

March 2026



QUANTOCK
For Nether Stowey & Over Stowey

Messenger 50p

Front cover, top: Visitors relax with hot drinks in the tearoom at Cole-ridge Cottage (Photo, Sophie Bolsworth) Front cover bottom: Jean Aikenhead, a valued member of the Wednesday Club, dressed for the occasion to celebrate Robert Burns (Photo, T Muir)



"Bramble Burning in Stowey Wood on a rare day of sunshine". This area has been cleared of bramble by Stowey Green Spaces Group volunteers to give bluebells a chance of flourishing once more. (Photo T Abbiss)

MARCH 2026

Welcome to the March edition which, we hope, may bring with it a change to the persistently wet weather and some brighter, Spring-like days.

While waiting for that, there's plenty of interest this month.

Do you have an announcement or item of interest to share with others in the villages? If so, let us know—the deadline for items is usually the 15th of the preceding month

Best wishes from the QM team

Your Quantock Messenger Team

Please email articles/photos to:

editor@quantockmessenger.org.uk

Please email adverts to;

advertising@quantockmessenger.org.uk

Sian	Editor	Email
Jan	Editor	Email & 734561
Richard Beer	Printer	732412
Sally Dymock	Advertising	326394
Molly Bradnor	Distribution	732166

CLUBS & SOCIETIES IN NETHER STOWEY & OVER STOWEY

Allotment Association

Diane Faris 733180

Coleridge Probus Club

Geoff Parle 01278 653681

Coleridge Cottage Tel: 732 662

Friends of Coleridge

Helen Boyles helenboyles@gmail.com

Friends of Over Stowey Church

Christopher Stone 732 907

Friends of the Quantocks

Mary ter Braak (01984) 656 633

Friends of Nether Stowey School

Lisa Rendle 732 508

Music on the Quantocks: Fay Chilcott
quantocks@live.co.uk 07938 728829

Nether Stowey Art Group

Rob Potter 07855546883

Nether Stowey Football Club

Chair: Nigel Waterman 732 310

Seniors: Steve Easden 07788 370014

Juniors: Nigel Waterman 732 310

Minis: Richard Marriott 07890 451694

Nether Stowey Playing Fields

Committee - Jane Erskine 732 025

Nether Stowey Short Mat Bowls

Mark Howells 01278 733215 Chairperson

Terry Binding 01278 732710 Secretary

Email: nsshortmatbowls@gmail.com

Nether Stowey & Fiddington Women's Institute

Ruth Andrews 734 613

Terry Binding 732710

Over Stowey Cricket Club &

Over Stowey Recreation Ground

Les Biffin 732963

Over Stowey Rights of Way Group

Richard Ince 733 237

Over Stowey Social Club

Patrick Tully 732944 or 07802697595

Over Stowey Village Hall

Jackie Barrow 07891 720565

Bridget Tully 07970781087

bridgetjtully@gmail.com

Quantock National Landscape Office Fyne Court

Tel: (01823) 451 884

Quantock Beekeepers Association

Ken Edwards 671 544

Quantock Players

Wendy Hobbs 733 197

Quantock Quilters

Anna Boulton 652309

Quantock Tennis Club

Robin Bendall 732 633

Royal British Legion - N/Stowey & District

Viki Fielder 238 691

Stogursey Forget-Me-Not Cafe

Helen Cuttell 734 818

Stowey Bears (pre-school)

Tina Miller 734 636

Stowey Book Club

Alison Whittingham 732 446

Stowey Gardeners

Kate Houghton 07940 836139

SGSG (Stowey Green Spaces Group)

Roy Osborne 734604

stoweygreenspaces@stowey.org.uk

Stowey Walking

Lynne Abbott 732 228

Thomas Poole Library, Nether Stowey

Sian Stafford 07734 968940

Wednesday Club Barbara 732412 or

Tina 732382

COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Police (emergency: 999 or non-emergency: 101)

Email somwestnptsedgemoor@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk
PCSO Supervisor Lora Bray—7528@avonandsomerset.police.uk
PCSO Finlay Wallace
Jake Dade (Hinkley issues only) @avonandsomerset.police.uk

Antisocial behaviour call **0800 298 2009**

Vandalism on the Quantock Hills call **101**

Household noise problems (Environmental Health) call **0845 408 2540**

Somerset Councillor:

Michael Caswell 01278 652043 mike.caswell@somerset.gov.uk
Brian Bolt 07970 855990 brian.bolt@somerset.gov.uk

