



NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2015

REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

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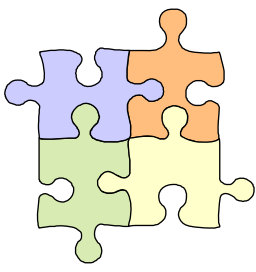
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C.A.N.S.

Annual Parish Report for Cans May 11th 2015

Another May Fair completed, the weather could have been better but on the whole it wasn't too bad. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the village for moving their vehicles to allow the fair to take place within the road closure area.

National Windscreens sponsored the Devon Cadets and also allowed use of a large vehicle to transport the barriers and signage; we thank them very much for their support of our event.

Wessex Water kindly allowed us to use their barriers and signage for the road closures and we thank them for this.

Special thanks must go to Cricketer Farm Shop who provided the lunch for the Devon Army Cadets and the Wessex Historical Society, the cheese and butter being donated by Cricketer Farm.

Thanks must also go to all the volunteers who helped at the barriers, the climbing wall and generally being available for whatever work was needed.

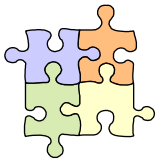
Once again we had a full day's entertainment on the Cross orchestrated by Bob Keene, we thank him for his hard work in the planning of this.

We had taken bookings for all available stalls and gazebos and a lot of pitches, on the day we had a few empty spaces where stall holders had not bothered to turn up and in most cases had not informed us, very frustrating as we had a waiting list of people wanting to attend.

We need to make a few amendments to the booking form so people are aware what CANS is already paying for in the way of entertainment etc so we have no duplication which could cost CANS. Also need to ensure people using BBQs etc have the correct fire extinguishers.

Next year the May Fair will be on April 30th as this is the Saturday of the May Bank holiday, if anyone should wish to help with the organisation of this event or has any ideas please let us know.

The new notice board will hopefully be on the Cross this week. This is for the use of the Parish Office, the Royal British Legion, W.I. and the Village Hall. The old notice boards



C.A.N.S.

will be removed from the wall except for the Church Notice Board as they chose to keep their own.

All the memorial plaques will be transferred from the old notice boards to the new one as soon as possible. The greater part of the cost of the new notice board has been funded by CANS through the May Fair and by donations from the Parish Council and Magnox.

The Parish Office will monitor the notice board so all posters etc should be current; this will also avoid any notices being hung from the trees and road side furniture.

CANS is something anyone can get involved with and we will look at any activity within the village that we can give support to but unless someone comes forward with suggestions we cannot help. In the past we have helped with The Orchard, Millennium Wood and Youth projects. Most noticeably the War Memorial was a project set up under CANS and the War Memorial and Memorial Books are a legacy for the village.

Please contact the Parish Office with any ideas and we can discuss them.



Annual Parish Meeting Nether Stowey CP. Paths

I took over this volunteer role in May 2014. This coincided with the Somerset County Council's Rights of Way team's annual paths survey. The survey of the 22 footpaths wholly within the parish boundary and a further 3 partially within it, revealed that many were either totally impassable or only passable with difficulty. The two reasons for this situation were either a lack of use by walkers or a lack of maintenance of the access and egress points. It was impossible to guess if the lack of use was a result of the bad conditions or if the bad conditions came about because of a lack of use.

Since that initial report, there has been a considerable amount of work carried out in order to bring the paths up to an acceptable condition for public access. Undergrowth was cleared around stiles and gates and where structural damage was found, faults were logged with Somerset County Council. As of July 6th 2014, with the exception of one, all of the paths within the Parish were open for everyone's enjoyment. Although all of the entry points were completely clear, as were the path furniture (gates, bridges etc), some of the paths themselves were overgrown to a certain extent. This hampers progress slightly and sturdy footwear and long trousers were necessary.

