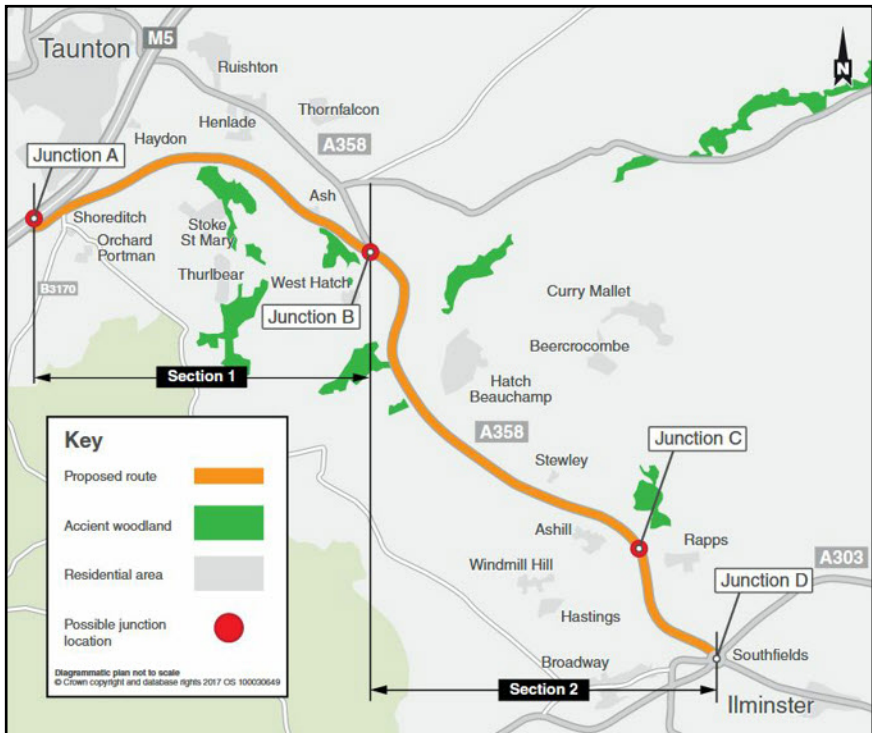


Working Together for a Better Community

NEROCHE VILLAGES Newsletter

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

Issue 24 - May 2017



Residents consider impact of A358 plans

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.

Expressway to the South West

Highways England presents a single, initial A358 upgrade option

By Alan Hyde

Highways England, on behalf of the Government, has started a consultation on a number of road schemes to create 'an expressway to the South West', which it says will deliver faster, safer and more reliable journeys between the South East and the South West peninsula, as well as boosting economic growth.



Specifically, an upgrade is planned from the A303 near Stonehenge to a new proposed M5 junction in the Killams Avenue area of Taunton, creating a "strategic A-road" or

expressway, which, it is claimed, will be "just as safe and reliable as a motorway" and where "mile-a-minute" travel is the norm.

Closer to home, local events have been held on proposals to upgrade the A358 between the M5 at Taunton and the A303 – see the map on the front page.

This proposed route has been divided into two sections:

- A new motorway junction and dual carriageway from the M5, extending north of Orchard Portman and Thurlbear, to West Hatch Lane where it will join the existing A358
- Widening the existing A358 from West Hatch Lane to Southfields roundabout to create a 70mph dual carriageway

The first stage of consultation launched in April when Highways England announced the road scheme and held a number of events which featured this single option. At the consultation/presentation event at the racecourse I attended, no alternative option was featured, and there was no indication either that the lanes which currently give access to the A358 would be blocked off, or that there would be no way of joining or leaving the proposed Junction 25A other than via the expressway.

The consultation was due to close on 20 May but our parish council received notification that, in keeping with pre-election guidance, Highways England has paused public consultation.

Therefore the scheduled public exhibition on 8 May at the Holiday Inn, as well as Highways England's attendance at all other public events during the election period, have been postponed. Events will be rescheduled and published after the General Election and the consultation period will be extended.

Once the consultation recommences, feedback will inform a more detailed design stage before Highways England announces its preferred route this winter.

This will then be subject to further consultation before an application (the Development Consent Order) is made to the Planning Inspectorate which then holds a public examination before making a recommendation to the Transport Secretary who decides whether it goes ahead.

Importantly, Highways England has to prove the adequacy of its consultation to the local authorities before the application can be considered by the Planning Inspectorate. If you have any comments on the adequacy of the consultation itself, these are best directed at Taunton Deane Borough Council and Somerset County Council initially, as well as Highways England, perhaps copying in the local MP too, once elected.

Subject to all that, construction is expected to start in 2020.

The A358 upgrade is clearly a major issue in our area, and was a hot topic at the Annual Parish Meeting (see overleaf) and the Extraordinary Parish Council meeting.

The latter was well attended and parishioners aired their views and concerns which will be reflected in the Parish Council's formal response.

For more information visit www.highways.gov.uk/Taunton-to-Southfields

Neroche Annual Parish Meeting

By Wally Torrington

On the advertising poster it stated “This Is The Most Important Local Event Of The Year, Your Attendance And Support Is Essential; Please Be There!!!”... and you were! Over 90 of you! Brilliant! A fantastic turnout. The Neroche Annual Parish Meeting took place in Neroche Hall on Thursday 20 April, and it was a great success, in every respect.

The evening commenced with the chairman of the Parish Council, Jon Bell, presenting his most comprehensive, interesting and informative report, which included a summary of the past year’s activities, events and issues.

He went into a little more detail regarding the A358 Improvement Proposal because Highways England were not allowed to attend due to ‘purdah’ having been declared (the period during an election when public bodies are not allowed to issue



Parish chairman Jon Bell

information that might be considered politically biased).

He was followed by two more speakers who gave briefings on ‘Results of the Housing Needs Study’



LEFT: Studying the A358 consultation map



There was a good attendance at the annual parish meeting

and 'An Update on the Recent G4 Wi-Fi Broadband Installations in our Parish by Exmoor Technologies'.

Then there were a few short presentations by: Tim French, chairman of the Communication Action Group; Jane Hole, chair of the History Group; Gary Larsen, our village agent; and David Spears on 'The Big Bang Science and Engineering Festival'.

There were stands situated all around the edge of the hall representing most of the clubs and organisations in the parish, including The Garden Club, Walking Group, History Society, Parish Council, Neroche Hall, Communication Action Group (website, newsletter and email alert), St Peter's Church, St Peter's Singers, The Thursday Lunch Club, WI and Neroche Artists.

The stands generated a lot of interest; and as would be expected, there was a lot of debate generated around the large map on the parish council stand, which showed the Proposed Single Route for the A358 Improvement Scheme.



Madeleine Spears with Ross Henley, county councillor at the time

Annual Parish Meeting report continued...



On the Women's Institute display stand

The aim of the Annual Parish Meeting is not only for members of the local community to sit and listen to a number of presentations (as interesting as they may be) but also to socialise with each other, engage with their parish councillors and find out more about the

activities that take place in the parish. If the noise of conversation as people mingled was a measure of success, then the aim was clearly achieved.



