



NETHER STOWEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2026

MONDAY 11 MAY AT 7PM AT NETHER STOWEY CHURCH CENTRE

The Annual Parish meeting is an opportunity to showcase life in Nether Stowey, with the range of village groups and activities that cater for all ages.

A number of people and organisations have reported their activities for the past year and these reports and others are on display for you to read. Please help yourself to copies – we haven't printed too many, but if we run out we can e-mail one or you can collect from the Parish Office and there is a list you can sign up to on the table.

There are also a lot of local people working for the furtherance of the village who get little recognition. So can I say thank you to Tony Edney and his team who continue to look after the clock, Danny Hicks who looks after the toilets, Sam Councill who keeps the Cross, car park and other areas tidy, and the hard-working volunteers of Stowey Green Spaces for the work they do around the village looking after and improving our green spaces. The Thomas Poole Library continues to go from strength to strength with many new projects and events.

I would also like to pay tribute to the ongoing work of the Nether Stowey Village Hall and Recreation Ground CIO: they have made continued progress towards the new Stowey Centre, despite the frustrations of the planning system.

The Stowey Shuttle and its great team of co-ordinators and drivers continue to help villagers with transport needs.

It must be remembered that all these people are volunteers who give their time freely and we should be grateful for the time and effort they put in.

PARISH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

We were pleased to welcome Becky Hannam to the Council in October. The Parish Council still has two vacancies to fill, so we remain thinly spread to try to cover all the activities where we would like to represent the village.

The situation with Somerset Council and their precarious financial situation remains very difficult to navigate and like everyone else we find it very difficult to get any response or co-operation from most areas where we overlap.

We have had to take on all sorts of work that Somerset Council used to do, but now just shrug off mainly, we presume, through lack of funds or staffing shortages. The promised partnership of Towns, Parishes and Somerset Council has unfortunately failed to materialise.

Despite this we were pleased that we were able to reduce the parish part of Council tax this year. This was largely due to careful management last year, and by successfully applying for grants to meet costs that we would otherwise have had to cover.

As many residents are aware, there are three footpaths which cross the A39 and which are not served by either of the pedestrian crossings at the traffic lights. We have however secured Highways agreement to have road safety signs in both directions along the stretch of the A39 between the traffic lights, warning drivers that there are pedestrians crossing and these will be installed in the near future.

Following many reports of inconsiderate, and sometimes dangerous parking at the junction of Castle St and Lime St., Somerset Highways will be installing double yellow lines along a short section of the road at the

junction in front of the Post Office. Although it is recognised that parking space is in very short supply in the village, cars are often parked in such a manner as to force pedestrians into the road as well as restricting visibility at the junction, particularly for traffic emerging from Castle Street. Accordingly, it was felt that action is required to address this situation.

Parking on the Cross is meant for loading and unloading only but more recently cars are being parked overnight on the loading bay or between the bollards. As well as being dangerous for pedestrians in some places, this has resulted fairly regularly in the low wooden bollards being knocked over, the repair costs having to be paid by the Parish Council. As a result, new cast iron bollards will replace the oak ones which will be more visible and more resistant to being knocked down.

We are pleased to say that the parish has been able to instigate the installation of two new benches for the use of the village. One will be on the path from Banneson Rd. to the playing field and the other will be on the grass area behind the old garage on the path to Oak Rd.

We have continued to represent the Parish's interests at the various Hinkley Point fora and Site Stake Holders meetings.

The Parish Council is always keen to support local groups and activities which enrich the lives of so many of our community. In the last twelve months we have awarded grants to local groups including for equipment for Stowey Green Spaces, the Short Mat Bowls Club, the Wednesday Club and NS Football Club. We also paid for training for Stowey Green Spaces volunteers and for the DJ at Party in the Park, and contributed to the repairs to the tennis courts... If your organisation would like to apply for a grant, please contact Caro for details or there is information on our website on the Local Organisations page. At this meeting we normally display reports from those who have received grants from the Parish Council, sadly this year, not all the recipients have submitted reports.

