

Beneath the Vale

Published on behalf of the Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council

Autumn 2018: Issue 29

Bid to end Vale's traffic misery: Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner at public meeting

Problems caused when the A35 is closed and traffic pours into the Vale are to be addressed at a public meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday 29 November in the hall at Whitchurch Canonorum.

Martyn Underhill, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), will explain how drone technology could halve the amount of time the A35 needs to be shut for police investigations after an accident.

He's also keen to discuss how his office can help to train and equip a band of volunteers who would provide a signed diversion route to keep traffic flowing when it does have to go through the Vale.



Char Valley Parish Council will be attending the meeting as well as villagers from Whitchurch.

Attend and make your views known

Everyone who feels strongly about this issue is urged to attend on the 29th and make their views and suggestions known. People have missed hospital appointments and been unable to get to work because of gridlocked traffic in the Vale. We need to find ways to improve the current, chaotic situation. Representatives from

The meeting is a result of discussions between the PCC and *Beneath the Vale*. Members of the magazine's editorial team went to see Mr Underhill at police HQ in Winfrith earlier this month. We asked why the A35 needs to be shut for so long after an accident and can the police do anything to reduce the disruption caused by traffic diverting through our narrow medieval

Marshwood, Stoke Abbott, Pilsdon and Bettiscombe

lanes. When the A35 was closed for nearly seven hours in June, the Vale became gridlocked.

Mr Underhill says that Dorset Police have already bought a camera drone that can be flown by remote person view (RPV), that is by someone on the ground who can see the drone's eye-view in the sky. But until recently, police lacked the specialist computer software necessary to map the scene below.

We met Mr Underhill a few days after the police bought new software. He said that a pilot would be trained over the winter and the drone would be operational by next summer. It would be for use on the A35 and A31 and would be based at either Bridport or Dorchester police station. Ricky Fiddler from the police drone section has been invited to the public meeting and we

hope he will tell us more about how the technology can help speed up procedure.

On behalf of local people

The overarching role of the PCC is to cut crime and to deliver an effective and efficient police service. He or she does this by holding the chief constable and the force to account on behalf of local people.

Here in the Vale we feel that Dorset Police need to listen to our views about how A35 closures are handled. We hope that Mr Underhill can use his organisational muscle to make a considerable difference to the disruption we suffer. Any improvement will benefit our quality of life here. It will help visitors to enjoy the area more, mitigate effects on wildlife and the environment and aid the local economy.



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Contents

'No need' for more housing in Marshwood	page 4
Parish council meeting reports	pages 6-7
Marshwood shop appeal	page 8
Broadband in Prime Lane and nearby	page 10
Recipe: Stuffed marrow	page 12
Parish landmarks	page 13

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Fed up with chaos caused by A35 closures?

Make your views known and help find a solution

Public meeting
Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall
7.30pm Thursday 29 November
Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner Martyn Underhill will be explaining how the police can reduce road closure time.
Could you volunteer to help direct traffic through the Vale?

'No need for new housing in Marshwood' according to Neighbourhood Plan latest

We don't need more houses in Marshwood. We should focus on restoring good shopping to Marshwood village and developing convenient parking where needed.

That's the conclusion reached by the recent Neighbourhood Plan site options consultation. The consultation found that:

- The most needed development is to replace the village shop. Three sites could have provided such a service but two have been excluded from the plan (through lack of support for housing) leaving only the Dungeon site as a possibility; this subject to agreement with the landowner on details.
- A widely supported project was the provision of extra parking at the school sites including a plan to rationalise short-term parking and to offer traffic circulation. Neither of the school sites is possible unless housing is supported.

- No further sites for homes are supported, only one site for live/work.

A long-term project for a communal sewage treatment plant for Marshwood did not receive support with a perceived lack of benefit for those who do not live in the centre of Marshwood.