Available throughout the evening, free of charge, were hot beverages with biscuits, cakes and pastries and a wine-and-cheese buffet with red and white wine and a wide selection of cheeses, 'small eats' and savoury dips.

As well as a great turnout of local residents, the parish councillors were there 'in force', from the

setting-up of the hall during the afternoon, to the clearing-up at the end of the evening; a great team effort.

Special thanks must go to the local branch of the Women's Institute which provided the cakes and pastries, made the coffees and teas, manned the refreshment stall and did all the washing up and other kitchen duties. A fantastic job, exceedingly well done! As always, their support was highly-valued and greatly appreciated.

There was much positive feedback from local residents during the evening, however, if anybody has suggestions as to how the Annual Parish Meeting might be improved in future years, then please contact the clerk to the parish council, Gillian Midworth at neroche.pc@nerochevillages.org.uk or speak with your parish councillor.



Please remember also, that members of the public are most welcome to attend regular parish council meetings on the second Thursday in January, March, May, July, September and November.



The Spring Fish'n'Chips Quiz

By Alan Perrior

Well, they say that a new broom sweeps clean, and the new Quizmaster, Richard Garbett, has certainly made a few changes.

The biannual Neroche Fish'n'Chips Quiz has gone from a relatively cosy affair to a quiz in which the contestants actually had to use their brain power. The village hall could have made considerable savings on its running costs by harnessing the energy being generated by the 100-plus contestants!



With every available table booked well in advance, this was always going to be a success and, judging by the noise levels and smiling faces, everyone had an enjoyable evening and it was good to see former quizmaster Colin Croad on the receiving end!

Equally impressive was the way that 'Lazyricks' managed to produce over 100 hot and tasty meals for the mid-quiz interval. The organising committee should be congratulated on another great evening – well done!

The quiz itself was a hard-fought affair with lots of interesting and challenging questions which generated much heated debate, and some groans, as the answers were revealed. In some rounds, Richard introduced an unusual twist - the *"double question"*. Firstly, what on



earth is the question about? Secondly, what on earth is the answer? Take this 'What's Next' question as an example.

Question: What's next in sequence after Willie, Willie, Harry?

You could almost hear the mental cogs whirring until realisation clicked in – "Willie, Willie, Harry" were kings: William I, William II and Henry I but who was next? Eventually a respectable 16 teams came up with the correct answer - 'King Stephen' or rather 'Steve' in the vernacular of the original question!

Two questions managed to baffle every team. These were: What's next in sequence after Aqueduct, Sanitation, Roads?

And in the 'Children's Programmes' round: "Why did Dangermouse go to the North and South Poles so often?"

(Answers to both these questions are at the end of the article.)

Spring Fish'n'Chips Quiz continued

Overall, apart from the relatively easy 'Countries and their Capitals' round, ten of the 100 questions were answered correctly by every team. These questions covered all manner of subjects from Irish airports to Victorian magicians, from moustaches to Disney films – and lots in between! The average score, across all teams was about 70 per cent - so maybe we're not quite as "dim" as Richard implies in his photo on the previous page.

Answers to the night's two most difficult questions:

'Irrigation' is next after 'Aqueduct, Sanitation, Roads'. It's a reference to "What the Romans did for us" in the film, The Life of Brian.

'Ink' is the reason why Dangermouse went to the North and South Poles so often. Still baffled? It's nothing to do with the story lines. Apparently, when the producers were short of money, they discovered that it was cheaper, quicker and easier to draw the snowy wastes rather than busy built-up areas! Obscure or what?

THURSDAY LUNCHESES AT NEROCHE HALL

Come along to Neroche Hall and enjoy a great home-cooked 2-course lunch. Meet people from the locality, take time out from your busy daily routine and enjoy conviviality & friendliness at a community lunch.

**Lunches take place on Thursdays at 12.30 for 1pm
1st June, 6th July, 3rd August**

Please phone or email to book (need to know for catering purposes).
Transport / special diets can be arranged.

Contact Alison Brown tel: 01823 480441,
Email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk
Organised by Friends of St Peter's Church



St Peter's Church Fete 2017

Saturday 17 June at 2pm

The Manor, Staple Fitzpaine

Fun for all the family including:

- Thurlbear School Country Dancing
 - Fun Dog Show (see below)
 - Wellington Town Band
 - Punch and Judy Show
- Market stalls - Running races
- Cream teas - Grand Raffle Draw
 - Bouncy Castle

A GREAT AFTERNOON OUT

Fun Dog Show

Entries from 2pm - start 3pm

Fabulous Prizes to be won

Eight classes judged by Janice Stoker

Dog most like its owner - Dog with most appealing eyes

Dog with waggiest tail - Veterans 7 and over

Best condition - Best child handler (12 and under)

Best rescue dog - Dog judge would like to take home

Proceeds in aid of St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine

Introducing our new county councillor

*Voters went to the polls in the county council election on May 4 and as a result Conservative candidate **John Thorne** took over from Liberal Democrat Ross Henley as our representative. Here he introduces himself in what we hope will be the first of a regular update.*

I am both proud and delighted to have been elected to serve the Neroche villages as a county councillor, thanks to so many people across the area placing their trust in me. I am looking forward to attending many local events and meeting people over the next four years.

The newsletter's tag line, 'Working together for a better community', is a very appropriate one, and I hope that I can work with everybody to help improve what is already an impressively vibrant community and tackle issues of concern wherever possible.

I have been reading the newsletter to help keep up to speed with local news and I am very impressed with the huge and diverse range of events and activities across the villages.

As a former cinema owner, I was particularly interested in the Friday Film Nights. Unfortunately, I work on Fridays, so I will not have many opportunities to go along but I will support it as much as I can.

I also worked closely with Rebecca Pow, MP at the time and now parliamentary candidate, and your Taunton Deane councillor, John Williams, who both did a tremendous job in supporting and encouraging me and helping me to keep tabs on local issues of concern.

Now for a little bit about me as a person.

I have two young sons who live with me for half of each week, I work part-time on the checkouts for Tesco, I am an active football referee, I speak some Italian (although I'm slow and rusty these days) and I have a condition which means I find it difficult to recognise people's

faces unless I have met them several times (no, that's not an excuse for why I often get people's names muddled up).



For anybody who is not quite sure, the Blackdown and Neroche division is one of the largest in Somerset, and

stretches from the Neroche villages through Stoke St Mary and Corfe, all the way over the Blackdown Hills villages of Pitminster, Blagdon Hill, Bishopswood, and Churchinford, to Wellington (where it even includes some of the town centre), and then through West Buckland to Junction 25, taking in Ruishton and Henlade, and then back down the A358 through Thornfalcon to Hatch Beauchamp.

If that sounds huge and diverse, that is because it is! So, for one councillor like myself, it is a massive task to try to get around and tackle the variety of issues which will need to be addressed, and I know that I will not be able to do it without the help of your parish and Deane councillors and others in the community.

I worked very hard when I was previously a Deane councillor for the Blackdowns part of the division, and for the past two years I have also served as a town councillor for Wellington. I will continue to put in just as much effort in my new role as your county councillor.

