



Welcome to Combwich

Otter Tales

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Diary of Events

Your village website

www.combwich.org.uk is the place to go for up to date information on what is happening in the parish and much more. Take a look to see what you have been missing.

Combwich Celebrated Bonfire Night

with a glorious Lantern Parade along Riverside to the Common where the Beacon was lit by Murray Lister and burgers and hot dogs consumed while watching the annual firework display.

Sarah Webb organised a series of three workshops with local children in the village hall to make the illuminated wicker and paper lanterns. Thank you Sarah.

This event was organised by OPRA and the Parish Council working together. But it would not have been possible without the active support of volunteers who give of their time so freely.



If you want to become more involved in village life, or have a suggestion to improve the community, get in touch with OPRA or the Parish Council.

You may just want to show your appreciation for this event by making a donation towards the cost by putting something in the fireworks bottle in the post office.



Otterhampton Offcuts

Snippets from the October and November 2015 Parish Council and other meetings

Bus Service

We have requested a meeting with WebberBus and Somerset County Council (SCC) to discuss parishioners' concerns at the declining bus service from Bridgwater and to request that passengers are dropped off by the bus shelter rather than the layby, to avoid crossing the busy main road.

Proposed Enhanced Play and Recreation Area

We have now selected our preferred tenderer to provide the enhanced play and recreation area. Two out of the three external funding applications have been submitted. We are awaiting the outcome of these before submitting the final one to the Hinkley C Community Impact Mitigation Fund. The parish council has granted £2500, OPRA has generously donated £1000 and the balance of £307 from Chat and Chill when it disbanded will also be used as match funding.



The project will cost around £95,000. Subject to securing the funding, work is planned to start April 2016 with completion May 2016. A big thank you to the team who have worked so hard on this project; not forgetting all those who wrote letters and signed forms in support of the scheme.

Parish Councillor Vacancy

We have a parish councillor vacancy following Stuart Mason's resignation. It is intended to fill this position by co-option and anyone interested in applying for the position, please contact the Clerk for a 'simple' application form. This should be returned by 11 December. Parish Council life is varied, interesting and very rewarding. If you think you might like to be involved in making a real difference to our community, please do apply. You can contact the Clerk or any councillor if you wish to find out more.

Parish Precept (local part of your council tax bill)

In the next couple of months we have to set our Precept (budget) for the 2016/17 financial year. These are the funds required to discharge our responsibilities. The funds are from Sedgemoor District Council, collected through the Council Tax. The current Precept is £17500. Items we are responsible for include grass cutting, grounds maintenance, children's play area, defibrillator, enhancements, small grants as well as statutory obligations such as insurance, accounts and audit. Residents are invited to attend the meeting which will be held on 9 December in the village hall. The Precept will then be formally approved at the January 2016 parish council meeting.

Contact details for the parish council

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Barry Leathwood (Chairman)	01278 652399
Heath Bennett	01278 651356
John Berry (Vice Chairman)	01278 562682
Dick Best (Stearth Ward)	01278 651063
Bob Birkenhead	01278 653127
Julie Evans	01278 652735
Vacancy	
Mrs Aly Powse (Clerk)	01278 652426

otterhamptonpccclerk@gmail.com

County and District Ward Members

John Edney (County)	01278 653026
Mike Caswell (District)	01278 652034
Julie Pay (District)	01278 732956

Highways Issues

The pedestrian barriers between Estuary Park and the Wharf Road were widened during October to allow easier access for those with mobility issues. Hopefully the recent works clearing the 'grips' along the C182 will allow improved water run-off, so places such as Dame Withycome Hill will not be so treacherous in periods of heavy rain. Although other improvements were agreed such as flood poles at Stearth, these have not yet materialised. Similarly, the suggestion submitted by a resident for a change of priority at the junction of Brookside Rd and other speed reduction initiatives are awaiting a response from Highways. We have erected a temporary solar light at the bus shelter.

