

winter  
2011

# Beneath the Vale

Published on behalf of upper Marshwood Vale  
Parish Council

## Stoke Abbott's new wood

*BTV met up with  
Parish Council  
chairman Matthew  
Bowditch to be  
shown Little Giants a  
little-known gem  
overlooking Stoke  
Abbott.*



**B**eneath the Vale has never seen a new wood before; new trees yes, but an entire brand spanking new wood is something else.

Certainly no longer a field with a crop of saplings, yet not quite a normal wood, nature is already taking control. So it is easy to imagine how the wood will appear as the decades perform their transforming magic.

Once an open field just like much the of the surrounding countryside, Little Giant was offered for sale, but the hilltop location had a particular attraction for dog walking villagers and nearby residents. Woodland Trust were persuaded to step in under their 'Woods on your Doorstep' scheme

and with help from the  
Millennium Commission,  
they acquired the  
4.3ha site.

Stoke villagers set about fundraising their share of the £40,000 needed for the project. Two large individual donations were matched by many more local gifts and grants to complete the funding for the land and planting,

Although all the trees were planted as whips in 1999, the wood is not a cultivated forest of closely spaced trees without underlying vegetation. There is a considerable variety of species, some planted in groups, others mixed. So far the race to the top is to the firs, some now so broad-trunked that their biodegradable tube has been shattered.

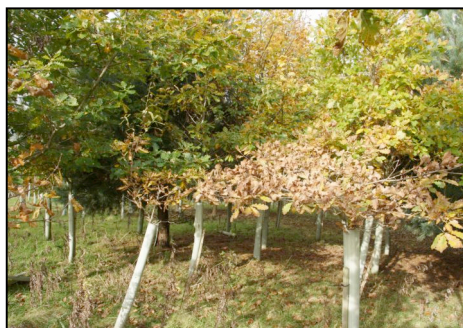


our Vale  
Newsletter

Similarly hazels with many low shooting branches have eliminated their early support. But after 12 years almost every tree has outgrown and split their tubes that will eventually fall away and be collected up as unsightly.

From the outset maintenance work on the wood has been kept to a minimum; wide grassy meandering spaces or rides were left unplanted to allow access around and to the top of the hill where a clump of teenage beeches congregate. When these are grown, they will form a crown to Little Giant being seen for miles around and appreciated by the great grand children of today's Stoke and Netherbury residents. These spaces and the even verdant grass do not feel natural - yet, and ragwort flourishes in one area despite cutting. This causes concern as spray treatment may well be needed to control the further spread of this problem plant.

Also less popular, horses are not encouraged on the 'rides' for fear of damaging the soft ground.



Within the woods, planting is remarkably close so the weakest are falling behind while deer eat the lower bark and squirrels eat bark round the higher branches. Matthew points these out.

"Deer could have seriously damage the saplings when they were smaller but at the present size these will survive.

But where squirrels have chewed the bark at the top, upward growth will be inhibited and other branches will grow sideways instead, flattening the shape of the tree."

All woods differ and this is unlike other Dorset woods. It is clear that wildlife has been just as attracted to Little Giants as to any other so it is hardly surprising that human visitors will find it something special. Panoramic views are rare in woods so at the top of the hill is another surprise. The clearings provide an open view towards Stoke as it nestles into the other hills

At present Long Barrow lane leading past the wood is somewhat overgrown and there is not a designated parking area, a Woodland Trust restriction. Don't let this put you off - outside the gate, yet off the lane, there is room for two cars if they are friendly and access for cars up the lane is expected to improve soon.

So for a very special walk in a mud-free, strangely attractive young wood, head to ST 465003 and hang a left.

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## Council News

**In these days of cutbacks and job losses, money may be hard to find but here are some sources of government or council cash. To find out more use Google.**

### **Business grants**

A new fund that will provide grants to businesses in the west of the region has been launched by Vince Cable, the Secretary of State of Business, Innovation and Skills...

