



# THE GOSSIP TREE

News & Views from the Parish of FONTMELL MAGNA

August  
2018  
Issue 294

*This issue is kindly sponsored by the Fontmell  
Magna & District Garden Club*

We are very pleased to have the opportunity to sponsor this month's edition of The Gossip Tree and tell you all – especially our new residents – a little bit about what we do and can offer as a community club.

We meet in the Village Hall each month except June and July for talks, social get together, AGM and a members' lunch. As a group we are affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society, and we receive their monthly magazine, which is available to members. We have a close relationship with Castle Gardens Nurseries in Sherborne: through the Club's membership of their Gold Club we receive discount on a number of their products, and in the Spring, we go there for a private discounted after-hours shopping evening.

You don't need to be an expert gardener but if you have an interest in your garden and want to learn more or seek advice, help is there. Our talks cover a very wide range of topics, and we aim to make them enjoyable. We always welcome members' suggestions on what you would like to hear about.

We organise an outing each year – in June we had a wonderful trip to Longstock Nursery and Water Gardens. We spent a glorious day there which included an



introduction to the gardens (see picture above) and a splendid lunch. Last year we visited Athelhampton House and Gardens and had the unexpected addition of a display of vintage cars. Visitors are welcome to any of our meetings, for a nominal fee of £2, so do come along and see for yourselves.

For more details please contact either Robert McCurrach (Chairman) on 812077 or Sue Keen (Secretary) on 812282

Just to inform you all that my mother, **Barbara Enderby**, peacefully passed away on Monday 16th July. The funeral will be on **Friday 10th August, at 2.00pm**, in St. Andrew's Church and afterwards in the Village Hall, for light refreshments. Family flowers only, but if you wish to make a donation, the proceeds will be split between the Blue Cross and the Alzheimer's Society. I look forward to seeing all at the funeral.  
Sue Mercer

## The Candlelit Meal & Grand Auction of Promises on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June

Last winter we were told that St Andrew's Church boiler was, like the Monty Python parrot, turning up its toes, falling off its perch and going to join the fires eternal. Barry the Churchwarden researched all the possibilities to replace it: air source, ground source (a bit dodgy avoiding the graves), doing a deal with that Red fiery heat supplier – no, not Putin, the one down there... In the end we needed to find about £7,700 for a replacement boiler and pumps etc. Perhaps a bit more given the age of the building and the unseen difficulties that might crop up (sharp intake of breath 'I don't like the look of that, Guv...').

Foolishly I suggested that we could try an Auction of Promises combined with a 'posh' meal, not realising that meant I'd be organising it. We had four months to set it all up: 60 people with a choice of a two-course menu with coffee and mints – waiter service of course. The committee were: Janet Smith & Barry (AKA Marge & Bill) who were chief Scroungers; David Fangen the Auctioneer and general 'persuader'; Sue Keen i/c catering & me – paperwork & money. The committee and another 10 people were scrounging glasses, bottles, table cloths, devising menus, cooking arrangements etc, setting up theatre lights, PA and PowerPoint projector... Posters were needed to persuade people to make promises using their skills or possessions to be auctioned.

A boost early on was a Gift-Aided donation of £1,000 from Gillian Rouse, ex flower arranger, whose husband Martin had been Churchwarden here for many years. Marise Woollard's donation was in memory of her late husband Tony. There was a range of donations without which we would never have hit the target. New promises kept arriving - who'd have thought we had a famous polar explorer, artists, sailors, pilots, amazing sports cars, architects, a bat expert and so many generous people in the parish! I was amazed as all this gathered momentum. Eventually 62 diners (the last two places were sold to four people by two of us!) paid for their places, the bar was stocked & manned and the food arrived from different kitchens around the village. The six excellent waiters, resplendent in their bow-ties were the last people to be recruited joining the other ten people making it work on the day.