One interesting idea for the future takes advantage of sites along the B3165 (sites 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 below) and would try to integrate all these developments into an overall scheme, thereby improving the architecture of the whole village. This was considered a future benefit, but not of immediate relevance for the NP.

The seven sites offered are listed below with their proposed use, and what was supported through the consultation process. All site owners were surprised by the opposition to housing and tourism ventures given the potential benefit for the future.

Site description	Proposed uses	Supported uses
1. The Dungeon	housing/shop	shop
2. Adjacent Gramarye Lodge	housing/parking/playground	parking/playground
3. Three Counties	housing/live-work	live/work
4. Adjacent Penn View	housing	no support
5. East of Bottle Inn	housing/holiday accom.	no support
6. Adjacent Bottle Inn car park	housing/holiday accom./shop	holiday accom./shop
7. Opposite school	housing/parking/shop	parking/shop

NP Committee conclusion

Having built our affordable homes and with limited interest from other parts of our community, more houses are not yet needed. We should focus on restoring good shopping to Marshwood village and developing convenient parking where needed.

There's a public meeting on 17 November from 10am to 12.30pm at Marshwood Church (tea and biscuits provided) to present the findings of the recent site options

consultation and to discuss with you:

- How to move forward with our Neighbourhood Plan.
- How we might establish a car park for the school and church.

Please come and join in the discussion on the future of your village.

**Charles Somers,
Chairman, Marshwood
Neighbourhood Plan**



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Parish council meeting 19 July

Following the usual formalities – apologies for absence, declarations of interest, adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting and the democratic period when non members of the council can have their say – Cllr Ali Edwards spoke for the whole council and indeed all present at Bettiscombe Village Hall, when she offered thanks to John Walther of Marshwood Stores. There was some confusion as to the length of his service, but since John was not present to give the authorised version, it was estimated that he had started in 1971. So 47 years is now his semi-official tenure of office.

Police representative absent

Also absent was a police person, so, in spite of the anger felt by some councillors at having had the A35 traffic once again severely damaging the Vale and life within, this subject could not be debated.

Of far more immediate interest was possible developments at Shamrock Cottage, Marshwood where proposals to convert a barn to a dwelling caused some concern.

Some councilors queried the use of the term ‘barn’ in a non-agricultural sense, others felt that stones recently placed at the roadside edge narrowed the passage of traffic in an unfriendly manner. After some debate it was agreed to seek a meeting with the owner by having a site visit set for the following Monday evening. In this way, councillors could be better informed as to what might be built and the owner could explain his intentions.

All other planning applications were approved or supported.

Charles Somers, Neighbourhood Plan Chairman, summed up the NP team’s hopes for presentations on the upcoming Saturday at Bettiscombe and Sunday at Stoke Abbott. With six possible developments on his list, it was hoped to discuss these and take down other ideas from the community. Not the least would be ideas for a new or revived village shop, hopefully located at the Dungeon site.

Under the heading of Dorset County Electoral Review, district and county councillors Jacqui Sewell and Daryl Turner discussed the implications to the parishes of Boundary Commission changes. It seems that to make up the correct numbers of parishioners per councillor, some of our community will be hacked off and others added on. At present proposals are to add parts of Char Valley and Chideock to the Upper Marshwood Vale; let us hope that does not include any part of the unloved Chideock bypass area.

Upper Marshwood Vale Parish Council dates

Parish council meetings for 2018/19 are as follows:

15 November, 13 December, 17 January. Meetings start at 7.30pm in Bettiscombe Village Hall. All are very welcome to attend.

Parish council meeting 20 Sept

A relatively brief meeting was held this time as the wind picked up and the heavens threatened rain. Rapidly disposing of the first six items on clerk John Vanderwolfe’s agenda, including a democratic period when no-one wanted to speak, councillors heard of progress on payments to be made and a summary of the accounts from John. He complained of Dorset’s habit of paying their precept late as compared with Devon who paid on due day.

