



Otter Tales

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General information

Coming soon - freedom to meet family and friends indoors and in groups and enjoy our

Newly refurbished village
hall for all to enjoy.
Thanks to Sue Barton and
her team

Wining and dining in the
updated Anchor pub.
Thanks Matt and good
luck

Steart Marshes
& river kept us
sane

Friday Morning
Coffee Club hosted by
Helen and her team

Combwich Fun Day

OPRA Programme
(details to be announced)

Out on the water with
the Combwich Boat
Club Gig section

Harbour View Bar for a
refreshing drink

Annual Cricket Match
on the Common

All our local voluntary
organisations and activities

Thanks to the NHS and all those front line workers
and the huge number of volunteers who have served
us well and kept us safe during this terrible
pandemic

Remember the 127,580 plus people who sadly lost their
lives during this pandemic and their families and
friends who are grieving in the UK. Remember too, the
millions throughout the world whose countries have not
yet brought this virus under control.

Be careful, stay safe and enjoy

Otterhampton Parish Council Chair Julie Evans delivers her annual report -



Welcome to you all and thank you for attending this evening. Our last Annual Assembly did not happen because the first coronavirus lockdown prevented us meeting in person and no legislation was yet in place to allow us to meet virtually; something that we never anticipated would become the norm quite so quickly. Our first meeting by zoom was on 2 July 2020 and this may be one of our last regular public meetings by zoom since we are hoping to meet again in person in the summer. I am very happy to deliver this unique “Annual” Chair’s Report, which is both virtual and covers a 2-year period since the last Annual Chair’s Report delivered in person was in May 2019!



The Parish Council had the steepest of learning curves in common with the whole world when coronavirus hit our corner of that world last year. We had to continue our business first by communicating by telephone and email and then by regular zoom meetings open to the public on the first Thursday of each month. We have made mistakes along the way but, I hope, learned quickly from them and settled into a new way of working which is likely to continue perhaps in some blended way into the future to take advantage of the best of both worlds.

I have been in the Chair for just over two years now and with the ever-brilliant help and advice of our Clerk Aly I would say that I am just beginning to find my feet. On behalf of the Parish, I would like to record our gratitude to Aly for all her hard work. As I identified in May 2019 this is a small Parish; but with a major construction project on our door step and the ongoing development of the WWT facility at Steart, there is an interesting mix of issues to consider in addition to housekeeping issues such as planning applications, tree and grounds maintenance and dog poo bins. The HPC Project has brought with it opportunities as well as inconvenience and as a Parish we are fortunate to have a mitigation fund to spend. Some grants have already been made from this fund and in the past 2 years these have enabled us to provide light at the bus shelter and to update the defibrillator, now housed in the telephone box beautifully refurbished by Bob and Carol Birkenhead, our thanks to them and to Matt at The Anchor who funds the electric for, and houses, a further defibrillator purchased with the benefit of the mitigation funding. Those potentially lifesaving devices are monitored by a brilliant team of volunteers to ensure they are ready for use when required.



A significant proportion of the mitigation funding for Otterhampton Parish has now been approved to facilitate major refurbishment work on Otterhampton Village Hall. My thanks to the dedicated Committee of Otterhampton Village Hall who have done a fantastic job getting plans together to refurbish the building and executing a rigorous tendering process that now sees work underway so that the building can serve our local community for many years to come. They did all that whilst still keeping the Village Hall open when they could within the rules, quite a feat!

We faced discussion about another potential major development in the village of Combwich in 2020 when a planning consultancy made some tentative gestures toward the Parish Council by way of consultation about a proposal to build houses and a new village hall at the entrance to Combwich. The Parish Council had not indicated support or otherwise for the proposal but were expecting further detail about it when a formal planning application to build 60 houses and a new village hall was submitted in December 2020. The timescale we were given to consult with you and respond to the application was short and over the holiday period. Once more my thanks to Aly who, with help from Bob Birkenhead and Barry Leathwood in particular, organised a survey to gather views and inform the response of the Parish Council to that application. My thanks to all those of you who responded to that survey, a significant percentage of our population did and that level of response was instrumental in giving weight to the Parish Council’s opposition to the planning application.

The groundswell of opinion was opposed to a development of this scale and nature and the application was refused. The Parish Council retains an open mind about potential development for housing but it

we have asked Sedgemoor District Council to carry out a Housing Needs Survey. A good response to such survey is vital to inform our response to any future planning application and even if you have no housing need of your own, I would ask you to return the survey when it arrives on your doorstep.

