

January 2023



PUBLISHED MONTHLY AND DISTRIBUTED FREE TO ALL CURRY RIVEL RESIDENTS; ALSO AVAILABLE IN VARIOUS OUTLETS AROUND CURRY RIVEL

Thank you Gina and CRiB

Marcus Hembrow – Chairman, Curry Rivel Parish Council

As the winter nights draw in and the heat and sounds of summer, and hours toiling in our gardens become a distant memory, now is an appropriate time to remember that baking hot day in early July when the South-West in Bloom judging panel visited the village.

This was no ordinary visit. It saw the village at its finest looking a picture from floral displays in the Church, to Granny's Garden, The War Memorial, Parsonage



Place and High Street planters and The Currywoods Conservation Field. The effort that went in was exceptional, aside from the planting there was the watering, the weeding, the sweeping and the litter collection.

To all who participated in whatever way and how small, thank you. The result was well worth the effort for in October at the Judging Ceremony, the Village were awarded their 4th Gold Award in the Cox Cup category of Large Village. The judging criteria included Horticultural excellence, Community Involvement and Environmental Responsibility and the success was a reward and reflection for the village keeping their front gardens and various displays looking so lovely.

In addition, the three entries that were entered in "It's Your Neighbourhood" were rewarded with two "Outstanding Awards" for Currywoods Field and The Allotments and most pleasing was a "Thriving Award" for the Primary School.

Just before judging in late June, we enjoyed Open Gardens which marked a resumption of normality after Covid. These two events and their this success were only possible due to the driving force of Gina Beauchamp without whom none of

this would have been possible. For over 5 years Gina has encouraged, cajoled and managed a team of volunteers and helpers whose efforts we enjoyed over the Summer. Aside from this Gina has been bringing on the next generation, holding gardening lessons at the Primary School.

Gina is stepping down from Chair of CRiB and I wish to convey on behalf of the whole village and The Parish Council a huge thank you to her and her husband Tony for all of their efforts, much of which have gone unseen but is very much recognised by the 4 Gold Awards received.

The opportunity has now arisen for new blood to join CRiB and to draw on the foundations and success of Gina's legacy. For the village to enjoy all that CRiB offers, new volunteers are needed. Please don't be shy and do get involved. Contact CRiB now at cribsomerset@gmail.com and offer whatever time you can.

Gina again thank you very much.



Which green space will be next to go?

Development in Curry Rivel.

Simon Hall

Higher demand on school places and the doctors' surgery? Less green space? Destruction of a busy dog walking area? Increased traffic and congestion? More flooding? Destruction of wildlife habitats?

Yes, this is the plan for a corner of Curry Rivel that has been a haven and habitat for villagers, wildlife and livestock for decades. The developers who built houses in Abbey Close and Abbey Fields are back, nearly 30 years later, to build up

2022 in which Polden Planning and West of England Developments answered questions and listened to verbal feedback.

What are the most important features within and around the site? The peaceful, quiet, safe, green environment with no traffic and cars, allowing children to play, dogs to roam. An area filled with deer roaming free, abundant with Woodpeckers, Jays, Owls, Bats and much more as well as peaceful tranquillity.

The thought that a road will run through the open green space and play area at the end of Abbey Close into houses on the meadow off Drayton Lane is horrifying! Residents in Drayton Lane, Abbey Close, Back Lane and Honeylands particularly those with schoolchildren should seek full information of what is proposed as the traffic issues will affect them considerably.

The villagers of Curry Rivel should vehemently oppose this development. Our roads and amenities are too small, our environment too precious to allow this to go ahead.

Contact Rebecca Randall at Polden Planning on: info@poldenplanning.co.uk, contact your Parish Councillors - contact details on the Village website - as well as letting us know your feelings on: abbeyclosecurryrivel@gmail.com



to 20 houses on a meadow, public play area and council owned green space.

Originally purchased by the Hunt family as preserved agricultural land, the housing proposal will see this altered forever. Another green space, not designated for planning, seen removed. This plan, combined with several other development areas in the village, means that the green space is shrinking, the built-up areas growing.

