

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017

Local groups and organisations have reported their activities for the past year, some will present their reports to you this evening and others are on display for you to read.

Before I get on to the main part of my report I would like to use this opportunity to express the thanks of us all to a number of people who do jobs around the village. The Clock continues to give good service and this is thanks to a dedicated crew of Tony Edney, Steve Scarrott and Ian Faris. To those who open and close the gaol: Heather Coates, Louiza Pearson, Mike Henry, Terry Sackett and Colin Penny. Thanks also to Chloë Frost for opening and closing the public lavatories every day, and Colin Falla for his work as Footpaths Liaison Officer. I'd also like to make a special mention of Terry and Eliza Sackett who have contributed their skills generously for many village projects – including a Village Information Panel now installed in the Gaol.

PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Malcolm Hogg has unfortunately resigned from the Parish Council to pursue other interests; this means that we have a vacancy for a parish councillor.

We have been given to permission to co-opt at the Parish Council meeting next Monday and application forms are available should you have an interest.

BUS SHELTER

Last year at this time we said that we proposed to erect a bus shelter at the junction of the A39 and Stogursey Lane. This has now been completed and is well used. It appears the children appreciate that they can now wait for the school bus without being soaked by rain and passing traffic.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

In early December 2015 the Parish Council undertook to work on a Neighbourhood plan. Once approved and adopted this would provide the village with a greater say in future planning issues and also how the village would continue to evolve in the future.

Although the Parish Council understood the need for a Neighbourhood plan we also understood that as a Parish Council we did not have the expertise or the time to commit fully to this task. Therefore in the first instance we agreed to employ on an "as-needed" basis planning consultant Amada Goddard to assist and guide us in this venture.

We are grateful to the hardcore of people who have stuck with this and the amount of work they are doing. The group is now headed by Kevin Ferriday who has taken over from Malcolm Hogg as the chairperson.

The results of the questionnaire have now being analysed. This was a huge task and I would to thank Bruce Roper for his meticulous work on this. Using the information residents provided in the questionnaire and meetings with local organisations the group is now completing a number of topic reports based on those results and will shortly start working on policy ideas to meld the (often contradictory) points of view.

Following this the next stage will be a consultation with the village to look at proposals for the final plan.

MAY FAIR

Preparations for the May Fair continue and we have now sold out of spaces. We do of course need volunteers for the day.

This will be the tenth year that it has been held and it has become an important part of the Somerset Street Fair calendar, drawing people and stall holders from a very wide area. However it is organised and staged by a very small group, who do most of the work, they feel it is time to step away after this year. So we are looking for people, individually or as a group, to take over and perhaps bring in some fresh ideas. The Parish Office will be happy to continue with their role in the dealing with the finances, licensing and other arrangements. It would be a shame to see this great event fade away, but we have struggled with a skeleton crew for the last few years, and it getting harder to get enough volunteers on the day to meet the requirements for licensing, health and safety – another reason to wonder if the May Fair should continue.

PLOT 173 AONB GRANT

We were able to obtain a grant from the AONB under their Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund for the planting of new trees on the land and elected to use this money for the purchase of local heritage fruit trees. These have now been planted and appear to be settling in nicely.

A nice addition to the garden is a new bench in memory of John Penn, which has been donated by John's widow Belinda.

NOTICE BOARD

It was decided that we will have an additional notice board on Stogursey Lane to would improve the availability of information. It's on order and we hope to have installed later in the Spring.

PUBLIC TOILETS AND CAR PARK

Work continues to keep this area clean and tidy and we installed a handrail at the steps at the request of a resident. A new electricity supply contract and new LED lights have considerably reduced costs.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AT MILL LANE AND LIME STREET

This project is still in the hands of the SCC Highways, it appears to be stalled whilst the road safety people look at the proposals.

BUDGET

Colin Penny as Chairman of the Finance Committee will speak separately on this

GRANTS

In a community such as ours it is important to encourage, help and support worthwhile groups that contribute to the life and well-being of the community. In the past twelve months the Parish Council has approved and provided grants to various groups within the village.

NS Recreation Ground	maintenance grant, including unclaimed funds from last year, £2,776
NS Village Hall	maintenance grant, including unclaimed funds from last year, £2,147
Stowey Centre	contribution to costs for new Charity, £750

Stowey Shuttle	contribution to set-up costs, £200
Mendip Community Transport	support for Sedgemoor Slinky Bus which serves Nether Stowey £100

CRICKETER

Please have a look at the display panels showing what is proposed for the site and details of how you can send your individual comments.