The past year or so has been tough but it has made me **really** appreciate our little corner of the world for its natural beauty, its open spaces and its sense of community. So many parishioners have helped and supported each other more than ever before and I would like to thank in particular the people behind; our school, our shop, our pub, our village hall and our Church for keeping those institutions going and for keeping us all going, within a context of fast changing rules few of us could ever have imagined.

Otterhampton Parish Council

Otterhampton Offcuts

Snippets from your April and May 2021 Parish Council Meetings

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 6.5.21

Annual Accounts to 31.3.21

The Clerk presented the annual accounts. Summarising receipts and payments, the balance brought forward at 1.4.20 was £39637, plus receipts during the year of £32017, less payments of £32872 equals a balance of £38782 at 31.3.21. This shows a consistent picture year on year demonstrating that we are “living within our means”. We sensibly set aside funds each year to pay for things likely to be required in the future such as play area maintenance and eventual replacement, election costs and Combwich track repairs. The Precept (budget) has remained at £26000 for the past 3 years.

The areas of expenditure (and income) that fluctuate year on year are mainly within “Restricted Funds” (funds obtained from external grant funders such as the Hinkley Point C Community Fund) which saw us spend £6340 in 2019/20 (new parish noticeboards and the lighting tower at the bus shelter) and £10932 in 2020/21 (Stearst borehole project, 2 new defibrillators, signage at the play area).

We also maintain a list of assets and equipment in the parish which totals £122027. It is also used for insurance purposes.

The full and detailed set of accounts together with the Audit Return will be placed on the Combwich.org.uk website mid to late May. The Clerk will be very happy to answer any queries residents may have on any aspect of the parish council finances and supply an on-line copy of the accounts if requested.

ANNUAL MEETING

Election of Officers and Representatives

Chair – Julie Evans

Vice-Chair – Bob Birkenhead

Community Forum – Marie Beckley (deputy Julie Evans)

Transport Forum – Andy Darch (deputy Lindsey Parsons)

Hinkley Point Site Stakeholders Meeting (SSG) – Bob Birkenhead (deputy Tina Gardener)

School Liaison – Rachel Perrett

Village Hall – Lindsay Parsons

Public Rights of Way – Bob Birkenhead

Defibrillators – Rachel Perrett (Combwich), Dick Best (Stearst)

Keyholders for Garage – Marie Beckley, Bob Birkenhead, Julie Evans, Tina Gardener, Rachel Perrett.

Contact details for the parish council

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Julie Evans (Chair)	01278 652735
Bob Birkenhead (Vice Chair)	01278 653127
Rachel Perrett	01278 652958
Tina Gardener	01278 652642
Marie Beckley	07748 154395
Lindsey Parsons	07843 604787
Andrew Darch (Stearst)	01278 653495
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

Continued over the page

Tree Strategy Group – Julie Evans, Rachel Perrett
Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA) – Tina Gardener
Otter Wheels – Marie Beckley and Tina Gardener
Otter Tales – Barry Leathwood
Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) – Parish Councillors (Rachel Perrett, Tina Gardener)
Community (Barry Leathwood, Sue Barton, Aly Prowse, Ian Rowland, Connie Sanders and Richard Stirling).

MAY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Hinkley Point C Community Fund

Two applications for funding were approved (by the Somerset Community Foundation Panel) on 30.4.21.

1. New mower for OPRA

2. Resurfacing of the play area, replacement of the damaged concrete bollard at the play area entrance, new seesaw, refurbishment of the wall and installation of verge marker posts adjacent to the play area. We will be contacting the contractor to secure a date for the play area resurfacing. The play area will need to be closed during this period. As soon as we have a date, we will update residents.

Next Meeting

The next parish council meeting will be on **Thursday 3 June 2021 at 7pm**. The venue will need to be confirmed as we are required to hold meetings in public after 7.5.21. The village hall will not be available because of the refurbishment, so other venues may not be of sufficient size to be able to accommodate the social distancing measures which may be in force at the time.

Contact for Clerk (Aly Prowse) otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com or Tel 01278 652426



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

We are now approaching the end of lockdown and hopefully things will get back to some degree of normality after 21st June. As mentioned in the previous newsletter we are putting together a future program of events. At this stage we are a bit wary of confirming dates as we would like to gauge people's reactions to meeting in large groups once again. We appreciate for some who have been self-isolating it will take a while to gain confidence socialising with others.

Our Annual Easter Egg Quiz was able to take place and eggs were distributed to all Primary School children along with a quiz to be completed during the school holidays. Of the quiz sheets returned we had five that were correct. The names were put into a hat and drawn by Ian Williams and the lucky winner was Ella Rose.

