



Welcome to Combwich

Otter Tales

Published with the generous support of Otterhampton Parish Council

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BIG COMMUNITY EVENT

Saturday 8th December

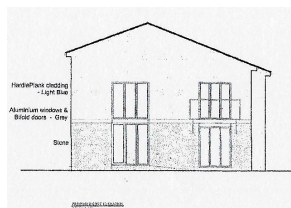
Otterhampton Village Hall, Combwich

Combwich Christmas Market 10am - 12 noon



Come and join us at the fabulous Combwich Village Market. Enjoy a free glass of mulled wine as you wander around the stalls full of ideas for Christmas presents and tempting culinary delights. Then pause for a cup of tea and cake, and maybe a delicious bacon roll.

Village Hall Refurbishment Plans, 10am - 3pm



You told us what you wanted via the survey sent to every household. Now come and see how fabulous your refurbished hall could look.

Draft plans and drawings will be on display - tell us what you think, we would love to hear from you.

Community Plan 10am - 3pm



The Community Plan was last updated in 2012. We have now amended it to reflect what has happened in the intervening years. We want to have your views on the existing vision or a new one.

Come and tell us what you want the parish to look like and what changes you want to see over the coming years.

Otterhampton Offcuts

Snippets from the October & November 2018 Parish Council Meetings



WW1 Centenary Commemorations

Following the consultation in September, the flagpole was erected opposite the Post Office with a 'Lest we Forget' flag that has been flying since 1.11.18. We also made a large poppy and affixed it to the welcome feature at the entrance to the village. Our thanks to Caron & Gordon Coldwell who helped with the design, Robin Prowse who made the poppy and who, along with Simon Darch, erected the flagpole. Many thanks also to Mike Ingram who laid the concrete for the flagpole base free of charge. If there are any flags you would like to see atop the flagpole, please let the Clerk know and councillors if appropriate, will (agree or not) to the suggestion at the following parish council meeting.



Whilst the flagpole was in progress, we also noticed the stone trough by the notice board which looks lovely. This is kindly planted up and tended by Helen Jowett, so a thank you to Helen too.

Community Plan

As per the front cover, we are holding a big community event on 8.12.18. Part of this includes public consultation on the Community Plan. We first developed the Plan in 2011 (amended in 2012) after extensive consultations with the community, driven mostly by the proposals to construct Hinkley C, the Wharf and laydown area, and the development of WWT Steart Marshes. A lot has happened in the intervening years such as the start of the Hinkley C build, the refurbished play area, cycle path to Cannington, the Friday coffee mornings, Otter Wheels and the loss of the public bus service. The Plan has been updated to reflect these changes.



However, with the proposed Sedgemoor District Council's Local Plan to 2032, lots of new people coming to live in the parish, together with available funding from the £500k Hinkley C Community Fund, we now want to look at the Plan for future years. We need you to tell us for example, how you might like the parish to develop (or not?) additional housing? what could we do to enhance the community? Your views are really important and will be used to update the Plan, so please come along to the event. Once agreed, the Plan will be issued to every household in the parish. The Draft Plan (as at 24.10.18) will be used as the basis for the public consultation and is on the combwich.org.uk website should you want to have a look at it in advance of 8.12.18.

Affordable Housing Survey

Following on from the item above, we have asked SDC to come and talk to us at a parish council meeting (hopefully January or February) with a view to conducting a new Affordable Housing Survey in the parish. The previous one carried out in 2012 suggested there was a need for 6 affordable units, so this may also change. We will let you know the meeting date when confirmed.



Contact details for the parish council

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Dave Cather (Chairman)	01278 652570
Dick Best	01278 651063
Barry Leathwood	01278 652399
Bob Birkenhead	01278 653127
Julie Evans (Vice Chair)	01278 652735
Rachel Perrett	01278 652958
Murray Lister	07802 823497
Mrs Aly Prowse (Clerk)	01278 652426

otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com

County and District Ward Members

Mike Caswell	01278 652043
(District & County)	
Julie Pay (District)	01278 732956

Highways - Dame Withycombe Hill Layby Widening

The contracts have been placed and Highways are negotiating a slot in the contractor's programme to schedule the work (hopefully before 31.3.19). The work should take 5 days (or less) and traffic lights will be erected for the duration so we can expect some disruption. SCC will give advanced notification of the works to residents.

Hinkley Point C Community Fund

We are delighted to report that 2 further parish projects have been awarded funding from the parish community fund. The Village Hall Refurbishment (Phase 1a – design stage) circa £12.8k (plus £3k for a project manager and business support) and a new wooden gig £22.5k which will enable more rowers to be out on the water simultaneously and also will allow participation in races and regattas.

SCC Highways Winter Services

You probably won't want to be reminded, but we are planning for the forthcoming winter. Previously we obtained bags of gritting salt from Highways free of charge, but from this year we will have to pay for them at a cost of £4.74 per 25 kg bag. We used 6 bags last year; not a great cost, but it all adds up from our precept (budget). If you are not aware, the parish council has a garage at Brookside Road where we store sand & bags (flood prevention) and grit (ice and snow conditions) plus shovels. The keyholders are Barry Leathwood, Julie Evans, Bob Birkenhead and the Clerk. Their phone numbers are on the previous page.

