



# THE GOSSIP TREE

News & Views from the Parish of FONTMELL MAGNA

FEBRUARY

2021

Issue 324

## From the Gossip Tree Committee

Welcome to the February edition of the Gossip Tree. Due to the new lockdown that is now in place, we will only be publishing the Gossip Tree electronically until restrictions are eased.

Even though what we are able to do remains limited, you will see from the articles in this month's Gossip Tree that clubs and societies are still managing to function and getting many things in place for when it is safe to do so.

Graham Eames on behalf of the Gossip Tree Committee

## **Welcome to the Parish**

We would like to welcome the following people who have recently moved into the parish.

Linda and Mark Gordon who have moved from Poole to 5 North Street

Sarah King and Ian Tullis who have moved to 37 South Street from Cann

Linda and Ian Warr and Linda's mother, Margaret Rogers who have moved from South Oxfordshire to Winchells, West Street.

Rachel Norris and Mark Honeybun who have moved to 3, Shaftesbury View, Gupples Lane Hartgrove from Ryme Intrinsic

## **St Andrew's Church, Fontmell Magna**

### **CHURCH SERVICES in FONTMELL MAGNA.**

During Lockdown 3, St Andrew's Church is only open for private prayer but Sunday services are available at:

St Mary's Church in Shroton - **Holy Communion** at 10.00am - Please let the Vicar know if you are coming as there is a limit on numbers – 01747 811291 or email [david.john6@bopenworld.com](mailto:david.john6@bopenworld.com)

**Informal Service** via Zoom at 10.00am – contact Barry, our churchwarden, for access details – 01747 811906

A video Service of **Morning Worship** is available on the benefice website [www.iwernevalleybenefice.org.uk](http://www.iwernevalleybenefice.org.uk) and *click*: Worship and teaching resources

There are also monthly services via Zoom on Friday evenings and home-groups via Zoom on Monday mornings – again, details from Barry

## Notices – February 2021

St. Andrew's Church - Services for February  
Please see announcement opposite for details

### Parish Council Meeting

Next meeting Mon 8th March at 7.00pm by Zoom.

Parish Clerk: Marianne Wheatley  
[clerk@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk)

### Local Councillor—Jane Somper

Email: [cllrjane.somper@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:cllrjane.somper@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07710 395359

### The Surgery

Closed until further notice.

Enquiries: 856700

### Village Shop & Post Office

Normal opening hours:

Mon - Fri 9.00am - 5.30pm

Sat 9.00am - 1.00pm

Sun 9.00am - 11.00am

Enquiries: 811201

### The Tea Room Crafters

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Jenny White 812042

### The Fontmell

Takeaway only on Friday and Saturday evening.

Enquiries: 811441 or [john@thefontmell.com](mailto:john@thefontmell.com)

### St. Andrew's School

Enquiries: 811500

### Fontmell Magna Toddler Group

Enquiries: Kelly Oakley 07792 425609

### Fontmell Magna Under 5's

Enquiries: 812773

### Iwerne Valley Walking Group

Walks cancelled until further notice

For more information please contact

Helen English: 07789 845498

### Bell-ringing

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Caroline Rhodes 812002

# Springhead

a rural centre for creative and sustainable living

As I am sure you will understand we have regrettably had to cancel the planned Snowdrop Open Garden in February. We will of course let you know when Springhead is able to open again.

Kate Partridge

Coordinator - Friends of Springhead



## Events in the Village Hall

### Fontmell Magna & District Society

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Dick Stainer 811153

### Sunday Breakfast

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Janet Smith 811904

### Fontmell Films

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquires: Libby Gendall 811551

### North Dorset Wildlife Trust

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

[www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk)

### Archive Society

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Roger Hillman 811878

### Garden Club

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Sue East 812349

### Fontmell Magna Art Club

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Sandra Jelbert 812468

### Carpet Bowls Club

Meetings cancelled until further notice.