Nether Stowey Parish Council / Over Stowey Parish Council

Clerk: **Caro Slaymaker** Clerk: **Amanda McMurren**
01278 733779 01278 734689
clerk@netherstowey-pc.gov.uk clerk@overstoweyparishcouncil.co.uk

Bookings secretaries

N/Stowey Church Centre **Pat Stacey** 01278 732518 (9am—9pm)
O/Stowey Village Hall **Jackie Barrow** 07891720565

Quantock Medical Centre (if closed call the NHS on 111)

Reception 01278 732696 8am - 6:30pm (Mon-Fri)
Dispensary 01278 733385 10am - 11.30am & 4pm - 5pm (Mon-Fri)
Dispensary Collection 10am - 12pm & 4 - 6pm (Mon-Fri)
somicb.quantock.mc@nhs.net
<https://quantockmedicalcentre.gpsurgery.net>

Cannington Health Centre (if closed call NHS on 111)

Reception 01278 652 335 Prescription line 01278 651 311

Other Community Facilities

Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline 03454 040506

The Thomas Poole Library 07734 968940 (Mon & Wed 10-1, Thurs 3.30 - 6.30, Fri 10-1 & 2-5 and Sat 10-1)

Quantock Hills National Landscape, Amanda Sampson - 01823 451884,
quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk

Community Car Scheme Stowey Shuttle - 07943 923742

Village Agent: Sarah Bennet, 07985 680269,

DIARY DATES 2026

Every Monday (except Bank Holidays) - Toddler Storytime - 11am - TPL

2nd & 4th Monday each month - Quantock Quilters - 10am - 1pm - NSCC

Every Tuesday - Stowey Singers all welcome 6.45pm - 8.15pm at NSCC

Every Tuesday - Stowey Walking

Every Tuesday - Short Mat Bowls 2 - 5pm - £4 session, annual subs £20 - NSCC

1st and 3rd Tuesday each month - SGSG (Stowey Green Spaces) work groups 2.30pm - 4.30 pm

2nd Tuesday each month - SGSG meeting 2.30pm

Every Wednesday - Nether Stowey Wednesday Club 10am - 2pm - NSCC

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month - Evening talk at the Library 7.30pm - 9pm - TPL

1st Wednesday of the month - IT drop in session - 10.30am - 12 noon - TPL

Every Thursday - Chess Time at the Library - 5pm - 6.30pm - TPL

1st & 3rd Thursday each month - Art Group - 2pm - 4pm - NSCC

Every 2nd Thursday each month - Nether Stowey & Fiddington WI - 2pm

Every 3rd Thursday – Stowey Gardeners - 7.30pm - NSCC

Every Friday - Knit & Natter - 10:30am - 12:00 noon - TPL

Last Friday of the Month - Library Book Group - 2.30pm - 3.30pm - TPL

Every Saturday - Second-hand book sales 10am - 1pm TPL

3rd Saturday each month - SGSG litter picking 10am

3rd Saturday each month - Over Stowey Coffee Morning 10.30 - 12 noon OSVH

1st & 3rd Saturday each month - Dungeons & Dragons - TPL

2nd Saturday each month - Dungeons & Dragons DM Workshop - TPL

6th April - Easter Bingo at Over Stowey village hall - OSVH

27th - 28th June - Big Bash weekend at Over Stowey CC

NSCC - Nether Stowey Church Centre

TPL - Thomas Poole Library

OSVH - Over Stowey Village Hall

SGSG - Stowey Green Spaces Group

The Marion Evered Trust

This years 200 club is now due for renewal, you should receive an invite letter to re join. If you haven't or if you wish to join then contact Pauline Barrow on 07724666011

We look forward to this years fundraising and there are a couple of events already planned, See below.

200 Club draw - Latest Draw results in next newsletter

Dates for your diary

- 6th April - Easter Bingo at Over Stowey village hall
- 27th-28th June - Big bash weekend at Over Stowey CC

Announcement

Jenny Manvell

My wife, Jenny, taught keep fit classes at Nether Stowey for 12 years from 2004 to 2016. I would like her friends and class members to know that, sadly, Jenny died on 15th January 2026 as a result of Frontal Temporal Dementia.

Phillip Manvell.

Why do I keep bees?

Now that Christmas is over, it is lovely to see the sun shining on the hives and, during the middle of the day, see the worker bees flying on their defecating flights.