Directly after this meeting there will be a planning meeting to discuss this proposal and there will be a public session at the start for anyone who wishes to comment.

BUSES

Following the demise of the bus service a number of ideas were looked at to try and get some sort of service reinstated. As a result EDF came forward and agreed to supply a FREE service between Minehead and Bridgwater from Monday to Friday.

The fact that this is taking place is down to the hard work put in by Councillor Hugh Davis, Councillor Peter Grandfield and Somerset Passenger Solutions who are providing the buses.

However please remember this is on for a trial period and without sufficient use being made it could be withdrawn.

It has to be said that Somerset County Council were less than helpful with this problem.

HINKLEY C DEVELOPMENT

Councillors continue to attend numerous meetings organized by EDF and the District Councils to discuss matters concerned with this development. Obviously now this is going ahead we can expect some inconvenience especially with regards to traffic locally, though it is a bit early to understand the true impact but I doubt whether there is anyone in the Bridgwater area who is not suffering.

DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL

We continue to work hard with both Councils to try to get the best possible services. You are no doubt all well that they offer in an ever tighter financial landscape and this means that some services are less than we might like. The Parish Council does try to top-up these service, but we do have to pay for them through the precept, which means everyone's Council tax bills. We can longer sit and wait for "them" to do things and I would urge everyone to do what they can – even something as quick and simple as sweeping up the leaves from your front garden trees can help stop drains getting blocked for example.

Can I also remind everyone that there are County Council elections on Thursday 4 May and the closing date to register to vote is 13 April for those who are not registered already. The provisional dates for postal and proxy votes are 18 and 26 April respectively.

GENERAL

We are pleased to see that progress is being made on the George and it is looking more like its normal self or in some aspect even better. We wish Bill all the best for the future once he is open again.

If we do not support our local shops and businesses, we will lose them and our village will be that much poorer as a result.

The agenda has an item about questions raised by Mr Peckham who is not here. These were:

Can we get the road WHITE LINES REPAINTED – we will discuss with Somerset Highways, when we Mr Peckham tells us which ones he means

Are the DISABLED PLACES STILL VALID: we are not part of the process, do not know who applies for them and are not consulted. We have been told in the past that spaces no longer needed will be removed when/if the roads are resurfaced.

Can we get a POLICEMAN TO APPEAR in the village every so often: Apparently not unless there is an incident, this is the present A&S Police policy and comments should be addressed to Mrs Mountstevens, Police & Crime Commissioner.

Can anything be done about PARKING ON THE CROSS: we realise that parking is an issue in this village and on the whole be able to rely on drivers being sensible and following the rules. We may now be able to get an occasional traffic warden, so be warned.

Why is it taking so long to REMOVE AN ABANDONED VEHICLE at the top of Lime Street. Sedgemoor and/or the Police are responsible for co-ordinating the removal of this vehicle and we understand the removal is now in hand.

A NEW VILLAGE HALL AND PAVILION FOR THE PLAYING FIELD.

A representative of the Committees will say more on this.

THANK YOU AND PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING AFTER THIS MEETING

News from the Finance Committee –

Report from Councillor Colin Penny, Chairman of the Finance & Audit Committee

During the past year the Parish Council (PC) has supported various local organisations including the Village Hall and Recreation Ground. Applications can be made to the PC from any organisation in Nether Stowey for small grants and these can be made via the Parish office.

During the year, the PC purchased, and had installed, a bus shelter for the stop near Stogursey Lane which was open to the elements. An ongoing project is the railings in St Mary Street. Although these are the responsibility Somerset CC, and remain so, it was decided that the work needed to be done and this should be finished in the near future.

As with all local authorities, we have been prudent in our efforts to provide services at an affordable cost, nevertheless we have had to implement a modest 1.5% increase in the levy for 2017/18.



Parish Report April 2017

Nether Stowey CP. Paths

There continues to be an encouraging increase in the use of the paths and rights of way within the village boundaries. They are now regularly used by locals (both dog walkers and social walkers) and occasional tourists.

Over the preceding ten months there have been considerable improvements made to the network. Some improvements have been as a result of faults that have been logged and some as part of general maintenance.