Enquiries: Gerry Bone 811814

### Dru Yoga

Meeting every Friday morning 9-11.

Enquiries: Kirsty Elliot 829281

Pilates Mon 5.30-6.30pm, 6.30-7.30pm and Tues 9.15.

STOTT Pilates Enquiries: Vicci Gillett 07940 961221 [www.stable-bodies.co.uk](http://www.stable-bodies.co.uk)

### Pop Up Play Village

Monthly on Sundays starting 31<sup>st</sup> Jan and three Wednesdays a month starting 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. 10.30 to 11.45 am – Contact: Helen Poll email:

[northdorset@popupplayvillage.co.uk](mailto:northdorset@popupplayvillage.co.uk)

website: <https://popupplayvillage.co.uk>

### Taekwon-do

Tuesday & Friday evenings

Enquiries:

Sam Donohoo 07584 039351

### Zumba

Every Thursday at 0930

Enquiries Abby Down 850867

[zumbawithabbyd@gmail.com](mailto:zumbawithabbyd@gmail.com)

**To book the Hall, please contact : Sian Highnam on 811028 or email [bookings.fmvh@mail.com](mailto:bookings.fmvh@mail.com)**

## Fontmell Magna Parish Council – Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7.00pm

Due to the Coronavirus restrictions the Parish Council meeting took place using the Zoom videoconferencing service. Draft minutes of the meeting are available on the PC Website [http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/FontmellMagna-PC/Meetings\\_and\\_Minutes\\_9778.aspx](http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/FontmellMagna-PC/Meetings_and_Minutes_9778.aspx)

**Present:** Cllrs Michael Humphreys (MH) Chair, Annie Newbury (AN), Andy Main (AM) and Clerk Marianne Wheatley (MW), DC Ward Cllr Jane Somper (JS), plus 3 residents and Keri Jones (press This is Alfred)

### **Public Questions:**

A resident asked whether the Parish Council would consider purchasing a Speed Indicator Device which shows the speed a vehicle is travelling. There are 45 communities in Dorset who operate these and they have proved effective in reducing speeding traffic. Stourpaine had recently installed a moveable SID costing approx. a£3500 plus £500 for a traffic survey. Cllr. Long undertook to investigate further and report back.

### **Apologies**

**Co-options** – the Chair confirmed there remain 3 vacancies on the Parish Council and appealed once more for residents from the Village or wider parish to come forward and join the Council.

**New Clerk** – the Chair confirmed that Samantha Smith has been appointed as the new Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer to take over from Marianne. Sam will start on 1<sup>st</sup> February and Marianne will step down on 28<sup>th</sup> February allowing for a handover between the Clerks. The Council thanked Marianne for her contributions and support to the Parish Council over the past 8 years.

**Minutes of the Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020** – these were approved unanimously.

### **Matters Arising**

**Development on Land near Home Farm, South Street** – Revised plans for this development had been submitted by the developer Pennyfarthing Homes in October, addressing most of the objections raised by the Parish Council (and Dorset Conservation Teams) on the plans submitted in April. It was agreed the Parish Council will now support this application for full planning permission. The Chair also reported that the developer is confident it has the right to lay services under the footpath by the school to be used for access. A decision on planning permission is expected sometime in the New Year.

**PC Website** – The Parish Council's new website is now live. The upgrade cost was £970 and needed to comply with current accessibility regulations. Councillors and residents were asked to take a look at the site and provide feedback on likes and dislikes.

**Dorset County Ward Councillor's Report** - Jane Somper's report is available on the PC website.

JS thanked everyone who had donated to the Cosy Coats Campaign. The closing date for anyone applying for a school place for the first time is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The draft **Dorset Local Plan** is due to be published in January 2021 for consultation. The plan would be an amalgamation of previous District Plans and Dorset Council plans. Residents are urged to read the plan and comment as appropriate, as once adopted it will influence all planning decisions for the next 15 years. There will be various webinar and podcasts on the plan and paper copies will be available in all libraries.