Lastly, The Parish Council represents the village and is made up of people who live in the village, it is the level of local government closest to and in contact with the community.

Parish Councillors are not paid; their only incentive is that they care about the village and are willing to put a little time and effort into representing that village.

So if you care about our village and its future I would urge you to consider putting yourself forward to becoming a Parish Councillor and represent and speak up for the village we all believe in.

Thank you all for coming.

Knit & Natter Club

The Nether Stowey Knit & Natter Club is based at Thomas Poole Library and we meet every Friday from 10.30 to 12 noon.

Members bring their knitting, needlework and crochet or any craftwork, we are all at various stages of experience.

We welcome all ages and abilities; however, you must be able to natter!

Refreshments are available at nominal fee and while you are at the group you could browse through the many books in our library.

We are a friendly village group and sometimes we don't do much knitting, just natter. No need to ring just come along.

Contact: Elise Cable 01278 732612

Annual Report From Nether Stowey Allotment Association

For the Annual Parish Meeting 11May 2026

The Nether Stowey Allotment Association is a well established group who rent the allotment site from the Parish Council on an annual basis. The allotments are made available for the residents of Nether Stowey. The site itself and the organisation around allocating new tenancy agreements is managed by the allotment plot holders and a volunteer committee of two people. It is very much a self help group, who have a community spirit.. Just to give you some idea of the work undertaken by the group throughout the year, they maintain the common paths, clear the stream which runs along the edge of the site and cut back the hedgerows that border the site, to mention but a few.

Recently the main gate to the site, a heavy "five bar" metal gate came adrift from its post. The post had deteriorated and broken in two. Two of the plot holders took on the task of replacement. Their solution was was ingenious and inventive and after some hard work the gate was back on the post and the site was secure. This was a major repair work.

The allotment year starts in January when the rent for the plots becomes due. It is at this time that it is most likely that plot/s become available as people review their commitments. A number of plots became available this January and as at this time, May '26, all plots are occupied and we have a waiting list of three people.

We welcome enquiries and applications from Nether Stowey residents and although we do not have plots available at the moment, circumstance do change and plots do become available on regular basis.

For more information please contact:

Diane Faris Secretary NSAA

demfaris@btinternet.com

Or Steve Clarke Chairman NSAA

sclarke@talktalk.net

The Nether Stowey Art Group – 2026 update

The Nether Stowey Art Group (NSAG) is in its fifth year following a start-up grant from the Parish Council. Membership has been steady with between eight and twelve regular members, down slightly from 2025 as several previous members have moved away from the area or experienced health issues. Thus, we recognise the need to better promote our activities and plans are in place to this effect. We meet on the first and third Thursdays, in the afternoon between 2-4pm. The Art Group is run on informal lines within a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. There is always plenty of help and experience on-hand to assist beginners and those looking to try different materials and/or ways of drawing or painting. New members are always welcome and should contact Rob Potter (contact details: robertopotter@gmail.com and mobile 07855546883).

RJP





Nether Stowey Short Mat Bowls Club

Chairman's Report March 2026

The 2025 season started with some changes. At the AGM on 18 March 2025, a new Chairperson and Treasurer were elected and at the AGM it was discussed and agreed by all members present to increase the annual subscriptions and weekly fees in order to keep the club financially sustainable.

Both the singles and doubles in-house competitions were reintroduced in 2025. The singles started in May and were played on mat 1 and the doubles started in September and were played on mat 2. Both competitions started with 18 people and ended up with Paul Binding & Stuart Harris in the singles final and Mark Howells & Stuart Harris playing against Liz Grandfield & Keith Edwards in the doubles final. Both finals were played at the Annual Christmas lunch with Stuart Harris winning the singles competition and Mark Howells & Stuart Harris winning the doubles final. The winners and runners up certificates and the winners' trophies were awarded at the Annual Christmas lunch.

Also, in September we were successfully awarded a grant from the Nether Stowey Parish Council and we purchased a new set of heavy-duty jacks.

The Christmas lunch was held on Tuesday 16 December and was a buffet style lunch in the Church Centre. It was well received and enjoyed by all members as there was plenty of opportunity to socialise.

