

**Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
Held on Monday 8th April 2002
At 7pm at Nether Stowey Village Hall**

Cllr J A Standing, Chairman of the Parish Council, took the Chair.

Present

Parish Councillors J Standing, M Fitzmaurice, G Bennet, M Harris, T Youe, S Watters, L Clark
District Councillor D Joslin
A Ensor, Clerk to the Parish Council
3 Parishioners

Cllr Standing welcomed those present.

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from:

District Councillors L Cartwright & K Dyer; County Councillor J Edney; Parish Councillor A Corkett; Mrs J Tyndall

2. Minutes of the 2001 Annual Parish Meeting

The Chairman stated that these had been approved at the May 2001 meeting of the Parish Council.

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman read a report on the business of the Parish Council over the preceding year, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Harris, Seconded by Cllr Watters

4. Reports from Representatives

4.1 School Governors

Cllr Standing presented a report on the activities of the Governors of Nether Stowey School, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Harris, Seconded by Cllr Watters

4.2 Playing Field

Cllr Youe gave a verbal report on the activities of the Playing Field Committee. During the last year a new roof had been fitted and substantial maintenance had been carried out to the portacabin, which is now 10 years old. In view of the problems of dog fouling a new doggy bin had been installed and was being well used. The Playing Field Committee was losing one of its longest serving members and would welcome any new volunteers.

Proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice, Seconded by Cllr Standing

4.3 Cemetery

Cllr Watters presented a report on the activities of the Cemetery Committee, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Bennett, Seconded by Cllr Youe

4.4 Hinkley Point Liaison

Cllr Standring read a report on the activities of the Hinkley Point Liaison Committee that had been prepared by Cllr Corkett, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Harris, Seconded by Cllr Bennett

4.5 Footpaths

Cllr Harris presented a report on footpaths in the Parish a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Standring, Seconded by Cllr Youe

4.6 Youth Club

Cllr Standring read a report on the activities of the Youth Club that had been prepared by Mrs J Tyndall, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice, Seconded by Cllr Watters

4.7 District Councillors

Cllr Joslin presented a report on the activities of the District Councillors, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Standring, Seconded by Cllr Fitzmaurice

4.8 Nether Stowey 2020

Cllr Watters presented a report on the activities of the Nether Stowey 2020 group, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice, Seconded by Cllr Youe

4.7 Village Hall

Cllr Standring read a report on the activities of the Village Hall that had been prepared by Cllr Webb, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Watters, Seconded by Cllr Bennett

4.8 Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

Cllr Standring presented a report on the activities of the Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Youe, Seconded by Cllr Bennett

4.9 Nether Stowey United Charities

The Clerk presented a report on the activities of the Nether Stowey United Charities, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Harris, Seconded by Cllr Youe

4.9 Twinning Association

There was no report from the Twinning Association

4.10 Allotment Association

Cllr Standing read a report on the activities of the Allotment Association prepared by Mr D Chedgey, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice, Seconded by Cllr Clark

4.11 Financial

The Clerk presented a summary Income and Expenditure Statement for the Parish Council for the year ending 31 March 2002, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, and pointed out that this was a preliminary report and may be subject to amendment.

Proposed by Cllr Fitzmaurice, seconded by Cllr Harris

4.12 County Councillor

There was no report from the County Councillor due to his absence due to ill health.

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

Chairman's Report

The Parish Council met on 11 occasions to conduct the business of the Parish including the Annual Parish Council meeting held May 2001. No Public Meetings were convened to discuss general Parish Council problems but two were organised to discuss the possibility and format of village celebrations for the Golden Jubilee of H M The Queen in June 2002. The first was well attended but only 4 members of the public were present at the second. The agreed outcome was that some form of celebration similar to that held for the Millennium, should occur and that a small sub-committee would take responsibility for the organisation. All meetings were held in the Billiard room of the Village Hall with the public being informed by the Agenda being displayed on public notice boards.

There have been a small but steady number of parishioners attending meetings, which has been welcome, with positive problems and comments being put before the Parish Council during the public session at each meeting. These were either clarified and dealt with at the time or taken forward as agenda items at the next meeting.

Cllr Jessica Healey, Chairman of SDC, was invited to speak and debate the new arrangements for local government, discussing the role and duties of the Executive and the future of the non-executive elected District Councillors.

Jon Blake, Corporate Director, SDC, explained the difficulties being encountered in recruiting a replacement for Matt Boon, who had unexpectedly resigned. Therefore any further flood relief investigations for the village would not be taken forward at that time. A realistic expectation would be that this work would not be undertaken until the next financial year. However, blocked culverts and other maintenance work should continue to be reported.

There have been Government and County Consultation documents received to which responses have been made. Several of these have related to local government at County, District and Parish level. Councillors and the Clerk have also attended meetings at District level to discuss proposals and changes implied within these documents. This has resulted in training being offered on the effects of the new Code of Conduct, which becomes operational in May 2002.

