



COMBWICH, OTTERHAMPTON AND STEART NEWSLETTER

Otter Tales

Inside this issue

Page 2

Parish Council Report

Page 3

The Windows of St. Peter's
Church

Page 4

Village Shop Report

Page 5

OPRA

Pages 6 and Page 7

Otterhampton School

Page 7

Scams

Page 8

Combwich & District WI

Page 9

Protecting the Fish

Pippi's Ponderings

Page 10

Anybody for a Game of Fives?

Page 11

Village Hall

Harbour View Community Bar

Page 12

No to Racism

Page 13

Otter in the Kitchen

Page 14

WWT Steart Marshes

Page 15

Hill House Menu

Church Services

Otter Wheels

Page 16

Mobile Library &

General Information



The West Window of Combwich Church

(story on page 3)



Otterhampton Parish Council

COMBWICH • OTTERHAMPTON • STEART

Christmas and New Year seem a long time away now, but we sincerely hope you all had a good break and want to wish everyone a prosperous and happy 2026. Due to the Christmas break, things were relatively quiet on the Council front, which gave us the time we needed to set the budget for 2025-26 and of course the 2026-27 precept. This was finalised at the January meeting.

Unfortunately, the precept (The proportion of the council tax determined by the parish council) has had to be increased slightly to allow the Parish Council to cover the increasing costs we are facing. With more and more services likely to be devolved from County to local community level, it is necessary for us to ensure our finances and potential spending is planned appropriately. This amounts to a small increase of £1.30 per month for a Band D property and is the first increase since 2019.

Emergency Planning Workshop – After carrying out a Preparedness review earlier in the year, it has become apparent that the Council needs to reassess our current protocols in the event of an emergency. We are therefore, looking for volunteers to form a working party to update our procedures ensuring that we are ready if the time comes. There are so many potential scenarios, which is what will make this very interesting. It starts with a training workshop on Monday 23rd March in Wembdon from 1730-2030. Any interested parties please contact me via the email below. Don't forget we are looking for a wide range of experiences, young or older.

Flag – Hope everyone has noticed the new shiny Somerset Flag!



Fly Parking – This continues to be a problem throughout the village. SPS are keen for any infringements to be reported and are currently developing an APP which will allow reports to be made directly to them. They will then be able to investigate the issue and deal with it more rapidly. We will let you know once it becomes live.

Things have been busy since our return from the Christmas break, and I look forward to updating you in the next issue.

If you would like to raise any issues you might like considering by the PC, please contact the Clerk on the email below or better still come along to a PC meeting which usually takes place on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Village Hall. Or alternatively, speak to one of your Councillors.

Full details of decisions taken at Parish Council meetings are contained within the minutes which are available on the 3 village notice boards (opposite the Post Office, opposite the Anchor Inn by the play area and on the wall of Ferracies Farm, Steart) plus Otterhampton Parish Council Website. Further information will be posted on FaceBook.

Contact details for parish councillors

Lindsey Parsons (Chair)	lindsey.parsons@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	01278 653700
Connie Sanders (Vice-Chair)	connie.sanders@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	01278 653307
Tina Gardener	tina.gardener@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	01278 652642
Mike Haycraft	mike.haycraft@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	01278 653264
Carol Bradbury	carol.bradbury@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	01278 652313
Steven Parker	steven.parker@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	07895 239878
Dave Dodge	dave.dodge@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	07306 243368

Clerk to the parish council

Stephanie Juniper	clerk@otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk	07395 008455
-------------------	--	--------------

(Stephanie works part-time and flexible hours)

County Ward Members

Mike Caswell	01278 652043.	Brian Bolt	079708 55990
--------------	---------------	------------	--------------

The Story Told in the Windows of St. Peter's Church

St Peter's church was built for the parishioners of Combwich. The stained glass windows within the church illustrate the link between the church, its values and serving the community.



The windows in the apse illustrate the spiritual journey of St. Peter and reflect the identity and calling of a church for a village whose identity is linked to the river, the estuary and the sea. Peter was a fisherman with links to being on the water.

The church values and connection to the village on the river and an active port are told through scenes that connect St. Peter and his faith to boats and uncertain waters.