I put my ear against the hive and gently tap the side, if I hear a gentle hum I know that all is well, but if I get a 'hollow' sound, I need to check further or get advice. I am well aware that the queen is very vulnerable at this time of year, and if she perishes there is no source of recovery - so treat her well; if the drones die there is no chance of drones mating with the queen. From March onwards, the bees become excited, so do beekeepers when they see or smell early dandelions – At last! Fresh food!

So mow your lawn and the bees will go to the tree blossoms. Clean up and repair any hives that need attention. Put an empty hive in the apiary, in the hope that a swarm will move in.

The Beginners' Beekeeping Classes run on Mondays at Spaxton Village Hall. Why not join us? Phone Ken 01278 671544 or email thebeesfly@outlook.com

Coleridge Cottage



New opening arrangements for 2026

Coleridge Cottage will be re-opening at the end of the month. This season, we have made a few changes to our opening arrangements:

- The open season: 25 March 2026 – 01 November 2026
- Open days: Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday.
- Opening times: 11am-4pm (last entry 3pm).

Free entry to the tearoom!

Did you know that you can enjoy free entry to the Coleridge Cottage tearoom, without a National Trust membership? We are delighted to offer free entry to the Coleridge Cottage tearoom for residents.

Whether you're popping in for a cuppa, meeting a friend, or simply taking a break on your doorstep, we'd love to welcome you in on the days we are open.

Just let the team know you are a local resident when you arrive.

Volunteer Recruitment

If you're hoping to try something new this year, why not join our friendly team and help make every visit special? There are many ways to get involved, and each role plays an important part in caring for Coleridge Cottage and the experiences it offers.

Bookshop Volunteer

Help us keep our little shop looking its best. Though small, it's full of character, offering souvenirs, garden gifts, and a selection of Coleridge titles alongside second-hand books. Run entirely by volunteers, the shop helps raise funds for the conservation of Coleridge Cottage.

Conservation Volunteer

Our Conservation Volunteers help care for the Cottage's interiors and handling collection, checking, recording and preserving items so they can be enjoyed today and safeguarded for generations to come. If you're curious about heritage and enjoy hands-on work, this could be the perfect fit.



Tearoom Volunteer

Our tearoom volunteers understand the value of a quiet moment. By offering a warm welcome and a friendly hand, they help visitors relax, refuel and enjoy a peaceful pause during their visit.

If you'd like to learn more, register your interest via the National Trust volunteering website, and a member of the team will be in touch.

If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch via email - coleridge.cottage@nationaltrust.org.uk or pop in when we are open.

Charlotte
Site Manager – Coleridge Cottage

Nick's Gardening Notes March 2026



February is now behind us and with the days getting longer we can hopefully look forward to a busy March in the garden and on the allotment. This is a month for 'spring cleaning' the garden and getting started on seed sowing and planting.

However, if the ground conditions are **too damp** and at the time of writing the soil **is** very damp following ten days of grey and wet weather, it is sensible to stay off the soil or work from a board to avoid compacting the soil. Waiting until the ground has dried out sufficiently is always worthwhile.

Ornamentals: borders can be forked over and crowded perennials can be lifted and divided so that the older inner

portions are rejected and the vibrant outer sections can be

replanted or potted up for friends (or village plant sales). Take care to dig out any perennial weeds such as bindweed, couch grass and buttercup. Once spruced up the borders can be mulched with well rotted compost, farmyard/horse manure or municipal green waste. Mushroom compost is satisfactory but beware of mulching around acid loving plants such as camellias, rhododendrons and heathers as it may contain some chalk (alkaline). 50-75mm (2-3") of mulch will not only keep the moisture in the ground for longer but also act as a suppressant for annual weeds. If done regularly it really helps to improve the structure of the soil resulting in better root run, drainage and water and nutrient retention. Lift, divide and replant snowdrops after flowering helping to establish bigger drifts for the future.

Pruning: March is when the coloured stem dogwoods and willows should be pruned. This will encourage strong new growth which always possesses the best colour and results from cutting back hard to buds near the base of the plant. Follow up by giving the plants a good feed with a general-purpose fertiliser such as Growmore or blood, fish and bone and then apply a mulch around the shrub. Dormant season pruning of top and soft fruit should be completed as should bush roses and later flowering shrubs such as buddleja (the butterfly bush). It is not too late to plant a choice winter flowering shrub which will provide a good display for future winters. *Lonicera x purpusii* (Winter flowering honeysuckle) is excellent as is *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Arnold Promise' (the Chinese Witch Hazel) and *Daphne bholua* 'Jaqueline Postill') all three having wonderful scent and for climbers one of the winter flowering Clematis such as *Clematis cirrhosa* 'Wisley Cream'.