Finally, for the 2025 season, it was good to see excellent support to the club as both membership numbers and the average weekly turnout remains strong.



Why don't you come and try short mat bowling at the Church Centre. You can come along and try it out for free, we can even let you use our bowls and then if you like it – it's only £5.00 for the 2 sessions on an afternoon and this includes a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit too. So why not come along and have fun and meet new like-minded friends and enjoy the indoor game of short mat bowls.

It's for all ages – the young and the not so young and new members are always more than welcome. It is every Tuesday from 2pm to 5pm at the Nether Stowey Church Centre.

If you decide that you want to join, then membership is only £20 per year.

If you are interested, then please contact the Nether Stowey Short Mat Bowls Club, either by email at nsshortmatbowls@gmail.com or contact Terry Binding on 01278 732710.



NETHER STOWEY

VILLAGE HALL & RECREATION GROUND

Over the past year, the recreation ground has undergone several key improvements:

- * A new duck spring rocker has been added to the children's play area.
- * New white lines have been painted on the tennis court.
- * The 3G court has been repaired and new goals are being installed (if not already).
- * A new temporary welfare unit is currently being renovated by the football club to provide suitable facilities for the away team.
- * New lights have been installed in the dark corners of the portacabin to enhance safety.
- * New porch for the portacabin.

Upcoming events include:

- * Youth football tournament on 13/14 June 2026
- * School fair with Party in The Park on 4 July 2026

We express our gratitude to the Parish Council for their support and a grant for the new goals.

We also thank Hinkley Point B for a donation towards the duck spring rocker.

We acknowledge the Stowey Green Spaces Group and our playing field committee volunteers for their invaluable assistance in maintaining the area.

Nether Stowey Football Club continue to be the dominant user group of the recreation ground and we continue to have a good working relationship with the club who has also contributed to its upkeep.

The Nether Stowey Wednesday Club

The village Wednesday Club has been running for over 30 years and is mainly focus on senior citizens of various ages who are in need of some light company and activities each week.

The group consists of a maximum of 16 members and we meet in St Mary's Church Centre each Wednesday @ 10.00 am (school term time only) for coffee and later lunch at 12 noon.

The 2-course hot lunch is prepared by the village primary school. After lunch we have a poem or short story and quiz.

The Club is run by volunteers mainly from the village. During the morning, we have guest speakers and various activities such as table top games & card making. Last year we held our own sitting down "Sports Day". Activities are optional and we aim to please all.

We are a very friendly group and welcome all.

Contact Tina Muir 07761586866 of Barbara Beer 01278 732412

Note: the Wednesday Club received a grant from the Parish Council in March 2026 to purchase a food transporter box

Report from Nether Stowey and Fiddington WI

We have enjoyed a very positive year. A full year of meetings with entertaining and informative speakers, Craft sessions and quizzes , a relaxing day at Sidmouth where we were joined by members from Combwich and Cannington WIs and our friends from the local community, we also visited our Presidents beautiful garden and a lovely cream tea.

We organized a shopping trip to Cribbs and a Christmas trip to Blackdown Nursery.

We chose to have a buffet and Christmas singsong this year for our Christmas celebration at the Church Centre and it was so successful we are going to do it all over again this year!

Our membership numbers have grown at a time where some WI's are struggling or have sadly closed, lack of ladies to take on officer roles and new legislation in place for women only groups have played a part.

The WI was established in 1915 based on the ideals of fellowship, truth, tolerance, and justice to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community, nationally we have regularly challenged issues around violence against women, women's homelessness and ' every child needs a friend' an initiative to increase volunteer independent Visitors to support children in care.

We will continue do our part locally with a welcome and the hand of friendship offered . Come for a visit, if it's for you, come join us.