37 people made a range of amazing Promises to be auctioned, some offers arriving in the last weeks and days, requiring regular updates to the Auction Catalogue. As with all auctions, some bidders had bargains, some paid well over the odds; full details of all monies taken can be seen in St Andrew's church. The overall total was just over £8,000 with the possibility of Gift Aiding for the donations. It was a whole village effort which everyone enjoyed and resulted in a good night out. Thank you to all those who contributed in so many different ways! Now what was I doing in February before all this took over...  
Peter Keen (see picture at bottom of page 3)

## Notices – August 2018

### St. Andrew's Church

Sun	5th	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Sun	12th	9.30am	Morning Worship
Sun	19th	9.30am	Holy Communion with choir
Sun	26th	9.30am	Holy Communion (CW)

Prayers each Monday at 9.00am

### Parish Council Meeting

No meeting this month. Next meeting Mon 10th September at 7.00pm in St. Andrew's School.  
Parish Clerk: Marianne Wheatley  
[clerk@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk)

### The Surgery

Mon - Thur 8.00am - 12 noon.  
Enquiries 856700

### Village Shop & Post Office

Mon - Fri 8.00am to 6.00pm  
Sat 9.00am to 1.00pm; Sun 9.00am to 12.00 noon  
Enquiries 811201

### St Andrew's School

Mon 3rd September - Autumn Term starts

### 'Open House' Coffee Mornings - All Welcome!

Friday 3rd, 10th, 24th and 31st - Coffee/tea/hot chocolate, biscuits and home-grown produce.  
Friday 17th – special session with home-made cake stall.  
10.30am to 12 noon in St. Andrew's Church social area.

### Iwerne Valley Walking Group

Sat 18th, starting at 10.30 a.m. from Compton Abbas airfield SP5 5AP.  
Leader: Judy Westgate 01747 811302.

### Bin Collection Dates

W/C 6th & 20th - Recycling & Food  
W/C 13th & 27th - Rubbish & Food

### Village Hall events - see over

**Parish Council**

The following items were discussed at the meeting held at 7.30pm on Monday 9th July 2018.

**Public Questions**

Roger Hillman was concerned about the statement in the minutes of the last meeting that “contributions would be made to the resurfacing of the footpath leading into West Street thus improving and encouraging the use of this route.” He was reassured that any resurfacing would only happen with the consent of all the landowners concerned. Dick Stainer noted that the PC had not objected to the planning application by the National Trust for a Forest School on Foretop, although he had concerns about possible contamination of the nearby ancient monument; access might also be an issue. Robert McCurrach asked if the PC knew when the larger developments might come before the planning committee; the answer was no. Roger Thomas drew the attention of the PC to Robert’s letter in the BVM covering the consequences of a lack of a 5 or 3-year land supply. DCC Cllr. Carr-Jones said that the 5-year land supply would not be achieved in the near future. However, there was a substantial backlog of planning appeals. Dick Stainer asked if all the white lines were now in place on the A350. Robin East replied that the outstanding white lines (by Middle Farm) should be completed by the next PC meeting.

**Parish Council Meeting**

Five parish councillors were present - Cllr. H. Horstead (Chairman) and Cllr.s C. Bellers, M. Humphreys, H. Lister and L. Williams - as were DCC Cllr. G. Carr-Jones, NDDC Cllr. C. Langham and 13 members of the public.

**Resignation, Co-option and training**

Cllr. Roberts had resigned meaning that there are now 2 vacancies on the PC; volunteers are requested to join the Parish Council (please contact the Clerk). Cllr. Bellers proposed a training & development programme for councillors to ensure everyone was aware of their role and to help with retention. The PC agreed to such a programme and would consider a draft at the next meeting. DCC Cllr. Carr-Jones said that Marnhull PC was arranging for a trainer to give their councillors planning training. The Clerk will find out more.

**Minutes**

The minutes of the last PC meeting on Monday 21st May were approved (subject to a minor amendment) and signed.

**Matters arising**

Cllr. Bellers thanked the Clerk for arranging the tidying up of the Pump House. Under Any Other Business, and the possible new footpath from St Andrew’s View to the lane to Croft Farm, he reported that he had had a positive meeting with the landowner John Ryall and had now approached the St Andrew’s View management company.

**County/District Councillors’ Report**

Two new shadow authorities have been formed for both the Dorset area and the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area. A consultation is underway to review boundaries and wards – this will probably reduce councillors in North Dorset by

around a third. There is also a consultation on merging Dorset Police with Devon & Cornwall Police, which will also involve reducing the Police & Crime Commissioners from three to one. The savings from the merger could mean an extra 30 to 35 more policemen in Dorset.