You will find that I am very approachable, and even if you don't agree with me, I will still want to hear your views.

Contact John at johnbthorne@gmail.com

Taunton Deane Borough Council News

John Williams, borough councillor, Neroche Ward and Leader of the Council, writes his regular article.

University of Somerset

At last we are seeing a start on the long and complex journey of achieving the establishment of a University of Somerset preceded by the recent setting up of a University Centre Somerset by Bridgwater and Taunton College.

The main campus is being established in Taunton with Engineering/Nuclear Centre at Bridgwater and Horticulture at Cannington, It is to be welcomed for the good of Somerset and Taunton Deane.



The University Centre Somerset was successfully launched with its own designated campus in the Wellington Road buildings. We welcome this as it will provide a huge economic boost for Taunton as it grows and becomes established.



University
Centre
Somerset

Toneway Funding

As a council, and personally, I am keenly aware of the concerns expressed about the lack of adequate roads and support services to cope with the planned increase in housing numbers. Therefore securing substantial grant funding from Government to improve the



capacity along the Toneway Corridor – the stretch of road at Creech Castle and the Sainsbury’s roundabout - has to be welcomed. It is one of five schemes in Somerset to gain a total grant of £24,000,000 to enable us to address the genuine concerns expressed.

The Toneway Corridor scheme will improve access into Taunton town centre from the M5 at Junction 25 and capacity at the Creech Castle junction.

Improving our infrastructure is key to delivering our Growth Programme in Taunton Deane and to assist we have been awarded £6,400,000 from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) towards the £9,800,000 projected cost of the project. The balance will come from Somerset County Council funds and from Taunton Deane using funds collected from the various developments.

Measures to improve traffic flow along the A358 and this vital arterial road into Taunton are welcomed, notwithstanding whatever final plans are agreed for the dualling of the A358.

A358 Upgrade Southfields, Ilminster to J25 of the M5

I thought I should just share my thoughts since the disappointing publication of a single option route out for consultation!

One thing is certain, we have to work constructively with Highways England to ensure, after many false dawns, we capture the huge investment in our roads system that is on the cards at present. I hear

and share some of the concerns that we are not delivering any economic benefit for Taunton, not delivering the much-needed Henlade bypass, not providing the required access road to the major new employment site planned at J25 and the planned new junction J25A is in the worst possible place.



Highways England say they have counter arguments to these points so we must work with them to fully understand their reasoning and where we have a differing view try and influence through the consultation process. One thing is certain the road through Henlade is at absolute capacity and we have to take action to relieve the long-suffering residents from the misery they suffer at present!

Formation of New Council covering Taunton Deane and West Somerset

Our proposal to create a new Council has now been submitted to the Government. The submission is based on last year's Business Case and updates by councillors since. It also shares the feedback and representations made during the consultation exercise. The submission is now published on our dedicated website www.yournewcouncil.org/news

We await to hear from the Department of Communities and Local Government, but the anticipated timetable is for an acceptance or otherwise before the Parliamentary Summer recess. If positive, legislation will follow to allow setting up a "shadow authority" and full elections to the new Council in May 2019.

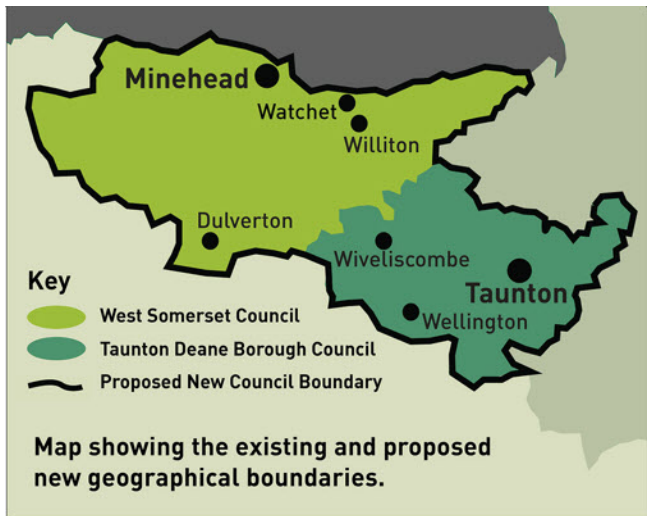
Having rechecked our business case as previously presented we remain confident that the annual savings of £3.1m are achievable. In turn this will support the retention of our front line services such as sport, recreation swimming pools and parks and gardens, so valued by our community.

Affordable Housing Demand

I recently attended the opening of an affordable housing site of 28 dwellings, which attracted 216 applicants. It is a salutary reminder of

the desperate need for affordable housing. The successful tenants had to have local connections as it is a requirement of the lease that these are given first choice.

As further evidence of demand, our own Taunton Deane Borough Council 'Housing Waiting List' has around 2,600 families registered, reinforcing the need for us to continue delivering much needed affordable housing and for the open market to contribute.



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.

Join us for a summer party

PROGRESSIVE 3-COURSE LUNCH

Sunday 9th July 2017

From 12 noon

Itinerary will be advised with your ticket

Tickets £20 (including drinks)

Numbers limited, book soon!

tickets from Alison Brown Tel: 01823 480441

New Email: aabrown.battens@gmail.com

In aid of St Peter's Church funds

Taunton Racecourse

By Wally Torrington

Half-Year Membership



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 Newton Abbot, 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. Also, included in membership is free entry to Hickstead for their Derby meeting, the Royal International

Horse Show and the All England Jumping Championships, **and** '2 for 1' Saver Tickets for the Royal Bath and West Show. Half Year Membership, for the remainder of 2017, is available now for just **£85**. Full membership facilities and privileges apply.

Reciprocal Racecourse Meetings and Dates *(Free Entry)*

JUNE - WINDSOR Monday 12th, **NEWTON ABBOT** Friday 16th,
SALISBURY Sunday 18th, PONTEFRACHT Sunday 25th, BRIGHTON
Tuesday 27th

JULY - BATH Wednesday 5th, WORCESTER Tuesday 18th,
CARTMEL Saturday 22nd, STRATFORD Sunday 23rd, UTTOXETER
Sunday 30th

AUGUST - CATTERICK Tuesday 8th, WOLVERHAMPTON Friday
11th, **NEWTON ABBOT** Wednesday 16th, NEWMARKET Friday 25th

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 the day of your choosing and tickets must be requested in advance through Taunton Racecourse.


Taunton Race Meeting Dates for Remainder of 2017

1, 16 and 30 November, & 14 and 30 December

Apply for half-year membership at the Racecourse Office: 01823 337172 or info@tauntonracecourse.co.uk. The membership application form can be found at www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk

TAUNTON RACECOURSE & conference centre

◆◆◆◆
THE JOCKEY CLUB



RACE 18
PASS -TO- 24

HORSE RACING HALF-PRICE,
EXCLUSIVE TO 18-24'S

RACE ON

Taunton Racecourse Business Club

Offering businesses around the region a range of racecourse benefits alongside social and networking events



UB40

FEATURING
ALI CAMPBELL, ASTRO
& MICKEY VIRTUE



TAUNTON RACECOURSE 11th JUNE 2017

Dining and Parties at Taunton Racecourse



Taunton Racecourse is one of the most beautifully located courses in the country, with outstanding views across the racecourse to the wooded slopes of the Blackdown Hills. Taunton

Racecourse is a unique venue for functions of all kinds. The range of accommodation available, ease of access with unlimited free parking, on site catering, bars and its photogenic location make it an ideal venue for dinners, buffets, weddings and private parties from 10 to 200 guests. The racecourse has extensive experience in tailoring functions to clients' specific requirements, and its catering staff will guarantee a professional and friendly service, first class cuisine and a memorable function.

