

FEBRUARY 2026



QUANTOCK
For Nether Stowey & Over Stowey

Messenger 50p



Nether Stowey
Primary school
artwork on
display in the
library. Article
on page 12.



Front Cover: The Wednesday Club Christmas party / Stowey Walking Group Christmas walk around Cannington followed by lunch in the Great Hall at Blackmore Farm

FEBRUARY 2026

Happy New Year everyone and our best wishes for a healthy and happy 2026.

During the last few months we have experienced many bitterly cold and icy days, so we hope that you have been able to keep warm and safe during this time. Hopefully February will bring some warmer weather!

This edition has many informative articles so we hope you enjoy reading it.

Best wishes from the QM team

Your Quantock Messenger Team

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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 helenmboyles@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: nsshorthmatbowls@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** 01278 733779 clerk@netherstowey-pc.gov.uk Clerk: **Amanda McMurren** 01278 734689 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

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

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

Notes from the Quantock Medical Centre

I would firstly like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year and Thank you for all your Christmas cards, kind wishes and treats at Christmas which were greatly appreciated.

We will be joining the Thomas Poole Library on Thursday 29th January 10am – 12 to support anyone who is interested in using their NHS App or applying for their NHS APP. If you would like to have access to the NHS APP do pop along to the Medical Centre and ask for an application form and bring along some ID a Driving Licence or Passport or utility bill and we will help set this up for you.

Our Patient Group will be meeting at the Nether Stowey Library on Thursdays at 10 am on: 12th March, 11th June, 10th September, 10th December. You are very welcome to come along and join us, feel free to ask any questions about your local health services or what's happening in the area, the more the merrier.

Thank you for your responses to our regular Friends and family test questions following your appointment at the practice we do appreciate your feedback and try and act on any suggestions where we can make improvements and where funding allows.

Over the last year we have updated several chairs in the waiting area and in the clinical rooms as requested. We have tried to improve the décor to be brighter and more modern and added music to help distract from being overheard on reception.

Unfortunately, one of the key themes which we find hard to accommodate is to open the dispensary window all day. We would struggle to do this due to the need to significantly increase our manpower in dispensary to accommodate this, which would be a huge cost to the practice. Currently the window is closed for certain times of the day to allow for ordering and replacing stock, as well as making up peoples requests for medication (we provide over 10,000 items every month), we need to avoid interruptions during these times to ensure mistakes are not made from a patient safety point of view. We are hopeful in time with additional funding we will be able to support this request.

We often get conflicting requests such as to have more patient information available and that we have too much information available. If there is anything you can not find do please ask at reception and we are happy to search for this for you.

We have launched a Facebook page for patient information and patient notices and hope patients will find this helpful.

We have a few staff changes at the Practice, we will be sad to say goodbye to Ali in dispensary in February, and Jacqui one of our Long-Term Condition Nurses in March, we hope to find good replacements to join the team as soon as possible to ensure we maintain our excellent patient care.

Helen Stacey Practice Manager

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

£20 Ken Popham £10 Kerry Ellicot £5 Wendy Hill

£20 Amelia Bushall £10 Kerry Ellicot £5 Henry Barrow

Dates for your diary

6th April - Easter Bingo at Over Stowey village hall

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



50-50 LOTTERY DRAW

December 2025 Draw

1st Prize	£33.00	Ticket No: 52	G Neal
2nd Prize	£16.50	Ticket No: 21	E Bridge
3rd Prize	£9.90	Ticket No: 48	P Rowe
4th Prize	£6.60	Ticket No: 161	D Penny

www.stowey.org.uk

Jane Erksine, Trustee 732025

Sharon Mayell, Treasurer 732311

PLAYING FIELD LOTTERY

Congratulations to the winners for December and January and
thank you for your continued support.



50-50 LOTTERY DRAW

January 2026 Draw

1st Prize	£33.00	Ticket No: 217	R Sedgewick
2nd Prize	£16.50	Ticket No: 35	M Hogg
3rd Prize	£9.90	Ticket No: 347	J Davison
4th Prize	£6.60	Ticket No: 30	H Piper

www.stowey.org.uk

Jane Erksine, Trustee 732025

Sharon Mayell, Treasurer 732311

Notes from Nether Stowey Parish Council



The Parish Council agreed the budget and precept for the next financial year (from 1 April 2026). Despite increasing costs all over, and the extra services that we have taken over from Somerset Council, we have found a way to reduce the budget, saving an average household about £12 per year. We have done this by careful management, and by successfully applying for grants to meet costs that would otherwise have come from the budget. The Parish Council are conscious that money is tight for everyone and we hope that this will go a small way to help offset the big increase that Somerset Council are hoping to put on their Council Tax.