**Development Control matters**

The PC had no objection to the applications in respect of the erection of a garage at Little Orchard, Bedchester, extension at The White Cottage, the change of use of Lower Hartgrove Farm, the new Forest School on Fontmell Down and the listing of Middle Farm (the stables are of interest, but the cottage is not). The PC still has to consider the application for change of use of a barn in Gupples Lane, Hartgrove.

Cllr. Humphreys said that the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had met the previous week to complete a ‘Table of Identified Need within Parish for S.106 Contributions’. The completion of this table was requested by NDDC Planners to identify infrastructure and facilities that would be needed to mitigate the impact of new developments. The PC agreed the contents of the table, other than a proposal to include a new path from Sutton Waldron to Fontmell.

Cllr. Bellers proposed that, as all planning applications should be considered in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan, they should first be considered by a new planning committee composed largely of the Neighbourhood Plan working group. That committee would then report back to the PC for a final decision. Cllr. Williams was concerned that such a committee would detract from the role of a parish councillor. Cllr. Bellers stressed that there was no intention to take anything away from the PC itself. The proposal was passed by three votes to two.

**Finance**

The RFO reported that the PC had funds of £13,032.32 and was on budget except that website costs were a little higher. Bills presented were paid. Barry Roberts asked who maintained the verge in West View. The Clerk confirmed this was a DCC responsibility.

**Other Parish Matters**

**Highways**

Robin East reported that DCC had confirmed that all outstanding work, including incomplete white lines and the replacement of direction signs, will be finished before the next PC meeting. He is discussing with DCC the surface problems on the A350 north of Fontmell towards Shaftesbury where the tarmac has melted and damaged the road lines and cats’ eyes. Melbury Abbas PC’s judicial review has come to an end (they reached an agreement with DCC about costs); Melbury are still unwilling to engage with the A350 Community Group. The A350CG is pursuing links with Shaftesbury & Blandford town councils and the PC’s on the A350 south of Blandford - Blandford St Mary has already joined. The A350CG has written to the PCC Martyn Underhill requesting a meeting, confirmed for 21st August, to discuss the lack of resources for effective enforcement of the new speed

**Events in the Village Hall**

**Garden Club Annual Show**

Sat 11th from 3.00pm.  
Bring your entry between 9.30 and 11.30am on the day  
Details Robert McCurrach 812077

**Fete Planning Meeting**

Wed 15th at 7.30pm  
Details Hannah Lister 811568

**Fontmell Magna Art Club**

Tue 2.00 to 4.00pm.  
Details Sandra Jelbart 812468

**Carpet Bowls Club**

Thu at 7.30pm.  
Details Gerry Bone 811814

**Dru Yoga**

Fri 9.30 to 11.00am.  
Details Kirsty Elliot 07783 780128

**Pilates**

Mon 5.30-6.30pm, 6.30-7.30pm.  
STOTT Pilates Matwork & props.  
Details Vicci Gillett 07940 961221  
[www.stable-bodies.co.uk](http://www.stable-bodies.co.uk)  
Tue 9.15-10.15am, 10.30-11.30am.  
Details Lyn O’Neill 07989 192424

**Taekwon-do**

Tue 8.00-9.00pm, Fri 6.00-7.00pm.  
Details Sam Donohoo 07584 039351

**Zumba**

Mon 7.30-8.30pm, Thu 9.30-10.30am.  
Details Abby Down 850867  
[zumbawithabbyd@gmail.com](mailto:zumbawithabbyd@gmail.com)

**To book the Hall, call Catherine Allard on 812047 or email [catherineallard1980@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:catherineallard1980@hotmail.co.uk)**

limits and other safety issues.

**Neighbourhood Plan**

Cllr. Humphreys reported that NDDC’s consultation has ended. 17 documents were posted in response, half of them from the developers of the two larger sites, promoting their case. An Examiner (David Kaiserman) has been appointed and his examination will start at the end of July, probably completing by the end of September. This means the referendum should be held in October/November.