A public consultation was held in November



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Looking Back to January 1963 – The Big Freeze

Jane Hamlin

Just about sixty years ago, on the 29th and 30th December 1962, a blizzard swept across South-West England and Wales.

The snow drifted to more than 20 feet in places. Roads and railway lines were blocked, and power lines were brought down.


Even the sea froze for about one mile off the coast of Kent, and the snow lasted for over two months in some areas. It was one of the coldest winters on record in the UK.

Some readers might remember scraping the ice from the inside of their windows. An Automobile Association (AA) spokesperson was quoted as saying, “the only thing travelling up the M1 is snow.”

Of course, this was several years before we had a motorway in Somerset, so it was probably the only thing – apart from tractors and bulldozers – travelling around here.

These photographs, shared by Alan and Gabby Burge, show the situation near the road to Swell, and Chris Osborne and Alan Bird on snow-clearing duties.





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Bringing the outside in – *flowers enhancing our lives*

Carolyn Paton

The WI was treated to an illustrated talk in November from Sue Randall, a talented flower arranger who lives locally, ably assisted at the tech table by Annette Stein, herself a member, grower and arranger. Sue spoke, and Annette put up illustrations, showing how the use and appreciation of flowers in churches and homes has evolved across the centuries, tracing development, as far as is possible, from earliest pictorial and other records through to current trends. The Romans were gardeners, but following their departure from these isles, as far as one can tell, their gardens disappeared, and earliest records show that it was monks who developed the use of herbs and simple flowers. These were not only for medical purposes but to strew on the ground to cover the (sometimes malodorous) air when crushed by footfall, and to ward off pestilence. The upper classes carried fragrant posies for similar reasons. No plug-in fresheners then!

The first mention of plants in churches seems to be around 1487 – of holly and ivy foliage for use in major festivals. There are bills that show the costs involved in 1526; 1s 6d was paid for 'rosemary and bay stuck around the church' – pretty pricey for those days! Following the Dissolution, all changed with the rise in personal manor houses and travel. Flowers and plants were brought into these large homes, and paintings show indoor arrangements. We saw some wonderful illustrations. Devotional depictions in the 16th century figure a variety of flowers and fruits, the symbolism of these being widely understood in an era when illiteracy was the norm. For example, the iris stood for royalty, the carnation for humility, the lily for purity etc. A Tudor nosegay, called intriguingly a Tussie Mussie, contained many different flowers and herbs, each with a meaning as well as a practical perfume purpose.

By the 18th century, flowers had become almost universally used for major festivals in churches, and arrangements were frequently placed in elegant classical vases. The Victorians were prolific in their use of floral decoration, calling their arrangements 'bouquets', a term which has a more specific meaning today. Their taste might seem over-the-top by later standards, as more structured styles came into favour, particularly post 2nd World War. Flower clubs became a feature, and a national association was formed, offering teaching and demonstration. Huge venues such as cathedrals offer the opportunity for spectacular arrangements which beautify the building as well as enhancing the worship experience of those taking part in services within them.

Today there are questions; gorgeous arrangements in either homes or public spaces may achieve their structure using micro plastics. That wonderful aid to the florist's art, Oasis, is now recognised as toxic in the eco sense, and indeed the RHS discourages its use and has banned its use in its own events. Our parents and previous generations used chicken wire and pin holders instead of these wet-foam blocks, and for the future these and other DIY systems are the way to go. New approaches such as the 'Flowers from the Farm' movement, promoting the use of seasonal native flowers over flown-in exotics or hot-house blooms are coming to the fore. However, we have to recognise that nothing is that simple, and it is valid too to ask about those who rely on the raising and sale of these flowers which come with a larger energy footprint, for their livelihoods. Sue and Annette had generously brought with them both a tightly bound Tussie Mussie and a fabulous decorative Christmas swag which served as prizes at the end of the meeting. Lucky winners!

