



# THE GOSSIP TREE

News & Views from the Parish of FONTMELL MAGNA

MARCH  
2021  
Issue 324

## From the Gossip Tree Committee

Welcome to the March edition of the Gossip Tree.

As the pace of vaccination increases, the prospect of a return to a more normal way of life is on the horizon. As we have reported over the past year, the village has remained as active as possible with many projects starting and flourishing thanks to the efforts of those involved. These highlight the community spirit which has been alive and well in Fontmell during these difficult times.

Graham Eames on behalf of the Gossip Tree Committee

## Speeding Traffic in Fontmell

Many residents have raised the subject of vehicles speeding through the village. This has come up at Parish Council meetings and in response to the surveys carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan. There is no doubt that residents are concerned about it.

A dozen Fontmell Magna volunteers have been operating Community Speedwatch for several years. With Dorset Police, and more recently with a Trucam officer who can record speeding vehicles and issue penalty notices, we have been able to put a brake on vehicle speeds through the village.

Speedwatch has been suspended during lockdown: it will resume later this year. But, to keep it going we need a new coordinator, as I am standing down.

If you are interested in taking this on and would like to know more, please contact me on 812077.

Robert McCurrach

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

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

With the impressive take-up of vaccines against coronavirus and the reducing number of cases in our area, it has been decided that services in St Andrews can recommence for Easter, starting with Palm Sunday on 28<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am.

During the remainder of March the services will be as advertised previously: 10.00am at St Mary's Church in Shroton (booking through the Vicar) and also *via* Zoom at 10.00am – contact Barry, churchwarden, for access details – 01747 811906. The video Service on the Benefice website also continues at [www.iwernevalleybenefice.org.uk](http://www.iwernevalleybenefice.org.uk)

Services in April start with the Good Friday 9.30am service in St Andrew's and Easter Day at 10.00am, for which there will be a booking system.



Will and Rose (The Maples) and Nikki and Damian (Larkspur) would like to pass on their thanks to the village for putting up with the West Street road closure. They have made a donation to the Fontmell Cut Flower Garden as a token of their appreciation."

## Notices – March 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 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



## 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

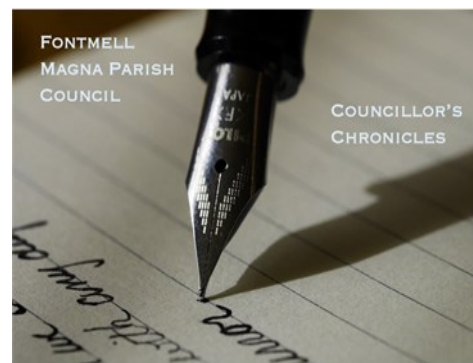
Enquiries Abby Down 850867

[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)

## Councillor's Chronicles No.1

By the time you read this Jackie Weaver will probably have returned happily to her normal life, not that she seems a woman who can't handle five minutes of fame, being the face of a cake or inspiring a slogan on a T shirt. Well done her - and she lightened another lockdown week. *That* Parish Council meeting has been likened to both a Shakespearean drama and A Game of Thrones. "Please tell me that my role is Cersei, that would be fabulous".



Jackie said on radio that it isn't kind to laugh at another person's meltdown. "I don't want to give the message out, join the parish council for a good bust up, but I can see there is something quite funny about adults losing it". What she does want is to encourage more, younger women (and men) into local politics and "don't get me even started on the wider diversity; that would be a real bonus".

There is an overlooked character here. It's not Aled's iPad or Julie's but 17-year-old Shaan Ali, the A level politics student who recorded the events during his studies. Rewarding for Jackie I should think when he said "I guess I am fascinated by what local authorities do and the role they play up and down the country. You have big councils and county councils, but it's the parish councils who work with communities and it's so fascinating because they argue over the smallest issues." And of course, he found some of the councillors' (in)ability to use zoom "hilarious".

Now I'm not going to compare Fontmell PC with Handforth and I am certainly not going to say being concerned over small issues is unnecessary because small issues can have a large effect on local areas. I am going to say thank you Shaan for being interested in our interest and in what we try to achieve.

On Fontmell PC we don't have idiosyncratic members nor are we bad-tempered, we can zoom without a cat filter and we are a harmonious group not in it for ego boosting or do-gooding but because parishes and their residents need to have a voice. We believe that giving expression to local views is one of the most important contributions we can make to our community and we enjoy doing it – mostly.