With over £1.5m raised, the latest funding round aims to distribute up to £400,000 in grants of up to £50,000 to UK projects.

### **Transforming Local Infrastructure Fund**

The Office for the Civil Society and Big Lottery Fund launched the Transforming Local Infrastructure Fund. A new £30-million Big Society fund to help modernise organisations that supply critical support to front-line charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises.

### **Want to help your community get online?**

If your group helps the community access the internet and improves people's ICT skills, you could be eligible to apply for a year's free broadband by applying for a BT Community Award.

### **The Prince's Countryside Fund**

has re-opened for applications from projects that benefit Britain's rural communities.

### **£10million to kick start Big Society public services**

A £10million fund is being made available to charities and social enterprises to help them develop the skills and infrastructure to win more capital investment and public service contracts.

## Working Party Reports: Broadband

### *Who will pay for Superfast Broadband?*

#### **T**he performance, probable shape and possible timing of superfast broadband

improvements for rural West Dorset has become much clearer in the last month at meetings with national, county and district officials attended by representatives of Upper Marshwood Vale's broadband working party. Two particular targets emerged: 100mbps to 50% users in the UK and 30mbps to everyone by 2020. These are phenomenal figures by West Dorset standards and will, if achieved, be good enough for almost all of us.

A mix of three techniques are promised:

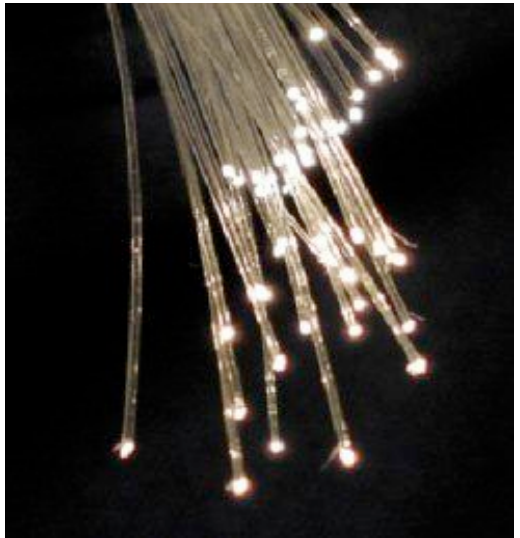
1) Fibre to the premises - FTTP - a high-speed fibre-optic line from the exchange to the home, office, factory or farm. The best and most costly but not so relevant for rural areas.

2) Fibre to the cabinet - FTTC - a high-speed fibre-optic line from the exchange to a village roadside cabinet that works at a similar speed as an upgraded exchange. At your local cabinet the present copper cables to the home, office, factory or farm will usually be reconnected.

Copper cables lose the superfast broadband signal - the longer the cable, the greater the loss. But in a village, the distances hence these losses, are low enough to allow

broadband up to superfast speeds.

Indeed more distant homes and farms that get their present poor signals from the exchange, going to the cabinet will usually more than halve the length of cable. So they too will get a great improvement in speed, just how much depends on the distance from the cabinet.



**Now the good news.** Installing them, connecting the fibre from the exchange and rewiring the cable to your house will be paid for by the national authority Broadband UK and council funds! So just sit tight, do nothing, don't pay any more and you should end up with improved or much improved broadband in the next 3 years.



Two more 'ifs' though. If you are still a long way from the box and need the superfast performance, it will be possible to either install your own fibre optic line from the cabinet to your home (e.g. a farmer digging his own trench) or to have this line installed at your cost. In some cases parish councils may well decide to cover this cost for a community benefit such as to a remote hamlet.

But what if some residents are simply too remote?

3) Use radio. This may be a satellite link similar to those at present used or it may use the wavelengths and channels vacated by analogue TV after digitisation.

Like a big wifi, although radio will never be the fastest system, such links feature a tiny transmitter on a high point, hilltop or church tower working to a compact home receiver to provide substantial improvements even to sites where broadband cannot reach. Obviously this approach has to be more expensive



than FTTC, but it can cover difficult terrain especially where

properly planned. Here too local councils may well decide to support their own less fortunate residents.

