

Char Chat News

For residents and our guests in
Whitchurch Canonorum, Wootton Fitzpaine, Morcombelake
Stanton St Gabriel, Fishpond, Ryall and Monkton Wyld

December 2022

Welcome to the Char Valley Parish Council newsletter

December 2022

As we are repeatedly being told, this is going to be a tough time for everyone. The impact of world events affects us all, from increases in costs, reductions in earnings and income, shortages of foods, and wilder weather.

Fortunately, as we showed during the pandemic, we have a wonderfully caring and accessible local community. We published the Dorset help leaflet in our August newsletter and it's pinned on our noticeboards but, if you, your friends, or your neighbours have any questions then contact the Citizens Advice Bureau on 0800 144 8848 or Dorset Council on 01305 211970. They have all the relevant information and access to relevant funding support. We also list the Bridport Warm Hubs on page 11 offering drinks and company in warm environments.

We've repeated our request for volunteer FLOOD WARDENS. It was dry when we last asked, now homes have been flooded. If there's no one out there in the right places able to help, then there's not much more we can do.

We'll be holding a public meeting in the Spring to examine the need for local affordable housing and we're planning a public event to highlight the environmental and climate actions that residents can learn about and act on if they wish, including the availability of a thermal imaging camera to help assess your home heat loss, and the NT's tree management proposals.

The River Char community project has been very successful and we are now working with other parishes to continue the clean-up.

This end of year edition includes a summary of what the Parish Council has achieved this year and the work that has been undertaken. This year we are proposing a 3% rise in precept after 3 years of no increase. Councillors do not get paid, but the Clerk does.

Our village halls and their committees are also run by volunteers and provide some great community activities and opportunities. They welcome your involvement and if they don't offer what you want, then let them know.

The Editor

Char Valley Parish Council (CVPC) is a group council made up of the civil parish councils of Stanton St Gabriel, Whitchurch Canonorum (North and South), and Wootton Fitzpaine.

Because each separate council is small, we join up for meetings so we can take decisions together and achieve more.

The combined civil parish stretches from the Jurassic Coast to the Marshwood Vale, all falling within the West Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

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Wishing you all a happy and safe
festive season

Opinions expressed by individual contributors do not necessarily represent the views of CVPC as a whole.

CVPC Meetings

CVPC meets monthly except in August and December. Being a group council, our meetings are normally held in each of our village halls in rotation—James Hargreaves Hall in Morcombelake (JH), Whitchurch Canonorum village hall (WC), and Wootton Fitzpaine village hall (WF). The meeting minutes and agenda are posted on parish notice boards and website. All our meetings are open to the public and we welcome public participation.

Our meetings are generally on Monday evenings and start at 7:30pm, with the following schedule for 2023:

Jan 9th (WC) Feb 13th (JH) Mar 13th (WC) Apr 17th (WF) May 15th (JH) Jun 12th (WC)
Jul 10th (WF) Sep 11th (JH) Oct 9th (WC) Nov 13th (WF)

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www.charvalley.org

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Representing: STANTON ST. GABRIEL

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CLERK

Tamsin Ely	07786 086038	E: charvalley@dorset-aptc.gov.uk
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Footpath Officers:	Wootton Fitzpaine	Sarah Dewe	sarahdewe@mac.com	07973920001
	Whitchurch	Christine Peat	christine_peat15@yahoo.co.uk	

Tree Officer:	Emma O'Bryen	emma@obryen.co.uk
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Representing: DORSET COUNCIL: Councillor for Marshwood Vale ward

Simon Christopher	07798 833715	E: cllsimon.christopher@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
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At the November CVPC meeting, Robert Cook was co-opted to the Council. Robert and his family have been farming here for over 100 years, and currently farm about 500 acres in Char Valley and the NT Estate. He first served on the Council about 20 years ago.

Char Valley FLOOD WARDEN—HELP!!

There has been some heavy rain which has led to homes being flooded in Char Valley. We were able to help but



this badly exposed our need for VOLUNTEERS!! Our sandbags were rotted through and not conveniently available—and our communications systems weren't quick and simple. Residents had to wait many hours/days for assistance from Dorset Council and suffered flood damage. The damage could have been reduced or even avoided with some planning. We need VOLUNTEERS.