Vegetables: As the soil warms up, particularly if cloches or polythene have been laid on the surface, it is the month to get

some early sowings of vegetables underway. Choose early varieties of crops such as lettuce, rocket, spring onions and later in the month leeks, parsnips, spinach, broad beans and peas. At the end of the month well chitted early varieties of potato such as Foremost and Pentland Javelin (Casablanca is a very early variety and RHS recommended) can be planted. Onion sets, shallots, and autumn sown brassicas (your own young plants or purchased from a garden centre) can now be planted. An alternative for shallots and onion sets is to start them off in modules and then plant out with a good root system and about 25-50 mm (1-2") of new foliage. This avoids birds pecking out the newly planted sets.

Lawns: this is the month that provided the surface is dry the lawn will benefit from a good rake and brush and then lightly topped with the mower if the ground/surface is sufficiently dry. Take the opportunity to tidy up ragged or weedy lawn edges. A smart edge to the lawn helps to identify and show off the border.

Finally, do not forget wildlife in our gardens. A bird box, bee and insect 'hotels', and plants to encourage pollinators are useful additions to the garden. Another option is to choose a wildlife seed mixture for a corner of the garden/allotment or even a large pot.

Nick Rigden

VOLUNTEER DISTRIBUTOR REQUIRED TO DELIVER QUANTOCK MESSENGERS IN MILL LANE

If you can help each month for less than an hour,
please contact Richard (732412)



Registered Charity No 1181213
WWW.THOMASPOOLELIBRARY.CO.UK

We are delighted that we now have a brand-new, top-of-the-range coffee machine in the recently reorganised Café area of the library! This isn't just any coffee machine – it's an all-singing, all-dancing marvel, so whether you're a coffee connoisseur, a tea lover, or just craving a comforting cup of hot chocolate, we've got something to tickle your taste buds!

Drop in during our opening hours and try out the new machine, Bring your friends, meet new people, or take a quiet moment to yourself and enjoy your drink in your local library's warm and welcoming atmosphere!

 Are you interested in finding out more about your family history? We have two computers that are available for you to use during Library opening hours. As a library member, you have free access to Ancestry.co.uk which unlocks one billion searchable UK family history records so if you fancy delving into your family history, then come along and explore.

**** WHAT'S ON ****

STORYTIME - Mondays (except bank holidays), 11am to 11.30am. Aimed at babies and toddlers, Join us for a fun half hour of stories and nursery rhymes.

CHESS TIME - Thursdays, 5pm to 6.30pm. Learn the basics, discover new moves and have fun!

KNIT AND NATTER - Fridays, 10.30am to 12 noon. All ages and abilities are welcome! Just bring your own project which could be knitting,

sewing, crochet, embroidery etc. or just come for a natter and see what others are working on. It's a terrific way to get inspired, pick-up new tips and make new friends.

SECOND HANDBOOK SALES IN "THE SHED" - Saturdays, 10.30am to 1pm. We have a wide range of good condition fiction, non-fiction, and children's books. All donations contribute to the running costs of the library

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS – 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am to 12.30pm. No experience necessary and all equipment provided

MONTHLY TALKS

Our library monthly talks are held in the library every second Wednesday of the month. Start time is 7.30pm and bookings are required. Entrance fees are £3.50 for members and £4.50 for non-members:

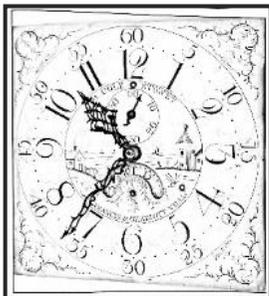
Wednesday 9th April - "Photographing horse sport at the Olympics." A talk by Kit Houghton

Wednesday 14th May – A book launch of "The Nature of the Quantocks" by local author Nigel Phillips

OPENING HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, 10am to 1pm, Thursday 3.30pm to 6.30pm,
Friday 10am – 1pm and 2pm – 5pm, Saturday 10am -1pm

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!



“YESTERDAYS.....IN NETHER STOWEY”

In the Old Gaol on The Cross

On display in the Old Gaol through

March and April

James ‘Conjuror’ Cole – Nether

Stowey Clockmaker

The Latest from the Cricket Club



I know it's only February, but preparations and plans are already being made to make sure that we are ready for the new cricket season. With this in mind, we are holding a signing on evening for any budding cricketers (Under 13 or Under 11) at Over Stowey Village Hall on February 6th between 5.30pm-7.30pm. If you miss this opportunity, then please contact our Head Coach, Warren Bond on 07540619007 for further details.