Operation HAROLD (Hinkley Alternative Routes Operating Local Diversions) –

Presentation by Avon and Somerset Police

This is the Avon and Somerset's traffic management plan in the event of a closure of the C182 between Cannington and Hinkley Point. The project has identified a single inbound route to Hinkley and three one-way outbound routes which will depend on the location of the blockage. Its aim of course, is to keep the traffic moving. The Police wish to publicise this operation with residents of the affected parishes, hence the presentation on 3rd December, 7pm, prior to the parish council meeting.

Community Car Scheme

The second meeting was held on 2 November. As reported previously, we have plenty of volunteer drivers – thank you. We now also have a Treasurer, but still just one volunteer co-ordinator and we really need one or two more. The co-ordinator will take calls from passengers on a dedicated mobile phone (to be provided) and assign the journey to a driver. It should not be too onerous, because we can specify booking times etc. If we have two (or three) co-ordinators it means the role can be shared, perhaps on a weekly basis. Later on we will need a Chairman/Secretary. This scheme will be a great community asset, predominately for health and social journeys for those without their own or access to transport, at a time when public transport is in serious decline. The scheme will include Combwich, Otterhampton, Steart and Stockland Bristol.



Combwich Buoy

We are sure you will have noticed the return of the buoy on the flood bank by the Pill. The remaining refurbishment work is being carried out by volunteers from the Combwich Boat Club. It will be painted in the traditional red and white colours. The iron cage, which will be painted black and then fitted, will complete the works. A huge thank you and much appreciation to the boat club members.

See Buoy, right with the dredger Arco Dart in the background



A 20mph speed limit for Combwich?

The parish council recently made enquiries with Somerset Highways Department, about having a 20mph speed limit in the village, only to be told that, 'there was no statistical evidence that it was necessary.' This was presumably a reference to the fact that there have been no incidents in Combwich resulting in injuries or worse, from road accidents. A few years ago a similar request was turned down, on the basis that the average speed in the village was 28.5mph, demonstrating that the present limit was adequate.



In common with many people, some of whom may live in Combwich, one of our councillors recently attended a speed awareness training course, because he was caught by a camera, driving at 33 mph on Taunton Road in Bridgwater. One of the most memorable aspects of the training was a section that dealt with the differing consequences for a pedestrian being struck by a modern car at 20 mph and 30 mph. At the lower speed the chances of death or serious injury are radically less than at 30 mph. So where is the logic of the Highways Department to refuse to impose the lower limit, you may ask?



We are lucky enough to live in a cul de sac village, where there is no through traffic. If you're driving here you're either going somewhere in Combwich or you're leaving the village. Either way, the time anyone can save by driving faster than 20 mph, can only be measured in seconds. But when we're in a hurry, logic flies out of the (car) window. And sometimes, we might be nudging that 30 mph figure. If we could agree to a voluntary 20 mph limit in Combwich and if there was a polite and well designed sign reminding us of that agreement, it would obviate the need for further discussion with Highways. And it would almost certainly contribute to us staying below what could be the fatal figure.

So please let the parish council know your views. We all share this space and mostly, we do that with consideration and kindness. We park carefully, we give way where cars are necessarily parked in the road and we remember the kids and older people who represent a greater risk of stepping out unexpectedly. We watch out for the cats and dogs who belong to our fellow villagers. Please support this suggestion. A 20 mph limit would help to make the village safer for all of us, for a negligible cost.



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Register Charity Number 1124017

A quiz was held in the Anchor on 18th October and although it wasn't well attended those who took part had an enjoyable evening thanks to our quiz master Shaun Ryall and his wife Mary. Our next quiz will be held on Easter Sunday.

The fireworks held on Sunday 1st November was a great success and a huge thank you to all our helpers. Also thank you to all who contributed to the collection of just over £230 which will be used to defray some of the costs. This year we were lucky to have a lantern parade and we were delighted with the number of children who turned up with their lanterns. The lanterns were made at the workshops in the village hall run by Sarah Webb and her family and were such a success we will consider making it an annual event.

Our next walk is planned for 15th November and we will be meeting at the Anchor car park at 9.30am for car sharing. More details will be displayed on notice boards and sent out by email.