It's not a full time job—in fact it had been a couple of years since the last 'action', and there is no hat nor uniform.

Fortunately, one of our councillors has taken on the Flood Warden coordinating role but we cannot work alone. Here's a note from our Flood Warden coordinator:

Firstly, tragedy... I've lost my yellow helmet that has a red flashy siren sounding light on the top! It's gone awol in our move, I can only find a moonraker white hard hat nicked from a BBC Christmas party circa 1995...



Secondly..

As the rain lashes down outside, on these dark autumn nights, some residents' thoughts will turn to the dread of being flooded due to the excess surface water, over-flowing drains, and to rising river levels.

If you or a neighbour are worried about flooding,

help is at hand; there are sandbags available as preventative measures and a Flood Warden to help direct assistance to you.

We also really need a person as first point of contact in each village for immediate action as the tide waits for no man (or woman).

Please contact either Tamsin Ely our Parish

Clerk on charvalley@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

Or Juliet Busby our Flood Warden coordinator on 07976 369 323 E: julietbusby@gmail.com if you can or need help

Housing Needs and Affordable Housing—Public Meeting

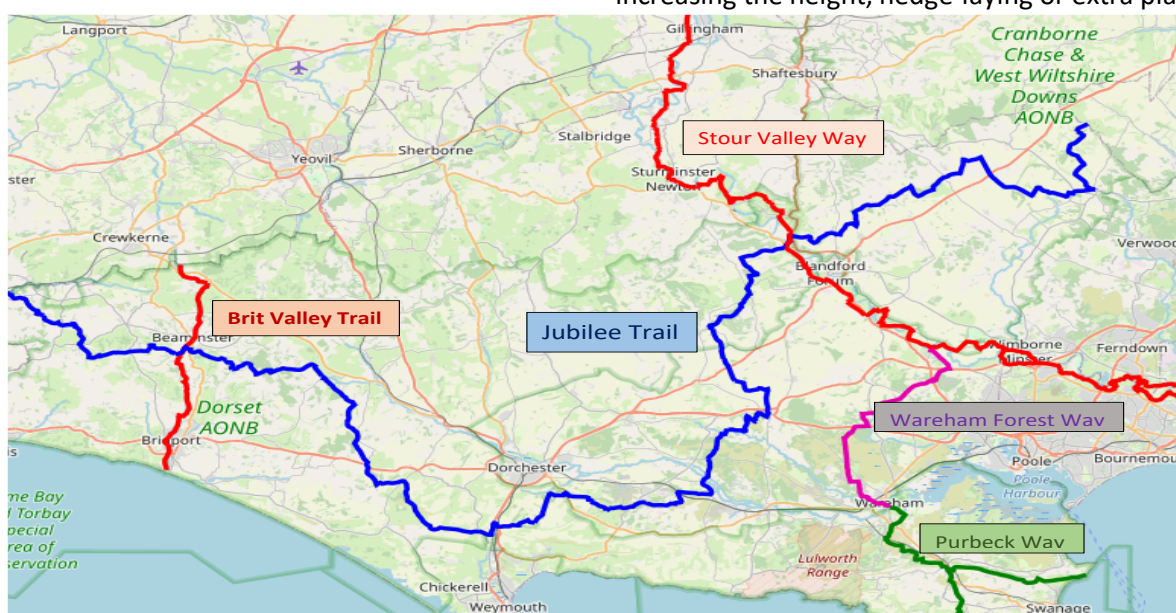
As a result of the Housing Needs Survey conducted across the Char Valley Parish area, CVPC has decided to hold a public meeting in early 2023 to discuss the findings with local residents. Dorset Council will explain how this can be carried forward **if there is sufficient support**. The recognised route is generally through the creation of a Community Land Trust. This would be completely independent of the parish council and require local volunteers to lead and manage. This will not be taken forward by CVPC and will only progress if there are enough volunteers interested and enough people willing to commit to seeing it through.