Large Loads on C182

We have been forewarned of some imminent, very big loads (Abnormal Indivisible Loads – AILs) that will be coming into Combswich Wharf by boat and travelling onwards to Hinkley Point C by road which will cause disruption and almost certainly some delays. These vehicles will be some 9 metres wide. This is all the information we have currently due to we suspect, security considerations. However if we are given any better information we will try and inform you via the notice boards, website, coffee morning etc.

Next Meeting

We would love to see more residents at parish council meetings. You will be given a warm welcome and the opportunity to participate and give your views on the various topics discussed. In addition, tea, coffee and biscuits are available from just before 7pm.



100th Anniversary of Armistice Day 1918 - 2018



The 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War reminds us of the sacrifices of young men in the service of their country. Over **16 million** people including civilians from all sides died in that conflict and within a generation we were at it again.

During World War II, over 60 million were killed, which was over 3% of the world's population at the time. 22 to 25 million of those people were soldiers, including 5 million who died in captivity as prisoners of war. (Source Wikipedia)

In the words of Winston Churchill "A nation that forgets its past has no future." We live and must learn!



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

What a spectacular Lantern Parade and Fireworks Display this year when even the weather which almost persuaded us to postpone the event, finally came up trumps. The Viking ships and shield Lanterns were a credit to the children and adults who made them, guided and inspired by Sarah Webb. They swept along Brookside Road from the bus shelter to the Common where they re-enacted the battle of Cynwit, between West Saxons and Vikings who in 878 reputedly landed at Combwich Pill, The battle may have been fought on Cannington Hill

The traditional Beacon was lit with some difficulty because of the wind, but the fireworks display was flawless thanks our committed and professional team, Adrian Floyd, Simon Briggs and Paul Cadmore. The delicious burgers and sausages, supplied by John Devlin and cooked by Ray Bollen and assisted by Christine Stockham were an obvious success. Mike Gardener was once again Master of Ceremonies and all round fixer. The OPRA committee who were all involved in making it happen would like to thank all who supported and contributed in any way. It could not happen without you.



The familiar **Pavilion** (or shed as some refer to it) on the common, is coming to the end of its useful life and we are looking for a replacement. On high tides there are several inches of water inside which not only damages the gear we store in it, but the building itself. Older residents will remember the previous building floating away on a high tide never to be seen again! We are in the process of researching the possibilities, but it is likely that the replacement will be in the same place but 18 inches (45 cms) higher. Planning permission will be required and funding found. More on this in the next issue.

OPRA Officers and Committee Chair

Tina Gardener 652642

Secretary

Ann Leathwood 652399

Treasurer

Sue Francis 653663

Vice Chair

Barry Leathwood 652399

Committee

Mary Cornish 653868

Beverly Smith 652595

Di Davie 652141

Felicity Ashworth 653633

Jacqui Sparks 652069

Melvin Fooks 651323

100 Club Organisers

Ann Leathwood 652399

Sue Francis 653663

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 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.

Senior Citizen's Christmas Dinner

Coming soon is the Senior Citizen's Christmas Dinner to be held in the village hall on Saturday 1st December. This is always a very enjoyable event with good food, wine, entertainment, and of course, good company. Invitations have gone out to all those on our list. On the same day we erect the Christmas tree ready for the lights to be switched on at 5.30pm on Sunday 2nd December.

All the above events are free and paid for by OPRA whose funding comes mainly from the 100 Club. If you would like to join and support these and many other village activities it costs just £1 per week paid by standing order every 13 weeks.

1st Combwich Brownies by Liz Brown

The 1st Combwich Brownies celebrated their 40th birthday this September with a surprise party for the girls. They were joined by some adults who had been Brownies at Combwich over the years and several invited guests including Jean Kibby who had started the unit in 1978. We are especially proud of our 40 years, because we are the only unit in the area to have stayed continuously open, Nether Stowey and Cannington both having been closed for periods of time. There was a great display of photos of the Brownies over the years and it was interesting to see how both the uniform and the activities have changed over 40 years. However what has remained unchanged is the fun that



the girls have and the ethos of Brownies within the umbrella of Girl Guiding U. K. which remains committed to the idea of empowering girls and giving them a broad and varied programme to work with.

Having said that, girl guiding has just launched an entirely new and exciting programme which spans the years from Rainbows to Rangers and gives girls continuity throughout their time in guiding. It has been brought right up to the 21st century, the rangers even having a festival goer badge! We are having fun at the moment getting to grips with this new programme and OPRA very generously donated money to help with the purchase of new badge books for the girls.

One of the new badges for Brownies is a charities badge and all our girls are currently working on this. Our chosen charity for our Christmas good turn is the Bridgwater food bank which does a tremendous amount of good work throughout Bridgwater. The Brownies are collecting money in giant smartie tubes



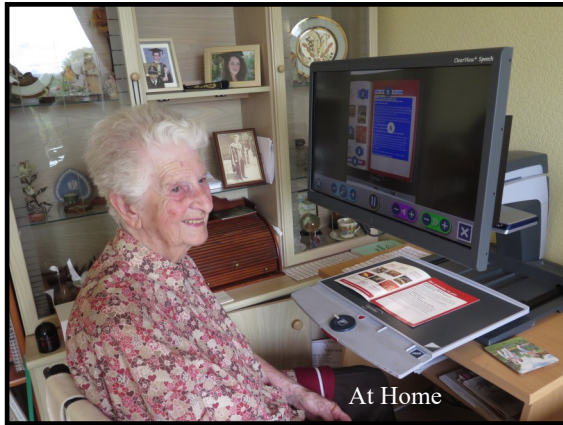
by doing good turns. At the beginning of December we will be taking them shopping to buy the non-perishable goods needed by the food bank and the following week the girls will take their purchases to the food bank and help to make up some food parcels for families. If anybody would like to help us with this venture we would be very grateful for any donations of money or non-perishable items of food by the beginning of December. Donations can be

taken to the Combwich coffee morning on a Friday or to the Brownie meeting on Monday November 26th 6-7.30 p.m.