Terry Binding

Secretary

Nether Stowey & Fiddington WI

Annual report and accounts for the Parochial Church Council for the year ended 31st December 2025

Administrative information

St Mary's Church, situated in Nether Stowey, is one of the churches of the Quantock Villages Benefice and is part of the Quantock Deanery in the Archdeaconry of Taunton in the Diocese of Bath and Wells within the Church of England. The correspondence address is: The Benefice Office, St Mary's Church Centre, 27 St Mary Street, Nether Stowey, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA5 1LJ. The PCC is a body corporate established by the Church of England and operates under the PCC Powers Measure 1956 and Church Representation Rules 2025 (the Rules). The PCC is a charity excepted by order from registering with the Charity Commission.

PCC members who have served in 2025 are as follows:

Ex Officio members:

Rector: Revd Eleanor King (Chair)

Reader: Viv Chesterton

Churchwarden: Nick Harrison

Elected representatives to the Deanery Synod: Viv Chesterton*

Elected members: Barbara Beer, Keith Chesterton, Emma Gulliver, Maggie Harrison (until March) Sarah King, Alan Simson (until April), Nirmala van Driel, Gerry Wright.

During the year, Emma Gulliver was PCC Secretary and Nick Harrison was PCC Treasurer. Gerry Wright was Parish Safeguarding Officer and Barbara Beer was the Chair of the Church Centre and Stable Loft Committee. Kerry Trout continued as Electoral Roll Officer although not a member of the PCC.

*Viv Chesterton is a member of the PCC *ex officio* by virtue of her Readership; she also attends Deanery Synod.

Structure, Governance and Management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules 2022. Members of the PCC are either *ex officio* (Clergy, Churchwardens and Deanery Synod Representatives and, following local decision, Readers), elected or co-opted members. Deanery Synod Representatives are elected every three years, and elected members are elected annually at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). The PCC has complied with the code of practice under section 5A of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

The PCC is responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding on how the funds of the PCC are to be spent, and for the maintenance of the church fabric. The business of the PCC, in addition to Fabric, Administration and Finance, includes Worship, Pastoral care and Mission work. The full PCC met six times during the year.

Given its wide responsibilities, the PCC has a number of committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of parish life. These include the Standing Committee, Fabric and Finance Committee, Church Centre and Stable Loft Committee and the Social Committee. Though these committees have not met as extensively as in previous year, they are responsible to the PCC and report back, as and when appropriate, with minutes of their discussions and recommendations being received by the full PCC and adopted as necessary. All but the Standing Committee and Fabric and Finance Committees have members not on the PCC. All

church attendees are encouraged to register on the Church Electoral Roll and stand for PCC election. The electoral roll at the APCM in 2025 stood at 51. The number of people in the worshipping community submitted for Statistics for Mission 2025 was 45.

Aim and Purposes

St Mary's Parochial Church Council (PCC) is responsible for cooperating with and supporting the Incumbent in promoting the mission of the church, in the areas of discipleship, pastoral care, social events and ecumenism.

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling and welcoming as many people as possible to worship and become part of the community at St Mary's. The PCC makes recommendations regarding worship. The services and worship, along with the home groups, endeavour through prayer and scripture, music and sacrament to enable, equip and empower the congregations to put their faith into practice.

We also aim to reach out into the community through social events and other opportunities.

Achievement and Performance

Worship

The PCC aims to meet the spiritual needs of its parish by maintaining a variety of services in a monthly cycle. There were weekly services at 11.00am either in the Church or in the Church Centre, with Services of the Word normally on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the Church Centre, and services of Holy Communion normally on the 2nd and 4th Sundays in the Church. We continue to be grateful to Keith Chesterton, Glyn Legge, Kathy Peckham and Brenda Jarvis for leading our musical worship week by week and all who take a role in the worship of our church - the readers, intercessors, sidespeople, 'clickers' and chalice assistants. A service of Morning Prayer is held in church every Monday morning. There was also a mid-week service of Holy Communion on Friday mornings in the Church Centre lounge, followed once a month by coffee and cake.

