

Welcome to Combwich

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Your village website www.combwich.org.uk is the place to go for up to date information on what much more. Take a look to see what you have been missing. You can subscribe by adding page to receive email notices of new posts to ensure you don't miss anything.

### COMBWICH, OTTERHAMPTON AND STEART NEWSLETTER

March 2016

Issue 5

# Otter Tales

## River Danger - Be Warned

The danger to young people of playing around the boats in Combwich Pill was highlighted recently when a pet dog got a leg caught in a mooring rope

while it was swimming.

With the tide rising two passing Civil Nuclear Constabulary police officers from Hinkley Point saw what was happening and went to help the owner. The officers called the fire brigade and two firemen wearing waterproof clothing and attached to safety lines were able to reach the dog and safely rescue her.

Parish Council Chairman Barry

Leathwood said: "Unfortunately young people are sometimes tempted to play around the boats and pontoons and even swim in the Pill during hot weather. Although this incident had a happy ending it illustrates how dangerous the area can be with clinging mud, underwater obstructions and fast moving tides."



## **Shipping Container on Village Green**

The parish council (PC) have received many complaints about the shipping container which was put on the Village Green (owned by the PC) opposite the Village Hall and adjacent to residential properties early December by the Combwich Boat Club. This was without permission or consultation with the PC. It should also be noted that a shipping container would need planning permission in this location. Village Green legislation must also be considered.

At a meeting with boat club members on 15.12.15, the PC advised that the is container could not remain and happening in the parish and instructed its removal. The boat club then presented a paper to the PC on 10.2.16 asking it to reconsider its your email address to the home decision. PC members considered the paper but re-affirmed its initial decision for the container to be removed.



Continued on page 2

## **Otterhampton Offcuts**

### Snippets from the February and March 2016 Parish Council and other meetings

#### Continued from page1

A letter fully setting out the PC's position was sent to the boat club following the PC meeting on 3.3.16, instructing the boat club to remove the container by 11.4.16 following which, enforcement action will commence. From the outset, the PC agreed that a smaller and more appropriate building will be considered to replace the original derelict shed" once the container is removed. Full details at www.combwich.org.uk.

#### **Bus Service at the Bus Stop**

This action continues following our second meeting with



Highways on 24.2.16. They have now suggested that it would be safer to block (with bollards) the slip road at the Dame Withycombe end rather than at Brookside Rd. We are keen to resolve this issue for the safety of our residents, who after alighting from the buses in the lay by, have to try and cross the increasingly busy C182. We will be meeting with

Highways shortly to discuss this option, and to try and negotiate a formal pull-in for the buses adjacent to the bus shelter mainly because the School buses often block the central access route.

#### Enhanced Play and Recreation Area - Getting closer...

Last month we reported we had secured £53.4k of the £99k total. On 24.2.16, the Sedgemoor Parish Cluster meeting approved a further £8.8k, taking the total to £61.2k. The final application, to the Hinkley C Community Impact Mitigation fund for £37.8k was recommended for approval by the Planning Obligations Board; the first of three stages of approval. The second stage at West Somerset Council Cabinet was approved on 2.3.16. The final hurdle will be at the West Somerset Full Council on 16.3.16. If this is approved, commencement of the project will be mid to late April.

#### **Highways Issues**

Following our meeting with Highways on 24.2.16 we were advised that a 20mph speed limit for Combwich would not be possible. It is a complicated process, starting with a statutory consultation process to change the Traffic Regulation Order including a number of key considerations such as history of collisions; road geometry and engineering; road function; compositions of road users; existing traffic speeds and road environment. We will however consider a voluntary speed limit of 20mph.

The suggestion from a parishioner to change the white lines at the junction of Church Hill with Brookside Rd was rejected, based on the absence of any accidents, plus it is not possible within the regulations to have an additional "give way" sign or road markings. However, it was suggested that the existing road markings which have faded, could be renewed, which we have requested.

