

Working Together for a Better Community

NEROCHE VILLAGES Newsletter

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

Issue 37 - Autumn 2020



The Neroche Scarecrow Festival 2020 was a huge success - an amazing level of creativity from all makers. Read all about it inside.

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



The Scarecrow Festival 2020 – A Walk Through Time

By Karen Learoyd

What a fantastic antidote to the last few months of doom and gloom this year's Scarecrow Festival proved to be! The theme of 'Historical Character – Fact or Fiction' provided plenty of scope for the scarecrow makers to stretch their creative talents. We travelled from Ancient Egypt, through Greek mythology, 5th century rulers, notable characters and monarchs from the Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian eras, culminating in a group of 20th century celebrities! There were outlaws, terrorists, plunderers (which must say something about the Neroche community) happily sitting alongside great leaders and pioneers, musicians, rulers and actual scarecrows!

The scarecrows started to appear late on Friday 17th July, and we soon started hearing reports of people who had made the rounds to visit them, with the aid of the maps carefully crafted by Alison Brown (not to scale she always says!). As the days passed it became apparent this had generated a huge amount of interest both locally and further afield and more maps were quickly produced. People 'did the tour' by bike, on foot, by car and also on horseback, although the size of some of the creations must have been quite frightening!

On Tuesday afternoon Alison supplied cream teas at Battens Farm, ably supported by Nicky Baxter, Jane Hole and Carole Wensley-Dodd. I heard the scones and Victoria sponge were all





delicious and went down a treat, raising a whopping £208 during the afternoon.

The traditional BBQ and prize giving was held on Sunday at St Peter's Church, and it was lovely to see so many people attend, all within the socially distanced guidelines. Thanks to Jon Bell for his amazing cooking, Sheila Green and Mary Bell for helping with the food, along with Jacky Kolkowski for supplying salads etc in advance. Anthony Brown organised car parking, Mark Porter and Rebecca George ably ran the bar, as well as setting up the day before and calculating the results – all in all a very pleasant afternoon, not even slightly dampened by the odd shower!

There were 21 entries in total, some people who regularly take part, although also great to see some new entrants this year. The standard was exceptional, so many extra details were added to the main exhibit, some looked more 'scarecrow like' than others, and all had so much work put into them. It certainly brought a great amount of pleasure to everyone who saw them in person, or online if they were unable to undertake the tour.

And the results were:

1st Place: Evel Knievel (John Cooney)
- see photo on front page

2nd Place: One Small Step for Man.... (Val and Mike Aspray)



3rd Place: Queen Victoria and Sharp the Dog (RSPCA West Hatch)



Children's Award: King Arthur and Guinevere (Harriet and William Lister)



Over 100 voting slips were posted in the Church, proving how popular a local event this is in spite of lockdown or maybe because! In total £850 was raised for the Church through the tea, BBQ, maps and some very generous donations.

Finally, a huge thank you to Alison Brown for all the energy and hard work that went into organising such a wonderful event, and last but not least, to all the scarecrow makers and visitors who made it such a success.

Here's to next year!



Socially Distanced Swans

Flower Eating Deer



District Councillor Update

By Ross Henley

I hope everyone is well. I know that lockdown has been so hard for so many people particularly trying to maintain physical and mental health. It only seems like yesterday that I saw lots of you at the Neroche Hall quiz back in March, which was just about the last face to face community event that took place before we went into lockdown. During the first few weeks I was looking after my 87 year old dad to make sure he was OK. It was lovely, in the nicest possible way, to be able to start to venture out after over two months staying in his house.



During lockdown there has been lots still going on locally. The long running planning issue in Curland which is of interest to so many people there has been continuing throughout lockdown and recently both applications were refused. We will wait and see what happens next with this issue. I am in support of local residents on this, and I will continue to do so having raised objections to the planning application. It has been a very stressful time for people living near this site for nearly a year now. They should not be having to put up with all of this uncertainty.

An issue on which I am keeping a watching brief is that of the land that the Crown Estate sold to Taylor Wimpey. I am totally opposed to large scale development like this in the parish. This is a deeply rural special location and I want it to remain so. I will continue to challenge on this issue to try and oppose any attempts to include this area for large scale development in any future local Council plans. I know lots of local residents worry about this, and I will do whatever I can to support them. This whole issue was highlighted in a recent article on The Daily Mail website scrutinising the deal between the Crown Estate and Taylor Wimpey. I'm always trying to keep an eye on what the Crown is doing, and once when they threatened to evict residents from rented properties in Neroche, I managed to 'door-step' the Crown Estate chairman at a black tie dinner in London where he was the guest speaker! The opportunity to challenge him in public over what the Crown was doing to local tenants was too good an opportunity to miss.

It was lovely to be able to get out recently and look at all of the entries for the scarecrow competition. I also really enjoyed going to the BBQ that took place in the churchyard at Staple Fitzpaine to celebrate the competition and award the prizes. The food was lovely, as was the company, and so nice to talk to people face to face, yet socially distanced, for the first time in months.

On another point, just a quick reminder if you are popping into Taunton or Wellington that all Council car parks are still free until the end of August. This has been done to support our local shops. Other councils started charging for car parking in May or June, although I think that Somerset West and Taunton has got it right by still offering free parking at the moment.

Finally, on a personal note, I wanted to say how much my dad and I enjoyed the weekly quiz set by David Spears. We looked forward to it each week, and it certainly helped keep my sanity in the early dark days of lockdown when I was looking after my dad full time.



Peacock Butterfly



Broad Bodied Chaser Dragonfly

Corn Stooks

By Jac Wanstall

Hopefully many of you have seen the impressive displays of corn in the field next to Stuckey's Cottage in Curland. I must admit, I had never seen any corn stooks like this before and thought they were stunning, so I wanted to find out a bit more about them. For those of you who are interested, here is a little information.



A corn stook, also known as a corn stack or corn shock, is an arrangement of either wheat, corn, barley or oat sheaves propped up by each other. The cut grain stalks are placed in such a way as to keep the grain heads off the ground to dry them and protect it from vermin. This is the main purpose of the stook, to dry the corn, whilst preventing it being eaten by wildlife, and was the traditional method prior to mechanical harvesting. The stooks are typically used as thatching material as the stalks remain longer than with normal harvesting. Once they have dried in the field, the next stage is then separating the grain, which is known as threshing.

Neroche Heritage Fingerpost Project

By Jane Hole

It seems an age and a pandemic away from our last Fingerpost bulletin in December. Luckily for the project we have been able to soldier on throughout the lockdown and ensuing months. Our last update showed pictures of 8 new aluminium arms due to go up this year.

During the spring and early summer months these arms have been undercoated with a red primer, followed by several coats of white metal paint. Then the fiddly task of painting the village names and mileages in black. John Learoyd, Dianne and Brian Hood, and Mark Palmer were the stalwarts here.

