

CHAR CHAT

Char Valley Parish Council Newsletter

Whitchurch Canonorum, Stanton St Gabriel, Wootton Fitzpaine

Issue 8

June 2005

CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005

How do we operate and what do we do?

The **Parish Council** is the lowest tier of Local Government, there to see that residents obtain suitable local services, to look after our rural way of life and our environment. The parish council does not have many powers but can ask District or County Councils and other bodies to act on issues that matter to local people. Residents can ask a Councillor or the Clerk to look into a problem for them with the correct authority. We do this with your money provided by the parish element of your Council Tax, known as the "Precept". Councillors are not paid though they may claim expenses.

The Parish Council is part of the community and cannot function properly without **your input**. We need good contacts with other community groups such as residents' associations and village hall committees. Our three hall committees all have councillor representatives. Our Rights of Way Officers and other representative positions are open to residents, not just to councillors. Please contact the Clerk, Mrs Hughes or one of your local councillors if you would like to help in any way to look after our area.

Char Valley Parish Council serves the three parishes of Stanton St Gabriel, Whitchurch Canonorum and Wootton Fitzpaine, and so is known as a "grouped" parish council. There are twelve councillor positions; nine councillors stood for election and two were co-opted by the Council. There is currently a vacancy for a councillor in Whitchurch Canonorum, where Mrs Anthea Bay has recently retired after more than twenty years as a councillor including three as Chairman. We will miss her wise counsel particularly on planning and environmental matters. The parish councillors for each ward, with their responsibilities, contact addresses and telephone numbers are shown on the back page. The next elections will be in 2007.

COUNCIL MEETINGS are held once a month in public, except for August and December. An agenda is posted on village notice boards. The agenda always has a **Public Discussion Period** when members of the public can bring an issue to the Council's attention. There are also reports from District and County Councillors on matters affecting our parishes. Our Parish Councillors' attendance in 2004/05 was 67.5% (some of our councillors are farmers and find it difficult to attend meetings during silage making). In 2004/05 the average number of members of the public present was seven. **We welcome members of the public** to our meetings whether you wish to speak or not.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS are discussed at Parish Council Meetings or at a Planning Committee Meeting, depending on when recommendations are due back to West Dorset District Council. All meetings take place in public, advertised with an agenda on village notice boards. Applicants may make a presentation at a meeting should they wish. During 2004/05, we received 35 planning applications; of these 3 were refused, 26 were approved and 6 were withdrawn by the applicant. Two went to appeal after refusal by WDDC. **The Parish Council** makes planning recommendations; **West Dorset District Council** makes planning decisions.

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE meetings are in public and are advertised with an agenda on village notice boards. The Finance Committee met twice during 2004/05: in October, to set the budget for the following year and in April, to examine the accounts of the previous financial year.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS: As Char Valley is a grouped Parish Council, each of our three parishes holds an Annual Parish Meeting between March and June and other meetings, when a chairman judges it is necessary. These are informal meetings for local residents to discuss individual parish issues and to hear reports from their own local organisations. Money for approved village projects can be paid through the Char Valley Parish Council budget.

REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICERS:

Each of our parishes has **Rights of Way Officers** who report on defects to Dorset County Council. The SW Coastal Path diversions have taken much time in 2004/05. The Parish Council is very grateful to Cllr & Mrs John Bridle (Stanton St Gabriel), Mr & Mrs Don Newman (Whitchurch Canonorum) and Mr Peter Mills (Wootton Fitzpaine) for looking after our Rights of Way. Our **Transport Representative** attends the Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG) meetings to discuss with other parishes the public transport needs of the area. The Parish Council requested better Bus Stop signing and a bus shelter on the A35 in

Morcombelake and these are now in place. Our **Tree and Hedgerow Officer** has dealt with a number of tree preservation and hedgerow issues. Our **Representative** to the **Bridport Local Area Partnership** attends the meetings between Bridport Town Council, the surrounding parish councils, businesses and voluntary organisations. They discuss problems common to rural parishes and pass recommendations through to the West Dorset Partnership, strengthening the voice of small communities.

ROADS AND LANES: A new system of **Dorset County Council Maintenance Teams** is in operation and our road repairs are being dealt with much more quickly. County Councillor Geoffrey Brierley organises an autumn **Lane Inspection** of each parish. Parish councillors and Cllr Brierley meet a DCC officer to note the trouble spots for flooding and to discuss a programme for road maintenance. In 2004 the lanes in the Marshwood Vale were repaired, together with drains and ditches. This year the drains and road surface on the lanes between Monkton Wyld and Wootton Fitzpaine and through Charmouth Forest will be repaired. In Morcombelake, drains in Verriotts Lane will be cleaned out. The Parish Council has provided **salt bins** at strategic points in the lanes. **Playground signs** have been erected at Whitchurch and Wootton at the Parish Council's request. The Parish Council has also asked that **speed limits through villages** be put on the agenda of each of the Annual Parish Meetings for a decision to be made locally.

