

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2019

Some 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. Please help yourself to copies – if we run out we can e-mail one or you can collect from the Parish Office.

As usual on this occasion I would like to use the opportunity to express our thanks to a number of people who quietly go round carrying out jobs around the village.

As always the Clock continues to give good service and this is thanks to a dedicated crew of Tony Edney, Steve Scarrott and Ian Faris.

However we have carried out a survey of the upper parts of the clock and found that there is a good deal of restoration work to be done. At the present time we are finalising the actual details and will then look into grants etc. to fund the works.

Thanks again also to Colin Falla for his work as Footpaths Liaison Officer and all the strimming he undertakes to keep the paths clear, copies of Colin's report can be found on the table.

There has been considerable investment in the public rights of way in the last couple of years, which has included the replacement of a quite a lot of "furniture – stiles etc, and some rationalisation of path routes and the creation of a new one.

Thanks also to Roy Osborne and Richard Ince who look after the Millennium Wood and put in many hours on our behalf.

The volunteers of Stowey Green Spaces who do a great job in and around the village.

Also to the volunteers at Stowey Shuttle who help keep villagers on the move so efficiently.

PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

We have recently had the election process for parish councils. Our existing councillors all put themselves forward for election and as there were no other candidates the election was uncontested.

As ever, we meet every month except August and all Councillors undertake a number of jobs for the Parish Council, attending meetings with EDF, the AONB, the District Council and local parishes.

A list of the Parish Council meetings scheduled for the next months is available.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Ferriday will provide a report on the neighbourhood plan later in the meeting.

LIBRARY

Our library is now a community run library. As you are aware the library faced closure by the County Council. Friends of Nether Stowey Library undertook to keep it open and running as a community run library operated mainly by volunteers. A new charity was formed and is known as the Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey. The group have put a tremendous amount of work into this project and it is hoped that the village and the surrounding area will give them the support they need. The support of our own village and surrounding villages is vital to the success of this endeavour.

Their report is on the table

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 received £1800.00 towards maintenance activities.
- NS Village Hall also received £1,800
- Citizens Advice received £100
- Stowey Walking £50 towards Walking Festival costs
- Stowey Bears £250 towards play and learning equipment.
- The Thomas Pool Nether Stowey Library £1200
- The Quantock Medical Centre towards equipment towards health activities (this grant is committed but not yet paid)
- One aspect that has been mentioned when we and other groups have attended grants workshops help by HPC and Community Fund is the lack of co-ordination by groups in Nether Stowey applying for grants. When you have five or six groups from the same area all applying for similar grants at the same time this can in fact be detrimental to all.
- The Parish Council is happy to help coordinate grants being applied from HPC by Nether Stowey groups, however it cannot do so if there is no communication.

CRICKETER

As you will by now be aware, a local developer “Strongvox Homes” has been carrying out consultations with regard to building on the Cricketer site. The consultation is still open if you wish to make comments on the current proposals. Cricketer is classed as a “Brown Field” site and is the preferred location for development in the parish (from responses in the Neighbourhood plan questionnaire). Sedgemoor’s new Local Plan means that Nether Stowey is obliged to have at least 75 new houses in the period to 2032 – so we’re going to have more homes somewhere: so we need to influence the process to get to achieve what is best for the village as a whole.

One priority is an improved junction with the A39, with a pedestrian crossing being an essential part of that. I know that people are concerned about the effect on the Medical Centre, but we have discussed it with the Practice Manager at the beginning of the year, and are comfortable with an increase number, which adds justification to the medical centre’s continuing presence.

I have also had discussions with the school. At present that the school is at capacity and only accepting children from Nether and Over Stowey, and any expansion will add to the already difficult road safety situation in the immediate area. One possibility – and this is in accordance with our emerging neighbourhood plan – is to use this opportunity to look at a new school for Nether Stowey in a better location that can cope with the traffic.

We feel that it is better to try to get the process started now, rather than have to react when it’s already too late. As such we will shortly have further discussions with the School’s team, and with the District and County Councils, and others, and start thinking about a possible site. The school is a vital part of the village and its young people are the future.