If you have an interest in the provision of affordable local housing, please contact our clerk to register and we will notify everyone once the meeting has been organised. E: charvalley@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

THE GREAT BIG DORSET HEDGE

The 'Great Big Dorset Hedge' project aims to enhance the existing network of hedgerows across Dorset from east to west and north to south. Hedgerows provide many environmental "services":

- ◆ forming extensive habitat for wildlife
- ◆ providing corridors connecting woods and rivers
- ◆ reducing soil erosion with their roots
- ◆ holding back flood water
- ◆ offering shelter from the wind and heat for livestock and crops
- ◆ and, crucially, capturing carbon and creating a reservoir for biological control of crop pests.



Dorset is well known for its broad hedgerows and in West Dorset what remains of the small field structure means hedgerows are very much a feature of the landscape. But, elsewhere in Dorset (and even around here) hedgerows have often been removed to allow larger-scale agriculture, lost from lack of maintenance where labour and time are scarce and the hedgerow has little practical use, or have become straggly and overgrown. It is in these situations that the project aims to restore the landscape and enhance the existing hedge network. This will enable wildlife to move more easily, greatly benefit biodiversity and increase carbon capture to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The project, being promoted by Dorset Climate Action Network's (Dorset CAN's) Land Use team, starts with surveying the condition of existing hedgerows. A network of volunteers is being set up to walk the footpaths of Dorset, initially focusing on the 160km of

the Jubilee Trail and associated trails such as the Brit Valley Trail, the Stour Valley Way, the Ridgeway and the Purbeck Way.

Volunteers are trained to survey hedgerows and will be asked to walk lengths of the trails, ideally in their own local areas, survey the hedges, and provide data on plant species and condition of the hedgerow as estimated by the Adams Condition Code, a national hedgerow standard. The results are fed into a GIS map of the whole county which captures the information for each hedge surveyed.

Analysis of each hedge surveyed may lead to a suggested change of hedge management (e.g. increasing the height, hedge-laying or extra planting).

In some cases, completely new hedgerows may be proposed, often where there was historically a hedge that could be reinstated. This information is available on the map. In due course, discussions with landowners will establish whether they are interested in making these changes – and we may be able to point them towards sources of funding and volunteers. One of the hoped-for sources of funding is Defra's proposed new ELMS scheme. Other schemes, such as Farming in Protected Landscapes, are good funding sources for some projects. Free trees are often available for community-based projects where land is owned by Parish Councils. We hope the project may also lead to more work for hedge-layers and other hedgerow maintenance specialists.

THE GREAT BIG DORSET HEDGE... ctd

As a separate part of the project, everyone is welcome to add any newly planted or improved hedgerow to the growing map of the Great Big Dorset Hedge.

Dorset CAN hope that this long-term project will help to realise the vision of a more biodiverse, sustainable, and carbon-rich landscape as well as being a wonderful opportunity for individuals to get out and learn about our local hedgerows and enjoy being involved in work in our countryside.

The project also links in with other hedgerow projects such as the CPRE's 'Hedgerow Heroes' and The People's Trust for Endangered Species 'Healthy Hedgerows' campaigns.

To find out more about how to assess hedgerows, the



cc-by-sa/2.0 - Marshwood Vale by Derek Harper - geograph.org.uk/p/562206

mapping system and more information on what makes a healthy hedge, go to our website www.DorsetCAN.org/hedge where you can also sign-up to join the project. Or contact us on: greatbigdorsethedge@gmail.com

Author: Julie Leah

National Trust Hedge Planting—Saturday 10th December—come and help!

Could you help plant a new hedgerow in West Dorset? Join the National Trust team on Saturday 10th December to put our new trees in the ground. The session will run 10-2pm and volunteers are welcome for the full day or

to drop in for part of the day. Parking is in the Seatown car park, Chideock, DT6 6JU but please walk or carshare where possible. Bring gardening gloves if you have them, but don't worry if not as I will bring spare pairs on the day and we'll provide all the necessary tools. Wear old clothes you don't mind getting a bit muddy, bring snacks, a drink, and lunch if you intend to stay for the whole day. The new hedge is a 10 minute walk over Ridge Cliff to the 'potato patch' hedge from Seatown car park, where there are toilets (and a pub!) available.