In early July 2014 I petitioned the Nether Stowey Parish Council, to request the path which runs adjacent to the A39 and enters the wooded area near the rear of the Church Centre, be mowed periodically as part of the Parish's maintenance programme. This was readily agreed by Council and from then that path has been well managed. I know from experience that this action has been very well received by parishioners who use it regularly.

During the year there have been five fault calls logged with Somerset County Council, all of which were investigated and rectified within 14 days.

In conjunction with the Parish Council I have also been working with Somerset County Council on the new Two Castles Trail, a new Promoted Path which will give a circular route from Stogursey to the Mount and back to Stogursey again (going in a different way). We have been examining how this walk could be made easier and have proposed some tweaks to the established footpaths in our Parish. As a result of this we will also be getting better "furniture" to replace stiles that are awkward to use or in poor condition. One stile has already been replaced by a kissing gate on the Mount.

Finally the surest method of controlling the kind of growth which hampers easy progress and therefore maintaining access is to continually use the paths.

I would urge people to rediscover these rights of way and to enjoy them.

Any information concerning village rights of way, please contact the parish office.

Colin Falla
Path Liaison Officer

FRIENDS OF NETHER STOWEY LIBRARY

Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2015

During the past year Committee Meetings have been held, on average, every two months, attended by our 8 Committee members and (usually) a member of the Somerset Library Service. With our activities now set up and each one having individual members responsible for their organization, there is much less need for formal meetings. Much communication and organization is done via email. Membership has held close to 80. Our aims of supporting and increasing the use of the Library have proceeded, with the following activities running during the year:

Book Sales

Monthly book sales were held until the middle of 2014, when the Library Service wished to clear the room that had been used for the sales. By that time nearly £1000 had been raised for the purchase of new books, through the sale of those books which had been donated by residents, but had not been taken into Library Service stock.

Tall Tales – Story-telling for grown-ups

Members of a local U3A creative writing group read their short stories to an audience on Friday mornings. The readings are held bi-monthly though the Autumn and Spring

Family History Research

Following training in the use of the Ancestry website, Friends committee members help those interested in family history to use the website - free to Library users - and further their research.

Knit and Natter

Sessions in the Library every Wednesday morning. Large numbers of garments for babies have been knitted and sent to Africa, Romania and, closer to home, Musgrove Park Hospital.

Mah Jong

A Mah Jong group has been established, meeting on Wednesday afternoons.

Childrens' Storytime

A Class from the School visit the Library every Friday afternoon to choose books and have a story or stories read to them, suitable for the age range of the class.

Programme of Monthly Evening Talks

The second series of Wednesday evening talks began in September 2014 and will conclude in May of this year. They have covered a wide range of topics and the highlight of this series was a visit by the distinguished novelist, Dame Margaret Drabble.

Play Reading

The latest new activity is a play reading group, established at the beginning of this year. Using scripts borrowed from the County Performing Arts Library, the group meets once a month on Friday mornings.

Stall at the May Fair

A stall taken to promote the work of the Friends and the Library itself.

The Friends of Coleridge

Registered Charity no. 295285

www.friendsofcoleridge.com

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THE FRIENDS OF COLERIDGE: Report, Spring 2015

The objectives of the Friends of Coleridge are to advance knowledge about the life, work and times of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his circle, and to support Coleridge Cottage as a centre of Coleridge interest in co-operation with the National Trust.

Twice a year the Friends produce the Coleridge Bulletin, which maintains a very high standard of scholarship and production thanks to Graham Davidson, the editor, and David Worthy, the designer. Last winter's issue included a CD of Wordsworth's Lucy poems set to music by Nigel Dodd and sung by Tom Mayberry (our former chairman), accompanied on the piano by the composer.

Coleridge's Father by J C C Mays, a ground-breaking work of scholarship, was distributed to subscribers and libraries last year. Graham Davidson, a long-standing committee member, saw this arduous publishing project through to a successful conclusion.

Our Chairman, Justin Shepherd, has given talks to the volunteers at Coleridge Cottage; has represented the Friends at the opening of the extension to the Coleridge Way; and has led groups of students from Wellington College on trips to Coleridge Cottage and the Quantocks.