As we approach the end of the financial year, it's a good time to remind local organisations and groups that the Parish Council set aside funds each year to provide grants to support you. We still have funds left to be awarded before the end of March. If your group needs support please think about applying. The deadline is 28 February. To qualify you must show how your group or organisation benefits the area or the residents of the Parish. You do not need to be a registered charity but usually your organisation must generally be open to anyone to anyone to join, although there are certain exceptions. If you think you would like to apply but need advice, please give me a ring or drop in for a chat, otherwise the application form and guidance are available at <https://netherstowey-pc.gov.uk/your-community/local-organisations-and-activities> on our website or available from the office. There is a finite pot of funds, so qualifying grants are offered on a "first come, first served" basis.

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.](https://netherstowey-pc.gov.uk/your-parish-council/vacancies-and-co-option)

The next Parish Council meeting is on Monday 9 February 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

SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

The Nether Stowey Short Mat Bowls Club held its Christmas Lunch at the Church Centre in December. It was a good turnout and the club also held its singles and doubles competition finals.

The singles final was won by Stuart Harris and the runner up was Paul Binding. The doubles final was won by Stuart Harris & Mark Howells and the runners up were Liz Grandfield & Keith Edwards.



NETHER STOWEY CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

The children of Nether Stowey CE VC Primary School took part in National Tree Week between 24th – 28th November 2025.

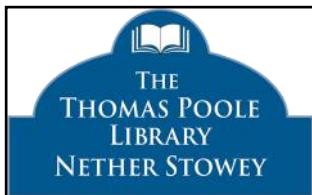
Over the week each class spent time learning about their class namesake (Oak, Holly, Willow, Maple, Beech) and presented it to the rest of the school on the final day. They created lots of different pieces of art to teach others about their class tree. Some of which you can see in The Thomas Poole Library (photos on page 2).

We teamed up with Stowey Green Spaces and planted some saplings on Bypass Woods, we look forward to seeing how they grow over the forthcoming years.

The oldest and the youngest children went to Woodlands Play Centre to take part in a whole day of forest school activities. The other children went for a village walk, where Stowey Green Spaces provided us with some knowledge of the local trees and we took part in a tree hunt.

It was a very educational and exciting week with lots of learning.

Terry Luke



The Thomas Poole Library would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year and thank you for all of your support.

2026 has started off a little colder than last year so a reminder that the library is registered as a Warm Welcome Space during opening hours. We have hot drinks available and a warm and safe place for you to go. All are welcome!

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

FREE IT SUPPORT SESSIONS - First Wednesday of the month, 10am - 12noon. Smartphones, laptops, tablets - if you have a query or a problem, come along and speak to our knowledgeable volunteers for help and reassurance!

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.

BOOK GROUP – Enjoy reading? Come and join the Library Reading Group - all are welcome! This is a fun, low key reading group that meets in the library 2.30pm - 3.30pm on the last Friday of each month.

MONTHLY TALKS

There will be no talks during February, our next talk will be in March

Wednesday 11th March 7.30pm - WW2 Chart Makers in Somerset
- a talk by Adrian Webb

Wednesday 18th March 7.30pm - Book Launch of 'Daughters of the Sea' by Gerry Wright

Gerry Wright has, at last, written a book about her life growing up afloat with her sisters and sailing across the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean sea as qualified bo'sun and navigator: a memoir called *Daughters of the Sea*.

Sailing the family's sturdy 50ft ketch with "Captain Cook's instruments along Christopher Columbus's route", there was no satnav, no telephone, just a compass, sextant, paper charts, ample provisions and 100 gallons of water.

This memoir is a saga of delights, lazy sailing days, mid-Atlantic swims and celebrations; of adversity, storms and disaster. It delivers a unique story of optimism and resilience.

She is pleased to launch the book in Nether Stowey on Wednesday 18th March, 7.30pm, at the Thomas Poole Library, offering an opportunity to buy a signed copy at a discount, if desired. All proceeds will go to support the RNLI.

For those who would like a signed copy but unable to be at the Library, there will be a second opportunity at St Mary's Church Centre with the coffee morning on Saturday 11th April from 10.30am.

LIBRARY 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!



Much of the work carried out by **Stowey Green Spaces Group** is routine, cutting back brambles, improving and keeping open footpaths, and checking planted trees and removing tree guards when appropriate. However, in the last three months the Group has been involved with the Primary School and has also started work on improving the "Zombie Ponds" of Stowey Wood.