Our thanks are due to both of these talented women. Anyone wishing to join our thriving Women's Institute is most welcome to contact the President, Anne Geach 01458 253078 for more information.

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Curry Rivel News

What do you think?

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OBITUARY

Rob Atkins

Sadly Rob Atkins, Curry Rivel News's Treasurer from 2013 to 2022 has died at the age of 82.

In his successful business career Rob travelled to all corners of the world. "If you wanted a fascinating story about, say, Azerbaijan, then Rob was your man" said Nigel Grinsted. "Washed down of course with a glass or two of Malbec".

Rob leaves behind his wife India and her son Simon and his son Peter and daughter Samantha.

Nigel G

Somerton u3a

The year 2022 has been quite a strange year for many of us as we have struggled to return to 'normal'. I think it would be fair to say that for most of us, we have enjoyed being back in our Groups, joining the Monthly Meetings and back socialising but, of course, this has not been the same for everyone and we will continue to support and encourage those who are finding things difficult still.

We have celebrated 40 years of u3a and, perhaps more relevant to us, 25 years of Somerton u3a! We did this by holding a splendid Tea Party and awarded Life Membership to our 3 remaining founder members. We had a Barn Dance, which was very much enjoyed, and we are now (depending on when you read this) preparing for a celebratory Christmas Meal at Long Sutton Golf Club.

What of next year? Well, our u3a is in your hands. The Committee, Group Leaders, those helping behind the scenes will do their very best for you, but it is up to every one of us to take part. So, let's go forward into 2023 with high hopes, a willingness to help, a sense of participation – and have fun!

Taken from the Somerton u3a Chairman's message in December's newsletter

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Sarah-Jane Fraser

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2023



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January Meeting

Talk by Paul Bygrave

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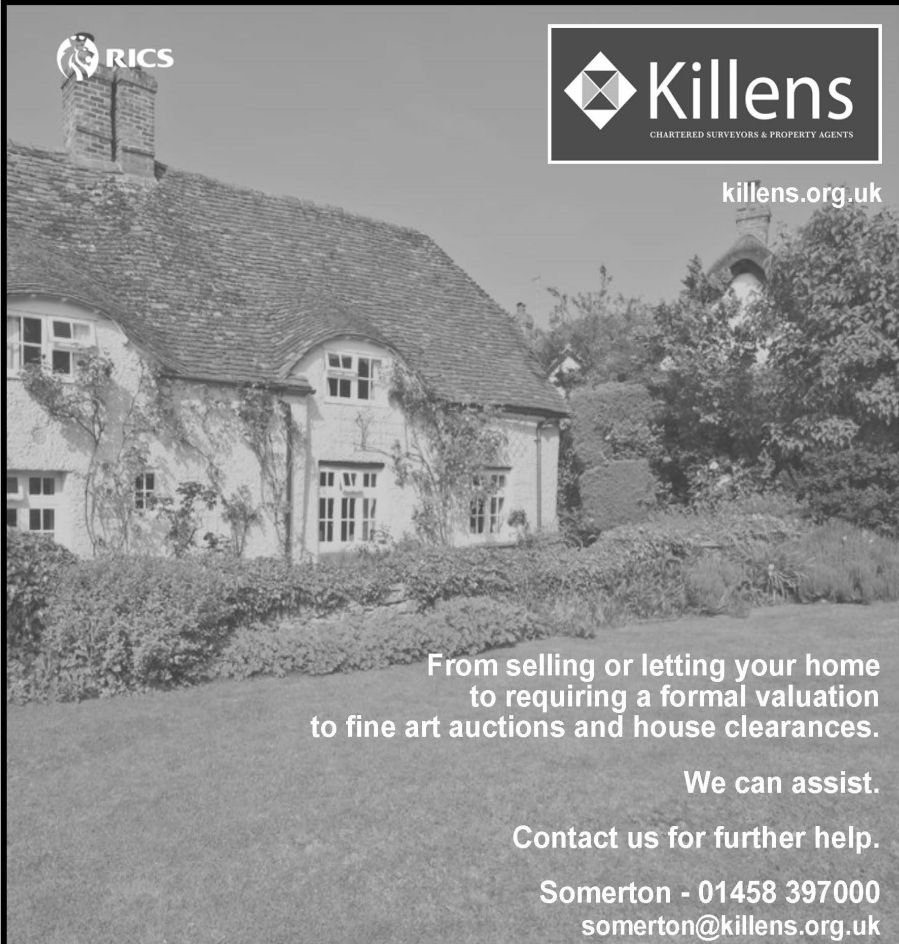
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No offence, but