Youth training will be held at our Marsh Mills Ground on Tuesday evenings between 6pm-7.30pm and starts on Tuesday 21st April. Prior to that, some indoor nets have been arranged at Quantock school on the 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th March which are all Friday evenings between 6pm-7.30pm. We also plan to give the pavilion a spruce up on Saturday 18th April from 1pm onwards so if you are able to help it would be greatly appreciated.

On the subject of equipment, we have serviced all of the grass cutting machinery and there are plans to have a working party at the ground to help our groundsman Mark get things ready for the coming season (further details to follow).

On the playing side, we will be fielding two senior sides again this season, our 1stXI will be playing in Division 1 under the captaincy of Kieran Barrow (07932699224) and our 2nd XI will be in Division 3, having been promoted last season, and will be led by Mark Sortwell(07969207770).

We, as a club, are always looking for new players of all abilities and if you are at all interested, please contact the captains on the numbers above.

If league cricket is not your thing, and you prefer a shorter format, we do run a mid- week friendly XI run by Hayden Langlois (07361859378) games are usually on a Thursday evening and the emphasis is very much centred on the social aspects of the game!!

Finally ,if you want to keep up with all matters concerning Over Stowey CC then please visit our Facebook page or log on to the West Somerset Cricket League.

We look forward to seeing you at our lovely Marsh Mills Ground in the coming season.

Over and Out



As the Parish Council did not meet in January and the February meeting will have been held after the deadline for submissions to the Messenger there is very little to report.

Following a short cold spell (unusual in this current cycle of wet weather) it was discovered that the rock salt in the grit bin in Hack Lane was unusable. This has been rectified and there are also small bags available should we experience any cold

weather before the drier, warmer days appear (always hopeful).

If you require any during icy conditions, please contact the Clerk who will give you details on how to obtain them.

The Clerk vacancy is still open and the Clerk has agreed to continue in the role on an extended notice period, until a replacement is found. The role is varied and interesting and if someone would like to take this opportunity on, the existing Clerk would be very happy to job-share or shadow someone for an extended period of time to ensure that the new Clerk is confident with the workings of a small Parish Council, with additional training provided free of charge.

If you feel that this is something you might like to consider but are unsure if you have the relevant qualifications or experience, please contact the Clerk to discuss further. If you would like to apply for this position, please see the Parish Council website for more information

<https://overstoweparishcouncil.gov.uk/news/parish-clerk-vacancy/>

There is also a vacancy for a Parish Council member. There has been some interest in this role and hopefully a new councillor will have been appointed by the time of publication.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18th of March 2026. Please see the noticeboard and website for details.

If you have any concerns or issues you would like to bring to the attention of the Parish Council, please contact the Clerk. If you provide your full contact details, we can then ensure appropriate and relevant items raised are on the agenda for the next meeting.

Problems on the highways can be reported online at [Fix My Street](#) or on the Somerset Council web page [Report A Problem on the Road](#)

Please report any missed waste collections at [Missed Waste Collection](#) if you do not get a satisfactory response, please contact the Clerk.

If you experience any problems when using a footpath or bridleway, you can inform the Clerk or access the online reporting tool at [Somerset Council – Report A Problem With a Public Right of Way](#)

Website: [Over Stowey Parish Council](#)

Email: clerk@overstoweyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Phone: 07391 313740 (please leave a message if there is no reply)

NETHER STOWEY & FIDDINGTON W.I.



At our meeting on 12th February, Brian Wright enlightened us with more stories behind well-known nursery rhymes. Some of them date back to the 1600's and a lot of them are quite dark and sinister really, which would now be seen as traumatising children. They were written to let people know what was happening politically and historically, and as many people couldn't read then the reciting or singing of these verses was letting them know what was happening in their world. It was rather like using a sort of code really.

"Humpty Dumpty" was the name of a canon which was used by the Royalists against the Parliamentarians in 1648 during the English Civil War at the siege of Colchester. The Royalists had mounted Humpty Dumpty on a church tower, but the tower was bombarded by the opposing side and collapsed - hence "the

great fall" that Humpty Dumpty suffered.

"Little Jack Horner" did actually exist. He was a steward to the last Abbott of Glastonbury. In 1543 he stole the Deeds to Mellis Manor which he was supposed to be delivering to Henry VIII during the dissolution of the monasteries. The Abbott was trying to bribe the King with 12 manors, in order to save his Abbey.