National Tree Week is in the last week of November and heralds the start of the winter tree planting season and last year the Primary School was anxious for pupils to become involved, as part of their environmental studies, and also to learn about Groups active in Nether Stowey as well. The Group cleared an area in the A39 Bypass Wood between the old Village Hall and the Church Centre and Taunton Midweek Volunteers then spent a day digging out most of the bramble roots to give the young trees a good start. Group members provided young trees and Castle street residents the spades (see Photo) for Maple class to spend a happy hour or so planting the trees complete with tree guards. The following day some 90 pupils walked through the wood from the old Village Hall to the Church Centre, viewing the new planting, identifying tree species, and being surprised by how many trees there were in such a small area. Their walk continued to the



footpath behind the Medical Centre where they marvelled at the size of the oaks which are some 100 years old or more, before inspecting Plot 173 and returning to the school via the Holm Oaks on the corner of Castle street and Mount road.

There are three almost derelict (or Zombie) ponds at the west end of Stowey Wood, and the Group had been unsure whether they should or could be rejuvenated. However, thanks to a grant from the Wessex Water Environment Fund enabling a survey by Somerset Wildlife Trust, it was apparent that rejuvenation is possible and desirable.

The first stage is to finish the work already started, clearing the bramble and blackthorn so that if a grant can be obtained diggers will have access in the autumn to the ponds, and can then excavate some 1 to 2 metres of leaf litter that has accumulated over the decades. There is much still to be decided, especially disposal of the litter, but it is currently planned to first excavate the pond nearest the entrance, followed by the one furthest away, and to use the small in-between pond to take some of the litter and become part of the woodland, a process already taking place.

Complete rejuvenation will require the digging out of the litter, but it is probable that just clearing much of the surrounding scrub will improve light access to the ponds, could encourage new inhabitants. It is of interest that photographs show the area being cleared was originally grass as recently as 2000.

The pile of wood chippings in the Dutch barn has now been spread along various parts of Stowey Wood footpaths in an effort to improve winter access. A lot of hard work because of the distance and weight to be carried, and members of the Saturday Group deserve considerable praise for their efforts.

Terry Abbiss

Nick's Gardening Notes

February 2026



When we get into February, longer days, the spring and warmer weather do not seem so very far away, and we should be planning for the coming season. However, this month and March can still produce some unwelcome weather (frosts, rain and strong winds) it is always better to keep off wet soil and avoid compacting it. Early sowings and planting can be tempting but if your soil is cold and too wet germination and growth will be disappointing. It is often better to raise plants in containers and plant out a young plant with a good quality root system when conditions improve. Some jobs such as winter digging, general border maintenance and pruning may have fallen behind and they should be completed providing ground conditions are suitable.

Vegetables: One of the advantages of raised beds in the vegetable garden (traditional or no dig) is that drainage is generally better and you are working from the paths rather than standing on the soil. Covering with black polythene or cloches will help to warm the soil and allow early sowings of broad beans, peas and early carrots to germinate more successfully. Lettuce and salad leaves are also worth sowing under a cloche or fleece. Make sure that the varieties chosen are suitable for early sowing otherwise summer varieties tend to 'bolt' i.e. run up to seed. Seed potatoes should be purchased, and the tubers placed in egg boxes or seed trays to 'chit'. It is a good idea to check through your old seed packets. Carrots and parsnip quickly lose their viability especially if the packet has been opened and it is better to start with fresh seed. Peas, beans and lettuce should be fine even after two or three years. Old yellowing leaves on overwintering brassicas should be removed and composted.

The plot that is going to grow brassicas (cabbage, sprouts, cauliflower, kale, etc) may benefit from a dressing of lime. This helps to raise the pH of the soil creating more alkaline conditions which the brassica family like.

Propagation: utilising a propagator, it is a good month to start chilli

peppers and tomatoes and cucumbers if they are to be planted in the greenhouse. For outdoor tomatoes it is better to wait until next month. Sweet peas can be sown in containers as can hardy annuals which if sown in modules develop a good root system ready for planting out and ahead of those sown directly in the soil later in March and April.

Pruning: Complete any pruning of tree and soft fruit that is still outstanding, and it is a good month to carry out any renovation pruning of old shrubs including out of control climbers. Hard pruning may cause loss of flower in the first year but it does allow the shrub to be rejuvenated and re-shaped. Shrubs that flower late in the season such as *Buddleja davidii*, *Lavatera* and *Hydrangea* can be pruned now. They benefit from being pruned hard to where dormant leaves/buds can be seen and the result will be strong new growths that will carry abundant flower in mid-late summer. Dormant *Wisteria* side-shoots can be pruned back to two or three buds. At the end of the month late flowering *Clematis* such as the *Viticella* and *Texensis* types can be pruned hard to encourage quality growth from the base. Late winter is a good time to prune hybrid tea, *floribunda* and shrub roses. Following their pruning it is sensible to apply a general fertilizer such as blood, fish and bone and a dressing of well decomposed compost/manure. This will help to condition the soil and provide nutrients to stimulate new growth.