Weddings at Taunton Racecourse



Taunton Racecourse not only holds a licence for civil marriages, but it specialises in catering for wedding breakfasts, evening wedding parties, receptions and dinner dances. It can cater for up to 150 guests for the wedding breakfast and 200 for the evening buffet, reception or dance.

Contact troy@tauntonracecourse.co.uk or call 01823 325035.

News from Neroche Hall

*Our regular feature by **Richard Davies***

Writing this article on behalf of the Neroche Hall I am conscious that much of what can be said tends not to be in real time in that it relates mainly too past and future events. You will often see articles in this newsletter which go into more depth about a particular event and these serve to complement my own comments and I hope, enhance the work that the committee undertakes.



The hall committee is made up entirely of volunteers within the Neroche parish who give freely of their time to ensure that this valuable resource can continue. We are a registered charity and are therefore rigorously scrutinised and audited annually. Our AGM will highlight the work of the committee over the past year as well as outlining our aims for the future and it is with this in mind that I would wish to reach out to those who live within our parish.

Recruiting new people to become involved in the hall is no easy task as it does require a degree of commitment, but this is not as onerous as it would appear when spread amongst a number of people. As you will all know events are put on during the year by the hall itself, whereas others will have been staged by others who hire it as a venue for a particular purpose.

A wide variety of everyday skills is a valuable commodity for us and all will be able to contribute in some small way should they take the plunge. I would therefore appeal to anyone who feels they could devote some time to their community to consider getting involved.

Anyone new to the area is most welcome and would find it a great opportunity to meet new people and become integrated into our community. If you feel able to assist in some small way we are also looking to build up a small core of people who would be willing to help for individual events such as film night, quiz or Take Art events.

I am aware that my article is rather looking like a recruitment poster but I make no apology for trying to maintain the hall as a valuable resource for the future.

Departing from this theme I would just like to mention that our Film Night will continue for the present although there will be a brief respite during the summer months and a return towards the autumn. Naturally some films prove more popular than others and choosing them to suit a wide audience is no mean feat, but I ask that you continue to support it as you have in the past.

As always our bar and nibbles, including now the popular addition of choc ices, will be available as well as a chance to socialise with friends and neighbours.

Our Fish and Chip Night Quiz will be next held on the 13 October 2017 and I am pleased to announce that Mike Michaels has kindly agreed to be our quizmaster for this event. We have tried to recruit more than one quizmaster as the compilation of a quiz is no easy task and it makes it a easier if one does not have to arrange two in a year.

Mike has been our quizmaster in the past and many of you will doubtless remember them, whereas others will I am sure be up for the challenge of a new quizmaster. Booking tables through the website, or directly with me, will probably continue due to the popularity of the quiz. Twenty tables with teams of six per table is really our maximum for the hall and at the last quiz I only had to turn away one team so the system worked well.

Another date to put in your diary is 29 October 2017 when we are holding a Craft Fair. With many similar events on the approach to Christmas it was decided to bring our event forward in the hope of attracting a wider and varied number of stall holders.

We are always pleased to hear feedback - speak to us directly or if you prefer via email to the address shown on our website:
www.nerochehall.org.uk

Turn to the next page for reports of recent events at Neroche Hall



Pancake Supper fun

By Alison Brown

Great fun was had by all at the annual Pancake Supper held on Shrove Tuesday.

There was fantastic food of jacket potatoes or rice with a multitude of toppings followed by pancakes also with many different accompaniments, pancake tossing, prizes and the Handbell Ringers delighted us all with a medley of tunes.

More than 50 people attended and the raffle was well supported. Funds were being raised for St Peter's Church Staple Fitzpaine general fund. Particular thanks to Jenny Stewart who made 100 pancakes! Most of all there was lots of fun, laughter and conversation. Many thanks go to all who contributed and all those who came and supported.



A spiffing evening of magic

By Sarah Hyde

Neroche Hall was transported back in time to the Victorian era to welcome sleight of hand supremos Morgan and West for an evening of magic and logic-defying trickery.

The pair of self-styled spiffing chaps donned top hats, whiskers and waistcoats for an evening of Parlour Tricks, in a set redolent with period features, complete with aspidistra. But there's nothing stuffy or dated about this duo's dexterity. There was a full house for the show, brought to us by the lovely Take Art team, and it was clear that everyone – young and old alike – was entranced by the card tricks, escapology, mind-reading, mentalism and inexplicable tricks with borrowed props which vanished and reappeared at will.

Lots of audience participation kept everyone on their toes, and all was interspersed with Victorian-style wit and whimsy. A thoroughly spiffing evening!

take
art *A*



A fond farewell to Gill

Anne Perry says a heartfelt thanks to our long-standing and dedicated cleaner on behalf of the hall committee

Gill Peatfield has decided to leave Neroche Hall where she has been our cleaner for 25 years. It is not appropriate to say that she has 'retired' as she still works full time elsewhere and is definitely not of retirement age.



She was appointed originally by Alan Marsh in 1992 when Gill had just had her second child, Louise. Alan remembers well how Gill would swing the very old and heavy buffing machine with four-year-old Tim playing and baby Louise asleep in the carry cot. She went on to have another child, Ellie who also accompanied Mum to 'help' clean the hall.

Of late it has been Esme the golden retriever who has kept Gill company. As the children grew, Gill returned to full time employment with a local photographic company but continued to clean and look after our hall over the weekends.

At a presentation to mark her 'retirement' she said that she views Neroche Hall as a second home. Many committee members have been and gone over the 25 years but she remembers fondly Alan Marsh, Joy Larkman, Colin Croad, Jane Hole, Tim French, Alison Brown and many others who particularly made her position as satisfying as possible.

All of the current committee was astounded and especially thankful when Gill, being unable to drive for a year due to medical reasons, cycled to the hall from Taunton! You do not get many people who display a work ethic such as that!



Gill receives her gifts from some of the Neroche Hall team who were joined by new cleaner Tracey, left, for the presentation

Richard Davies, Alison Brown, Diana Davies, Anne Perry and David Spears gave Gill a good send off on behalf of the current committee with a leaving gift and a bouquet of flowers and thanked her for her loyalty and outstanding contribution to Neroche Hall.

We now welcome Tracey Mountstephens who takes over from Gill. Tracey is a local resident who knows the hall well and has worked with Gill for a couple of weeks before her official start date of May 1.

Neroche Friday Film Night

Hidden Figures - Friday July 7 at 7.30pm

This wonderful film tells the true story of three inspirational African American women whose mathematical brains helped launch the space project. Not to be missed.