Proposed 'Blossom' Hedges



Thank you!

As well as hedgerow restoration, this work is tied into the National Trust goal of 20 million trees by 2030, and our 'blossom' project. We've chosen flowering species: hawthorn, blackthorn, and crab apple for the new hedgerows that we're planting over the next few years. The idea is that as well as supporting pollinators and other wildlife, the blooms will be visible from local communities.

Claire Sissons E: Claire.Sissons@nationaltrust.org.uk

River Char Community Project

There's a sea change taking place in the way we think about, live alongside and work with our rivers.

Around the world, apparently sensible people in apparently sensible countries have voted to give legal rights to rivers to stop them being polluted, exploited and poisoned. Examples include the Magpie River in Quebec, the Whanganui in New Zealand, all rivers in Bangladesh, the River Yarra in Australia, and the Ganges in India (though this decision is under appeal). These movements are often in previously colonised countries where indigenous people tend to think of themselves as guardians or caretakers of the land, rather than 'owning' the land. By contrast, an attempt to give legal rights to the River Frome was refused by the UK government.

Around the UK, there is growing outrage at the amount of untreated sewage that Water Companies have a legal right to release into our rivers and into the sea every month. The sober Financial Times recently reported: "cutting the Environment Agency's



budget by two-thirds since 2010 has effectively 'defunded' environmental protection in the UK. 'If you want to pollute a river, you can pretty much do so knowing that no one will catch you; if you are reported, no one will follow you, and if they do you will not be prosecuted.'"

UK water companies have borrowed nearly £50bn since 1991 and paid dividends of £57bn to shareholders. That's all money that could have been spent on treating more sewage, modernising infrastructure and stopping spills into our rivers. (But we voted for privatisation in 1989 so have only ourselves to blame.)

Righting the wrongs

Across the county, there are at least 15 community river projects like ours, working on the Asker, Char, Kit, Lim, Piddle, Stour, Simene, Tarrant, Wey and others. And a fantastic new West Dorset Wilding project based in the River Brit catchment. They all give hope that things can improve again.

Here on the River Char, a campaign is building to clean up the river so we can, one day, remove this sign

Beach Streams

The water in the stream is unsuitable for swimming or paddling as the water quality cannot be guaranteed.

- Don't drink or swallow stream water
- Avoid splashing around the face
- Wash hands carefully with clean water before eating or handling food

For further information please contact Environmental Health

Telephone: 01305 251010

Email: env.health@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk

(which tells us to wash our hands after contact with the river) from the river mouth in Charmouth, where visitors swim all through the summer. Two community projects (one in Charmouth and ours higher up the river) are working to:

- ◆ Get Wessex Water to cut the number of downstream sewage spills each year
- ◆ Get South West Water to clean up tiny plastic beads littering the sand at the river mouth (which have come from their Sewage Treatment Works in Uplyme).
- ◆ Get our MP to support our campaign.
- ◆ Reduce the amount of sewage that leaks into the river from our septic tanks
- ◆ Reduce the amount of agricultural run-off from farmed fields that pollutes the river
- ◆ Test the river regularly for pollution
- ◆ Maintain the river banks to let in more light and reduce erosion; to increase levels of plant and animal life in the river and to use nature-based solutions upstream to help prevent flooding after storms.

River Char Community Project...ctd

With that in mind, over the summer and autumn we've organised, with Dorset AONB, Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) a number of walks and working parties (see separate article) and coming up, there's:

Thurs 26th Jan – DWT / DAONB river working party. Please join us if you can.

Sat 18th Feb – We are the River. An indoor community event in St Andrew's Hall, Charmouth to celebrate the River Char and share your hopes and memories. With art, craft, music, river tales and poetry alongside river facts and tips on being Water Wise.

Fri 24th Feb – An evening talk at one of our halls with river experts. For details, ask our clerk to add you to our mailing list.

Thurs 18th May – Farm/River walk at Babers Farm (Countryside Restoration Trust).

Sat 27th May – We are the River. Community procession and outdoor events in Charmouth.