TRAFFIC

We are working with the County Highways department to try and improve the traffic situation along Mill Lane, Jackson's Lane area. This will in all probability be changes to the speed limits and relocation of speed limit signage. Obviously this then brings the problem of who will police these measures but that is always the case and should not be an excuse for doing nothing.

In the first instance the Highways department are to conduct a survey of the traffic using Mill Lane. The virtual foot path that has been constructed in Lime Street seems to be appreciated; both drivers and pedestrians appear to be working together in this area.

We recently delivered 43 letters to Lime Street and St Mary Street to ascertain the feeling with regard to a rear entrance to properties in that area. Unfortunately we only received 11 replies, therefore the project is deemed not viable.

However we are still proceeding with the suggestion of a car park between St Mary Street and the By-Pass with access to the village and will see if this can be achieved.

HINKLEY POINT PROJECT

Councillors continue to attend numerous meetings organized by EDF and the District Councils to discuss matters concerned with project, and to try to find resolution to the impacts that the influx of workers and the increase in transport.

We have had some success with fly-parking and the office can report vehicles believed to be parked by those using one or the other of the buses from Nether Stowey. Unfortunately this only applies to Hinkley workers who do not live in the village – and we know that there are quite a few village houses which have been rented as shared houses to several workers and quite a few people who have lodgers in their spare rooms.

Last year we reported that the buses were causing problems in the village by parking in awkward places, causing unnecessary disturbance early in the morning, using Lime Street and chewing up the verge opposite Cricketer Farm. We are hopeful that these problems have now been resolved, however if you know differently please let us know.

Only by continually reporting incidents can we solve these problems, what we do need is the date, time and ideally a registration number so that the drivers can be identified.

We do however also have to thank EDF for stepping in to provide a community bus service when the County Council would not help, and for listening to our feedback to work out a new timetable which gives a little bit longer in Minehead and Bridgwater. It must also be remembered that the use of the buses and the park and ride system has taken many cars off the roads even if we do see buses running around empty.

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 aware 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.

POLICE AND CRIME

I am pleased to welcome PCSO Jason Wyatt to the meeting. Since last summer we have had a regular monthly beat surgery in the village. Please do remember this – I am sure that, if there is no interest, it will be viewed as a waste of officer time that could be used elsewhere. Jason will say a few words in a moment, but I would mention that there appears to be an increasing number of rural crimes taking place in and around our community, sheds and out houses being broken into, quad bikes and other vehicles being stolen – so please think about locking your sheds etc and immobilising other property that could be taken away.



Parish Report May 2019 Nether Stowey CP. Paths

In general, all the paths within our Parish are in good order. Access points are clear of obstructions and defined routes are satisfactorily waymarked. The only path where the definitive route cannot be followed is BW22/23.

A combination of, SCC Rights of Way team work and the Parish being part of the SCC strimmer volunteer project, have brought our paths into their current condition.

Over the last year there have been several improvements to our path network. The SCC Rights of Way team have been upgrading many of the tradition style wooden step stiles, to metal self closing gates. Where these gates give access to grazing land, the gate is enclosed to become an all metal kissing gate. Currently over 50% of our old wooden stiles have been replaced. The metal structures are much easier to maintain and comply with SCC accessibility policy.

There have been several path diversions implemented. These were mainly a simply re routing of the way to adhere more to the route most walkers preferred. One entirely new path has been established. This joins an existing path BW22/1 from Millennium woods to Stowey Rocks Farm and runs south to Stowey Woods where it continues as an Over Stowey ROW. This now establishes a short circular walk starting from the New Stowey Farm gate at the south west corner of the playing field.

Currently there are only two issues logged for attention. One is a known right of way obstruction and the other is a minor defect which does not interfere with access.

There continues to be an encouraging increase in the use of the paths and rights of way within the village boundaries. Also, positive feedback concerning the paths is being received.