The first window in the story shows Christ calling Peter with the simple words: "Follow me." Peter leaves behind his nets to follow Christ. This reflects the values of courage, trust, and the willingness to step into the unknown.

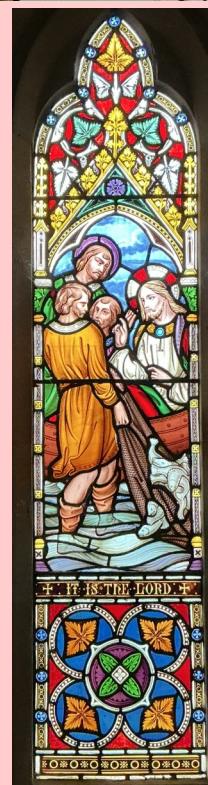
The other windows capture dramatic moments on the water. In "Peace, be still," Jesus calms a violent storm as the disciples fear for their lives.

In "It is I; be not afraid," He comes to them walking on the waves, and Peter dares to step out of the boat toward Him.

The final window shows the moment after the Resurrection when the disciples, back at their nets, see a figure on the shore.

When John says, "It is the Lord," Peter plunges into the water to reach Jesus.

The mission of the church is reflected in the larger West Window (shown on the front page) depicting Christ's words from Matthew 25:



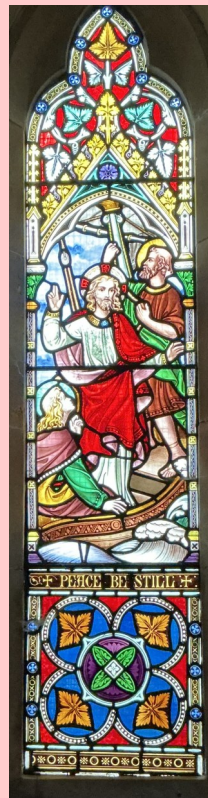
"I was hungry and you gave me food... I was naked and you clothed me... I was a stranger and you took me in."

These scenes illustrate Jesus' charge to Peter: "Feed my sheep." The fisherman who once gathered fish in nets is now called to gather and care for people with compassion.

St. Peter's Church in Combwich was built to serve the community and these windows illustrate this mission. To care for people with dignity and honour. To be hospitable to strangers, to be welcoming, provide food, safety, and a sense of belonging. The windows also form a spiritual guide for the church and congregation.

In a coastal village these images carry special depth. When the church was built in 1870 this powerful imagery would remind parishioners that their patron saint understood their world and that the church was there to serve the village with courage and love.

A message that still resonates today as the church attempts to reconnect with the village and once again become central to community life.



COULD THIS BE OUR VILLAGE SHOP?

Report of Community Shop Steering Group



The Combwich Community Shop steering group is using the existing shop as a primary consideration, but we are currently not in a position to give information publicly. The picture above is our idea for the development of the shop should a purchase go ahead. We have received training from Alison Macklin of the Plunkett Foundation which is an organisation formed to help with community shops.

When we are in a position to give more information, we will set up a stall at future village markets. As we progress forward, we will form an effective management committee. This will be a professional body which will work to creating a sustainable Community shop.

We will hold an open day for all of the parish and Stockland when significant progress has been made. This will be an opportunity to talk to and possibly recruit new volunteers.

The Current members of the steering group are Gary Perrett (chair), Paul Thornell (vice chair, Ally Prowse, Baz Juniper, Pete Rawlings, Carol Bradbury, Bob and Carol Birkenhead, Sue Aherne, David and Joy Simcox. Villagers are welcome to talk to members of the team. If there are any volunteers, particularly with computing and accountancy skills, willing to join the steering group, please contact Gary Perrett at combwichcs@gmail.com



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

Chair Tina Gardener 652642 - Secretary Carol Bradbury 652313

Although it's a bit late OPRA would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

Our Christmas activities started off with the ever popular Senior's Christmas dinner. This year it was attended by 57 people. It was a very enjoyable evening for both diners and helpers, and is always a great way to start the Christmas festivities. A 3-course meal was served with wine and, as it was OPRA's 25th anniversary, a glass of prosecco was given to everyone. No one



went hungry or thirsty as the following was consumed; 28 bottles of wine and prosecco, 10kg of turkey, 15kg of potatoes and 20kg of vegetables. Play your cards right was the theme of this year's quiz.

