CONTACT

MARCH
Deadline
5pm 15th FEB.
For **all** content-
Editorial &
Adverts

The community magazine for Chickerell and Fleet No 574

FEBRUARY 2026 - GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

FEBRUARY 1976

CONTACT

FOR THE RESIDENTS OF CHICKERELL, CHARLESTOWN AND FLEET

This news sheet comes to you in the hope that you will find it both informative a[illegible] you who are newcomers "WELCOME!" May y[illegible]ship in your new area.

The first thr[illegible]ws sheet will be de-livered to you fro[illegible]nue can be obtained from advertising i[illegible]e in that way.

The object is [illegible]nterest in events that now take place in [illegible] to take part in some or all of them.

It is also in[illegible]ging about a closer community relation[illegible]nother and making more friends.

Ideas, intere[illegible]u wish to publicise and constructive criti[illegible]yone is interested in starting new activ[illegible] Judo Club, Keep-fit Classes, Discussio[illegible] YOU ARE THE PEOPLE THAT ARE NEEDED. [illegible] amongst us - could not a small orchestra be formed? Lots can be achieved with your help.

You may feel that yo[illegible]g to offer to this venture or can provide material[illegible]ct. If so please contact Mr. G.E. Bailey at 13 M[illegible]erell or telephone Wey.5566.

It is proposed to [illegible]ts and to have an Exchange and Mart Section. A[illegible]ill be made for each item advertised, and a cha[illegible]cial advertisements.

ALL ENTRIES FOR [illegible]N MUST BE IN BY 12th FEB.

Letters on subjects of y[illegible]e welcome. (No pen names please).

Have you got a favourite recipe? If its edible we'll print it!

Here now are [illegible]e in the area. If any have been miss[illegible]nd restitution can be made next month!

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. The COUNTY CO[illegible]lestown and Fleet is Major General Mark[illegible]c. He has proved himself to be very[illegible] is a man of action

2. Your represent[illegible]STRICT COUNCIL are Mr. W.J. McCarthy[illegible] Chickerell and Mr. L.J. Bennett[illegible] These two gentlemen who devote much of[illegible] this level will be pleased to help y[illegible]s you may have involving the District Council.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF CONTACT 1976 - 2026

Cover shows our very first edition 50 years ago this month with inset – pictures of the junction of West Street with North Square. 50 years apart. More INSIDE this month in our special supplement

From the editor:

This month we celebrate 50 years of our 'village' – town – news sheet. Although I have been involved in production since 1977 when a committee was formed, my wife Gillian has been part of the team since first publication in 1976 as a delivery agent for Rex Lane. Since taking over as editor from Geoff 44 years ago, I have seen many changes but always had good people helping me continue. Find out about our history, how it was first envisaged by Mrs Edward Stuart and Geoff Bailey, plus previous front pages and photos in our pages this month. One article, a newcomer to Chickerell in 1916, was written by my mother. It still makes interesting reading, and I would like to think in 2026 that we still welcome all newcomers to Chickerell. Thank you to Caroline for gathering the history and articles together.

At the end of last year, I read of the death of Miss Bella Croad of Charlestown. Last year we featured stories of Charlestown Pantomimes; Bella Croad was one of the stars. I am also sorry to report the passing of Ian Gardner of Fleet. Ian was active on the council, both the town and West Dorset District and was chairman of the district council planning committee. Ian and Dianne were also part of the Contact team as treasurer and agent. To their families and anyone else who has lost loved ones in recent weeks, we send our sincere condolences. Finally, may I hope Contact continues well into the future.

John Dean

DIARY DATES -FEBRUARY

For more see local group entries

2nd: Coffee morning, Charlestown Victory Hall, 10am-11.30am – new monthly event.

3rd : Colour & Chat (adults) library 2-4.

4th: Craft & Chat, Methodist Church Chapel, 2pm.

5th: Walkers Club meets, 10am, Littlemoor Shopping car park entrance.

5th: Luncheon Club.

6th: Coffee morning, Chickerell library, 10am to 11.30am.

6th: Bingo, Charlestown Victory Hall, doors open 6.30pm eyes down 7pm.

9th: Peto Book Club, library, 2pm.

11th: Craft Group (formerly knit & natter), library, 10.15-12.15.

13th: Walkers Club meets, 10am, Radipole Drive.

16th: Lego Club, library, 2.30-4pm.

17th: Community Lunch, Marshallsay Court.

17th: Colour & Chat (adults) library 2-4.

18th: Craft & Chat, Methodist Church Chapel, 2pm.

20th: St Mary's Coffee morning in the church, 10am-12noon.

20th: Bingo, Charlestown Victory Hall, doors open 6.30pm eyes down 7pm.

21st: Walkers Club meets, 9am, Lugger Inn. One-hour circular social walk.

21st: Life & Soul village café, 10am to midday, Lugger Inn.

24th: Walkers Club meets, 10am at Willowbed for walk to Fleet.

25th: Craft Group (formerly knit & natter), library, 10.15-12.15.

26th: Rhymetime for babies & toddlers, 10-10.30am, library.

28th: Coffee morning and raffle, Chickerell Methodist Chapel & hall, 10-11.30am.

WHO TO CONTACT: **Editor: John Dean**, 4 Rashley Road (01305) 785895. **Treasurer/Advertising Manager: David Tattersall: (**01305) 761643. email: **davidtattersall2003@yahoo.co.uk** Please contact David if you wish to place an advert or renew an advert. **Compiler: Caroline Tomlinson:** Email: caroline@elephantsears.org

Please send all letters to the editor, articles and editorial to the compiler. When sending an email, you need to put 'Contact Magazine' & the appropriate month in the subject heading, or it will be regarded as 'spam'. You need to add a phone number for queries. Letters and editorial contributions, which **may be edited**, are welcome but anonymous letters will not be published. Note: the views and opinions expressed by the contributors in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editor, compiler or publisher. Every effort is made to ensure all information provided is correct at time of going to press. **Closing date for articles:** 5pm on the 15th of the preceding month. **Closing date for adverts:** (including amendments to current adverts) 5pm on the 15th of the preceding month. PLEASE SEND ADVERTS AS EITHER A JPEG OR BITMAP AND SIZED ACCORDINGLY. Thank you. All artwork is accepted on the strict condition that permission has been given for its use in this publication. Adverts are accepted in good faith in the strict understanding that goods and services described are both fair & accurate. Adverts will not be placed in Contact without prior payment. Copies of Contact (if not delivered to your door) available at: Chickerell Library; Chickerell Pharmacy and hairdresser next door; Wessex Pharmacy; Sgt Bun Bakery, Lanehouse Rocks Road; Codfathers. Online in colour on the Chickerell website.

CHICKERELL WEBSITE By James Bennett: Find us at www.chickerell.com and view Contact Magazine including past issues.

