We have just chosen the forthcoming films for the autumn season and we are sure they will not disappoint. Please see adverts for details.

We love our film club but we are struggling and need your help.

Firstly, we need a minimum of 45 people to attend each film so we can break even on costs. So please support the film club by attending whenever you can. It is a great social event at the Neroche Hall and includes drinks and nibbles before each screening and during any interval.

Secondly, we need help running the group. We would welcome assistance with setting up, running the bar and clearing up. A rota of helpers who could share the work around would be so wonderful.

People feel the film nights are an important community facility throughout our parishes but they can only exist with your support.

If anyone would like to help please contact me at ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk.

Otherwise see you all in September.



THE VICEROY'S HOUSE 12a

Personally recommended, this film tells the epic story of the last Viceroy of India. Lord Louis Mountbatten is tasked with overseeing the transition of British India to independence, and partition, meeting with conflict as different sides clash in the face of monumental change. Stars Hugh Bonneville, Gillian Anderson, Michael Gambon, Simon Callow and Simon Williams.

Neroche Friday Film Night

Friday 29th September 2017 @ 7.30pm

Bar, snacks

Nicky Baxter 01823 480674



Their Finest (12a)

This fabulous film has a star-studded cast including Gemma Arterton, Sam Claflin, Bill Nighy, Jeremy Irons, Richard E Grant to name but a few. The film tells the story of a British Ministry of Information film-making team making a morale-boosting film about the Dunkirk evacuation during the Battle of Britain and the London Blitz.

Friday 27 October 2017 @ 7.30pm £6.00 Bar and snacks

Nicky Baxter 01823 480675





Neroche Friday Film Night

HAMPSTEAD 12a

(to be confirmed please see website, Facebook or email alert)

An American widow Emily (Diane Keaton) surprisingly finds unexpected love with a man Donald (Brendan Gleeson) living wild on Hampstead Heath when they take on the developers who want to destroy his home. Based on a true story the film also stars James Norton, Lesley Manville and Simon Callow.

Friday 24th November 2017 @ 7.30pm

£6.00

Bar and snacks

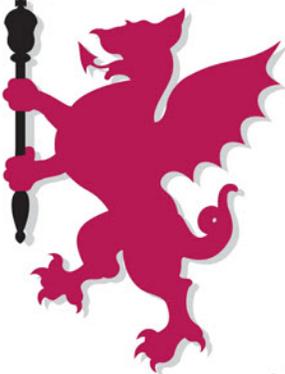
Nicky Baxter 01823 480675



County Council Update – roads rule

by Cllr John Thorne

SOMERSET



County Council

Since becoming your new county councillor in May my caseload has been building up, and already I am finding my diary is completely full for 10 days in a row.

I work part-time and have found that I no longer have time to work any overtime. Goodness knows how anybody with a full-time job can be a councillor as well.

Most of the issues I get involved in are to do with our roads. The biggest current issue, of course, is the Highways England proposal to turn the A358 into an Expressway - a 'motorway lite' allowing mile-a-minute uninterrupted journeys. This is one of those

rare issues which affects many different parishes all at the same time but each in a different way.

The concerns of residents in the Neroche parishes are different to those of villagers in Stoke St Mary, who in turn have different worries to the residents of Ruishton, who again differ from people in Hatch Beauchamp etc. The one common theme is that none of us like the route which Highways England has put forward, and we all agree the consultation has been a bit of a sham.

I am pressing for the road to join the M5 at Junction 25, not a new Junction 25A, so that it can provide Henlade residents with the bypass they deserve, and so it can also serve the Nexus 25 business park.

I have been assured by senior highways officers that the planned improvements to Junction 25 will allow it to take the extra A358 traffic.

**A plan of
the Nexus
25 business
park
planned for
Henlade,
with the
park and
ride site
clearly
visible**



At the other end of the highways scale, I am supporting efforts by your parish councillors to create a 'village gateway' for Staple Fitzpaine, in an effort to slow down motorists going past the Greyhound Inn at one end and through Bulford at the other.