Ornamentals: Summer flowering plants such as pelargoniums, begonias, antirrhinums, gazanias, lobelia can be raised in the warm from seed. Lenten hellebores will be starting to show their flower stems and old leaves can be cut off in order to see their flowers better. Once winter flowering heathers have finished blooming trim them lightly to prevent them becoming woody and leggy. The border will benefit from checking and removing early perennial weed growth such as dandelions, coarse grasses and seedling brambles. Lawn edges may have become a little ragged and achieving a good edge not only sets the lawn off but the border as well. It is a good month to visit gardens and enjoy snowdrops and winter borders particularly the coloured stems of *Salix* and *Comus* (willows and dogwoods).

Nick Rigden

NETHER STOWEY & FIDDINGTON W.I.



Mary's Meals - 8th January 2026

In 1992, two Scottish brothers - Magnus and Fergus MacFarlane-Barrow - were moved by the plight of civilians, particularly children, in war-torn former Yugoslavia. They decided to go and help people in those affected Balkan states, and set off with food and supplies in a Land Rover. Over the years, the Land Rover became a truck, the truck became a lorry, and the lorry became a pantechnicon. The brothers operated out of a shed in their garden, and after more than 30 years it is still the HQ of this world-wide organisation, so there is no big, glossy office to run and finance and overheads are kept to a minimum.

After a visit to Malawi in 2002, Magnus witnessed the poverty and deprivation that years of war and strife had on the population, but particularly affecting the children, who had little prospects of a better life. He thought that if you could feed and educate the younger generation, eventually they could perhaps attain that 'better life'. So, Mary's Meals was born.

Mary's Meals is a non-profit making charity which has set up a school feeding programme in some of the world's poorest communities where hunger and poverty prevent children from getting an education. His idea was simple - to give every child at least one hot meal a day along with schooling. This would encourage children to come to school, and parents to support the feeding and education of their children. There are many children who are orphans and for one reason or another are having to live on the streets. So for these children the prospect of a hot meal, along with learning, was a life-line.

The meals, which are Mary's Meals began by feeding just 200 children in Malawi in 2002, and since then have fed and educated 3 million world-wide. Their operation uses locally-sourced food where possible and the local community run the kitchens and cook

nutritious and have extra supplements where needed. The whole community, all volunteers, get involved, from growing and preparing the food to collecting firewood for the ovens. It takes about 5 hours for the whole process of making a meal for a child, which, astonishingly, costs just 10p per meal - £19.15p would feed a child for a year!

16 countries now carry out this work, ranging from the USA to as far as Madagascar, though mostly the greatest need is in Africa. The organisation has also set up mobile clinics, have built homes for abandoned children in Romania, and is sponsored by UNICEF.

A film shown by Ann and Jennifer from Mary's Meals showed what a difference having a regular decent meal can mean for a child. Across the globe people are finding different ways of raising money for Mary's Meals, from running marathons to an 11-year old boy who has refused birthday presents since he was 7 to use the money instead to feed less fortunate children.

2025 was a busy year for us, but there are one or two highlights worth mentioning.

In May 2025 we had a really lovely VE tea to celebrate and commemorate the ending of WW2 in Europe. The Church Centre looked beautiful and a choir entertained us with nostalgic songs. Other noteworthy events were visits from a female Wing Commander, how Village Agents work and an interesting demonstration of LASER printing.

In addition to our regular monthly meetings, we also had our popular coach trip to Sidmouth in July, a cream tea in August, and a trip to Cribbs Causeway in November for some Christmas retail therapy!

This year, our WI voted to support the "Bystanders Can be Life Savers" campaign. This demonstrates how people (bystanders) can help in so many ways when a difficult situation occurs. Even if you

cannot administer CPR you might be able to help simply by calling for medical help, letting family know of the situation or by keeping the victim in a safe environment by diverting traffic and the public away from the scene.

We aim to provide a wide range of topics for our members to enjoy.

Our WI membership is growing, but there is always room for more, so you'd be most welcome to come along and just try us out first before committing to join the WI.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Church Centre, from 2.00 - 4.00 pm and visitors would be most welcome. The cost is £1.50p for members and £4.00 for visitors. This includes refreshments and a raffle.