HEALTH INFORMATION

WYKE REGIS AND LANEHOUSE MEDICAL PRACTICE: (with Chickerell Surgery) Registered patients are requested to use the internet site: www.wykeregisandlanehousemedicalpractice.co.uk for any medical query or appointment request. If unable to access this: Tel: 01305 782226. **Emergency Care Service: Dial 111. If critically ill call 999.** For critical conditions: DORSET COUNTY HOSPITAL Accident and Emergency Department, Dorchester. Urgent, less critical: WEYMOUTH URGENT CARE CENTRE, Weymouth Community Hospital. Open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.

CHEMISTS: Chickerell Pharmacy 779054: Open 8.30-5.30pm Monday to Friday (closed lunch 1-2pm). Wessex Pharmacy (Lanehouse) 783287: Open 9-5.30pm Mon to Fri (closed lunch 1-2.15pm) Sat: 9-1pm.

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Contact is printed by Print Shop Express, Chickerell.

NEWS……NEWS…..NEWS…..NEWS

ROADWORKS REMINDERS: A temporary closure of Nottington Lane, Buckland Ripers, from its junction with Church Lane for around 1215 metres is still set to carry on until **approximately the end of February**, this is for installation of a new water main.

Roadworks along the harbourside and around Weymouth Pavilion are expected to continue to cause some delays to traffic with the No 8 bus service into Weymouth from Chickerell continuing (as Contact went to press) not to use the bus stops at The Range (Commercial Road) and Town Bridge. This could **continue until April** with buses dropping off and collecting from the King's Statue bus stops on the seafront.

Roadworks are also affecting the route out of Weymouth between Osmington and Poxwell with traffic lights (after a complete road closure in January) until the end of March.

Meanwhile **the road over to Portland at Ferrybridge** is being affected by repairs to the bridge, **with traffic lights expecting to continue to cause delays until the beginning of March**.

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SAINSBURY'S BUS: Another reminder that there is a **free bus service, using South West Coaches, from Chickerell via the Lanehouse estates to Weymouth Sainsbury's and back** every **Tuesday and Friday morning** (except Bank Holidays), for all shoppers. Just indicate to the driver you wish to step onboard along the route, which follows that of the No 8 bus into Weymouth (arriving in Glennie Way around 9.30am) until it gets to just past the Marquis of Granby, when it goes down Lanehouse Rocks Road to circle round two residential roads – behind St Edmunds Church (Ludlow Road) and behind Lanehouse pharmacy (Fraser Avenue) – to pick up from there. It usually arrives at Sainsbury's around 10am. The bus picks up the passengers it dropped off at Sainsbury's at 11.40am for the return journey, normally arriving back in Chickerell around 12noon.

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THANK YOU FROM THE ANIMALS: From Rosie and Jess the dog: To all friends and residents of Chickerell and Charlestown. A very big thank you for your donations of food, toys, etc., for Margaret Green Animal Rescue, including the people that left donations and I didn't see, thank you, along with those who gave money to buy food. A big thank you to Sam Wykes who donated £200 from doing car boots in the summer. It really does make a difference. Let us hope a lot of animals find their forever homes. I and all the animals wish you a very happy and healthy 2026. Thank you all once again.

****

ARE YOU A CARER FOR SOMEONE who cannot manage without your help? Weymouth Carers Group can offer friendship, support, advice and the opportunity to share experience with other carers. At most meetings there is a speaker from either the wider Dorset Care or on a more light-hearted topic. The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month 11am-1pm in the Bethany Hall, Westham Road, Weymouth, next to Primark. Next meeting is on **17th February**.

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QUIZ NEWS FROM SUE ADAMS: Thank you to all those who entered the 'Literary Authors Quiz' over the festive period. Thanks also to Nigel Smith who compiled the quiz. Together you helped raise £33.00 for St. Mary's Church. Three people submitted all correct answers: Ian Coleman; Brian Groves, and Deborah Watling. A winner was chosen at random after our service on 12th January. Subsequently Brian Groves received a small prize. The answers to the quiz are available in the library or St. Mary's.

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NEWS FROM DORSET TRADING STANDARDS: Reminders to take care when burning fuel: Trading Standards says few people realise that domestic burning is a major source of pollution that can affect air quality, and harm people's health, affecting the lungs and other organs from the tiny particles the burning releases. It is urging people using woodburning stoves and open fires to adopt cleaner burning practices, including regularly maintaining the stove or open fire. This reduces the harmful particles, and the fire will perform better producing more heat. It is also important to keep chimneys swept: "Soot and tar build up in your chimney over time, reducing its efficiency and increasing the risk of chimney fires." The right fuel is also important too: "Choose cleaner alternatives such as dry wood and manufactured solid fuels, as they produce less smoke and pollution and are cheaper and more efficient to burn. Burn dry wood; freshly cut wood should be air-dried for at least two years before use and when buying bagged fuel, look out for the 'Ready to Burn' certification mark. Some types of solid fuel have been banned from sale due to high pollution levels. These include sales of wet wood in small units (less than two cubic metres) and traditional house coal for domestic heating."

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NEWS FROM LOCAL GROUPS, CLUBS & SOCIETIES – more overleaf

NEWS FROM ST MARY'S – Chickerell's historic, listed church in North Square

The 100 Club winners for January were numbers 73, 57, and 23. Our December coffee morning raised £140 including a generous donation; the morning in January, £83. Thank you to all our visitors and 'staff'. A collection for The Children's Society at our Christingle Service & our Christmas Eve Carol Singing at Moonfleet is awaiting final donations before counting. 100 Club starts again in March and is still £12 for a year of monthly draws. If you have taken part before, we will deliver a new form to you, with one for a friend. If you would like to join in, which helps to keep our lovely historic church in good order, please contact Hilary on 01305 772817 or email johnben33@gmail.com Monthly prizes have been £15, £10 and £5. Thank you to all who support our events throughout the year. Our next coffee morning in the North Aisle Cafe at Church is on **Friday 20th February**.

NEWS FROM THE LIFE & SOUL COMMUNITY TRUST

The Life & Soul Trust would like to thank everybody who turned out to support Santa's Christmas Float Tour, Christmas Carols at the Willowbed and the Christmas Bingo in December. All three events were hugely successful and popular and are already back in the diary for next year along with the annual Race Day and Picnic in the Park! The Trust is also putting on other free and fund-raising events throughout the year including the launch of a new Local Heroes Award Dinner at the end of the year. Please keep checking Contact Magazine and the Life & Soul Facebook pages for details as these events get confirmed.

This month The Lugger will once again host the next **Life & Soul café** on **Saturday 21st February** from 10am to midday. The Trust is aware some customers may have difficulty getting to The Lugger for the café and, if this affects you, then please contact the pub directly on 01305 766611 to arrange travel assistance on the day.. For the popular Life & Soul Walking Club walks, see **details below.**

LIFE & SOUL WALKERS CLUB: Group walks organised each month for those who like walking

Avoiding muddy routes! **Thursday 5th February: Snowdrop Walk**. Meet 10am at Littlemoor Shopping car park entrance. A steep hills walk, using cycle path up to Ridgeway. Good views then on to Bincombe and return. Three plus miles.