Clergy leadership of Collective Worship in Nether Stowey School and 1st Friday services in the church or Church Centre continued during the year, together with Open the Book. Children from Year 5 were welcomed into church for Experience Easter, an interactive workshop exploring the events of Holy Week and Easter and the school leavers were given a Good News Bible from the church. We thank all those who have been part of the work in the schools over the last twelve months. In July 2025, we said farewell to Headteacher Chloe Holt and welcomed Terry Luke as Acting Headteacher. The school intends to appoint a permanent headteacher for September 2026. The school underwent a SIAMS inspection in November; four representatives from the church met the inspector and discussed the church's relationship with the school. The school received a Judgement 1 award, confirming that the school is effectively living up to its foundation as a church school.

The Prayer Chain on WhatsApp was used extensively during the year and three Home Groups continued to meet.

There have been two baptisms, three weddings and nine funerals, seven of which were in church. We thank Alan and Jenny Simson, Neil and Edré McElwee, Nirmala van Driel and the team of vergers for helping these services run smoothly.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is carried out by a number of people within the parish, both clergy and lay.

Mission and Evangelism

Looking outwards into our community remains a feature of our life as a church. The Quantock Messenger has continued through the year; we are very grateful to Richard and Barbara Beer and their team of editors and distributors for ensuring that the QM continues to be a wealth of information and support for the local villages. As in 2024, some of the profits from the QM were distributed to village charities and organisations and some was shared with Over Stowey Church, who also distribute the QM to local residents. The weekly Benefice News continues to be distributed primarily by email and through the churches, together with the Prayer Diary each month. Christmas cards were delivered to every house in the village. Quantock Good News, distributed about four times per year, shares news from across the deanery.

Review of the Year

2025 has been another busy year for St Mary's.

An Alpha Course was run during the early part of the year, with 18 people attending at its peak. Thank you to the team, led by Jennifer Lindner, who made the course possible, and to those who provided food.

Monthly Coffee Mornings took place on most second Saturdays in the Church Centre, raising money for various charities, as well as for the church. A lunch to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day was shared in May, and we were delighted to welcome Stowey Singers to entertain us with songs from the 1940s. This was followed by a Harvest Lunch in September, and we were very grateful to Amy from Nether Stowey School, and her team, for cooking the main course for us. A Community Christmas Lunch was held in December, again accompanied by Christmas songs from the Stowey Singers. Thank you to the Social Committee for organising these events, and all who have given of their time, provided food, prepared it, served it and washed-up!

Lent was marked with Lent lunches held on Fridays, which were much enjoyed by those who came. The Walk of Witness on Good Friday, starting under the cross on the Mount, was well attended and followed by hot cross buns and children's activities in the Church Centre. The resurrection was celebrated early on the Mount on Easter Day followed by bacon butties.

A new microphone system was installed in church in the spring, improving both sound quality and reliability.

Revd Kate Sax retired from her role as Associate Priest in June, which was marked by a service in St Margaret's Church, Spaxton, followed by a bring-and-share lunch. We are pleased that Kate has remained resident in the area and continues to worship with us.

In August, we were delighted to welcome Martin Stacey to give an organ recital in aid of the church, which was greatly enjoyed by those who attended.

In September, the Group Mission Team (made up of clergy and lay representatives of the four benefices in the deanery) met for the first time following the pastoral reorganisation. We are grateful to Emma Gulliver and Sally Bult for being the lay representatives for the benefice.

Church of England Safeguarding training at Basic level was offered in the Church Centre in October, attended mainly by those across the deanery who were required to complete the training but were unable to do so online. Safeguarding Sunday was marked again in November. Gerry Wright, the Parish

Safeguarding Officer, continues to maintain the Safeguarding Dashboard during the year, ensuring that that safeguarding checks and training are up-to-date and that church activities are being held safely.

In November, Revd Eleanor and Nick Harrison met with our local MP, Ashley Fox, to discuss matters of local interest and importance in rural communities.

A card reader was installed in church in December, allowing worshippers and visitors to make donations by card for the first time.

We marked the 50th anniversary of the first Carols on the Cross on Christmas Eve with upwards of 350 attendees and excellent (if rather chilly!) weather. We were again grateful to Andrew Jeanes and the Parish Council for their support and help, together with those who monitored road closures in particularly low temperatures. The paperwork required is significant and the PCC will need to consider how the event can be held and managed sustainably in the years to come.