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary" is reputed to be Mary, Queen of Scots, (Bloody Mary). "How does your garden grow?" could be referring to the graves of the Protestants she had executed and the "silver bells" were thumbscrews - a popular form of torture at the time!

"Jack and Jill" could be referring to the attempts by king Charles I to reform the taxation of liquid measures used at the time. But, it could also mean King Louis XVI of France (Jack), who was executed in 1793 and his queen, Marie Antoinette (Jill), who met a similar fate at the Guillotine the following year.

So, it can be seen that nursery rhymes can be open to interpretation and possibly used as a PR tool, as each nursery rhyme has many versions. Some of them should be taken with a pinch of salt, but nevertheless they are quite amusing and informative. As we read them to our children and grandchildren, I'm sure they just enjoy the illustrations and tunes, and the sinister meanings just don't enter their imagination. Only adults see the darker side.

Our next meeting on 12th March will be our AGM, thereafter we will continue with our 2026 programme, starting in April with a talk by a retired Police Officer. Other topics through the year will include Search & Rescue, Goats on the Gorge, a talk on legal matters such as Tax, Wills & Power of Attorney, a trip to Sidmouth in July, a Cream Tea in August, Christmas shopping trip in

November, and finally our Christmas party in December. Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month, from 2.00 - 4.00 in the Church Centre. Entrance is £1.50 and £4.00 for visitors, which includes refreshments and a raffle.

AB

News From the Quantock Medical Centre

We will be running a Gentle Seated Exercise Class at the Practice from Monday 16th March 2026. It will be run by our Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP) Coach 'SJ'.

It will be every Monday starting at 12.45 (do come in a little earlier to get settled)

The Class will allow you to try something new with a view to accessing other local activities.

The class will be free to take part and will be limited to 8 people per session, on a 6 week rotational basis.

If you would like to join in please contact the Practice on 01278 732696.

Our SASP Coach 'SJ', works with our patients to inspire and enable positive life choices through sport & physical activity. They provide accessible opportunities locally for all ages and abilities and support those who are least active.

If you feel that you are ready to make a positive change in your lifestyle to improve your health for your future ,please do contact your surgery book an appointment with a Health Coach they work in all Practices across Bridgwater.

For more information check out their website

<https://www.sasp.co.uk>

Helen Stacey Practice Manager

A round up of the latest news from Hinkley Point C.

Successful Testing of Acoustic Fish Deterrent

Sea trials carried out by Swansea University have shown that an acoustic fish deterrent developed for Hinkley Point C is highly effective.

The innovative use of ultrasound technology has been shown to keep target fish species away from the power station's water intakes.



Hinkley Point C is the first power station on the Severn with protections for fish built into its design. The systems will give Hinkley Point C more fish protection than any other power station in the world and will cost more than £700m. This will help protect the internationally important Severn estuary.



Scan the QR code to read more on our website



Apprenticeship



To date, the project has created more than 1,700 apprenticeship opportunities, supporting people at every stage of their career journey.

Apprenticeships remain central to our commitment to developing a highly skilled workforce, providing a wide range of training routes that help individuals learn, grow and build long-term careers.

A strong focus on local engagement means that 70% of our apprentices come from across the South West, supported through close partnerships with schools and regional training providers.

Notes from Nether Stowey Parish Council



Hopefully by the time this edition comes out it will have stopped raining, but as I write (on 12 February) it's still pretty miserable. Nether Stowey seems to have been spared the worst and the Council are grateful to Sam and Pete and GWB Services for keeping the brook clear of debris, as well as those residents who have looked after those near their houses.

At the meeting on 9 February the Parish Council awarded grants to the Wednesday Club and West Somerset Citizens Advice. I was also able to report that Highways have agreed to put warning signs on the A39 between the traffic lights to warn motorists of pedestrians crossing. We hope that will make it a bit safer. The Council are aware that, despite the 40mph speed limit, many drivers go faster but despite our pleas there is never any enforcement.

From time to time we receive anonymous correspondence. In general we can't do anything with such letters since we cannot go back to you for further information. Equally we cannot tell you what we have done or who to contact if it is not a Parish Council responsibility. We treat all correspondence, whether by letter or by e-mail or even by phone in the strictest confidence, and would not pass on your details without your consent, unless required by the law. So if you want something done, or you need help with something, please put your name and contact details so we can follow up with you.

We are in the process of reviewing our website in terms of content accessibility. If you struggle with any part of our website, or documents on it, please let me know, so we can fix

the problem and/or provide a document in a better format for your needs. We cannot always help with content supplied from outside the Council, but we will try where we can modify the original.