Friday 13th February: Crocus Walk. Meet 10am at Radipole Drive Children's Play Area and Cafe car park. Walk via Radipole Gardens, seafront and around Lodmoor bird sanctuary. Finishing with coffee. Easy route; four to five miles.

Saturday 21st February: Regular Social One Hour Walk. **Meet 9am at the Lugger**. Walk suitable for most people, including prams, mobility scooters and dogs. Finishing at the Village Cafe at the Lugger.

Tuesday 24th February: A Fleet Walk. Meet 10am at Willowbed Hall. Walk via Tidmoor Lane, Chickerell Hive and Butter Street; easy walk; four miles.

CHICKERELL LUNCHEON CLUB – First Thursday of the month at the Turks Head pub, East Street

Another year has flown by and here we are in February, looking forward to our roast gammon carvery followed by a warming crumble and custard. Why not phone Ann and come and join us. We do have a few spaces. Looking forward to seeing you all and I do hope you all have a happy and healthy year. Queries/cancellations please phone Ann 07387 223339 or Ruth 775364.

CHARLESTOWN VICTORY HALL, PUTTON LANE venue for classes, clubs and events

DIARY DATES Monday: pm: Ballet; Modern Tap* (WSB) Evening: Dorset Phoenix Folk Dancing (telephone 568674 for more details). **Tuesday:** am: Move it or Lose it, 10am-11am. Pm: Ballet; Modern Tap* (WSB). **Wednesday:** pm – WHIST. **Thursday:** pm - Gymnastics* (WSB) **Friday:** Evening - BINGO (fortnightly). **Saturday**: am Cygnets Ballet* (WSB). *additional dance sessions available with WSB (Weymouth School of Ballet) contact: Lisa 07703463974.

NEWS: Bingo: **Dates for February are 6th and 20th**. Whist continues every Wednesday afternoon at 2pm. Logs & kindling are still available at £4.50 per sack. Contact Robbie on 01305 785255. We are also a drop off point for Chickerell Food Bank when the hall is open. If the hall is closed and for all booking enquiries, please contact Joe on 01305 789125. **NEW for 2026!!** Postponed from last year, **a new monthly coffee morning starting on Monday 2nd February 10am-11.30am.** Start your week with a cup of tea or coffee with friends. We look forward to seeing you. Don't forget we also have Move it or Lose it from 10am to 11am on Tuesday mornings.

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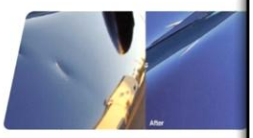

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CHICKERELL MOONFLEET WI: Meets 7pm on second Monday of each month at Willowbed Hall

The group began the year with the Annual Meeting, where members heard and discussed the resolutions which had been proposed by the WI. Then every member voted for the one which they felt should become part of the WI's next national campaign.
Jacqui gave her report at the end of her first year as President and she thanked everyone for making it so successful. Along with her team she is looking forward to the next year of Chickerell Moonfleet WI and the many more events and meetings which have been planned. For more information contact Jacqui on 07870 411721.

NEWS FROM CHICKERELL METHODISTS: CHURCH & HALL corner of North Square and West St

The Craft and Chat group will meet at 2pm in the Chapel on **Wednesdays 4th and 18th February.**
Bring your own craft and enjoy a chat with friends or perhaps learn something new. We welcome new members to our craft groups or just come along for a chat.
Our next Coffee Morning will be on **Saturday 28th February** from 10-11.30am in the chapel and hall. Coffee/tea and cake and biscuits will be served and there will be the usual raffle. All welcome.
Our church council meeting is on Tuesday 3rd February at 2pm.

COMMUNITY LUNCH at Marshallsay on **Tuesday 17th February**, 12 for 12.30pm. Please ring to book your seat by **Thursday 12th**. This is very important to insure we have the correct amount of food. Thank you. Jacqui and the team.

MARSHALLSAY COURT: Events in the communal lounge in the flats in Marshallsay Road
Coffee mornings every Wednesday 10-11am with raffle.

CHICKERELL FOODBANK **Email: placemarys4@gmail.com Tel: 07591851075**

Thank you to all who support us whether that is by donating, being a collection point or volunteering. Without your support, we would be unable to help those needing it in our community. If you are struggling for any reason, or know of anyone who is, please give us a call on 07591851075 and leave a message if no answer.
We are in need this time of the following:
Tinned meats – e.g., corned beef, ham, Spam, chicken in white sauce, minced beef. Frey Bentos tinned pies. Tins of soup. **Sandwich paste**, pasta sauce. Chocolate spread, biscuits, hot chocolate. **Cereal**. Tea and coffee. **Squash.**
Drop off points: 56 Lilly Lane (shed if out); Chickerell Library (when open); Chickerell Primary Academy (term time only); Wisebuys, Lynch Lane; Victory Hall, Charlestown; 57 Oldridge Rd; 11 Randall Close (garage if out).
Chickerell Town Council offices at the Willowbed Hall: The council can take donations Monday to Thursday, between 9.30 and 12noon.

MORE LOCAL GROUPS & EVENTS

WYKE REGIS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY: The annual Seed Swap takes place on **February 14th**. Non members are welcome. Come along and have a look around to see what we offer, have a drink and chat to fellow gardeners. Seed potatoes are in stock and plenty of seeds to start off for summer. The Clubhouse in Rylands Lane will be open on Wednesdays from 2pm to 4pm and on Saturdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Membership is £10 per year. Join in January and get three months free membership!
For more information email enquiries@wrhs.org.uk or call 01305 602137.

SOUTHILL GARDENING CLUB: This month James Bennett will be talking about the formation and development of Bennetts Water Gardens from **7.30pm on Tuesday 10th February** at Southill Community Centre. Members and non-members are welcome to attend and refreshments will be available. Further information on this meeting or the club in general can be obtained from Nigel Smith on 01305 788939.

DORSET PHOENIX FOLK DANCE meets Mondays from 7.30pm-9pm at Charlestown Victory Hall, Putton Lane. Ideal for gentle exercise. £3 per session. New members welcome.

ANDYSMANCLUB Helping to get men talk, meets Mondays 7pm (except Bank Holidays) in the Dry Dock, St Thomas Street, Weymouth; at the Beehive, Portland and the Cadet Reserve Barracks, Dorchester info@andysmanclub.co.uk (National Charity).