For more details of all events, visit

www.charvalley.org/riverchar

How you can help?

To join our River Char Community Project, email our Clerk, Tamsin: charvalley@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

To join Charmouth's Community Project to clean up the river, visit www.riverchar.org

If you've got a septic tank/cesspit/sewage treatment plant, help keep the river free of sewage by maintaining your tank. See www.charvalley.org/sewage

If you've an hour a month to help us monitor the water quality in the river, please email acarey@charvalleypc.com

Walk the river if you can. It's beautiful. But it needs our help. If you see anything interesting (kingfisher, otter, water vole...) or worrying (pollution, mink, algal bloom ...) let us know – with a photo if possible. Again, email: acarey@charvalleypc.com

Your New Year's resolution...

Make this year the one where you use public transport a little more, saving money and the planet at the same time! It's also very sociable!

The **Dorset Community Transport PlusBus Bridport B** service will collect and return you to your own home on alternate Wednesday mornings - free for pensioners, £7 return for other local residents. To register and book a place phone 01258 287980 in the mornings.

The **Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride Service** has been in operation since September 2001 and is a registered charity running community transport for the West Dorset and East Devon areas. It is open to anyone but especially caters for people with a special need for transport facilities because they are elderly, disabled, parents with young children or people living in isolated areas where there is no adequate public transport.

The door-to-door service offers passengers security and comfort, taking a lot of the strain out of shopping. The fares are very reasonable with morning shopping

trips to Bridport, Dorchester, Honiton, Axminster and Chard costing just £5.00 return.

There is also a Passenger Club for each zone that offers a weekly afternoon trip and a day trip on one Saturday each month and is very popular with members. The annual membership fee is just £10 and gives the opportunity to visit destinations such as Sidmouth, Otter Nurseries, Sherborne, the Somerset Levels, Weymouth and Dorchester with day trips to Lynton and Lynmouth, Glastonbury, Wells, Swanage and many others.

For further information and details about any of the trips available please contact the Ring and Ride office on 07510 255 965.

Details of timetables can be found on:

www.bit.ly/CVPC42



Tree Management

The National Trust will be working on the trees at Langdon Woods and Filcombe Woods to improve the resilience and growth of the woods. This is essential work to avoid the longer term failure of the woods and the NT have offered to come and talk to local residents about the challenges and issues.

CVPC are organising a public event for late Spring 2023 on environmental and climate issues within and around the Char Valley at which the NT and others will be

presenting.

Dorset Council do not have to notify local residents about their own or residents' actions to cut down or otherwise affect listed trees. CVPC have asked that this is changed so that we do receive all notifications.

Our tree officer, Emma O'Bryen has compiled a list of trees that are currently not affected by disease and are beneficial to wildlife. Please contact her about local tree issues E: emma@obryen.co.uk

URGENT: Surveyor needed to estimate the replacement value of CVPC Assets for insurance purposes, including the war memorials. Please contact our clerk.

THE OLD CHURCH AT STANTON ST GABRIEL

The earliest know reference to the church or chapel of St Gabriel is an Ordinance of Robert first Bishop of Salisbury dated Christmas Day 1240.

During the Middle Ages it became a chapel-ease to the older and larger church of Whitchurch Canonorum. By the end of the 18th century services were held there only once a month. My ancestor Samuel Hunter was married at the church in 1775.

Once the top road linking Chideock to Morcombelake was in operation from

1840 (which "by-passed" the fishing village of

Stanton St Gabriel on the coast and hastened the village's decline) a new church was built on the new A35 main road, and the old church fell into disrepair. By the early

years of the 20th century it

was a roofless ruin. What little of it remains is now cared for by the National Trust – which owns the Golden Cap Estate.

A few years ago I walked on the SW coast path from Charmouth to Chideock. En-route one gets fantastic views of Stanton including the only working farm left, Upcot, in the small parish and the old ruined church.

There are church services still held at the ruins. One is every May when there is an Ascension Day service, whereby Elizabeth Carter usually plays her flugelhorn as an accompaniment to the hymns. Another service is for Evensong each August.