We do run a very exciting and varied programme of events and join in with a lot of larger scale activities. We hope the unit will keep running for another 40 years but we do need a few more Brownies to keep the unit flourishing. We accept girls between 7 and 10 years old. You can register your interest online at www.girlguiding.co.uk or phone to speak to one of the leaders:

Liz Brown 652687 Karen Barton 652673

Agnes Dougall - profile



Agnes Dougall is well known in Combswich, a regular at the Friday Morning Coffee Club and a passionate member of the Combswich Short Mat Bowls Club with her husband Tom until he very sadly died in February last year. Agnes still enjoys the Coffee Club where she meets old friends and occasionally goes to the Short Mat Bowls club evenings where she says they are very patient with her as she is now partially sighted.

These days she values the new technology provided by audio books and a machine which will magnify text and read it out to her. *See photograph left.* But like most of us she has a past. Brought up on the banks of the Clyde in a top floor tenement block in the 1930s. Decent jobs were hard to find, so at the age of 18 years decided to do her bit for the war effort and

signed up to Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS) more popularly known as the WRENS.

Her training was in Tullichewan Castle on the banks of Loch Lomond. Her first duties together with the other "girls" included such menial tasks as scrubbing floors, but her potential was soon recognised, and she became a "writer" and trained in a number of wartime administrative tasks. The trainees were sent to various naval bases, but Agnes was taken ill with appendicitis and, after an operation, spent 6 weeks recuperating which delayed her posting to Eglinton near Londonderry in Northern Ireland in 1943 which was a Fleet Air Arm training station sometimes accommodating US pilots.

She lived with 15 other women in Hut 7, a wooden structure, and enjoyed a lively social life on the station with a regular Saturday night dances. Six monthly trips home were allowed, and these were occasionally made on Dakota aircraft and other military aircraft.

Her role together with two other Wrens was in flight control, and involved monitoring and recording aircraft movements and radio communications at the base until the end of the war. She remembers being taken to Londonderry to witness the surrender of the German U-Boat fleet in May 1945 and also the visit of Princess Elizabeth and Princes Margaret.

After the war she returned home and secured employment in a local engineering company where she met and married Tom and bought their first house in Glasgow. They later moved to Bolton and from there Tom travelled the world as part of his job. When he retired in 1991 they moved to Combswich.



Agnes (top left) in Hut 7



As we walk through the village and greet our neighbours, we are usually unaware of the fascinating back stories some of them have. If you have a story you would like to tell, or know someone in the parish with an interesting life story that should be told, then please get in touch. (nothing will be printed without the consent of the person concerned.)

Reflections on the first half term at Otterhampton Primary School.

Head Teacher, Claire Luce



As we come to the end of this half term I have been reflecting on how busy it has been at Otterhampton Primary School and how much we have done in a relatively short time.....

KS2 PGL residential for 3 days to Osmington Bay
Harvest Stay and Play
Combwich Church Service
After-school clubs
Weekly visits from Rev Alison
Weekly newsletter
EYFS/Year 1 Forest School
KS2 Lantern workshop
Football tournament
Cross Country event
Class Dojo – nearly 100% of parents are accessing this!

A return of the mobile library

This is all on top of weeks of focussed teaching and learning in the classroom! As I walk around the School, there is a very positive buzz! Children have been fully engaged in their learning and have behaved exceptionally. Next half term brings more exciting opportunities for our students including trips for all classes and, of course, Christmas celebrations.

I would like to thank staff, parents and members of the Community for supporting me in my first half term. I have thoroughly enjoyed it and look forward to next half term.

Date for the diary:

Friday 7th December - Otterhampton Primary School Christmas Fayre 5pm - 8pm - all welcome.
Every Thursday 9.15 Toddler group at Otterhampton Primary School



Just a few of the lovely activities the children have been involved in this term.

Clockwise from top left ;
football tournament, singing
harvest songs at Combwich
Friday Coffee Club, lantern
making, walking to the Church
and visiting the mobile library.

News from Comwich and District WI

Vanessa J Smith (President)

Members of Comwich & District WI had our Summer Recess in August so no news for this month.

The **Craft Club** met on 2nd September at Sue Jacob's cottage and had a most enjoyable afternoon 'Iris Folding'. This technique for making cards is the ultimate in recycling! The members enjoyed this so much that we continued at the next Craft Club on 1st October at Vanessa's house. The next Craft Club will be held at Elizabeth Marriott's on **5th November** and the theme will be 'Something Christmassy'.

Our monthly meeting on **Thursday 20th September**, advertised as **Creative Writing** with **Yvonne Bulman**, did not go as planned. Unfortunately our Guest speaker had to postpone as she was taken ill and was in hospital, so in WI spirit, Elizabeth Marriott and myself, put together some entertainment which was very well received even though it involved our singing and acting skills!!! I am glad to report that Yvonne is out of hospital and recovering well. We all wish you well Yvonne and look forward to welcoming you at another meeting when you are fully recovered.