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Opening Hours: **Tuesday 10am-12.30pm; Weds 10am-12.30pm and 4-6pm; Thursday 2-4pm; Friday 2-4pm; Saturday 10am-12.30pm.**

Coffee Morning Friday 6th February 10–11.30am**.** A chance to chat with friends, old and new, over coffee and perhaps win a prize in the raffle. **Peto Book Club – Monday 9th February at 2pm.** A chance to read & discuss various genres of books. The **Colour and Chat Group meets on Tuesdays 3rd & 17th February 2–4pm**. Pictures and pens/pencils provided. Come along and enjoy a relaxing afternoon with friends. **Craft Group** (formerly Knit and Natter): **Wednesdays 11th & 25th February** 10.15-12.15. Bring your own craft, knitting, crochet, cross-stitch, etc., and enjoy a cuppa with like-minded friends. **NEW: Rhymetime** with Holly on **Thursday 26th February** 10am-10.30am for babies and toddlers and their parents and carers. More information on our Facebook page. And **LEGO** IS BACK! On **Monday 16th February** from 2.30-4pm. Children, please bring an adult with you. More on our Facebook page.
Chickerell Community Library Annual General Meeting : Wednesday 4th March, 6pm in the library. All welcome.
Photocopying facilities & computers available and books & greeting cards for sale for a small monetary donation plus a range of local history books to borrow for anyone new to the area. Don't forget the library is a drop-off point for Chickerell Foodbank (during opening hours).

CHICKERELL PRE-SCHOOLS

DUCKLINGS PRE-SCHOOL: Methodist Church Hall, North Square, Chickerell DT3 4DX
Tel: 01305 766920 Email: ducklings.pre@btinternet.com
Website: ducklingspre-schoolchickerell.co.uk **or visit our Facebook page**

Sessions: If you are interested in sessions starting from this September, please contact us now to request an application form. We welcome children from two-and-an-half years old. Spaces for two-year-olds are limited, however, so early enquiries are recommended. We accept Tax-Free Childcare, and 15-hour and 30-hour funded places.
Information: Over the coming weeks, the children will be enjoying and learning about a range of exciting events and celebrations, including Chinese New Year (Year of the Horse 2026), Children's Mental Health Week, the RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch, Safer Internet Day, Ramadan, World Book Day and of course Pancake Day. If anyone has any Chinese-themed items they would be happy to donate to our home corner, we would be very grateful. Further information can be found on our website and Facebook page, which are regularly updated with photos of activities and useful information links.

CHICKADEES: Rashley Road (by Chickerell Primary Academy) Tel: 01305 773103.
Contact Jenny Lamming, pre-school manager. Email: pre-school@chickerell.dorset.sch.uk

CHICKERELL PRIMARY ACADEMY - Rashley Road.

School Office: 01305 579148 – please contact office if you are new to the area and would like to join our school

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL: The children, staff and governors would like to wish all our residents a very happy (if belated) New Year. We hope you all enjoyed a restful and enjoyable Christmas break and that 2026 has started well for you.
We have had a fantastic start to the spring term. The children returned after the holidays feeling refreshed, positive and ready to learn, and we have been delighted with the enthusiasm and focus shown. Classrooms have been full of curiosity and excitement as the children have begun their new topics, and they have loved sharing their learning, ideas and achievements with staff and visitors. We have also welcomed visitors, including prospective parents visiting to learn more about Chickerell Primary Academy to help them decide whether it might be the right school for their children. Feedback from these visits has been overwhelmingly positive. Visitors consistently comment on how polite, friendly and confident our children are, and how happy they are to talk about their learning. They also note how warm and welcoming our staff are. As always, our children are a real credit to themselves and their families, and we are extremely proud of them.
We would also like to extend a very warm welcome to David Byrne, who has joined us this term as a Year 4 teacher. He has settled in quickly and has already become a valued member of our teaching team. We are delighted to have him with us and look forward to the positive impact he will make.
With best wishes from the children, staff and governors at Chickerell Primary Academy.

CHICKERELL TOWN COUNCIL

Council offices adjoin Willowbed Hall, Putton Lane.
Office open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to noon Tel: 01305 767458.
Website www.chickerell-tc.gov.uk Email: townclerk@chickerell-tc.gov.uk

The Town Council has responsibilities for Chickerell's **open spaces**, eg., Willowbed field, Claypits (off Glennie Way) and the land off Meadow Close. It is also responsible for the **hiring out** of the Willowbed Hall and Sports Pavilion (Lower Way); has responsibilities for the **local cemetery** (St Mary's), **bus shelters**, the **play area** on the Willowbed field and **allotments.** Please contact the council if there are any issues with these areas.

Town Council full council meeting 3rd Tuesday of every month, in the Willowbed Hall at 7pm.
Members of public welcome to speak in democratic half hour 7-7.30pm.

Anti-social behaviour: Please report all incidents to the police either online : The website is dorset.police.uk - see the Contact section (where you can report crime online) Or by calling 101, the non-emergency number available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
Remember, if a crime is in progress or life in danger call 999.

CCTV is around the Willowbed field & is constantly monitored

WILLOWBED HALL, Putton Lane & THE SPORTS PAVILION, Lower Way: Available for hire. Queries and bookings: Town council number above.

IMPORTANT AND USEFUL COUNCIL DETAILS

REFUSE/RECYCLING, RUBBISH BIN PROBLEMS, FLY TIPPING: Call Dorset Waste Services on 01305 221040 or report online via dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-litter and follow the link.
The main number for Dorset Council is 221000. The main number for Dorset Council which covers this area is 251010.
HIGHWAY ISSUES: Roads, verges and hedges, public footpaths, streetlights, road signage, winter maintenance and bus timetables – if you have any queries regarding any of these contact Dorset Council.
DOG WARDEN: Contact by email: envhealth@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
STREETLIGHTS: If there is a streetlight out, please phone 0800 0684145.
FLOODING: For sandbags, please call 01305 251010 and ask for emergency planning who will advise where sandbags can be purchased.

Water emergencies: Report to Wessex Water – 0345 600 4 600.
Electric Emergencies: 105. Call this number for emergency help.
CITIZENS ADVICE: Details on website www.westdorsetca.org.uk

PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT: Dorset Council on 01305 251010. See website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk follow links to planning section and search for Chickerell to view applications.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS received by Dorset Council

P/FUL/2025/06254: Loscombe Farm, Nottington Lane, Buckland Ripers: Retain widened field entrance and carry out associated work; formation of hardstanding.
P/FUL/2025/07428: 18B Fossil House, Coldharbour: Use of building as a dwelling.
P/NMA/2026/00045: Land adjacent 423 Chickerell Road, Non material amendment – omission of the basement level to planning permission P/FUL/2021/02048 (Erect 1no. dwelling).

NEWS FROM CHICKERELL TOWN COUNCIL

CHICKERELL TWINKLE CHALLENGE: Congratulations to the Murphy family of Cobham Drive, who gained the most public votes and are the well-deserved winners of the Mayor's Cup Challenge for their Christmas light display! Another well done to the Caldwell household of Oldridge Road, winner of the 'Lights for a Cause' charity category. Thank you to all who took part this year to brighten our community.