We have put in a funding bid to the HPC Community Fund for a replacement ride-on mower. It was approved by OPPT and the Parish Council and we are now delighted to report the successful outcome of our application to the Somerset Community Foundation. The replacement mower is more robust and has a wider cut than our old machine which has served us well for the last eight years.



The 100 Club draw usually takes place every month at the Coffee Morning in Otterhampton Village Hall, but during the last few months the numbers have had to be drawn and witnessed by an independent observer by a video link. The winning numbers are displayed in the Post Office and the parish website

www.combwich.org.uk

If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Ann on 652399 or Tina on 652642 or any committee member.

OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL CIO: NEWS



Village Hall Refurbishment:

Work is well underway on the refurbishment and lots of progress has been made over the past few weeks. Since the scaffolding went up on 12th April, double glazing has been installed throughout which looks brilliant. Five new Velux windows have been installed in the Bowls Room to give much needed light and ventilation. This really changes the interior of the Bowls Room which will be so much more welcoming.

New ceilings were installed and plastered in the Bowls Room, Skittle Alley and Small Meeting Room. Unfortunately, asbestos was found in the Harbour View Bar ceiling which has to be removed and the ceiling replaced which will incur an extra cost and delay the removal of the two small walls in the bar area.

However, many of you will have seen that the new electronic front door has been installed which is a practical improvement as well as being visually appealing.

Trustees have chosen the internal decorations and are now looking at new furniture for the Hall and Harbour View Bar.

Lastly, we are planning to repair and repaint the Village Hall weather vane which unfortunately has a couple of compass point letters missing but not for long!



New Village Hall Website:

Keep up to date on all of the exciting developments via the new village hall website where you can read all about our progress and view the transformation through photos posted in the gallery. You can access the site via the following links:

Blog: <https://www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk/news>

Gallery: <https://www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk/gallery>

When you log in, please scroll down and sign up for automatic updates via the village hall newsletter where you will also be in with a chance to win two rounds of drinks for four people on the opening night of the village hall!

Easter Raffle:

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets for the Easter raffle and supported OVH and the Harbour View Club. Over £575 was raised and a vast array of exciting prizes were won including Easter eggs, wines and spirits and even a vehicle MOT. A special thanks to everyone who donated prizes.

Watch out for our next update regarding the grand re-opening of the village hall!

Health and Wellbeing Visits on the Up at Steart Marshes! by Nicole Turnbull

One way or another, the covid-19 pandemic has meant that 2020 was a very different year for all of us. This has certainly been the case at Steart Marshes. During these extraordinary times we have managed to

stay open throughout and have seen a distinct change in our visitor profile from that seen in previous years. Talking to, and observing people on site, it has felt like there have been more families, more cyclists, more people walking to access the site from local villages. Also people from the Bridgwater area saying they have recently discovered Steart Marshes for the first time.

It has been great to see an increase in people using the site specifically to enhance their physical and mental health & wellbeing during these difficult times. Spending time in wetlands, or blue space, can be especially beneficial to our wellbeing, improving mood and reducing stress. There is growing evidence that spending time in these blue spaces can be even more beneficial than being in green space. Think of where we often choose to go on a day out... how many people would head to the coast, a lake, a river, a wetland to be by the water? It just makes us feel better!

We monitor visitor and vehicle numbers at Steart Marshes, not as absolute figures due to the complexities of routes and multiple entrances to the site, but we can look at trends over time. Our 2020 data shows an increase in visitors passing the people logger, but this is not backed up by an increase in numbers of vehicles using the main car park. This suggested a shift towards greater numbers of local visitors accessing the site on foot and by bike.

We also carry out an annual visitor survey. The questions are devised in consultation with our insights team at Slimbridge in order to allow certain comparisons between the 10 WWT sites around the UK. Once we have gathered a sufficient number of responses, the insights team

analyse the data and present us with the results. In summary, the Steart Survey 2020 saw:

- 94% of respondents leaving the site knowing that 'wetlands are important'
- A distinct shift towards more families visiting Steart Marshes
- The majority of survey respondents were from local postcodes. 67% from Taunton, 11% from Bristol, 6% from Bath postcode areas
- 63% are frequent visitors (up from 26% in 2017)
- Dwell time on site has increased from previous years
- Between 2017 and 2020 the proportion of visitors arriving at the site:
 - by car has reduced from 93% to 77%
 - on foot or by bike has increased from 5% to 19%

Interestingly, our survey results mirror what was observed by our peers at Shapwick Heath NNR over the same period, with a particular increase in family visits, local people and cyclists.