On a wet June day our external contractors, Somerset Forge came to dismantle the posts at Thurlbear and Staple Fitzpaine. These posts are on dangerous roads and unsafe for the volunteers to work on.



Somerset Forge dismantling the post



Staple Fitzpaine unrestored

Of the 6 arms on this post, the 3 plastic arms (identified by their straight end) have been replaced with new aluminium arrow edged arms. The new arm for Bickenhall now includes the sign for Neroche Hall and we have taken down the clunky old plastic one.

The cast iron arms needed to be restored by rubbing down and removing all the old flaking paint, rust spotting, then a coat of red anti corrosive primer applied. This has been followed by up to four coats of white paint and the lettering painted in black. We have also replaced the old rusty internal poles with new galvanised steel ones. Once again, the volunteer team stepped forward and John Parsons, Kingsley Beck, Pete Malthouse, Jane Hole and Clare Canape worked on these.



Red primer



Restored arms and finial

On 6th August Somerset Forge reassembled the fingerposts at Thurlbear and Staple Fitzpaine.



Somerset Forge reassembling Staple Fitzpaine Fingerpost

Neroche Heritage Fingerpost Team proudly present: Two More Fully Restored Fingerposts!



Thurlbear fully restored



Foundry mark on Thurlbear post



Staple Fitzpaine fully restored



We will now concentrate on the post at New Road. It will soon be ready for reassembly by the volunteer team and then we will have finished our planned programme for this year. 2021 will hopefully see the lost post from near Neroche Hall replaced, the post at the T junction near Dairy House Street.

Farm renewed, and the work completed on Badger Street.

FLOWERS FLOWERS FLOWERS

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

Now St Peter's Church has reopened, the Flower Guild has started to decorate the church with a flower pedestal. Candy Janes produced her first pedestal last month - well done Candy!

We hope we will be able to decorate all areas of the church for Harvest Festival in October.

Plant Fair at St Peter's Church 2021

We will be holding a plant fair at St Peter's next year and we would like some help! When you are splitting your perennials or sewing your annuals this autumn or spring, please could you put some aside for the plant fair.

Of course, there will be lots of scrummy cake on sale as well!

THANK YOU

I would like to thank all of you that came to the small plant sale outside my house in Curland. Thanks to you we made £75.00 for the church.

If you are interested in joining the small group who make up our Flower Guild, please do not hesitate to contact me.



Grow the Tallest Ruby Sunflower Competition

In Support of St Margaret's Hospice 40th anniversary

Is your sunflower taller than this?



Many of you around Neroche have been growing sunflowers - now it's time to measure up!

Please send me your plant height measurements and photo by Sunday 30th August

Height is measured from the base of stem to the top of the plant in a natural position

Jacqueline.kolkowski@btinternet.com

Prizes for the tallest sunflower grown by Under 10s and over 10s up to any age!

I have received over £100 in generous donations for the hospice and I know many of you have sent money directly to the hospice

If you would like to donate, I am still collecting

A Warm Hello

Hello! We would like to introduce ourselves to everyone in the Neroche Villages - we are Nick Dyke and Vanessa Bourne, and between us we have 4 sons! Henry (18) is Nick's son, Ben (24), Archie (22) and Oscar (17) are



Vanessa's boys. Nick ran his own Stud Farm for 30 years, initially near Kingsbridge, South Devon and then Bealy Court near South Molton, North Devon, as well as doing building development projects for clients. In the summer of 2017, he sold the Stud Farm and we moved temporarily into Tiverton. We then bought Bridge House Cottage and its adjoining barn, in Bickenhall in November 2017. We had a few early delays although we were finally allowed to start the renovations in summer 2018. We have carried out almost the entire build on our own as Nick, with his building skills, had always wanted to build his own house! The boys have all been involved when they have been around and have thoroughly enjoyed learning new skills although the main incentive, I'm sure, was driving the diggers and dumper trucks! We ended up moving into a 'semi' building site and continue to finish things off in any spare time we have.



Our boys keep us very busy too. Henry is at catering college in Exeter, Archie is a rugby player going into his final year at Loughborough University and Oscar is going into his final year of 6th form at Richard Huish.

In July 2019, Ben had a near fatal fall from a 2nd storey window after sleepwalking whilst in Cornwall with friends. He suffered a very severe traumatic brain Injury and spent 5 months in hospital and the Somerset Neuro Rehab Centre in Cotford St Luke to help him recover. Before the accident he had just passed out of Warsash Naval College with his degree in Maritime Operations and was embarking on his career as an officer in the Merchant Navy. His progress has been nothing short of a miracle, we are so grateful for all the NHS have done to put him back together and through his own determination and huge support from family and his now, fiancé, Steph, he is gradually getting back on his feet and they will marry next July.

This has slightly put us off our stride to say the least! The timetable for continuing the renovations have very much been put on hold, although as a result of the need to host the wedding celebrations next summer, we have renewed our efforts to make progress with the outside of the property before the winter comes around again.

And finally, me! I am most often known as Ness, I trade under YogaNess Yoga and I have been teaching Yoga to adults as well as children and teenagers in schools and studios, for nearly 15 years. I lived and taught in Salisbury for 10 years and then moved to Devon in 2016. Since moving to Bickenhall, I have been continuing to teach my established classes around Tiverton and Salisbury with a couple of local private clients, although I am now working out of a space at home with online yoga via Zoom, which is proving popular. My yoga has evolved due to my own life experiences and I have moved away from the typical 'fitness' type of yoga, fast and furious with high level, inaccessible postures for most, so often portrayed in many adverts and YouTube videos, to a gentle, yet very powerful subtle yoga which is accessible to everyone. It works by specifically soothing the nervous system and builds resilience. It is the perfect antidote to stress and anxiety in all age groups from 5-95!

It has been a pleasure to introduce ourselves and we very much hope to meet more of you in due course as things start to settle down a little more!

Bearding the One Somerset Lion

By John Thorne

YES, that is me in the photograph, with my lockdown beard during what is now a rare journey around our county council division because



of the restrictions caused by Covid-19. I am not going to keep it. I have just been too lazy to shave for a few weeks although as life hopefully gets back to a form of normality (I do not like using the term 'new normal'), I will lose it.

I also need to lose my lockdown tummy in the next few weeks, as I have now had the news that local football can re-start competitively in September and so I will be taking up my refereeing again. People say that running around on a football pitch refereeing must keep me fit, although the truth is you have to keep fit to referee, not referee to keep fit.