The Parish Council are still looking for two new members by co-option. If you would like to make a difference to the community, please contact me or see the information on our website at <https://netherstowey-pc.gov.uk/your-parish-council/vacancies-and-co-option>.

The next Parish Council meeting is on Monday 9 March at 7 pm at the Church Centre.

Caro Slaymaker

Clerk to the Parish Council

Tel: 01278 733779 or e-mail: clerk@netherstowey-pc.gov.uk

Website : www.netherstowey-pc.gov.uk

Ragu Bolognese

Pretty much everybody has their version of a «Spag Bol » as a go to evening meal. Having worked in Italian kitchens, I am afraid to say that there is no such dish in Italy. They have a dish called «ragu bolognese » and is not served with spaghetti but with a flat and wide pasta such as tagliatelle, pappardelle or even short tube pasta such as penne or even orecchiette. All the types of pasta are designed to « hold » the sauce. Also, the pasta is always added to the sauce, along with a little of the



pasta cooking water to loosen the sauce and mix through. This is not the "cow pat" style of serving that we generally see in Britain or even in France ..make of that what you will. Then serve with grated Parmesan, Grana Padano or Pecorino.

There is no true « Ragu » recipe. Here is a recipe given to me by a true Italian Nonna*. I love it. You will need some time. Approx 2-3 hours of cook time. Nonna cooked her Ragu for 3.5 -4 hours. Please don't be alarmed at the addition of a glass of milk. It helps soften the meat and bring the dish together. It's also fantastic with gnocchi (see previous QM recipe)

Also feel free to add a dried old Parmesan rind, they add so much depth of flavour. I never throw them away and add to any Italian soup, minestrone, ribellita etc.

Ingredients - Serves 4

- 1 medium diced carrot
- 1 stick of celery diced
- 1 medium onion dice
- 2 cloves of garlic minced
- 200g beef mince
- 200g pork mince
- 50g pancetta or streaky bacon diced
- 200ml full fat milk
- 150ml red wine
- 500ml chicken stock
- 1/4 tube of tomato purée
- 100ml olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 large sprig of rosemary

Method

- Heat the olive oil in a heavy bottomed pan and add the diced vegetables, pancetta or bacon along with the garlic.
- Gently sweat down for about 10minutes, occasionally stirring so they do not stick. We don't want any colour on them.
- Once the diced vegetables and pancetta have cooked for about 10-12 minutes, add your minced pork and beef. Cook for a few minutes until browned
- Add the tomato purée, cook again for a few minutes until the redness has gone. Add the glass of red wine, turn up the heat a touch and bubble to reduce.
- Add the chicken stock, a sprig of rosemary, salt and pepper.
- Place a tight-fitting lid and gently simmer (and I mean gently ... just an occasional blip from the sauce) for 2.5 hours. Check every now and then. Don't let the sauce go dry. Add a few drops of water if need be.
- After 2.5 hours, add the milk. Cook for a further 30 minutes. Now you should have a lovely thick sauce.
- Bring a large pan of salted water to boil. Following the directions on the packet, cook your preferred pasta. When « al denté »** place the pasta into the sauce along with a tablespoon of the pasta water to loosen the sauce.
- Grate over parmesan and serve.

*Nonna is grandmother in Italian and is generally the guardian of recipes passed down from generations

** al dente means literally "to the tooth" but means an ideal texture of pasta that is cooked to be firm but tender. Not soft and mushy!

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Nature of the Quantocks Conference

Date – March 21st

Time- 10am to 4.30pm

Location– Stogursey, Victory Hall

Eventbrite link - <https://>

NatureoftheQuantocksConference.eventbrite.co.uk to book your place.

The Nature of the Quantocks Conference brings together a team of people involved in the conservation and protection of the Quantocks and the wildlife you can find on it. The conference is free to all and is brought to you by the Friends of the Quantocks charity who own 400 acres of the Common and will share about their own conservation work over the last year, including the project that led to the re-discovery of the rare and elusive **White-letter Hairstreak butterfly**, after a gap of 18 years and the planting of over 400 disease resistant elm. They will also be sharing a number of ways in which you can get personally involved in conservation work, **could you be a species champion?**

You will hear from local naturalist and wildlife author Nigel

Philips, who will share from his new book **“The Nature of the Quantocks”**, (the book will be available on the day and Nigel on hand to sign your copy). We also have author Aidan Meighan, who will be sharing some “tree folklore” and on hand to sign his new book the **“folklore of trees”**.