Many thanks go to Helen, Brian, Tom and Mel for peeling all the potatoes, Pete for chauffeuring duties, Simon for waiting on tables, Mike for the quiz, and all the committee for all their hard work

preparing serving and clearing up afterwards. Special thanks as always to Ray and Chris for their superb work in the kitchen; they are so well organised and we couldn't manage without them.

The following evening saw the lighting of the village Christmas which was switched on by Tom Jacobs and two young helpers who asked if they could switch on the lights. As lots of children have asked to switch on the lights we will hold a competition this year and the winner will have the privilege of switching on the lights. As always, we must thank Mike and his helpers for erecting the tree and lights and taking them down again. This takes a lot of work and they are well practised in doing this. We hope you all liked the new lights (over 3,000 bulbs) that went round and round the tree as so many of you have requested. They were certainly a spectacular sight.

At the Christmas dinner the 100 Club Christmas draw took place and the following prizes were given out. 1st prize of £128 went to Angie Griffiths, 2nd prize of £79 went to Mary Cornish and 3rd prize of £50 went to Tina Gardener. Thank you to our new members who have joined us this year and there are still numbers available if anyone would like to join. Please contact Tina on 01278 652642 or Sue on 01278 653663 for an application form.

Hopefully once the weather improves we will be able to commence our monthly walks which have dwindled off.

The 100 Club draw usually takes place every month at the Coffee Morning in Otterhampton Village Hall. If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Tina on 652642 or Sue 653663 or any committee member.

Otter Tales Distribution

Bob Birkenhead who has been responsible for organising the distribution of Otter Tales has decided to retire after many years in the role. Thank you Bob for all your efforts. We are delighted to announce Di Davie has agreed to take over from Bob



Otterhampton Primary School - Autumn 2 Update

Claire Luce - Executive Head Teacher

Another busy term at OPS!



Well done Y3/4/5/6 Indoor athletics team who represented the school at Bridgwater College in November. Also **congratulations** to our Dodgeball Team who were victorious over BCA.

RSPCA Hedgehog workshops - In November we had a visit from Alex and Bel from the RSPCA. We found out how we can care for hedgehogs and why they are under threat. We finished the workshop having lots of fun creating our own hedgehogs.



African Dance workshops - Batch taught the children some African dance moves and spent some time with each class exploring African dance and cultures. They listened to some traditional African music.

Christmas Movie Night - this was a success! The children brought in their pyjamas, onesies and blankets and chose from a selection of movies. They were served hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows and popcorn.



Blackmore Farm Trip -

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 went on a "Journey to Bethlehem" at Blackmore Farm. They started their journey to Bethlehem with 25 miles to go. They heard how an angel appeared from the sky to speak to the shepherds, they gave their names and towns for the census, paid their taxes and eventually made their way to the stables to meet Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. A lovely morning for all involved.

All change! - We said goodbye to Mrs Reidy our lunchtime supervisor who retired just before Christmas after 8 years of service. We also welcomed Donna Parsons into the role in January.



Baubles! - In our final week before the Christmas holidays all children joined in 3 performances of our Christmas Nativity show "Baubles!" One of these performances was to the local community with coffee and mince pies, and lots of people attended. Well done to all the children for their excellent performances and singing!

The Nutcracker - Just before Christmas River and Bay class went to Taunton Brewhouse to see a production of the Nutcracker. They all had a lovely time and were excellently behaved, and enjoyed the ice creams in the interval.



Carnival Mask Competition - Before Christmas Otterhampton got the exciting news that we had won 1st place in the Carnival Mask competition! The theme this year was "Festivities" and our breakfast club and afterschool team worked hard on our creation which celebrated the holidays of Eid, Diwali, Christmas and Hanukkah. All the staff are so proud of the children and the hard work that went into making this design and have won £250 for the school!

Christmas Jumper Day - We raised £55.80 for Save the Children charity wearing our Christmas jumpers.



Parent or Community Governors - We are on the look out for these, if you know of anyone who is interested please ask them to email Claire.Luce@otterhampton.org for further details.