During the summer of 2019 further new sign posts and way marks should appear. These will be defining the route of a new national trail which links with Stogursey and the English Coastal path.

There are some misconceptions regarding rights of way. Path users should recognise that there are limitations as to what they should expect. A public footpath is permitted access to a defined route. Landowners cannot obstruct a path or deliberately restrict access – e.g. with electric fencing or a crop, and they have to leave a minimum width of passage, but they are not required to do more. They are not expected to cut back naturally growing surface vegetation on the path and are certainly not required to provide a manicured grassy park-like path. Walkers should recognise that we are a rural parish. It is expected to be able to walk a path in boots and trousers, but not necessarily less.

The greatest misconception is held by dog walkers. A public right of way across a field, does not mean that it is permitted for the dog to be unleashed and allowed free use of the entire field. The law is very clear that animals must always be kept under tight control and they must follow the defined route only.

Finally, I would again 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

St Mary's Church, Report to the Annual Parish Meeting 2019

Firstly, thank you for inviting us to share what has been happening in the life of our church during 2018 and it is good to hear from other groups, too, as there is so much to appreciate in our village community.

We began 2018 in vacancy, receiving wonderful support from the Archdeacon, Area Dean, retired clergy, especially Peter Williams and Peter Attwood who live locally as well as Readers and many others so that we were able to maintain our normal pattern of services. We are so grateful.

In August Reverend Eleanor King was licenced as the new Rector for the Quantock Villages Benefice of which Nether Stowey is part, by Bishop Ruth of Taunton. Eleanor joins The Benefice Ministry Team, and we are waiting the appointment of an associate priest (House for Duty) to complete the team.

Throughout the year we tried to offer a range of services to our community to meet its spiritual needs. For example, opportunities are provided for people to engage in more informal worship such as Café Church as well as Home groups which provide an intimate and reflective environment for learning about our faith from the Bible as well as enjoying tea and cake.

Apart from the regular services in the Church and Church Centre, there has been a monthly Benefice service of Holy Communion held in one of the six parishes of the Benefice. Our three outdoor services in 2018 – the Good Friday service and walk of witness at the Mount, Remembrance Day at the Cross and Carols on the Cross on Christmas Eve – were well attended, although the Good Friday service was rather wet! Our thanks go to those who allow us to erect the Cross on the Mount and gather at the Cross in Nether Stowey. There was also an All Souls' Service at which we remembered loved one who have passed away.

The Friday morning said Holy Communion continues in the Church Centre and several housebound church members received Holy Communion in their homes or in care homes.

There have also been services of celebration such as baptisms and weddings, and sadly several funerals and services of thanksgiving at the milestones of the journey through life. There have been two Messy Church sessions with families in the Centre. We have valued our links with the primary school through 1st Friday services, school visits, opportunities to share in Collective Worship and take Open the Book into the school. The wonderful team of Urban Saints leaders have continued to offer opportunities for our young people to meet and discover more of God.

The Church West wall and parapet were re-pointed in 2017/18 allowing the South Aisle wall to dry out for two years before re-decoration. Agreement for ventilation in two of the windows has been approved also. Several stones on the small medieval tower had become loose and unsafe – these have now all been fixed and re-pointed. The churchwardens and PCC are now planning for further restoration and enhancement over the coming years. You may well have heard the bells of St Mary's ringing when several bell-ringing groups visited during the year. The PCC has also completed its Safeguarding and Disability Policies and completed relevant DBS checks.

The Church Centre is occupied on most days with clubs, bowls, badminton, art, singing and sewing or NHS blood collections as well as church and youth activities. It just about paid for itself again last year.

We continued the monthly coffee mornings raising around £1000 for church restoration and charities as well as the Art Exhibition, Quiz and Supper and evenings of Fun and Music. Over the year we have donated 10% of our income to charities; local, national and international.

Overall the financial position is stable with a turnover for both buildings at over £50,000. Reserves are adequate for two months operation with a small amount held over for the school from the Philip Luther Fund and in the Lucy Hobbs Trust from which only the interest may be used.