Our next meeting on 12th February will be a return visit from Brian Wright, who this time will be telling us about the origins of some Nursery Rhymes.

Ann Bass

THANK YOU FROM THE QUANTOCK QUILTING AND SEWING GROUP

Quantock Quilting and Sewing Group would like to extend their grateful thanks to everyone who kindly attended our recent Christmas Fayre at Nether Stowey Church Hall on the 22nd of November. It was an extremely successful day despite the dreadful weather. The club managed to raise

£450.00 for the **Alzheimer's Research UK** our chosen charity this year. A special thank you to Nether Stowey Church and their congregation, also to those of your readers who came to our event and supported our fund raising efforts.

Anna Boulton (Secretary)

Happy New Year everyone!

I have just come back from a short trip to

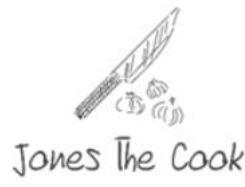
Paris, very nice, thanks for asking!

At Heathrow I had a quick snack of Welsh

Rarebit from a well-known outlet before tak-

ing the plane and it was awful!! So being a complete foodie, that led me to contemplate the difference between Rarebit and Croque Monsieur.

A Croque-Monsieur is a French bistro classic. A hot sandwich of white sliced bread ham, gruyere cheese with a white cheese bechamel sauce. Dijon mustard can be added for a tang of flavour. When both are made correctly, they are both simple and delicious. It's a fab lunch when served with bitter salad leaves.



Croque Monsieur – serves 2

Ingredients

- 200ml whole milk
- 20g plain flour
- 20g salted butter
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 4 slices of cooked ham
- 60g grated gruyere cheese
- Grated cheddar
- 4 slice of medium or thick white bread
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Salt and pepper

Method

- Into a saucepan on a medium heat add the butter and when melted add the flour and mix with a whisk to make a roux.
- Cook out the flour for a minute or so
- Now gradually add the milk, whisking as you go to prevent

- lumps forming
- After all the milk has been added, whisk in the mustard and season to taste and gently cook for about 5 minutes
- Take off the heat and put to one side
- Now place 4 slices of bread on a baking sheet and place under the grill until toasted
- Take the bread off the grill and place on a plate.
- Now turn 2 places of bread over and place on each a slice of ham and some gruyere cheese. Gently spoon on some white sauce.
- Place the other two slices of toasted bread uncooked side down on top of the other to create a sandwich
- Now add another slice of ham on top of each sandwich and more gruyere.
- Add the remaining white sauce as a topping with grated cheddar and place back into a preheated oven of about 180 degrees for about 12 mins until golden and bubbling.

Welsh Rarebit – serves 4

Ingredients

- 50g plain flour
- 50g salted butter
- 250ml strong ale (bitter)
- 250g grated strong cheddar
- 2 teaspoons English mustard
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 4 slices of granary bread

Method

- In a small saucepan, make a roux with the melted butter and flour
- Cook for a couple of minutes stirring all the time
- Now slowly add the ale, stirring until you have a smooth sauce

- Add the cheese and stir until thick
- Now add the mustard and the Worcestershire sauce
- Toast the bread, butter the toast and pile on the cheese sauce
- Put under a hot grill until nicely browned

Enjoy!

The Stowey Shuttle needs YOU!

Stowey shuttle is a local community car scheme, which provides car journeys at cost, or sometimes free, to its registered members. It is run entirely by volunteers who manage the scheme, receive and allocate requests for travel, and drive our passengers using their own cars.

Our drivers received a mileage allowance for each journey; we are supported by Somerset County Council and the Shuttle is linked the bus pass scheme.



Demand for our service is increasing, and we **URGENTLY** need more drivers.

If you can offer yourself and your car, or would just like to know more about what is involved, please ring our central number:

07943 923742

And speak to a coordinator.

Paul Brierley, on behalf of the committee of Stowey Shuttle.

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Come along, learn something new, and take your next step with tech!

Nether Stowey Wednesday Club

Join us every Wednesday (term Time)

St Marys Church Centre

10am-2pm

Coffee & Lunch at 12 noon



Raffle



Speakers & Crafts

We welcome all ages 70 + from surrounding villages

We look forward to welcoming newmembers both ladies and gents !

Pop in for a friendly chat meet the members

Contact Barbara 01278 732412 or Tina 07761586866

The Nether Stowey Wednesday Club, who meet at St Mary's Church Hall each Wednesday other than term time, currently has 2 vacancies for new members.