While I have my beard, it might be said that I have 'bearded the lion' of the One Somerset issue, because as I write this column I have just helped to approve the business case which has gone to the Secretary of State for Local Government, Robert Jenrick. The Minister is now considering it before deciding whether he wants more options and public consultation ahead of a White Paper due in September which is expected to list the next group of local councils to become unitary authorities. The aim, of course, is for Somerset to be on that list. If it is, then Somerset County Council will be abolished, along with the four district councils of Somerset West and Taunton, Sedgemoor, South Somerset, and Mendip, and a single new authority will be created for the whole of the county. A 'shadow' unitary council would be set up next April and run for 12 months alongside the existing county council, and then the new authority would officially take over in April 2022, with elections a month later for the new councillors – all 100 of them.

It might all sound a bit remote to readers of this newsletter, but actually it is going to have some very local effects for you. That is because an important part of the One Somerset business case is the desire to give your parish council more responsibility for delivering local services. Then, decisions on things like cutting roadside grass verges in, say, Bickenhall, or Staple Fitzpaine, can be taken locally by parish

councillors who are your next-door neighbours and who know the area best. At the moment, those sorts of decisions are overseen by a councillor who lives in Burnham-on-Sea, although, of course, prior to him it was a councillor who lives next door in Stoke St Mary - although that was just coincidental. Hopefully, if your parish councillors did take on more functions, they would also be given the funds to carry them out.

I say 'hopefully' because donkey's years of experience in journalism writing about the workings of local government right across the West country has made me very cynical about these things. The One Somerset business case is heavy on the idea of creating 'Local Community Networks' (LEPs) across the county where neighbouring parish councils can be grouped together and where community groups could also be involved, to take local decisions. Unfortunately, it is a little light on financial detail and whether LEPs would have proper budgets to spend. It is clear, though, that no parish council will have to do more if it does not want to. All 134 pages of the business case are available on the dedicated One Somerset website www.onesomerset.gov.uk if anybody would like to read them, along with much more information about the issue.



Great Spotted Woodpeckers Feeding

Pigs Reunited

It has not been uncommon for the Newsletter to report on missing pets that have been reunited with their owners after a period of time away from home. However, we think this may be a first!

If you are able to cast your minds back to the middle of June when we experienced a couple of days of extremely heavy rain after a long hot spell of beautiful weather. As the rain subsided and people started to go about their everyday business, a piglet was discovered in the ford in Dairy House Lane, Bickenhall by Michelle Watts, who stables her horse at Fordbridge and so travels over the river on a daily basis.

He was put into the stables to dry off while his owners were sought. His photo was posted on the local Facebook page, and Michelle and Louise Lawton, also did some asking around. By ingenious means, he was identified as belonging to Andy Palmer from Bickenhall, and he was collected within a couple of hours.

It transpired that Andy and Kathy have two piglets, both of which had fallen into the Fivehead river the previous evening during the rainstorm. One fortunate piglet was pulled out, although they feared the other had met an untimely end. What a relief that he was found the next morning, although he was fairly sick initially. We are pleased to report that he has recovered well and is happy back with his piglet mate!



ANNUAL VILLAGE CRICKET MATCH



**Stoke St Mary Cricket Ground
Sunday 6th September 2020
from 2pm**

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

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

Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood

Despite the continued restrictions there's been a lot of (socially distanced) activity at Young Wood these past weeks. The winter's careful conservation management generated a good crop of timber and firewood, including ash from the diseased trees which we've been obliged to fell. We have milled some larger ash, as well as larch and beech trunks, to produce thick planks to use for making benches and for crafting activities. We used a Woodmizer mill owned and operated by Julian Pady from Goren Farm, Stockland.

Alongside this we have made a new batch of charcoal, using a mixture of ash, hazel and willow, harvested and seasoned in the woods. The charcoal is now available at £5 for 2kg bags – email Gavin on gavin@nerochewoodlanders.org if you'd like some.



Meanwhile our Crowdfunder appeal has been successful, raising money to enable our Nature Craft Bags service to continue – we're really grateful for everyone's support. This will give impetus for resuming our work with vulnerable families and adults in the early autumn – it will be great to be able to get people out into nature again after all this time.

And there's a lot of nature to see, as the woodland wildlife has had a good summer. We have a lot more green woodpeckers than we used to, which attests to the increase in anthills which have spread since we widened the woodland rides. The woodpeckers gather in groups of up to five, feasting in the grass with their long tongues – so long in fact that they have space behind their skulls for the tongue to retract into.



The butterflies have been a treat this summer too. Lots and lots of meadow browns, gatekeepers, skippers, ringlets, commas, small tortoiseshells and the huge silver-washed fritillaries. The reptiles have also enjoyed the warmth – nestled under a piece of corrugated iron in the sunshine we've had a constant tangle of slow worms, and also our first grass snake.

We've added to the list of orchids growing wild in Young Wood this year, with white helleborine being found for the first time, alongside a bumper crop of bird's-nest orchid (which has no chlorophyll and lurks in deep shade). And down in the valley below Young Wood, the show of pyramidal orchids has been the best ever – thousands of them – amidst an equally astonishing sea of oxeye daisies.

Gavin, Jenny, Sarah and the team at Neroche Woodlanders



Blue Tit

News from RSPCA West Hatch
By Bel Deering – Centre Manager

Last newsletter I described how we had begun to cope with the changes COVID-19 has brought to the centre, and since then things changed once again. I am pleased to update that we are now able to admit wild animals from members of the public, and rehome and foster domestic animals too. However, we do both these things in new and different ways and so I have outlined our new procedures below so that you can share with friends and family as required.

Wildlife Centre – open every day 8am-9pm

- Please do not come to the site if you are experiencing any of the symptoms of Covid-19 (high temp, continuous cough, etc)
- We ask that only 1 family member brings the casualty to the centre
- Please wear a face covering if you are able and use hand sanitiser provided
- On arrival please ring the doorbell by the green gate and wait for attention
- Please ensure social distancing at all times and stay behind safety screens/signage as requested
- You may be asked to take the box/bedding you brought with you back home

Animal Centre – by appointments only for animal collections

- Please check our website www.rspca.org.uk/findapet to see what animals we have available
- If you find a suitable pet, please ensure you have read the full description and can meet the criteria required
- Drop the centre an email to let us know of your interest and we will then send over a Perfect Match form for you to complete
- Be prepared to exchange information, including ID and photos of your home and animal accommodation by email
- Be able to watch videos we send you and look at photos to ensure that the animal is suitable for you and the one you want
- Be able to pay over the phone and then visit the site to collect your animal
- For some dogs we are arranging opportunities to meet on site before coming to collect – although staff will guide you on what is required for each individual animal

Overall Covid-19 has been tough on our whole team. Our Wildlife Vet, David, and Vet Nurse, Barbara, have worked 4 months solidly, being on call every day from 8am-9pm. Our colleagues who have been furloughed are desperate to return to work, and our volunteers can't wait to come back and help out, although there have been many positives as well. We have had immense support and patience from our supporters and adopters. We have found new, cost-saving, innovative ways to continue rehoming, and have managed to laugh even when we have been exhausted. Taking part in the local Scarecrow Festival helped bring us all together and the kindness of people making donations from our Amazon wish list has continued to bring cheer to us and the animals in this difficult climate.