Our next social event will be a race night to be held on Saturday 21st November at 7.30pm in Otterhampton Village Hall. The cost will be £3.00 which will include a race card and a ploughman's supper. Drinks will be

available from the social club bar. Tickets are on sale now in the Post Office and Harbour View Social Club for this not to be missed event.

Our Christmas programme starts with the ever popular Seniors Christmas dinner being held on Saturday 5th December at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Invitations have been sent out and if you haven't already done so replies need to be taken to the Post Office by Monday 16th November.

The village Christmas tree lights will be switched on at 5.00pm on Sunday 6th December come along and discover who will be switching on the lights. Previous years we have had a cow, giraffe and a gnome. What will be next?



OPRA have recently contributed £1,000 towards the cost of a shelter for the proposed new play area. We've also purchased a digital projector to be used village talks, presentations, computer training and other events.

Looking ahead, the biennial fete will take place next summer if we get enough volunteers. It is proposed to set up a fete committee and we are looking for volunteers to join. If you are able to help then please get in touch with any committee member. We'll decide early next year if the fete will go ahead depending on the level of interest shown.

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

OPRA funds come mainly from the members of the 100 Club who contribute a £1 a week and participate in the weekly draw (made monthly). This is your local charity where all the money raised (after the prize money is paid out) is spent in the community and in support of local people and organisations.

The 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 www.combwich.org.uk 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.

Stear Marshes - Dick Best on the natural history of the parish



“.....more things in *heaven and earth*”

The past few weeks have seen many spectacular natural phenomena in our little part of the globe. A spring tide in late September was predicted to be the highest the Severn Estuary over a twenty-year period. However, tides are fickle things and although the timing of a tide is fairly accurate its height is dependent on the prevailing weather, wind and atmospheric pressure. The weather at the time of this spring tide was beautiful with plenty of sunshine and little wind, all associated with a period of high pressure which, much to the relief of Steart residents, suppressed the mega-tide, the height of water on Wall

Common was at least a foot (30cm) lower than some recent high spring tides.

High tides are associated with full moons and this high tide was associated with a much advertised “supermoon”. For several nights we all had the magical spectacle of this huge orange moon rising through a clear cloudless sky. If that was not enough, late one night during this period there was a total eclipse of the moon, providing (especially for those with weak bladders!) the eerie sight of a pale moon gradually creeping out from behind the earth’s shadow.

Then in early October there was an almost unprecedented occurrence of the northern lights (aurora borealis) being seen this far south and from the Quantocks some spectacular photographs were taken showing a green curtain of light hanging over South Wales.

From your Village Agent November 2015

A worrying SCAM is taking place at the moment – several people have been targeted in Bridgwater supermarket car parks. Shoppers are being approached and asked for directions, they are then requested to write them down. While they are doing this a second person goes through their bags in the boot or foot well of the car taking any debit/credit cards they can find. By the time the victim is aware of what has happened their bank accounts have been emptied or the credit card is spent out. Do be aware, there are some nasty people out there!

On a totally different note – have you had your flu jab yet? If not, do ring the surgery and make an appointment, the ‘jab’ does not hurt and it only takes a few minutes and helps to give you some immunity against the flu – much better the jab than the miseries of the illness.

Until next time take care and remember I can be reached on **07572 023432** or by e-mail y.bulmanva@somersetccc.org.uk. Our service is free and totally confidential.

Public Notices

Recycling and Refuse Collections over the Christmas and New year 2015/16. Please look on the notice boards for information.

SCC introduced its new single phone number in March 2015 (services include children and young people; elderly and vulnerable adults; roads; libraries; registrar; major planning applications). Some people are still using the old 0845 number and from 1.11.15, these will not be re-directed. The number is 0300 123 2224. The website address is www.somerset.gov.uk

Keep Your Home Warm This Winter - If you are worried about the coming winter and how you might afford your bills or keep your home warm, then contact the Home Energy Team on freephone 0800 082 2234 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday or email home.energy@cse.org.uk

For more details on the launch of the ‘New loan scheme for local first time buyers’, please phone 01823 461099 or Email enquiries@wrcic.org.uk<<mailto:enquiries@wrcic.org.uk>>

Somerset County Council Chairman's Award 2015



The parish council are delighted that John and Elizabeth Marriott have received the Somerset County Council Chairman's Award for Service to the Community.