There is a lovely poem written about the origins of the 13th century chapel. It outlines that a ship was sinking nearby and man wanted to use the lifeboat so that he



could take his new bride to safety at Stanton. Eventually the captain agreed, but it took the small boat three days in the dreadful storm to reach land by which time his bride had passed away. So her heart-broken husband built a shrine to her and the rest is history

"They took the granite from the cliff

And quarried marble fine

They hewed they built for morn till night

And raised a goodly shrine."



By Chris Downer, CC BY-SA 2.0 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12989942>

Char Valley Parish Council 2022—The Precept and where it goes...

The running costs for your local parish councils, the Parish Council Precepts, are collected as part of the Dorset Council tax. As you know, Dorset has one of the highest council taxes in England and yet one of the lowest average incomes.

Char Valley Parish Council has kept its Precept unchanged for the past three years and has been using reserves to cover the shortfall. This year, that will not be possible and CVPC have asked for a 3% rise in the Precept. This equates to a Council Tax increase of £1.02 per year for a Band D home. Overall, if agreed by Dorset Council, the CVPC annual precept will increase by £582.09 to £19,985.09 for 2022/23.

The Parish council is responsible for, or contributes to the upkeep of quite a varied portfolio of assets including graveyards, war memorials, playground equipment, playing fields, bus shelters, salt bins, notice boards, and odd patches of 'un-owned' land.

On your behalf, we make donations towards the upkeep and running of our three village halls and other local charitable organisations which benefit our residents, such as the Air Ambulance or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Over the past couple of years, there was a focus on COVID support, but this year we have moved on to look at more general Resilience Planning and are working with Dorset Council and others to identify areas of key risk for our parishes. We are looking to identify practical support mechanisms and viable communication routes, recognising that Char Valley, and much of West Dorset, is relatively sparsely populated, has very narrow roads, poor broadband connectivity, and would be low on Dorset Council or any emergency service priorities if there were a major adverse event.

One of the major responsibilities of a parish council is to assess and respond to local planning applications. This year CVPC responded to 38 planning applications ranging from solar farms, conversions of farms to holiday accommodation and well-being centres, to house extensions and camping exemptions. Of the 38, we supported 21 and Dorset agreed, objected to 12

with Dorset agreeing with us for 6 of them and imposing conditions or changes on the other 6 for acceptance. The remaining 5 are yet to be determined.

We launched a survey into whether there is any demand for affordable housing in our area. This is a sensitive issue and we are organising a Public Meeting on this issue in the new year.

We have been very worried about the uncontrolled expansion of campsites and the inconsistent use of camping exemption certificates which can circumvent full local consultation. We have worked with Dorset Council to introduce a more open process to involve us, the AONB, environmental teams, local highways, and local residents in the evaluation of any application for a camping exemption certificate.

We responded to planning concerns outside our area but that will have an impact on us, such as the Foundry Lea development in Bridport and the Dorset Local Plan, and applied for a grant from SWR for a bus shelter in Morcombelake.

For the Platinum Jubilee, CVPC arranged for each child in the parish to be sent a letter from Queen Elizabeth's Lady in Waiting, along with photos of the Queen. These documents were rolled into a scroll and tied with a red, white and blue ribbon and labelled for 160 children in 82 families, and distributed over the Jubilee weekend.

Rowan Trees for each parish/hamlet within the CVPC have been ordered, along with wire mesh guards and slate labels. The planting of the trees will commence in the next 2 months.

A derelict bench at Wootton Fitzpaine was replaced and a new one was placed in James Hargreaves Hall Garden. Another will be installed half-way up Loves Lane in Morcombelake. This will be constructed by a local craftsman.

We survey the Grit Bins every year across the whole 37 sq kms of Char Valley and ensure they are filled. During the year bins at Ryall, Stanton St Gabriel, Monkton Wyld, Whitchurch and Morcombelake were replaced.

Repair work was required on local fingerposts—two separate arms had been snapped off in Wootton, along with a roundel being dislodged from another finger

post. The repairs were done by a local firm in the area.