A number of our congregation passed away during the year, including Maggie Harrison in March and Margaret Adam in May. We are grateful for their lives, service and witness.

The need to repair the churchyard wall to the west of the church was an ongoing concern for most of the year. With thanks to those who contributed funds, including Quantock Landscape Partnership, the work was completed to very high standard by Cyril Harriss and his team in the autumn. We are pleased that the Harras fencing has now been removed and the graves at the base of the wall can be tended once more. We offer particular thanks to Roger Stacey for his contribution to getting the task completed.

It became apparent during the summer that the Stable Loft fire escape was no longer safe and the decision was taken to close the Stable Loft to general use until the fire escape can be repaired. There is also a (less immediate) need to repair the roof. Conversations with the diocese, who own the building, are ongoing as 2026 begins.

As the only hall available to hire in the village, the Church Centre continues to be extremely busy and we are grateful for the ongoing work of Barbara Beer, Pat Stacey, Nirmala van Driel, Kerry and Martin Trout, Nick Harrison and all who manage, clean and maintain the Church Centre and ensure it is safe and available to all who use them. Various maintenance tasks were completed during the year, including redecoration of the main hall during the summer, the installation of replacement cookers in the kitchen, and the cleaning of the floor. Pat Stacey has indicated that she will be retiring as Bookings Secretary in April 2026; we thank her for her many years of dedication to her role and all it has expanded to be.

Thank you to those who have organised events and fundraised for the church during the year. We are grateful for their contribution to the continuation of ministry and mission in Nether Stowey.

Thank you to all who have contributed to church life during 2025, in whatever way, seen and unseen. Particular thanks to Nick Harrison, who has continued both as Churchwarden and as Treasurer this year, and to those who have supported him in those roles. Thanks too to those who have led services, especially Viv Chesterton and Revd Stephen Campbell, and to Alison Hoare for her ongoing and valuable support as Benefice Administrator. Finally, thank you to Revd Eleanor for all she does to facilitate and support the worship and life of the church.

Financial Report 01 January to 31 December 2025

Our accounts are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis, which means that we account only for income and expenditure that is received or paid during the year.

Overall, our receipts totalled £85,108 and payments £98,780.

Receipts:

Planned giving, collections, donations and other giving reduced slightly to £22,899. Our claim under Gift Aid produced £6,623 and community events, specific collections and coffee mornings raised a further £6,538. Work on the Churchyard West Wall attracted £7,615 in Grants and I transferred £5,000 from the Lucy Hobbs fund to cover the final cost.

The Church Centre hire income increased slightly resulting in a total income of £17,400. We received £3,842 from our insurance towards the repairs to the lounge ceiling. Income from the PV panels totalled £10,912 but £5,124 was delayed from 2024. We continue to be very grateful to Ian Clarke who masterminded the installation of the PV system.

Adverts and sales income of the Quantock Messenger reduced slightly as did the cost of production, but the magazine produced a useful profit of £4,712.

Payments:

The total Benefice Share was £94,644, Nether Stowey's portion increased by 11.6% to £31,541!

The running costs for the Church and Church Centre totalled £20,761 including the heating and lighting costs of £8,127. Major repairs on the Church and Church Centre totalled £23,734, maintenance and minor improvements to the Church Centre totalled £6,064 and to the Church £4,737.

Donations to Charities amounted to £5,968 of which £3,089 was raised from coffee mornings and other events. Our giving included a portion of the profits from the Quantock Messenger. A few charity cheques are still to be cashed in 2026.

Reserves Policy:

At the year-end our total available funds amounted to £27,895 with £16,887 in the General fund and £11,008 in the Restricted fund. Thus, we have £16,885 in general funds to meet the normal outgoings of the Church and Church Centre.

The PCC aim to maintain an adequate balance in reserve, assessed as approximately three months average outgoings. We go into 2026 with a little over two months in hand.