**Defibrillator**

Cllr. Humphreys reported that he had approached the pub to site the defibrillator; there is a convenient wall by the bus stop with electricity. He has also approached the school. If the school agrees, this would be the preferred location, for a number of reasons. Cllr. Bellers said that training was being arranged in the Village Hall for the Bedchester defibrillator and this might be widened for the village one.

**Maintenance of Bedchester Notice Board**

The PC agreed to proceed with the quote provided by Perrys.

**New Dog Waste Bin**

The Clerk is still investigating. There was no other business. The meeting closed at 8.45pm. The next PC meeting will be on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September in the School Hall at 7.00pm (it is hoped the Rural Crime Team will attend).

**Iwerne Valley Walking Group**

**Midsummer's Eve Walk - Thursday 21st June**

We met on a warm sunny evening in the car park at Win Green - the track down to it has become almost impassable because of its potholes, and the National Trust should do something about it before it wrecks any more tyres! We set off down a very steep hill onto the Ashcombe Estate and along a track past Guy Ritchie's house and eventually reached Tollard Royal. We had a welcome break and a refreshing drink sitting in the garden of the King John pub there before setting off for a steady yomp back up the hill along the bye-way. Once back at Win Green, we retrieved our picnics



from our cars and settled down on the grass to watch the sun set behind the far hills and light up the sky as we ate and chatted.  
Helen English

**Springhead**

Thursday 2nd August, 7.30pm Miracle Theatre Company - The Cherry Orchard  
Bill Scott's new adaptation treads the tragicomic tightrope, bringing out all the humour and pathos of Chekhov's masterpiece which, more than a century after it was written, is as popular as ever. Recommended 7+. £12 adult, £10 Friend of Springhead, under 18 £8, and family £32. The outdoor performance starts at 7.00pm and refreshments will be served.

Sunday 12th August, 7.30pm, Ninebarrow, a multi-award-winning folk duo are paying their first visit to Springhead. £12 in advance, £14 on the door, Friends of Springhead and U17 £10.

All the performances are outside in our lovely amphitheatre beside the lake so bring something to sit on, warm clothing and a torch. The gardens will be open for picnicking before the performance and there will be a bar. Tickets from [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) or send a cheque payable to The Springhead Trust with a stamped addressed envelope to the Springhead office.

Bank Holiday Monday 27th August, Open Garden, 10.00am to 5.00pm, café serving refreshments and light lunches. Admission £3.50, under 16 and Friends of Springhead free. Dogs on leads welcome and assisted wheelchair access.

For more details please see our website – [www.springheadtrust.org.uk](http://www.springheadtrust.org.uk)

**Fete – Saturday 15th September**

Preparations are in full swing for this year's Fete which is sure to be a fun packed afternoon of games, competitions, favourite stalls, music, beer, food and so much more including some fantastic prizes to be won.

We are still accepting donations for the following stalls: bric-a-brac (Alison Main - 811304), cakes (see below), bottle stall and any old crockery that might be suitable for the crockery smashing (Fosse Cottage, 46 Church Street). Other drop-off points at the village shop, Fontmell House and 36 South Street.

If you wish to donate any new and unused items to the Family Tombola, please deliver to Lisa Le Druillenc at Blackmore Cottage, West Street (opposite Orchard Close) – 07962 138039.

Some wonderful donations from jam makers this year, thank you to you all. If anyone else has some jams or preserves they would like to donate, these can be left with Laura at High Barn, 18 St Andrew's View; there is a box outside the house they can be left in.

Thank you to all those who have volunteered to help or generously donated to the Fete this year - your efforts are hugely appreciated. Wednesday 15th August is the last Fete meeting so do please come along if you can. If you would like to get involved do please get in touch with Hannah (811568), we are always grateful for support.

We look forward to seeing you on the 15th September!

Hannah Lister



**Welcome**

We welcome to the parish Sophie and Alex Fairchild and their six-month-old daughter Iris who have moved from Compton Abbas to 49 Church Street and to Gary Coleman who has moved from Stockbridge to Fernlea Cottage (formerly Glyn Gift Cottage), Mill Street.

**Distributor needed** to deliver The Gossip Tree and Valley Views to the residents of Orchard Close. Please contact the Editor.