However, it was agreed to have a further trial of a Speed Indication Box to monitor the speed of traffic in the village. We are considering the most effective place to site the box. Highways also agreed to carry out maintenance on three of the trees in the village which will be carried out in the next financial year i.e. after 1.4.16.

#### Contact details for the parish council

#### **PARISH COUNCILLORS**

Barry Leathwood (Chairman)	01278 652399
Heath Bennett	01278 651356
John Berry (Vice Chairman)	01278 652682
Dick Best (Steart Ward)	01278 651063
Bob Birkenhead	01278 653127
Julie Evans	01278 652735
Rachel Perrett	01278 652958
Mrs Aly Prowse (Clerk)	01278 652426
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#### otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com

County and District Ward Members		
John Edney (County)	01278 653026	
Mike Caswell (District)	01278 652043	
Julie Pay (District)	01278 732956	

#### Cycle Path Cannington - Combwich

Work on this is due to commence shortly and will involve various speed restrictions and delays for a 2-3 month period. While there has been a lot of



discussion and rumour, we have been advised that there are no plans currently for a cycle path route between Combwich and Hinkley Point

#### **PUBLIC NOTICES**

#### Mobile Library Service withdrawn at Steart

The service will cease at Steart from April 2016 because of lack of use (no visits for three consecutive months). This is regrettable, but understandable.

Still time to register to vote – SDC removed 398 electors from the electoral register on 1.12.15 due to electors not responding to any contact from SDC since July 2014. The deadline to register for the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election on 5 May is 18.4.16. You can register by visiting <a href="www.gov.uk/register-to-vote">www.gov.uk/register-to-vote</a> or ring SDC on 01278 435268.

#### Grants to help people stay in their own home –

more money is being made available in this coming year to help disabled people stay in their own homes by making their properties more user-friendly. This money is aimed at providing help for home owners or tenants to enable access in to and around their home and facilities by making essential adaptations. Grants are means tested for adults but not for children. Applicants should contact Somerset County Council on 0300 123 2224 (ask for Occupational Therapy assessment).

# CHILDRENS PLAY AREA WORKING PARTY Job Done!

We would like to thank the following volunteers for helping with the vegetation clearance in readiness for the play area project: - Jim Doble, James Atkins, Barry Leathwood, Julie and Jack Evans, Paul Gripton and Gary Perrett.



#### MOBILE PHONE COVERAGE IN OUR AREA

Mobile phone reception in our area can be a bit patchy, it is dependent on your network provider and your exact location. There are currently four network providers in the UK:- Vodaphone, O2, Three and EE. All Other mobile phone companies use one or more of these four networks and you can find out which one by asking your phone company. The performance, in our area, of the network providers can be found on the Ofcom Mobile Coverage website.

#### http://www.ofcom.org.uk/mobile-coverage

This website shows a map of signal strength for voice and texts, 3G data and 4G data reception for all four networks. This could be helpful in choosing a network provider either directly or through another phone company who use the network in question. It can also be used when complaining about a poor signal if the

Ofcom website indicates otherwise.

If you are not happy with your mobile phone performance, look at the complaints procedure in your contract and complain. The networks are gradually improving coverage but more complaints should speed up this improvement.



## Dog Poo!!



You may have noticed a recent press report that, in an attempt to deal with the local dog poo menace, the Borough of Barking (!) and Dagenham is to start sampling deposits for DNA. The idea is that the dogs responsible can be traced through their microchips (compulsory for all dogs in England from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016) and the owners brought to justice.

Maybe we won't need to go to these lengths in Combwich, but we do have a serious problem in our parish. A recent survey carried out by the PC, shows that certain parts of the village are favourite with irresponsible dog owners. And you won't be surprised to learn that these are places that are not overlooked by houses. On February 17<sup>th</sup> there were 42 sites of recent dog defecation in Wharf Road, between the

telephone box and the gates leading to the harbour. This is by far and away the most popular place with our offending and offensive neighbours. Other hotspots include the verge on the left of the Combwich track, leading towards the WWT gate, the grass verges maintained by residents on Riverside, opposite the Pill wall and the grass area by the bus stop by the crossroads. *And there is a necessarily large dog whose owner has allowed it to foul twice in the last couple of weeks on the narrow footpath by the harbour wall.* Opposite numbers 17 and 19 Riverside. It is likely that this person will read this article. It is also probable that this is as close as we'll get to naming and shaming and



perhaps that is a good thing. None of of us wants to go down that path – particularly if the aforementioned dog has been there recently.