With the usual offices done, councillors listened attentively to the reports of the two senior councils and a ‘shadow’ council that will take office next May under the baton of Matt Prosser.

Progress with Dorset Council

Jacqui Sewell, Mark Roberts (district) and Daryl Turner (county) are our present councillors and Daryl summed up progress to date, or otherwise. Logos for the new council as submitted by staff artists did not seem to be very inspiring but at least repainting lorries and other vehicles bearing ‘Dorset County Council’ to ‘Dorset Council’ will wait until they are replaced.

Cllr Sewell’s efforts to rationalise the removal of agricultural ties limiting cottages to be occupied by farm workers is receiving overall approval, largely as a result of the case involving a Marshwood house.

Perhaps of greatest concern for non-Bridport inhabitants was the state of the town’s public toilets. It seems that promises to use a local enterprise have been ignored

and a company based in Manchester now has the contract to clean our loos. That they are not doing this simple exercise only points out a failure to supervise effectively, something that use of a local organisation might have prevented.

We are now used to the absence of police officers at council meetings so Planning was next. An application for a new building at Dunster Farm, Broadoak, was withdrawn since this application was not needed. An application for repairs at Valehouse Farm, which are covered by Listed Building Consent, were supported as was a small shed in Blackney.

An application from St Mary’s Church, Marshwood, for a small donation was considered. This is to cover the extra costs of lighting and heating for a temporary Post Office at the church for one afternoon a week (on Tuesdays).

The Post Office will cover all their own operational cost including fitting a phone line and providing the service, but with such small number in the congregation there is nothing in the budget to spare for this boost to the community. Unfortunately this kind of support is not permitted so our clerk will seek advice on how we could help. Over to our CLT?

As the rain started to bluster, the next meeting was set as 15 November, but with some doubt if a December meeting will be needed. As councillors left the hall, the heavens opened.

Wanted - a new shop for Marshwood. Can you help?

When John Walther fell and broke his hip, it was a painful situation for him: for the community that makes up Marshwood, it was a severe shock. Suddenly, we had lost our Mr Reliable, the busiest focus of our community.

We had all given much thought about what would happen when John decided to retire but no-one had developed serious plans, partly in order not to offend the Walthers, but mostly because this potential problem was never urgent enough. As part of our Neighbourhood Plan, David Hitchcock discussed general terms with John's son Bash, but John soldiered on and on.

Marshwood Stores is closed permanently. Ideas for a new shop to replace the old one have emerged with a possible site now under consideration.

The Neighbourhood Plan can help to develop these ideas, but it is only an aid in the planning process, it cannot raise funds although it can go a long way in support of a future plan, including helping to get planning consent.

Vive local democracy!

The first to step forward was District Councillor Jacqui Sewell, who has experienced similar concerns with other community shops such as those at Broadwindsor, and Thorncombe (with Cllr Mike Robinson). She has knowledge

of many of the financial aspects of such ventures.

In previous reports, Jacqui has asked for support from interested parties. Support from the CLT and NP has been registered but we now need some organisation to refine the occasionally conflicting development ideas. This means someone to take the lead in getting a shop for Marshwood, hopefully with better parking, a larger multi-functional building, and far greater resources than the old shop could ever offer.

Act now!

NP chairman Charles Somers is calling for interested parties to come together at the church to form a committee to co-ordinate ideas, developments and plans for the new shop. The date for this event is 17 November at 10am at Marshwood Church.

A commercial interest has been received from Felicity Perkin, whose eponymous Morcombelake stores can claim impeccable credentials, but for now she will advise the new committee.

All will be welcome to contribute as representative of interested organisations, as users of the new shop, as villagers of Marshwood or as seriously concerned individuals.

Ali Cameron

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Broadband update on Cards Mill Lane and Prime Lane properties

Properties on Prime Lane and Cards Mill Lane (Watery Lane) are waiting to hear the cost of installing superfast broadband using fibre to the premises (FTP).