Bar and snacks Tickets £6 from Nicky Baxter 01823 480675

Ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk

The Farming Calendar

by Mark Pope at Staple Farm

At the time of writing the weather is very dry, the wind not over warm and there's a bit of a lazy wind that goes through you rather than round you.

Our rainfall has been very low - in fact the total for last year was about half our normal.

I hope that by the time you read this summer has arrived and we are having warm nights and days with the occasional night's warm rain.

This year the crops are generally looking good having come through the winter well.

We have this year planted some spring barley. We brought this crop into our rotation to help get better control of a very difficult weed known as Black Grass.

Also for the first time this year we have been trying cover crops in some fields to try to help improve the soil structure and the drainage during the winter. To date the results have been encouraging.

We have noticed an increase in earthworm numbers and the soil seemed to keep a better structure and does not appear as sticky as in other fields. However, the proof will be in the yield of crop we get at harvest time. On the combine harvester, we have a yield meter that can measure the quantity of crop over a given area.

By the time you read this, the miscanthus should have been cut and bailed and brought back to the farm. This is now used in our biomass boiler to heat the workshops and stores and the house.





Oilseed rape blooming in the fields around Neroche

From spring through to mid-summer we are making sure the crops have fertiliser at the right time and treating the crops for any diseases. This involves a fair amount of crop walking to see what is happening in each field.

Also, we are just emptying out the last of last year's crop from the grain store. This store then has to have in effect a spring clean. Not the nicest of jobs. It involves cleaning all the dust and old crop out from top to bottom. To do this we will normally use a large compressor to blow off the dust, this is then hoovered up. If we don't keep the grain store clean we risk allowing mites and insects to build up and contaminate the new crop.

We will shortly start to cut the grass for our first cut of silage, if the weather plays fair and we get our sunshine and a few showers we hope to make three cuts of silage. So over the next few months there will be tractors and machines about so please take care on the roads.

This year the oilseed rape will be the first crop to be harvested followed by the winter wheat then the spring barley and finally the field beans.



Youngsters enjoying some Forest Folk fun

If you go down in the woods today ...

by Gavin, Jenny and the team at Neroche Woodlanders

It's been another busy winter at Young Wood, and it's great to see the leaves unfurling once again and the bright blue of the bluebells beginning to flicker across the forest floor, amongst the wild garlic and wood anemones.

Such an uplifting time of year to witness the life of the forest, with the daily symphony of bird song – rhythmic great tit and chiffchaff, urgent nuthatch, tuneful robin, blackbird and blackcap, and occasional percussion of a woodpecker.

We have been thinning and re-coppicing in Twelve Acre Copse this winter, letting light reach the forest floor and creating the foundation for new habitats for nesting birds next year. In the process we've harvested the raw material for making charcoal next season, while now we prepare to make charcoal with the seasoned wood from the previous winter.

There's lots happening in the woods this spring. We've run two very successful 'Forest Folk' days for families over the Easter holidays, and a 'Dangerous Dads' day for fathers and their children to have fun with fire making and shelter building.



We've several greenwood craft courses coming up – Spoon Making on 21 May and Letter Carving on 11 June.

Woodlanders also offers bespoke commissions - for example, house signs made to order. Email gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org for more details.

And we now sell charcoal! Fire up your barbecue with locally-made, sustainable hardwood charcoal which helps support our work in using the forest for wellbeing and social benefit.

We will be running a series of events to search out as many species as possible, in a Lottery-funded project called Meet the Neighbours. Look out for dates at www.youngwood.org.uk

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.ncv.org.uk for details of upcoming dates.



Save the date - flower and music festival

It has been 20 years since St Peter's Church in Staple Fitzpaine organised and hosted a flower festival. We hope that the festival we are now planning for 2018 will be a huge success with a lot of fun along the way.

We already have the evening concerts confirmed and booked and the daytime music events are taking shape and will include local choirs, handbell ringers, folk band and church bells.

In order to cover as many costs as possible in advance of the festival fundraising is now in full swing. Our first event will be a quiz night on Friday June 9 at Neroche Parish Hall, featuring Mike Michaels, returning quizmaster! Tickets cost £9 which includes a two-course supper. Places are limited so please book now!

Thank you in anticipation of your support and we look forward to hearing from you.

Contact **Katherine Michaels** and **Jacky Kolkowski**, festival organisers on flowerfestival2018@gmail.com

Quiz night fundraiser



In aid of St Peter's Church Flower & Music Festival

Friday 9 June * 7 for 7.30pm

Neroche Hall * Teams of up to six

£9 pp includes a two-course supper

Prizes * Raffle * BYO drinks

Book now on 01823 480474 or

flowerfestival2018@gmail.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

Neroche Villages website is changing

By Tim French

The Neroche Villages website - nerochevillages.org.uk - was launched six years ago by the Neroche Communication Action Group to let those with access to a computer know what was happening in our area and to promote local businesses. It became the official website for the Neroche Parish Council and so a way of learning about the council's activities and getting information it sends out. But many changes have occurred since the website was created. As a result, the content of parts of the website needs to be updated and the website needs to be redesigned.

Changes in the community

In the last few years our area has seen new residents arrive, new businesses develop, activities in the parish increase and those running them change. As a result we need to update the content of the website so that the information is correct and useful to users.

We will need your help to do this.

We would ask those involved with a club, society or other group to go to the website and check if their group is on it and if the details are correct. We are also concerned that we are missing some new businesses operating or based in our parishes. Every business, whatever size, is entitled to a free listing of basic details on the Business page of the website (and the addition of email and/or website addresses for a small fee, with the cost used towards running the website). If your group or business is not listed, or if details are incorrect, please use the Contact page on nerochevillages.org.uk and tell us and we will rectify the problem.

Viewing websites on smart phones

Originally websites were viewed on computer screens. Today, more and more people use a mobile phone. This creates a problem as traditional websites viewed on a phone are small and can be difficult to read. We took advice and will be converting Neroche Villages website. It will look much the same on a computer screen but will alter shape to become easier to read on a tablet or phone. This will make it

more useful to residents wishing to quickly get community or parish council information.

Joining the website team

The website is kept up to date by three members of the communication group who spend a few hours or less, every third week, editing the site. It usually involves changing information on the Coming events, News and Neroche Parish Council pages. We are looking for others who would like to get involved. Anyone with a computer who can use Word or a similar program could do it. Please let us know if you are interested or would like to know more by using the contact page of Neroche Villages website.



Donations to the Neroche Newsletter

In our Spring edition we included a donation slip to help with the running expenses of the newsletter. Thanks to your generosity we have received an amazing £230. A huge thank you to everybody who has donated to date.

It's not too late to do so! If you have lost your donation slip, or simply forgot, you can still contribute.

Please make a cheque out to "Neroche Communication Action Group" and send it to Jacqueline Wanstall at Barton Oaks, Bickenhall, Taunton, TA3 6TX.

Defibrillator at The Greyhound

Gillian Midworth, our parish clerk, is keen to remind everyone that we are fortunate to have a defibrillator that is situated at the Greyhound Inn, Staple Fitzpaine.



The battery has recently been replaced and monthly checks are carried out to ensure that the machine remains in working order.