I met Dianne Hood and Fiona Gledhill, who showed me the problems and talked through their ideas, and now I am finding out what the county council might be able to do to help, and how soon.

A best guess is that it could take three to four years to achieve, unless money can be found from a third party to speed it up.

*The photograph,
right, shows Fiona
(centre) and
Dianne with me
outside the
Greyhound Inn,
Staple Fitzpaine.*



**A special celebratory evening
at Taunton Racecourse**

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS

Get into the party spirit with a glass of Prosecco on arrival,
then take your seat amidst the twinkling candles for
a delicious four course festive feast with wine.*

Then glide onto the dance floor to party the night away with a fabulous disco.

The party organiser will also receive 2 open Race day tickets for the coming season.

For just £32.95pp

*Free bottle of wine per 5 guests

Arrival 7:30pm Dinner 8:00pm Carriages 12:30am



Farming calendar

By Daniel Macey

Recapping on the Spring season, the maize went in well. It was a cool but dry Spring which did not promote grass growth so our first cut grass yields were down on previous years, but we managed to make some very good quality first cut silage. Our second cut of silage came very quickly, only four weeks later.



The maize was drilled by 25 April, probably a good week to 10 days earlier than normal for us. Once it had germinated and grown past the cold spell it grew very fast, probably due to the lovely hot weather.

The general rule is 'knee high by the 4th of July' where ours was already waist and shoulder height by this date so, at the time of writing, we could have an early harvest.

Neighbours and colleagues started their cereal harvest with winter barley which was done in reasonably good weather, followed by oil seed rape which was a bit 'some and some', some got it in the good weather and some had to dodge the storms!

On Sunday 23 July we had a storm where we had 23 mm of rain in one hour. This does not do the wheat any favours as it makes the plant very top heavy and it goes flat, which in turn makes it difficult for combining and also ups the losses.

On the diary side of the business the heat in June did not do the cows any favours, as they like to get out of the heat as much as we do. Cows can suffer from heat stress which can result in a reduction in milk produced and possible pregnancy loss.

As a result we have now installed 12 large fans in the main cow shed and the cows are enjoying the difference before they start calving in the late Summer/Autumn.

Pets Reunited

By Wally Torrington

On the morning of Saturday 15 July, a grey lurcher, looking forlorn and clearly lost, strolled up the drive and into the yard of Summerlease in Curland, the home of Emma and Tom Milsted.

They walked up and down the lane hoping to find somebody looking for it but without luck. Emma then contacted me to suggest that we send out a Special Alert hopefully to reunite the lost dog with its owner.

I produced the notice but before I clicked on the 'send' button I thought I'd firstly make a couple of phone calls. I contacted one of my fellow parish councillors, Karen Street, who lives in Curland, to ask if she knows anybody in the village who owns a grey lurcher.



To my surprise she said *"it's mine, its name is Storm, and my husband Robin has been out all morning looking for it"*. Within the hour Storm and owners were reunited.

A few days later, on Thursday 20 July, I received another email, this time from Clare Canape of Bow Green, Staple Fitzpaine, asking for an urgent Email Alert to be circulated regarding a lost bird-of-prey.

She described it as *"...a large white falcon, bred this year, that has been hand reared so very tame. If caught, he has rings on his legs from which we can be contacted as he is registered with the*

Department of the Environment but we would like to know if anyone spots him whilst out walking, working in the fields etc. He also has black 4" jesses (leather straps) which may help in identification"



I immediately began to produce the notice but, again, before I clicked the 'send' button I got another email from Emma stating "... I was just about to email you the picture when our friend who is the wildlife vet at West Hatch, pulled in carrying a box...someone in Curland had picked him up and took him to the RSPCA. We've literally just got him back, all safe and sound !!!". So another successful outcome.

Pet Inventory for the Parish?

Regular readers of the Newsletter and Email Alert will be aware that we have been requested to report numerous lost/ found animals over the years, including sheep, cows, ponies, dogs, cats and even a budgie (or was it a canary?).