Over the past two decades or so, it has been increasingly recognised that allowing dogs to foul footpaths and verges is not just anti-social behaviour, which is bad enough. It can also present serious health risks to children. And Combwich is better provided with suitable bins than many villages. Not enough it seems.

The PC has decided that we need to take some action. Two poo bag dispensers will be installed in areas most affected, in the belief that this will encourage the offenders to do what they should be doing already and one more bin will be added to the three already in place. We are also looking at further signs reminding people to clear up after their dogs. We hope this will be effective. Nobody really wants anyone to be fined – it shouldn't be necessary in a mature community................... should it?



## Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

**Registered Charity Number 1124017** 

It is officially spring and our thoughts naturally turn to the delights of better weather, longer days and the chance to make more use of the beautiful countryside we have on our doorstep. The pleasure of walking or cycling through Steart Marshes for gentle exercise, or to experience the vast array of birds that are now visiting the Marshes is obvious. It is also interesting to know a bit more about what goes on behind the scenes and Alys Laver, Steart Marshes site manager was able to enlighten us at a recent presentation she made in the village hall.

Arrangements for the village Fete to be held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July are progressing and the Fete committee, with new volunteers has already come up with lots of fresh ideas for the day. The main objective is of course for everyone to have a good time, but it is also an important fund raiser for OPRA and helps to make sure we can stage the firework display in November, the



Christmas dinner for the over 60s of the parish and the Children's Easter Egg Hunt and much more.

Speaking of which, the Annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt will start at 11am Good Friday (25th March) from the Anchor, and every child taking part will receive an Easter egg and the winner will be awarded a giant egg. All children of the parish are

welcome, and grandparents, if you have your grandchildren with you they are welcome too. And for the adults there will be our usual Easter Quiz with Sean and Mary presiding, but this year it will be on <u>Saturday</u> 26th March starting at 7.30pm in the Anchor. All welcome.

OPRA also serves to financially support other organisations (we are donating £1,000 towards the new play area) in the parish with grants to buy equipment, or perhaps provide a little start up cash to help a new venture get off the ground. A new simple grant application form is now available from the secretary, or downloaded from the Combwich website <a href="https://www.combwich.org.uk">www.combwich.org.uk</a>.

Finally, we are all looking forward to the new play area, which all being well will in use by the early summer. Congratulations are due to the Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) and the parish council for all the effort so far.

## Singing Success Nicole Wigley 653431

This month the Combwich Community Choir is celebrating 5 happy years of singing. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved we have gone from strength to strength over this time. We now sing a wide range of music including sea shanties, popular music, African chants and clapping/rhythm games. The choir meet 7-8 pm in Otterhampton Village Hall on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. If you enjoy singing why not come and give us a try? Full details are on the village website. Here's to the next 5 years of laughter and songs ... well done everyone!

OPRA Officers and	Committee
Chair	
Tina Gardener	652642
Secretary	
Ann Leathwood	652399
Treasurer	
Sue Francis	653663
Committee	
Mary Cornish	653868
Jacqui Sparks	652069
Beverly Smith	652595
Rob Wright	652277
Di Davie	652141
Barry Leathwood	652399
100 Club Organiser	
Ann Leathwood	652399

The 100 Club draw takes place every month at the Coffee Morning Otterhampton Village Hall and the winning numbers are displayed in the Post Office and the parish website <a href="https://www.combwich.org.uk">www.combwich.org.uk</a> shortly afterwards.

If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Ann on 652399 or any committee member.