WILLOWBED HALL EXTENSION: Works on the Willowbed Hall extension project began at full pace on 5th January. During the first week, the foundations were excavated, clearly marking the footprint of the planned extension. At time of writing, contractors are creating and temporarily surfacing a new access route around the rear of the building. This will serve as the primary route for Greendale Construction Ltd throughout the duration of the works. **The project remains on schedule for completion at the end of June 2026**. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this period and apologise for any inconvenience caused to users of the building and surrounding recreational facilities while construction is underway.

POPULAR HISTORIC PHOTOS FROM CONTACTS IN THE PAST

Lower Putton Lane barn with The Fisherman's pub on the right. Inset: the view today

Below: An older photo of the front-page picture, looking up towards St Mary's with the old wheelwright's workshop on the corner and the methodist church opposite

All historic photos supplied by courtesy of Charlie Oldridge, a valued contributor to Contact Magazine

A LOOK BACK TO CONTACT MAGAZINE 33 YEARS AGO

FEBRUARY 1994

- Chickerell Utd FC reported Alan Hutt equalling the club's scoring record by netting five of the club's six goals during a Dorset Junior Cup match to Cranborne.
- Fleet Church was asking for D Day memorabilia for a small display it was planning in the church for May and June 1994.
- The Parish council reported that following its recommendations to Dorset County Council to reduce the speed limit along Coldharbour, the county councillor said further traffic checks would be carried out to look at the number, size and origin of the vehicles using the road before considering what action could be taken.
- Chickerell Primary School was looking forward to the visit by the Tall Ships in Weymouth in July 1994 by taking part in a Tall Ships Workshop at Weymouth Pavilion. Other activities planned by school and the Friends of Chickerell School included a School 'Arts' Concert, Five a side football, a family quiz, jumble sale and the date was set for the summer fete.

A NEWCOMER TO CHICKERELL IN 1916

First published in Contact Magazine February 1978

Coming from the town where I lived to the village it seemed very quiet. No lights on the roads and oil lamps indoors, but Chickerell people were so friendly towards us that we soon felt at home.

Fishing from Chesil Beach has always been a great thing for the menfolk. Mackerel was the main fish caught. Years ago, the buyers used to take loads away already packed in boxes and send them all over the country. Village people would salt them in for the winter.

A **wheelwright and Cabinet Maker** (*off West Street at the end of North Square – you can see the entrance to it in the picture of the 17th anniversary edition overleaf*) made wagons and carts, farm gates, wheel barrows and do all sorts of carpentry besides being an undertaker. On Garston Hill (*now known as part of Chickerell Road, just up from the entrance to East Street*) there was a blacksmith's shop. This firm also did house painting, carpentry and was an undertakers.

The **village was almost self-supported, with a baker, a butcher who called twice a week, a coal and oil man, and a cobbler** all living here. Where the (*was a grocers, now a pharmacy*) is now was a large house call the Manor House. The owners used to grow tomatoes and flowers and had greenhouses which stretched to the bottom of Lower Lane, (*Lower Way*) as we then knew it. He grew violets in the fields on which School Hill houses are now built and down in the fields at Lower Way he grew cauliflowers which were supplied to the Navy at Portland but could be bought by villagers as well. The Post Office was where it is now, in East Street. Another little shop farther down the road (*near The Turks*) was a general store which sold practically everything, supplying other villages around as well.

The Doctor lived at The Elms – (*Chickerell Road end of East Street*) that's where we used to have Fetes in the summer. There was, as now, beautiful lawns and flowers, especially roses.

Our Rector lived at The Old Rectory on the Main Road (*Chickerell Road*). I can remember the boys of the village taking him up to the Reading Room (library) to have a game of billiards. He was getting on in years then and was still keen to join the younger lads for a game. In the entrance to The Rectory, every spring, there was a carpet of daffodils.

We had no conveyance to get into town. **There were no buses back then, and we had to walk nearly six miles there and back.** Thinking back, one man made a covered-in van which would hold about eight people. It rocked and bumped along but it got us there alright. The fare was 3d. It had a bicycle lamp inside which just gave a glimmer. (How we laughed!).

During the 1914-18 war, Australian troops were stationed at Chickerell Camp. Several young men had gone to the war from the village. After the war, the boys came back and things brightened up. **There were dances and concerts and we used to have little 'do's' at the Women's Guild Hut up on the Main Road**. Later on, there was a British Legion Hut put in East Street which became the church hall and was destroyed by fire in recent years. Every New Year's Eve there was a football club dance.

There were lots of farms around Chickerell in those days. One big farm at East Chickerell (*now the electricity sub-station site*) was owned by William Jesty. He employed a number of men and was a JP (magistrate) who took a great interest in the school. At the farm there were stables. His son owned several racehorses which ran on the race-track in the field opposite the present (*football*) stadium. The jockeys lodged in the village.

Most of the young women, including myself, worked in Weymouth. This meant cycling to and fro in all winds and weathers. **There were no houses between Crossroads and the Marquis of Granby**, and it was very lonely.

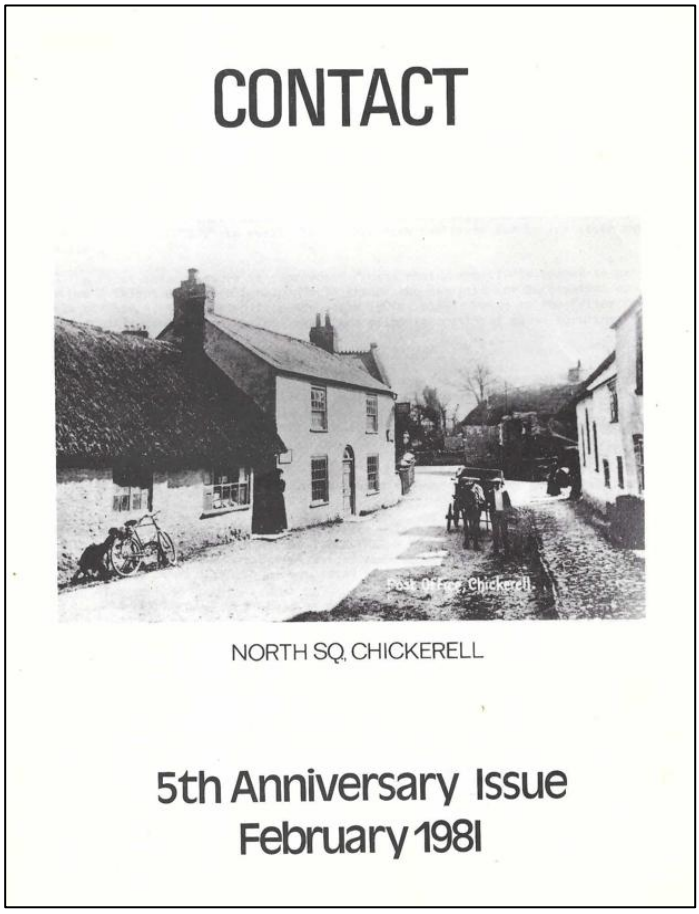
There was a little man in the village who used to mend our bikes. His name was Tom Bugler and he lived at the corner of North Square.