A marble tablet commemorating Coleridge's time in Malta has been unveiled in Valetta; the Friends made a donation towards this project.

The Friends awarded two bursaries of £200 each to enable young British scholars to attend the Coleridge and Contemplation conference in Kyoto this year.

At the end of July last year the Coleridge Conference took place in Cannington under the academic leadership of Professor Tim Fulford. More than 50 papers were given by scholars and academics from around the world, including North America, Europe, Asia, Australasia and Africa; plenary papers were given by some of the most distinguished scholars in the field. Tours and visits were arranged to places associated with Coleridge and his circle. The next Coleridge Conference will take place in summer 2016.

In autumn this year the Friends, in partnership with the Lamb Society, are organising a day of talks and outings in Highgate to celebrate Coleridge's time there. For more details, please check our website, www.friendsofcoleridge.com

Last October the 22nd autumn Study Weekend was held at Halsway Manor. The theme was 'Coleridge the Shakespearian'; talks from five speakers were much enjoyed during this convivial weekend. The next Study Weekend will take place at Halsway on 11-13 September 2015 – everybody welcome! Please contact Maggie Roberts, email quadrifoglia1772@btinternet.com, telephone 01278 734789.

Do keep checking our website for more news and events: www.friendsofcoleridge.com

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TRUSTEES REPORT TO THE VILLAGE MEETING FEBRUARY 2014 - FEBRUARY 2015

The year 2014 – 2015 has been another successful year for the village hall, although income was slightly down.

Highlights

- Our quiz evenings are proving to be very popular and continue to add to village hall funds.
- Our first venture into comedy thanks to Colin and Janice was a great success and Richard Digence will be returning in September. For those who missed him you have another chance!
- In September we received another successful visit from the River Tones who very kindly donated their fee to the MacMillan Coffee Morning.
- Our fourth Christmas market made a profit of £751 – the market has a reputation of providing an enjoyable afternoon with a wide variety of stalls. We continually seek new stalls while maintaining a good basis of regular supporters offering a variety of crafts and produce stalls. Feedback from stall holders is generally positive with many saying “we will be back next year”.
- Following the success of the Christmas Fayre, we introduced an Easter market earlier this year – starting small in the main hall – which was well received and is likely to become a permanent feature of the village calendar. Interest from stall holders has already been shown for next year and we are almost fully booked for our fifth Christmas market.
- The Bouncy Castle continues to attract children's parties to the hall drawing a new generation to the attractions we provide.
- The number of adult parties has increased and we hosted a successful brownie camp during the summer.
- Following our village survey we introduced Nether Stowey Village Cinema last September with an Australian biopic - “Tracks”. From the start our new cinema was well supported and has now become a regular feature of the monthly calendar. The outlay on equipment hire made us cautious initially with the choice of films but gradually our confidence has grown adding a comedy and family film this year. The Parish Council kindly donated a big screen to replace the hired one and a Blu-Ray player in lieu of a grant in 2014/5 and we hope to add to our own equipment in the coming year to reduce the reliance on hiring from Somerset film. To this end, we have applied for a free projector from the BFI who are currently supporting village cinemas showing mainly British films – hopefully we will be lucky although there is another chance to win one later in the year. If I was to pick two highlights of the cinema year it would be the showing of Pride – a great biographical comedy at the expense of our friends across the water in January and Paddington last month where we saw a number of families bringing children to the show. This season we have included a film ostensibly for “the boys” by that great director Clint Eastwood.

Our web site content has improved and now contains details of events we hold and regular clubs and provides details of booking details for the hall. We have recently updated the web site to a cleaner template more in keeping with the modern look.

Lowlights

- Unfortunately, during the year we lost our regular Friday night Kick-Boxing Club due to dwindling attendance although we have been able to fill some evenings with private parties.