As you will have heard, there is plenty happening! The church is there for all of us. We would welcome anyone from the parish who would like to lend their time or talents to furthering any of our current projects. Furthermore, we would be delighted to hear any thoughts and ideas about how we might serve the parish more effectively, whether it be through changing service times or types, or any other initiatives.

Nether Stowey Village Hall & Recreation Ground CIO (No.1176413)

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

<http://netherstoweyvillagehall.co.uk/>

Report to the Parish Council May 2019

The two existing charities formally joined on 21 December 2017 and we have been working behind the scenes to sort out the administration whilst at the same time continuing to manage and maintain both facilities for the benefit of local residents

The first AGM of **the new CIO** is on 17 June and we are currently asking residents to become members of the CIO to enable them to be involved in decision making for the future of the facilities and vote in new trustees. The trustees will take on a variety of roles and start moving the new Stowey Centre Project forward. The existing village hall and recreation ground committees will continue to manage the facilities. We are very pleased that new, enthusiastic people with much needed skills have already come forward. Sharon Mayell & Jane Erskine will be offering to stand as Trustees and Michelle Thomas will continue as a member.

The **village hall** is still standing.....but finances are tight and rely on fundraising such as the cinema, quiz nights, bingo, Spring & Xmas markets and the flower show to supplement income from hirers. Our thanks goes to the Parish Council for their continued support and last year's grant was spent on repairs to the Jubilee Room roof, guttering and painting. Sharon Mayell has now taken over as treasurer (and Hilary Sells continues to help with this role.) Small improvements have been made such as adding draft excluders to doors. All expenditure is being reviewed to make savings wherever possible, but the major outgoing is electricity at over £4,000 a year. Thank you to Peter Simmonds for all his work helping to make the village hall tidier and warmer. We recognise that it is essential for all groups within the village to work more closely and support each other as we are all dependent on each other's success.

The **recreation ground** is ticking along nicely, with much needed maintenance support from Kevin Hellier as well as monthly litter picking and additional work by SGSG. The income comes from Nether Stowey football club and others as well as a local tennis club and of course the mobile mast. Income received from the lighting tokens, pays for most of the electricity. In addition we organise the annual Party in The Park which will be on 8 June and will again be a free entry family focused event with Paul Enever as well as live music from local bands and soloists. The PFR club (formerly the village lottery) has increased its membership and provides essential evidence of support when applying for grants and of course funds for the Stowey Centre Project.

We continue to focus on increasing income and controlling costs in order to prepare for future investment in the Stowey Centre as well as the MUGA (which is used every day of the week.) We would like to thank the Parish Council for maintenance grants over the last 12 months, which enabled us to purchase a new leaf blower and service the MUGA tractor as well as paint the skate board ramp and reduce the large beech hedge.

We received a Bronze Award from Somerset Playing Fields Association Large Field of the year 2018 and Kevin Hellier won an award for volunteer of the year. Our thanks go to all of those people and organisations in the village who have helped maintain and improve these facilities.

Sharon Mayell, Jane Erskine & Michelle Thomas – Trustees Nether Stowey Village Hall & Recreation Ground CIO

Nether Stowey Twinning Association

The Twinning Association had a mixture of highs and lows in its year to 31st March 2019.

Some events which had been successful in previous years did not take place through lack of support; these included the Open Gardens event and the Safari Supper. A pop-up dinner in the Village Hall was cancelled a week before it was due to take place when only two tickets had been purchased; the Committee was advised that its marketing was not a problem.

On the other hand, there was a very successful visit to Theillay to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the end of The Great War. Sixteen people went, either in a Minibus or their own cars, and were warmly welcomed by the people of Theillay, with interesting events and excursions, returning each time to delightful meals, when the conversation and the wine flowed. The Visitors were honored guests at the Armistice Day ceremony at the War Memorial in Theillay at which they laid a British Legion Wreath in honour of the dead and presented a blue plaque commemorating the occasion. The main car park in Theillay is now renamed Place Nether Stowey (“Nether Stowey Square”) and the red GPO telephone box presented to Theillay some years ago was inaugurated as a free lending library.