Out in the field

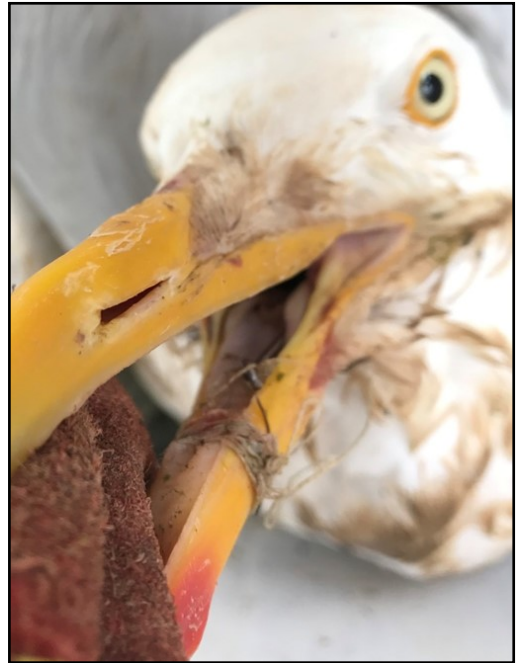
Our Inspectorate colleagues have not stopped during lockdown and beyond, and these are just some of the stories of their work.

This baby pipistrelle bat named Teeny Tiny, was found on a lady's doorstep in Bradpole, Dorset. He was skinny and thanks to ACO Clara Scully he is now progressing well in our care at West Hatch.

Keen passersby spotted a herring gull in a real predicament on a shallow stream in Exmouth earlier this month. The Inspector on duty donned wellies and life jacket and managed to cross the water and scoop up the gull in a net.



Not only did it have a fishing line very tightly wrapped around its lower beak and its leg, cutting off the blood supply, the line also tied its head to its leg, and there were metal fishing hooks deeply embedded in both its tongue and its foot. It was then rushed to White Lodge Vets just around the corner where vet Linda Salmon sedated it and removed the hooks and line. From there it came to West Hatch for further rehab. Sadly it seems the RSPCA message to discard your (fishing) litter responsibly is still not getting through!



Work at the centre

There are plenty of animals that have needed our help across the summer as these images show. As is normal for the time of year we have had an influx of bird of prey nestlings and fledglings with many being fledgling buzzards that have got themselves into trouble. The buzzard fledgling pictured found itself trapped in a slurry pit and was brought in by North Devon Animal Ambulance along with a couple of barn owl nestlings that had been found emaciated and alone in a field with no parents around. We have several more buzzard chicks on site at the moment along with



barn owl chicks, a sparrow hawk nestling and many tawny owlets!

An important part of our work is releasing animals back into the wild. And nothing pleases us more than finding out how they are doing further down the line. This month saw us get news of a swan that we released ten years ago after it first came into the centre in a weak and wobbly state. A keen wildlife spotter sent us this photo in August, showing it thriving in Exeter Quays, with 5 cygnets in tow!



From a more recent release, we were also pleased to hear that one of our 2019 seals was sighted around Lundy. This individual was admitted to us on 12/01/2019 from Whitsand Bay, Cornwall by BDMLR medics. He was 19.6 kg on admission, underweight and had infected wounds and an abscess which required treatment.

After successful treatment and rehabilitation he was released at Combe Martin in North Devon on 11/04/2019 weighing 41 kg.



© Saeed Rashid

Meanwhile in the animal centre we have rehomed and fostered around 100 animals since lockdown began – so here is a little montage of some of this work.



There is always a lot more going on at the centre than we can cover in the newsletter – why not follow us on Facebook to keep up on a more regular basis. You can find us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/RSPCAWestHatchAnimalCentre/>

and

<https://www.facebook.com/RSPCAWesthatchwildlife/>



Mr Mole

Report from Neroche Parish Council

by Jon Bell, Chairman



These are strange times for the Parish Council, as they are for everyone else. We have had our second Parish Council meeting using Zoom, which seems to work better for some than others, perhaps related to the patchy broadband coverage in the parish. There is no further news on this I'm afraid. As Zoom meetings are limited to 40 minutes, unless we all sign in again for a new meeting, we have kept agendas as short as possible.

Some issues, such as the upgrade of the A358, seem to have gone very quiet. We have heard nothing further on this but remain concerned over the location of cross over routes and junctions. The finger post restoration project is progressing, and we have again arranged for cutting of roadside verges around some of the junctions in the parish.

The issue of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has reared its head in spite of restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic. We have recently received a document commissioned by the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) and the Somerset branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), which makes a series of recommendations on the role of Parish Councils in the event of a major reorganisation in Somerset. The County Council's business case to create a new Unitary Council, replacing the present County Council and District Councils, has been put forward although is opposed by the four District Councils in Somerset. They prefer a future model under which the present councils remain but work more closely together and achieve savings by sharing facilities and back room staff.

Whichever of these alternatives eventually takes place it seems likely the role of parish councils will change. One criticism of the Unitary Council plan is that decisions would be made more remotely from the people they affect, to counter this a series of about 20 Local Community Networks, each made up of a number of adjacent parish councils, is proposed. This has been done in other areas where Unitary

Councils have already been set up. Under this model parish councils or town councils would be enabled (encouraged?) to take on responsibility for matters which are currently managed by the District Council.

The problem with this is that parish councils are a very mixed bag, ranging from small ones like Neroche with a budget below £10K to large town councils with large six figure budgets. Some of these might be well placed to increase the range of services they provide although we would struggle. If for instance, we had greater responsibilities for planning decisions we would need a degree of specialist knowledge and expert opinion we do not currently have. How we would access this is unclear but would probably be expensive and if our decisions were challenged by large organisations or wealthy individuals, we would not be in a position to defend an expensive legal case.

Another concern we have is whether adequate funding would come with any delegated responsibilities, especially as the main driver for reorganisation is saving costs. We would probably end up having to raise our precept, the amount we add to the Council Tax bill, substantially. This issue has concerned us for some time as at present there are limits on how much County and District councils can raise their precept, although we have no such limit, so to them offloading responsibilities onto us must look attractive. Another fear is that under a new system the position of small parish councils like ours might become unsustainable, although what would happen if we disappeared is unclear.

In any event we indicated in reply to the document that we would like to be involved in discussions over the future role of parish councils under whatever new system emerges from the present debate, while making clear our reservations about some of the recommendations in the document we were sent.

Meanwhile we welcome the slow return to normality as restrictions are slowly relaxed.

Stay safe!