So, you thought you were too experienced to be scammed; so was I until it happened to me. Last September I clicked on what I thought was a message from the DWP about the Winter fuel payment. Didn't follow through with it but I obviously gave enough information to access my bank account. Over the next few months small amounts, even as little as 90p or a few pounds were taken and I didn't notice. Then in the last couple of weeks larger

amounts, amounting to several thousand pounds were taken and I certainly noticed then!

I contacted the bank fraud department using the national fraud telephone number 159. Together we were able to check all my bank transactions until they identified how I had been scammed. A few anxious days followed before the money was restored to my account as it was deemed not to be my fault. However, had it been my fault I may have lost all that money! Lesson learned!

So be wary, never follow a link from a text or email unless you're absolutely sure it is genuine. If you think you may have been caught out ring bank national fraud number 159 and you will be put through to your own bank's fraud department.

For more information go to <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk>

ed

What we've been up to!

In November one of our ladies guided us in the making of table decorations. She explained that ideally 3 different types of greenery and flowers are needed to create a pleasing arrangement. The flowers and the greenery should vary in size to get the best effect. Starting with the greenery an outline shape is made and then focal greenery is added, followed by smaller leafed greenery to fill in the spaces. Flowers are added in the same way and by cutting stems at varying lengths a sense of depth is added to the arrangement. A very enjoyable creative evening with our members producing their own arrangements. Following the evening one of our ladies used the advice given to make a centre piece for her dining room table using artificial flowers.



We celebrated Christmas with our members buffet, a cryptic quiz and game, a lovely way to start the yuletide season

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



Combwich and District WI

Dates for your diaries

Thursday 19th February – Mickey Little 'Bulb Selection and Planting' – Competition – An interesting old picture or photo

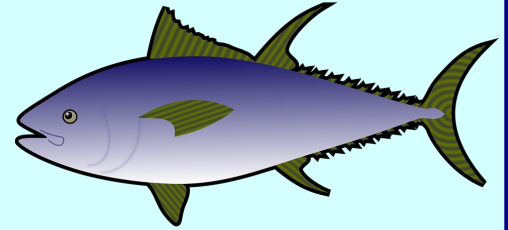
Thursday 19th March – John Hardy 'Dementia Talk' – Competition – A tactile Ornament

Thursday 16th April – Richard Navoy 'First Aid' – Competition – Make up a 2 line motto

Why not come along to one of our evenings and see what happens. We welcome visitors and new members to join us at our meetings which are held on the third Thursday of each month in Otterhampton Village Hall, doors open at 7.00 ready for 7.30 start.

For more information contact Connie on 01278 653307

Protecting Fish at HPC *by Tim Jones*



It looks like a new Acoustic Fish Deterrent (AFD) system proposed for Hinkley Point C works - at least according to EDF.

In the Autumn edition of its own magazine **Plugged in** a short article entitled **Protecting Fish** says a new AFD system is being trialled and concludes: "Experts from Swansea University are helping with the tests, which so far show the system is helping keep fish away from the area altogether".

While that is undoubtedly good news for fish and conservationists, it could mean that the marine saving scheme could finally get the go ahead. EDF Maintains it will only save up to one small trawler load of fish (44 tonnes) a year, but multiply that by the projected 60 year operating life of the station and the fact that very few, if any, trawlers operate that far up the Bristol Channel and the numbers take on much more significance. Also research carried out over decades at Hinkley Point C examining dead fish that had been sucked into the old intakes, indicate that the Bristol Channel is a far more important fish nursery than was previously thought. Some conservationists also maintain that the impact the new station will have on fish stocks is totally unknown.

Proposals for an AFD were first suggested by EDF as part of its planning application for HPC. But once permission was granted the company went off the idea and tried to have the condition - which it had put forward - removed, claiming alternative fish preservation methods would be sufficient. But the Environment Agency and numerous conservation groups wanted it retained. The matter then went to a full public inquiry and no less than the Minister decided the condition had to remain. Strangely the Environment Agency changed its mind and appeared to accept the alternative fish protection measures instead. A totally new suggestion also emerged - creating compensatory salt marsh along the Severn Estuary by flooding land. The first proposal targeted the Pawlett Hams and another one a location further up the Severn Estuary. Both not surprisingly went down like lead fishing weights with the communities involved. Fortunately those proposals are now paused awaiting the outcome of the new AFD trials.