Many Planning Applications have been considered and site meetings held. Most have been agreed although some have required amendment and comments following consultation with neighbours and siting observations. The Goldfinch Appeal for a further 27 dwellings to be built upon the Poultry Packers site was rejected by HM Inspector who took into consideration both the Parish Council's (supported by SDC) recommendations and local residents solicitor's representations against the development. Goldfinch is currently appealing against the Inspectors decision.

Children's' Millennium Wood

The plans for the saplings were halted after the initial planting by the school children in spring last year, which fortunately happened just prior to the Foot and Mouth epidemic restrictions being imposed. The second planting by the grandparents, parents and children not attending Nether Stowey school was delayed until late Autumn when the restrictions were finally lifted with a subsequent final planting occurring early this year.

Cont/...

The Parish Council has purchased a picnic table with a seating facility for wheelchairs. This is to be installed by the Quantock Rangers during this springtime. Our thanks to Richard Ince, Liz Onions and the Quantock Rangers for masterminding the whole project and bringing it to fruition.

Dog Fouling

This has continued to be a problem, especially on the Playing Field. A parishioner proposed patrolling the area with the help of a group of concerned villagers. Notices were placed informing the public that non-compliance with non-fouling law could lead to prosecution. This has occurred in one instance in recent months with an imposed fine of £50 plus £25 costs.

Community Transport

An extension to the service already offered to the disabled and less mobile has been initiated as there was insufficient uptake of the available seats. Although numbers have improved this service is not being fully utilized. However, the Parish Council has agreed to continue this service to the community with a monthly run. Should there be a greater interest this will be reviewed.

Highways

An additional street light has been installed in the cul-de-sac off Mount Round and this year's precept includes a further identified need for 2 more street lights in particularly dark areas.

The railings in St Mary Street have been repaired and painted.

The flagstones on the Cross have been lifted, the roots of the trees, which were the cause, have been trimmed after consultation with the County Council arboriculturist and the broken flagstones replaced.

Sedgemoor Contract Services have been contracted to maintain the bus shelter and Clock Tower, paint the street furniture, keep the banks in Mount Street and Lime Street trimmed and the South Lane footpath tidy.

Our thanks are extended to Derek Buller, Cricket Malherbie Farms for continuing to mow the grass on the triangle and along the wide verge leading into St Mary Street.

The blocked and broken culvert on the old A39 adjacent to the allotments and playing field was repaired and County Farms are putting New Stowey Farm onto the main drainage system thus making their septic tank obsolete.

The Parish Council agreed to re-open their two yearly regular requests to SCC Highways for improved road safety measures on the A39 to be implemented especially in view of the residential development proposed for the Poultry Packers. A recent spate of accidents, including a very serious one has caused an even greater awareness of the dangers and this is being supported by the local people. A recent proposal produced for SCC Highways Dept, was considered unacceptable and rejected by the Parish Council. Following a supportive meeting with our MP, Ian Liddell-Grainger, a meeting has been proposed by County to take into account our perceived needs, the original proposal put forward in 1995 and revising the plans for the future of the A39.

Golden Jubilee Celebrations

It was agreed at the public meeting held that Over Stowey should be invited to participate in the festivities, especially as their children attended the local school.

Preparations for the full weekend of celebrations are progressing well with a draft programme mapped out. This was outlined in the Easter Newsletter and covers a street fayre, entertainment on the Cross being supplied primarily by local talent, followed by a hog roast and dancing in the Marquee in the evening. Sunday will be a fun sports afternoon whilst the older folk enjoy a cream tea. The official opening of the skateboard ramp and cyclo-gym with a display of the youngsters' talent on this equipment will commence at lunchtime. Monday, the official celebration day, is for the younger children with entertainment and tea in the Marquee. The Beacon III will be lighted on the Mount at 2200hrs with refreshments available in the school grounds.

Parish Council

At the June meeting, Lorraine Clark was co-opted onto the Parish Council to fill the vacancy occurring after the resignation of Dave Slocombe. In February, Mike Harris tendered his resignation due to ill health. He has tirelessly given his time and commitment to the benefit of the community over the past seven years. During his period as Vice-Chairman, he was most supportive and gave me much encouragement. He will be greatly missed by us all and I wish him improved health in the future. In October I also received the resignation of our Clerk, Jenny Tyndall, who has taken a full-time work commitment. During the three years she had been with us she has streamlined the administration thereby contributing to a smoother running of the Council. She was always accessible to the community and Parish Councillors alike. I shall miss her support and friendliness and wish her well in her new role. Ainslie Ensor was appointed as our new Clerk in January of this year and has been thrown into the deep end with the influx of new legislation applicable to Parish Council and the task of co-ordinating the different facets of the Jubilee celebrations. I hope that he is not put off and will enjoy working for the village in every aspect.