Jennie Browning

This phrase is almost always the precursor to the recipient of the comment being offended! That said, it seems that these days people are so easily offended, it's almost pointless to start a comment this way. I do wonder if there is *anything at all* that doesn't offend somebody.

I think social media has made it too easy for people to express instant offence and negatively comment on absolutely anything they see on TV or online. Would you feel outraged enough to write a letter, perhaps to "Points of View", and put it in the post (remember that – pen and paper, envelope, stamp, trip to the post box?)? It was necessary to start the letter with "Dear Auntie Beeb, I was watching <insert show> and was horrified / appalled / perplexed / saddened / outraged (delete as appropriate). Why, oh why, oh why..." and signed "Upset of Swindon" or "Disgusted of Leamington Spa".

This is not to say that people shouldn't be allowed to voice their displeasure about something - of course they should. But maybe it would be useful to stop and think for a moment as to your motive. Are you really offended or just disagree with the viewpoint presented? Do you want to effect change?

If there is a program on TV which offends you, I have found a fantastic function on the TV remote, which enables you to change channel. Who'd have thought it!

Something that I'm sure won't offend anyone (except possibly me, as I wasn't invited to perform in any way) is an evening of entertainment, fun and frolics.

Dispel the Winter Blues on Friday 24th February, at St Andrews Church. There is no entry fee, but donations would be very welcome, and there will be wine and nibbles and a Raffle too. Maybe you will win a Paddington Bear? More details closer to the time.

The word offend comes from Middle English *offenden* "to assail, violate, displease, hurt the feelings of" and was first used in the 14th century. I do hope I have done none of these things, but if I have, whoops!

Somerset Bus Partnership Welcomes Flat Rate Fare Proposals

Peter Travis – Co-Chair Somerset Bus Partnership

Somerset Bus Partnership welcomes the Government's plan to provide up to £60 million, to enable bus operators to cap single adult bus fares at £2. The £2 flat fare comes in from the beginning of January and will continue through to the end of to March 2023. Most bus operators are expected to adopt the scheme.

This means millions of people across England will save money, at a time when many households are suffering massive pressures from the rising cost of living. The move will help people travel for work, education, shopping and medical treatments and provide a much-needed saving in daily expenditure.

The current average single fare for a 3-mile journey is estimated at over £2.80, meaning that the new fare will save passengers almost 30% of the price every time they travel.

In addition, Somerset County Council currently plans to introduce a £1 single/ £2 return bus fare in Taunton, as part of its Bus Service Improvement Plan. Somerset Bus Partnership welcomes this initiative but emphasises the need to procure further funding to enable this flat rate fare to be extended across all of Somerset.



Somerset Bus Partnership Co-Chair, Peter Travis, said, "Bus usage declined in Somerset in the last decade, and even more so during the pandemic. We need initiatives like these to restore and improve passenger levels. Encouraging people to choose buses over cars helps to reduce carbon emissions. It is estimated that the Government's £60 million will reduce car journeys by at least 2 million and cut pollution and congestion for all of us."

Somerset Bus Partnership will continue to work closely with Somerset County Council to encourage bus use and ensure implementation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan across the county.

Contact us at: somersetbuspartnership@gmail.com
<http://www.somersetbuspartnership.co.uk/>
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Movies in the Village Hall

Alison Cockrell

mvh.curry.wix.com/films



Fisherman's Friends: One and All (12A)

Friday 20 January 2023

**Please note earlier start time of 7.00pm
(doors open 6.30pm)**



A follow up to the 2019 hit 'Fisherman's Friends', the film continues the story of the famous sea shanty singers from Cornwall. Having found fame, the fishermen have to cope with success, love, loss, a second album and performing on the pyramid stage at Glastonbury. Fame is never plain sailing!