There was even an extremely valuable professional 'sniffer' dog lost in the woods by a visitor from Liverpool. During his very long, tiring, wet and cold search, he fortunately knocked on the door of Pauline Phelps in Curland, who gave me a call. An 'Alert' was sent out immediately, and following some quick thinking by Kate Baker of Bickenhall, the dog was reunited with a very grateful handler.

All of this has got me thinking; what we need in the Parish is a Neroche Villages Pet Inventory. If a couple of animal-loving local individuals would be willing to manage the inventory, I'd be willing to send out a proforma with the Email Alert to allow owners to register their pets so if they go missing and are found, it should be relatively easy to reunite them with their owners. What do you think?

If you fancy doing a good deed and volunteering to be one of those who'd be willing to manage the Neroche Villages' Pets Inventory/Register, please contact me on wallytorrington@hotmail.com

Save the date: Preliminary announcement



NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

at Neroche Hall

Come and celebrate with us

Music, food and local group

Badger Street Band

8.30 till late

(details subject to confirmation)

Further details to be announced see:-

Facebook, nerochehall.org.uk, parish mag & newsletter

Preserving the past, pointing to the future

The Story of Neroche's Fingerposts

by Jane Hole

We mostly take for granted our ability to navigate our way around the countryside. In the 21st century we have a formidable array of tools and technology to help us, from sat navs and maps, to road signs. It wasn't always this easy! The story of local navigation can be traced to ancient wayside markers, crosses, cairns, standing stones and wooden posts.

The first notable date for the modern fingerpost is 1697 when legislation was introduced requiring local Justices of the Peace to place markers at remote crossroads to show the way to the nearest town.

From the middle 1700s private turnpike trusts were able to erect milestones and guide posts; distance and direction being important information for the toll paying traveller and vital for the timetables of stage coaches. The introduction of tall posts was in response to coach and wagon traffic, as posts allowed a driver to see the information without having to stop, get off and read often illegible stones.

By the 1920s county councils had assumed responsibility for highways and signage. As cast iron direction posts replaced



wooden ones, they were to be painted white and include on the post the name of the authority responsible for its maintenance. The destination names on the arms were to be 2½ or 3 inches high in upper case lettering and on a white background.

All direction signs were removed during WW2, apparently causing no small difficulty for troops looking for remote camps. After the war Somerset County Council embarked on a programme of renewing the fingerposts. Many of them would have been produced at the Sheldon Foundry in Wells.



In the 1960s Somerset was one of several West Country authorities to ignore government guidance to remove cast iron fingerposts and erect standardised modern signs.

Somerset County Council has maintained the fingerposts until recently. They are now looking for new partnerships with parish councils and community groups for them to restore and maintain these iconic and historic fingerposts. A project is underway to train the first group of Neroche volunteers to undertake the restoration. As the photos show, our local fingerposts are in need of a little TLC!

If you would be interested in getting involved please contact me at jane.hole@outlook.com



ST. PETER'S CHURCH
STAPLE FITZPAINE

FLOWER & MUSIC FESTIVAL

11TH - 13TH MAY 2018

Daytime music events
Café

EVENING EVENTS

FRIDAY 11TH MAY 2018

KING'S COLLEGE CHOIR AND BIG BAND CONCERT

SATURDAY 12TH MAY 2018 - AMICI CONCERT

SUNDAY 13TH MAY 2018 - EVENSONG

For more information contact Katherine Michaels
flowerfestival2018@gmail.com

News from Bickenhall and District WI

by Jacqueline Kolkowski

Our gathering in May included our Annual Meeting, at which Tricia Dryden was re-elected as President, plus the presentation of two resolutions which went forward for a final vote at the National Annual Meeting in Liverpool in June.

Our two resolutions, which were successfully passed, were:

Alleviating Loneliness - to ask every WI Group and the National Federation to work alongside care providers and their local community to raise awareness of the causes of loneliness, thus ensuring better identification of lonely people in order to offer them the appropriate assistance and support.