The Parish Council has produced 3 newsletters and will take into consideration the government recommendation that 4 free newsletters per year is distributed.

May I take this opportunity of thanking all of the Parish Councillors for their support during the past twelve months and their dedication to the forthcoming festivities. To our District Councillors Lillian Cartwright, Ken Dyer and David Joslin who keep us informed of developments occurring in SDC and other snippets that are of interest or that could pertain to the village. County Councillor John Edney has also given us his support and brought news from Taunton. Thank you all for so regularly attending our meetings. My thanks are also extended to Jenny and Ainslie for working so closely with me.

Cllr J A Standing

School Governors Report

There have been three new Governors appointed during the past Academic year with Simon Barton being appointed as Chairperson and Jason Satchel as vice-chairperson at the September meeting. Joyce Standing was appointed as Governor representing Nether Stowey and Over Stowey Parish Councils.

Parents

An Annual Report of the Governors was produced for parents and was presented prior to the Annual Meeting of Parents and Governors in October

Teachers

The Pay Policy was updated and will be adopted according to the Somerset Authority and NAHT models.

New job descriptions and pay/grading for support were drawn up.

Consultation with the Health & Safety representative from SCC regarding a special chair to assist and support Mrs Hoare's back injury was sought. This was recommended and purchased and is much appreciated.

Anna Davies, ICT support worker has been appointed on a 1 day basis

Tricia Condor has requested and been granted, unpaid leave to visit New Zealand next autumn.

Governor training courses have been made available for all governors.

A new Governors role has evolved after the creation of an IT suite.

A donation received from the late Betty Williams has been used to purchase a weather vane and replace the tree seat.

It is proposed to enhance and develop a quiet, grass area. The PTA are interested in being involved in and funding the project.

After schools clubs are flourishing and range from physical activities to chess.

Music continues to play an important part in the life of the children. A fantastic week of diverse music and dance was held last year to the enjoyment of the school and the community. The PTA was instrumental in obtaining the hire of the Marquee. A CD is also being made. The children have also been invited to be an important part of the Jubilee celebrations.

SATs results have maintained the high standard.

Cllr J A Standing

Nether Stowey Cemetery Committee

New Rules and Fees were approved in March 2001, so no further change has been required over the past year.

The Cemetery Committee suggested that an escallonia hedge should be planted in the beds each side of the path, with a mat and mulch to restrain the weeds. This cost was estimated at £185.46. The work will be started once the daffodils have died down.

Complaints were received during the year regarding children playing in the cemetery, and a suitable notice and disclaimer has been put on the gate and on the notice board on the Cross.

The caretaker asked whether a mulch/mower could be purchased, and this has been precepted for the year 2002/3.

The dustbins have been replaced by two new ones. A compost bin was bought in September and has considerably reduced the amount of rubbish put out for refuse collection. Two wire baskets to contain the plastic water bottles have also been bought.

Mark Fitzmaurice, Mike Harris, Shirley Watters

Hinkley Point Liaison Committee April 2001 – March 2002

For the year it appears that there are three main items of interest to Nether Stowey parishioners.

The application for decommissioning must rank as the most important issue, with the ensuring reduction in employment, changes in requirements of the site regarding traffic and transportation of fuel rods. Hinkley Point A Power Station commenced refuelling on 11 December 2001. A comprehensive safety case for long-term shutdown and refuelling had been developed. The preparations included plant modification, upgrading, staff training and procedure changes. The Station is offering to Parish Councils the opportunity of having a speaker to attend their meetings and provide more information about decommissioning. There are a large number of leaflets and documents regarding this aspect available to the public. Those interested in further information are recommended to contact the Visitors' Centre, which has now been reopened by Hinkley A. It is regretted that station tours have not been available since 11th September due to the increase security arrangements.

The leak of radioactivity into the Bristol Channel and the failure to report the matter to the Environment Agency. This was the subject of a fine in the courts. The fault was due to filters not working or being maintained correctly. A similar case resulting in a fine occurred with Sizewell. During 2001 the levels of radioactivity in liquid a gaseous effluents discharged, and solid radioactive level waste processed, remained well below the authorised limits set by the Environment Agency.

There have been reports in the press about a Hinkley Point C station, but at the moment although the land is already purchased the matter is the subject of a feasibility study.

Cllr A Corkett

Footpath Report

The past year has, of course, been blighted by the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease.

With the lifting of the ban the situation is now improving with our footpaths being largely accessible. The footpath from South Lane, which circumnavigates Castle Hill, is subject to a maintenance contract and during the Foot & Mouth outbreak work by Sedgemoor commercial Services was, of course, not carried out. The work will be done as soon as possible, but obviously this situation obtains throughout the District and it is a matter of 'catch-up' for the Contractor.