In 2004, the Parish Council asked the **Highways Agency** for improvements to the **A35 through Morcombelake** including a pedestrian crossing, Vehicle Activated Speed Indicators, and a safe crossing point for horses to the Golden Cap Estate. A survey was commissioned but the Highways Agency refused to show the report to the Parish Council. **Oliver Letwin MP** kindly stepped in to see that we were sent a copy. The report showed the need for many of the points that we had raised. However, the HA say there is no money for the scheme. The Parish Council will continue to press for the items we consider most urgent, a **30 mph speed limit**, a **pedestrian crossing** between Moores Biscuits and the Post Office and **Vehicle Activated Speed Indicators**.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING GROUP: In 2004 the Parish Council with the help of WDDC completed a Housing Needs Survey in Whitchurch Canonorum parish that shows there are sixteen people presently in need of housing. The Steering Group will consult Planning Officers on the possibility of finding an exception site for building in this very sensitive area. If a site can be found, we will then look into ways in which a small development can be achieved. The Steering Group members are two parish councillors, three Whitchurch residents, the Rector and Andy Lloyd (West Dorset Housing Enabler).

CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2005/06

All Full Parish Meetings take place on a Monday evening at 7.30 p.m.

<i>DATE</i>	<i>VENUE</i>	<i>TIME</i>
April 11th	James Hargreaves Community Hall	7.30pm
May 9th	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall (AGM)	7.30pm
June 13th	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	7.30pm
July 18th	James Hargreaves Community Hall	7.30pm
August	No Meeting	-
September 12th	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	7.30pm
October 10th	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	7.30pm
November 21st	James Hargreaves Community Hall	7.30pm
December	No Meeting	-
January 9th	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	7.30pm
February 13th	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	7.30pm
March 13th	James Hargreaves Community Hall	7.30pm

Planning Committee and Finance Committee Meetings are held in public and details are posted on notice boards.

OTHER MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED BY PARISH COUNCILLORS DURING THE YEAR

2004/05: Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils, Stonebarrow Lane Residents' Association (most meetings), Bridport Area Planning, SW Coastal Path, AONB Seminar, WDDC Planning Committee and Appeal Hearing, Western Area Transport Action Group, Affordable Housing, Bridport Community Land Trust Seminar, Cycleau Project on River Char, New Chairman's Training, Ancient Monuments Officers' Training, WDDC Planning Seminar, Parish Council Clerks' Local Council Administration.

WORKING WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES: Our District and County Councillors attend our regular Parish Council meetings. They report on matters that will affect our area, provide much valuable advice and work hard on our behalf. We have regular contact with **West Dorset District Council** and **Dorset County Council** departments. **Oliver Letwin MP** has taken up several issues on behalf of local residents. Other bodies contacted include the **Highways Agency** and **Connect Road Operators**, **The Association of Parish & Town Councils**, **AONB Management Team**, **Dorset Community Action**, **Campaign for the Protection of Rural England** and **Dorset Wildlife Trust**.

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS: The **Parish Council newsletter - Char Chat**, is put together four times a year by two editors, Liz Daros and Trevor Chambers, together with Tim Heap and parish councillors. It covers Parish Council news and items of general interest. Char Chat is now posted or delivered to every household with the help of Martin Legg of Morcombelake Post Office. Our **website, www.charvalleypc.co.uk** is maintained by our web designer Tim Heap (www.logomotion.co.uk). Parish Council Minutes, Meeting dates, Char Valley Action Plans 2003, Community Survey 2002 and more, are all available on the website. We are very grateful to our editors and webmaster for their invaluable voluntary contribution. The Parish Council provided two new oak **notice boards** last year, at Stonebarrow Lane and at Monkton Wyld. Char Valley Parish Council aims to comply with the Freedom of Information Act.

OUR PARISH COUNCIL CLERK ~ MRS CHARLOTTE HUGHES: The Clerk is the only paid officer of the Parish Council. Charlotte arranges the meetings, sets the agenda, takes the minutes, writes letters, contacts County, District and other Parish Councils, does the book keeping, tells us what we can and cannot do, and remains smiling. She has also been working for the Parish Council Clerks' Certificate of Local Council Administration. If we achieve 'Quality Status' for our Parish Council it will be largely due to Charlotte's efficiency (clerk@charvalleypc.co.uk).

FINANCES in 2004/05: The Parish Council would like to express our gratitude to local resident Simon Christopher who completes an internal audit on the Parish Council accounts free of charge before they are sent through to the Audit Commission. Simon John Christopher Ltd, Accountants, 1st Floor Suite, Drapers House, Market Place, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1AS.