For most users extra costs for users are expected although your internet provider should give you a faster router and may sell you a better



service to take advantage of the improved technology.

This could involve specialist services such as tele-health, subscriber services such as high-speed TV programme downloads, or more commercial services for businesses.

Instead of this big jump in speed, a few will only get a more modest improvement, probably to the sort of standard at present enjoyed by a lucky few. It will depend on where you live and where the engineers place the cabinet.

Others - busy offices, home-based media workers, hard-pressed farmers, may need a greater improvement and will want to acquire fibre optic links via the cabinet. Just a few will use the radio waves a bit like a vast wifi network.

In the future, further expansion of superfast services is on the cards so speeds should continue to grow. A new modem or router may well be issued by your service provider so they can sell the speed and you will buy more data. Fewer and fewer will fail to get a good standard of broadband although there remain circumstances that will limit improvements or delay implementation

As the shape of superfast broadband in Dorset becomes more certain, local activists and users are now working with County and District officials in the last stages of funding - proving the need and convincing bored and over-hyped customers that superfast broadband is a real step forward.

**Our parish of Upper Marshwood Vale is just one step away from having a Quality Council. Sounds good, but what is a Quality Council? Our Parish Clerk, John Vanderwolfe explains**



The Quality Parish and Town Council scheme was launched in 2003 following the Government's *Rural White Paper*, 2000. The aim of the scheme is to provide benchmark minimum standards for parish and town councils. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs commissioned the University of Wales to review the scheme in 2006 and their research helped the National Stakeholders to agree amendments that would help councils achieve ever-higher levels of professionalism and help to cement their position as community leaders.

The National Stakeholders are the Commission for Rural Communities, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Local Government Association, the National

Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

In order to achieve Quality Status, parish and town councils must demonstrate that they have reached the standard required by passing several tests.

These include electoral mandate, qualification of the clerk, running of council meetings, communication and community engagement, the publishing of an Annual Report, correct financial control, adhering to the Code of Conduct, promoting local democracy and citizenship, terms and conditions in place for all staff and on going training both for officers and elected members.

At present there are 702 Quality town and parish councils in England. As far as the Westcountry goes Devon is in the lead with 32 Quality councils, followed by Cornwall (20), Wiltshire (13), Somerset (10); leaving Dorset at the bottom of the list with (7).

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council will be one of only a handful of councils in West Dorset to hopefully soon achieve this distinction.

The council is hoping to make its application for accreditation in early 2012.



**So what does that mean for residents of these Quality Councils  
- and what is that last step?  
Beneath the Vale's editor looks at what's happened elsewhere.**

'Quality Council' is the status your council seeks to attain as our clerk has explained. It does not mean councillors will make better decisions, give wiser leadership or even that as individuals we will be better people. To expect that would be too much.

But it does mean that if/when UMV gets this status then we will be seen as a serious council by other organisations, a council that can be relied upon, a council that does its job.

So what does this really mean to residents - after all there don't seem to be many 'I've got a Quality Council' tee shirts! Other Dorset councils have got there already – Cerne Valley's Chairman writes:

*"..our excellent working relationship with district and county council members and officers results in early resolution of many issues of local concern, and this has brought a number of environmental improvements."*

And from a Sussex parish council: *"The project has resulted in a better level of service for our residents with prompter and better attention to our problems."*

But most councils seemed to find a financial boost as a result of their new status. A Stafford clerk recalls: *"We have received two grants that were only for Quality Councils and we would not have got these otherwise. We added value to our precept with grants, projects and interest, and we are proud of bringing in more money to the area than the precept."*

Quality Council status is really all about confidence – confidence for other authorities dealing with UMVPC, confidence that grants given to the parish council or working parties will be spent wisely, and self-confidence in our influence in the wider world on matters important to us all.

Most of all it should be confidence in our council looking after our Vale and all within.