**Village weather for June 2018**



After a wet cool start, a hot sunny week, followed by a brief damp spell, then another mini-heatwave. Some early morning mists. The final week was thundery with some heavy showers but most missed Fontmell.

4 ground frost. 1 air frost. 11 rain days. 2 days thunder. 1 gale.

Comp. Figures	2018	2017
Rain (most 12.4 mm on 29th)	47.2 mm	78.7 mm
Sunshine	248.5 hr (av. 8.0)	194.9 hr
Max mean temp. (highest 27.1 °C on 7th)	19.49 °C	18.6 °C
Min mean temp. (lowest - 1.0 °C on 1st)	6.84 °C	8.6 °C

The above record, kindly supplied by Judy Westgate, shows that June 2018 was hot and dry, the driest June since her records began in 1988. Nationally, it was the warmest June on record in Northern Ireland and Wales, and one of the warmest in England. For England and Wales it was, despite Storm Hector on 14th June, the fourth driest June in records dating back to 1766. Over southern England, it was the driest June on record, averaging only 3mm rainfall, and not a drop of rain fell in St Osyth, Essex, the driest place in Britain.

This June was actually drier in southern England than June 1976, when Dutch Elm disease also struck, and finished off the 250-year old Cross Tree, so long a landmark of Fontmell Magna. The weather folklore: "A dripping June brings all things in tune," does not apply this year, and the continuing dry spell is not good news for farmers. At least this year's heatwave was preceded by a wet winter – this was not the case for the 1976 'long, hot summer' when the drought led to hosepipe bans, standpipes and even the appointment of Dennis Howell as 'Minister for Drought.' Within three days of his appointment, it started raining - so much so, that he was later appointed Minister of Floods (and even later, during the winter of 1978-79, he was appointed Minister for Snow).

**Full Moon – Sunday 26th August**

The Full Moon in August is the Full Sturgeon Moon, also known as the Green Corn Moon or the Grain Moon.

**Fete - Cake Stall**

A request please for Cakes and Savouries for the Cake Stall at the Village Fete on Saturday 15th September. These should be clearly marked for the 'Cake Stall' and can be delivered direct to the hall any time after 9.00am on Fete day. For further information please contact Sue Green 811207 or Mary Adlam 812101.

Compost Corner

It's bad enough dealing with pests in the garden, but it's even trickier to control them in a confined space like a conservatory or greenhouse or, indeed, in a container.

Recently I bought a rather unusual scented pelargonium but, on leaving the shop, I spotted that it had whitefly - a friend suggested that I would be wise to abandon it, but I thought I could probably rid the plant of the flies myself. I duly hosed the plant down and even submerged it in water. I left the plant outside for a week or so and it looked pest-free, so I brought it into our conservatory. But, sure enough, they were very definitely still in residence.

Whitefly are very difficult to remove because they have become very resistant to traditional pesticides. However, biological control is effective and involves introducing a little parasitic wasp, *Encarsia formosa*, which attacks the whitefly nymphs - but it takes a bit of time so don't wait until you have a really bad infestation. Of course I would have saved myself a lot of bother if I'd listened to my friend or if the whitefly hadn't been such expert swimmers.

Alison Main

Garden Club Annual Show – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August

We hope as many people as possible will come along in the afternoon to see the display of entries, and have a cup of tea. The doors open at 3.00 and tea is served from 3.15pm. At the time of writing, members are watering away feverishly, after weeks of drought, to get their entries ready for the show - but who knows what will happen in the meantime? However, not all the entries are for members only - a number are open for all.

The full Show programme is available in the Shop, and if you fancy having a go why not try your hand at one of these: An Animal made from fruit and/or vegetables; Miniature garden on a plate; Best Dressed Vegetable (plant material only); A Photograph entitled "Happy Couple"; A Painting entitled "Happy Couple"; Matchbox Challenge (see below)

For the Matchbox Challenge, you have to get as many pairs of things in the matchbox as you can, with a list of what they are. It has to be a standard size matchbox (and not a giant one!). As last year, Rick and Jan at the Shop hold a stock of suitable matchboxes. We look forward to seeing you!