Summing up:

We enter 2026 with a reduced balance but 2025 saw the completion of major repairs to the Church Centre roof, redecoration of the main hall and several other improvements. Major repair and repointing of the Churchyard West Wall were also completed.

We will need to attract significant grant monies to enable us to carry out necessary repairs to the Church South Aisle roof and we plan to continue with energy saving works in the Church Centre.

I recommend that our church hold fund raising events in 2026 to ease the financial situation.

Thanks:

Our thanks go to Barbara and Richard Beer for recording and banking the cash income, to Pat Stacey for looking after the Church Centre bookings, to Barbara and Martin for looking after Church Centre maintenance and for the Quantock Messenger team for the editing, production, and distribution of the magazine.

NPH

Stowey Bears Report

The new "baby room" is doing amazingly well and we are thrilled with the performance of the setting in it's new guise. We remain exceptionally grateful for the not-insignificant sum given by the PC; I don't think we could have done it without your kind support!

Both rooms (9mths - 2yrs and 2yrs to pre-reception age) are going extremely well and we are delighted to have had lots of positive comments from staff and parents; the children are thriving with their development. We are very busy, in that we are almost at full capacity. However, we do have a couple of spaces in the PM sessions, we are happy to keep them as a buffer in case parents require the odd ad-hoc session. We have opened our waiting list for 27-28 and numbers are already looking healthy.

All staff very happy with their pay rise, following the recent minimum wage increase, however we are aware that many staff in our sector are struggling with the cost of living and fuel price increases. Rurally based staff are often hit hardest by any changes in this regard; running a car and filling the tank make for a large chunk of their outgoings and as we open early and have limited access to it anyway, public transport is not a viable option for them, especially those with children in other settings outside the village.

We have recruited 1 new keyworker starting in May and 2 new bank staff (1 has already completed shifts and 1 awaiting DBS.) We have 1 member of staff on long term sick leave and were unsure of return date yet, meaning that our dedicated team is stretched a little more than usual. Our apprentice has almost finished her placement; we have 2 further trainees and are working towards being a centre of excellence in this regard in order to help bolster recruitment not only for ourselves but also more generally for the sector now that government funding is encouraging more parents back to work. We are also supporting existing staff to raise their skill levels and we currently have 3 members of staff working on their Level 3's. All our new recruits are local to the village and its immediate surrounding areas and we are committed to try to continue this trend, bringing employment to our local area. We now are a team of 15 which has essentially doubled from pre-baby room days!

Our internal structure has altered slightly after opening the baby room, inasmuch as Rachel Penny, our wonderful Manager, has become full time office based in order to be able to oversee the two rooms. As such she has taken on a greater part of our marketing, previously covered by member of the volunteer committee. Our Facebook page and website being kept updated regularly along with notice boards and Tapestry (parent comms platform), which is helping attract new families but also has also garnered some lovely community support.

We aim to run one fundraising activity each half term. You may have seen our recent Facebook post that we raised a whopping £800 from our Sponsored walk from the School to Street Bean Cafe. The walk was really well attended and we noticed that our GoFundMe page was generously donated to by villagers who aren't even connected to the preschool, which was lovely! Our next fundraising activity is due to be happen on the Sunday 17th May; we are going to do a sponsored litter-pick and hope to engage members of the wider community.

Hopefully this gives you a good snap-shot of our current activities, however if there is anything else you have specific questions on, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Stowey Gardeners is a vibrant club based in Nether Stowey drawing members from all around the Quantock area.

We meet on the 3rd Thursday each month at 7.30 in St Mary's Church Centre to enjoy a guest speaker, raffle, garden table, tea, coffee and homemade cake and exchange knowledge and information on a huge range of topics.

The aim of the club is to offer all gardeners, whatever their particular enthusiasm, a chance to get together with other gardeners in the locality, to their joint advantage and mutual interest.

This year our speakers have given us insight into Soft Fruit Growing, A Short History of Growing Food, The Self-Seeded Garden and the Historic Front Garden of the with our upcoming May speaker giving us an insight into Nature As Your Neighbour. Garden visits feature prominently in our programme as we explore gardens preferably within reasonable travelling distance, including Watcombe, nr Winsford, Gares Barton, Langport, Babbs Farm, Highbridge and Kingsland and have a successful bring and buy Plant Sale in the village on May 16th.