Plastic Soup: keep plastic fibres out of our oceans - Microplastic fibres are shed from synthetic clothing with every wash and the main contributors to micro plastic contamination of the oceans. The NFWI calls on the government and industry to research and develop solutions to this problem in order to stop the accumulation of these fibres in our oceans.



The resolutions will now form the basis of two new NFWI campaigns.

In June, Dr Francis Burroughs gave an amusing talk on his visits as a speaker to other WIs. I wonder if we added to his anecdotes!

The July meeting was our Summer Party held in The Greyhound Inn, followed a delicious evening meal.

Candy Janes eloquently presented the '**Time to talk about organ donation**' initiative.

Our WI ladies at the Houses of Parliament with MPs Rebecca Pow and James Heapey - see the next page for details of the visit



The WI has passed four different resolutions on organ donation in our 100-year history. It was our 1994 resolution to government and subsequent campaign that led to the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Donations cannot take place without family consent - regardless of whether someone is on the Organ Donor Register or not. This campaign recognises that the decision to donate is a deeply personal one and your wishes may not be followed if you do not share them with your family.

We also had another presentation and discussion on the partnership of Care Quality Commission with the NFWI **on your rights as a family carer of someone in hospital** and what you can expect from a good hospital.

We then reviewed our 90 birthday year pledges, ranging from swimming 90 lengths to planting indigenous trees and bulbs, and ended the evening with a quiz games and song. Many thanks to Pauline for organising and the Greyhound Inn for an excellent meal.

Visit to Houses of Parliament.

The Somerset Federation organised a very enjoyable and informative trip to the Houses of Parliament where we were met by the assistants to the various Somerset MPs in the Westminster Hall, the oldest building on the Parliamentary estate, built in 1097.

Then, in small groups, we were given a guided tour of the site. One of the most spectacular rooms we visited was the Queen's Robing Room. The decorative theme is the legend of King Arthur, considered by many Victorians as the source of their nationhood. Five frescos in this room, painted by William Dyce depict allegorical scenes from the Arthurian legend.



After the tour we were met by Rebecca Pow MP and James Heapey, MP for Wells, who gave us an insight to the workings of the MPs within the Parliament. They arranged for a visit to the chapel of St Mary's Undercroft and for the group to have refreshments on the river terrace.

Events

Four members attended a croquet event at Kingston St Mary. Di Grabham and Frances Alford enjoyed it so much they now play every week. Frances even has a croquet court marked out at home.

In June four members and two husbands attended the West Monkton WI quiz. In July we entered two teams in the County Fun quiz in Hatch Beauchamp, accompanied by friends and husbands who, in the words of the quizmaster, came to make up the numbers!

Bickenhall & District WI meet the second Wednesday of each month and would be delighted to welcome new members to our meetings.

Please contact Tricia Dryden at tricia@witchlodge.co.uk

FORESTRY FEEDBACK

Keeping up to date with changes at Castle Neroche

Jon Burgess, Forester with the Forestry Commission, writes:

One of the single biggest changes to affect the Blackdowns for many years has arrived, but it will pass unnoticed by most! The Crown Estate has been our landowner leasing the land to the Forestry Commission (FC) for the last 50 years. However in a land swap involving parcels across the country the FC has taken over the freehold of the land at Neroche, which we now manage and own.

Introducing Robert Greenhalgh, the new Community Ranger for East Devon and the Blackdowns

I was delighted to become the new Community Ranger for East Devon and the Blackdowns. It's been a whirl-wind couple of months since joining the team here. I've had a wonderful reception from everybody I've met and it's been a pleasure to see all the exciting initiatives and great work that's taking place!



We'll soon be discussing with the community about how the land can be improved, and feed this into the FC's management plans. Part of my role is to give you the opportunity to be involved and feel valued and informed when it comes to the development of our sites. I hope to foster a transparent and open line of communication and encourage you to feel free to come forward with any ideas or suggestions.

Castle Neroche is starting to recover from the compulsory felling of the diseased area reported in the last issue. Now the bulk of the work has taken place, we have been spending time up at the monument clearing small trees and brash to open up the scheduled site and help with its preservation, whilst working alongside Historic England. There

are a variety of 'jobs' we still need to carry out and it's through the great support work of people like the Neroche Woodlanders, helping to clear Himalayan Balsam, that make this place so special – I have been amazed at the extent and support this special site attracts.