And that last step?

It is for our team to produce the 4<sup>th</sup> issue of Beneath the Vale – so we'll just have to wait till March!

And when that happens we will be the second small parish in West Dorset to get that Quality Council stamp!



**QUALITY  
PARISH  
COUNCIL**

## War of the Weeds

-- *Coming to a field near you!*

*First printed in Char Valley's 'Char Chat', Carolyn Peck now warns the rest of us.*

**Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed** were introduced into the UK many years ago as ornamental garden plants. They don't look especially scary, do they?

But they are on the Environment Agency's hit list and you should not let their beauty deceive you. Like Houdini, resisting all efforts to contain them, they have escaped from the garden and are now making themselves at home in the countryside ... with disastrous effects. They are muscling out our native wild flowers.



**Himalayan Balsam**

The balsam's colonisation of river-banks renders them vulnerable to erosion over winter when the plant dies back.



**Giant Hogweed**

The hogweed is armed and dangerous, its sap causing severe blistering to the skin, and it can grow to a height of five meters. As for knotweed ... well ... it's big, beefy **and** virtually indestructible.

You get the picture? But like all bullies, they have their weaknesses and a variety of controls are available to help eradicate them. The Environment Agency offers detailed information about identification, control and disposal, as dealing with these plants at the right time in their growing cycle and removal of the arisings as directed is crucial.

**Ragwort** falls into a rather different category. It is a very common wild flower but highly poisonous to cattle, horses, pigs and chickens; even dead or dying plants are attractive to livestock.





**Ragwort**

If silaged, it will contaminate the whole clamp. Older sheep and goats allowed to graze infected grassland over winter and early spring are helpful in controlling it. If you should wish to deal with it manually, pulling not cutting is advised.

If you should spot any of these plants on verges or in public places you can contact the Council or the Environment Agency. If sighted on private land you can alert the landowner. Other organisations such as The National Trust and local wildlife trusts also organize working parties to clear infested areas.

If you know of an area near you that is especially badly affected, perhaps you might consider organizing one yourself? But before going into battle it is very important to understand that if you do the wrong thing you might make the situation worse or even face prosecution.

**So follow the experts' advice.** The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 states that it is an offence to "plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild" any plant listed in Schedule nine, Part II of the Act.

This lists over 30 plants including Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed. It's down to landowners to control these plants, but they don't have to remove them. However, causing the plants to spread by removing or disposing of them incorrectly would be illegal and the police are responsible for investigating any offences.



**Japanese Knotweed**

For more information, contact the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 or Dorset District Council on 01305 221 000 or log on to either Dorset for You or the Agency's website at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk> and search for invasive weeds and knotweed or hogweed.

**Be afraid! Be very afraid!**

# John McClellan

2.9.1939 – 14.11.2012

I put the papers in a battered box at the top of the drive. In front of me was a large caravan, the door opened to reveal two knees accompanying a white haired, white moustached smiling man-in-shorts. Retrieving the Independent and giving it to him, this was the first time I meet John McClellan.

He told me he was a retired policeman who had acquired the site and was about to rebuild it whilst living in the caravan, then parked where the garage now stands. Meetings like this became a regular highlight of the paper round and we chatted more and more until we had to meet socially and became friends.

Even though he was a policeman.

He started on the beat in West London but when he was 'over-Joyed' they sensibly set up home in family-friendly Claygate, Surrey. Here it was Joy that joined in with the young mums community life, as John's Metropolitan career developed.

As a detective, John dealt with crimes great and small including national level murder enquiries. These included a particularly swift clear up where a young woman, victim of a particularly nasty rape was interviewed by John and a colleague before repairing to local hostelry to help her relax. When served she recognised the chef and immediately identified him as her assailant. He was promptly arrested, charged and, eventually, confessed.

Although an excellent policeman, John's family always came first. Frank Griffiths, his long-time number Two recalls: "After a hard day at work, it was common for police officers to relax over a drink before going home. Sometimes this "drink" lasted far too long, but not for John. He always came to relax, but never stayed very long. He always wanted to get home to his wife and family."



