

# CHAR CHAT

## Char Valley Parish Council Newsletter

Whitchurch Canonorum, Stanton St Gabriel, Wootton Fitzpaine

Issue 5

July 2004

### **'Wodetone**

*~ A Wooded Place ~'*

The Wootton 2000 Group have published their first book

**Wodetone**

*~ A Wooded Place ~*

**A History of Wootton Fitzpaine** by Guy Bryan which is a fascinating book and can be bought from the publishers: -

Wootton 2000 Group, Manor Gardens, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, Dorset. DT6 6NH for £7.50.

For those unable to collect, add £1.75 for UK postage.

Tel. (01297) 560807

### **Home Watch**

Debby Snook has kindly agreed to become the new Home Watch Coordinator for Wootton Fitzpaine. We would like to extend our thanks to Reg Haynes for his long service in this role.

**Our thanks to Simon Christopher for carrying out the Internal Audit of the Char Valley accounts.**

## **Parish Meetings Reports**

As most of you will be aware, the Char Valley Parish Council was formed by "grouping" Whitchurch Canonorum, Wootton Fitzpaine and Stanton St Gabriel parishes. Within a grouped Parish Council, each parish must still hold an Annual Parish Meeting for the electors of each parish to discuss the needs and aspirations of their own communities.

The Annual Parish Meetings are more informal than Parish Council Meetings and give an opportunity for everyone to have their say. A Chairman is elected by the Meeting. There are short reports from the Parish Council and from local groups, clubs and charities on their activities. Everything from tree planting and village enhancement schemes, to nuisances or eyesores can be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting and actions can be dealt with locally or passed on to the Parish Council. The Parish Council pays the expenses.

Wootton Fitzpaine Parish Meeting AGM was held on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004 at the Village Hall. John Bradbury was re-elected as Chairman and Marion Brooks as secretary. Annual reports were given for the Wootton 2000 Group, Parish Council, Wootton Fitzpaine Playing Field and the Best Kept Village Competition. Wootton won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the Previous Winners category of the Best Kept Village competition 2003. Trees have been purchased and planted around the village and the seats and cemetery gates de-varnished and oiled in preparation for the 2004 entry. Wootton also entered the Dorset Wildlife Trust Living Churchyard competition and won Best New Entry. A copy of the minutes may be requested from the Secretary, email address [brooksies.manorgardens@virgin.net](mailto:brooksies.manorgardens@virgin.net).

The Annual Whitchurch Parish meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> May and was attended by representatives from Connect Highway Maintenance and the Rural Housing Enabler. Councillor Andrews was elected chairman. Connect Highways set out the plans for resurfacing the A35 in Morcombelake. The new surface is intended to be quieter. Councillor Richards reported on the Housing Survey conducted within the parish that indicated there were 17 families in need of affordable housing. Mr Lloyd, the Rural Housing Enabler spoke supportively of the need for a rural exception site to provide affordable housing. For further information, see centre-page insets. Detailed minutes may be obtained from Anthea Bay.

The Stanton St Gabriel Parish meeting took place on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2004. John Bridle was elected Chairman and Mrs. Y Bridle Secretary. The meeting discussed the following topics - National Trust current policy, coastal path problems, oil transfers at sea, new bus timetables, Bopper Bus, A35 traffic calming, overgrown hedges on A35 and driver distraction near the Ship Inn. A full copy of the Minutes can be obtained from the Chairman ([coldharbour@bushinternet.com](mailto:coldharbour@bushinternet.com))

Please support your Meetings, which take place between March and June each year. Full copies of the Minutes of these meetings are on the CVPC website at [www.charvalleyipc.co.uk](http://www.charvalleyipc.co.uk) We will endeavour to see that better publicity is given in future through the Benefice magazine, Char Chat and on village notice boards. As there is likely to be some confusion between the similar names of the Annual Parish Meeting and a Parish Council Meeting, can you think of a more arresting name for your community gathering?



## **Affordable Housing**

The combination of 'planning exception site policy' in the Local Plan, and the Rural Housing Enabler to facilitate surveys works really well for rural communities. The Char Valley parishes have done an excellent job in considering housing need in their communities. However, certain information has to be provided for planners etc to accept the results. This was not covered by the parishes' own survey. For the sake of the minor inconvenience, we can now do a full survey, which the planners and housing departments can then readily support.

### **What are 'exception sites'?**

The beauty of exception sites policy is that it delivers affordable homes exclusively for local need. This is a special concession made only for rural communities because authorities are concerned about the effect on communities of high private rents and unaffordable house prices.

### **What information is needed?**

In order to trigger this concession we need to provide certain basic evidence, which confirms the true housing need of the client households. Close family connections, time living in the parish, working in or near the parish, living in the parish or having been forced out by high accommodation costs all count.