Thanks go to the Greyhound's Mike and Marina for housing this vital piece of equipment and keeping a watchful eye over it.

Neroche History Group

Jane Hole, chair of Neroche Local History Group, shares her findings on the little-known Exon Domesday

Most people have probably heard about the Great Domesday Book and know the survey was conducted at the behest of William the Conqueror in 1086. Less well-known is the Exon Domesday.

Somerset Museum in Taunton recently held an exhibition about the Exon Domesday and I was lucky enough to attend the sell-out lecture by Dr Frank Thorn, the foremost living editor and translator of Domesday Book.

The Exon Domesday has been preserved for many centuries in Exeter Cathedral Library and is named after the Latin word for Exeter (*Exonia*). In 2011 it was removed from its 19 century binding so that digital photography and detailed study could begin. Since then a research project by a team, from King's College London and the University of Oxford, has been uncovering the document's secrets from its 532 parchment pages.

Ultimately it will mean the 1,000-year-old manuscript will be digitised and can be used by schools, local historians and academic researchers across the world. The project ends this year and hopefully the results will become available to us all.

Exon Domesday covers the five western counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire, although not all of it has survived. The other regional surveys that make up Great Domesday are all abbreviated and thus some of the detail from the original texts has been lost to posterity.

The Exon is unabridged and remains full of the minute detail and the idiosyncrasies left in by the clerks that would have been removed had it been abridged. The study identified that 26 different scribes wrote up the Exon. Eight of the pages relating to Somerset were on display at the museum.

When the Exon was removed from its binding it became apparent the pages had not been bound in chronological order. When the pages were placed in sequence what had previously appeared just as a mark on separate sheets was



discovered to be the outline of a medieval spearhead imprinted across two of the Somerset pages, shown in the image above.

Dr Thorn described the detail of the survey - the King required that “not one ox, cow, sheep, or pig” was to be left out. There were over 13,800 manors (an estate held by a landlord) in England in 1086, each of which was surveyed over a ten month period. The level of detail is extraordinary. It describes; who held it in King Edward’s time, who held it in 1086, how many hides (amount of land which could be ploughed in a year using one ox-drawn plough), how many of the ploughs were owned by the lord and how many by the local people, the number of villagers, how many owned their dwelling, how many were slaves, and so on. Its primary purpose of course was to raise money for the King.

The accuracy and durability of the Domesday Survey is illustrated by the fact it was last used in a dispute over land in Norfolk in 1920!

The significance of the mark is not yet known.



Notes from your village agent

A regular round-up by our own Gary Larsen

These longer, lighter days certainly put a spring in your step. I don't want to spoil your enjoyment of them, but they can bring out the crooks, so please be extra vigilant. Scams are everywhere these days and I'm absolutely amazed at the brazen cheek of some of them.



A current favourite is that you receive a phone call from someone purporting to be a solicitor and claiming that you have won £5,000 in a quiz/lottery/draw. They tell you that you need to have £200 in cash handy so you can claim the money and they will send someone round to your house to collect it or even take you to the cash point free of charge!

It's a scam. The general rule is that if it's too good to be true, it probably is.

Another scam affects computer users. You get a phone call from someone claiming that your computer has a virus and they can remove it for you if you pay them. No, it's another scam.

The most current problem is opening an email from a friend/company/anyone with an attachment that you don't recognise BUT as soon as you open that attachment it releases the virus into the computer and you have to ring a special telephone number to pay criminals to unlock your computer.

Please don't open any email attachment that you haven't specifically asked for or you can't verify the owner immediately. It could come from a friend whose own computer has been hacked.



If you have any computer crime concerns, feel free to call me. I may be able to help.

Power of Attorney

On a separate matter, I've been asked about Power of Attorney. This can be quite a complicated issue and is very important to get right.

Age UK has a good information sheet which can be obtained from its website or you can ring me and get some further details.

Silversurfers

Finally, I've had a look at an interesting website called Silversurfers which has interviews and articles and general news for the over 50s - I know, I don't look it!. There's also the Silverline service if you are feeling lonely and want to chat to someone on the telephone for information, friendship or advice. The service is available 24 hours a day on 0800 4708090.

That's all for now, but do get in touch if I can help you to get the most out of village life.

Gary

The Somerset Village Agent project is a Community Council of Somerset initiative. It uses paid, part time, highly-trained individuals living in the parish 'clusters' they support. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals, and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs. Village Agents work with all ages, dealing with a wide variety of issues, although a considerable number of their clients are elderly and involves social care matters.

Contact Gary at gary@somersetcc.org.uk, or phone him in 07931



Update from the Forestry Commission

John Burgess brings us up to speed with events at Castle Neroche

After a few quiet months in the forests things have suddenly got busy. As I write this we are in the middle of a significant clearfell at Castle Neroche that will make a big difference to the views from the top of the monument, and change the feel as you drive down from the ridge.

This has been forced on us by the discovery of diseased larch trees which leads to a compulsory order to remove the rest of the surrounding tree. This is in order to try to prevent the onwards spread of the spores and this site acting as a stepping stone which could then infect further sites.

We had planned to clear a very small area of the site where tree cover had crept over the ramparts of the Castle. The removal of these trees helps to further visualise the full extent of what was a very impressive creation. This will go ahead in a period of dry weather to ensure absolutely minimal disturbance to the soil structure.

The work is undertaken by Kleen Kutt, a local timber harvesting company

seen here undertaking one of the most complex areas along the roadside edge. The work was undertaken with minimal disruption to traffic.

We had already planned to



thin the trees at the site and will continue with the thinning elsewhere on the site over the rest of the summer, this will give space for the remaining trees to grow, will allow more light to reach the forest floor, helping the bluebells to thrive. We appreciate everyone's patience and thank them in advance for following the signs and diversion necessary for safety.

In late April we also welcomed a new member of staff in the Neroche office – Rob, who is Community Engagement Ranger. It is Rob's job to help people access and enjoy the forests so if you have any ideas about how the Forest could better serve the community get in touch at robert.greenhalgh@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Neroche Friday Film Night



Lion (PG)

Don't miss the next Moviola film night at Neroche Hall on June 2.

The film **Lion** tells the true story of Saroo Brierley, played by Dev Patel, who became stranded in Calcutta thousands of miles from home - aged just four.

He survives as a street child and ends up in an orphanage before being adopted by the Brierleys, a prosperous Tasmanian family.

Years later and living in Australia Saroo begins his quest to trace his roots using only Google maps. Made with the cooperation of Saroo and his family, and with surprises at the end, this film stays with you. June 2, 7.30pm. Bar and snacks. Tickets: £6. More information from ncbaxter@hotmail.co.uk, 01823 480675.

Caring for your Furry Family

In our series which puts the spotlight on local enterprises, Jacq Wanstall talks to Fay Mackenzie about her pet care business

Fay Mackenzie lives in Staple Fitzpaine and is a local pet expert. She established Fay's Pet Care in 2012 and now looks after roughly 100 pets each year.

I caught up with Fay on a dog walk to find out more about the pet care services she offers and why her job is the best in the world.