Whatever happens EDF trumpets the fact that HPC will have more fish protection systems than any other power station in the world - something that will surely be welcomed by the conservationists - and fish.



Pippi's Ponderings

We are 14 days into January yet it feels like Christmas was 3 months ago. The entire of the UK is waking up to a different weather system each day, the lack of consistency has put Barbara from down the road on edge on what to wear so she's decided to layer her wetsuit with a set of skis, windproof goggles, a sun hat and a rubber ring.

Nobody has had a proper meal since Christmas day and most of the British public are living off of Bounty Celebrations, the dregs of grandma's Christmas cake and the remnants of the festive cheese that's stuck at the back of the fridge. Pay day is still approximately 1300 days away yet recycling day is here again.

America is a circus. Greenland are weeks away from becoming Orangeland where Trump will unzip his body suit and reveal his alien self.

The world is completely and utterly crazy and nobody bats an eyelid.

Anybody for a 'Game of Fives'?

In the car park outside the Anchor Inn is a Fives Wall. It is one of only a few remaining Fives Walls in the South West of England. The Anchor Inn along with the other public houses in the village would have been an important part of a social network and community life. The Anchor would have been particularly popular due to having its own Fives Wall.



The Fives Wall is for the three hundred year old game of Wessex Fives, a regional variant of handball. Wessex Fives is part of a broader family of handball wall-based sports such as Basque Pelota, Gaelic Handball, Eton and Rugby Fives. Each variant has their own set of rules and courts. The Fives played at the English public schools developed into a formalised game. In Somerset, Wessex Fives was a folk game, uncodified and adaptable to local situations. The game was played in pub yards, village squares, and against church walls. Its simplicity and accessibility enable Fives to be played across rural communities across Somerset.

In Somerset, purpose-built fives walls still remain in the villages of Shepton Beauchamp, South Petherton, Stoke-sub-Hamden, Bishops Lydeard, Milborne Port and Hinton St George. Each Fives wall would have been different. There were no set dimensions of the court. The Combwich Five Wall is flanked by two angled and stepped side walls. A design very similar to the 1780s Fives Wall at Warminster School, one of the oldest Fives Walls in Britain.

The angled side walls introduced a more tactical approach to playing the game. Players could use the side walls to rebound the ball and play unpredictable shots. The ball would bounce off the walls in unexpected directions sending the players in all directions around the court. This tactical dimension would mean that skilful players understood the geometry of the walls.

The objective of Wessex Fives was straightforward: players aimed to strike a hard, cork-filled ball, wrapped in leather, against the wall above a designated "playline," making it difficult for their opponent to return it before it bounced twice. It was played with bare hands or padded leather gloves. Playing bare handed would often result in bruised or injured hands. The game could be played as Singles or Doubles. Each player taking turns to serve.

Scoring was similar to the formalised versions of the game played at public schools. Only the serving side could score points, earning one point for each rally won. If the receiving side won a rally, they gained the serve but no points. The game would end when one side reached a pre-agreed score. Local tradition would have dictated the score needed to win. The server may have called out "game" at the penultimate point.

Playing Wessex Fives competitions at the Anchor Inn would have drawn in crowds of local parishioners. It would have been a focal point of village life. Family, friends and neighbours and others coming together to participate, make connections and maintain community.

It is not known when playing Fives stopped at the Anchor Inn. Not much, let alone Fives, is happening at the Anchor Inn anymore. Yet Wessex Fives is still played at the Wessex Fives Club in Winchester.

The Anchor Inn and the Combwich Fives Wall are part of the village's rich cultural and social heritage. Along with other historical structures both are part of a wider community inheritance. It is important that they are not lost. Anybody for a game of fives?

Otterhampton Village Hall

Firstly thanks to all who attended the Murder Mystery event held in the Village Hall, this well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy it. Many thanks to Chris Ponka for not only writing the script but putting up with a ragtag bunch of wannabe actors.



There will be more events coming up over the next few months, so keep your eyes peeled for posters on the Village Hall notice board and the All Things Combnich Facebook page.

The first of these events is the welcome return of the Stoggymen who will be performing on the night of March 7th, some tickets are still available and can be purchased from the Harbour View Bar.