Elizabeth and I were happy to join **Nether Stowey WI** on Friday 14th September to celebrate their **95th Birthday**. We were entertained by the very delightful **Simon Dawson** who you may have seen on TV with **Ben Fogle**. Simon and his wife left the rat race in London about 15 years ago and started a small holding on Exmoor, having no previous experience of rural life, bravely or stupidly gave it all up to venture into uncharted waters and hearing Simon talk about his animals, new found marketing skills, TV experiences, becoming an author and the financial struggles along the way, I get the impression he would not change his life for anything. The evening was rounded off by tea and cakes! I have to confess, the Chocolate Brownie was to die for!! Yes I only had one!

Also in September was the start of the **Annual Skittles Tournament** so a team of us played at The Lime Kiln against Bridgwater Firecrackers – although we played admirably - we lost by a whisker, but we had a very enjoyable evening as our opponents were such lovely, friendly ladies.

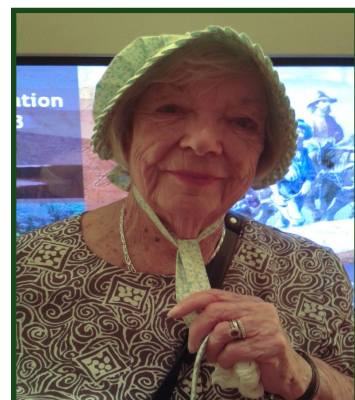
Our next meeting was on **18th October** when we had a **Vintage Quiz**, covering questions from 1920 – 1970 on general knowledge, music, television & film plus ladies fashions. This was a very lively evening. The competition was well supported with all manner of interesting items from this 50 year period, including a 1930's wedding dress which was the outright winner.

Our **New Programme for 2019** promises to be both varied and exciting will be available shortly, so look out for it in the Post Office.

We are growing steadily in number but are always eager to welcome new members. Just a reminder that this year we are still offering **the first visit free**, the second visit is £3.50 which is refunded when you pay your membership which stands at an annual fee of £41 and includes a free magazine posted directly to your door each month. This contains a wealth of information, articles, cookery and craft ideas, gardening tips, competitions and puzzles, special offers and so much more. Also each month a County News letter is issued to members free from our WI, informing you of local, national and global events, information and current affairs within the Women's Institute organization.

The annual subscription is pro-rata so you can join at any time of the year. Remember our successful monthly Craft Club which has been running for over a year now, and is also free to members of Comwich & District WI. There is so much you can get involved in, opportunities to enjoy organized outings, workshops, invitations from local WI's within the Quantock Group, it really is excellent value for money and a most enjoyable pastime which enables you to be part of this friendly and supportive women's group. It is important to note that there is **absolutely no pressure** to do anything other than as much as your desire or time allows.

Comwich and District WI received the very sad news this month that after a long struggle to survive after suffering a cruel and debilitating stroke our dear Mem Myatt passed away. Mem has been a member since 1960 and was our Vice President for over 3 years, she will always be fondly remembered as the most inspirational, fun loving, cup totally full, kind of girl! She never ceased to amaze us with her zest for life, her enthusiasm to enter into the spirit of anything we asked of her. She was the ultimate in **WI Inspiring Women**. We are all better for knowing you Mem.



For more information or to join Comwich & District WI, you will be sure of a warm welcome, please phone Vanessa on 652830 or Brenda on 446279

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War and the establishment of what has become to be known as Remembrance Day. On Sunday 11th November we will be remembering those who died in both World Wars, and the sacrifice of those injured and left behind, from the communities of Combwich, Otterhampton, Steart and Stockland Bristol with a service of Remembrance at Stockland Church at 10.45am. All are very welcome.

Do join us at a Service of Light at Steart Church on 3rd November at 7.30pm to mark All Souls, when we remember all who have died. If you would like loved ones remembered by name, regardless whether you will be able to attend, then please let me know at cannington.benefice@gmail.com or on 01278 652953.

Details of our Christmas Services are also given in this issue. We look forward to the annual Christingle service at Combwich on 2 December at 3pm. Children and parents are very welcome to celebrate the light in the darkness of winter, and to mark the work of the Children's Society. On Christmas Eve, we will mark the coming of the Christchild with a traditional "not quite Midnight" Mass at 9.00pm.

Regular services are held at Combwich Church on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at Stockland Church on 2nd and 4th Sundays, all at 11.15am.

Finally, do look out for our grand draw in aid of our churches. Tickets are on sale now with great prizes and the draw will be made after the Christingle service. Your support is very much appreciated.

Christmas Services

Christingle Service
2nd December at 3.00pm at Combwich Church

Carols by Candlelight
16th December at 4.30pm at Stockland Church

Eucharist on Christmas Night
Christmas Eve at 9.00pm at Combwich Church

Family Communion
Christmas Day at 11.00am at Stockland Church

OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

News from the Otterhampton Village Hall Committee



Exciting new developments at the Village Hall

Work is progressing on the proposed refurbishment of the village hall. As you know the results of the independent survey of all Otterhampton residents earlier in the year recorded that the majority of people who replied were very much in favour of refurbishing the village hall. Given that mandate planning application to Sedgemoor District Council has been made for the external works which includes a disability access ramp, stunning new entrance and windows throughout, repointing of the exposed masonry and installation of plank cladding, velux windows in the bowls room and solar panels.