BW 22/9 has had a new handrail installed to increase safety.

BW 22/27 has had two faulty stiles replaced by kissing gates.

During autumn of 2016 considerable clearance work was carried out on most of the Nether Stowey CP paths. This was most noticeable in the area to the North of the A39.

The most considerable improvements were made on the path which links the allotments area to the slip road entry to Inwood garage. Because this path, popular with locals, does not feature on the definitive ROW map, it's maintenance was an area of contention. I would like to thank Nether Stowey Parish Council for their initiative in commissioning improvements to the entry areas on both sides of the A39. Further, a huge amount of thanks must go to Mr Andrew Jeanes for his voluntary work in completely clearing the paths route along the old Taunton road.

There are over 20 public footpaths wholly within the parish boundary and a further 3 partial within it. Throughout the previous year there were seven new faults reported and five of them resolved.

Currently there are six faults logged on our network and only one of these seriously impairs use of the path. This impairment is known by SCC Rights of Way team and is a long running issue with the land owner.

There are a number of further improvements and diversions scheduled for the near future. Some of these are allied to the project to create a new national trail linking the castles of Stogursey and Nether Stowey. The other major diversion is to avoid the construction of the new facilities at Inwood Farm complex.

On the only negative aspect of my report, I must remind dog owners of their responsibilities relating to use of the paths. We have no "Open Access" areas within our Parish. The paths across fields are generally on privately owned farmland, some have livestock and some have crops. All dogs must be kept under control, preferably on a lead. The dogs must not be allowed to stray across the whole area of the field. Most important is that all faeces must be removed.

Finally, I would encourage everyone to use the paths as often as possible. This is the most assured way of maintaining them. Any information concerning village rights of way, please contact the parish office.

Colin Falla
Path Liaison Officer

Nether Stowey Recreation Ground Charity No.304590

<http://www.netherstoweyrg.co.uk/>

Report to the Parish Council April 2017

The committee of only 7 volunteers arrange the regular maintenance of the playing fields, undertake fund-raising activities to pay for these and apply for grant applications to improve the facilities on the field. We are also working with the village hall committee to combine the 2 charities in order to work together to create a new facility (working title - The Stowey Centre) on the Playing Field which will serve the needs of the village for the foreseeable future.

In the last 12 months the committee has undertaken the following:

- Organised the annual Party-in-the-Park..
- Administered the PFR Club (formerly the lottery). These two activities are our main fund-raisers for the charity.
- Co-ordinated the management of the trees (either reduced in height or removed). Thanks to Dave Robinson for the substantial amount of work undertaken. We have also consulted with Richard Ince about re-planting.
- Arranged for the cutting of the hedgerows – thank you to Andrew Jeanes for donating this to the charity.
- Organised a community clear up of the recreation ground.
- Arranged for a significant amount of general maintenance work to be undertaken by Gary Bickers, including repairing fences, cutting back brambles, edging paths, weeding safety surfaces and painting shelters.
- Installed new signage on and around the children's play area regarding dogs.
- Obtained grant funding for half the cost of CCTV to be installed on the MUGA to help prevent vandalism and dog fouling. The remainder of the cost will be from the charities reserves.
- Collaborated with the Village Hall committee and members of the Task Force to progress the community pavilion (Stowey Centre) project.
- Held discussions with Simon Freeman of Clarke, Wilmott and Clarke solicitors in respect of a request to install a mobile phone mast on the field adjacent to the MUGA. Sedgemoor have granted planning permission and the lease is being completed. This should bring in a much needed annual income to the charity for the next 25 years.

Our thanks go to all of those people in the village who have helped make the last 12 months so successful.

The annual accounts are submitted to the Charities Commission and are up to date. We continue to manage our finances carefully and aim to keep approximately £10,000 in the current account and have just over £11,000 remaining from the Sedgemoor District Council RLT3 funds which is being used towards repairs of sports facilities.

We have regular income from the Nether Stowey Football clubs, both towards the cutting of the pitches as well as the maintenance of the 3G court. Income is also received from the lighting tokens, which pays for the electricity. Other regular users pay for the hire of the courts and we continue to focus on increasing this income.

Our meetings take place on the 3rd Wednesday of the month 7.15 pm in the village hall and everyone is welcome to attend.