Citation

Elizabeth and John Marriott are an example of what is best in village life. They have played a leading role in a number of village organisations until John's ill health forced them to take a back seat, including a local recreational charity where Elizabeth was Secretary and John edited the newsletter and helped organise a range of activities. For years they were on the village hall committee of which Elizabeth was secretary and John organised the refurbishment and

carried out day to day maintenance. John was also a conscientious Otterhampton parish councillor for seven years, and as you would expect, took his duties very seriously. He also produced the parish council newsletter. They both helped to set up and organise the village market at which John's home baked bread was a real treat.

They are also good neighbours always ready to help whenever needed. The whole community will be delighted with this award.

A Story for our time (contributed)

"There is a good story about a fictional boat race between the national health service and a Japanese crew. They both worked long and hard to maximise their performance and the Japanese won by a mile; so they set up a working party as they always do in those circumstances.

And the working party concluded that the Japanese had 8 people rowing and 1 steering and the NHS had 8 people steering and 1 rowing. So, the NHS employed consultants, which is what you do when a crisis of that kind occurs, and 18 months and about £5million later, the consultants confirmed that diagnosis and recommended that the NHS crew be completely restructured. There should be 3 assistant steering managers, 3 deputy steering managers and a director of steering services and the rower be given an incentive to row harder. And they had another race and the Japanese won by 2 miles, so they laid off the rower for poor performance, and they sold the boat and used it to give a higher than average pay award to the director of steering services."

Get fit the fun way!

Fun and Friendly Fitness Classes!
Tuesdays. 9.30am Aerobics, 10.45am Pilates.
(Otterhampton village hall)
Thursdays. 7.15pm Bootcamp. (Otterhampton School)
Classes are £4/£4.50 per session and will suit any age and ability. Come along and join us!! For more information please contact Cally on 07825817728 or email callylouisewills@hotmail.co.uk

Combwich Community Choir Presents:

Carols by Candlelight

Concert and Sing-a-long

Free refreshments Christmas Raffle

Friday 11th December

Otterhampton Village Hall 7.30pm

Adults: £5 Children: £3

All proceeds to:



SOMERSET TRUST FOR ARTS & RECREATION

Tickets from Choir Members, Village Shop, Coffee Club
Nicole Wigley 01278 653431

Parking

Parking in the village is often a problem, please take care not to obstruct peoples drives or force pedestrians particularly with children's buggies or wheelchair /mobility scooter users into the highway unnecessarily .

It is an offence to park in disabled bays without a blue badge.

Friends of Otterhampton School (FOS)

School and Little Otters Pre-School who give their time and energy to run events to raise vital funds to assist with extra equipment or activities that are outside the schools everyday budget.

Over the course of the year the aim of FOS is to run a number of successful events to raise money as well as bring the school and community together. As a group we like to offer a wide range of events and activities for the school that are both accessible to the children and encourage the parents to attend and see the children in their school environment. These range from ice pop Fridays, school discos, handmade items for children to produce for their families, pamper evenings, bags 2 school clothes collections, to name but a few. Easy Fundraising is another way we have started to raise funds and we are keen to expand upon its potential in the next year. Easy Fundraising is a free fundraising website which means that every time you make a purchase online with specific retailers and go through this website it will donate money to FOS. So far we have raised £488.00 and our target is to increase this and gain as much extra income as possible. All you have to do is go to the easy fundraising website and search for your retailer and make your purchase. For more information and to start earning money for FOS while you spend you can visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk.

Some of our larger events such as the summer and Christmas Fayres really engage the children and their families with the chance to socialise, participate in games and most importantly spend money on raffles, BBQ's and even a mulled wine or two! The next important date for your diaries is the **Christmas Fayre on Friday the 27th November from 5pm until 8pm** which will be an amazing opportunity to get ahead with your Christmas Shopping, enjoy our homemade cakes and browse a range of local businesses and crafts who will have stalls on the evening.