Why did you set up your business?

I worked for a bank for a number of years and felt I wasn't suited to that kind of job. I have grown up around animals and I had originally planned to work with horses one day, but at the time there was a calling for more dog walkers in Taunton, so that's how Fay's Pet Care was founded.

How long have you lived in the area?

I have lived in Staple Fitzpaine for 18 years, having moved to the village with my family in 1999. But I grew up in Hatch Beauchamp and lived briefly in Broadway as a child, so have always been very local to this area.

What does your typical day look like?

A normal day would be to pick up my first group of dogs - I take up to five at a time - and drive them to one of the local walks. My morning slot is usually in the Blackdowns. Thurlbear Wood or Priors Park woods are the favourites. I then take those dogs home, and pick up my next group, and we often head to the Quantocks. Wind Down woods is a particular favourite. If I have any other pets booked in, such as horses, cats or small furrries, I visit them before or after the dog walks.

What type of animals do you care for?

Dogs mainly, but I also look after cats, horses, rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens etc. Some more unusual pets I've looked after are bearded dragons, degus and tortoises, and I have even looked after a pet sheep!

What's your favourite breed of dog?

Well my own dog is a Jack Russell and she is a great little dog, so she takes the top prize. But I've always liked huskies, and I love the Labrador's happy-go-lucky view on life, and the Hungarian Vizsla is a stunning dog. So there are quite a few !



What has been the most characterful pet you've looked after?

One of the funniest characters would have to be a toy-sized Yorkshire terrier named Eddie. He was the tiniest dog I've ever walked, but nobody ever told him that! He commanded respect from every other dog, and merely walking among the others would have them submitting to him, it really was quite a sight. Even the biggest pooches never questioned Eddie's status as top dog.

What's the best and worst thing about your job?

The best thing is being privileged to be able to walk well-behaved lovely dogs in the beautiful countryside on a sunny day. The worst thing is the weather in winter (perhaps a bit predictable). The rain and mud seems never ending! But the dogs have a great time regardless, so that's the main thing.

For more about Fay and the services she offers get in touch:

Phone 07738 274909 Email: fayspetcare@yahoo.co.uk

www.fayspetcare.co.uk

www.facebook.com/FaysPetCare

Fay's Pet Care
Professional Dog Walker and Pet Sitter



Latest on lessons at Thurlbear School

The tale of Thurlbear School's Mysterious Eggs, by Sarah Lucas and Hannah Kelloway

On returning from break one day the children found that two eggs had been left for us to look after, one in Year 1 and one in Year 2.



We nurtured them for three days when suddenly, after returning from lunch, they

had hatched but unfortunately we did not see the dinosaur, just dinosaur footprints, feathers, an empty shell and scratches on the doors. The children wrote about what they thought had hatched and what had happened. Following on from this the children have been busy learning all about dinosaurs. We have visited The Dinosaur Museum in Dorchester and have taken part in dinosaur workshops.

We have also created leaflets showcasing in our dinosaur museum which is open to parents. The children have had an amazing experience. The standard of learning and quality of work has exceeded all expectations, and it has provided the children with long-lasting happy memories.

Do you have some spare time? Would you like to make a difference? If the answer is YES we are looking for volunteers to run a **Gardening Club** for our very enthusiastic pupils. If you are interested, please contact Jo Moore (school business manager) on 01823 442277 jmoore@educ.somerset.gov.uk

News from Bickenhall and District WI

by Jacky Kolkowski

Again over the last few months we have had another group of interesting speakers and have been involved in, organised or attended various events.

In January and we were pleased to welcome Kath Michaels who kindly stepped in with her excellent presentation about her life as a nurse, from her training in London to the position she now holds at Musgrove Park Hospital.

Kath expanded on her role in haematology/oncology at the Beacon Centre, and how the team support patients when they come to the unit including procedures put in place to continue supporting the patients if they have problems when they return home. It was quite obvious that Kath is very passionate about her work and very proud of what the hospital and teams offer to the patients in her field.

Our March meeting saw the welcome return of Mike Spencer who once again gave a fascinating and educational presentation, this time about his Vietnam venture, a trek where 14 people walked 50 miles through very rough tacks, living with the people of Vietnam to raise money for St Margaret's Hospice.

The April speaker was Suzanne Llewelyn who spoke on Crystals for Health and Happiness. Suzanne is a holistic therapist with a gentle and down-to-earth approach and she gave us a very informative talk on the use of different stones. We were invited to pick



Frances Alford receiving her trophy from president Tricia Dryden - see next page

our own amethyst to take home, a crystal to put under the pillow to help with sleep.

At each meeting we run a competition with points awarded for the first three places and yes, you have guessed it, "*Points Mean Prizes*". The winners for 2016 (big drum roll please) were: 1st Frances Alford; 2nd Elizabeth Westlake; 3rd Brenda Crossley.

EVENTS

In January we held a **table top sale** at the Neroche Hall with a varied range of table top sellers from around the area. We were a bit disappointed with the low number of shoppers, especially after all the advertising we carried out, but it was still a successful event.

Our **Easter Bingo** was held at the Greyhound in April again a good turnout and nice to see family tables. Lots of Easter eggs for the winners, with John Dryden doing a very good job as our caller. Thanks to Pauline Phelps "bingo supremo" and to Marina and Dave for the use of the function room.

We visited **Bridgwater Custody Unit** to view the new 36-cell facility that has replaced the smaller units in Taunton and Weston-super-mare the building also houses other police units. We spent an interesting morning touring the building and custody area with talks about the use of firearms, forensics and dog handling. One of the police dogs was a rescue dog from the RSPCA at West Hatch.

Horton WI hosted **Call My Bluff** evening where auctioneers gave information about antiques and the audience had to guess which was the actual antique. It was a most entertaining evening with a good Bangers and Mash supper.

Some members braved **Blackbrook Leisure Centre** to trial the toning tables, an array of power-assisted exercise machines to help increase strength, tone and mobility; a low impact circuit/gym.

The fit and competitive **skittles team** braved the low visibility of the Blackdowns to compete against the West Buckland WI at the Victoria Arms in Wellington. We were made to feel very welcome as always by



The table top sale in full swing, with Sheila on her stall, below left, and Jacky setting up



the West Bucklanders and the pub. The team played out of our skins with Debbie showing us a few of her Mum's old moves. A good match won by us. Thanks again to Win for doing all the organising.

NEWS

Our many Twiddlemuffs - knitted muffs with bits and bobs attached for dementia patients to 'twiddle' with - have been taken for use at Immacolata House, Langport, and Hazelwell Lodge, Ilminster.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month and we would be delighted to welcome new members to our meetings. Contact Tricia Dryden at tricia@witchlodge.co.uk if you would like more information.

Broadband for Neroche Parish

Lynne Spoors explains the latest position

Connecting Devon & Somerset Phase 2

The Parish Council has been closely monitoring Connecting Devon & Somerset Phase 2, for news of fibre broadband for the parish.

Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) recently announced that the successful contract bidder to provide Phase 2 fibre broadband for the majority of the Blackdown Hills area including Neroche Parish, is a company called Gigaclear.