- Expenditure has increased – our Performing Rights fees is income based and has risen slightly together with additional payments to Sedgemoor District Council to cover variations to our premises licence for the new cinema and Designated Premises Supervisor.
- Our licensing DPS resigned during the year and the committee decided to take on the role themselves as it seems unfair to ask a publican to take responsibility for what is effectively a competitor to their business. We would like to thank Bill of the George for his support both through the premises supervisor post & also hosting some of our planning meetings
- Hall temperature in winter continues to be a problem and we have installed a curtain heater over the main door to alleviate problems in winter, and heating and light costs – our biggest expenditure – are being closely monitored.

Looking Forward

- Our Hallmark 1 & 2 quality certificates expire in 2016 and a decision has been taken that when we re-apply for them we will also apply for Hallmark 3 (the highest quality mark for village halls) at the same time. Work will start soon ensuring we have policies & procedures in place to make this possible.
- We have participated in the Task force considering the feasibility of a new village hall combined with showers, pavilion facilities and outside toilets on the playing field. The feasibility report is likely to be agreed this coming week and will then be sent to the two committees for consideration at a joint meeting in July. Following that, the task force will report our recommendations to the village. Should a decision be taken by the village to go forward with a new village hall, this will be a major undertaking, and the two committees will need the support of villagers and all groups in the village and using the hall to achieve the necessary fund raising.
- Disappointingly, our AGM was attended by only two villagers apart from the existing committee – now many more people are using the hall we really wish we knew the formula to get some to come along to hear our annual report and tell us if we are going in the right direction or not and maybe even stand up and join our committee.

Thanks

My personal thanks go to the entire committee for their help and support and to our expanding team of volunteer helpers who work hard organising entertainment for the village and raising funds in the process. More volunteers are needed to spread the load so if there is anyone out there with a few hours spare whether you are a cinema buff or are itching to organise a jumble sale or farmers market etc or help with anything please get in touch with us.

We also thank those village handymen who come to our aid whether it is repairing the hall, fitting a new electric screen or unblocking the sewers.

Finally I would like to thank the Parish Council for their support of the village hall and on occasions their guidance.

Ray Brooks (Chair)
01278 732532



STOWEY GARDENERS has been established for many years and has a membership of all ages...We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30 in the Village Hall. For each meeting we have a guest speaker and over the year a variety of topics are covered from 'Wildlife in the Garden' and 'Vegetable Growing', to 'Plant Hunting in Japan' and 'Colour in the Garden'. Our speakers are mainly local but from time to time we have celebrities such as Anne Swithenbank, Timothy Walker of Oxford Botanic Gardens, Helen Yemm (Sunday Telegraph Gardening Correspondent) and recently Toby Buckland. Many of our speakers are very entertaining as well as instructive and some bring plants and bulbs to purchase.

At each meeting we have a raffle and in season a plant stall and a social time when tea or coffee and biscuits are served. In addition to meetings we make group visits to gardens – these are mainly half day visits but from time to time we organise a coach visit to gardens further afield. In Summer we organise a Garden Party and at Christmas a very enjoyable party, both these are very social, friendly events. We welcome all ages and it is not at all necessary have a garden or even just a patio to enjoy the club. Our subscription is a very modest £15 per year and it is possible to attend meetings as a visitor for £3 only. For more information contact Angela Lampson on 671831 or Teresa Turner on 733334.



BOOKS FOR LIFE

Charity

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Annual report 2015

We are pleased to report that we have had another successful year, despite the inclement weather. This is mainly due to the local generosity of donations both in cash and also in material items. We can now say that we are 100% recycling. We are even able to recycle our cardboard. It is very encouraging for Margaret who many of you have now met as she worked so hard changing the Windows and putting on different displays outside.

We are pleased to say that the shop has now become a two way community facility for the village. As apart from large furniture we can supply most of the household equipment that people require for day-to-day living. Our electrical side is very successful and keeps our pack tester very busy.