JS mentioned the **Dorset Broadband Voucher Scheme** which is jointly funded by the Government and Dorset Council. It allows groups of residents and businesses to apply for grants up to £2,500 per household, and £6,000 per business, to upgrade their broadband provision to an ultrafast service. The Parish Council will publicise this scheme to gauge the level of interest amongst residents.

### **Reports from Parish Councillors**

**a. Planning** – MH confirmed there had been six new applications which were assessed by the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group; their reports are available on the PC website. The PC had no objection to three: Timbers, West St; Old Pump Cottage, West St; Land at Home Farm, South Street (Pennyfarthing). Three more are under consideration: 54 West Street; Springhead, Mill St.; Barn Cottage, West St.

## Parish Council Meeting (cont)

### Reports from Parish Councillors

**a. Planning** – MH confirmed there had been six new applications which were assessed by the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group; their reports are available on the PC website. The PC had no objection to three: Timbers, West St; Old Pump Cottage, West St; Land at Home Farm, South Street (Pennyfarthing). Three more are under consideration: 54 West Street; Springhead, Mill St.; Barn Cottage, West St.

The Neighbourhood Plan came into force in November 2018 as part of the Dorset Local Plan and is due to be updated but this has been put on hold pending the new Local Plan and more clarity on the Government's proposals to reform the planning system.

**b. Highways** – JL reported that residents had voiced concerns about the speed of traffic along the B3091. This has been raised with Dorset Highways but it seems unlikely there will be any change for sometime.

The issue of the overgrown hedge along Lurmer Street had also been raised with Highways as it could potentially cause a traffic accident. Ownership of the strip of land containing the hedge is not clear. The PC will investigate the cost of trimming back the problematic hedge.

JS will raise with Highways the condition of Gupples Lane in Hartgrove which has considerable surface damage.

**c. Environment Protection** – AN confirmed the water leakage issue at Bedchester crossroads is largely resolved including the re-instatement of the verge posts.

Another organized litter pick is prohibited by COVID restrictions. Instead AN wrote an appeal in the Gossip Tree for residents to clear any litter on the stretch of road outside their own property, to keep the roads clean and tidy.

**d. Social Infrastructure** – AN confirmed that the defibrillator had been checked.

AN advised that the Village Hall is closed until February for repainting the interior. A fast broadband link has been installed in the hall.

**e. District Liaison** – MH attended the AGM of the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils and a seminar on the services provided by DAPTC.

MH also attended a webinar on Dorset Council's Climate & Ecological Emergency strategy and plan.

**f. Parish Communications** – MH attended a webinar on Effective Communications & Engagement which covered the best ways to communicate with residents using websites and social media. It's clear Fontmell should do more in this area, for example, creating a Facebook presence, using NextDoor posts, holding town-hall meetings and publishing videos.

**g. Footpaths** – AM confirmed the overgrown brambles on the snicket path adjacent to the school had been trimmed back. The safety of the footpath over the dam at Mill St. was discussed. It is felt the existing surfaces are sufficient, which are kept clean voluntarily by Gary Payne. The PC expressed its appreciation and thanks to Gary for this work and for tackling the extensive weed on the adjacent pond. AM raised the issue of the pond weed with Dorset Wildlife Trust who spent a morning clearing some weed away; Gary Payne then cleared away a substantial amount. Gary has also cleared the blocked drain on Mill Street which had been blocked for years.

AM confirmed more signs would be placed along the footpath to the Lynchets to deter dog fouling.

**h. Trees** – Whilst the PC is no longer consulted on any applications for tree works, it was decided it should keep a watching brief; AN agreed to take on the responsibility for trees.

### Report from the RFO and Bills Presented

The Clerk confirmed the income and expenses to date. The available balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 was £11,284.40. It was agreed bills set out in the Schedule should be paid:

M Wheatley for Zoom charges - £28.78

DM Payroll Services - £44.50

DAPTC for Councillor training – £30.00

### Approve the Budget and Agree the Precept for 2021/22

The Clerk prepared a plan for the PC's budget for 2021/22 and for the precept.