None of these results are entirely unexpected given the circumstances with the pandemic, but it has been interesting to discover that what we felt from being out and about on the ground, has been backed up by both the visitor data, and the 2020 survey results. It will be interesting to see what happens going forward when we start to bring in visitors from further afield again, yet lose a large number of people currently working and studying from home and popping out for daily exercise at Steart Marshes.

Let us know how you've been interacting with the site to support your own health and wellbeing...

Twitter: @WWTSteart

Facebook: @WWTsteartmarshes

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about Steart Marshes:

Reserve Office: 01278 651090 info.steart@wwt.org.uk

Site Manager: Alys Laver 07717 505966 alys.laver@wwt.org.uk

Engagement Officer: Nicole Turnbull 07717 342061 nicole.turnbull@wwt.org.uk

A message from the Curate the Rev'd Jan Church



Dear Combwich Community

As a way of an update from my introductory post several months ago. I thought I would write again. I have now been the Curate in the United Benefice of Cannington, Otterhampton, Combwich, Stockland Bristol and Steart since July 2020. During my time in this training vicar role, I have been working with Revd Alison, serving in our churches (Pandemic permitting) and have been getting to know the church community. Neil and I decided we wanted to move into the area so we could get to know people in the different communities. After much prayer we felt drawn to Combwich. It is a beautiful, friendly village and with two rescue dogs in tow walking around the marshes clinched it for us.

We moved into Ship Lane, Combwich at the end of March 21, we have done a bit of decorating and have nearly emptied all the packing boxes and it is beginning to feel like home.

We would both like to get involved with community life and to be here to support you all in whatever way we can.

I am being ordained as a Priest at the end of June 21, this will mean I will be leading more services, along with Revd Alison, and will be able to take weddings and baptisms as well as funerals in all our churches, including St Peter's.

There was a wedding in St Peter's on Saturday (8th May) and many turned out to watch Millie walk to the church despite the rain. And next month we are hoping to organise a plant and cake sale and afternoon tea at the church. I'll use the notice board for updates.

Really looking forward to meeting you all over time. Revd Jan.

SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICES IN COMBWICH & STOCKLAND

23 rd May	11.15am	St Mary Magdalene, Stockland
30 th May	10.00am	St Mary Magdalene, Stockland
6 th June	11.15am	St Peter's Combwich
13 th June	11.15am	St Mary Magdalene, Stockland
20 th June	11.15am	St Peter's Combwich





Otterhampton Primary School.

Summer highlights

Head Teacher, Claire Luce



What a year it has been so far! We were delighted to welcome back all students on Monday 8th March and have a fun packed Summer term planned for them.

New school values - OTTERS

This half term we have launched our new values with the children. Last September the staff met and decided that the old values needed re-visiting. The plan was to focus on a value each half term this year but the pandemic seemed to get in the way of that! Over the next few weeks we will be choosing our student of the week with a focus on one of the values.

O – Open-minded
T – Thoughtful
T – Team workers
E – Excellence
R – Resilient
S – Safe

Somerset Coastal Champions

This term we are getting involved in the Somerset School Coastal champions initiative. We will be working together with Carymoor Environmental Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Litter Free Coast and Sea Somerset to make positive changes to our school and local environment which will have big benefits for local nature, waterways and coastal environments. We have had an introductory assembly and we are all looking forward to getting involved over the coming months.

Little Otters Easter raffle and Easter Bonnet competition

Julie and the team at Little Otters raised an amazing £400 for outside resources by holding an Easter raffle back in April. They had some very generous prizes donated including a family fishing lesson, a haircut, a voucher for the Foxy Bean and a voucher for Sweet pea's Tepee hire! They also held an Easter Bonnet competition which was won by Ella in Little Otters.

Thank you!

Over the Easter period we were very lucky to have received eggs from several different sources. Thank you to Mrs Tyson, OPRA (Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association), The Old Vicarage Nursing home and Mr and Mrs Jones who have donated eggs for all children. They were enjoyed by all!

OPS Family Quiz

The Friends of OPS held a fun family Quiz in March which was a bit of light relief during the lockdown.

Forest School fun

Since returning to school in March, we have been taking every opportunity to spend time outside enjoying our beautiful environment. River Class have enjoyed linking their forest school sessions to their Stone Age topic and Brook Class

We are keeping everything crossed that we will be able to take our Key Stage 2 children on our residential to Osmington Bay in Weymouth. This will be a great way to end another really tricky year for all of our families.