Three new noticeboards were installed in the parish during 2022, one at the Old Post Office, Morcombelake, one at the Village Hall, Whitchurch and another at Peter's Gore Fishpond. There are two planned, one at Felicity's Farm Shop, Morcombelake and one at Knapp Farm, just at the junction of the Monkton Wyld road, Wootton Fitzpaine. It is hoped that the three lockable noticeboards at Ryall, Monkton Wyld and James Hargreaves Hall, Morcombelake will be made "delockable" in the near future so that other public notices can be displayed.

A defibrillator is being purchased for installation on the outside wall of the James Hargreaves Hall in Morcombelake. Locations can be found through <https://www.defibfinder.uk/>

We have regular inspections of the Playgroup area in Whitchurch and repairs and rectification are carried out as quickly as possible.

CVPC employs a Lengthsman, Stephen Lee, to undertake much of the regular minor maintenance and repair work across the parish.

CVPC continues to be concerned by the damage and issues caused by the A35 and are liaising directly with National Highways about their safety and severance studies, although, apart from hedge cutting and footway clearance in Morcombelake, progress is very slow. Same with Dorset Council and local roads. Finance and manpower seem to be the common challenge.

CVPC has a strong commitment to helping our residents understand and respond to climate and environmental issues through the provision and identification of relevant information and resources. Examples of our work this year include:

- ◆ Prepared a new leaflet for residents on Septic Tank maintenance and included these with the in the April issue of Char Chat. The leaflet is available at www.charvalley.org/sewage
- ◆ Ran two Riverfly training sessions for local residents, to allow us to monitor numbers of caddisfly larvae and other insects – a key indicator of the health of the river.
- ◆ Worked closely with the Lower Char Community

Project in their discussions with Wessex Water about how to reduce the number of engineered releases of untreated sewage into the River Char at Newlands Bridge and from the Sewage Works into the sea. (Action promised for 2023.)

- ◆ Worked with the River Lim Action Group to get South West Water to clean up the plastic biobeads, which were released in an earlier spill at the Sewage Treatment Works in Uplyme and which have since washed up at Charmouth Beach. (Action promised for Spring 2023.)
- ◆ Had conversations with Cllr. Ray Bryan, who leads Dorset Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy, asking him to adopt a "major Public Engagement Programme to get the electorate on side in addressing the 98% of the county's carbon emissions for which DC is not directly responsible". Cllr. Bryan answered that: "this is something we will be exploring in more detail over the coming year and would like to engage Town and Parish councils in."
- ◆ Attended a meeting of the River Asker Community Project in Loders in March to learn from their experience of working with farmers to reduce pollution entering that river.
- ◆ Spoke to Charmouth Parish Council about the River Char Community Project in May.
- ◆ Held an impromptu meeting with Chris Loder MP in March to discuss his views on river pollution and his voting record in Parliament on the matter.
- ◆ Attended a meeting of Dorset Climate Action Network's Land Use Group to discuss bringing together the Char Valley Lifelines Project and the Great Dorset Hedge project in the Char Valley.
- ◆ Gave a talk to the Symondsburry Annual Parish Meeting, with two councillors from Charmouth Parish Council and Lyme Regis Town Council on the role of small parishes in the climate emergency.
- ◆ Led an evening event at the Bridport Climate Fellowship Circle.
- ◆ Attended the online 'Fighting Climate Change' event organised by NALC, which encouraged

community engagement schemes like ours.

- ◆ Prepared reports on sewage releases into the River Char and plastic pollution of the River Char, available at www.riverchar.org/sewage and www.riverchar.org/plastics
- ◆ Organised guided river walks, led by Nick Gray of Dorset Wildlife Trust and Ian Rees of Dorset AONB at Northay Farm (June), Crabbs Bluntshay Farm (October) and New House Farm (November).
- ◆ Organised a working party to root out Himalayan Balsam at Stockham Bridge in July.
- ◆ Attended a Rivers Awareness event called 'Connecting the Culme' at Uffculme in July.
- ◆ Agreed that Ian Rees will move ahead with the next stage of research and survey on the river, gathering information on geomorphological survey approaches and liaising with the Environment Agency and Wessex Water about identification of significant pollution sources in the catchment.
- ◆ Ran two community working party sessions doing flood management work at Befferlands Farm (March) and New House Farm (November).