Rather than accepting promotion to Detective Chief Superintendent, John chose early retirement from the Met in order to train detectives and to join another ex-colleague as consultants to the Post Office, in both cases to apply his own proven high standards of conduct. These lead to his complete retirement from duty and the start of his life in the Vale.

With in-laws living in Lyme Regis, if Joy and John's retirement ideas were obvious, their approach was not. First came the caravan, then the old Hunts Holm came down to be slowly replaced by the present house as good friends with building skills helped out.

It all came together, the caravan was towed away and John was now a DorMet (Ex Metropolitan Police now living in Dorset).

So John's impact on the Vale was considerable – not Upper Marshwood Vale, not Char Valley, not even Symondesbury but the whole Vale; Joy and John lived so close to all three parishes and were broadminded in their involvement. He was a key player in the Whitchurch Village Hall developments, he was a parish councillor for Pilsdon, he was a leading light of Bridport Rotary, he and Joy even sang with 'The Gangs All Here', an entertainment group.

His local achievements were considerable.

**It was John** who was a key part of the team behind Whitchurch Village Hall and all the improvements that have made this hall so comfortable and attractive. Funding this involved many people and organisations and went far beyond the usual grants. As usual John and the team got the money and the hall its transformation.

**It was John** who was a rock around which the ideas and wishes for Upper Marshwood Vale's Parish Plan ebbed and flowed, eventually to coalesce into the actual Plan to which so many contributed; the Parish Plan that continues to inform the important changes in and around our Vale, just as he had foreseen.

Without him you would not be reading this.

**For it was John** who nailed your editor's feet to the floor when the idea of a parish magazine or newsletter was mooted, thus preventing my escape.

**It was John** whose vision for a whole new medium of communication within and around our parish has found its first reality in Beneath the Vale.

**Mind you it was Joy** that put in the hard work around such local events as Whitchurch's Farmers Breakfast and it was Joy that is at the heart of so many Bettiscombe events, as usual helping with other ladies of the Parishes.

**And it was Joy who**, only last week quizzed the recent ploughman's supper since John was by then too ill to control the more unruly elements in the audience, but Joy set aside her worries and saw off all question-doubters to ensure all the others had a good evening.

**It was John** that saw in Jemma, his springer spaniel, the deep affection and loyalty both he and eventually Joy would come to find.

Perhaps it was John's rigorous police background that caused him to make a total rejection of what others saw as petty flouting of rules and codes. Those that both knew and understood, could only admire his unswerving strength of purpose.

Good friends did not see a golden couple who had everything going for them. Both in John's professional life and in their personal life, bad luck did not pass them by, tragedy was no stranger, not that one would know this.

Again, John saw to that.

He was a true friend to so many, his loss will be both widely and deeply felt.

None more so than to his family.

## update

### Your Septic Tank - Result!!

**W**orried Marshwood residents can relax, at least for the time being thanks to our MP's swift and witty letter to top Environment Agency officials. Oliver Letwin poked fun at the pointless and impossible rules they had imposed, and along with other like-minded MPs, forced a re-think in two stages. Firstly the end of the year deadline was postponed while Agency officials looked once more at the silly rules they had so warmly welcomed. Annoyingly for us this occurred as the postman were delivering the last BTV.

So far so good, but no cancellation. Then they announced that: "Environment Agency are now undertaking a joint review with Government on the requirement to register small domestic sewage discharges in England, details of which will be announced in the next few weeks." That was 3 months ago.

So it would seem that this stupidity might be quietly buried without even an announcement of its death. But it is not dead yet. You can register your outflow on <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/132391.aspx> but you don't have to do so. And it might well be a complete waste of time to do so.