PAYMENTS 2004/05		RECEIPTS 2004/05	
Running Expenses			
Hall Hire	£198.00	Precept from WDDC	£11,750.00
Char Chat & website	£743.86	Bank Interest	£101.30
Clerk, office expenses, insurance, subs, etc	£5,070.79	VAT returned	£100.62
Burial Ground maintenance grants		Countryside Agency (Action Plan)	£531.25
Whitchurch, Wootton, Fishpond, Stanton, Morcombelake & Monkton Wyld PCCs. (2 yrs)	£1,352.00		
Agency Services			
Playing field & playground maintenance & repairs	£522.00		
Audit Commission	£141.00		
Donations			
Dorset Air Ambulance, Citizens Advice Bureau, Samaritans, Whitchurch Playgroup, WATAG	£200.00		
Bopper Bus (Chideock Parish Council) ¹	£350.00		
Contributions towards Grant Aid ²			
Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	£1,750.00		
James Hargreaves Community Hall	£2,800.00		
Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	£800.00		
Capital spending			
New notice boards, salt bin and memorial seat	£1,608.16		
Payments total	£15,535.81	Receipts total	£12,483.17
Bank balance 31.03.05	£4,119.13	Bank Balance at 31.03.04	£7,171.77
	£19,654.94		£19,654.94

¹ The Bopper Bus takes children from Char Valley and other neighbouring parishes to Bridport Leisure Centre for organised activities once a week. It is a great success thanks to Cllr Kate Geraghty of Chideock Parish Council.

² Village Halls. In 2004/05 the Parish Council provided grants for each of our three village halls - £5,350 in total. Whitchurch and James Hargreaves Halls are both undergoing major repairs and refurbishment. In future each hall will also receive an annual maintenance grant from the Parish Council to help with regular expenses. This will start at £300 in 2005 and will be reviewed annually. This sum does not preclude other grants towards specific projects, as these are community facilities run for local residents by dedicated trustees and need our support.

CHAR VALLEY PARISH COUNCIL

www.charvalleypc.co.uk

Representing Whitchurch Canonorum North

Mr R S ANDREWS	Befferlands Farm, Berne Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, DT6 6RD	01297 560203
Mrs S M JOHNSON	Cardsmill Farm, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, DT6 6RP	01297 489375
Mr C N RICHARDS	6 Goodens Hill, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, , DT6 6RF	01297 489500
- Vacancy -		

Representing Whitchurch Canonorum South

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

Representing Wootton Fitzpaine

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

Representing Stanton St Gabriel

Mr J E BRIDLE	Coldharbour, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EP	01297 489711
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Finance Committee

Mr R S ANDREWS	Befferlands Farm, Berne Lane, Charmouth, Bridport, DT6 6RD	01297 560203
Mr V G DIMENT	Peter Pan, The Green, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EA	01297 489636
Mrs E J FORTESCUE (Chair)	Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, DT6 6NA	01297 560800
Mrs S M JOHNSON	Cardsmill Farm, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, DT6 6RP	01297 489375
Mr R K TAYLOR	Knapp Cottage, Morcombelake, Bridport DT6 6DY	01297 489125

Planning Committee (all councillors)

Mr V G DIMENT (Chair)	Peter Pan, The Green, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EA	01297 489636
Mr R K TAYLOR (Vice-Chair)	Knapp Cottage, Morcombelake, Bridport DT6 6DY	01297 489125

Rights Of Way Officers

Mr & Mrs J E BRIDLE	Cold Harbour, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EP	01297 489711
Mr & Mrs D NEWMAN	Peal House, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, DT6 6RH	01297 489781
Mr P Mills	The Old Rectory, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, DT6 6NF	01297 560654

Tree & Hedgerow Officer

Mr C N RICHARDS	6 Goodens Hill, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, DT6 6RF	01297 489500
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Transport Representatives

Mr J E BRIDLE	Cold Harbour, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EP	01297 489711
Mr V G DIMENT	Peter Pan, The Green, Morcombelake, Bridport, DT6 6EA	01297 489636

Bridport Area Partnership Representative

Mrs E J FORTESCUE	Nutcombe Cottage, Wootton Fitzpaine, Bridport, DT6 6NA	01297 560800
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DAPTC Representatives

Mr W B CHAPMAN	Stubbs Farm, Monkton Wyld, Bridport, DT6 6DE	01297 560464
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Parish Council Representatives to Village Halls

Mr R S ANDREWS	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	01297 560203
Mrs S M JOHNSON	Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall	01297 489375
Miss B BRISCOE	Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall	01297 678203
Mr C N RICHARDS	James Hargreaves Community Hall	01297 489500

Ancient Monuments/Local History Officer

Mrs S CREED-CASTLE	Crabbs Bluntshay Cottage, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport DT6 6RN	01297 489064
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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, DT6 6BB	01297 560855
Mrs G SUMMERS	31 Victoria Grove, Bridport, DT6 3AD	01308 421966

Dorset County Councillor

Mr G BRIERLEY	Hinkhams, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport, DT6 6RJ	01297 489773
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Police Liaison Officer

PC BYE	The Police Station, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3PG	01297 442603
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CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

Mrs C HUGHES	42 Fishweir Fields, Bradpole, Bridport, DT6 3HF clerk@charvalleypc.co.uk	01308 421410
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