The plans will create a visually exciting village hall which will have first class facilities for all villagers and all occasions.

The Village Hall Committee is now considering the first draft plans for the internal layout of the building. The current facilities will remain but we will be upgrading throughout including the WCs, heating, electrical and drainage services, installing a lift to the first floor and taking the opportunity to move the kitchen and Harbour View bar facilities to create a large attractive lounge area. We are talking to members of the groups who regularly use the hall facilities to make sure we fully understand the specific needs of each individual club. But we also want to make sure we capture everyone's views as the hall belongs to the residents of Otterhampton. So come and see the exciting plans and have your say at the consultation day on 8th December (between 10am and 3pm). ***Your views are needed to help shape the new village hall.***



Once we have agreement from Sedgemoor District Council we will be able to seek tenders for the work and then submit our bid to the Hinkley Point C Community Fund (used to be called the CIM Fund) and other grant organisations. Refurbishment work will then begin next year. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact the village hall committee: write to us at the hall, email me on bartonbs@btinternet.com or phone me on 01278 653531.

To help raise some funds the Village Hall has printed Christmas cards showing a view of Combach village in the snow. The cards will be available to buy at the Friday Morning Coffee Club, the Harbour View Bar and the village markets. The cost is £5 for 10 large cards.

Don't forget the Christmas market on Saturday 8th December; both open between 10am and midday. Free mulled wine and mince pies will be on offer at the Christmas market.

POLICE SURGERY COMING TO THE VILLAGE HALL

PCSO Jason Wyatt is part of the Sedgemoor Neighbourhood Policing Team and you will see him and his colleagues in the Otterhampton area. He has arranged to work in the Village Hall every **2nd Tuesday of the month between 10am and midday** so if you have any problems or concerns you would like to discuss with Jason just pop into the social club and he will be very pleased to see you.

Jason and his colleagues will also occasionally drop into the Friday Morning Coffee Club and the monthly village market and will be very happy to help. They can also be contacted by mobile or email - see the details below

Police Community Support Officer

7628 Jason Wyatt

07802 874663





Harbour View Social Club



The Club is open Fridays and Saturdays from 7pm to midnight, Sundays between 2 and 6pm, and Monday evenings during the winter skittles season 7 till 12pm. Annual membership is only £2.50 with £1 charged for visitors. Everyone is welcome so why not come along? The Club has a fully stocked bar including Real Ale (on a handpump); a darts area and skittle alley are available for social events.

Dates for your diary include:

First Saturday of each month brings the monthly quiz with a cash prize for the winner and various prizes for each round. Cost is £1 per person and starts at 8.30pm. Come along and test your brainpower.

The Christmas season is approaching fast. The Club will be open Christmas Eve from 7pm till midnight, Christmas Day between midday and 2pm and Boxing Day. Harbour View is holding a raffle with a brilliant first prize of a £100 hamper of festive food and drink. Tickets available from the bar.

NEW YEAR'S EVE: come and welcome in the New Year at the Club. You **must** wear a hat and the wearer of the most original hat will win a prize. Tickets will cost £2.50 and this includes hot food and a free drink.

Look out for the blackboards and posters for details of the next event and come along.

Combwich Christmas Market

Saturday 8th December 10am -12 noon
Otterhampton Village Hall Combwich

Free mulled wine and mince pies



Lots of interesting Christmas present ideas and food stalls and of course the café, where you can rest a while and enjoy the delicious offerings.

Whilst you are here spend a few minutes at the two exhibitions below and help decide the future of our community.

10am - 3pm

Village Hall Refurbishment Plans

The village hall is the centre of activity in the parish and is well used, but it needs updating.

Take a look at the proposals for the village hall refurbishment based on extensive consultation throughout the parish. Committee members will be present to answer your questions and to listen to your comments. It's not too late to change things

10am - 3pm

Otterhampton Community Plan Consultation

The Community Plan produced in 2011 and revised in 2012 is having a major update as much has changed since then.

The purpose of the Plan is to record and implement the wishes of the community, monitor the success (or otherwise) of the Plan. Have a look at the Plan presentation and let us know if you like it or want changes.



WWT Steart Marshes

working in partnership with



Environment
Agency

Wildlife

With Autumn passage still in progress another few rarities have popped up on the reserve including a Glossy Ibis on Stockland and a Long-Billed Dowitcher (An American wader) which was seen briefly on the River Parrott. 12 Cattle Egret have also been very regularly out on Stockland marsh, along with 2 very mobile Spoonbills spotted across the reserve. Wintering numbers of waders and wildfowl are also building up with already 500+ Lapwing and Golden Plover seen from the Quantock hides. Flocks of Avocet have built up to well over 350 and can be seen on the higher tides on the river.

Avocet flying along the River Parrott (Simon Williams)



With most flowers over one of the remaining highlights of the plant kingdom are teasels (*Dipsacus Fullonum*) and there are plenty at the fresh water areas of the marshes. They are a great food plant for bees due to their abundance of small flowers, later in the year the seeds heads also attract a range of small birds particularly goldfinches for which they are a very important winter food source.

They were used in the wool and flax industries to tease, this process cleaned and raise the nap of the material, and in the wool industry this created the term teased wool.