If you are interested or know an elderly relative or neighbour who may enjoy some company once a week give us a call.

Contact: Tina 07761586866 or Barbara 01278 732412



A season of talks and outings for 2026

- If you love gardens or gardening
- Enjoy hearing about or visiting beautiful gardens
- Want to pick up lots of tips or add to your garden knowledge
- Enjoy a social gathering of enthusiasts
- Like listening to experts on a wide variety of gardening subjects...

then come and join our monthly club!

We meet at the Church Centre, St. Mary's Street,
Nether Stowey. TA5 1LJ
every 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.00 for 7.30

Come as a visitor to try us out. £5 for a talk including tea/ coffee & cakes and there is a raffle and garden table too. Annual membership is £25. Car sharing available for visits.

Contact Kate Houghton, Secretary. Phone: 07940 836139 or
email: stoweygardeners@yahoo.com

website: <https://sites.google.com/site/stoweygardeners>

Our programme this year has included talks on a range of topics from Somerset plants to her Glorious gardens, and in detail those of Dunster Castle and the Newt, as well as further afield to Madeira. Groups of us have visited a variety of

gardens around Somerset, and a coachload went to the RHS Malvern spring show. And we've done brisk business at a plant sale outside the library at Nether Stowey.

Here are the details of the remaining events for the year: come and join us!

A reduced membership rate of £12.50 is available from July.

DIARY DATES FOR 2026	
19th February	Greg Morter - A Short History of Food Growing
19th March	Katherine Crouch - The Self-Seeded Garden



Nether Stowey Short Mat Bowls Club

Come and try Bowling at the Church Centre!

It's for all ages - the young and the not so young!

We meet on Tuesdays 2 - 5 pm

Come and try it out for free and then if you like it -

it's £4.00 for the afternoon

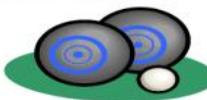
Phone Terry Binding on

01278 732710

Or email:

nsshortmatbowls@gmail.com

**New members
are more than welcome!**



2026 is set to be a pivotal and action-packed year for Hinkley Point C with progress and transformation across the construction site. Our top priority will be driving progress on Unit 1, with a strong focus on Mechanical, Electrical, and equipment installations. You'll see major milestones as more equipment is fitted into buildings whilst thousands of individual pipe sections will be installed. We will also be continuing to see progress on the second reactor with the installation of the Reactor Pressure Vessel later in the year.

Second Nuclear Reactor has arrived

The Reactor Pressure Vessel for Unit 2 arrived safely at the construction site last month.

The pressure vessel harnesses nuclear fission to make heat and steam for the world's largest turbines. Each one will power around 3 million homes around the clock. The high strength steel cylinder weighs in at 500-tonnes and is just 13-metres long.



The reactor was shipped from the Framatome Saint Marcel factory in France to Avonmouth Docks in Bristol, before being transported by barge to Combehill Wharf on the River Parrett in Somerset. The final journey was a six hour road trip for four miles by a transporter to the construction site.

Rotor delivery

We've received the first main-shaft component for the world's largest steam turbine.

The high and intermediate pressure rotor arrived last week from Arabelle Solutions in Belfort, France, and is now in the Unit 1 Turbine Hall.

With 13 sets of precision blades, the rotor will use high-pressure steam from the Reactor Building to spin at 1,500 revolutions per minute, driving electricity generation in the Stator.



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CHURCH SERVICES – FEBRUARY 2026

	NETHER STOWEY	OVER STOWEY
1st February Candlemas	11.00am Christingle Service for Candlemas (Church Centre)	4.00pm Evensong
8th February 2nd Sunday before Lent	11.00am Holy Communion (Church Centre) Baptism 12.30 in the Church	9.30am Morning Worship
15th February Sunday before Lent	11.00am Morning Worship (Church Centre)	9.30am Holy Communion
18th February Ash Wednesday Lent begins	7.00pm service for Ash Wednesday (Church Centre)	-
22nd February 1st Sunday of Lent	11.00am Holy Communion (Church Centre)	No Service

COFFEE MORNING
Saturday 14th February
ST. MARY'S CHURCH CENTRE
10.30am – 12.00 noon

Dear Everyone,

Where has the first month of 2026 gone, I ask myself!

Christmas is behind us – well almost, the Christmas season concludes on 2nd February with the Feast of Candlemas when we hear the story of Jesus being presented in the Temple. Our focus then turns from Christmas to Easter. With Easter being early this year, on Sunday 5th April, we move swiftly into Lent on Ash Wednesday on 18th February having eaten our pancakes the day before – Shrove Tuesday. There are services for Ash Wednesday at 11:00am in Holford Church and 7:00pm in Nether Stowey Church Centre. All are welcome.