Useful Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsBBGVi2MCw>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-56012319>

<http://www.fontmellmagnapc.co.uk/>



We are very pleased to tell you that two beavers have been released onto a Dorset Wildlife Trust enclosed trial site in west Dorset. Over the coming months and years conservation experts will study how these beavers can improve the landscape for both wildlife and people. Beavers are often referred to as 'ecosystem engineers', improving water flow, water quality and biodiversity, providing a natural solution to growing concerns about wildlife decline in Dorset and the UK nationally.

This is the first trial of its kind in Dorset and working with our partners at Exeter University and Wessex Water



## Fontmell Magna Cookery Book - £10 - proceeds to the Village Hall Playground Appeal

**Don't Forget – Mother's Day on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

All your Mother's Day Gift dilemmas solved by this lovely Cookery Book full of tasty local (and some not so local) recipes.

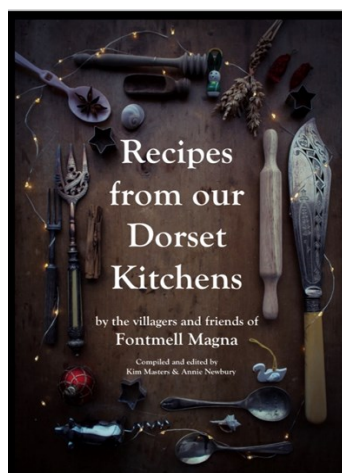
About 2 years ago we asked everyone in the Parish to send us a family favourite recipe for inclusion in a cookery book to be sold in aid of the Village Hall's playground.

This glossy paperback book has over 150 pages of inspiring recipes and plenty of fresh ideas, including vegetarian, vegan and gluten free.

If you would like to buy a copy of this book then it is in stock at the Village Shop, just ask, they also have a sample copy for you to look at.

So, don't forget this ideal little extra for Mother's Day.

You can also order by email or text: [cookbook.fmvh@mail.com](mailto:cookbook.fmvh@mail.com) or text/phone Rosie-Anne Yates on: 07710 326 339



### Compost Corner

Evergreen shrubs are such a useful addition to the winter garden - they can provide form, structure, flowers, fragrance as well as food for birds. There are so many you could choose but some worth considering are :-

*Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *digyna* - the main reason to select the shrub is for its wonderful fragrance

*Skimmia japonica* 'Chameleon' - a stunning variety which has large clusters of rich crimson berries

*Pittosporum tenulifolium* - with glossy, ovate, wavy-edged leaves it's useful for flower arranging

*Fatsia japonica* - an impressive shrub with large palmate, glossy leaves. Looks almost tropical but really tough

But don't overdo the evergreens, they can become oppressive. I remember meeting someone who moved house because her garden abutted a conifer wood making the garden feel dark and gloomy. A ratio of 1 evergreen to 3 deciduous plants works well.

And one final one...*Daphne odora* 'Aureomarginata' a real star, with the most exquisite fragrance.

Alison Main



### Village weather for January 2021

A lot of grey, gloomy days. A cold start and milder mid month.

22 rain days, 1 day hail, 1 gale, 17 air frost, 21 ground frost. 2 days sleet and snow.

Comp. Figures	2021	2020
Rain (Most 15.5 mm on 420h)	105.8 mm	92.7 mm
Sunshine	43.9 hrs (ave 0.7 hrs)	34.7 hrs
Max mean temp. (highest 12.5 °C on 28th)	8.1 °C	9.2 °C
Min mean temp. (lowest -4.6 °C on 28th)	0.8 °C	3.2 °C



## FONTMELL FRIENDSHIP GARDEN

We have had a busy month with the Fontmell Friendship Garden and can I thank everyone who has been so very kind in so many ways.

The photos show the progress made. The "Sian" weed is no longer and the beds are now filled with top soil kindly donated by Sue and Peter Keen and mulch kindly donated by Gold Hill Organic Farm. Thank you everyone who braved the cold but sunny Saturday the first weekend in February to shovel soil into the beds.

We have six beds filled and thank you to Eddie Parker at Springhead who has agreed to build two more beds for us specifically for the children of St Andrew's school and the community, who will be planting sunflowers and wild flowers.

Thank you to John Crompton at The Fontmell who has bought three planting troughs for the Fontmell Magna Under Fives. They will have their own area for bee friendly wild flowers in the trees, below the recently installed bird boxes.

Thank you to Lisa, Jane and Gill and George Darwall for the bird boxes.

The craft club are sewing bunting to hang around the garden, which will be a wonderful addition to the area.

Thank you to the Parish Council who have bought a wooden trough to match one I have sponsored. They will be planted with two roses donated by Jo Prendergast at the entrance of the garden.

Annie and Steve Smale have kindly donated a trough which we will be planting with herbs.