We have just received the following message from them:

“Gigaclear will be installing a new, pure fibre-to-the-premises broadband network in your area over the next three years bringing speeds from 50Mbps up to 1000Mbps to properties in the area.

Gigaclear
Ultrafast Fibre Broadband

Currently, Gigaclear and CDS are finalising the coverage area and the rollout schedule which should be confirmed towards the end of June 2017. In the meantime, you may register your interest on the website <https://www.gigaclear.com>. This does not commit you to anything it just allows Gigaclear, who will be building the network, to keep you informed on progress with the rollout.”

Neroche Parish Council is keeping a close eye on the progress and has sought further information from CDS but as yet has not received a reply. However, we will continue to chase Gigaclear and CDS for any information. We will include any updated information in the email alert distributed by Wally Torrington.

In the meantime, the parish council strongly urges anyone interested in fibre broadband to visit the Gigaclear website at:

<https://www.gigaclear.com> and register your interest. When you access the site, simply enter your postcode where it says “Can I get Gigaclear”, select your address and you will most likely be taken to a page showing “Progress in Buckland St Mary” with an update on progress (the CDS contracted areas are larger than the Parish boundary). Scroll down and you will see the button “Register your Interest”.

We recommend that all households in the Parish register, so that Gigaclear will see a high potential take-up in the area, which in turn may influence (speed-up) the timescale for the provision of a fibre network.

PHASE 1 Update

Phase 1 Connecting Devon & Somerset (CDS) bid was won by BT but the large majority of Neroche Parish was one of the areas that unfortunately did not benefit from BT’s fibre provision, presumably on the basis that we were not ‘cost effective’. CDS put in place an interim ‘voucher scheme’, whereby any households that could not obtain broadband speeds greater than 2.5 bits were entitled to apply for £500 voucher to put towards the costs of an alternative provider.

The voucher scheme was well-publicised in the various parish publications. The voucher scheme closed on 30 November 2016 with just over 55% of households who successfully registered and obtained the CDS voucher. Many residents have since used the voucher to obtain fast broadband using one of the CDS registered providers, mostly Exmoor Technologies. The voucher is used to cover most of the installation costs of the router and aerial. Broadband is then purchased as required from one of the recommended mobile suppliers.

Due to the delay in finalising Phase 2 rollout plans, Connecting Devon & Somerset has agreed to extend the voucher expiry date to June 30 2017.

If anyone holds a voucher and wishes to install an interim solution please ensure that you register your request with your chosen provider as soon as soon as possible.



Special model railway event in Curland *by Wally Torrington*

Taunton Town Model Railway Club (TTMRC) held an Open Day on Sunday 7 May in its clubhouse at Seymour Farm in Curland. The exhibition comprised the large permanent indoor model railway display and three 'O' gauge test-track layouts in the car park, provided by the new Sedgemoor 'O' Gauge Club. The day attracted a steady stream of visitors and visiting enthusiasts were invited to use the track to test their locos; the track is able to take any 'O' gauge model train.

The event was enjoyed by young and old alike, and proved to be a great success; a wonderful experience for the whole family. The youngsters were be fascinated by the realism of the scale models, railway yards and street scenes; and 'dad' was able to revisit his childhood.

Taunton Town Model Railway Club is the only teaching club in the Taunton area. It meets on Wednesdays, 10am to 4pm and 7pm to 10pm, and Sundays, 10am to 4pm, at Seymour Farm. Just drop in - visitors are made most welcome. The club's aim is to help anyone who



might be interested to enjoy this wonderful hobby. On its website the club asks “*Are we just playing with trains or creating a 3D work of art?*”

Why not call in and judge for yourselves?

For more information visit www.ttmrc.co.uk, email ttmrc@hotmail.co.uk or ring Graham on 01823 327155 (*this line is open from 9am to 9pm; closed on Wednesdays.*)



BICKENHALL, CURLAND and STAPLE FITZPAINE
SCARECROW FESTIVAL 2017

This year's theme is
FILM AND TV CHARACTERS

22 July - 29 July

Enter your scarecrow and/or vote for your favourite
Entries £5 per household

Contact Mal Lee 01460 234282,
lees.curland@gmail.com

Entries close 18 July


1st prize £50, 2nd prize £25, 3rd prize £10

Teas in church Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 July

Teas en route 3pm - 7pm on 26 and 27 July
at Woodcott, Curland

**Prizes presented at a barbecue on 29 July, 7pm
St Peter's Church, Staple Fitzpaine**

Collect voting forms from St Peter's Church,
Staple Fitzpaine during the festival



Neroche newsletter reader survey

By Jacq Wanstall

In the last edition of the newsletter we included a survey for readers to complete, either in a paper format, or online. We were delighted that more than 25 per cent of you how took the time to do this, so a huge thank you.

Curland led the way, with an impressive 33 per cent of the survey responses, so well done Curland!

It is important to us, as a new editorial team, to make sure your newsletter is everything you want it to be, and that we have content that interests and informs you.

What was most informative was your 'level of interest' ratings on the various subjects covered in the newsletter. It's clear from your feedback that the majority of our readers want to hear more about local history, wildlife and forestry matters, learn more about local residents and businesses and local events. This is all very valuable feedback, so you can expect more on those areas in the future.

A third of the people who completed the survey said they might be interested in writing a one-off article, which is fabulous news, so hopefully, in the future, we will have a few more guest authors.

In the general comments section of the survey, we had some lovely comments, many of them thanking the newsletter team, past and present, for the time and effort required to create and deliver the publication. I hope you are reading this Wally and Alan, as much of the praise is aimed at you, for doing such an amazing job over the years.

Thank you, again, to everybody who completed the survey. All your thoughts, comments and ideas will be taken on board in future editions. Don't forget, you can always get in touch with us, on nerochenewsletter@gmail.com if there is anything else you wish to suggest or an article you fancy writing.

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

Tuesday 25 July 2017 to Monday 4 September 2017

Household Recycling & Refuse Collections

**No changes scheduled for June and July.
Bank holiday on August 28 means collection
will be on Thursday instead of Wednesday**



To view the actual dates, go to www1.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc/sites/waste/pdf/WednesdayB.pdf



Events for your calendar

June

- 1 - Thursday Lunch Club - see page 10
- 2 - Friday Film Night - Lion with Dev Patel - see Page 41
- 7 - Quiz night at the Greyhound
- 8 - General Election - voting at Neroche Hall
- 9 - Quiz night for Flower and Music Festival - see page 32
- 11 - UB40 at Taunton Racecourse - see page 20
- 17 - St Peter's Church Fete - see page 11

July

- 5 - Quiz night at the Greyhound
- 6 - Thursday Lunch Club - see page 10
- 7 - Friday Film Night - Hidden Figures - see page 27
- 9 - Progressive lunch - see page 17
- 13 - Parish council meeting
- 22 - 29 - Scarecrow Festival - see page 52
- 25 - Schools break up for summer

August

- 2 - Quiz night at the Greyhound
- 3 - Thursday Lunch Club - see page 10

Advance notice of events

October 13 - Fish and Chip Quiz Night with Mike Michaels
October 29 - Craft Fair - 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

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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