Management

On October 11th, WWT held their AGM at Slimbridge and I had the privilege of being asked to talk about the changes that have occurred on site over the last 4 years. The main highlights being the development of the saltmarsh plants, with 15 key species already

*Recent picture taken of Otterhampton
(Sam Stafford, WWT)*



established and the wintering bird numbers

reaching over 25,000 with 10 species obtaining national importance levels. It was great to be able to share the success of the site with our members and report back that the habitat is developing as was intended.

I was able to use the latest pictures taken on site only a few weeks ago to show the visual changes as well as the survey results.



AGM (James Robertson, WWT)

Events:

Our night walk is now fully booked, but we still have a few places available on the birdwatching walks, **Sat 10 Nov** and **Sun 9 Dec**, both at **8-10am**.

We also offer 1:1 birdwatching sessions, or have you ever thought of supporting the work of WWT by becoming a member? Both are available to book as a gift, for further information please contact Nicole in the site office.

Please contact the office for further information or to book a place on 01278 651090 or Info.steart@wwt.org.uk

Please come and talk to me if you have any questions or comments about Steart Marshes. I can be contacted on 01278 651090 / 07717 342061 or email at nicole.wigley@wwt.org.uk

Any further queries please don't hesitate to contact the Site Manager, Alys Laver on 01278 651090 / 07717 505966 or email on alys.laver@wwt.org.uk

Lantern Parade - a message from the creator Sarah Webb

This year's lantern parade had the theme of the Vikings landing in the pill in the Year 845 from which they laid siege to Cannington where they suffered a major defeat: several years later they returned and again were also defeated. Eventually they did manage to invade us, and the rest is history.

The children made lanterns around this theme and during the week constructed 45 lanterns in the shape of swords, axes, helmets and shields some of which were used to adorn the Viking longboats, which were made by volunteers from the Gig rowing club, Harbour view Players, Harbour View Social Club and Village hall Committee. We were also lucky enough to have several members of the Choir and a couple of village residents Paul and Carol on the team as well.

The whole Parade was put together in a week and used 1 and ½ Gallons of glue, 39 rolls of masking tape, 2 bundles of willow, 693 sheets of tissue paper and 100 sets of lights. The two Viking long ships named Spirit and Bills Boat after the village gigs, took 196-man hours to create and 9 people to man.

I would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work and commitment to the project, especially my right-hand woman Jude Cound from the Harbour view Players who worked along side me to orchestrate the whole parade and show, Tina and Michael Gardener for their support, OPRA for organising the event and providing funding, the Village Hall for the use of the hall and skittle alley, the children and parents for coming along, the Post office for sorting the bookings, the Marshalls, BBQ and firework team, and everyone who came out to support us on the night.

Thank you everyone for helping to create a fantastic village event. It wouldn't have been possible without you all.

Best wishes

Sarah Webb



Notes from your Village Agent

Izzy Silvester



Scams! We do talk about them a lot but it is important to do so as they can be really disturbing to receive and potentially very expensive.

We seem to have had a rise in a particular phone call and so I thought it wise to share. Sharing makes us remember to be vigilant and helps us to know what we may be faced with and so to act confidently.

The recent call is from a well-spoken lady who tells you that there is a court case pending against you. It is often for unpaid tax. She will ask you to call her back on a given number. This is usually a premium number and will be costing you lots of money while they slowly ask for all your details!



I have fallen foul to clicking on emails before I have really thought about it. I had one for a fixed penalty fine. Indignantly I opened it, thinking of all the potential scenarios of what I might have done wrong! I then realised that it would not have been sent by email and most certainly not to my work email. I was lucky to be able to seek reassurance that I hadn't crashed the entire company system through our tech support but many people can be left worrying.

The advice from us hasn't really changed, put the phone down quickly and don't talk. Chat to a neighbour or call me or Citizen's Advice if you are anxious about what you did. You can also report it on the Action fraud

website www.actionfraud.police.uk phone number 0300 123 2040. The latter also have information about recent scams to watch out for. You can also tap the phone number into your search engine (google it!) and it will tell you what type of phone number it is. According to Which, www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/premium-rate-number-scams "To avoid being ripped off in this way, you should firstly never use numbers beginning with 084, 087, 090, 091 or 098 when calling government advice lines"

Don't forget that you can buy phones with a call blocker service or use the BT call blocker service. This means that the phone will only automatically answer numbers that you have previously agreed to. It will ask the caller to put in who you are and display it so that the call recipient can decide whether to take the call.

This is also useful if you care for someone with dementia because they are less likely to share all your bank details with the caller if they have to press the correct buttons to release the call.

The last and most disturbing scam is when people who are helping us by picking up our money from the bank are really helping themselves to your savings. This is called "Mate Crime". Get them to take you to the bank rather than giving them your card and pin. Get help from CAB or a money wise service to put your bills on direct debit and use phone or internet access to your bank accounts. Check your statements for any strange activity. Make sure that any private carers have a current DBS certificate. Ask me to support you with this.

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/safe-at-home/rb_april15_only_the_tip_of_the_iceberg.pdf

If you are online, do have a read of the above to reveal the statistics and types of fraud. You can also phone Age UK Advice: 0800 169 65 65 Lines are open seven days a week from 8am to 7pm. www.ageuk.org.uk for one to one advice and to order their really interesting booklet.