Following the end of the outbreak, the planting of the Millennium Wood has been completed and it appears to me, following an inspection that the success rate of the transplanted seedlings is nigh perfect.

The Quantock Greenway has been established by our AONB Service and is well marked. Leaflets giving details of the Greenway together with suggested walks and refreshment places have been widely distributed.

The Rights of Way Group within Somerset County Council is to be reviewed as part of the Best Value Process and a survey of the paths network is to be carried out. Nether Stowey Parish Council will take part.

Mike Harris

Youth Club Report

The last year has been very active for the Youth Club, its leaders and members. The club opens on a Wednesday from 6.30-9pm and on a Thursday from 7-9.30pm. Membership averages between 26-30 a week with higher number in the summer. Julie Nurton is the Youth Worker in charge, with Keith Robinson currently in training and Adrian Prowse due to start training next year. Richard Morse continues to be the honorary treasurer of the club, despite having moved away from Nether Stowey.

The club has undertaken many activities in the last year including Blind Date; an art project; paint-balling and ice-skating. Health education is high on the agenda for the club and this ensures our young people are equipped with sufficient knowledge to make informed decisions. March 13th was no smoking day and a programme was put together for this (see some attached materials). The members of the Youth Club have also been involved in fund-raising activities to raise funds for the club itself, for the portacabin roof and for the new facilities on the playing field.

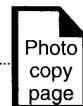
The youth club has recently been the subject of an Ofsted inspection and was praised as having good coverage of health issues, excellent activities and a good relationship with the Parish Council. A notice board is now present in the portacabin window and, amongst other things, provides important crisis contact information for young people.

The youth club is very appreciative of the Parish Council grant and this helps with rent and insurance costs and the costs of health education events. Plans are in hand to open the Youth club for a few hours on the Sunday of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, to coincide with the official opening of the skateboard ramp and cyclo-gym, and the children's sports event. This will allow both young people and parents to see what the youth club has to offer. Other activities planned for the forthcoming year include Euro Disney, quad bikes, horse riding, girls' relaxation, massage and self-esteem, first aid and life saving training and a full summer programme. More fund-raising is planned to help towards the Golden Jubilee celebrations, the portacabin roof and the youth club activities.

The youth club is an important facility for the young people of Nether Stowey and provides a wide range of social, health and education activities for both sexes. It is also invaluable in the integration of the young people into the local community. I always enjoy visiting the club and am made very welcome by the youth workers and young people alike.

Jenny Tyndall

What are you puffing when you smoke?



There are over 4000 chemicals in tobacco smoke – many of them are major poisons. Some of the common ones are below, but in anagrams. Can you work out what they are?

Their common uses are there to help you.

TECANOE – Paint stripper, nail varnish remover

RICNESA – Ant poison in the USA

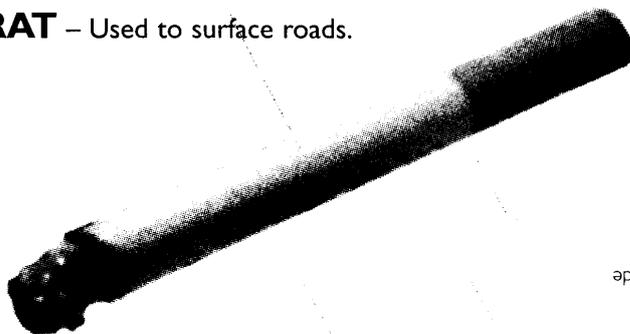
NUTBAE – Camping gas, lighter fuel

BANORC XOMINODE – Exhaust fumes

EYDELMOARFHD – Embalming fluid

MAIANOM – a strong cleaning fluid

RAT – Used to surface roads.



Answers:
acetone
arsenic
butane
carbon monoxide
formaldehyde
ammonia
tar

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No Smoking Day



Make it a day to remember

Haven't thought about stopping smoking?



If you'd just like to think about stopping smoking for now, that's fine. Here are some things you might like to consider.

Do you see yourself still smoking in five years' time?

Do you know someone who has stopped smoking?

Do people nag you about your smoking?

How much will you have spent on smoking by then?

Ask them why and how they did it, and how they feel now.

Try to hear it as concern, not criticism. They want you around for longer!

What will you be feeling like then?

Have a go at making two lists

What do you enjoy about smoking?

What do you dislike about smoking?

.....

.....

How do your lists balance out? Do you think you might feel differently in the future?

Most people who stop smoking don't just wake up one day as a non-smoker. They go through different stages from just thinking about

it, to naming a day, planning to quit, stopping then staying stopped. Many go through these stages a few times before they stop for good – learning a bit more about stopping each time.

Just by reading this far you've already taken a few steps –

when you're ready to find out a bit more, talk to someone – they'll be glad to help. Have a look at

www.nosmokingday.org.uk
- any day of the year!