Sharon Mayell – Treasurer Nether Stowey Playing Field Committee

THE FRIENDS OF COLERIDGE

REPORT FOR NETHER STOWEY PARISH COUNCIL

Last season's visitor numbers at **Coleridge Cottage** were 13,542, up on target. The Friends continue to support the work of the National Trust by helping recruit volunteers, acting as a source of information about Coleridge, and in strengthening relations with the Cottage.

Robin Whittaker, our **Membership Secretary**, brought the membership list up to date and enrolled 43 new members. Membership stood at 303 in September 2016.

Summer and Winter editions of the Coleridge Bulletin were published. There were some outstanding contributions from distinguished scholars.

In June the Chair took about 15 Sixth Form students from **Wellington School** to the Cottage, which was opened up early specially for them.

In August 2016 the biennial Summer Conference was held at Wills Hall, Bristol University, a new venue, under the academic leadership of Tim Fulford. A distinguished group of mainly American scholars gave keynote addresses and the delegates this year notably included many young scholars from the US, UK and other countries. The increased number of bursaries provided by the Friends enabled many of these young scholars to attend. The Conference was deemed a great success and the move away from Cannington, the traditional venue, did not inhibit attendance.

On 16-18 September 2016 the annual study weekend at Halsway Manor took place. Organised by Peter Larkin, Maggie Roberts and David Rix, it focused on the 'Christabel' volume of 1816. The list of speakers included distinguished senior academics, experienced speakers and younger academics. Musical entertainment was provided in the form of excerpts from Italian opera by Mozart and others, a musical form of which Coleridge was particularly fond.

Special project: *Kubla Khan – Imagined Worlds*

The Friends of Coleridge celebrated the bicentenary of the publication in 1816 of *Kubla Khan* with an unprecedentedly ambitious project, *Kubla Khan – Imagined Worlds*, which was aimed mainly at the local community, but which also had a national and international reach. This innovative 2016 project was supported by the Arts Council, Somerset Artworks and Somerset Film and was driven by Ian Enters and Terence Sackett with the support of other members of the Committee. The exciting programme included:

- **International Poetry Competition:** Poets were asked to write a poem inspired by 'Kubla Khan'. We received about 200 entries in two categories, one for adults and one for poets 10 to 17 years of age, with prizes of £500 for the winning poem and £250 for two runners-up. The winning poems also formed part of the touring art exhibition.
- **National Art Competition and touring exhibition:** The exhibition comprises contemporary work by about 35 artists. It was first launched at CICCIC in Taunton, and is now on at the Royal United Hospital in Bath until 28 April, when it will transfer to Coleridge Cottage in Nether Stowey.
- **A series of Coleridge-related guided walks with readings:** Led by Ian Enters, Terence Sackett, and Tilla Brading, with natural history information from Nigel Phillips. The walks included Porlock Weir to Ash Farm; around Nether Stowey, to experience the village as Coleridge and Tom Poole knew it; a walk in the footsteps of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Quantock Hills; and around Holford and Alfoxden – this walk will form the basis of a 'Walkers are Welcome' event being arranged with Sedgemoor Ramblers in early June. Terence Sackett has produced an 8-page illustrated leaflet covering the Nether Stowey walk. A thousand will be distributed free of charge.

- Film of *Kubla Khan* read by various local people: created at the Engine Room in Bridgwater by Somerset Film. It was shown at the CICCIC launch in Taunton, and is now on YouTube and the Friends of Coleridge website. Ian Enters was interviewed on local radio, and Inside Out (BBC Somerset) picked up the importance of the year linked with the National Trust and the visit of Ian McMillan to Nether Stowey to create their own film, crediting the Friends of Coleridge.
- Programme of school workshops: In partnership with Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film, the Friends of Coleridge arranged a programme of school workshops inspired by 'Kubla Khan'. Poets and artists Chris Jelley and Alice Maddicott encouraged young people to explore their own ideas and creativity in response to Coleridge's poem. Schools signed up to the InspirED project received a resource pack written by Ian Enters and were invited to apply for placements. Somerset Film coordinated workshops to create broadcasts by children for Somerset Radio. The success of this project has led to SAW extending the work to more schools in a continuing programme.
- Talk by Seamus Perry, Professor of English at Oxford: Seamus Perry gave a talk on 'Kubla Khan' and Coleridge to an audience of around 90 at Taunton Castle. It was arranged by Tom Mayberry and the Museum of Somerset.
- Poetry Readings: at Nether Stowey Library and Aisholt Village Hall.
- *In Xanadu...*: an illustrated, full-colour, 58-page booklet written by the Friends of Coleridge Chair Justin Shepherd, and designed by Terence Sackett of the Friends. 500 copies have been printed and it is being sold for £5 on the Friends' website and at local retail outlets and tourist centres. This has sold locally, nationally and internationally, including Europe, US, Canada and Australia via the society's website.