There will also be talks on the rare **Lesser-spotted Woodpecker** and the **heathland birds** nesting just feet away from the paths you walk on. In addition, you will hear about an important scientific research project starting this year on our local **Adder population**.

National landscape manager Iain Porter will also be sharing about the management plan for the hills over the coming years, whilst Paul Rutter will talk about the importance of **wildlife corridors** and Fiona Jackson & Beth Riches on how **community projects** can play their part in conservation and nature recovery.



<https://friendsofthequantocks.org/update/nature-of-the-quantocks-conference-2026/>



Annual Church meetings

Each year, like other organisations, our churches hold an Annual Meeting often referred to as the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM). All are welcome to attend the meetings to hear about the work of the church in the last twelve months and what is ahead.

The meeting for Over Stowey Church is on Sunday 12th April at 10:30am in the Church after the morning service at 9:30am and for Nether Stowey Church is on Sunday 19th April at 12noon in the Church Centre after the morning service at 11:00am.

To be able to vote at the meeting, you need to be on the relevant Church's Electoral Roll both of which are being revised in preparation for the meeting. If you are on the Electoral Roll, you do not need to do anything. However, if you would like your name to be added, or removed - for Over Stowey Church, please contact Peter and Jean Higginson, Bincombe Tops, tel: 732102 by Tuesday 24th March at the latest. For Nether Stowey Church please contact Kerry Trout, 2 Bishop Road, tel: 732112 by Tuesday 31st March. Alternatively, for either church, please contact the Benefice Office – 01278 732855.

The new Electoral Rolls will be published on Friday 27th March (OS) and Thursday 2nd April (NS), in the church and Church Centre porches, and will be available there for inspection until the APCM. If you would like a copy, please contact the Benefice Office.

CHURCH SERVICES – MARCH 2026

	NETHER STOWEY	OVER STOWEY
1st March Lent 2	9.30am Holy Communion at Over Stowey Church 11.00am Benefice Morning Worship Service at Nether Stowey Church Centre	
8th March Lent 3	11.00pm Holy Communion (Church)	9.30am Morning Worship
15th March Lent 4 Mothering Sunday	11.00am Morning Worship for Mothering Sunday (Church Centre)	9.30am Morning Worship for Mothering Sunday
22nd March Lent 5	11.00am Holy Communion (Church)	No Service
29th March Palm Sunday	11.00am Morning Worship (Church Centre)	6.30pm Evensong

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 14th March
ST. MARY'S CHURCH CENTRE
10.30am – 12.00noon

Dear All,

As I travel around the Benefice, I see the first signs of spring beginning to make their way through the squelchy ground. Clusters of daffodils at the roadside, with crocuses nearby peeping through the sodden soil, giving us hope of better weather.

With the coming of spring, we find ourselves in the season of Lent and the days and weeks leading to the great celebration of Easter, which this year is on Sunday 5th April.

In the middle of Lent we celebrate Mothering Sunday which is on Sunday 15th March this year. Please look out for services over the weekend which will offer opportunities to give thanks for our mothers and those who are or have been 'mum' to us. Later in the month, on Sunday 29th March, we will remember Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey with the waving of palm branches, and there will be palm crosses to collect from the churches. Later in the week, on 2nd and 3rd April we will welcome Bishop Michael to the Benefice as he walks the Coleridge Way. Hopefully, he will join us for our Maundy Thursday service and the Walk of Witness starting at the top of Nether Stowey Mount on Good Friday at 10am. Please come along and meet the Bishop.

As we look forward to warmer weather and longer days, may we find hope in travelling through Lent to the great celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Day!

Eleanor



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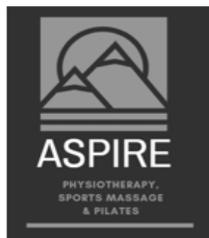
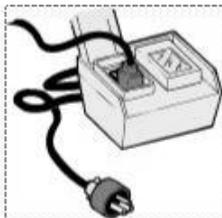
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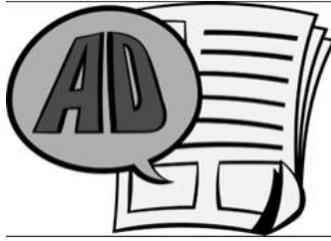
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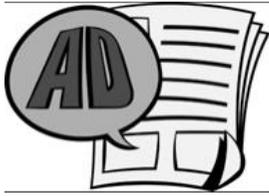
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