Thank you staff, parents and the community for their support.



HPC Acoustic Fish Deterrent Proposals Challenged *by Tim Jones*

Dozens of organisations and individuals are opposing Hinkley Point C's bid not to install an acoustic fish deterrent near its cooling water intakes in the Bristol Channel.

The arguments will be heard at a virtual public inquiry due to start on 8 June and last up to nine days. The Inquiry Inspector, who is an environmental scientist and chartered planner, will make his report to the Secretary of State for Defra who will make the final decision.

The Environment Agency will lead opposition to having the acoustic deterrent requirement removed, backed by nearly 70 individuals and organisations including the Institute of Fisheries Management, Natural England and international charity, the Blue Marine Foundation. Following research over a number of decades, the Bristol Channel is recognised as an important nursery for several species of fish.

As part of the original planning application for HPC, EDF proposed a range of measures to protect fish being killed by the plants cooling water intakes. These were a fish return system, special intakes and the acoustic fish deterrent system.

But a report sponsored by the company from the Centre for Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, now claims the acoustic deterrent will have a negligible effect on protecting fish stocks in the Bristol Channel.

As a result EDF says installing and maintaining the device two miles offshore in an area subject to dangerous currents is an unacceptable risk, particularly to divers.

The technology is not new and has been tried around the world including at Dungeness Power Station more than 20 years ago.

Which does raise the question why the company bothered suggesting the measure in the first place as both the dangers of working in the Bristol Channel and the technology were already well known.

Want to know more? There are plenty of websites with information for and against

<https://www.edfenergy.com/energy/nuclear-new-build-projects/hinkley-point-c/about/acoustic-fish-deterrent> and the following is one of the many organisations opposed to EDF's proposals [The Need for Acoustic Fish Deterrents at Hinkley Point C | \(fgs.world\)](#)



Combwich Boat Club GIG Section

The gig section of Combwich Boat Club have enjoyed a return to rowing with Covid safe restrictions in place. We had a good turnout over the Easter weekend allowing us to get two gigs out, even if a bit chilly. We even had the pleasure of seeing the two tugs on the water recently!

We will be doing some taster sessions in the very near future and if you are interested in trying out gig rowing, please contact Marie Beckley on (07748)154395



Connie & Pete Sanders - Profile

Connie and Pete, now happily retired in Combwich, and with a holiday caravan retreat at Blue Anchor, are enjoying life though they take nothing for granted after busy and interesting lives. They both play their part in the village when Covid restrictions allow. Connie is a regular at the parish council meetings, unafraid to raise an issue of concern in the public session. She is also an active member of the Otterhampton Parish Project Team (OPPT) which scrutinises applications for funding from the HPC Community Fund before passing on their recommendations to the parish council. Connie is also a member of the WI. Peter is a volunteer driver for Otter Wheels and enjoys bell ringing at St Peters Church. Both are regulars at the Friday Coffee Club and volunteers at the monthly Saturday Market, when conditions allow.



Pete and Connie at home in the garden



A young Connie

Connie lived at Biffen's Corner until she was 6 and recalls Haybittels bus taking her to and from Combwich school. At the age of 7 she moved with her parents to Brookside Road, Combwich, later attending senior school, at Westover School for Girls. After leaving school she took a job as a Counter Clerk at the Post Office in Bridgwater prior to moving to Bridgwater Borough Council, in the Borough Engineers Department. Connie remembers an amusing occasion taking a call from a man who asked for assistance to get his horse out of the house. His cart horse had been unwell so decided to take it indoors by the fire. Only, overnight the horse died. The dilemma was removing it. The only way out was for a team to take out the living room window.

Years later, wanting a change in her life she took a BTEC course in European Studies, the working of the Commission and Parliament, giving her the opportunity of visiting both parliaments in Strasbourg and Brussels. During this period was involved in setting up the European Information Centre at Bridgwater College for students, who were planning exchange programs, which was officially opened by our regional MEP. Another course lead to an appointment of Administrator at Hinkley Point 'A' Power Station. Later she managed the Volunteer Bureau working out of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Bridgwater.

Pete was raised in Spaxton attending the local schools, and joined the church choir. He spent a great deal of time with his father who worked for the Holm Sand and Gravel Company as a crane driver at Bridgwater docks, unloading the sand dredgers, Steep Holm and Sand Holm.