*The views expressed in this publication by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Committee of The Gossip Tree. Last copy date for the next issue is **Sunday 19th August 2018**. Contributions for consideration should be submitted as early as possible to the Editor, Chris Bellers, via e-mail to [chris.bellers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chris.bellers@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 811734. Please also contact the Editor if, rather than have your Gossip Tree delivered to you, you would like to be emailed a copy and benefit from seeing the pictures in colour (while also saving us printing costs), or if you would like to sponsor an issue (cost £30).*

Fontmell Centenarians

It is generally accepted that, on average, people today are living longer than those who lived 100 years ago. 100 years ago, most people had no access to mains running water, sewage or electricity. Medicine and medical practice was relatively basic and there was no National Health Service or Welfare State. Most inhabitants of Fontmell parish depended on agriculture and were unskilled. They lived in basic farm cottages, frequently over-crowded. Much of the work available was seasonal, hard and low paid.

And yet many residents lived a long life. In August 1922, when the population of Fontmell parish numbered around 460, the Rector, Rev. C. P. Edmonds, invited to his annual Rectory Party all parishioners and former parishioners "in the neighbourhood" over 80. He felt that "very few Parishes of our size could boast so many hale and hearty 'Veterans'." 17 such parishioners were invited, but three could not attend. One of these was the churchwarden, James Barnes of Manor Farm (who died the following year aged 83). The other two were Josiah and Isabella Merrifield, then aged 97 and 84 respectively, as they were "ill with excitement". However, the other 14 did attend and are included in a photo that we have long held in the Village Archives.

What we did not know, until we were given it by Rev. Edmonds' grand-daughter, Tricia May, is that another picture was taken, this one of just the six parishioners over 90.



*L to R standing – Thomas Stark (91), Joe Ryall (98), Rev. C. P. Edmonds (Rector, 51)  
L to R seated – Mrs Sarah Lawrence (92), Mrs Leah Still (99), Mrs Harriet Nottle (92), Mrs Bastable (West Orchard) (91).*

According to the Parish Magazine: "Sir Richard Glyn motored over from Gaunts and after tea said a few words to the Guests as to his pleasure in seeing them all and their youthful appearance. Anyone, he said, might be pardoned for making a mistake of from 20 to 30 years, in guessing their ages." Three of those invited to the party reached 100.

Josiah Merrifield, who was unable to attend, was baptised on 13th November 1825 in Compton Abbas church. Josiah was an agricultural labourer (as was his father) and was married to Isabella for 66 years; they had 12 children and lived at 55 West Street. He was buried at St Andrew's Church on 16th February 1926 aged 100. Joe Ryall was also a labourer, and the son of a labourer. Born in Bedchester and baptised on 28th September 1823 in St Andrew's Church, he married Martha Andrews in 1853 and had five children. He was married for 63 years. By 1871, he and his family had moved to Sutton Waldron and Joe was buried at the church there on 17th December 1925. His age was given as 103.

If a long marriage was key to longevity, as with Josiah and Joe, this did not apply to Leah Still. Born Leah Merefield in Twyford, Compton Abbas, she was baptised in Compton Abbas church on 31st December 1822. Her parents were James and Ann (nee Tuffin) Merefield. She became a "buttoner" and then married James Hull, another labourer, and they had two children. James died in 1871. In 1874, Leah, now aged 51, married George Still, a widower aged 60, also a labourer. They lived in West Street. George died in 1890 and Leah moved to 24 Lurmer Street. In 1891 she is described as a seamstress. Shortly before she died, 24 Lurmer Street burned down and she is thought to have ended her days at 67 West Street (now Pump Cottage). She was buried at St Andrew's Church on 16th February 1925, aged 102.

Despite the increase in life expectancy over the years, not to mention the improvements to quality of life, we have no record that any other Fontmell resident has reached 100, though we have a reference to Ruth Salmon of Bedchester who reached age 100 in July 1982. If any reader knows any more about Ruth, or any other Fontmell resident who has reached 100, do please let us know. Incidentally, the latest census for Fontmell indicates that, in 2011, there were 8 parishioners over 90 (1.1% of the population of 734). Chris Bellers, Archive Society