As an archaeologist who specialised in prehistoric Britain, I am very keen to see this site fulfil the potential it has to the visiting public and professional organisations alike – and this does not necessarily mean more people visiting! Rather, we'll be improving the site aesthetically and in line with Historic England's advice whilst maintaining its special woodland charm. It truly has one of the best views in Somerset, if not the UK. I'd rank it alongside the likes of Hambledon Hill in Dorset, and Tre Ceiri in North Wales, as one of the most unique hill forts.

Elsewhere we undertook a small thinning operation to further the restoration of ancient woodland at Bickenhall and Ben's Copse. We removed some of the densely shading beech and cedar to allow the other tree species to flourish which will allow the ground flora to develop. That site still looks a little bit 'raw' but will become a more open attractive woodland.

Get in touch with any suggestions you have about the forests at robert.greenhalgh@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or on 07780 493753.

Neroche Thursday Lunches

Come along to Neroche Hall to enjoy a great home-cooked two-course lunch. Meet people from the locality - take time out from your busy daily routine.

Lunches take place on the first Thursday of the month (except for December), 12.30pm for 1.00pm. Cost £6.

**Forthcoming Dates: 7 September; 5 October; 2 November.
December - TBA. Please phone to book (for catering purposes).
Transport/special diets can be arranged.**

Contact Alison Brown Tel: 01823 480441.



Cool in the forest

Gavin, Jenny and the team at Neroche Woodlanders

In the hot summer days the woods is about the best place to be – cool in the dappled shade, lazy sounds of bird song and buzzing hoverflies in the canopy.

At Young Wood we have been learning a lot more about our various buzzing, creeping and crawling creatures, through our Lottery-funded ‘Meet the Neighbours’ project.

During June we welcomed entomologist John Walters, *pictured above*, fresh from his work with BBC Springwatch, to help us explore our insect neighbours. We discovered some pretty meaty bush crickets, more delicate meadow grasshoppers, brightly coloured cucumber spiders, fast moving wolf spiders, malachite beetles, white-legged damselflies, scorpion flies, red-tailed bumblebees, shining black ants and cardinal beetles, as well as many butterflies and moths like the ghost-like plume moth.

Oh, and a fair few hornets – including one in the process of shredding a meadow brown butterfly – and lots of ticks!

We've gathered a list now of over 350 species of fungi, plants, insects, birds and mammals living in Young Wood, and we're thinking about how we can help our visitors get to know more of them better.

Meanwhile we've spent much of the summer creating a new earth oven for making pizzas and baking bread. The oven is constructed of cob, which is a mixture of sand, straw and clay, dug from the woodland floor and mixed by getting our shoes and socks off and treading it like grapes! The oven is covered with a green timber framed shelter made from wood harvested on site. We already cook meals with our groups over the campfire, and the oven will widen the range of creative outdoor cooking we can explore.



You may notice the new signs at the entrance to Young Wood, on the Badger Street road. If you're passing and see the sign out, do pop in to see us. Anyone is welcome to join us on volunteer days at Young Wood, on the fourth Wednesday of each month. We also run volunteer days on other local nature reserves on the second and third Wednesdays. Take a look at www.ncvorg.uk for details of upcoming dates.



You can support Woodlanders' work by becoming a shareholder member – see www.youngwood.org.uk for details.

Woodlanders also offers:

- Birthday parties for children or adults
- Charcoal at £5 a bag
- Bespoke commissions, such as house signs made to order.

As a social enterprise all paid-for products and services help support our work in using the forest for wellbeing and social benefit. Just email gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org for more details.

Latest news from the classroom

Thurlbear School's young entrepreneurs

Year 6 pupils took part in Young Enterprise's national Fiver Challenge. The Challenge introduces pupils to an understanding of finance, budgeting and the importance of money by having the opportunity to set up a mini business and create a product or service they can then sell or deliver at a profit. Any profit made is then donated to a charity of their choice. Some of the business ideas were:



Super Soakers - an opportunity to buy water balloons to throw at year 6 volunteers at lunchtime – what could be more fun!