## Children's Easter Egg Hunt Good Friday

11 am

The Anchor

Free Easter Egg for all children completing the hunt and aa big egg for the winner

For the Adults

Easter Quiz With Sean & Mary <u>Saturday</u> 26th March

> 7.30pm The Anchor





#### Wildlife Update

A lot of excitement was created when we had 2 rare birds visit the site at the same time, a first for some of our local bird watchers.





## Record bird numbers - National Importance

Our resident ornithologist, Joe Cockram who has been surveying the wintering birds using the site as part of an agreement that WWT has with the EA has discovered that Steart Marshes is supporting a huge number of birds. Certain species, such as Dunlin, Little Egret, Redshank, Shelduck and Shoveler reaching national importance levels. Photo taken by Joe whilst witnessing the spectacle of a Dunlin flock of 4500 in number.

More info can be found at; https://witter.com/WWTSteart





#### **Butterfly Transects**

Last year we set up 2 more butterfly transects on the reserve, the first on Stockland Marshes and the second around Otterhampton Marshes. The transects are designed to take in as much different suitable habitat as possible and has to be carried out on a weekly basis. The survey continues for 28 weeks commencing in the first week in April. We are now included in the Butterfly Transects booklet covering Somerset and Bristol,

#### **Reserve Update**

#### **New Infrastructure**

This Spring we will commence works on some new infrastructure around the reserve, 2 raised viewing platforms. One along the Otterhampton to Combwich path on the Southern side of the reserve. This will offer views into the lagoons along the far side of the Otterhampton Marshes section of the reserve. The second will be installed in Stockland Marshes, along the long section of high hedge line at the eastern side of the freshwater area. This will allow closeup, elevated views across this fantastic wetland without disturbing birds and wildlife. It will be screened by the existing



Design drawing provided by Buscott Woodworking

hedge and extra hedge whips will be planted around the structure to insure it's screened. Both Structures will be high at the back to insure privacy to locals as well as protection from the wind. A new 7metre long bridge is also being installed. We're very much aware that the last part of the footpath coming from Stockland Marshes leading to the main car park is extremely muddy and hard to walk on. The bridge will allow walkers to bypass the particularly bad section, walk around the pond area and join the stoned path.

If anyone has any concerns about the proposals or is unsure about their location, please contact Alys Laver the Site Manager who will be happy to talk it through at;

WWT Steart Marshes, Reserve Office, Stert Drove, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 2PU Tel; 01278 651090, Mob; 07717 505966 or Email; <a href="mailto:alys.laver@wwt.org.uk">alys.laver@wwt.org.uk</a>

#### New Member of Staff - Lucy Bartlett; People Engagement Officer

Steart Marshes welcomes our newest recruit, Lucy Bartlett. The 18 month role is to look into what the team at Steart Marshes already does well, and what else we can try in order to:

Recruit and retain volunteers, developing new roles for them (including training if wanted).

Analyse what works well in encouraging visitors to the reserve and enhances their understanding and enjoyment of the wetlands.

Scoping the opportunities for formal learning (desk based research).

Continued overleaf

#### Continued from page 5

With Lucy's involvement we will start to put together a programme of guided walks that we can offer our visitors covering everything from the reasoning behind the existence of Steart Marshes to the dragonflies found on site.

There will also be more training opportunities on the horizon. The first of which is **Planting a Living Willow Hedge**; **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March.** 9.30am arrival for a 10am start, it will last the day with refreshments and biscuits during the breaks but you will have to bring your own lunch. There are limited places so if you're interested or require further information please contact Lucy on <a href="https://living.ncbi.nlm.nc

## A Bridge too far?

Are you fed up because 'The Bridge 3' has ended? Are you looking for an alternative? Do you like playing cards?



If the answer to these questions is yes, here's another question for

you. Have you ever considered playing bridge? It's challenging, stimulating, a great way to interact with your neighbours, can provide hours of fun for very little outlay and could easily be available in Combwich.