News from St Peter's Church

Our first service, since lockdown eased, was at St Peter's on Sunday August 2nd. We have to follow certain Covid-19 precautions as laid down by the diocesan authorities following Government guidelines. Luckily on that Sunday, masks were not compulsory, although they have since become so. Many of the congregation wore them anyway. No singing was allowed, so some of us hummed along to the hymns, while we read the words that were being sung on the Bluetooth speaker.

Rev Christabel has become increasingly adept at the technology that has become necessary for us all to worship together in one form or another. For these skills we are indebted, and so grateful for the work that she and the Ministry team have put into creating services, where we are part of the Benefice and the larger church, despite often being separated by some distance. Services now are following a pattern of one service on either side of the A358 each Sunday at 10am, with services at St Peter's being on the first Sunday of the month. The Zoom services now take place at 12 noon on every Sunday. The services are not Services of Holy Communion at the moment, although contain hymns (see above), the readings for the appropriate Sunday, prayers and a reflection. The next service at St Peter's will be on September 6th and Harvest Festival will take place on October 4th. Due to social distancing seating is slightly limited. Anyone wishing to attend please ring or email one of the churchwardens, which also helps with the need for contact tracing should any local infection take place.

Our Scarecrow week was highly successful with a cream tea one day and a BBQ at the end. A much-needed sum of well over £800 was raised for the church funds, and we are most grateful to the sponsors, AES Building Services and Bickenhall Consulting Ltd, as well as a number of generous donations. However, most gratitude is due to the Scarecrow makers, without whom there would be no fun or Festival!

Very recently we have heard that Bishop Peter Hancock, our Diocesan bishop, has been diagnosed with acute Myeloid Leukaemia and will be starting chemotherapy as soon as possible. Please keep him in your prayers and we pray he will be soon on the road to recovery. Meanwhile the bishop of Taunton, Bishop Ruth Worsley will be standing in where necessary.

As I am sure you realise, St Peter's has inevitably been affected by a decrease in income, and loss of fund-raising functions over the period of

lockdown. This is an ongoing problem as expenses such as insurance and the Parish Share continue to drain our reserves. These reserves were earmarked largely for the toilet project, which is still in our sights, so must not be depleted any more than needed. Regular giving by Standing Order/ Bank Mandate helps the general income and therefore to maintain the reserves for future use. This is apart from the need for expenditure on the fabric of our beautiful church. If you feel able to support the church by regular giving please contact Mary Bell, our Treasurer, or the churchwardens for the appropriate form.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) held the Annual parish meeting by Zoom in July at which the Annual Report & Accounts were presented and approved. If anyone requires electronic copies of these documents please contact Sheila Green, Secretary to the PCC (01823 480758). Nicky Baxter and Mary Bell have agreed to serve on the PCC which will be a great help.

Sadly, one of the fund-raising functions to be affected by Covid restrictions was the Fete held at The Manor every three years. Our gratitude is extended to Chris and Heather Dunn for organising this wonderful function over so many years. They have decided the time has come to retire from this mammoth task. The PCC of St Peter's are immensely grateful to the Dunn family.

We hope that the wonderful café run by the WI will be permitted to start again soon, though probably with social distanced seating. We know many people are missing the social contacts at this time, not to mention the cakes! Opening of the Neroche Village Hall is being discussed by the hall committee, and hopefully when this happens the Thursday Lunches should be able to get going again.

Giving the gardeners in our locality plenty of notice, we intend to have a fund-raising plant sale next spring, organised by Jacky Kolkowski. More news of this will follow and any of you prepared to grow plants for this, start planting now and please let Jacky (01823 481326) know of your interest.

This has been a strange time for us all, although St Peter's Church remains a constant presence. Thank you for your support.

God bless you.

Alison Brown and Mark Porter
Churchwardens

Neroche Hall Covid-19 Update

By Richard Davies, Chairman

The last significant event held at the Hall was our Spring Fish and Chip Quiz and despite the pending uncertainty of the Coronavirus Pandemic there was an excellent turnout. I know several people were concerned and stayed away, although the overall event proved a pleasant diversion for many.



Shortly after the quiz the committee decided to close the hall to all hirers in the interest of public safety, and this was subsequently reinforced by the formal lockdown imposed by the Government. Since then we have all endured weeks of uncertainty not really knowing what the future would hold for us and indeed whether we would ever return to the status quo of normality.

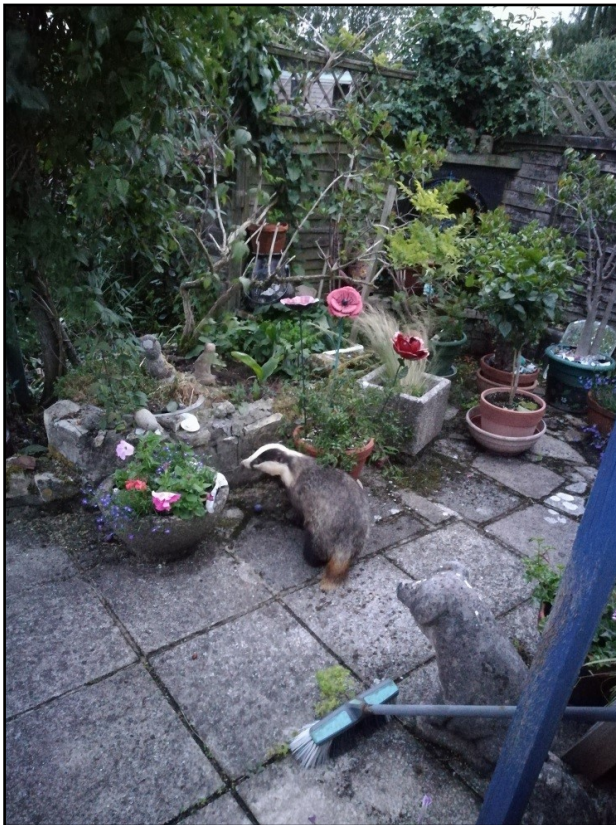
As lockdown has been eased in certain areas the question of re-opening the hall to our regular users and hirers has been uppermost in the minds of all the committee members. Unfortunately, we are unable to simply re-open the doors and resume use as before, as a raft of new guidelines in terms of social distancing, sanitising, and general public safety have to be considered and where appropriate implemented.

We are guided by the organisation known as 'Action with Communities in Rural England' (ACRE) who provide village and community halls with advice on the organisation and running of such buildings and best practice. This together with advice from the Community Buildings Officer at the Community Council for Somerset is designed to help us reopen safely. The guidance, entitled 'Post Covid-19 Reopening of Village Halls' was last updated on the 20 July and runs to some 32 pages, covering a myriad of topics.

The committee have held a preliminary meeting via the popular 'Zoom' platform with a view to moving towards a structured return of use. A number of areas require further investigation not to mention the procurement of safety equipment, signage and cleaning products. There will also be a need to include additional information within our hiring agreement plus risk assessments under Health and Safety. We are meeting again during August to reassess our status and whether it

will be possible to reopen during September or October for certain activities. Numbers will obviously need to be curtailed within the building due to social distancing and this may as a result limit the type of use available, in particular Film Nights, Quizzes etc which we have agreed will not start until at least the beginning of 2021, should the numbers limitation still make it financially viable.