Talking of lights on roads – I remember when we came to Chickerell **there were only oil lamps on standards**. One was down by the corner of Putton Lane and Lower Putton Lane. It was on a triangular piece of grass, and another was up near the new Rectory. I once heard an old man saying he had put the Putton one out so that when the men came out from the Fisherman's Arms, a bit tipsy, they would make for the light and would find themselves in the pond just below!

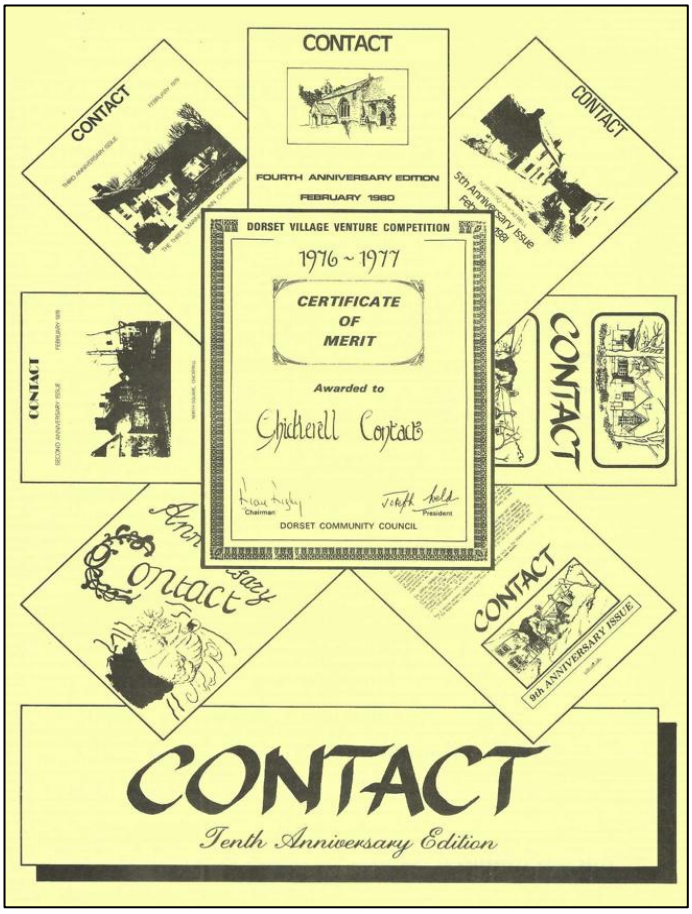
There used to be a **Cottage Garden Show** held on the Football Field and people brought along all kinds of vegetables, fruit, flowers, jams, pickles and cakes. Chickerell people loved their gardens, and every other man seemed to have his piece of allotment and grew all they needed and more.

Fleet was a beautiful quiet place, and it was very pleasant walking around the shore to Fleet House (now Moonfleet).

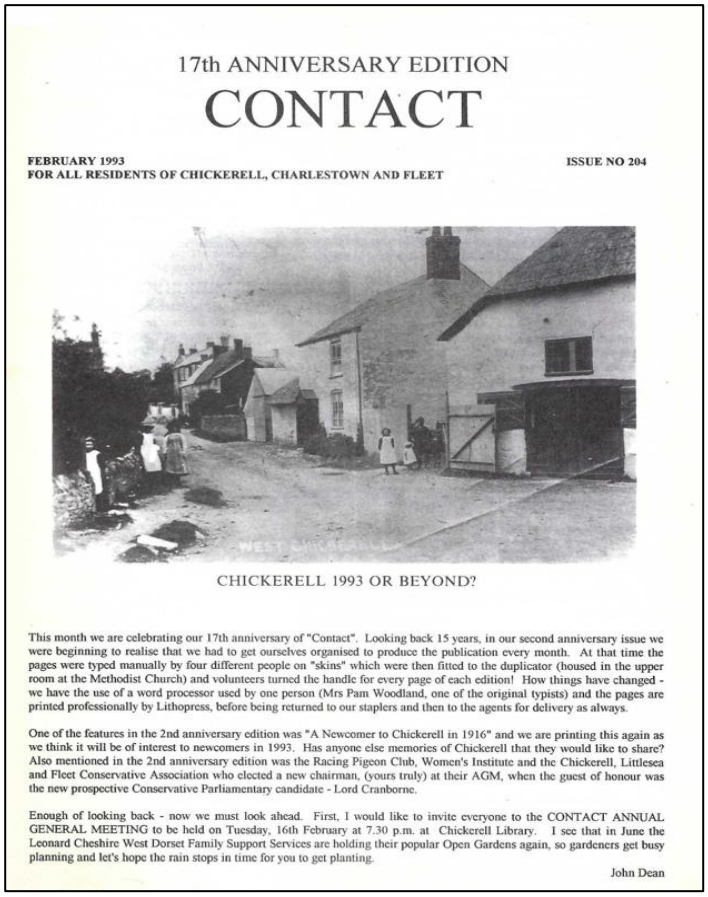
It is all altered with the new houses being built. Did we ever think Lower Way (with our little shady lane) would look like it does today? Progress must go on. It's somewhere for folk to live. I was fifteen years old when I first came. I wish I could say I was born here. I have now lived in the village for 62 years and am a great-grandmother. I have many nice friends among Charlestown people, some of whom now live in Chickerell**.** **Anon**



This edition includes historic photo. A reader remembered painstakingly weeding all the weeds out of the cobbled path (in front of the buildings on the right)



10th Anniversary cover includes award in Dorset Village Venture competition


17th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

CONTACT

FEBRUARY 1993 ISSUE NO 204

FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF CHICKERELL, CHARLESTOWN AND FLEET

CHICKERELL 1993 OR BEYOND?

This month we are celebrating our 17th anniversary of "Contact". Looking back 15 years, in our second anniversary issue we were beginning to realise that we had to get ourselves organised to produce the publication every month. At that time the pages were typed manually by four different people on "skins" which were then fitted to the duplicator (housed in the upper room at the Methodist Church) and volunteers turned the handle for every page of each edition! How things have changed - we have the use of a word processor used by one person (Mrs Pam Woodland, one of the original typists) and the pages are printed professionally by Lithopress, before being returned to our staplers and then to the agents for delivery as always.

One of the features in the 2nd anniversary edition was "A Newcomer to Chickerell in 1916" and we are printing this again as we think it will be of interest to newcomers in 1993. Has anyone else memories of Chickerell that they would like to share? Also mentioned in the 2nd anniversary edition was the Racing Pigeon Club, Women's Institute and the Chickerell, Littlesea and Fleet Conservative Association who elected a new chairman, (yours truly) at their AGM, when the guest of honour was the new prospective Conservative Parliamentary candidate - Lord Cranborne.