2026 sees the start of the Diocesan year of a special focus on prayer. There will be opportunities to explore what prayer is and also different ways of praying throughout the Benefice; please look out for the logo.



If there are special things to pray for, please let me know. More information on what is happening around the Benefice and Deanery will follow throughout the year.

The new year also sees a new Deanery Mission Project. Last year it was the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance and many thanks to all who contributed in any way to raising money for this project. This year, our project is: When I needed a neighbour. The Salvation Army is helping the homeless in and around Minehead and as a Deanery we are joining in. For further information, please contact Margaret Tatham who is leading on this venture. Her email address is: mtatham0502@gmail.com.

I realise that we are well into the new year, but whatever 2026 onwards holds for you, my prayer is that you may know the peace and love of Christ in your hearts. Eleanor

CHURCH CONTACT POINTS

ST. MARY'S, Nether Stowey *with* ST. PETER & ST. PAUL, Over Stowey

Rector Revd. Eleanor King Tel: 734 777
The Rectory, 25 St Mary St, Nether Stowey TA5 1LJ
eleanor.king@hotmail.com

Readers Mrs Viv Chesterton, B.A. Tel: 733 568
3 Bishop Road, Nether Stowey TA5 1NP

Mrs Alison Hoare Tel: 732 350
2 Park Cottages, Over Stowey

Church Warden - Nether Stowey
Mr Nick Harrison Tel: 732 532
32 Old Farm Road, Nether Stowey, TA5 1PE

Church Warden - Over Stowey
Mr. Peter Higginson Tel: 732 102
Bincombe Tops, Over Stowey

Church Centre Contact:
Mrs. Barbara Beer Tel: 732 412

Church Centre Bookings:
Mrs. Pat Stacey Tel: 732 518

Benefice Office: Mrs Alison Hoare
Church Centre, 27 St. Mary Street,
Nether Stowey, TA5 1LJ

11am Office hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9am -
Closed Wednesday

Otherwise phone & leave a message or email Tel: 732 855
Email: qv.benefice@gmail.com

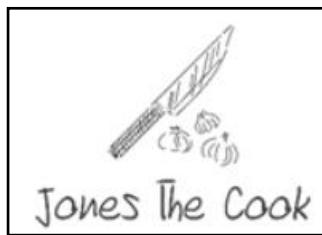
THANK YOU FROM THE QUANTOCK MESSENGER TEAM

Thank You to our Team of Volunteer Distributors, our Advertisers, our Contributors and everyone who has supported the Quantock Messenger in 2025.

We are pleased to tell you that donations have been made, from the magazine, to two local Clubs, a local Group and a local Charity.

Nether Stowey Football Club
Stowey Green Spaces Group
Over Stowey Cricket Club
Marion Everard Trust

On sale at The Thomas Poole Library and Post Office



The Quantock Messenger Cook Book

Including 45 recipes featured during 2024 & 2025
by Evan Jones, professional chef, former member of
the "College Culinaire de France".

The wall between St Mary's Churchyard and Stowey Court



In recent times, this boundary wall has needed repair with loose masonry occasionally falling to the ground. On one occasion, masonry fell near someone visiting a grave. Somerset Council, who are responsible for the upkeep of the churchyard itself, fenced off the area in response and the affected graves became inaccessible.

I am delighted to report that the wall has now been repaired, the fencing has been removed, and folk can again tend their loved ones' graves.

Repairs are costly, and we are very grateful to Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme for covering half the cost. A further donation came from the Lucy Hobbs Trust Fund which was restricted to use for churchyard maintenance. The remainder of the money was given by other donors. We are hugely grateful to all who contributed.

The excellent repair work was carried out by Cyril Harriss and his colleagues. We thank them for their skill and diligence in producing such a wonderful repair. Thank you.

Rev'd Eleanor

New website for the Quantock Views Project

A volunteer led photo archive project on the Quantock Hills has been given a new lease of life with the launch of a new website. The Quantock Views project was initiated and led by Keith Edwards, a volunteer with the National Landscape Team, in 2017 and since that time over 1,000 historic images of the Quantock Hills, its communities and landscapes, have been captured.



The project was set up to capture existing collections of photographs, postcards and paintings which are rarely seen and to gather together private collections and recollections, which may be in danger of being lost to the Quantock community.

Iain Porter, Manager of the Quantock Hills National Landscape Team, said 'It is great to see this volunteer led project with its new website, allowing people to explore the archive and see the Quantock Hills as it was 100 years ago. Completing this new website coincides with our Management Plan review and it has been great to see the historic changes across the Quantock Hills as we plan for the future.'