Homes and businesses in this corner of Marshwood parish are on the Chideock telephone exchange, which means that they did not benefit from the recent roll-out of FTP in the rest of the parish.

The plan instead was to install a new cabinet near the church in Whitchurch and supply superfast broadband from there. The cabinet has been installed but as the service has to come a long way down copper wires, it is nowhere near superfast. Users find that their broadband is often too slow to use and frequently drops out completely.

BT's official position is that superfast is available to these homes. But those who have signed up to superfast packages have found that is not the case and their broadband speeds are no faster than before. Openreach accepts the difficulties. The best option is to install FTP. One farming family were told it would cost £500 a month to lease an FTP line! However, there is a government-backed

community fibre grant aid scheme available for small communities to get together and apply for FTP as a group.

Back in the summer I contacted Openreach and began an application on behalf of local people. It's been a long-winded process, not least because of difficulties applying through the official website. Because BT does not recognise that our area hasn't got superfast available, it would not accept my application. So I had to go behind the scenes and get Openreach community fibre partnerships to make the application manually, which they did and were very helpful.

The application has now gone in for 12 properties. Eleven of these have a business associated with them, which shows the level of economic activity hidden away in the Vale and underlines the need for a good broadband service. I'm waiting to hear what the cost of installation will be and how much grant we will get. The best outcome would be that it covers 100% of the installation cost. When we know the actual percentage, the community can decide how it wants to proceed.

Sara Hudston

Marshwood shop - can you help?

Join the committee to co-ordinate ideas, developments and plans for the new shop. Part of the NP meeting.

17 November at 10am at Marshwood Church

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Recipe: Stuffed marrow



What to do with all those marrows/overgrown courgettes

Very easy stuffed marrow
Serves 4

1 large marrow
Favourite bolognaise sauce recipe
Grated cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 180 degrees centigrade.
Cut ends off marrow, slice into eight, about 1½ inches or 4cm thick. Scoop out and discard middle.

Remove skin (if marrow is very tender it can be left on).

Arrange slices in a large roasting tin, add a small amount of water to stop drying

out and cover with foil.

Put in oven for about 10-15 minutes until beginning to soften.

Spoon sauce into the rings and cover with grated cheese. (My dear husband used to periodically make a large quantity of bolognaise sauce which I portioned up and put in the freezer for use in so many recipes.)

Bake uncovered until sauce is heated and cheese is golden and bubbly – about 30 minutes.

This is a meal in itself or you could serve it with extra vegetables.

Joy McClellan



Special features of our parishes: Continuing our series of local landmarks, we have St Mary's church and the horse trough, both in Stoke Abbott, plus Bettiscombe Village Hall, home to our parish council meetings.



Marshwood Neighbourhood Plan What next?

17 November from 10am to 12.30pm

**Marshwood Church
(tea and biscuits provided)**

**We'll present the findings of the recent
site options consultation and to discuss
with you:**

- **How to move forward with our
Neighbourhood Plan for Marshwood.**
- **How we might establish a car park
for the school and church.**
- **Plans for a new village shop.**

**Please come and join in the discussion
on the future of your village.**

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**Community Land Trust website: www.marshwoodclt.org.uk
Facebook Page: Marshwood CLT**

Interested in renting affordable housing?

Are you registered with Dorset Home Choice?

Would you, or someone you know, be interested in moving into one of the houses at Bramblehay, Marshwood, should a property become available?

Allocation of these properties, and similar schemes in neighbouring villages, is handled by Dorset Home Choice.

To be considered as a tenant, you need to be on the housing register. Be prepared by registering now at www.dorsethomechoice.org

When registering, please make sure you put the following statement on your application to show you qualify for Marshwood CLT housing:

‘Have local connection required to qualify for CLT housing’

These houses are for those in our community. Please register, even if Dorset Home Choice would normally regard you as adequately housed.

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee: Members

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Members Jacqui Sewell, WDDC councillor
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