- ◆ Met Baroness Jenny Jones (Green Party peer) in Lyme Regis in September to discuss sewage and pollution on local beaches and in local rivers (report at www.riverchar.org/sewage)

CVPC represents Char Valley residents on various local forums including the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC), and more locally, Bridport Local Area Partnership (BLAP). DAPTC is a coordinating body for information and issues with Dorset Council and has been effective in organising some very informative meetings about planning and local plans. We are currently following up some local issues with planning enforcement.

BLAP provides a working interface for councils, business groups, and other organisations centred around Bridport, and in helping to understand the importance of Bridport as a services hub for the surrounding areas.

According to the 2021 National Census, there are 1,024 residents in Char Valley—virtually the same as the 2011 Census. In Bridport there are 8,463 residents—an increase of 131, but overall in the BLAP area, there are 22,054 residents—an increase of 272 on the 2011 census.

Warm Hubs in Bridport

A number of Warm Hubs are planned in Bridport. Some are operating now and should continue through January. Residents can drop-in to these warm venues.

- ◆ Tuesdays 10am - 1pm - Bridport Youth & Community Centre, Gundry Lane. Hot drinks, newspapers, WiFi and board games.
- ◆ Tuesdays 12.30pm - 2pm - Catholic Church, Victoria Grove. Lunch at no charge.
- ◆ Wednesdays & Saturdays 10am - 12noon - Cafe at Chapel in the Garden, Rax Lane (entrance along Rax Lane).
- ◆ Wednesdays 10am - 12noon - Bridport United Reformed Church, East Street. Cafe with hot drinks and biscuits. 12noon - 4pm soup and toasties.
- ◆ Wednesdays & Friday's 10am - 2pm - Beacon Church, Priory Lane. Community Kitchen Cafe and lunches. No charge.
- ◆ Thursdays 11am - 2pm Chapel in The Garden (Rax Lane entrance) hot drinks, newspapers and games.
- ◆ Saturdays 10am - 12noon - United Reformed Church, East Street. Coffee morning. £1.20 for refillable coffee.
- ◆ Saturdays 10am - 12noon Bridport Christian Fellowship, East Street. Coffee and cake (no charge).



The Village Halls

There are three wonderful and very active village halls in the Char Valley Parish, one in Wootton Fitzpaine with the associated Wootton Social Club, one in Whitchurch Canonorum, and another in Morcombelake (The James Hargreaves Hall). Many of you will be familiar with the events and social activities but, as Christmas approaches, here's a few reminders.

Wootton Fitzpaine

Yoga: Tuesday evening: Annalisa Renee
07761721357

Guides: Wednesday evening: Debbie Thatcher
07977035768

Art Class: Thursday evening: Trudi Ochiltree
07812856823

Singing group: Wednesday evening: Kate Meltzer
07970943805

Coffee Morning: Monthly: Saturday 17th Dec

Arts Reach: Jan 12th: Sue Beckers 01297 560 948

Wootton Social Club: £10 annual fee: bar,
snooker, skittles, pool, darts.

Christmas Draw –25p—Saturday 17th December

Booking and info: Anna Bearpark

E: Annabearpark65@gmail.com

Morcombelake—James Hargreaves Hall

Saturday Dec 10th: small declutter sale: proceeds to
food banks: St Gabriel's Church Porch: Bronwen
01297489622

Monday December 19th: Christmas Carols, mulled
wine & mince pies

Fri Jan 20th: Quiz evening: fish/chicken or veggie &
chips: £12

February: Auction of Promises

Fri Dec 16th: Soup Cheese: Sherry & Mince Pies: £5
01297 489719

Table Tennis: Wednesday 4-6pm: Mark
01297489758

Music Group: Wednesday 10-12: Barbara
01297489438

Knit & natter: Monday 2.30-4.30: Pat 01297489571

Garden: 1st Saturday in Month: Carol 01297 489741

Art Group: Thursday morning: Sue 01297 489404

Singing group: Monday monthly: Ronnie
0129748952

Hall Booking and enquiries: Debbie 07956285221
debbiehewson@googlemail.com