Over the winter there were the usual quizzes once a month in The George. And the annual Boules & Barbecue was rescued from torrential rain which made the pitch unplayable by the purchase of indoor boules and a move inside The George.

The Association held its Annual General Meeting in late March. The Committee was keen to attract more support from the Village and about 750 well-produced leaflets were printed and distributed to every household in the village. The leaflets explained the values and benefits of Twinning and invited villagers to come to the meeting and learn more. Despite this, at the meeting, there was not one attendee who was not already a member of the Association and most people who had gone on the visit to Theillay or expressed an interest but been unable to go. As was pointed out, of the sixteen who went to Theillay, ten were members of the Committee and their families. It was also noted that of the four of five teams at the winter quizzes, all but one were again members of the Committee.

A Committee member described the lack of interest, for the effort involved, as “soul-destroying” and questioned the ongoing viability of the Association. It was recorded at the meeting that no activities are planned for the forthcoming year and committee meetings, are to be quarterly rather than monthly. It is as yet undecided whether there will be a season of winter quizzes. The situation is being kept under review.

**Stowey Green Spaces Group –
Report to Nether Stowey Annual Parish Meeting 20 May 2019**

30-32 Castle Street, Nether Stowey TA5 1LW - Tel:01278732483 – email: mrsjudithgreig@gmail.com

1 Background

Stowey Green Spaces Group grew from an initial brief in late 2016 to advise on a long-term strategy for care of the trees, rough grass and undergrowth, hedges and stream on the Recreation Ground. The Group quickly expanded its horizons to include the green spaces of the surrounding areas and linking routes between them in order to maximise community interest and introduce visitors to our wider surroundings.

2 Overall objectives of the Stowey Green Spaces Group

- Identify, assess and help protect and enhance the natural and developed landscape and features of the landscape in the local area;
- Assist in the long term management of local natural resources especially land based;
- Take a role in building awareness, educating residents and visitors at the local level about the natural environment and introducing the countryside to people who may be hesitant to 'use' it because of unfamiliarity with countryside practice;
- Take on local projects to achieve the above objectives;
- Gather and catalogue information on the natural environment;
- Engage with local schools and colleges - the next generations - to achieve the above objectives;
- Offer advice and recommendations for best management practices on public and private lands as requested;
- Liaise with Nether and Over Stowey Parish Councils, AONB, SCC, SWT and others on green space issues;
- Keep public areas and roadsides in and around Nether and Over Stowey clear of litter, in liaison with Sedgemoor District Council.

3 The Green Spaces

Nether Stowey Recreation Ground; Stowey Millennium Wood; Stowey Wood; The Mount; Public Rights of Way (footpaths and bridleways); Area between Banneson Road and Memorial Gate; Nether Stowey Plot 173; The old A39; The Mount; The pedestrian lanes throughout Nether Stowey; Barn Close; Waterways; Rough woodland between RG and A39; Village Hall area, until/if it moves to the playing field; Over Stowey Cricket field; any other green areas in the locality of Nether and Over Stowey.

4 Work since last year's Annual Parish Meeting, in hand and in planning

4.1 Recreation Ground

Planted new hedging in the area at the MUGA entrance to replace damage caused by fly tipping; constructed a compost bin and planning a second bin; improved/widened the path between the stream and Play Area; installed a stop-post at the MUGA pedestrian entrance to deter vehicular entry and fly tipping; supervised hedge flaying to allow development of suitable saplings into trees in the hedge

4.2 Stowey Wood

In July, Somerset County Council licensed the management of Stowey Wood, an 'ancient wood' that dates back to the 1700s, to the Stowey Green Spaces Group.

The Green Spaces volunteers together with groups from Taunton Midweek Volunteers, Quantock Conservation Volunteers, The Field Studies Council (Nettlecombe) and their Family Groups and D of E candidates, cleared brambles and other brash, including invasive rhododendron and Himalayan balsam and planted 420 broadleaf saplings. This was possible as a result of 2 previous years hard preparation work by Richard Ince and Roy Osborne.