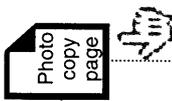
www.nosmokingday.org.uk

No Smoking Day



Make it a day to remember

Up in smoke - a waste of time



Cigarettes per day	Cost in time					
	per day	per week	per month	per year	in 5 years	in 10 years
5	nearly 1 hour	about 4.5 hours	a whole day	nearly 2 weeks	over 2 months	over 4 months
10	nearly 2 hours	nearly half a day	over 2 days	nearly 4 weeks	over 4 months	over 8 months
20	over 3 hours	nearly a whole day	over 4 days	a month and a half	over 8 months	nearly a year and a half
30	5 hours	a day and a half	over 6 days	2 and a half months	over a year	over 2 years
40	nearly 7 hours	nearly 2 days	over 8 days	3 and a half months	nearly a year and a half	nearly 3 years
60	10 hours	3 days	nearly 2 weeks	5 months	over 2 years	over 4 years

Ever wondered why you can never get round to anything? Just look how much of your time has been going up in smoke.

What else could you do with all those hours?

- Take some exercise?
- Learn to drive?
- Earn some cash?
- Do some voluntary work?
- Pamper yourself?

In the time it takes to smoke 20 cigarettes, here are some other things you could do.

- run a half-marathon
- play 2 games of football
- watch an entire series of Fawlty Towers
- take the train from London to Paris
- circle Earth twice on a satellite
- climb Ben Nevis

.....
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puzzle it out



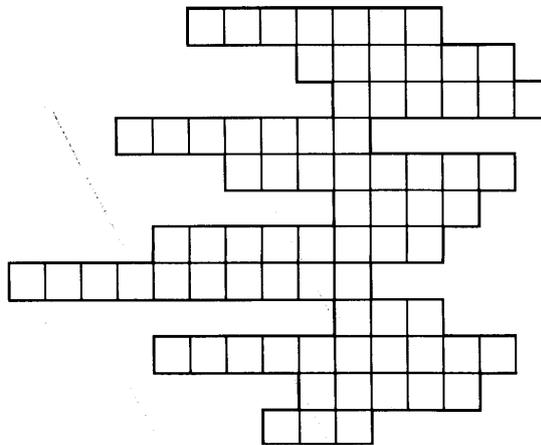
B	O	V	X	L	A	C	H	Q	R	Z	M	I	N	N	T
E	R	U	T	U	F	W	O	N	S	I	K	O	U	F	Y
J	D	W	H	T	K	P	O	N	J	V	G	S	N	D	H
H	P	S	C	V	R	D	R	W	F	G	K	H	R	E	B
T	R	H	R	E	F	R	E	S	H	I	N	G	F	C	Y
N	O	I	A	I	L	N	S	K	U	T	D	H	I	B	G
E	Y	W	M	N	E	D	L	T	N	D	H	E	T	M	R
E	H	A	F	R	O	W	I	H	A	B	M	A	N	U	E
T	J	B	D	A	H	U	F	P	O	R	D	L	E	C	N
R	F	H	E	S	A	E	E	W	O	F	T	T	S	H	E
I	W	S	M	H	E	H	J	N	H	S	O	H	S	D	Y
H	D	O	A	L	W	N	H	B	U	D	I	Y	F	W	S
T	K	H	G	H	A	H	D	J	H	W	S	T	E	M	U
E	N	O	D	R	E	B	M	E	M	E	R	D	I	B	Z
B	O	H	D	W	F	H	J	U	W	S	A	F	D	V	H
D	W	N	F	H	D	G	N	I	T	T	I	U	Q	D	E

Find the words below in the puzzle:

- Smoke
- Fitness
- Refresh
- Life
- Renew
- Remember
- Wednesday
- March
- Thirteenth
- Feelgood
- Confidence
- Positive
- Start
- Healthy
- Energy
- Future
- Money
- Quitting

CLUES

1. These people will support and encourage you (7)
2. This person can give professional quitting advice (6)
3. Make sure these are healthy and sugar-free (6)
4. Quitting gives you this (7)
5. Carbon is one of the poisons in tobacco smoke (8)
6. With fresher breath, you're more likely to get one of these! (4)
7. It's free to call this for advice and support (8)
8. Yoga and Tai Chi can help you with this (10)
9. Chew this to reduce the craving (3)
10. Look good, feel good...quitting gives you this (10)
11. If you prefer not to chew, stick one of these on (5)
12. You can only be successful if you ... (3)



When you have completed the grid, a phrase should appear down the middle

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No Smoking Day



Make it a day to remember

shepton Mallet Young People's Centre Smoking Project

These postcards contain a variety of messages and information aimed at young people. You can use them as a part of a display or as part of a discussion around smoking, tobacco and its effects.

Don't tell the parents!

This card is about the secrecy involved when young people start smoking. Young people have enough stress in their lives without the added stress of being caught smoking by parents or teachers. Of course, smoking with a group of other young people can bring with it a sense of belonging, fitting in with friends or peers, being accepted.