Aged 11 Pete, one Saturday morning whilst in the crane, was watching his father opening a valve on a concrete bin to allow the discharge prior to the arrival of a ship. His father slipped and fell into the bin. Pete could see his dad 20 foot below lying unconscious. Going for help he saw the last lorry driver and stopped him leaving the dock. Together, with Pete operating the crane, lowered the driver in the grab to



Pete ready for a European adventure

rescue his dad. The driver then took him to hospital. Pete drove his dad's car home to Spaxton to tell his mother. His mother was not pleased!!

When Pete left school he worked as a trainee mechanic for Stacey's Motor's for a time, before joining Thomas Silvey of Bristol, working on the Bristol Channel Trading cargo boats, the Nigel and the Wycliffe. These boats sailed and called at ports within the Bristol Channel, the Severn Estuary and the River Parrett. He then joined British Rail as a lorry driver, when an opportunity arose to become a steam crane driver at Bridgwater Docks. He got the job. It entailed unloading wood pulp for British Cellophane and timber for Hooper's. He unloaded the last ship before the docks closed in 1965. He then worked on a Sand Dredger the Harry Brown dredging in the Bristol Channel for Holm Sand and Gravel Co., Bristol.

For a number of years he was employed as a coach driver for Bakers Coaches and Berry's on continental tours. There were many trips including the passion plays in Oberammergau. He remembers taking Taunton School CCF boys to Check Point Charlie at the Berlin Wall, also Belsen Concentration Camp, which left a lasting experience on the boys. There were happier times, too. There are many memorable moments and if you are ever in Pete's company he can always bring a smile to your face when he is telling his stories.

Connie and Pete met through a mutual friend in 1998 and married in 2000. Together they spent 3 happy years working as Site Managers for the Camping and Caravanning Club sites in the West Country. In 2006 they decided a new challenge was called for and moved to Brittany. They bought a beautiful Breton house with established gardens and little did they know when they bought it that it was known, locally as 'maison de fleurs' (the house with beautiful flower gardens). So, the pressure was on to keep it that way. They lived the "good life" and integrating with the local community which took a little time. Pete being outgoing, took no time in "mucking in" with the neighbours and the locals, and with Connie's knowledge of the language they were welcomed and invited to endless events and settled in nicely.

But, the time had come when they were considering to down size that Connie's father Stan, had fallen and his health was deteriorating and so the move back to the UK was without question. Selling their property in record time eventually moved back to Combwich, in 2017. Back to the family home, and the next stage of their life together.

1st Combwich Brownies

We have been successfully meeting with some of our Brownies using zoom over the last ten months. Not the same as face to face but it has been amazing what we have achieved. The girls have managed to complete various badges and a couple of our older Brownies were presented with their Gold Award, which is the highest achievement possible and involved a lot of hard work. At our first meeting of the new term we made lemonade scones and then enjoyed eating them with our favourite toppings at a virtual tea party to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's birthday. There was even a badge for this!

We are now very hopeful of starting face to face meetings outside after the spring half term holiday. These will probably be on Saturdays and we are looking forward to welcoming two or three new Brownies and also hoping to welcome back some of our Brownies who have been unable to attend zoom meetings. This is all very exciting and we are planning a varied and interesting programme of activities in line with our current girlguiding remit.

This would be an excellent opportunity for us to welcome any other girls between 7 and 9 years old who would like to come and try some new post lockdown activities and make new friends. We welcome girls from all the surrounding villages and are a very inclusive unit. For more information contact:

Liz Brown 652687 or Karen Barton 652673



Brownies



Martyn Howe's early morning perambulations by the River Parrett



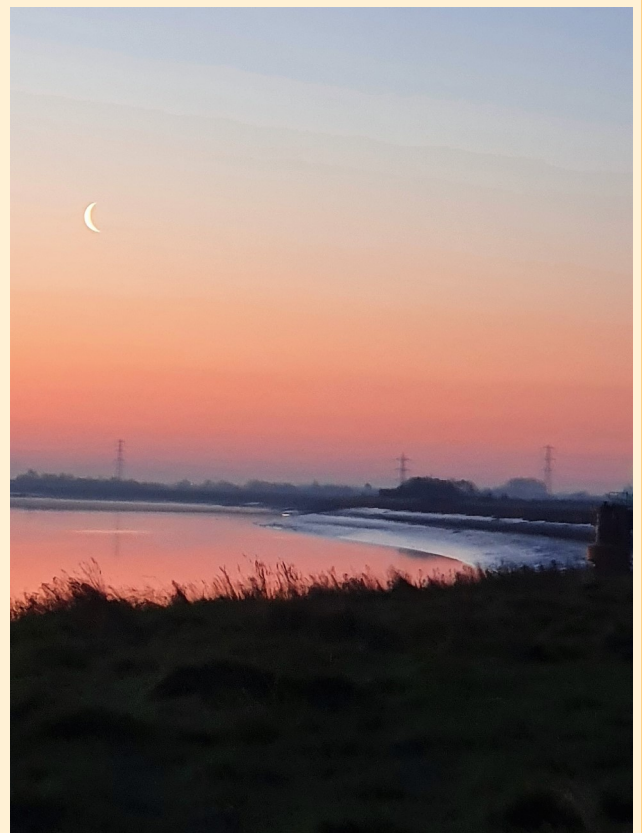
Charlie at dawn



Porpoises in the river



Early morning fishing



Crescent moon at dawn



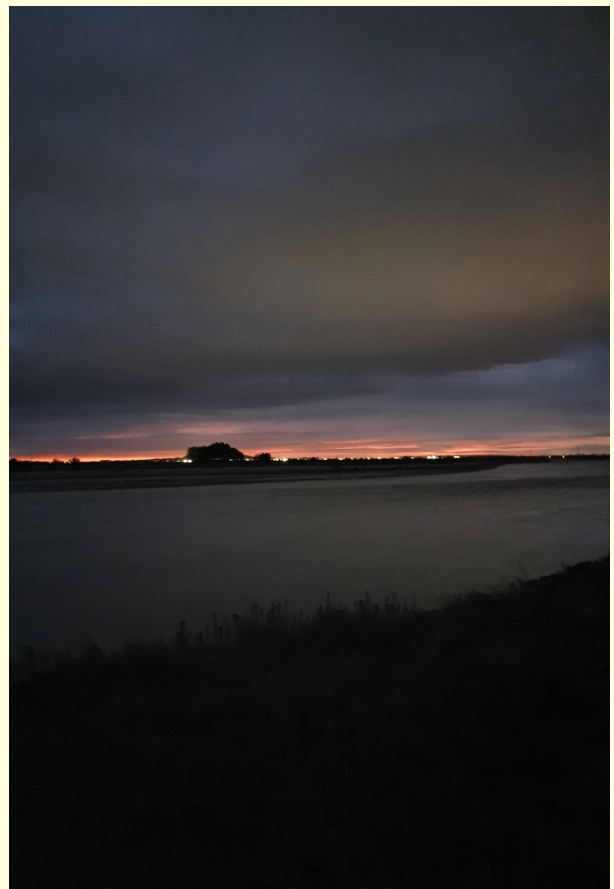
Sun rise towards Pawlett



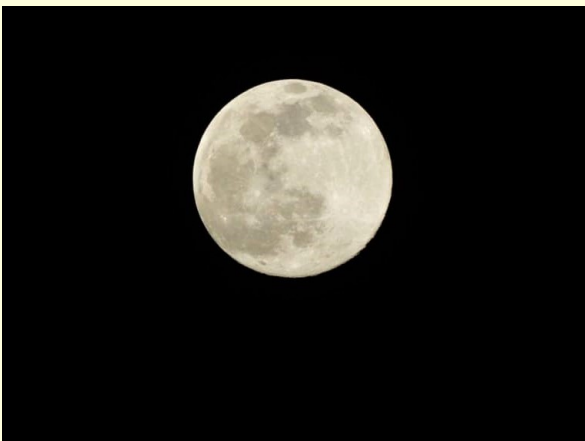
Combwich Common under water



Tugs returning to base with gig rowers in the background



Morning Gloom



Moon - Elaine Howe



The Marshes - Carole Birkenhead



WANT OTTERHAMPTON TO DO IT'S BIT FOR WILDLIFE?
HELP MORE NEIGHBOURS CONNECT TO NATURE?

OTTERHAMPTON 'WILDER COMMUNITY' NEW Biodiversity and Conservation Group

FAMILY 'TASTER' EVENT

23rd May - 11am (to 1pm)

FUN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES
HAVE A GO AT SOME WILDLIFE SURVEYS



FIND OUT HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN THIS NEW LOCAL GROUP
AT COMBWICH COMMON/BROWNIES COPSE

For more details contact: mark.ward@somersetwildlife.org ring: 07880 754750

SOMERSET WILDLIFE TRUST - SOMERSET BRILLIANT COAST PROJECT
Supported by Otterhampton Parish Council & local residents



A group of local residents supported by Somerset Wildlife Trust's 'Somerset's Brilliant Coast' Project' (funded by HPC CIM Funded & the National Trust) and Otterhampton Parish Council have set up a new group to help conserve biodiversity and make the Parish even greener!