The Village Hall Trustees have, due to inflation and rising costs, have had to slightly increase the costs of hiring the Hall\Committee Room\Skittle Alley, this is our first increase in 3 years and compared to other Village Halls we are still extremely competitive.

FIXTURES 2026				
ROUND 1				
FRA	20:10	IRE		
ITA	14:10	SCO		
ENG	16:40	WAL		
ROUND 2				
IRE	14:10	ITA		
SCO	16:40	ENG		
WAL	15:10	FRA		
ROUND 3				
ENG	14:10	IRE		
WAL	16:40	SCO		
FRA	15:10	ITA		
ROUND 4				
IRE	20:10	WAL		
SCO	14:10	FRA		
ITA	16:40	ENG		
ROUND 5				
IRE	14:10	SCO		
WAL	16:40	ITA		
FRA	20:10	ENG		

A Happy New Year from Harbour View Bar .

Combnich's community bar was open over Christmas and New Year and it was great to see everyone. Over Christmas we introduced a new Guest Ale, which went down very well. Keep your eyes open for future Guest Ales.

The Six Nations Rugby starts on 5th February and we will be showing every match.

The bar has a couple of sofas to provide a more comfortable seating area.

Membership is only £4 for the year.



Bridgwater No to Racism

Following the 'No to Racism' article in the December issue of Otter Tales, a silent vigil was held on the Cornhill, Bridgwater with participants all holding posters declaring 'BRIDGWATER Proud to Say No to Racism'

Organiser, Simon Darch, a local farmer, was joined on Saturday January 10th by family, friends and local supporters from different walks of life: all proudly declaring that there is no place for racism in the town, it was a clear statement affirming the decency and tolerance of the vast majority of the local community.

Simon, who has farmed locally all his life, has long appreciated the support many people from overseas have given to workers on his farm and to his mother during her last years.

He abhors the ever increasing xenophobia of the current political climate and says: "For every one person you can find who abuses the system, I'll show you 10, 20, 30 or more who contribute to the country, whether in the health system, the care sector, in transport, education or farming - the list is endless!"

Simon has shared the poster with Bridgwater Town Council, Bridgwater College, Cannington College, Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce and Bridgwater Trades Union Council,

He is encouraged by the response he has received so far. More so, the number of young people prepared to say that racism has no place in their life, gives him faith that Bridgwater will continue to be a town that welcomes all.

The next vigil on the Cornhill will 11am Saturday 7th February. Please join us.



20's Plenty where people are

20's Plenty for Us campaigns for 20mph as the default speed limit for urban and village streets where people live, work, shop, play and learn.
www.20splenty.org

Otter in the Kitchen

I would like to say a big thank you to Otter Tales for this opportunity to support the parish newsletter with this new food column. Welcome to my new food slot 'Otter in the Kitchen'. I hope this will be the first of many inspirational ideas on how to utilize seasonal produce whether homegrown or bought.

My name is John Bradley and I am a chef based in Cannington and have been living in Combswich for just over a year. I have been cooking professionally for most of my adult life and was, together with my wife, the Chef Proprietor of the award winning Dunkery Beacon Country House and Coleridge Restaurant on Exmoor, which we ran for over a decade.

In this recipe we will be looking at utilizing celeriac and butternut combined in a comforting dish that will help dispel the winter blues and also keep a close eye on the food budget. This particular dish is versatile in the that it can be adapted to use Barley or Orzo as a substitute for risotto rice, though cooking times will vary depending on your choice. If cooking as a vegan meal the white wine can be omitted or a vegan option sourced as with the Crème Fraiche.

Spiced Butternut and Celeriac Risotto (2 portions)

Ingredients

*1 Celeriac peeled, and chopped down into 2 cm chunks.
(If you can source a small celeriac great).*

1 smallish butternut peeled, deseeded and chopped into rough 2 cm chunks

1 finely chopped white onion

2 cloves of finely chopped garlic peeled

180gm risotto rice (Barley or Orzo can be substituted though Barley will require a longer cooking time and a little more liquid)

150ml white wine (optional), 500ml + 250ml vegetable stock (from powder is fine)

1 tablespoon Cajun spice or similar (mild curry powder, jerk spice, Ras el Hanout)

50ml + 50ml Olive oil, 200ml low fat Crème Fraiche, Salt and pepper.