Okay. My proposal is that we get Sounds good? together and start a bridge circle, club, gathering – call it what you will. A few ideas..... People who play cards are often put off learning bridge. It's too stuffy, too difficult, too complicated, posh, demanding, cliquey ...... and so on. So here's the thing. It doesn't have to be any of these things. And it is probably the best card game ever invented. If you are interested here's another The best way of learning is with other people who aren't any of those adjectives above and who are all at about the same level of experience. So no experts If you're still interested, please get in touch. We'll need at least four, or eight, twelve ...... you get the picture ...... people. Any age, well maybe twelve upwards. Go on, give it a go ...... you know you've always been curious, or maybe you've played a bit with your 'expert' in-laws, whatever. Or maybe you know Omar Sharif.

Get in touch on with me, John Berry on 652682 and we'll see where it takes us. Which would almost certainly be the Village Hall. I'll wait for those calls.

# The FOPS (Friends of Otterhampton Primary

School) are looking for someone to take on the role of treasurer. It is not a massive role but one that requires the



person to be a signatory, write the cheques and the usual stuff. This year we are currently looking to raise money at events to enable us to replace the outdoor play equipment and in addition to the role of Treasurer we are always looking for enthusiastic people to join us to help raise funds and offer their time and skills to our events whether as a committee member or as a one off volunteer. The contact for anyone who is interested is Trish Martin and she can be contacted via email which is trish@trishmartin.co.uk

## News from Combwich and District WI

Members saw 2015 out on 17th December with a wonderful evening of fun and games and a finger food buffet with mulled wine.

The new year got off to a good start with an evening meal at The Cottage, Keenthorne, to celebrate New Year and the Competition trophies were presented.

The first meeting on 21st January we welcomed **Liz Turner** (a member) who demonstrated the fascinating craft of **'Encaustic Art'**. This was a most enjoyable evening were we could all get creative and have a go. We also welcomed a new member, Wendy Aspin.

On Friday 22nd January we played against Pawlett WI in the third round of the WI Skittles Tournament at West India House, Bridgwater. We were doing so well in the first half too!!! But we only lost by 5 points, so we are



improving, but it was a very friendly and sociable evening by all who took part.

Finally, on **9th February**, we enjoyed a **Willow Weaving Workshop** at Stockland Club, our incredibly talented Tutor Sarah Webb, worked so hard to help us achieve our goal, - a lovely crafted basket for fruit or rolls. All so very different. It was a most brilliant day and we are all hoping to have another day to learn willow sculpture.

We have a full Programme for 2016 with a speaker each month, lots of outings and activities.

We welcomed Revd. Peter Martin to our meeting on Thursday 18th February to talk about The Lynton and Barnstable Railway. This was a very interesting and enjoyable evening and it was indeed lovely to see him looking so well — retirement obviously suits him!

Helping us look our best on 17th March is Tina Heaven who is giving us beauty tips for 'Looking Good'.

For more information please phone us, we would welcome your call -

Vanessa J-Smith on 01278 652830 or Anne Weston on 01278 653192

## **Otterhampton Village Hall**

A message from the Chair Sue Barton

Here are some of the long awaited events planned at the Village Hall. Look out for the posters announcing the dates, times and details:

9th April: Beetle Drive

An evenings fun for the whole family.

30th April: Quiz

Long awaited return of Sean and Mary to hold a family quiz in the Village hall

7th May: Jazz Nite

The popular and versatile Andy Barrett band appearing for the first time at the hall. The band play a variety of popular jazz.

1st October: An Evening in Provence

A 7 course French meal prepared by 2 popular and talented Combwich village Mesdames. Seats for this event will be limited.

Dates to be decided for the ever popular family Bingo night and a second quiz nite.

We are now planning the 2017 Otterhampton Parish calendar which will feature photographs of nature, wildlife and animals (including pets) and will include selected favourite recipes from parish residents. All photos must be taken by yourself or a family member and recipes tried and tested. They will need to be submitted by the end of August.

So start taking your photos now and watch out for fuller details in the summer.