Enough of looking back - now we must look ahead. First, I would like to invite everyone to the CONTACT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held on Tuesday, 16th February at 7.30 p.m. at Chickerell Library. I see that in June the Leonard Cheshire West Dorset Family Support Services are holding their popular Open Gardens again, so gardeners get busy planning and let's hope the rain stops in time for you to get planting.

John Dean

The 1993 17th anniversary edition shows historic photo looking up West St from the bottom of North Square

I have had a kind invitation from the Editor to write a short message concerning this momentous issue of "Contact". Yes, it is truly a momentous occasion when the 240th edition comes out denoting 20 years of unbroken publication. It seems only yesterday that a few of us got together to try to bring the first issue out - none of us having had any experience in that field whatsoever. There is a lot of history behind us now but a lot more experience has been gained and many friendships made. Thank you all for carrying the "torch" all these years. Long may CONTACT continue. Bless you all.

Geoff Bailey
(Editor 1976 - 1982)

Like Topsy, over the past years the village area has "growed" and Contact has had to grow as well. When Geoff and Mrs Edwards-Stuart started Contact in 1976 about 300 issues were printed the first months - this month we are printinge 1,825! When we started we had a team of typists who produced the stencils which were then manually duplicated by a few volunteers sometimes in the Chapel hall and sometimes in someone's kitchen - now it is produced on a word processor and printed by Lithopress. Since I took over as Editor in 1982 I have been very grateful for the support given by the Contact team, some of whom are the original volunteers who helped with the first few issues.

John Dean

A book compiled and edited by Pam Woodland containing extracts from Contact 1976-1996 was also published this year with the same graphics

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONTACT MAGAZINE

The 1970s

In 1975, the then Chickerell Parish Council chairman, Geoff Bailey, was asked by Mrs Edward Stuart of Fleet if he thought it would be possible to produce a news sheet for Chickerell and Fleet, with the aim of getting people interested in what was going on in the village and foster a community spirit, with the hope of starting more local groups and activities.

The first issue in February 1976 was produced by a small band of volunteers led by Geoff. Mrs Edward Stuart's husband was at the time the Bursar of Claysmore School in Iwerne Minster, and the first three issues were printed there.

Initially 750 copies were produced and delivered through the doors in both parishes. A manual printer was obtained, and the news sheet was printed in the upstairs room of the chapel. A group of typists each produced wax skins which would be fixed to the printer and then someone had the arduous task of winding the handle of the machine hundreds of times.

In 1977. the magazine was entered into a Dorset Village Venture Competition and won second prize! One of the stipulations of entry was that Contact must have a committee, so John Dean was roped in and given the title of Assistant Editor and Advertising Agent.

The 1980s and 1990s

February 1982 was a turning point when Geoff Bailey decided to resign and stop producing Contact. Mrs Edward Stuart called an emergency meeting. It was decided to keep going with a new committee with Mrs Edwards Stuart continuing as chairman, Frank Finn as treasurer and John Dean became editor. Jean Noyce took over as Assistant Editor with a pool of typists and a new advertising agent.

Pam Woodland and her husband Derek took on the task of publishing and printing the magazine which they did for many years. Contact at this time was manually typed but progressed to using an electric typewriter, kindly paid for by Chickerell Parish Council in 1988. Finally, when the task of printing became too much, the services of Lithopress of Weymouth were enlisted. Derek was then instrumental in obtaining the services of Creeds of Broadoak near Bridport.

From 2000 to the present day

Pam and Derek handed over to Gerry Mitchell who produced the magazine using a computer, keeping it alive & financially healthy. Caroline took over on Gerry's retirement in 2007.

After a spell with printers Weyprint, the magazine is now printed digitally by Print Shop Express in Lynch Lane. Copies are stapled and batched up ready for distribution by our fantastic team of 36 dedicated volunteer delivery agents across Chickerell, Fleet and Buckland Ripers – all for free.

Printing costs are covered by our supportive and very much appreciated advertisers with many thanks to our treasurer/advertising manager, David, who has been in post since the summer of 2020 when Ian Gardner stepped down after his sterling service.

Online support comes from Chickerell.com which kindly puts copies to view in colour on its website each month. Thanks also to all our local outlets and Chickerell Library for keeping copies of the magazine each month.

21st Anniversary Edition

CONTACT

February 1997 Issue No 252

East Street with 'Hillside' in the Foreground - c.1910 (courtesy of Emma Hillman)

From the Editor ... Once again Contact reaches an anniversary - Twenty One this month. At the Annual Meeting held in January it was pleasing to see that the magazine is now on a firm financial footing following changes made last year. Our chairman Geoff Bailey was delighted and thanked everybody who between them make up the team that enables Contact to come through your letter boxes. May I add my thanks also. Our readers may notice that, with the turn of the year, we have lost one or two of our advertisers and gained some new ones. Our thanks go to all our advertisers, whether old or new - after all, it is they who keep us going. It would be helpful if you mention Contact when using their services, otherwise the effectiveness of advertising in our pages goes unnoticed.

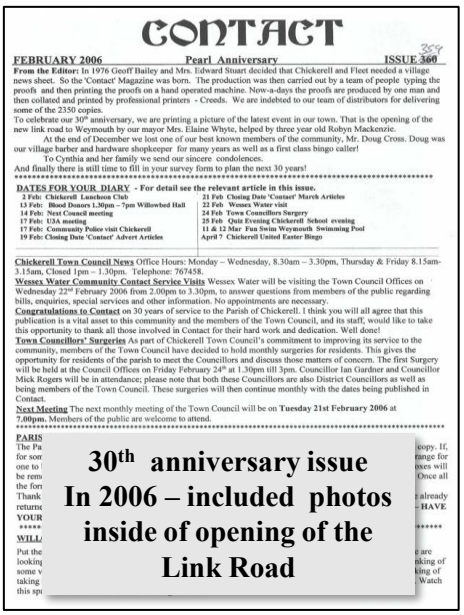
It is pleasing to see the 'Village Green' committee making some progress in their aim to secure The Stalls field for the use of the village. Simon Humm's article in this edition sums up the situation well - Thank you Simon.

Finally, I learn with sadness of the death of Charlie Downton at the Roundhayes Nursing Home on 21st January. Charlie was a quiet, unassuming character who will be missed by his many friends. Our condolences also to the friends and family of Ken Jones of Charlestown who also passed away recently.

John Dean (Editor)

CHICKERELL BUS SERVICE

21st anniversary issue in 1997



CONTACT

FEBRUARY 2006 Pearl Anniversary ISSUE 360

From the Editor: In 1976 Geoff Bailey and Mrs. Edward Stuart decided that Chickerell and Fleet needed a village news sheet. So the 'Contact' Magazine was born. The production was then carried out by a team of people typing the proofs and then printing the proofs on a hand operated machine. Now-a-days the proofs are produced by one man and then collated and printed by professional printers - Creeds. We are indebted to our team of distributors for delivering some of the 2350 copies.