Anyone interested in the archive can view it online at www.quantockviews.com. We will shortly be looking to start collecting further images and if you are interested in volunteering in the project by helping to collect and archive pictures please contact the Team at quantockhills@somerset.gov.uk

The consultation on the draft Quantock Hills Management Plan is open until 31 December 2025 and further information can be found on the Quantock Hills National Landscape Team's website - [Management Plan 2026-2031 \(All\) | Quantock Hills](#)



The Cinnamon Trust needs more dog walking volunteers in Nether Stowey – TA5 postcode area

The Cinnamon Trust is the national charity whose wonderful volunteers help people over retirement age and those in the latter stages of a terminal illness by offering all kinds of free pet care. We are looking for dog walking volunteers to help a resident of Nether Stowey and their delightful dog who would love to go for a walk.

Many elderly or ill pet owners worry about their ability to provide proper care for their animals and start looking to rehome what may be their only companion. This is where our national network of dedicated volunteers step in to offer support enabling them to stay together. We'll walk the dog for a housebound owner, we'll foster pets when owners need hospital or hospice care, and even clean out the bird cage or litter trays.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, you can download our volunteer registration form from our web site www.cinnamon.org.uk or email us at appeals@cinnamon.org.uk If you would like to have a more in-depth chat about becoming a volunteer, please call us during office hours (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) on 01736 758 701, or you can check out our website www.cinnamon.org.uk for more details.

The Cinnamon Trust is a Registered Charity No: 1134680. The Cinnamon Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales. Registered Office: 10 Market Square, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 4HE. Company Number 07004861

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The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) is a charity working throughout the County. We believe everyone in Somerset should be able to live a healthy, independent, and safe life and be part of a strong and thriving community.

We have a team of over 60 Village Agents working across all corners of Somerset, who use their local expertise to advocate for people and their communities. They provide confidential, practical community-based solutions for you, wherever you are in Somerset.
Contact Sarah Bennett for more information - 01823 331222



Over Stowey Parish Council would like to send all good wishes for the coming year and are hoping and planning for a good and productive 2026.

The last meeting held was in December and as ever, many of the items on the agenda were with regards to highways. This included: Verge/hedge cutting, the cattle grid on the road to Crowcombe (which at that point had still not been fully emptied fully), sunken drains, blocked drains, potholes, road degradation and the leat wall.

The Clerk had already reported many of these issues and subsequently reported the new ones.

Unfortunately as many are not classed as urgent by the Highways Department, we will have to wait and see what works are actually undertaken. Cllr Caswell also reported that Somerset Council are looking closely at riparian rights with regards to ditches and the responsibilities of landowners.

The budget for 2026/2027 was agreed and the precept for the parish is based on this. The Parish Council have endeavored to keep the increase as low as possible. It was proposed and agreed that the precept be set at £10,000 for 2026/2027. This will mean an increase on an average Band D property of £1.41 per annum from 2025/2026.

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://overstoweyparishcouncil.gov.uk/news/parish-clerk-vacancy/>

There is also a vacancy for a Parish Council member. If you are interested, there is information on the website, or contact the Clerk on the email address below.

The Parish Council kindly request that as the bird nesting season starts again from the 1st March 2026, please could any landowner/property owners with a boundary that has hedging adjacent to or trees overhanging the highway ensure that these are cut back as soon as possible in the interests of safety to all road users. Many thanks to those who have already undertaken work, it is very much

appreciated.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18th of February 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)

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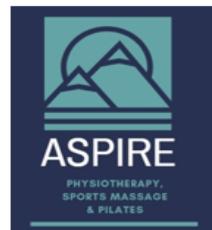
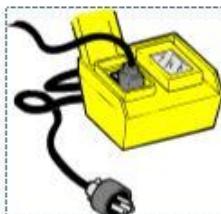
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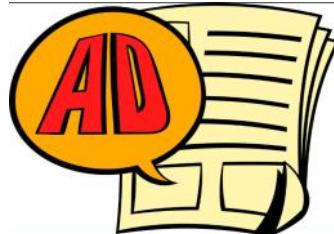
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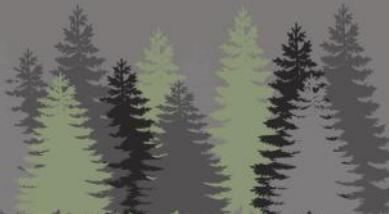


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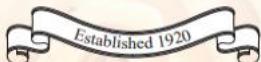
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