STINK BUT!

This card is similar to the packaging of a well know brand of cigarettes. Look at the way the words have been changed

Smelling bad in 3 easy steps.
Smoking makes you smell. Other people's smoke makes you smell. No amount of perfume or deodorant can mask the smell of stale tobacco.

£4.00 for a packet of 20!

This card originally was designed with a cigarette in the Queen's mouth. It was taken out, apart from being tried for treason, a comment was made that the Queen is a good role model, because she doesn't smoke. Compare the Queen's health with that of her sister's and you can see the impact smoking can have on a someone's health. Out of interest, from a packet of cigarettes that cost £4.30 the Government receives £3.43 in tax.

Which would you prefer?

Most young people are given their first cigarette, they do not buy them, and so slip into a habit they may not be able to afford in the future. The cost of a CD, a holiday to Ibiza, affording a car and being able to run it are more achievable if a person doesn't smoke.

PENALTIES

This card shows young people enjoying a kick around with a ball. The words express the effects smoking can have on a person. There are no goals with smoking, only penalties.

Bar Code

This card recreates a bar code showing the cost of smoking for a year. If you smoke 15 cigarettes a day, costing £3.23, the cost over a week would be £22.64, a year £1,177, 5 years £5,886. Even smoking 5 cigarettes a day, at a cost of £1.08, would cost £7.55 and £392 over a year.

BREAK THE HABIT

When you smoke, nicotine, tar and carbon monoxide are inhaled into the body. Nicotine is highly addictive and its absence can cause withdrawal symptoms in regular users. Although the nicotine in the cigarette is addictive it causes relatively little harm itself. It is the tar and the carbon monoxide that cause the damage. For help in giving up smoking contact Somerset Smoking Advice Service 01823 323808 or the National Smoking Helpline 0800 1690169.



Somerset
Health Authority
NHS



District Councillors

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly the Annual Meeting seems to come around. I am not sure whether or not this is the fourteenth or fifteenth time I have addressed the Annual Meeting.

It has again been a busy year for myself and my two colleagues both in Nether Stowey, our Ward and in the District. As far as Nether Stowey is concerned I think that there can be little doubt that the principal matter of concern has been the proposed development on the site of the Poultry Packing Station in Stogursey Lane. Despite our best efforts the Inspector, at Appeal, allowed quite considerable building to take place on a large part of the site and the remaining part is now subject to an Appeal to the High Court by the applicants. We do not yet know the outcome of this. The other main cause of concern has been the ongoing problems associated with the A39. Even though this is a County Council matter I am doing all I can to support the Parish Council in its efforts to get a more sensible and safer layout.

As far as the District Council is concerned this past year has seen the doing away of the old committee system and the introduction of a new Executive. Nobody of any Party wanted this change but it was forced on us by the government and we are doing our best to make it work. The only remaining freestanding committee is the Development Control committee which encompasses planning. I have continued as Chairman of this committee – a challenging task I can assure you. I have to confess that our performance figures fall far short of what I would like them to be and this is due to acute staff shortages and an increase in workload. However we are embarking on a process of reorganisation which will improve our performance. Recently the government has published a Green Paper on reorganising the whole planning system. It's stated aim is to bring the decision making process closer to the people. In my view, and the view of many others, totally the contrary will apply. For instance Parish Councils will no longer be statutory consultees! Furthermore the government has decreed that 90% of all Planning Applications must be decided, under delegated authority, by Officers and not elected Councillors. I recently chaired a working party to see how we could apply this dictate and one thing which I was quite determined to maintain was the input of Parish Councils and I am pleased to say that my suggestions have now been adopted as Council Policy. However I must stress the importance of Councillors attending at least one of the forthcoming training seminars on planning.

Now to the vexed question of local taxes. You will have recently received your annual Council Tax bill and this has gone up considerably. By far the largest part of this is the tax set of the County Council and this year this alone went up by a massive 12.9% - one of the highest in the country. Add to this the Police authority rise of 14.8% and you begin to understand the rise this year. And what about Sedgemoor's part? I can tell you that our part of the tax bill rose by only 4.5% which was well below the national average. And this was despite setting aside more than a million pounds for growth items. I think we can justifiably be proud of that.

Finally, and briefly, I can report that work on the NDR continues apace and I am confident it will open before the schedule date. The Town Centre improvements are just about complete and we are looking at what can be done inside the market buildings. Despite recent job losses the employment situation remains buoyant and what particularly pleased me is the progress being made on Express Park which is on the A38 just outside Bridgwater. I am in frequent meetings with the Directors of the company, which owns the Park, and I can tell you that they have ambitious and exciting plans which we are hoping to soon bring to fruition. In addition we will soon see the start of work on the new Asda store.