Later in the summer we hold a party for members in a local garden and in the autumn have talks on Dahlias, Using Bulbs in the Garden, Sustainable Gardening and Honey Fungus and Other Fungi still to come, plus our 3 more garden visits to come, rounded off with a party at Christmas.

Come and join us!

Stowey Green Spaces Group

Report to Parish Meeting

11th May 2026

The Stowey Green Spaces Group [SGSG] operates within the 2 Stowey parishes with 2 distinct roles.

Our volunteers meet in the afternoon of the first and third Tuesdays, and the 4th Saturday, of the month, with occasional extra days, to carry out their self-defined role, which is to "Identify, assess and help protect and enhance the natural and anthropogenic landscape and features of the landscape in the local area"

There is also an open meeting for all volunteers, and anyone else interested in joining in, on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, in the afternoon.

The areas under management comprise:

- **the A39 by-pass wood, which lies behind the Nether Stowey Church Centre and the area of grass and woodland to the west stretching as far as the Stogursey Lane traffic lights**
- **Stowey Wood, and**
- **Stowey Millennium Wood [including Diamond and Platinum Jubilee extensions].**

We also enjoy volunteering in Plot 173, an area to the east of Old Farm Road, managed by NSPC, and the Mount, site of Nether Stowey castle, and owned by Sue Aubrey.

The work carried out includes removal of bramble and other invasive vegetation, planting of trees and maintenance of existing woodland, and maintenance and improvement of footpaths railings, stiles and foot bridges.

A particularly exciting project under way now, with many hours already spent in clearance work, is the exploration of the ponds in Stowey Wood with a view to improving their role as a habitat for invertebrates and other relevant flora and fauna

The work also involves establishing and maintaining relationships with stakeholders such as the Parish Councils, Somerset Council, Quantock Hills National Landscape, English Heritage, Community Payback and other bodies like local walking groups, all of whom appreciate the work of our volunteers and in certain cases provide material support such as equipment and storage facilities which is gratefully received.

The other role is that of our Litter Picking teams who operate on the 3rd weekend of the month, on 23 defined routes within the 2 parishes. Equipment is provided by grant aid from NSPC which is much appreciated and with the support of Sedgmoor Clean Surroundings who provide the blue bags we use, and also arrange the collection of the litter from Parsonage Farm where Mr Richard Ince provides a temporary collection point.

The collaboration between SGSG's volunteers and the various agencies and bodies mentioned helps make the two parishes of Nether and Over Stowey a noticeably more pleasant place to live in and to visit.

Paul Brierley

Deputy Chair

Note: SGSG received grants for volunteer training and litter-picking equipment in the past year

The Stowey Shuttle

Report for the Nether Stowey Parish meeting on 11th May 2026

The Stowey Shuttle is a community car scheme affiliated to the West Somerset Community Car Scheme Partnership. There are a number of similar schemes in operation locally; our Scheme serves registered passengers within the parishes of Nether and Over Stowey only.

The trips are limited to medical, optometry and related services, and, less often for shopping. Very rarely are our drivers asked to travel beyond West Somerset and the Sedgemoor areas. Drivers are free to decline a job and with only a maximum of 11 drivers available occasionally requests cannot be met. Many a time the search for a driver involves very many phone calls, by our equally hard-working co-ordinators. There are 64 Passengers registered with bus pass and 8 without a bus pass, totalling 72. The pace of new registrations has slowed, with just 3 new passengers registering in 2025. From zero journeys when the Scheme started in 2016 we had completed over 1000 by the end of 2025.

Starting on January 1st, 2026, a new numbering scheme was introduced; beginning with 0126, our first trip of 2026, we have already reached trip number 5826, so that is 58 trips, by the end of April, 2026. On this basis, we could reach 180 by the year's end!

The support of the Parish Council on this important resource for our community is much appreciated

**Paul Brierley
Chairman**