Udderly Awesome high quality milkshakes (super strawberry and cheeky chocolate.) Selling for 50p or 60p with toppings and a cookie on the side.

Kool Kidz - a high quality stationery stall which believes in pocket money pricing of £1.00. Our products packs contained: fun rubbers, coloured note pads, ballpoint pens and pencils.

Confectionery Craze is a sweet business. We sell quality sweets, cakes and lemonade for great-value prices.

AJEZ Movies. Following on from a very successful lunchtime cinema session, we offered children another opportunity to attend a free lunchtime viewing with the opportunity to purchase tickets for delicious popcorn and a cold, refreshing cup of lemonade!

Polar Poles. We sold delicious ice poles after-school on the playground.

Especially Deliciously Good. The sale of amazing home-made cakes and delicious doughnuts at pocket money prices.



ArtSis. We sold home-made arts and crafts such as: dream catchers, tattoos, slime, fairy dust, pots, earrings and peg sets, after school.



Moo Music comes to Neroche Hall

Tuesday 5th September, then weekly in term-time

10.15 to 11.00AM

For age 0yrs to 5 yrs old



We Sing! We Moove!
We Learn! We Play!

Moosical Fun for your little one!

Why do Moo?

Moo Music is great fun for children and parents/carers too. Music is an essential part of every child's development and our songs are positive, uplifting, fun and educational. Our interactive sessions will help your child gain confidence and develop memory, language and coordination skills in an exciting, enjoyable and multi-sensory way.

It's a great way to make new friends - both for the children... and the adults too!

All songs are written by a professional songwriter and recorded by professional musicians and vocalists using real instruments. This is children's music that adults can enjoy too!

Find out about all our classes...

Visit : www.moo-music.co.uk/areas/taunton

To book a place for your child

go on the website or phone Katriona on 07738 827 175

Email Alert Parish Notices

If you wish to be kept informed of all that is happening in the community (including: crime alerts; road closures; community activities; local events; important meetings) then why not add your email address to the 280 plus individuals that have already signed-up to the service.

Your details will be kept secure, as all Email Alerts use the BCC address system so that nobody sees the full list.

If you are not on the list, then you are missing-out on 'up-to-the-minute' information on all that is important and happening in the immediate area in which you live.

To join, send an email to: wallytorrington@hotmail.com with the message "**please add me to the list**".

We look forward to you becoming a fully-informed Neroche resident.

School Holidays

It is always useful to know the school holidays dates. The dates below include, where appropriate, the weekends either side, as these are equally affected by school breaks, especially regarding family holidays and road traffic.

Summer Holiday

Schools return on Monday 4 September 2017

Household Recycling & Refuse Collections

No changes scheduled for Autumn

To check collection dates, go to www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc/sites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf





Events for your calendar

September

4 Back to school

7 Thursday Lunch Club

13 Women's Institute, Neroche Hall

14 September Parish Council Meeting, Neroche Hall

29 Film Night - The Viceroy's House - see page 27

October

5 Thursday Lunch Club, Neroche Hall

11 Women's Institute, Neroche Hall

13 Fish and chip quiz night with Mike Michaels

27 Film night - Their Finest

29 Craft Fair, Neroche Hall - Chance to sell and stock up with some Christmas gifts. For details of tables and to book contact Alison Brown at aabrown.battens@gmail.com

November

2 Thursday Lunch Club

8 Women's Institute, Neroche Hall

9 Parish Council meeting

24 Film Night

December

1 Supper and quiz night in aid of St Peter's Flower Festival

2 Christmas wreath-making workshop

13 Women's Institute, Neroche Hall

31 New Year's Eve party, Neroche Hall



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

It 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

This website 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. It forwards information of a general nature about local events and issues - please contact Wally Torrington at wallytorrington@hotmail.com if you would like your name added.

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 Kate Reynolds on 01823 444023.

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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