Anticipated expenses for 2021/22 are £9,915, including provision for updating the Neighbourhood Plan and grants to the Village Hall and the Church.

The PC decided by a majority to set the precept for 2021/22 at £9,750, slightly less than the budgeted expenses, as there may be grants available to support the Neighbourhood Plan update work.

### Other Matters

**2021 Census** – The national census will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Further information will be placed on the parish website and also is available at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

**Fontmell Magna CLT** – The PC has been approached regarding taking out a loan to go towards the potential purchase for the village shop freehold. Further information has been requested from the CLT.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm. The next meeting is on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00pm** and will be held via Zoom videoconferencing.

## Update from the Village Hall

It was a huge relief when we heard that that playgrounds could remain open during this third national lockdown. It is now widely acknowledged that the risks posed to children by **not** playing outside far outweigh those posed by the virus. Parents and child carers rely upon the playgrounds in their local area to keep their children mentally and physically well and to provide some respite for themselves. These lockdowns have shown us what is really important to our village community and that our Village Hall Playground really does matter.

We have a schedule of maintenance in place for the playground starting as soon as the weather improves. We will be removing the goal posts, and rolling and re-seeding the grass in the children's recreation area behind the Village Hall. The cycle track will remain open during this time but the goal posts will be stored off-site.

The under 12's play area needs more rubber chippings, and work will start soon to spread them. The fences and gates are due for repair and then we will begin cleaning down all the play equipment, removing the graffiti and repairing and re-treating the woodwork. We have a good budget from all our fundraising, so thank you to everyone who has supported our fundraising efforts – we hope you will see a big improvement in the children's play area this year. By the way, there are still Cookery Books available to buy at the Village Shop if you would like to donate to this cause the profit from every book sold goes to the Appeal.

The Tennis Court had to close in line with the lockdown rules. We appreciate that this is incredibly disappointing and frustrating news for all our keen social players and coaches. As soon as we hear that it can open for singles matches or doubles matches between members of the same household we will put out an announcement on social media.

By the time this article goes to print the decorating of the interior of the Village Hall will be complete. They started with the Main Hall in December and then in the first two weeks of January decorated the Lobby, Kitchen, Committee Room, Cloakroom and both Washrooms. It certainly looks a lot brighter and fresher. We aim to have the exterior woodwork re-painted this Summer.

At present most activities that usually run at the hall are suspended. However, there are some exceptions to the Hall Closure and some activities can continue as it is a Covid-19 Secure Venue. The Hall can also be re-purposed for other uses. It is a long list, but here are a few examples:

- For work purposes where people cannot access reliable broadband from home
- For digital access to public services to enable villagers to access the internet using the broadband available at the hall
- To provide essential voluntary activities
- For the purposes of education or training
- For the purpose of support groups
- For supervised activities for children, mother and baby groups or childcare under the Childcare Act 2006.

If you organise groups or activities that are permitted during this lockdown and are looking for premises to operate from or looking for a quiet space to get on with some work then please get in touch with Sian Highnam, Bookings Manager by email: [bookings.fmvh@mail.com](mailto:bookings.fmvh@mail.com)

Finally, we are pleased to report that the joint venture Cut Flower Garden Project is going ahead according to schedule. Sian has received huge support from sponsors and villagers alike. Look out for her latest update in this edition of the Gossip Tree and our posts on Instagram, Facebook and Nextdoor.

### Fontmell Magna Village Hall Management Committee

Any queries - please email: [secretary.fmvh@mail.com](mailto:secretary.fmvh@mail.com)

Fontmell has supported the Gillingham Foodbank for several years. The manager, Neil MacBean, has written to thank us for our contributions and encourages individuals and families who may have need of it to get in touch.