We are planning to work together on conservation tasks such as tree planting and encouraging people to grow plants for pollinators both in public spaces and in their own gardens. We will also be setting up citizen science projects to monitor the wildlife we already have such as butterflies, bumblebees and bats - getting everyone involved from school children to seniors!

One of our first projects will be to continue work already started by some residents to improve access to the Brownies Copse for local people whilst also improving it for wildlife. The Copse is owned by the Parish Council and is adjacent to Bridgwater Bay SSSI of which the Combwich Common is a part.

If you live in Combwich or in surrounding hamlets within the parish and you would like to find out more we are running a 'taster event' - meeting on Combwich Common, next to Brownies Copse, at 11am on Sunday 23rd May. Why not come along and bring the family? We will have some environmental activities to get involved in and some mini-wildlife surveys to do. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm.

If you want to find out more email Mark Ward on mark.ward@somersetwildlife.org or ring him on 07880 754750

Smiling is infectious
you catch it like the flu
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too

I walked around the corner
And gave someone a grin
And then I realised I'd passed it on to him

So if you feel a smile begin
Don't leave it undetected
Let's start an epidemic
And get the world infected

Submitted by Hazel Bishop



Your favourite
Jam, Marmalade
and chutney and
also plants are
still available.

Proceeds to the
Bridgwater Food
Bank

Ring Liz on 01278 652687



Anchor news update

During this last lock down period we have been busy updating the pub and carrying out essential maintenance. We have fixed the flat roof to hopefully stop the leaks and refurbished the kitchen as most of it is over 15 years old and has seen better days. Two new ovens have been fitted and lots of little bits to make life in there a bit easier. We have also built a new porch which will make the dining area much more comfortable, particularly during the winter.

We have taken on a new full-time chef and are hoping to be providing food 7 nights a week and all-day Saturday and Sunday. We intend restarting the Sunday lunch carvery very soon and we look forward to getting back to dining inside the pub. It's been great to see so many new and old face since we were able to open again outside. Just wish the weather would stay sunny every day.

All being well the full menu will be available by the end of May and we are hoping to get some live music booked in and planning some parties for the village to hopefully say goodbye to COVID and this long hard year. To check if the pub is open on bad weather days txt Matt on 07850 328817



Somerset Medal Award



We are delighted to report that villager Lynn Carter has been awarded the Somerset Medal for her outstanding work in setting up Otterhampton Scrubs at a time when the NHS was desperately short of PPE. With her group of volunteer sewers they produced much needed scrubs, hats with ties, caps, headbands and masks.

Responding Lynn says; -

“I was absolutely blown away to receive the Somerset Medal. I hadn't heard anything about the award and had no idea that I'd been nominated. I actually thought the email from Councillor Fothergill was some sort of scam! I had to read it three times to take it in. I'm sure there must be many more deserving people out there but I'm very moved to receive such an accolade and thank everyone who nominated me. The whole Comwich Scrubs project couldn't have happened without the lovely talented ladies who did all the sewing and my wonderful husband Nick who put up with a very messy house for a couple of months and put his pattern cutting skills to the test – they definitely all deserve a big thank you as well.”

MOBILE LIBRARY

The mobile library visits Combwich and Stockland every four weeks on a Thursday morning. The next visit is 3rd June.

Combwich Harbour TA5 2QU 10.15 – 10.50

Combwich Post Office TA5 2QW 10.55 – 11.20

Stockland Bristol Captains TA5 2PY 11.30 – 11.55

For information about this service, contact Somerset Direct 0300 1232224 or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries.

Please support this service

Please note this service has now resumed

Post Office and Shop

Masks must be worn at all times by all customers and please note that we are currently operating on one customer only allowed in at a time


Opening hours may vary during these difficult times, and please remember we are a small shop and cannot stock the range of the Supermarkets.



To keep up to date with all that is happening in the parish check the village noticeboards, log on to our own website, www.combwich.org.uk or visit "All Things Combwich" Facebook Group

Otter Tales
Deadline for articles etc for next issue is
Thursday 1st July 2021

Otter Wheels



We are sorry we cannot offer the normal service to our passengers due to the Covid 19 restrictions, but as soon as we are able we will resume normal service.

Thank you for your understanding

However

Essential journeys for medical appointments will be undertaken when no alternative transport is available

Ring 07925 154216

For more information

Otter Tales

Articles for publication to Barry Leathwood (editor) Tel: 652399, email: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com
Events to Aly Prowse, Tel: 652426 email: otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com
Distribution. Bob Birkenhead Tel: 653127, email: birkenhead.bob@gmail.com

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