This year saw our Summer Fayre incorporated with the sports day, which was amazingly successful and provided an opportunity for the whole community to see the school children participate in their sports events and then relax in the sun with their picnics and a cream tea while the children wandered around the stalls, tombola and had their faces painted. We were lucky enough to have some amazing prizes donated by local businesses and members of community which allowed us to raise the fantastic total of in excess of £500. Our latest event was the magical storytelling evening where children and their parents could come and be entertained with stories about Knights and Princesses and snuggle down with hot chocolate and cookies under the twinkling fairy lights. All the children loved this event and our aim is to have a different theme to entertain the children at our next storytelling event. All our money this year is working towards providing the school with some much needed new outdoor play and exercise equipment after the old area was removed as it was worn out and had become unsafe. We are already well on our way to achieving our aim of raising £10,000 towards this.



We are always looking for enthusiastic parents or carers who can spare some of their time or have a particular talent or skill to promote and help with events that are run throughout the year and if you would like to get involved no matter how much or little you can offer we would love to hear from you. If you would like to know more about FOS or if you think that you may work for a company that may be able to provide match funding for some of the events that we run, then please contact Trish Martin on trish@trishmartin.co.uk or call into the school office who will be able to point you in the direction of any of the members of FOS.



More Celebrating for Comwich & District WI

The 16th September marked the centenary year for the WI which was well celebrated up and down the country, reflecting on its history and achievements.

Next month will mark *A Special Birthday for Comwich and District WI* as we will be celebrating our **65th Birthday** in November. Still we 'Party On' and celebrate – So, I expect this will mean cake again!!!!

Our next monthly meeting on **Thursday 19th November** we will be joined by our Guest Speaker Pat Richards who will be demonstrating *How to make marzipan fruits*, ready to adorn any cake. So this will be nearly round off our year of celebrating, except of course our December Christmas meeting, when we will be having another 'Party!' and Secret Santa!!!! - more cake!

If you are interested in joining Comwich & District WI, we are a very friendly group who love learning new skills and enjoy the companionship of our members. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, 7.30pm at Stockland Club.

For more information, please phone Vanessa J-Smith (President) on 01278 652830

Coming Up - Harbour View Social Club

Harbour View Players & Social Club are proud to present their second Pantomime Jack & the Beanstalk on Fri 15th and Sat 16th Jan.

Look out for posters to announce the sale of tickets, but following the success of our first Panto we advise you get your tickets early.

Can we remind everyone that the village hall is available for hire for your private parties and events, and Harbour View can supply your bar for the evening, we also have music equipment and lights available for your disco or some backing music. For more details of the use of the equipment or to book the bar for the night contact harbourvsc@gmail.com

Please check our new screen in the club window to keep up to date with our forthcoming events.



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	8 th Dec, 5 th Jan 2016, 2 nd Feb, 1 st Mar, 29 th Mar
Wednesday	Doctor's Surgery	3pm – 4pm	
Thursday (1 st of month)	Parish Council Meeting	7pm	Starts with public forum
Thursday (2 nd & 4 th)	Choir	7pm – 8pm	
Thursday (3 rd of month)	Combwich & District WI	7.30pm	Stockland Sports & Social Club
Friday	Coffee Morning	10am – 12noon	
Saturday (2 nd of month)	Combwich Market	10am 12noon	

FUTURE EVENTS

Sunday 15 th November	Walk	Meet at Anchor Inn 9.30am	
Saturday 21 st November	Race Night	7pm for 7.30pm start	Otterhampton Village Hall
Thursday 3 rd December	Avon & Somerset Police Operation HAROLD	7pm (prior to Parish Council meeting)	Presentation re diversionary routes along C182 if road blocked
Saturday 5 th December	Senior's Christmas Meal	7pm for 7.30pm start	Otterhampton Village Hall
Sunday 6 th December	Christmas tree light switch-on	5pm	Grassed area junction of Wharf Rd with Brookside
Wednesday 9 th December	Parish Council Precept Meeting	7pm	Public welcome
Friday 11 th December	Concert and sing-a-long	7.30pm	Combwich Community Choir
15 January 2016	Next Otter Tales		Articles by 5 January

Otter Tales

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