Stars: James Purefoy, Sam Swainsbury, Dave Johns, Maggie Steed and David Hayman.

Doors open at 6.30pm; show starts at 7.00pm in the Curry Rivel Village Hall.

Tickets £7 are available at the door

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We warmly welcome visitors and new members of the community to any of our services and other events.

January

Please note that this month's diary as shown below is a change to the 'regular' monthly pattern on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Sundays.

Sunday 1st - 1st after Christmas

10.30 **CR OSR** - United Benefice Holy Communion

Thursday 5th

10.00 **CR OSR** - Holy Communion BCP

Sunday 8th - Baptism of Christ

10.00 **FH** - All Age Family and Friends Service + refreshments

11.15 **FH** - Said Communion CW
6.00 pm **CR (OSR?)** - Evening Prayer

Sunday 15th - Epiphany 2

9.30 **SW** - Holy Communion BCP
11.00 **CR** - Parish Communion CW
+ Kids Church

Thursday 19th

10.00 **CR OSR** - Holy Communion BCP

Sunday 22nd - Epiphany 3

9.30 **FH** - Morning Worship
11.00 **CR** - All Age Family & Friends Service + refreshments
12.15 **CR** - said Communion CW

Sunday 29th - Epiphany 4

9.30 **FH** - Parish Communion CW
11.00 **CR** - Morning Worship CW
+ Kids Church
6.00 pm **SW** - Evensong BCP

CR = St. Andrew's Church, Curry Rivel
CR OSR = Old School Room, Curry Rivel, 'behind' St. Andrew's Church
FH = St. Martin's Church, Fivehead
SW = St. Catherine's Church, Swell

Scott's spot



The original and best

Just before December last year, you may have heard that we now live in a minority Christian country. According to the 2021 census 46.2% of the population in England and Wales now describe themselves as "Christian" - a fall from 59.3% a decade ago in 2011. Pundits spoke of this as a 'pivotal moment' with comparisons drawn to 'the dark ages', and to illustrate all this pictures of tiny congregations in large churches were shown.

How did you respond to the news? Perhaps with a 'hooray, we're a nation finally ridding itself of the shackles of repressive religion' or maybe you felt this a moment to be regretted. How about your vicar then? Well three things came to mind. Firstly a slightly defensive: 'well at least part of the drop - perhaps a significant part - may well be to do with many people no longer feeling they ought to write 'Christian' on the form'. My suspicion is that this census more accurately represents a long hidden truth that many will have written 'Christian' in the past not as worshipping, praying, growing, disciples of Jesus, but because of British social convention. This census probably reveals hearts more accurately.

My second response is that 46.2% equates to 27.5 million people. It can sometimes feel rather lonely being a Christian or a Christian leader in our culture. But to know that nearly 1 in 2 people do still express some kind of Christian affinity, is actually heartening. This is still a lot of people. Did you know that by comparison the combined membership of our four largest political parties is approximately 850,000?

Scott's Spot ctd. . .

And thirdly, as I grieve the reality of this moment, knowing in my daily life the hope, help and courage that flow from my partnership with Christ, I also want to ask the people of England and Wales a question: "**how's this working out for you?**" As more than half of us no longer acknowledge Jesus Christ and our nation drifts from its Biblical moorings, how's that going in practice?

The teachings of Christ and the Christian faith speak of God's expectations in terms of public and private integrity. As we drift from this, how's that working out, even amongst those holding the highest Offices in our land? Christians are called to live in fellowship with God and each other, to 'love our neighbours as ourselves', and in the pattern of Jesus to do so sacrificially. As we drift, how's that working out in our increasingly individualistic and lonely culture, where voluntary organisations and charities are struggling to find support? Christ's followers are called to have a special care for the weak, vulnerable and powerless amongst us. How have you felt about some of the care received by families who have landed on our shores seeking help?