Pre-heat your fan oven to 180deg C. Place the chopped butternut onto a roasting tray and drizzle with 50ml of olive oil. Sprinkle with your chosen spice and roast until tender, but not mushy.

Whilst the butternut is roasting place the chopped celeriac in a saucepan together with 250ml of vegetable stock and cook until the celeriac is very soft and mushy. The liquid should have soaked into the celeriac but not dried out. Stir in a good spoonful of Crème Fraiche (keep some back to finish the dish) season and blend to a puree with either a hand blender or liquidizer. It should resemble a thick soup consistency when done. Set aside.

In the meantime, add the remaining oil to a saucepan and set on a medium heat. Add the chopped onion and garlic and gently cook without colouring. Once the onion is semi translucent add the risotto rice and stir together.

Next, stir in the white wine (if using) and allow to simmer until 80% of the fluid has been soaked into the rice mix. If not using wine, start by slowly adding the remaining stock making sure that each addition has been mostly absorbed before adding the next batch. Once two thirds of the stock has been added place a lid over the saucepan and allow to simmer until the rice is semi opaque. Be careful not to let it dry out at this stage adding more stock if required.

As we have utilized a proportion of the stock to make the celeriac puree, the risotto will be getting drier and heavier, so at this point the celeriac puree can be stirred back into the risotto mix a little at a time until a creamy porridge like consistency has been achieved. Use any remaining stock to adjust the consistency and season. The rice should be soft with a slight bite in the center.

Serve into warm bowls and top with the spiced butternut and a dollop of Crème Fraiche.





WWT Steart Marshes & Bridgwater Bay NNR

Welcome to the new year at Steart Marshes!

We continue with exciting project work this year as we near the end of the Species Survival Fund and continue with our engagement work through NLHF Connecting Coastal Communities.

The cold weather across continental Europe has driven a large influx of white-fronted and tundra bean goose across the south of the UK. Steart saw the arrival of 7 Russian white-fronted geese on the 1st of Jan for a few of days out on Otterhampton Marsh. Short-eared owls have been spotted regularly hunting out on the reserve, particularly late afternoon on the common and around Steart gate carpark.



Unfortunately, we have had several incidents of people walking across non-public areas of the reserve to get closer to wildlife. We will continue to push the message that it is vital that visitors respect the habitat and park in allocated areas only.

WWT Steart Marshes Connecting Coastal Communities (CCC) Project: As part of our drive to develop new educational materials based around the superpowers of saltmarsh, we held a co-creation workshop on 8th January with secondary school teachers led by STEM Learning. A site tour and curriculum-based discussions furthered our understanding of classroom needs, which will influence the content of the online resources STEM will be writing.



The viewing platforms are open now on the Otterhampton loop and the far end of Stockland Marsh. Bird identification signs will be added once we have completed the design process.

Remember, you know you can now book the Slinky Bus to Steart Marshes. Please let your friends and family know. Anyone can register to use the service, although only Somerset-issued bus passes can be used for discretionary travel. Sedgemoor South information sheet: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/.../slinky-digital-sedgemoor/>

See our latest updates on Facebook, Instagram, www.wwt.org.uk/steart

Contacts - Reserve Office: 01278 651090 info.steart@wwt.org.uk **Duty Manager:** 07717 505966

Site Manager: Alys Laver 07743 502525 alys.laver@wwt.org.uk

Engagement & Learning/CCC Project Manager: Nicole Turnbull 07717 342061

nicole.turnbull@wwt.org.uk

Email: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com

www.otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Hill House Christian Centre

MENU



DRINKS

- Tea** £5
English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Fruit.
(Free Refills)
- Coffee** £5
Filter coffee with Cold or Hot milk
(Free Refills)
- Orange or Apple Juice** £1
250ml Glass
- Squash** £1
Free Refills



SMALLER BREAKFAST

Cereal with Milk £1
Selection of cereal with milk.

Toast £1
2 slices of toast with spreads.

Build your own breakfast
Ask a server for what you would like and we will let you know a price.