In 2010 we reported that we had financed over a quarter of million meals for children in the boys home and the vocational training centre which caters for older boys and girls. We had a vision to aim for half 1 million meals and we are pleased to say that this target was exceeded at the end of September 2014.

St Joseph's boys home children have worked very hard in this last year because when they came to the school. Some of them had had no education at all. The average pass rate has increased and some of the students have excellent results, which will give them the opportunity to go on to further education.

The Corlim Vocational Training Centre is amazing. The female students have continued a record of 100% pass rate since 2002. Many of these girls and boys have failed to their initial exams in government schools and come to the Vocational Training Centre for a concentrated period of 12 months. This has resulted in them going onto the skill training that they need to get higher paid jobs. The boys worked very hard because many of them are slow learners that in practical skills they excel in their pass rate is 84% and 94% still managed to get a job because of the good reputation of the school.

We requested that both the school and training centre should set up an Old Students Society, which has been very beneficial in encouraging students when they hear of the success of the older students and this has now become an annual event.

The hospital and school in Boroboro Health Centre, Uganda continues to progress with staff accommodation and toilets built. Dr Andy Douglass has made regular visits together with his wife, who has involved herself in delivering babies and brightening up the wards. It is intended to improve and expand a staff accommodation, so that some of the staff can be permanently on hand for emergencies.

We are pleased that we have been able to increase our local funding this year as it dropped last year due to the flooding in the village. We have now increased the number of trustees who are very practical asset to the charity, especially as both Margaret and I are getting older.

It is our intention to increase our local funding to improve facilities of the smaller organisations in the surrounding area. However, this will very much depend on the generosity of people supporting the shop by purchasing items here locally rather than going to the charity shops in Bridgwater. Besides the cost of travel and time, we are told that we are very competitive in our pricing. We regularly change the racks of clothing according to the season and weather. Clothing and fabrics are an essential part of our income for recycling. So do please remember us.

To remind and inform newcomers to our lovely village what our charity is about. In India. We are in association with a very large educational foundation that were set up in 1903 and now has 360,000 children of all ages in education. Most of these are in rural districts where there is no funding to be raised to fund the local inhabitants and the old-fashioned way in supporting is to give food to the schools. We examine the accounts that are monthly provided from each institution and then notify the bank to release the amount that is required. Since 2001 we have never found any discrepancy in the accounts which are also examined by the government because the boys' home is attached to a government school. Our responsibilities are for food, medical, uniforms, exam fees and in the case of vocational training centre. We cover the cost of the travelling expenses so that the poor children can get the school on a daily basis. This is cheaper than accommodating them and therefore we can increase the number of students that we support. A larger accommodation area with a hall to relax in was provided by a benefactor and this houses the boys that come from far away, such as the persecuted Orrissa children.

In 2007. We stayed in Hyderabad and visited 17 schools, all located in slum areas. The accommodation for the schools was provided by the inhabitants themselves by giving the top floor of their houses. This was to protect their children whilst they were at work because to their horror when they came home at night their children had been trafficked. So in 1990 was agreed by one slum area that a crèche would be created and the parents would leave their children in the care of specially trained teachers from Montfort and they will be collected in the evening. Such was a success of this project that other slum areas requested the Montfort brothers to do the same for them. At the time of my visit I enquired if they needed financing and was told that they were adequately covered by UNESCO and WHO and therefore did not need any further finance. However, the recent Ebola crisis and refugee demand has caused both international organisations to reduce their funding and we have been asked if we could raise £10,000 to support 941 children in 29 schools with water. We are trying our best to help and have started a JUST GIVING campaign, but at the moment we are not being very successful due to the workload that we already have. We therefore desperately need help in someone who could come up with some fundraising ideas to help and organise fundraising for this project.

To date the above project has saved 15,000 children from being trafficked and as far as we can gather this is higher success than anywhere else in the world. Many of these children have gone on to further education.

All funds raised will go hundred percent to the project.

All donations to be made payable to Books For Life Charity. Please indicate if your donation is for a particular project other than the above.

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