Tree felling was carried out by arrangement with Bridgwater College Arboriculture Department, who use this as a necessary part of their students' curriculum work.

Year 5 from our school visited Stowey Wood in January and planted wild fruit tree saplings along the lower slopes next to the path through the wood

4.3 Castle Mount,

SGSG are girded up for preliminary volunteer work, clearing brash and bracken, ahead of funding plans for new fencing.

4.4 Other Green Spaces

25 kilograms of daffodils were planted in November.

4.5 Walks

The Green Spaces arranged a Spring Walk through Stowey Wood and an Autumn Walk from The Mount through Watery Lane to Hockpitt Farm with guides Nigel Phillips and Louis Pearson and tea and cake from Jo Scoins and Gill Carr and the hospitality of the Recreation ground and Hockpitt Farm.

4.6 Funding

We are applying for funding (not due until May 2020) from the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme. This includes:

Interpretive panels, showing the title of the location, a map covering all the green spaces and linking paths between them as well as an overview of heritage and/or ecological information. These are planned for the Recreation Ground, Millennium and Stowey Woods and The Mount

Leaflets for the Woods, The Mount, in the style of the one already being distributed for the Recreation Ground promotion.

This has been made possible with considerable professional volunteer help from Terry Sackett.

4.7 Treasury

After initial banking in an old chocolate box we opened a real bank account in December.

4.8 Signage and other publicity

We have a Facebook set-up and have produced a flyer promoting the Recreation Ground. A panel is in hand for inside the Stowey Gaol, in collaboration with Stowey Walking and sponsored by Nigel and Janet Phillips. Litter picking

The Green Spaces organises litter picks on the 3rd Saturday of the month, from a 10 am start to midday finish with tea/coffee in the Portacabin on the Recreation Ground – we now have 18 volunteers on the roll, more would be welcome. Sedgemoor's Clean Surroundings team provide equipment and collection of the bags.

5 Volunteers

Some funders allow volunteer time to be match-funded: £50 per day per volunteer, £150 per day for volunteers giving professional input.

6 Collaboration with other organisations

Over the past year we have worked with and/or benefitted from help:

- The NS VC Primary School
- Thomas Poole Library – the Library displays our publicity; we supported their funding application.
- Dog Walkers – a sound source of feedback and suggestion.
- Sedgemoor Green Surroundings for litter picking and care in their mowing around our crocuses.
- Stowey Walking – we installed a handrail on the steps on the north side of the Old A39 at the request and with the help of Stowey Walking, and are collaborating in the Gaol!
- AONB – for advice
- Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme (Reimagining The Manor) – SGSG carried out a pioneer Hedge Survey, 30m sections of 9 hedges
- Taunton Mid-week Volunteers
- Field Studies Council, Nettlecombe – working volunteer group visits, long-term monitoring of Stowey Woods
- SDC Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study – contributed information
- Bridgwater College arboriculture department.
- Inwood Farm, who kindly arranged the biennial Recreation Ground east border hedge cutting.
- The Woodland Trust – who supplied 420 saplings.
- The Quantock Messenger
- Nether Stowey Parish Council – maps, use of their address, printing and patience.
- The Quantock Conservation Volunteers
- The Greater Quantock Landscapes Development Fund, who funded stakes and protective tubes for our 420 saplings.

THE THOMAS POOLE LIBRARY NETHER STOWEY REPORT TO PARISH MEETING – 20th MAY 2019

Twelve months ago, the County Library Service was engaged in a Consultation on the future of libraries in Somerset. Representations from Nether Stowey were considerable, through attendance at meetings, completions of a questionnaire and other written responses. The Parish Council had been in negotiation with the Library Service since the end of 2017, before the Consultation was held, but by the middle of 2018 it looked increasingly unlikely that, for financial reasons, the Parish council would be able to take on responsibility for the building and operation of the Library.