At this point, despite the prolonged closure, the hall is currently in a good position financially and we were fortunate to have been able to obtain the £10,000 grant on offer from Government. In the worst-case scenario this would cover our general costs for a twelve-month period of complete shutdown. We remain optimistic for the future of the hall and once we return to full use hope that the community will continue to support it as they have in the past. As with all things the situation can suddenly change, and we will be guided by circumstances as well as Government.



Plum Thief

Taunton Racecourse
Somerset, Taunton, TA3 7BL

The ultimate summer DRIVE-IN CINEMA is coming to Taunton!

! LIMITED spaces available so buy your tickets below while you still can!

Contact free and social distance friendly with additional measures put in place for a safe event experience, following all government guidelines.

- ◆ Bring your own food & drink. Don't forget the popcorn!
- ◆ Built-in social distancing from the comfort and safety of your car.
- ◆ On-site toilets available.



BACK TO THE FUTURE (PG)

Tues Sep 1st, 2pm

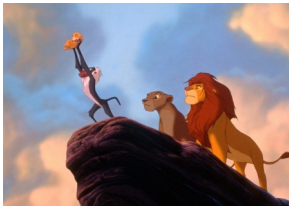


DIRTY DANCING (12A)

Tues Sep 1st, 6pm



Tues Sep 1st, 9.30pm



THE LION KING - 1994 (U)

Wed Sep 2nd, 2pm

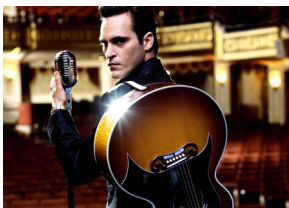


THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (PG)

Wed Sep 2nd, 6pm



(15)
Wed Sep 2nd, 9.45pm



WALK THE LINE (12A)

Thurs Sep 3rd, 2pm



(PG)
Thurs Sep 3rd, 6pm



somerset **village** &
community agents



CCS
people · place · enterprise

Somerset Village Agents
Partnership Ltd



Somerset West
and Taunton

COMMUNITY FUND
Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Somerset



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Community Council for Somerset Agent's News

Talking Café Live on Facebook:

Have you caught any of our sessions we stream live daily on Facebook? If not you can catch up on any of the Talking Café Lives here: www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset/live.

A Village, Carers or Community Agent from CCS are LIVE weekdays at 11am to answer any questions or concerns you have – you can also ask privately via a message to the page. Each day Agents cover a different topic, and they have been so varied and interesting - below are just a few:

- Cooking on a Budget, where Rev. Jess whipped up 5 dishes for less than £10!
- Art Therapy ● Family Activities and things to do on a budget ● Library Service updates
- Hydration and UTI Advice ● Hospital Discharge Support ● Domestic Abuse ● Exercise to do from home and for people with reduced mobility ● Mental Health

All the Talking Cafes we have hosted on Facebook so far have had a combined total of 65,000 views!

Focus on Domestic Abuse awareness

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, of any age. We are seeing a particular rise in cases of abuse being reported by people over 71

years and with one in four women and one in six men experiencing some form of abuse in their lifetime, the chances are we all know somebody who is experiencing domestic abuse behind closed doors.

It happens in all types of relationships, regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, disability, sexuality, lifestyle or nationality.

Tensions can escalate due to restrictions on socialising and 'normal life', although they are never an excuse for violence, manipulation, coercion and controlling a partner or family member. Even if you are self-isolating, government guidance allows you to leave your home to flee an abuser or seek help. It's rarely a one-off occurrence, but usually a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour.

The Government define domestic abuse as:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.”

Types of domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take many forms such as psychological, physical, sexual, economical and emotional.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.

Getting help if you are being abused

- Online at <http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk>

- Call the local helpline: 0800 69 49 999
- In an emergency always dial 999, even if you cannot speak for fear of being overheard, you can get help by pressing 55 when the operator answers
- Talk to any health professional or your local Village Agent – we can help!
- Somerset pharmacies allow their consulting rooms to be a safe place for people experiencing abuse to get help and advice

TOP TIPS TO AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

We have all been online and on social media more since lockdown began, and it's important to stay vigilant of new scams circulating. Get Safe Online safety experts have put together some simple tips to help you avoid becoming a victim of social media scams.

www.getsafeonline.org

If you become a victim of a social media scam:

- Report it to the social media network via the reporting mechanism on the site or app.
- If you have lost money as a result of social media scams or via any other fraudulent activity, report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre by calling 0300 123 20 40 or by visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk.

CCS Village, Community & Carers Agents are in your communities across Somerset. 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. We can offer advice and support to find local groups and activities available in your community and help you with any queries you may have or situations that you need advice and support with. Please visit www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk or www.somersetcarers.org or <http://www.somersetccc.org.uk> or call 01823 321222.

Farming Update

by Mark Pope

So, we roll into summer 2020. It has certainly been a year we will all remember, weather, Brexit, climate change and Covid-19.

After one of the wettest winters on record, we went into a very dry and warm spring. It was amazing how quickly the ground changed from too wet to backed out concrete! We did get crops of spring barley planted in early April using a technique called strip till. This meant that only the soil by the seeds is disturbed. The advantage in a very dry time is you do not lose moisture, so enabling the barley to germinate and grow.

The only winter crop we had was two fields of oilseed rape. These were harvested in mid-July, about 2 weeks earlier than normal. The seed was taken to a central store we use. This will be the last time we grow oilseed rape, as we have decided that the potential risks outweigh the gain. Instead we will look to increase our grass acreage and will sell this to local dairy farms.

We are now waiting for the golden drier, the sun, to work its magic on the spring barley and turn the fields a nice golden colour. The big worry with spring barley is trying to avoid any heavy rain and wind at this crucial time, otherwise this can lead to the barley straw buckling up, known as brackling, and the grains going down onto the ground making harvesting very difficult.

The Christmas trees are growing well and even after the very dry spring seem to have come through fairly well with only a small number of losses.

Once harvest is over, we will be preparing the fields for next year's crops. This is the time of year we can dig holes and examine the soil for any problems, and also this is the time of year we can take samples to check the nutrient status of the soils.

Forestry England Update

By Robert Greenhalgh



What a peculiar period we've all just experienced! We have never seen the forests so busy, and this has been a trend that has been reflected nationwide. Many Forestry England sites have seen huge increases in visitor numbers in recent months and the associated pressures this can bring – not to mention having staff furloughed and unable to support the influx. Hopefully, most people have been responsible visitors and you haven't noticed too much upsurge or anti-social behaviour within your parish.