The Friends were pleased to support the publication, by subscription, of *Il Cantico dell' Antico Navicante*, an Italian translation of 'The Ancient Mariner', including both 1798 and 1834 versions, illustrated and hand-written by Ugo Gervasoni.

We are sad to report that **Shirley Watters**, who, together with her husband Reggie, revived the Friends in the early 1990s and largely made it what it is today, as well as serving on the committee until 2012, died after a short illness in the autumn. A service of thanksgiving was held in Nether Stowey church on 28 October. In addition to family tributes, The Chair of the Friends gave an address and a collection was made in support of the Friends.

Conclusion. The year has been a remarkable one in which the recent consolidation of the fundamental organisational structures and finances has enabled the success of the summer Conference at a new venue, our autumn study weekend, the two Bulletins and the fulfilment of the ambitious plans contained within the *Kubla Khan...* project. 2016 was a year of unrivalled ambition and activity for the Friends.

Eliza Sackett, Hon Secretary

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.friendsofcoleridge.com

NETHER STOWEY URBAN SAINTS

(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS CRUSADERS)

Report for Annual Parish meeting

The Juniors (school years 3- 6) meet weekly in the Church Centre. The programme (from the Urban Saints website) is a mix of games, Bible teaching, exploration of the Christian faith and craft. During the past year, the children have also enjoyed Bonfire Night at Cannington Activity Centre, with sparklers and toasted marshmallows. And a 10- pin bowling outing in Taunton.

The Seniors (school year 7 and above) meet fortnightly in the Church Centre. They too use the Urban Saints online session plans. This consists of games, fun Bible exploration and lots of discussion.

Highlights of this year have included ice skating in Bristol, raising funds for our Deanery Youth Worker by having a stall at the May Fair, and raising funds for Children in Need by joining in with the Countryfile Ramble. We also had a 10-pin bowling experience at Taunton, and finally the annual weekend at Spree, this is a Christian youth camp in Devon run by Urban Saints.

Contact for the juniors

Kerry Trout 732112

Brenda Jarvis 741227

Contact for the Seniors

Kathryn and Robin Popham 733745

Nether Stowey Women's Institute

Report for 2016/17

Nether Stowey WI currently has 29 members, we hold our meetings on the evening of the 2nd Thursday of each month, apart from August when we have no meeting.

Subscriptions for members are £37.00 per year, any non-members who attend a meeting are charged £2.00.

Almost at every meeting we have a guest speaker who gives a talk on many different subjects, we always try to support other events that take place in the village.

Occasionally we organize a coach trip to a place of interest, at Christmas we attend with all the other WI in Somerset, a service at Wells Cathedral. We also take part in our local group WI Christmas Carol Service, we have also at Christmas a meal with our members at a local venue, last Christmas this was a nice meal at the Nether Stowey Tea Rooms.

Margaret Harris

President Nether Stowey W.I

Report from the Nether Stowey Twinning Association for Parish Council

The Twinning Association has had a very eventful year and subsequently the membership has increased and is now approx 60.

There was a visit to Theillay by a small contingent in June, who, despite the weather had a very warm welcome from the French.

We welcomed the French back to Nether Stowey in November and they enjoyed breakfast at the Cricketer café, a visit to the Fleet Air Arm museum, a very lively evening at The old cider house, including fireworks!. Remembrance Sunday was marked by a laying of a poppy wreath by the two youngest members of the group

The afternoon was spent competing at Skittles for the challenge cup before a very traditional pub quiz.

Our normal quizzes have been running through the winter months and have proved popular.

A BBQ and Boule afternoon was held at The George and the weather was kind to us.

A very successful pop-up restaurant was held at the village hall in March which 43 people attended and thoroughly enjoyed.

There has been widespread interest shown in our proposed visit to Theillay next year over the remembrance weekend to coincide with the 100 anniversary of the war and the 20 years of Twinning