Mind you this wasn't really an EA problem. No it was our old and oft-despised friends at DEFRA who obligingly made obligatory Brussels' whims in a European Union Water

Framework Directive and then dumped it on EA to operate it. So this was not a law passed by our representatives, but a directive from an unknown and uncaring Eurocrat. No wonder both the UK ministries involved tried to hide it until it was too late to do anything - but that's DEFRA for you.

And we are still waiting a reply to our questions from EA's press folk in Bristol. So we can't tell their side of the story this time.

What is true is that when BTV first contacted Environment Agency to ask why there was no publicity for a change that affected everyone in rural areas, their website barely mentioned the matter. Within a day or two the subject had a page to itself. Then within a week there was an instant link from the home page. Asking the wrong questions at the right time can have that effect.

Ironically the very Gallic way of simply ignoring silly ideas from the EU has not happened in France! Not only have the French Government enforced the regulation, but the fee charged is allegedly a big fat €250. Perhaps the French Government decided to proceed so they could take the money and run while blaming the EU.

So please don't tell Environment Agency or DEFRA or they'll rethink the idea reintroduce the scheme - and start charging us all.

## Editorial

**I t seemed like a good idea at the time** – a phrase that so often foretells a disaster.

One can admire the administrative convenience of the officials' thinking all those years ago.

*We'll knock out the towns and big villages and lump together the rest. That's Marshwood, Bettiscombe, oh! and Pilsdon. They're all in the Marshwood Vale so we'll call it Upper Marshwood Vale - - hang on its a bit big even though its still not enough people. Look Stoke's not actually in Beaminster so if we add them to the rest its about the right number of residents now. Pity its so large – well they've all got cars now so they can drive, can't they. Job done!*

So perhaps this was how the strip ridge-village and one-time estates of a pair of old manors joined an ancient village in the next valley as it was being suburbanised to become Upper Marshwood Vale.

A whole but by no means an entity.

As the survey returns for the Parish Plan came in, it was immediately clear that Stoke Abbott was rather different to the rest of the Vale. Cottages and houses in ancient stone abound in a pretty village proud of millennia roots are homes to both retired folk and families earning a living in nearby towns.

Marshwood, with only a small group of young families within mostly elderly community, has no real heart as it meanders for miles along the high ridge that makes up the western edge of the Vale.

Rural Bettiscombe centred on its church but divided between an ancient and historic manor and an elderly manor, nestles comfortably in a sheltered valley.

Most Pilsdon residents still live and work at the manor but in a very different way than prevailed when it was the seat of powerful men, so leaving not much more than a hamlet and farms. Other hamlets and communities, principally around Shave Cross, lie within these parochial boundaries so add to the Marshwood mash.

Hardly the rich tapestry of urban towns and cities throughout the UK, we are nevertheless a good mix of folk, families, fortunes and of course, farms. Different people, different jobs, different backgrounds, different outlook; perhaps it was a good idea after all.

So what started as administrative idleness, became a useful set of church parishes, ran as four groups of councillors in one council, is now slowly coalescing into a real place to be proud of. The differences are no longer to be a cause of friction but celebration of diversity.

Ali Cameron

**Editor, Beneath the Vale**

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or e-mail [ali.cameron@talktalk.net](mailto:ali.cameron@talktalk.net)

## News in brief

### **Bettiscombe hall better**

Over the last couple of years Bettiscombe village hall has received a series of improvements starting with a new kitchen area. Work on repairs has been balanced by improvements such as replacement of inner and outer main front doors to make the hall more draughtproof and the creation of improved access storage areas for the hall's tables.

Much of this work has been paid for from the village hall's own fundraising efforts such as the Friday evening events along with a gift from Bridport Round Table.



Here the photo shows Bettiscombe Village Hall vice-chairman John Brown, (left) & committee stalwart Joy McClellan receiving the cheque from Bridport Round Table's vice-chairman Hugh Matthews outside those new doors.

### ***Magna, and their men, come up smelling of roses***

Magna's workmen completed the installation of the new sewage treatment plant behind Marshalsea exactly on time.