God's teaching is that parents are to be honoured and older members of society respected for their wisdom and experience.

Marriage and family are to be honoured as worthy of protection and nurture, and God's call is for the powerful emotions involved in sexual expression to be reserved for the marriage bed. As we drift from these principles and find ourselves facing a 'youth culture' that rejects the wisdom of age, that is ever more sexually liberal, and that undermines family by advocating quick and 'easy' divorce, how's that working out for us?

In 2031 another census will come along and the expectation is that the current pattern will continue. Even fewer people will consider themselves 'Christian'. At the same time, my expectation is that the many painful and destructive consequences of this decline will continue to multiply. Might there possibly be a link?

With prayer and every blessing for the New Year and on into 2023,
Rev'd Scott

From St. Andrew's Registers

Funerals

May God grant them eternal rest.

6th December - Service of

Thanksgiving for the Life of
Charles Norman Carter (Charlie)
(† 11th November)

followed by burial in the churchyard

**For your Diary
'Curry Capers Variety Show'
On Friday 24th February**

Members of St. Andrew's congregation and friends will host an evening of light entertainment with a varied programme of short performances.

More details in the February issue of the CR News.

St. Andrew's Rotas January

Brass - Gillie Purves

Flowers

7th & 13th - Adrienne Holmes
20th & 27th - Sue Randell

Cleaning

7th - Nicky Barker
14th - Liz Rendell
21st - Lynne Comley
28th - Tina Geary



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United Reformed Church



January

Services at 10.30 (unless indicated otherwise) in our Chapel building and simultaneously via Zoom

Anyone unable to attend in person who would like to feel part of a worshipping community is invited to join with us - from any denomination or none; simply email Steve Beney on sbeney6@gmail.com expressing your interest and he will make contact with you to explain how you can join with us on Sundays @ 10:30 am.

Sunday 1st - to be arranged

Sunday 8th - Rev Rowena Francis (incl. Holy Communion)

Sunday 15th - to be arranged

Sunday 22nd - Rev Evelyn Ridout

Sunday 29th - Rev Tim Richards

URC Minister:

Rev. Tim Richards 01458 252799

We are an inclusive, outward looking group of people and we welcome all: wherever you are on your life/spiritual journey we welcome you without regard to age, gender, denominational background, sexual orientation, race or ability. Tea/coffee is served after every service, providing the opportunity to meet and chat with each other and the preacher.

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Well here we are, another new year. Did you make any resolutions?

The one I usually make is, NOT to make any resolutions, but generally I fail.

The thing is, why is it that New Year has become associated with changing things that we are generally unsatisfied with? Be it our weight, level of fitness or a desire to improve our quality of life in some way or other.

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They made promises to their gods at the start of each year that they would return borrowed objects and pay their debts. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honour of the new year—though for them the year began not in January but in mid-March, when the crops were planted.

The Romans began each year by making promises to the god Janus, for whom the month of January is named.

There is a natural desire to change that with which we are dissatisfied and the turning of the year is an obvious time to reflect on that, we leave behind that which has passed and open a new page in the diaries of our lives.

Scripture is full of references to God welcoming us anew. From Isaiah 43. 19, 'behold I am doing a new thing..';

Matthew 11. 'come to me all who are weary..',

Revelation 21:5 'And he who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'

This is covenant time, when once more within the Methodist tradition, Christians are reminded that God is always present and always accepting of us, and within that we are invited to partner with God in making a real change in our world, in God's world.

Our opportunity, our responsibility is to accept God's offer and to know that whenever we need to change or adapt some aspect of our lives, God is ever present, ever open and ever loving.

A very happy New Year to one and all,

Rev. Tim.