There are so many seed growers in the village and I have enjoyed seeing photos of some of them sprouting. The photograph here shows some of my seeds which thankfully survived the recent cold spell.

Behind the scenes- the benches have arrived and will be assembled soon and the plaques are completed to place on the benches ( Thank you Sarah Jane ). You will soon see water butts on the site and an irrigation system will arrive, ready for the sunnier days.

We have been compiling a calendar of events- which will be confirmed in the next week, offering a variety of workshops, talks and social events for the future.

### In the meantime - THIS IS A LITTLE PLEA FOR HELP

I am looking for people who would make cakes for events on April 20 th ( Kingston Maurward demonstration 1 .30-4.30) May 22 nd ( Mass plant out 10-4) and June 19 th.( The grand opening 2-4)

We also need people who would be willing to make and serve teas and coffees on these days and finally anyone who would man a plant stall on May 22 nd and June 19 th.

Help on all or part of these days would be fabulous- and it will be fun, as they are the first events in the calendar. More details will follow .

Going forward, I will need definite names please of people happy to give up half an hour to forty five minutes on a rota to dead head and water the flowers in their growing season. This would be a daily requirement- so if there are enough of us, your name might only come up once a fortnight/ three weeks over five months- while remembering the garden is open for everyone all the time to cut flowers.

I have a grid ready to add names- please e mail me on [garden.fmvh@mail.com](mailto:garden.fmvh@mail.com) if you are able to help - or if you have any ideas for the garden or for activities. It is OUR community garden.

Thank you everyone very much - it is a privilege to be involved in this project and I am really enjoying meeting everyone and am humbled by the kindness and generosity being shown.

Siân







## The Ghost Owl's Wood

In 1985 we lived in a hamlet on the edge of the New Forest. Our home was on open, flat farmland with set aside fields and cattle. Nearby the River Avon attracted overwintering birds and twitchers and occasionally more unusual species flew over or into our garden. But the bird we welcomed the most was the ethereal barn owl which would quarter the evening ground in front of our windows searching for prey. It took it's catch to a dilapidated farm building before coming back for more hidden food scurrying in our grass. That Barn Owl and many others it seems, disappeared well before the end of the decade and from then on, the only

time we saw one was while driving at night, a ghostly white form perched on a roadside post. We always hoped that these hunting birds didn't get caught by a car, stunned by bright headlights, giving life to the colloquial name, Death Owl.



In Hartgrove, we took over land that includes 5 acres of not very good pasture. Although dryish when we arrived it became boggy with natural springs and is no longer much use for anything seriously agricultural.

It's one recent purposeful function was to host three dead pig legs which were left in cages by a forensic science student who was studying decomposition under different conditions. We call that site "Pig-leg Bottom" and the maggots on the unclothed leg were a truly phenomenal sight. At the top of the field two ancient willows stand to one side regenerating each time they are chopped down to shoulder height, almost eternally indestructible.



The Woodland Trust promotes non-professional woodland planting. Our application to them was submitted in November 2019 as a Christmas present. A brief acknowledgment preceded COVID-19 restrictions and for months nothing happened. Then last summer a consultant, Guy, visited to look at the site, discuss our plans, consider their viability and make suggestions before he decided whether to recommend support for our scheme. It felt strange that the last time I saw him he was eight years old and his mum was a member of the baby-sitting circle. He didn't mind it being mentioned.

Our original plan had been to use only part of the field. However if a scheme is large enough the Trust will supply not only a grant towards the cost of trees, stakes, and tree-guards but also contractors to determine a planting layout and most helpfully, put the trees in the ground. This was a very attractive idea so we gave over the whole field to woodland.

After more months wait the trees finally arrived in early February. To the left is what 1,000 trees and 200 shrubs look like when delivered by lorry. To the right this is what they look like in the ground, planted in sub-zero temperatures over two days by three hardworking young men who didn't even wear gloves. There is an avenue of wild cherries along a track, fronted by lower growing bushes and behind the cherries a range of other mixed native trees.

To return to the barn owl. The evening the contractors departed, when the light was fading, a barn owl flew slowly over the trees from some long grass that sides the stream at the edge of the field. It was as if it was inspecting the new landscape, though given the cold it was probably desperate for more vole. That owl takes us full circle and we are so thrilled to be living in the vicinity of this beautiful, ghostly, avian assassin again.

If you would like to know more about the support we had from the Woodland Trust or about this project you can email Barbara at [blueletterbox@btinternet.com](mailto:blueletterbox@btinternet.com)

This March 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 April 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 April issue by Tuesday 23rd March 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)*