Obviously, incomes have to be indicated as this concession is intended to meet the needs only of those who do not earn enough to access the private market. Of course, all the information remains strictly confidential and there is no link in the report to anyone's names or details. A wide range of incomes can be considered for different forms of affordable housing.

The survey also needs to provide the contact details of the households in need so that they can be contacted as things progress.

## **Diversification of Land Use**

For almost 1000 years - from the Norman Conquest to well into the 1900s - feudalism, or a form of it, dictated the nature of agriculture in the Vale. Medium and small subsistence holdings within large manor estates sought to make a living from a range of different agricultural activities.

The gradual break up of the estates, the creation of the Milk Marketing Board and the onslaught of World War II changed the face of farming. For the period 1950 - 1970, the stated Government policy was for Britain to be self-sufficient. Farmers in the Vale thus turned to intensive dairy farming which led to grassland improvements, land drainage and hedge moving. Most of the people in the Vale were connected to farming in some way. For instance, Westover Farm supported three families directly and a further two indirectly, through the supply chain.

Now, some 50 years later, we are perhaps coming full circle. Under the banner of 'diversification', farmers and landowners, large and small, are being encouraged to allow the grassland to convert to its natural state and to look for other income sources from the land. Recent research has shown that over 50% of farmers now rely on income from diversified activities to varying degrees.

A number of people have kindly contributed articles demonstrating diversity of land use.

**Westover Farm:** My grandparents moved into the farm in the 1930s and in our last year of production, we produced 1 million litres of milk. Now, after at least 150 years of dairy farming, milk production has ceased. Grassland is now extensively grazed by beef cattle, and the area by the stream is subject to an environmental scheme (Stewardship) application. The old stone barn in the farmyard has blossomed into two beautiful holiday cottages contributing to tourism, now the area's main industry.

**Crabbs Bluntshay Farm:** Diversification is the name of the game in these days of poor farm prices. The camping and caravan site on a level area near the farmhouse was something that my parents started and we have continued. Over the last few years, Farmers' Markets have come to the fore offering an outlet for honey, cider and preserves with the main ingredients of the chutneys coming from the large cottage garden and orchard.

We joined the Countryside Stewardship Scheme 5 years ago and farm the fields involved in the natural, organic way with no fertilisers and sprays. We have a circular conservation walk, which encompasses historical features such as an ancient sheep wash, retting ponds for flax and hemp, and ridge and furrow fields as well as wild flower meadows.

**Befferlands Farm:** We have lived at Befferlands farm now for nearly 21 years. Over the years, a combination of Government/ EEC Policies and animal diseases (BSE, Foot & Mouth & TB, for example) has ripped the heart out of farming and a source for alternative income has been sought.

Our policies now include short-term grass lets to neighbouring farmers, and an annual camp for Boys Brigade Companies. A 3-acre mixed woodland was planted in 1998 with financial help from the Forestry Commission. We are midway through a 10 year Stewardship Scheme which provides funding for hedge laying, fencing etc. In 1988, we converted the old traditional stone buildings into small industrial workshops for local businesses and in 2001, the old dwelling/turkey loft/bull pen was converted into a self-catering holiday let. Bed and Breakfast is now available in the Farmhouse.

With the new Cap Reform just around the corner and subsidies set to be phased out (thankfully) over ten years, diversification will become an integral part of the farming / agricultural business. What next? Wind Farm to be sited in West Dorset?

**Stoke Mill Farm:** Raising meat goats became a trial and error experience. Researching the market was difficult with little information available, so the idea was to start small and see if what was produced sold.

A livestock project has a long time scale from buying breeding stock, building up over several years, and then keeping a market supplied once established. Goats are challenging and responsive to work with and very different to cattle and sheep. For a start, they are browsers rather than grazers, so show them a field of grass and the response is, "Thanks, but we'll check out the hedge first!"

Goats are marketed when they reach around the 100lbs stage and each produce about 20-23kgs of meat that is low in fat and cholesterol. The selling side was the most difficult. The first sale to a local butcher was not auspicious and did not cover costs. However, a lucky phone call to the Real Meat Company opened the door to their business, which in turn helped to promote acceptance with local farm shops and others.

This enterprise is still very much in the early stages but interest seems to be developing which is encouraging.

**Monkton Wyld Court.** The eleven acres here are a mix of grazing, permanent pasture, woodland, scrub, semi-formal garden and an acre of walled vegetable garden. We keep cows and free-range poultry which, along with the garden produce, help us to feed our guests and ourselves with home-produced vegetarian food as far as the seasons and our work capacity will allow.