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WARNING

All the below events are subject to cancellation at short notice due to the Corona virus epidemic please contact each group for details.....Keep well, Keep safe

what's on ...In January

Regular Events

MONDAY

10.00	Art Club	Village Hall
10.00	Table Tennis (kevl@outlook.com)	Village Hall
6.00	Pilates	Primary School
6.45	Explorer Scouts	Scout Hall, Langport

TUESDAY

10.00	Craft & Coffee (2nd only)	Old School Room
10.00	Keep Fit (nicky.barker1@btinternet.com)	Village Hall
2.30	Forget-Me-Not-Café	Village Hall
4.30	Rainbows/Brownies	Drayton Village Hall
5.45	Pilates	Primary School
6.00	Cub Pack	Scout Hall, Langport
6.30	Rangers	URC Hall
6.30	Langport Youth Club	Ridge way Hall
7.00	Short Mat Bowls	Village Hall
7.30	Sedgemoor Garden Club (2nd only)	All Saints Hall L'port

WEDNESDAY

10.30	Sparklers Toddler Group	Old School Room
5.30	Beavers	Scout Hall, Langport
6.30	Cycling Club	Bridge Cafe
6.45	Scouts	Scout Hall, Langport
7.30	Bell Ringing	St. Andrews

THURSDAY

10.00	WI (2nd only)	Village Hall
2.00	Short Mat Bowls	Village Hall
6.30	Yoga	Village Hall
7.30	Parish Council (1st only)	

FRIDAY

9.30	Pilates	Village Hall
9.30-2	Friday Club	Village Hall
7.30	Movie Night (3rd only)	Village Hall

SATURDAY

9.00	Cycling Club	Bridge Cafe
3.30-5.30 (2nd only)	Messy Church	Old School Room

Some Useful Telephone Numbers**Youth Organisations**

Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorer Scouts	(gslthelevelsscouts@gmail.com)
Rainbows	01823 698940
Brownies	251953
Rangers	252901
Langport Youth Club	0793 899 338

Sports Clubs

Short Mat Bowls Club	251616
Cricket Club	01823 698849 & 01458 252791
Yoga	07789 862548
Pilates	07769 351984

Social

Flower Show	250311
Out & About	0788 737 7942
Royal British Legion	01460 281115
Twinning Association	01460 281905
Women's Institute	253078
Rotary Club of Langport & Somerton	252813
Sedgemoor Garden Club	250091
Heale Lane Allotment Association	741880
Curry Rivel in Bloom	762296
Friday Club	252791
Health Walks	250725
Mother and Baby	07732 197030
Forget-Me-Not-Café	252710 & 396123

Arts

Entertainers	250311
Music Club	250863
Art Club	253126

Community Facilities

Food Bank (help@curryrivel.org.uk)	0771 6792760
Village Hall (crvhbookings@gmail.com)	07789 661288
Old School Room Bookings (crosrbookings@gmail.com)	250655/253856
United Reformed Church Hall - Bookings etc.	259391

Community Services

Doctors	250464
Police	101
Yarlington Housing	01935 404500
Footpath & Litter Warden	johncasebourne@sky.com

Education

Little Pips	252822
Primary School	251404
Huish Episcopi Academy	250501
Huish Episcopi Leisure Centre	251055

Local Authorities

Parish Council (Clerk) curryrivelparish@outlook.com	07714 510828
District Council	0 1935 462462
County Council	0300 123 2224

Religious

Church of England Rector	251375
Churchwarden	259003
Secretary PCC	251355
Organist & Bell Ringing	253856
Flower Guild	252710
Roman Catholic Church, Somerton	07483 120 603
URC Minister	252799
Messy Church	01458 762523

Deadlines for February 2023 Edition

Advertising: 5pm Thursday 5th January
Send to: crn.nigel@outlook.com

Comments & Articles: 5pm Monday 9th January
Send to: curryrivelnews@gmail.com

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Editor	Jane Hamlin	252946
	curryrivelnews@gmail.com	
Advertising	Nigel Grinsted	0773 422 6000
	crn.nigel@outlook.com	
Treasurer	Graham Finlayson	0790 0082194
	cr.news.treasurer@gmail.com	
Publisher	Mike Davis	0786 799 1338
	crnpub@gmail.com	
Distribution	Bernard Hall	252378
	bernard@hall159.plus.com	
Secretary	Natalie Gunter	
	crngsecretary@gmail.com	
Church Pages	John de Ronde	251355
	johnderonde51@hotmail.com	