We worked hard to bring our sites back up to a reasonable standard in the weeks after lockdown, and hadn't nature been busy? We had miles of pathways to inspect and access tracks to clear, car parks to strim, fallen trees to cut and rides to chop back. Wildlife surveys were placed on hold, meaning we couldn't continue with the great work we started in 2019 to survey the adder and nightjar populations in the area – although we look forward to kick-starting these again next year. A noticeable side effect was the flourishing of nature – the natural world really did seem to breathe a deep breath of clean air whilst our roads were clear and stunning flora appeared everywhere throughout our woodland. The orchids at Wych Lodge and the butterflies at Staple Hill were of particular note to me this year. I'm sure you'll agree, the forests burst with vibrancy in the spring and summer months. As we now move into the autumn, and the seasonal displays take hold again, I'm excited to see if the same levels of growth and abundance are seen once more!

Forestry work did continue throughout lockdown, and you may have noticed activity at several of our sites within and adjacent to the parish. One of the positive things about forestry work is it often involves social distancing at the busiest of times thanks to the rigorous health and safety standards we adhere to. This allowed us to continue our operational work and catch up, in many ways, on work that had previously been delayed. Looking ahead we have work planned for the forest at North Down where we will continue to remove the trees that have reached an age of maturity and continue to improve this heathland habitat.

Staple Hill, as well as many other sites, has been welcoming lots more visitors than usual. It's great to see so many people out enjoying the forests, but it has provided a series of challenges surrounding dog mess,

dog bags in trees and bags generally dumped around the signage (which incidentally does ask people to take responsibility for their dog and leave the sites as clean and picturesque as when they arrived, and to take their mess home with them). In the coming months we will be launching a new Doggy Code for the South West region. We hope you can support us in improving the behaviour of some of our less frequent visitors and help instil a positive message to dog walkers in the area. We still hope to place dog bins at Staple Hill and Castle Neroche and await details of when these will be installed by the local council.

Wild cycle trails have also appeared in abundance over the lockdown period so lots of our work has been focusing on liaising with the groups and builders, and ensuring any trails that are allowed to remain on Forestry land are built in a safe and secure manner and in an appropriate place. As there has been such a large volume of building, we are finding new trails all the time. If you do happen to spot anything new, or indeed any trail digging and building taking place, please do contact us on the below email address or phone number.

In other news, Castle Neroche is receiving a signage facelift – we have recently removed the interpretation board in the main car park and will be replacing this, along with the second board inside the monument. These will be refreshed and rebranded and in place soon – do take a read when you spot them.

Volunteering and events have recently stopped or slowed significantly. This, at the time of writing, is still yet to be resolved. Any updates and details can be found on the Forestry England website. We hope to welcome volunteers back to our land by the time of publication of this article and hopefully we will see the forests used once more for positive recreational activities and well-being and societal benefits.

Our centenary tree is approaching its first birthday in-situ within Castle Neroche car park – it is looking very healthy and we're very pleased how well it is taking.

Happy autumn!

Rob Greenhalgh, Community Ranger
Robert.greenhalgh@forestryengland.uk

Tel: 07780 493753

News from Bickenhall and District WI

By Jacqueline Kolkowski

It's been very strange without our monthly meetings, although we have been keeping connected with a weekly natter at the Zoom meeting. Of course, not all our members have good internet access or use this form of communication, so we still use the telephone to keep in touch.

Zoom I know plays a big part in all our lives at the moment and the WI is no exception. The Somerset Federation have invited guest speakers to give talks ranging from Nature's Recovery in Somerset, to ones about The National Gallery - enjoying art with children. One of the best talks was by Emma Britton, a BBC local radio presenter, who spoke about her career at the BBC in Somerset and Bristol, and her role as a celebrant.

Denman, the WI College are providing online courses. Many of our members have taken part, especially in the cookery and craft courses. They have also provided some excellent talks ranging from Wilfred Owen and the First World War, to Beneath the City streets – London's Unseen History.

Bickenhall and District WI usually meet the second Wednesday of each month, at Neroche Hall – we hope to be back soon.

Thursday Lunches at Neroche Hall

The organisers of the community lunches at Neroche are hoping that the Hall will be open soon, subject to Coronavirus restrictions. We propose to organise a tea at the Hall to give our guests an opportunity to meet under the new restrictions, and to ensure our volunteers are able to be safe in the Hall environment

**Afternoon Tea on
Thursday 24th September (provisional)
At 3.30pm**

Numbers will be strictly limited. Masks to be worn to enter the hall and when not eating or drinking. If you wish to attend please book in with Alison by 20th September

Tel; 01823 480441 or abrown.battens@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you all again!

Organised by Friends of St Peter's Church

News from your MP

By Rebecca Pow

Coping with COVID-19

I have been out and about across the constituency over the past weeks, socially distanced of course, and it is clear that many businesses and enterprises are now open.

I am pleased that amongst other enterprises places of worship have been able to open for services and communal prayer which is a comfort to many. Our communities, particularly in rural areas, also thrive on local activities provided by a range of premises, activity clubs, community centres and youth clubs and their re-opening is welcome too.



Mr Miles

Unfortunately, at the time of writing (early August) the Prime Minister has just announced that further easing of restrictions that were due to take effect from 1 August have been delayed by at least a fortnight following data that suggests infections are likely to be increasing. Even though the Government has always been clear that each stage of re-opening further is conditional, I know this will still be deeply disappointing news for affected businesses, as well as couples who had planned for wedding receptions to take place before this announced delay (with many having re-arranged from earlier on in the year too) and I will continue to support them going forward.

As you will be aware, face coverings have become a regular accessory and at the time of writing are mandatory on public transport, in shops and supermarkets, in museums, galleries, cinemas and places of worship. Also, at the time of writing people are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet. Some people will be exempt from needing to wear a face covering, and the full list can be found online at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

Government is keeping all guidelines under constant review to ensure that any restrictions in place are worthwhile in the fight against coronavirus, and as ever it is a fine balancing act in terms of safety, civil liberties and the restoration of economic and social life. The science is constantly evolving although the body of scientific evidence that has built up shows that the risk of transmission is made lower by wearing a face covering. Please do continue to adhere to the guidance and also please continue to support our local shops and enterprises who all need your support and will be happy to see you albeit in a mask.

Despite all of the downsides of these unusual times there have also been some positives and I visited two examples of helpful initiatives recently. The first was a visit to the Cannonsgrove centre, set up to accommodate and support rough sleepers through the pandemic and the second was an education scheme.



*Visiting the Cannonsgrove centre
for rough sleepers*

TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING

Early in the actions to tackle Coronavirus, Government provided emergency funding to help ensure all rough sleepers had a place to stay. This funding enabled Somerset West & Taunton Council to link with the YMCA Dulverton Group to set up a facility on the Cannonsgrove site in Taunton. As well as a bed and regular meals, a wide range of

partners are providing support services including mental and physical health and drug and alcohol rehabilitation. During my visit it was clear the system is working well and could be a welcome model for the future and I am making the case to Rough Sleeping Minister, Luke Hall, for this to become a permanent centre.