It is dangerous to be complacent but, for the District as a whole, it has been quite a good year and I look forward to an even better year this time. Finally can I assure you that both I and my two fellow Ward Councillors continue to take a close interest in the village – witness our frequent attendances at your Council Meetings – and please be assured that we are only too happy and willing to be contacted by villagers. We may not always be able to actually solve problems but we will certainly always do our best.

Cllr D Joslin

Nether Stowey 2020

At the end of the year 2000 the Parish Council agreed that they would go ahead with a project set up and managed by the Community Council for Somerset, and would invite interested parishioners to join together to make a Community Appraisal.

A few people showed interest and a first meeting was held on April 19, 2001. They formed a Working Party, and adopted the name NS2020, partly because it had a catchy sound and partly because thinking about the next 20 years was relevant to the project. Over Stowey wished to make a separate Appraisal, and already had come up with the clever name 'Over Stowey Matters'.

Six more meetings were held in order to plan the Fun Day at the School on July 28 and the August exhibition in the Library complex. Both of these aimed to publicise the project.

Four further meetings were held to assess how NS2020 could support the Parish Council and encourage more people to get involved. Two traffic surveys were carried out on the A39 and an Environment Group recently organised a Litter Pick. At another public meeting on January 28, 2002, a Steering committee was elected, and the Community Appraisal Project Officer, Saveria Moss, suggested that the group had already done enough to prepare an Appraisal Report.

As the representative of the Parish Council I would like to thank all those volunteers who have contributed so much during the past year.

Shirley Watters

Village Hall Report 2001 – 2002

During the past year the hall has continued to be well used by the many organisations from within and outside of the village, this has meant that the hall has managed with the help of grants and fundraising by the committee to run successfully.

However the hall has had a lot of expenditure in this financial year, the majority due to the completion of the disabled toilet in August. It is hoped that this will enable more people to both use and continue to use the hall.

Other major expenditure has been on electrical maintenance and the thorough decoration of the hall. The general maintenance of the hall as always remains of a high standard, due mainly to the hard work and dedication of Mr & Mrs Wheat, Mr & Mrs Place and of course the caretaker.

A donation of £1181 was received by the committee for the purchase of new more comfortable chairs. These have been bought and 80 of the old chairs have been sold.

Unfortunately the hall has suffered at the hand of vandals. The flat roof of the disabled toilet has been climbed on and some signs have been taken. The Police are aware of the damage and are including the Hall in their patrol of the village.

The accounts for the hall are attached and show the value of the hall and its assets, its income and expenditure, an analysis of its lettings and a bank reconciliation statement.

The committee is pleased to welcome some new members. They are also pleased that for another year Mr Brian Place will continue as Chairman and that Mrs Wendy Hobbs will continue as Secretary. There are sad, however, that in June 2002 Mr Ken Wheat will no longer continue as Treasurer. The committee appreciates all the work he has done in his long years as Treasurer and general handyman.

The next Village Hall committee meeting takes place 7.30 pm at the Hall.

Cllr M Webb

Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee

Three meetings have been held during the year of which two have been attended.

A presentation by Oliver Lucas of Forest Enterprise, related to the proposed forest design plan for Great Wood. Consultation had taken place giving an overall plan for the next 50 years. During the forthcoming 5 years it is envisaged that there will be a reshaping of the forest giving a more natural appearance with the introduction of native woodland and heathland, into which there will be 5 new viewpoints introduced.

The Quantock Greenway project was on hold during the Foot and Mouth epidemic and finally launched in November with 5 walks in the foothills being introduced of which the village and surrounds of Nether Stowey are one. The Parish Council has granted permission to the Rangers to place an information board in the bus shelter.

Deer Watch outlined problems associated with the unlawful culling and poaching of the stag population, especially during the Foot and Mouth epidemic. Requests were made that should gunfire be heard, 999 should be dialled and the incident reported.

Friends of Coleridge had requested support for the National Trust proposed development of the garden in Coleridge Cottage in Lime Street. This was agreed.

Village Design Statements are being or have been developed in Bicknoller and Spaxton.

Cllr J A Standing

Nether Stowey United Charity

The Trustees met twice in 2001 and made ten sickness distributions and one distribution of gifts of fruit & plants just before Christmas.

The Trustees welcome applications, at any time, from people in the village who were in need of financial assistance. If the Trustees become aware of an individuals hardship they will make financial distribution without requiring a formal application.

Mervyn Ham was re-elected as Chairman of the Trustees. The other Trustees are Roger Stacey, Tom Ware, Molly Little, Margaret Wells, Alison Robinson and Phil Denison.

The Charity receives income on its investments with Charinco that amounted to £132.71 in 2001, and also £100 income from rent of the Wells Close field. The only other income was the £350 grant from the Parish Council. The distributions for 2001 totalled £219.22. At the end of the financial year the Charity had £500.86 in the bank deposit account.