LUNCH

Jacket Potato £6
Tuna Mayo, Beans, Cheese & side Salad

Sandwich £5
Choice of Cheese, Ham or Tuna Mayo served with Crisps

Soup of the Day £5
Served with a roll & butter

Cheese Burger £7
4oz beef patty with cheese in a brioche bun served with salad & crisps

MAIN BREAKFAST

Bap £4
Bacon or Sausage & Egg Bap

Full English Breakfast £7
2 Bacon, 2 Sausage, Egg, Hash Brown, Tomato, Mushrooms, Beans & Toast

3 Stack Pancake £5
Choose either Fruit or Streaky Bacon with Syrup

Sausage & Eggs Muffin £5
English Muffin with a sausage patty, fried egg, cheese slice & a hash brown

Bagel £6
Toasted Bagel with cream cheese & either Smoked Salmon or Serrano Ham.

01278 652289 | www.hillhouse.org.uk | Hill House Christian Centre

Thursdays only - 10am - 12 noon

REGULAR SERVICES AT COMBWICH CHURCH

Each month

1st Sunday at 11.15am

CAFÉ CHURCH

Space to talk, sing, pray and learn together over a cuppa and cake

2nd Sunday at 6.00pm

PRAYER & PRAISE

Informal worship and prayer

3rd Sunday at 11.15am

HOLY COMMUNION

4th Sunday at 4.00pm

FAMILY SERVICE

For the young and young at heart

Prayer time every Thursday at 9am. All very welcome.

Revd Alison Waters, Rector & Revd Jan Church, Associate Priest
01278 652953 / cannington.benefice@gmail.com



Otter Wheels

Your volunteer car scheme is here for you.

Is lack of transport a problem? Want to visit a friend or family, or go to the dentist, doctor, hospital, then maybe we can help.

Ring Otter Wheels on 07925154216— to book a trip, but please give as much notice as you can before you need to travel. You will need to register (if you have not already done so) on this number before you can book a trip

This not for profit car scheme has been running for several years with well over 1,600 trips completed. If you haven't tried us give us a go. Door to door service with friendly experienced drivers, all DBS checked and happy to help. Typical return journey prices are: -

	With bus pass	Without bus pass
Cannington Health Centre	£1.75	£3.50
Bridgwater Bus Station	£4.00	£8.00
Musgrove Hospital Taunton	£9.75	£19.50
Blackbrook Business Park	£8.25	£16.50
<i>Plus booking fee</i>	50p	£1.00

Please note, when you renew your bus pass you must let us have your new number.

Feedback

Email, comment, feedback, and suggestions to the editor please.

Stories, articles reports, events and other items for publication in the next edition of Otter Tales need to be received by Thursday 26th March 2026

Email The Editor:
barry.leathwood@btinternet.com

Church Bellringers

Contact bellringers for Birthday Bells, or if you would like a go at bell ringing.

combwichbells@outlook.com

Defibrillators can save your life.

The 2 Combwich defibrillators are positioned in the telephone box and on the corner of the Anchor in Ship Lane

The Steart defibrillator is positioned at Ferrices Farm.

Dial 999 to call for an ambulance then follow the simple instructions. **NO TRAINING NEEDED**



Otter Tales:

Editor: Barry Leathwood. Assisted by Steven Parker.
Distribution: Di Davie. Email dianadavie@hotmail.co.uk

Articles for publication: email

barry.leathwood@btinternet.com Published with the generous support of the Parish Council

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information published in Otter Tales, the views expressed are those of individuals or organisations.

Articles for the next issue by Thurs 26th March 2026

Mobile Library: Dates and Times.

Thursday 19th February 2026. 16th April

Combwich Harbour TA5 2QU 10.15 – 10.50

Combwich Shop TA5 2QW 10.55 – 11.20

Stockland Bristol Club TA5 2PY 11.30– 11.55

For more information about this service contact Somerset Direct 0300 123224 or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries

To keep up to date with all that is happening in the parish check the various village noticeboards, log onto www.otterhamptonparishcouncil.gov.uk or visit the

“All Things Combwich” Facebook page.

For information about the village hall go to www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk

For local history visit Combwich, Steart and Otterhampton Memories Facebook Group



To access the parish council website scan the QR code.



Your favourite Jam, Marmalade and chutney and also plants are still available.

Proceeds from the market will be donated to charity.

Ring Liz on 01278 652687



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association operates a parish emailing service providing information about local events and other information about the local area.

If you wish to be included, email barry.leathwood@btinternet.com