You very generous people of Gillingham, Shaftesbury and the Blackmore Vale donated nearly 5 tonnes of food to the Foodbank during December. That's amazing, thank you so much everyone! We provided 68 emergency food parcels last month, feeding 112 adults and 79 children. Your donations meant that many families - with your help and compassion - were able to celebrate Christmas instead of having to ignore it. THANK YOU!

Gillingham Foodbank will again remain OPEN during this lockdown - on Monday and Thursday mornings between 0945am & midday - for help and donations. We recognise that these are really, really difficult times and that sadly, a growing number of people across the UK are needing to turn to foodbanks for help. Remember, here at Gillingham Foodbank, we're ready, able and wanting to assist so please, if you need a little extra help to provide food for yourself or your family, or you know of someone who does, please contact us on [info@gillingham.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@gillingham.foodbank.org.uk). No-one should have to go hungry! If people want to donate, they can do so via the donation points at St Andrew's Church, Fontmell & Fontmell Village Shop, at Waitrose, Iceland, Lidl or Asda in Gillingham or Tesco at Shaftesbury. To give money, please visit [www.gillingham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/](http://www.gillingham.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/)



## FONTMELL MAGNA CUT FLOWER GARDEN

This is the start of a monthly update on the progress of the garden and any requests for help which may be required. From February onwards, I will include photographs of our progress as there will be more to see.

Firstly, I am delighted to announce that after the wonderful suggestions from the people of the parish, we have decided to name the project **THE FONTMELL FRIENDSHIP FLOWER GARDEN**. With our new name, the instagram and Facebook page will be launched.

Thank you so much to everyone helping with this project. We have over twenty local people starting to grow seeds which will fill the beds with beautiful blooms. Thank you also for all the offers of other plants, soil, manure and compost which will ensure our beds are very productive. The six wooden beds for the flowers will be installed behind the surgery on January 30th and filled with soil and manure in the following weeks.

There will be more promotion for the project – and you can listen to thisisalfred from 7.1.21 which featured the plans and the BV magazine on 15.1.21. The RHS and Country File have recently been promoting green social prescribing and it is likely these initiatives will gain more prominence in 2021.

I have been overwhelmed by the support from local businesses, local people, friends and family and it is such a wonderfully positive initiative when the news surrounding us can seem bleak.

Thank you so very much to everyone for supporting us and we look forward to sitting together in and around the village hall with tea and cakes with flowers to grow, tend, collect and enjoy.

Sian ( [sianhighnam@gmail.com](mailto:sianhighnam@gmail.com) )

## Boosting Broadband in Fontmell Magna



Fontmell Magna Parish is being offered a great opportunity to boost broadband provision.

The **Government's Gigabit Voucher** scheme, which runs until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, provides **funding to rural households and businesses towards receiving full-fibre broadband** in homes and premises. Dorset Council has topped up the scheme to enable even more communities to receive faster broadband including those in our parish.

To be eligible for a voucher a household or business must be receiving currently broadband speeds of less than 100 Mbps (megabits per second) and have a rural postcode. Residential households will be able to claim up to £2,500 and businesses up to £6,000.

People receiving full fibre under the scheme will have to commit to taking out a 12-month internet service of at least 30 Mbps or if they already receive that speed or above, a service that is at least double their current speed.

There is more information at [Gigabit Vouchers – Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/superfast-dorset/funding-for-full-fibre-broadband-connections.aspx) or from Dorset Council at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/business-consumers-licences/superfast-dorset/funding-for-full-fibre-broadband-connections.aspx>

This is a very welcome initiative for many of us but for the scheme to get up and running it requires households and businesses in a parish to come together through the Parish Council to apply for their vouchers – individual premises cannot apply on their own.

If you are interested in joining a community group to boost the broadband service you receive at your home or business in Fontmell Magna parish please email us at [broadband@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk](mailto:broadband@fontmellmagnapc.co.uk) with your name, address and telephone number. *Don't delay as we need to register our interest in the scheme before the grant funding runs out.*

If you have any questions please call Mike on 07850 875429.