Income:		Expenditure:	
Balance brought forward	£ 628.41	Sickness distributions	£ 48.38
Field rent	£ 100.00	Christmas distribution	£170.84
Shares interest	£ 132.71	Charinco Shares	£500.00
Donation from NSPC	£ 350.00		
Bank interest	£ 5.27		
Donation	£ 3.69		
Total	£1,220.08	Total	£719.22

Income and balance £1220.08, less expenditure of £719.22 = £500.86 in bank.

April 2002

Mervyn Ham
Chairman

Ainslie Ensor
Secretary

Nether Stowey Allotment Association – Annual Report 2001 – 2002

With the help of the Parish Council we have hopefully prevented the water from running in the gateway and over the allotments. But we still have a great problem with the rabbits.

The membership is around the same as last season, our adverts have produced 1 new member. But we still need members if we are to keep the allotments going into the future.

We have 15 members on 22 plots with 3 of these being vacant. The bank balance at the end of the year 2001 stood at £437.24.

Denis Chedgy
Chairman & Secretary

Nether Stowey Parish Council

**Preliminary income and Expenditure Statement
Year Ending 31 March 2001**

Code Receipts	Amount	Code Payments	Amount
9001 Precept	13,000.00	2000 Administration	6,773.67
9002 Allotments	100.00	3011 Allotments Rent	100.00
9003 Cemetery	922.63	1000 Cemetery	1,751.43
9005 Transport	369.00	3015 Transport	262.80
9100 Police Office Rent	84.00	4001 Grants & donations	1,550.00
9006 Grants	450.00	3017 Street Lighting	794.08
0002 VAT repayment	816.70	3016 Christmas Tree	150.00
9007 Millennium (Wood)	1,131.40	4002 Millennium (Wood)	298.00
9008 Millennium (Playing Field)	1,431.00	4003 Millennium (Playing Field)	8,268.30
9009 Golden Jubilee	504.27	4004 Golden Jubilee	500.00
9004 Interest on deposit a/c		3004 Security	85.00
9004 Interest on investment a/c		3005/6 Clock Tower	210.48
9100 Other Income	101.00	3008 Playing Field	938.87
		3009 Village Hall	892.00
		3001 Village Maintenance	333.78
		3010 Subscriptions	260.06
		3003 Insurance	274.49
		0001 VAT Paid	568.99
		4005 Miscellaneous	94.00
Total receipts	18,910.00	Total payments	24,105.95

Opening Balances at 01/04/2001

Current	1,573.53
Deposit	9,241.66
Investment (National Savings)	2,783.15
Petty Cash	2.10
Total Balances	13,600.44

Closing Balance as at 31/03/2002

Opening Balance	13,600.44
Total Receipts	18,910.00
Total Payments	24,105.95
Closing Balance	8,404.49

A Ensor
Clerk to the Parish Council

Nether Stowey Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting – April 2002

Youth Club Report

The last year has been very active for the Youth Club, its leaders and members. The club opens on a Wednesday from 6.30-9pm and on a Thursday from 7-9.30pm. Membership averages between 26-30 a week with higher number in the summer. Julie Nurton is the Youth Worker in charge, with Keith Robinson currently in training and Adrian Prowse due to start training next year. Richard Morse continues to be the honorary treasurer of the club, despite having moved away from Nether Stowey.

The club has undertaken many activities in the last year including Blind Date; an art project; paint-balling and ice-skating. Health education is high on the agenda for the club and this ensures our young people are equipped with sufficient knowledge to make informed decisions. March 13th was no smoking day and a programme was put together for this (see some attached materials). The members of the Youth Club have also been involved in fund-raising activities to raise funds for the club itself, for the portacabin roof and for the new facilities on the playing field.

The youth club has recently been the subject of an Ofsted inspection and was praised as having good coverage of health issues, excellent activities and a good relationship with the Parish Council. A notice-board is now present in the portacabin window and, amongst other things, provides important crisis contact information for young people.

The youth club is very appreciative of the Parish Council grant and this helps with rent and insurance costs and the costs of health education events. Plans are in hand to open the Youth club for a few hours on the Sunday of the Golden Jubilee celebrations, to coincide with the official opening of the skateboard ramp and cyclo-gym, and the children's sports event. This will allow both young people and parents to see what the youth club has to offer. Other activities planned for the forthcoming year include Euro Disney, quad bikes, horse riding, girls relaxation, massage and self esteem, first aid and life saving training and a full summer programme. More fund-raising is planned to help towards the Golden Jubilee celebrations, the portacabin roof and the youth club activities.

The youth club is an important facility for the young people of Nether Stowey and provides a wide range of social, health and education activities for both sexes. It is also invaluable in the integration of the young people into the local community. I always enjoy visiting the club and am made very welcome by the youth workers and young people alike.

Jenny Tyndall
March 2002