On 13th July, at a joint meeting between the Parish Council Library Working Group and representatives of FONSL, the second such meeting, FONSL tabled a proposal which would enable it to take on responsibility for the Library building. It would become a registered charity and in so doing gain 100% Business Rate relief on the building having taken a lease on it, in the event of the outcome of the Consultation being unfavourable to Nether Stowey.

The outcome was unfavourable, and the Library was threatened with closure by 31st March 2019. FONSL submitted an Expression of Interest to the County Council on 13th November, a first step towards entering into a Community Library Partnership, and this was accepted. The next step was to achieve charitable status, and with the help of Spark Somerset an application was made, and charitable status granted on 17th December, only 13 days after submission. The charity took the name '*The Thomas Poole Library Nether Stowey*'. In the following 2 months discussions took place with the County Council to agree Heads of Terms for the Community Library Partnership Agreement and for the Lease that had to be taken on the building. The Community Library Partnership Agreement was signed in the Library on 5th March and the Lease on the 21st March.

On 1st April the Library began to operate as a CLP, staffed totally by volunteers. The volunteers had trained during the preceding month and there was light touch support from the Library Service for the first two weeks, but we are now 'on our own' and still learning on the job. There are usually 3 people on duty for each half day 'shift', and the work is proving taxing but rewarding. There is much more to the work than simply issuing or taking returned borrowed books, and although it is stressful at times, we can only become more competent as we familiarise ourselves with the processes. There is a notable desire among the volunteers to provide a good service and we are encouraged by the patience and goodwill of our 'customers'.

We have secured the retention of a working Library in the village and brought back under village control Tom Poole's 200 years old school building. None of this would have been possible without the commitment of a very large number of people. The committees of FONSL and The Thomas Poole Library have worked tirelessly, and continue to do so, but the huge number of other volunteers who have attended public meetings and subsequently offered their time and expertise has really shown what people power means in a community like ours.

Early signs are that our estimated income and expenditure for the year will meet expectations and we are very grateful for the award of a grant of £1200 from the Parish Council towards costs for the coming year. Our aim is to improve and increase the services that are on offer in the Library, in particular those associated with our local heritage and environment, and to make it a centre for Quantock related activities.

Quantock Players ▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Unfortunately last year there was no pantomime - we were unable to cast a show as there just wasn't enough adults to play the major parts.

This year we decided to hold adult auditions much earlier than usual, and were pleased to see some new faces, and also some returning faces that we hadn't seen for a long time. So, yes, it was looking promising that there would be a 2019 Panto.

Junior auditions were held on 13th May, and so we now have a junior chorus of 17, which means that there is a good cast to start rehearsing for this year's Panto, which is to be Ali Baba And The Four Tea Leaves.

During the last year we were fortunate to get funding from HPC Community Fund and Magnox Socio Economic Scheme which enabled us to purchase new lighting equipment. The new lights are LEDs so save on power, and will give great special effects, with any colour being obtainable from each light.

We look forward to seeing you in our audience, or why not come along to help?

NETHER STOWEY URBAN SAINTS (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS CRUSADERS)

The Juniors' group meets weekly in the Church Centre or Stable Loft during term-time. We have 16 regular attenders, and all seem to really enjoy what we offer.

We use the Urban Saints Energize website for our weekly programmes, with a mix of games, Bible teaching, quizzes, discussions about the Christian faith and craft. We have also watched a couple of Veggie tales DVDs.

As in previous years, the children have enjoyed an evening at Cannington Activity Centre, bonfire night with sparklers and toasted marshmallows, and 10-pin bowling in Taunton.

This year all the leaders have been required to complete several face-to-face and/or online training courses, to ensure that the group is running safely.

Robin and Kathryn Popham lead the 2 Seniors' groups. The groups meet as Home Groups on alternate Wednesday evenings.

The younger, smaller group are between 11 and 14 years old and are all boys.

The other group consists of six older teenagers in their last year of school or first year of sixth Form.

Both groups share a meal together before we have an hour or so of activities exploring issues of faith.