One young mum who lives in Marshalsea was complementary: "They were really good and co-operated with us fully - normal service was maintained throughout."

Not only that but the lads attended to a number of minor improvements to the access. But the greatest difference of all was the hedge at the end of the road was

removed for access to the plant site but in doing so revealed to all Marshalsea residents the outstanding views that Marshwood village eastsiders enjoy.

For Magna and residents - a result!





## Buzzard's View

### **Get onto our address list**

For the last issue we expanded our address list so all homes in the 4 parishes received a copy - or so we hoped.

We added in those 20% of residents who also got a copy e-mailed to them since many preferred to have a proper newsletter to hand around and read when convenient. But what if we got it wrong – or missed someone out?

If we have your details wrong,

please contact the editorial phone line or inbox with the correct name, address or spelling. And if you want a regular electronic copy, perhaps to e-mail to others interested in UMW and what's happening here, please send us your e-mail address or the name and e-mail address of the recipient. Or download issues from the Parish Council website:

**[uppermarshwoodcouncil.org](http://uppermarshwoodcouncil.org)**

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### **Dates for your Diary**

To all newshounds, chairpersons, secretaries, organisers, business folk, advertisers & contributors. This newsletter is published quarterly so we need to hear from you by the middle of February, May, August or November for publishing at the end of those months. In fact, contacting us well before then would allow us to reserve a slot in the next issue.

If you have an event to publicise, please let us know as early as possible and remember it could be more than three months before your event's details can reach residents letterboxes.

Get that extra bit of publicity for your local events– remember our deadlines - and let us know **who, what, where and when.**

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### **Advertising Manager**

The team will be able to raise the production standard of the newsletter if we can earn sensible fees from commercial organisations that wish to promote their services or access a local market. The only problem is that we need someone who better understands advertising and marketing better than the present team.

Yes, we need an Ad Manager to sell space, organise the ads and encourage local commerce to support Beneath the Vale after all this is your local newsletter.

So if you can help us to help the community, join the BTV team.

**Call the editor without delay.**  
**[ali.cameron@talktalk.net](mailto:ali.cameron@talktalk.net)**

## Councillors' Comments - bigger than Twitter

Veteran newshound Rene Gerrys continued the Bridport News' habit of ignoring Marshwood as she moved the story of our pub, The Bottle, into Char Valley when she composed the then month-old story.

The article seemed to quote Marshwood parish councillor Wendy Nightingale but was hardly news to readers of BTV. Somehow Wendy found that she had been moved to Char Valley while the council meeting she quoted also appeared to be credited to Char Valley by Rene even though minutes of both parish councils appear on the internet for all to see. Along with the fact-free headline, other crucial omissions and misquotes in the story did cause problems for two locals, but fortunately not for Wendy.

Purely coincidentally, BTV had been at the Char Valley parish council meeting of when the Bottle was not mentioned. BTV was also at the Upper Marshwood Vale PC meeting where the Bottle was discussed as Wendy had told Rene.

By the time Bridports best hit the streets of that town and lanes of West Dorset, Wendy and husband Peter had left the country – not out of embarrassment, but on a well-deserved Mediterranean cruise.

Wendy is probably the most media-savvy resident of Marshwood as a result of her £500,000 fund-raising activities for Dorchester Hospital's cancer patients. Without her side of the story, friends immediately pointed out that with her many media appearances she was unlikely to have made such a silly mistake.

Before this, rumours of Rene's interest in the story soon reached the BTV team who had long known of the developments including financial support for repairs as Mark van de Weyer reports earlier, but she did not follow up the story as Wendy suggested by asking us but printed the gaffes complete with an image of Wendy apparently standing in the pub car park - airbrushed in courtesy of Photoshop.

But this is not the only time Bridport-centric News has eliminated Marshwood. Listing candidates for the District Council elections in May, Marshwood disappeared along with candidates Michael Robinson and Howard Thomas.

Does this mean that Bridport News is withdrawing coverage (and circulation) from all parts of Cclr Robinson's patch?