EDUCATION

At the Link Centre in Halcon I was pleased to meet some of the 50 students from Heathfield Community School coming to receive a laptop as part of the Department of Education initiative to ensure those from

disadvantaged areas can access education remotely as well as where necessary, social care and other safety and wellbeing services. This is a welcome scheme that will be of immediate benefit to many. Our schools across the constituency, like Thurlbear, have been doing a sterling job in educating our children during challenging times and are all working towards the forthcoming autumn term.

WELLINGTON RAIL STATION

The prospect of a Rail Station in Wellington has taken a big step towards becoming a reality. I made this one of my commitments when I was first elected in 2015, and with stakeholders in the Devon and Somerset Metro group we have been working consistently on this ever since. In a really welcome step, Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps has announced that Wellington is one of just 10 projects nationally to be selected for the next phase of development. The Rail Minister has subsequently confirmed to me that officials from the Department of Transport will be working on the details with our Metro Group (initially with the District Council sub group) with the intention that, providing the case stacks up, this project will be escalated quickly once the case has been worked through. A station at Wellington will improve access across the region, reduce congestion and improve air quality, connect communities and open up job opportunities which will be more important than ever as we come out of the Covid-19 crisis and I look forward to continuing to work on this much needed project.

TAUNTON RAIL STATION



As a further welcome injection to the local economy, I am pleased that Government has recently allocated the final tranche of funding required to complete the Taunton Rail station upgrade; providing £400K for the junction that will link the station to Firepool. This project was also one of my 2015 commitments and I look forward to it finally coming to fruition. Regular users of Taunton

station will have seen that there is significant investment being made in

the station and the re-development is coming on apace. A further bid has recently been submitted to the Active Travel Fund to provide cycleways from Firepool to the station too.

BUSINESS DIGITAL NEWS

With the allocation of £5.5M from the Governments Getting Building Fund – I'm overjoyed that another of my long campaigned for schemes is getting the go ahead; namely the Digital Innovation Centre on Firepool. I started this work with stakeholders including Somerset County Council; John Williams, the former leader of Taunton Deane Borough Council; and more recently the new Somerset West & Taunton District Council. It will focus on digital skills and business, with potential opportunities for marine special data too. Finally, Firepool is moving!

MUSGROVE PARK HOSPITAL REBUILD

I am delighted that another of my priority projects is also moving forward. Musgrove Park Hospital (MPH) has been allocated funding to focus on developing the business case for the £450m rebuild of the hospital. I was pleased to have worked with stakeholders to secure the initial commitment for the entire upgrade (building on success with the new theatre complex); Government is fast tracking hospital upgrades across the UK, and certainly the MPH project will benefit people right across the region. As ever those working in our health services deserve our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for their dedication in respect of the Covid-19 demands.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

The A38 Chelston Link repairs has been given the green light to proceed, as the Prime Minister announced plans to invest £5 billion in infrastructure to kickstart the country's economic recovery from coronavirus. The A38 Chelston Link repairs will receive £4,736,000 from the Government, along with £1million of local funding, to proceed. It is one of 29 local road projects which are receiving a share of £100 million, as part of Government's plans to reignite local economy, connect communities and speed up the recovery as lockdown eases.

CYCLING

There's been a big surge in cycling during this crisis, whether as a form of exercise (I have certainly enjoyed cycling the local country lanes) or as a means of socially distanced transport. The Government recently announced a £250 million emergency fund for pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling, wider pavements, safer junctions and cycle and bus-only corridors and some of this fund was secured to enable cycle lanes in East Reach in Taunton following some of the temporary road closures. I am continuing to work with the Taunton Area Cycle Campaign on creating a sustainable cycling network for the area.

Launched at the end of July, The Fix your Bike Voucher Scheme allows members of the public to receive a voucher worth up to £50 towards the cost of repairing a bicycle. The scheme is open to anyone in England who has an unused cycle in need of a repair. Vouchers can only be used with bike repairers or mechanics that are registered for the scheme in England, and up to two vouchers can be claimed per household.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fix-your-bike-voucher-scheme-apply-for-a-voucher>

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Delivering an economy which is stronger, greener, more sustainable and more resilient are key drivers for Government and priorities for me as the MP, as we recover from the virus. In this vein I am delighted that my work with regional power distributor, Western Power, has resulted in Taunton being selected as the location for the pioneering 'DC Share Project' which will help facilitate the uptake of rapid electric vehicle charging equipment, helping to decarbonise transport and reduce emissions.



It will use smart technology to unlock spare electrical capacity from across Taunton to power 15 rapid EV chargers and aims to get over 110,000 EVs moving in the South West by 2023. The charge points will

be available by the Spring of 2022 following installation next year. Charging will be free for local people throughout the 12-month trial. The charging stations will then be passed to a local service provider. Having recently rented an electric car I realise that having a reliable charging network is a key to enabling the step change needed to moving society to the EV world.

FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Having fed back views from our farming community and many constituents, I am pleased that Government has agreed to establish a Trade and Agriculture Commission to inform and shape agricultural trade policy as we leave the EU. Maintaining our high environmental and animal welfare standards is important. Also, a new £40m Green Jobs Challenge Fund will create jobs in conservation through wide ranging projects that will bring environmental benefits. As the Environment Minister I shall be pressing on with bringing our landmark Environment Bill through Parliament which will cement Britain's position as a world leader on air quality, environmental biodiversity and tackling the scourge of plastic.



Stearth Marshes

WELLINGTON MONUMENT



the Wellington Monument project is one of those that is continuing. This is due to several factors including the amount of external funds raised and the fact that the contract is well under way on site. So, whilst a couple of the project team remain on furlough, it is moving ahead as planned in terms of the main construction and repairs. I visited the

These are very challenging times for the National Trust, and they have recently had to review all spending. An initial review of projects has meant many have been deferred or cancelled. However, the good news is that

Monument recently and it was great to see the stone masons at work. Do go and have a look if you can.

As ever please do get in touch if there is anything I can help you with at rebecca.pow.mp@parliament.uk or 01823 443062. Also do sign up for my regular e-bulletin by emailing me or through my website <https://www.rebeccapow.org.uk/> The latest bulletin has a special environmental focus.

Best wishes, Rebecca



Chiffchaff Nest



Caught On Hogcam

Local Communication and Information

Websites:

Neroche Villages www.nerochevillages.org.uk

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

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

Neroche Hall www.nerochehall.org.uk

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

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

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

Email Information:

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

The Parish Magazine:

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

Many thanks for taking the time to read this Newsletter.

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

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