Remember, if you do feel suspicious or uncomfortable about door to door, email, phone or "Mate" contact, talk to someone trusted straight away. Keeping it to yourself makes anything you might have actually done far worse and by sharing it, you can remove your own anxiety and stop someone else from making the same mistake!

Not sure who to turn to? Village Agents are a charity that work with individuals and social groups to give confidential support and advice.

Please phone me Izzy Silvester your village agent on 07931 018045, leave me your name and number and I will ring you back. Or e mail me on izzy@somersetccc.org.uk .I do only work part-time so it may take a day or two for me to return your call. Thank you

C182 (Hinkley Road) and Trees

A report by Otterhampton Parish Councillor Julie Evans



Change to speed limit on C182

On Valentine's Day this year I spent an hour in the company of 2 Community Police Officers, Esther and Sue, whose duties include patrolling the C182 as part of the Hinkley Beat. We all get frustrated when we see poor driving on that road and my thanks goes to all on that Beat who work day in day out to make it as safe as it can be. They feel just as passionately as all of us about the hazards this road presents and the changing nature of those hazards amplified by the increased use of the road while HPC is built. Not the kind of passion you usually associate with Valentine's Day but

We monitored traffic on the road between 08:00 and 09:00 between Dame Withycombe Hill and the turning to Steart Marshes; a stretch of road that forms part of our Parish. I had the opportunity to try my hand with a speed gun – not as easy as it looks! **The speed limit on our stretch of the C182 from Cannington through to Stockland Bristol has changed and is a 50 mph maximum.** Esther & Sue were keen to remind me that a speed limit is just that; a limit not to be exceeded NOT a target speed.

Many of us drive along this road several times daily and that familiarity can breed contempt. There are parts of the road that do not lend themselves to travel at more than 30/40mph due to the bends, the width and the camber of the road and the size of oncoming vehicles. This was borne out by my incompetent use of a speed gun. Sometimes I think we perceive that vehicles are travelling faster than they are – it feels faster because the road is narrow.

I repeated the experience a month later this time at the junction Brookside Road with the C182. We monitored traffic between 07:30 and 08:30. I expected to find that vehicles were travelling much faster as they approach the junction especially coming from Hinkley Point; but in fact it reaffirmed the conclusions I had drawn a month earlier. Perception and fact do not always align!

Now that the new speed limit has been implemented I further repeated this experience between 12:50 and 13:50 on a sunny Friday at the very beginning of this month at the junction of Combwich with the C182. Sue and I recorded 545 traffic movements (vehicles passing us in either direction), including 49 lorries and 34 buses, in that time; admittedly a busy time on a Friday when Hinkley B workers leave early for the weekend. However, when Sue asked me to estimate how many had passed less than half an hour after we had started my perception was about 100 in fact it was already nearly 250! It would appear that our powers of perception in terms of both speed and numbers is extremely unreliable.

Here's wishing everyone happy and safe driving under 50. It's one way we can all stay under that landmark number and do our bit to keep our local road free of any more serious accidents.

Our Green and Pleasant Village

We are fortunate to take for granted a local environment with plenty of green spaces. There are however some spaces within the village confines that have to be managed and maintained to provide us with an effortless effect.

Your Parish Council has recently formed a small group to look at these spaces and think about how they can be enhanced. 3 Parish Councillors are being very helpfully advised by a local tree surgeon who is giving his time to the project.

In the first instance the attention of the group is focussed on 3 areas of the village, in brief we are thinking about,

- at the entrance to the village abutting the C182, planting some more colourful species of tree.
- at the area by "the green boxes" and telephone box, which is a focal point as you drive into the village, planting a feature tree, again with some colour and taking out the rather unsightly and potentially dangerous willow by the telephone box, so be warned it may look a little bare for a while!
- at the Brownie Copse on the left of the track by the common, applying for Local Nature Reserve status and extending the area with more native trees properly.

Obviously, given the time taken for trees to grow this is something of a legacy project which will feed into Parish Council budgets for years to come. We hope to have some visual ideas ready to display at the forthcoming Open Day in December and as ever invite your ideas and comments. We would also welcome anyone who would like to volunteer to join our group.





Comblwich Early 1800s
(an artist's impression)

STEART VILLAGE HAS A "FREEMAN"

Army Captain Honoured

ONE of the loneliest places in England, the hamlet of Steart, near Bridgwater, put itself on the map this week-end when, as part of the proceedings at a British Legion dinner in the neighbouring village of Combach, "The Freedom of Steart" was conferred on Capt. R. L. Varney (Royal Signals), who during the war has been in charge of a wireless station there.

A local farmer, Mr Victor Biffin, wearing appropriate "robes of office," performed the ceremony, during which Capt. Varney was presented with a huge key.

Steart has a population of 26, no public-house, no shops, no main services, and the residents have to walk over two miles to catch a bus to the nearest town, Bridgwater, which is nine miles off.

Three times recently Steart has been cut off by heavy seas which have swept across the only road and inundated the fields.

The hamlet is proud of its only serving man, Sgt. Pitman, who is with the Army in C.M.F.

An interesting cutting from a newspaper shortly after the Second World War referring to Captain R L Varney (Royal Signals) who was awarded the Freedom of Steart for his service in charge of the military radio station there.

The article also states that the hamlet is proud of its only serving man who was with the army in C.M.F. He is a relative of Pauline Hurley who lives in Steart.