Or is Char Valley seeking a takeover?? Check with Beneath the Vale, not the Bridport News!



## **Always wanted to be a Forest Ranger?**

Dorset has an active Volunteer Ranger service that would like to expand its activities to public footpaths and rights of way in our parish.

Would you be interested in volunteering with the Ranger Service? Work outside in our beautiful countryside? Learn a new skill or apply existing talents to maintain our ancient rights of way. Any age, any skill set - all are welcome.

Contact your Councillor, or get in touch with Peter Nightingale on 01297 678165 or, preferably, by email: [nightech@toucansurf.com](mailto:nightech@toucansurf.com)

## **useful numbers**

### **Public Transport:**

Bus services:	Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring and Ride	01404 46520
	Mike Halford MiniCoaches	01308 421106
	Sewards Coaches	01404 881343
	Stagecoach South West	01823 672247
Western Area Transport Action Group	Secretary: <a href="mailto:joy.michaud@btinternet.com">joy.michaud@btinternet.com</a>	01308 897892

### **Health and Welfare:**

Dorchester Hospital Governor

Wendy Nightingale	01297 678165
<a href="mailto:wendy_nightingale@hotmail.co.uk">wendy_nightingale@hotmail.co.uk</a>	

Wayfinders, Partnership for Older People's Project (POPP)

Rose Bird	07971 338398
<a href="mailto:wayfinderrose@btconnect.com">wayfinderrose@btconnect.com</a>	
Carol Pearce	07971 338622
<a href="mailto:wayfindercarol@btconnect.com">wayfindercarol@btconnect.com</a>	

Rural Housing Officer

Rob Asprey	01305 252447
<a href="mailto:R.Aspray@westdorset-dc.gov.uk">R.Aspray@westdorset-dc.gov.uk</a>	

### **Environment:**

Flytipping, Graffiti & Abandoned Cars (WDDC)	01305 251010
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Dorset AONB	<a href="http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk">www.dorsetaonb.org.uk</a>	01305 228239
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## Others

Dorset County Council	Switchboard <a href="mailto:dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk">dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a>	01305 221000
Trading Standards Consumer Advice		08454 040506
BREG - Bridport Renewable Energy Group	<a href="http://www.breg.org.uk">www.breg.org.uk</a>	
Highways Office		01305 221020
Highways Agency	<a href="http://www.highways.gov">www.highways.gov</a>	01203 358300

## Emergency numbers

Childline	Abuse, bullying, worries <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a>	0800 1111
Electricity	Western Power Distribution <a href="http://www.westernpower.co.uk">www.westernpower.co.uk</a>	0800 365 900
Floodline	Environment Agency <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a>	0845 988 1188
NHS Direct	We're here 24 hours a day <a href="http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk">www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk</a>	0845 4647
RSPCA	Cruelty line <a href="http://www.rspca.org.uk">www.rspca.org.uk</a>	0300 1234 999
Local Hospitals	Axminster Bridport Community Crewkerne Dorset County	01297 630400 01308 422371 01460 72491 01305 251150
Samaritans	Talk To Someone <a href="http://www.samaritans.org">www.samaritans.org</a>	08457 909090
Women's Refuge	West Dorset <a href="http://www.womensaid.org">www.womensaid.org</a>	01305 262444

## **Your District Councillors**

Marshwood Vale	Mike Robinson	01308 868979 <a href="mailto:cllrm.robinson@westdorset-dc.gov.uk">cllrm.robinson@westdorset-dc.gov.uk</a>
Broadwindsor	Jacqui Sewell	01308 867145 <a href="mailto:cllrj.sewell@westdorset-dc.gov.uk">cllrj.sewell@westdorset-dc.gov.uk</a>

## **Your County Councillors**

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Beaminster	Rebecca Knox	01308 863365 <a href="mailto:r.knox@dorsetcc.gov.uk">r.knox@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a>

## **Working parties: chairman/co-ordinator**

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