Highlights for the Seniors' groups have included a trip to the Anne Frank exhibition, ice skating in Bristol, a fancy-dress Christmas lunch, a whole family Christmas social and 10-pin bowling.

We also took seven young people to Spree, a vast Christian camp run by Urban Saints.

Juniors: Kerry Trout 732112
Brenda Jarvis 741227

Seniors: Kathryn and Robin Popham
733745

The Wednesday Club Annual Report for the Parish Council AGM 2019:

The Wednesday Club continues much the same as in previous years, but in December last year we said a fond farewell to **Margaret Adams** who had been involved with the Wednesday Club (previously known as the Wednesday Day Centre) for 25 years. Our heartfelt thanks go to her, for her years of loving and selfless service for the benefit of the Club members, from Nether Stowey and the surrounding villages.

From January the running of the Club has been passed onto Maggie Harrison, who has been a volunteer with the Club for a few years. Since January the Club has adopted a Constitution, held an AGM and applied for new funding from the Somerset Community Foundation Trust, other funding is also being sought. The weekly meetings are run by a faithful and dedicated team of volunteers, who work to a monthly rota, with an extra volunteer team helping out with serving and clearing away the weekly lunch.

During the past year we have had some interesting guest speakers, including a talk on Raptors (with Barn Owl and Tawny Owl present) by Secret World, a Flower Arranging Demonstration, an interesting morning with a local Story Teller and another with a visit, from Gibby Swaine, who brought along her interesting and varied Musical Instrument Collection and encouraged us all to have a go, whether we are musical or not, it was great fun and enjoyed by even the most reluctant among us. We've also had a visit from the Police Community Support team, visits from the Quantock Medical Singing group and Carols sung by the local school choir. We also all went to the Cottage Inn for a meal at the end of the summer term and plan to do so again this year. A past member has also kindly provided funds for us to have a Cream Tea at a local Restaurant later this summer.

Besides all of this we have much homespun entertainment, with an Easter Bonnet Competition, an Ascot Hats day, a Bathing Belle/Guy Photo quiz of members, as well as the more regular activities such as Felxercise, Reminiscing and Craft sessions, Quizzes, Poem / Book Reading, weekly News updates from members and/or volunteers, and of course each week a wonderful hot and nourishing meal supplied by the Nether Stowey Schools Meals Service, for which we are very grateful.

We have a lot of fun and really enjoy our time together each week, so if you are interested in finding out more, either as a member or volunteer, please contact either Maggie Harrison - Chairperson, Tel: 01278 741230; Tina Murihead – Secretary Tel: 01278 732; or Barbara Beer – Treasurer Tel: 01278 732418.

NETHER STOWEY WI

We have enjoyed a positive year both socially and as part of the wider circle of WI.

We enjoyed a very successful evening with Sion Dawson author and TV presenter celebrating our 95th year with over 80 visitors. As well as a very funny and entertaining talk by Simon we had memorabilia display of our 95 years young! And, a display of our campaign both locally and nationally for the fight against plastic soup in our oceans.

We have campaigned at local level by writing to supermarkets encouraging more environmental packaging, actively looking at more effective recycling, and how our laundry daily is contributing to plastic pollution. Our campaign hit the headlines at Prime Ministers Question Time on March 6th when Rebecca Pow, MP for Taunton asked the Prime Minister to support action on the issue, quoting our report.

We go forward this year with 2 resolutions – Don't fear the Smear, and a call against the decline in local Bus Services.

It was also the centenary of the National Federation of WI's with celebrations across the country and recognition of the successful campaigning over the years to make life better particularly for those more vulnerable in our society.

We also had for the second year a very successful fundraising event with our "Soup & Pud lunches" and will be back again in October by popular request.

Our WI values are even more relevant in 2019 than they were in 1915. Our inclusivity – that we welcome all women – and our desire to make a difference, these things perfectly capture the spirit of women in 2019. We are so much more than Jam and Jerusalem.

Terry Binding

President Nether Stowey WI