Apparently in the then recent times, Steart was cut off by high seas when the only road was under water.

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Do you have photographs of old Combwich, Otterhampton or Steart?

If you do please let me know and perhaps we can copy them and mount an exhibition in the village hall. We already have a lot of photographs, but don't always know the back story, perhaps you can help.



Contact Barry on 01278 652399 or email barry.leathwood@btinternet.com



THE ANCHOR INN



*Christmas eve party raffle carols and free pig roast
Families welcome 7pm start*

Boxing day open 1pm till late open mic night from 8pm

*Between Christmas and New Year's eve we are open
all day*

Deals of the week

Monday Nights Burgers £5.50

Wednesday Nights: Steaks from £6.00

Sunday Lunchtimes:

Carvery £9.50

12:30-2:30pm

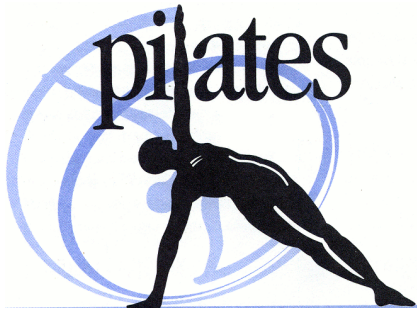
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For more information or to book ring Matt on 653612

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Otterhampton Village Hall will be holding Pilates classes for all ages and abilities every Tuesday evening from 6.30-7.30pm.

Pilates is a gentle paced class, mainly floor based and helps improve core

stability, muscle tone, strength, posture and balance. All of which we require our bodies to have to stay healthy, whatever our age!

Classes are taught by a qualified and experienced Instructor and cost £5 per session. You are welcome to attend and see if it suits you before you commit and then payment will be required in advance for that term. For anymore information please contact Cally on

Tel: 07555302145/651214

And email: callystephens18@icloud.com.



Cumbwitch Short Mat Bowls Club

(Established 1987)

First floor Otterhampton Village Hall Combwich.

**New members welcome
why not come and give it a try**

Mon: 7.15pm for 7.30 > 9.30

Tel: Brian: 01278 652747

Otter Wheels

Your local car scheme always there for You

Is lack of transport a problem?

Can't get to the dentist, doctor, hospital, shopping, visit a friend?

Ring - Otter Wheels on: 07925 154 216 - but please try to give us 48 hours notice

This not-for-profit car scheme has been running over two years now, with over 300 journeys to date. If you haven't tried us why not give us a go? Door to door service with friendly experienced drivers all, DBS checked and happy to help.

The rates are reasonable and are per car, not per person and those with a bus pass travel half price.

Typical return journey prices are: -

	With bus pass	Without bus pass
Cannington Health Centre	£2.25	£3.50
Bridgwater Bus station	£4.50	£8.00
Musgrove Hospital Taunton	£10.25	£19.50

Please note when you renew your bus pass you must let us have your new number.

Ring Otter Wheels 07925 154 216 for more information and to book a journey

The success of the scheme means we need additional drivers. If you are interested please ring 07925 154216. Expenses are paid



MOBILE LIBRARY

The mobile library visits Combwich and Stockland every four weeks on a Thursday morning . Next visit 6th December. (2019 timetable not yet available)

Otterhampton School TA5 2QS	10.05 - 10.40
Harbour TA5 2QU	10.55 – 11.15
Combwich Post Office TA5 2QW	11.10 – 11.30
Stockland Bristol Captains TA5 2PY	11.20– 11.40

Please make use of this facility if you can. We have the advantage in Combwich of the school using the mobile library which helps us to retain the service.

If you have an interesting hobby, or interest which you would like to share in these pages, please contact the editor.

And if you would like to receive Otter Tales by email as well as hard copy

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. You can subscribe by adding your email address to the home page to receive email notices of new posts to ensure you don't miss anything.

DIARY OF EVENTS (Otterhampton Village Hall unless otherwise stated)

REGULAR EVENTS			
Monday	Art Club Brownies Short Mat Bowls	2pm – 4pm 5.45pm - 7.30pm 7.30pm - 9.30pm	
Tuesday	Aerobics Pilates Gentle movement to music	9.30am – 10.30am 10.45 am – 11.45am 6.30pm - 7.30pm 12.15pm - 1pm	
Tuesday (2nd of month)	Police Surgery	10am - 12 noon	
Wednesday	Combwich Crafters Short Mat Bowls	10am - 12 noon 7.30pm - 9.30pm	
Thursday (1 st of month)	Parish Council	7pm	Starts with public session
Thursday (2 nd & 4 th of month)	Choir	7pm – 8pm	
Thursday (3 rd of month)	Combwich & District WI	7.30pm	Stockland Sports & Social Club
Friday	Coffee morning	10am – 12 noon	
Saturday (2 nd of month)	Combwich Market	10am – 12 noon	
FUTURE EVENTS			
Thursday 6th December	Parish Council Meeting	7pm	Village Hall. Public welcome - tea and biscuits provided
Thursday 3rd January	Parish Council meeting	7pm	Village Hall. Public welcome - tea and biscuits provided
Saturday 8th December	Community Event - Christmas Market - Village Hall Refurb Plans - Community Plan Consultation		10am - 12 noon 10am - 3pm 10am - 3pm
Articles 6 ^h January 2019	Next Otter Tales		Distribution by 14th January

Otter Tales

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