## **Harbour View Players**

Harbour View Players would like to thank all who came and supported this years Pantomime JACK & THE BEANSTALK. Money raised will help to equip the stage with better lighting, sound and scenery, helping the facility become more accessible to all. We are already planning next years Panto DICK WHITTINGTON! If you would like to help in any way, please feel free to contact us.



We are hoping to form a Comainly for a bit of fun for the NO experience is necessary as given... AND will be ket POSSIBLE! You will only in FUN! (Bells will be supplied!)

We are hoping to form a COMBWICH MORRIS DANCE TROUPE, mainly for a bit of fun for this years village fete... NO experience is necessary as full training will be given... AND will be kept as SIMPLE as POSSIBLE! You will only need a BIG sense of

Also keep a look-out for this years Murder/Mystery 'MURDER AT THE VILLAGE HALL', where once again someone will win £50 cash for finding out WHODUNNIT! Date to be confirmed, but will be sometime in April...

If you would like to be involved in any of these events, or require more information - please feel free to contact the club (open every Friday & Saturday night) or e-mail harbourviewplayers@outlook.com

The Harbour View Club will be producing Christmas cards of winter scenes around the parish and if you have suitable photographs you don't mind sharing please send them to Harbour.vsc@gmail.com. The best ones will be used.

#### QUANTOCK WALKING FESTIVAL

11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016



Celebrate 40 years of walking with Sedgemoor Ramblers

Three guided walks of 3, 7 and 10 miles each day starting from

Nether Stowey, a total of 40 miles for 40 years Enjoy stunning views of coast, moor and woodland Tea and homemade cake afterwards at the Church Centre

(donations requested)

**BOOKING ESSENTIAL (all walks free)** 

Full details and booking form on

www.sedgemoorramblers.co.uk or tel: 01278 773730

## IT for Seniors Joe and Graeme Wigley

The IT for Seniors sessions that are being held during the Friday Coffee Mornings are going really well. Thank you to everyone who has come forward with their questions. We've had a complete mix of IT-related



issues and it's been great fun trying to solve them. We'll continue to try and come along to most Coffee Mornings. We're happy to tackle any IT problem no matter how big or small, and also any upgrades or repairs eg. broken screens or dead batteries. Just come and see us on a Friday or give us a call on 653431.

## DIARY OF EVENTS (Otterhampton Village Hall unless otherwise stated)

REGULAR EVENTS				
Monday	Art Club	2pm – 4pm		
Tuesday	Aerobics	9.30am – 10.30am		
	Pilates	10.35am – 11.35am		
Tuesday	Mobile Library	School ~ 9.30-10.25am Harbour ~ 10.30-10.50am Post Office ~10.55-1.15am	29 <sup>th</sup> Mar	
Wednesday	Doctor's Surgery	3pm – 4pm		
Thursday (1st of month)	Parish Council Meeting	7pm	Starts with public forum	
Thursday (2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> )	Choir	7pm – 8pm		
Thursday (3rd of month)	Combwich & District WI	7.30pm	Stockland Sports & Social Club	
Friday	Coffee Morning	10am –12noon		
Saturday (2 <sup>nd</sup> of month)	Combwich Market	10am - 12noon		
	F	FUTURE EVENTS		
Sunday 20th March	OPRA Walk	Meet the Anchor at 9.30am to share cars		
Friday 25th March (Good Friday)	OPRA Children's Easter Egg Hunt	11am The Anchor	Free to all children of the parish	
Saturday 26th March	OPRA Easter Quiz	7.30pm The Anchor		
Thursday 7th April	Next Parish Council Mtg	7pm Village Hall		
Saturday 9th April	Beetle Drive	7.30pm	Village Hall	
Saturday 30th Aapril	OVH Quiz	7.30pm	Village Hall	
Saturday 7th May	Jazz Evening	7.30pm	Village Hall	
15 May 2016	Next Otter Tales		Articles by 7th May	

#### **Otter Tales**

Articles for publication to Barry Leathwood (editor) Tel: 652399, email: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com
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