Pick up your Prescription from the Post Office

Do you pick up repeat prescriptions from Langport surgery? If so you can request your medicine to be delivered to Curry Rivel Post Office in the BP petrol station. When you reorder, simply ask for delivery to Curry Rivel PO (including reorders on the surgery website). The surgery delivers to the Post Office every Tuesday and Friday. And while you're in the Post Office you can pick up a cappuccino too!

Beetle-mania

Nigel Grinsted

Beetles, beetles everywhere! Well almost. Here Nigel Grinsted tells us about these incredible insects.

You may think there are more species of butterflies, bees or ants in the world but in fact there are over 400,000 species of beetle, more than any other animal. Scientists think there may be at least another 400,000 species still to be discovered! They're mostly dull in colour, small and harmless – and they live in secluded places chewing rotten wood and vegetation – so we just don't see them often.

UK Beetles

Starting here in the UK, there are over 4,200 beetle species. But only 59 butterfly species. There are all the well-known beetles like Ladybirds, Stag Beetles, Woodworm (several species), Deathwatch Beetle and Carpet Beetles (three types). The male Stag is the largest in the UK at 7.5cm long. It is quite rare, but London is a stronghold.

Like all insects, beetles grow when they are in larval (caterpillar) form. They generally feed on a wide range of organic material, depending upon the species. Some are predators, eating slugs, snails and other invertebrates.

As you would expect, some species are serious pests such as the Elm Bark Beetle which isn't a pest itself, but it spreads the sac fungi which causes Dutch Elm Disease that killed 70% of Elms in the UK in the 1970s.

Most of a beetle's life is as a larva. The Stag Beetle larva can live up to seven years underground feeding mainly on rotting wood. And it can grow to 11cm long!

Most UK beetles are dullish in colour but there are exceptions:

- Snowdon Beetle
- Wasp Beetle
- Ant Beetle
- Banded Sexton Beetle

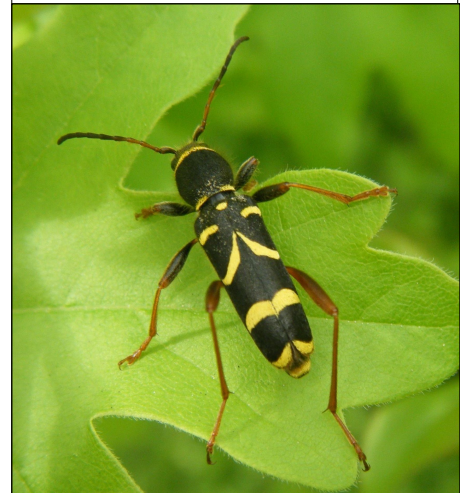
Key beetle facts:

- They are insects.
- They are harmless to humans.
- The scientific name (order) for beetles is Coleoptera.
- They have two pairs of wings.
- The front pair of wings is hardened into protective wing cases.
- Two beetles vie for the largest beetle in the world award: the Titan Beetle and the male Hercules Beetle. However more than half the Hercules's length is its plier-like horns. The Titan Beetle is hornless. Their length is around 190mm - that's 20mm shorter than the width of this page. In other words - massive! Both are found in the Central America region.
- Incredibly the larva of the Titan Beetle has never been found! That's amazing! Judging from boreholes found in wood they estimate that it's up to 300mm long and 50mm in diameter.
- *The smallest known beetle is a type of Featherwing Beetle only discovered in 1999 in Nicaragua. It's only 0.325mm long. That's minuscule.*
- Beetles haven't been found in the Arctic or Antarctica (yet?).

Colourful beetles



Super Snowdon Beetle



Wasp Beetle - quite a good mimic



Ant Beetle



Banded Sexton Beetle