Mike Humphreys, FM Parish Council

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Brassicas are vegetables that are in season this month. Cauliflower is divine in a cheese sauce, but it also works extremely well in this curry which is incredibly quick and easy to prepare.

### Ingredients

Onion, 1 sliced

Curry paste 2 tbsp (use whatever is your favourite)

Ground turmeric 1.2 tsp

Cauliflower 1 small, cut into bite size florets

Ripe plum tomatoes 3, quartered

Spinach 100g, roughly chopped

Roti or naan bread to serve

### Method

Step 1—Fry the onion with a pinch of salt for about 10 minutes until soft and golden. Add the curry paste and turmeric and cook for a couple of minutes until fragrant.

- Step 2— Add the cauliflower, tomatoes and 250ml of water, then bring to a gentle simmer. Cover and cook for 10-15 minutes until the tomato has broken down and the cauliflower is tender. Stir through the spinach and cook for a couple of minutes until wilted and then serve with the roti or naan, or rice if you prefer!



### Articles for the Gossip Tree

I am always on the lookout for new articles or news for the Gossip Tree. If you have anything happening in the parish that you would like covered, please let me know.

Also, if you a member of one of the clubs and societies in the parish then I would love to feature a small piece on how you have kept going under the restrictions of the past year.

Graham Eames, Editor

## Village weather for December 2020

Chilly start and end to the month with milder spells mid month. Not many sunny days with many grey drizzly days.

23 rain days, 1 day hail, 1 gale (Storm Bella), 11 air frost, 21 ground frost. No thunder or snow.

Total rainfall for the year 1054.1mm (197 rain days)

Comp. Figures	2020	2019
Rain (Most 21.8mm on 4th)	145.6 mm	157.7 mm
Sunshine (ave 1.5 hrs)	42.8 hrs	48.7 hrs
Max mean temp. (highest 13.2 °C on 21st)	8.6 °C	9.6 °C
Min mean temp. (lowest — 4.2 °C on 31st)	1.8 °C	3.3 °C

### Compost Corner

Do you remember the campaign, 'Plant a tree in 73'? Goodness knows how successful it was but once again, we're being asked to our bit for climate change and try and find space in our gardens for a new tree. I've got my small sapling ready and it's awaiting a suitable home, and what is more, it's a tree that disappeared from most of the country many moons ago - it's an elm. I was given this rarity from someone in the Isles of Scilly where, because of its remote location 28 miles off the Cornish mainland, the islands' elms were saved from Dutch Elm disease. There are two species of Elm on the islands the Dutch Elm and The Cornish Elm - mine could be either, and if it makes it to maturity could reach 30m. Possibly not the best choice for a garden, but it's going to be planted anyway.

And watch out for a rash of newly emerging banana plantations from all those buried banana skins.....!

Alison Main



## PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE IN WEST STREET, FONTMELL MAGNA

We have been advised that Dorset Council plan to close West Street for up to 2 weeks, between 15th and 26th February whilst a new foul water sewer is installed for one of the properties on West Street. At the time of writing, the Parish Council have raised a few issues with Dorset Council over access to the properties affected and whether the closure will be complete or partial. Once I have news of what the closure will entail, I will email recipients of the Gossip Tree.

Graham Eames, editor

This February issue of The Gossip Tree was edited by: **Graham Eames.**

We apologise in advance if we have made any errors or omissions  
Please would regular contributors for the March issue contact me via email:  
**([fmgossiptree@gmail.com](mailto:fmgossiptree@gmail.com))**

Alternatively, contact the **Chairman, Barbara Humphreys**, email: **[blueletterbox@btinternet.com](mailto:blueletterbox@btinternet.com)** for further information.  
**Submissions for the March issue by Wednesday 17th February please.**

The views expressed in this publication by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editors or of the Committee of The Gossip Tree.

*If you would always like to receive The Gossip Tree by email, please let us know at [fmgossiptree@gmail.com](mailto:fmgossiptree@gmail.com)*