Our land is child-friendly and this is a major factor in making our home such a beautiful and attractive place to be in. The "Monkton Magic" attracts folk from around the world to join our community or come on the educational courses that generate our income.

**Shedbush Farm:** Shedbush Farm follows the ideas given in Rudolf Steiner's lectures of 1924, on which the *biodynamic* agricultural movement is founded. At the heart of biodynamics is the ideal of a self-contained, mixed farm providing its own seeds, fertility and feed for a wide range of different animals and a range of environments from ponds and hedges to orchards, woods and pasture. It is a method that is entirely free of agri-chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Biodynamics takes a holistic world-view that, for example, sees the influence of planetary rhythms on the growth of plants and animals as equally important to a purely chemical analysis. It is the regeneration of the forces that work through the soil to the plant, aided by enlivened compost or manure that is the central aim of biodynamics. Shedbush uses special therapeutic preparations for the soil, plants and for compost and manure.

Shedbush keeps Tamworth pigs, Aberdeen Angus and traditional beef shorthorn cattle, Portland sheep, pure Aylesbury ducks, Guinea fowl, black rock hens and rare-breed pheasant fowl hens "from Cromwellian times."

They rely on lunar and seasonal cycles to plan planting and fertilising times and mix their own natural treatments by drying or mulching plants like dandelion, nettle and chamomile in manure and then burying them in cows' horns for up to a year. It is a chemical-free approach to farming and food production putting animal welfare first. They are educating in this sustainable method of farming and food production and are also passionate in promoting 'Slow Food.'

**General Comments from Farmers - Diversification into the Holiday Industry in the Marshwood Vale.** Decline in farming's profits in recent years has meant that farmers have had to diversify to make a living. Many farming families in the Vale now have incomes from businesses such as farm shops, garden nurseries, attending shows, making wine, honey, and jam, and selling at farmers' markets. However, the most popular market is *holiday accommodation*.

Planning laws allow redundant farm buildings to be used as self-catering conversions. The Char Valley area is well suited to the holiday industry as it is near the World Heritage Coastline with its attractions of beach, walking, fossils, the popular towns of Lyme Regis, Charmouth and Bridport and National Trust properties. Well-kept farmland and agricultural areas with different crops and animals help make it immensely enjoyable for holidaymakers.

The holiday industry now has to provide facilities such as ensuite accommodation, dishwashers, washing machines, CTV and VCRs and sometimes PC and Internet links. Guests have to be encouraged stay at your particular farm, so there must be something extra such as games rooms, property position, friendly communications, and website information. The changed needs of the industry now include more out of season breaks, and more short breaks at all times of the year, but it can also be an enjoyable industry when one sees guests unwinding and enjoying our beautiful coastline and countryside.

**Further information** on the Stewardship Scheme is at [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) and a discussion on planning aspects of rural land use is at [www.asken.co.uk](http://www.asken.co.uk) You may also be interested to read the notes of a seminar on planning and agricultural diversification held on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2000, at which Brian McLaughlin (NFU) said that farm diversification was not *the* answer to the economic problems facing farmers but it was *an* answer. Visit [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

## **Affordable Housing (cont'd)**

### **Why do we need affordable housing?**

Dorset is now famous as a retirement and second home destination, and consequently for some of the highest property prices (and lowest incomes) in Britain. This means many households who once would have expected to buy or at least rent comfortably, now cannot.

We use the term 'affordable housing' because this can range from pure rented to shared or discounted ownership.

Lessons have also been learned so that all of these tenures are now controlled to remain affordable for future occupants.

### **What happens next?**

I am currently liaising with the Countryside Agency preparing their new questionnaire, which should go out to the community in the next month or two. The results will be made available to the Parish and the process of discussing locations with planners and the community and inviting a Housing Association to provide the homes will commence.

Putting together schemes like this does take a little time, but a little patience and determination will be rewarded a thousand fold as the homes materialise and families finally find secure accommodation in their community.

*Andrew Lloyd, Rural Housing Enabler*

***Unfortunately, the Char Valley Trail (see Issue 3 - November 2003) has been shelved. However, we are pleased to confirm that plans to improve the Wessex Ridgeway are going ahead.***



## CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL - MEMBERS NAMES, ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### Representing Whitchurch Canonorum North

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Mr R S ANDREWS  | Befferlands Farm, Berne Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RD | 01297 560203 |
| Mrs A C BAY     | Stoke Mill Farm, Broadoak, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NR               | 01308 868036 |
| Mrs S M JOHNSON | Cardsmill Farm, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RP    | 01297 489375 |
| Mr C N RICHARDS | 6 Goodens Hill, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF    | 01297 489500 |

### Representing Whitchurch Canonorum South

|                               |   |              |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Mr R COOK                     | Hillside Home, Ryall, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EG                 | 01297 489695 |
| Mr V G DIMENT (Vice Chairman) | Peter Pan, The Green, Morcombelake, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EA   | 01297 489636 |
| Mr R K TAYLOR                 | Knapp Cottage, Morcombelake, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6DY          | 01297 489125 |
| Mr P G WHITE                  | 7 Goodens Hill, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF | 01297 498128 |

### Representing Wootton Fitzpaine

|                              |  |              |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Miss B BRISCOE               | Stonecroft, Fishpond, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NN     | 01297 678203 |
| Mr W B CHAPMAN               | Stubbs Farm, Monkton Wyld, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6DE           | 01297 560464 |
| Mrs E J FORTESCUE (Chairman) | Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NA | 01297 560800 |

### Representing Stanton St Gabriel

|               |   |              |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Mr J E BRIDLE | Cold Harbour, Stanton St Gabriel, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EP | 01297 489711 |
|---------------|---|--------------|

### Rights Of Way Officers

|                     |                          |              |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Mr & Mrs J E BRIDLE | for Stanton St Gabriel   | 01297 489711 |
| Mr P MILLS          | for Wootton Fitzpaine    | 01297 560654 |
| Mr & Mrs D NEWMAN   | for Whitchurch Canonorum | 01297 489781 |

### Tree & Hedge Officer

|                 |   |              |
|-----------------|---|--------------|
| Mr C N RICHARDS | 6 Goodens Hill, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF | 01297 489500 |
|-----------------|---|--------------|

### Transport Representative

|               |   |              |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Mr J E BRIDLE | Cold Harbour, Stanton St Gabriel, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EP | 01297 489711 |
|---------------|---|--------------|

### Bridport Area Partnership Representative

|             |  |              |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| Mrs A C BAY | Stoke Mill Farm, Broadoak, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NR | 01308 868036 |
|-------------|--|--------------|

### DAPTC Representatives

|                |  |              |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| Mrs A C BAY    | Stoke Mill Farm, Broadoak, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NR | 01308 868036 |
| Mr W B CHAPMAN | Stubbs Farm, Monkton Wyld, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6DE | 01297 560464 |

### Village Hall Representatives

|                 |  |              |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Mr R S ANDREWS  | representing Whitchurch village hall                       | 01297 560203 |
| Mrs S M JOHNSON | representing Whitchurch village hall                       | 01297 489375 |
| Miss B BRISCOE  | representing Wootton Fitzpaine village hall                | 01297 678203 |
| Mr C N RICHARDS | representing James Hargreaves Community hall, Morcombelake | 01297 489500 |

### Finance Committee

|                   |  |              |
|-------------------|--|--------------|
| Mr R S ANDREWS    | Befferlands Farm, Berne Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RD | 01297 560203 |
| Mrs A C BAY       | Stoke Mill Farm, Broadoak, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NR               | 01308 868036 |
| Mr J E BRIDLE     | Cold Harbour, Stanton St Gabriel, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EP        | 01297 489711 |
| Mr V G DIMENT     | Peter Pan, The Green, Morcombelake, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6EA      | 01297 489636 |
| Mrs E J FORTESCUE | Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6NA     | 01297 560800 |
| Mrs S M JOHNSON   | Cardsmill Farm, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RP    | 01297 489375 |
| Mr R K TAYLOR     | Knapp Cottage, Morcombelake, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6DY             | 01297 489125 |

### Ancient Monuments Officer

|                    |  |              |
|--------------------|--|--------------|
| Mrs S CREED-CASTLE | Crabbs Bluntshay Cott, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RN | 01297 489064 |
|--------------------|--|--------------|

### West Dorset District Councillors

|                  |   |              |
|------------------|---|--------------|
| Mr I L GILLESPIE | Tempest, Hawkchurch, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5UW                         | 01297 678235 |
| Mr D NEWSON      | Lavender Cottage, Higher Sea Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6BB | 01297 560855 |
| Mrs G SUMMERS    | 31 Victoria Grove, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 3AD                            | 01308 421966 |

### Dorset County Councillor

|               |   |              |
|---------------|---|--------------|
| Mr G BRIERLEY | Hinkhams, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RJ | 01297 489773 |
|---------------|---|--------------|

### Police Liaison Officer

|            |   |              |
|------------|---|--------------|
| P C MULLEN | The Police Station, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3PG | 01297 442603 |
|------------|---|--------------|

### Clerk to The Council

|              |   |              |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| Mrs C HUGHES | 42 Fishweir Fields, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 3HF | 01308 421410 |
|--------------|---|--------------|