To celebrate our 30th anniversary, we are printing a picture of the latest event in our town. That is the opening of the new link road to Weymouth by our mayor Mrs. Elaine Whyte, helped by three year old Robyn Mackenzie.

At the end of December we lost one of our best known members of the community, Mr. Doug Cross. Doug was our village barber and hardware shopkeeper for many years as well as a first class bingo caller!

To Cynthia and her family we send our sincere condolences.

And finally there is still time to fill in your survey form to plan the next 30 years!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - For detail see the relevant article in this issue.

2 Feb: Chickerell Luncheon Club
13 Feb: Blood Donors 1.30pm –7pm Willowbed Hall
14 Feb: Next Council meeting
17 Feb: U3A meeting
17 Feb: Community Police visit Chickerell
19 Feb: Closing Date 'Contact' Advert Articles
21 Feb Closing Date 'Contact' March Articles
22 Feb Wessex Water visit
24 Feb Town Councillors Surgery
25 Feb Quiz Evening Chickerell School evening
11 & 12 Mar Fun Swim Weymouth Swimming Pool
April 7 Chickerell United Easter Bingo

Chickerell Town Council News Office Hours: Monday – Wednesday, 8.30am – 3.30pm, Thursday & Friday 8.15am-3.15am, Closed 1pm – 1.30pm. Telephone: 767458.

Wessex Water Community Contact Service Visits Wessex Water will be visiting the Town Council Offices on Wednesday 22nd February 2006 from 2.00pm to 3.30pm, to answer questions from members of the public regarding bills, enquiries, special services and other information. No appointments are necessary.

Congratulations to Contact on 30 years of service to the Parish of Chickerell. I think you will all agree that this publication is a vital asset to this community and the members of the Town Council, and its staff, would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in Contact for their hard work and dedication. Well done!

Town Councillors' Surgeries As part of Chickerell Town Council's commitment to improving its service to the community, members of the Town Council have decided to hold monthly surgeries for residents. This gives the opportunity for residents of the parish to meet the Councillors and discuss those matters of concern. The first Surgery will be held at the Council Offices on Friday February 24th at 1.30pm till 3pm. Councillor Ian Gardner and Councillor Mick Rogers will be in attendance; please note that both these Councillors are also District Councillors as well as being members of the Town Council. These surgeries will then continue monthly with the dates being published in Contact.

Next Meeting The next monthly meeting of the Town Council will be on **Tuesday 21st February 2006** at **7.00pm.** Members of the public are welcome to attend.

PARIS

WILL

30th anniversary issue In 2006 – included photos inside of opening of the Link Road

CONTACT

The community magazine for Chickerell and Fleet. FEBRUARY 2016 – No 469

40th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

February 1976 – February 2016

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - FEBRUARY 2016: February 4th: Chickerell Luncheon Club. **February 4th**: Chickerell Community Litter Team AGM, 7pm, 16 Rashley Road. **February 5th:** Pancake Morning, Marshallsay Court, 10am to noon. For St Mary's. **February 5th** Tea Dance, Willowbed Hall, 2-4pm **February 6th:** National Libraries Day coffee morning, Chickerell Community Library, 10am to noon. **February 6th:** Soup, cheese and desert for Shelterbox, 12noon, Marshallsay Court. Chickerell and Charlestown TG. **February 8th:** Chickerell Monday Club, Fairfield Hall, 7.30pm. Talk on tools. **February 13th:** Chickerell Walkers Club, walk to Weymouth, meet Willowbed Hall, 10.30am. **February 15th, 5pm: Deadline for all adverts and advert amendments for MARCH Contact. February 16th:** Chickerell Town Council monthly meeting, 7pm. **February 16th:** Chickerell and Charlestown TG meets 7.30pm, Marshallsay Court. **February 19th, 9am: Deadline for all articles for Contact MARCH. February 20th:** Village cafe and table top sale, 10am to 12.30pm, Willowbed. Spirit of Chickerell. **February 27th:** Chickerell Methodist Church coffee morning and stalls, 10am to 11.30am in hall.

40th anniversary issue In 2016 – a colour special to mark a ruby anniversary!

CONTACT'S FIRST ISSUE – FEBRUARY 1976

Here are a few items from the first issue of Contact that might be of interest….

The front page (as seen on the front this month) welcomed all to the new news sheet: "The object is to stimulate and increase interest in events that now take place in Chickerell and invite you to take part in some or all of them."

Other items in the first issue included:

- An introduction to who served Chickerell on the county council and West Dorset District Council. The County Councillor was Major General Mark Bond on Owermoigne 'who has proved himself to be very interested in our affairs and is a man of action.'
- A note about Fleet, stating that in 1973 it had joined with its neighbouring villages of Langton Herring, Portesham and Abbotsbury to be part of the new Chesil Bank Parish Council.
- Notes about the following on activities and clubs in Chickerell: A Tufty Club, to teach three to five year olds about road safety; a weekly WRVS coffee morning; a WI; a Village Produce Association; a determination to revitalise the Youth Club, held in the Church Hall once a week; Chickerell United Football Club (founded around 1900); The Monday Club (for ladies of all ages); The 1st Chickerell Brownies and a Mothers Union.
- Notes about St Mary's, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Church (now Chickerell Prayerhouse). The Congregational 'church and land was given by the late Jeremiah Buck Esq., on 6th June 1883'.

CONTACT in 1976 – ITEMS IN THE MAGAZINE DURING THAT FIRST YEAR

In the **March** issue the Ministry of Agriculture had arranged to show a film about rabies called 'Once Bitten' in the hall. The church hall was also to be a venue for a talk on 'Education – Parents Rights and Responsibilities' by a member of the County Education staff. Also in March, a fund raiser was begun to restore the piano in the hall.

In the **April** issue there was a recipe for Furmity. It consisted of soaked wheat mixed in with boiled milk. Flour was used to thicken it and the Contact recipe included soaked currants and raisins. The adverts this month included a Frozen Food Shop in Chickerell Road that offered free deliveries to Chickerell.

In **May** mention was made of how Chickerell School Parents Association had helped pay towards the installation of a swimming pool, including housing and heating 'at a cost of £1800'.

By **June** a Parish Rambles group had begun and Contact was holding a Bingo Night in the Church Hall.

In **July** Chickerell Utd held a fete which was a 'huge success' 'marred only by the late arrival of the hot air balloon and its ultimate failure to make a take-off, much to the disappointment of all'. And a new table tennis club was to be started up in the village.

Reports in **September** included the Sunday School outing to Iwerne Minster; arrangements for a Harvest Supper and a successful litter pick. There was also a report about how the drought over the summer had hit farmers.

In **October** a wedding fair was to be held at Moonfleet and in **November**, Chickerell School Parents Association were trying a new venture – for a nominal charge for each parcel, the PTA could 'arrange for your child to receive a parcel (or parcels) delivered by Father Christmas sometime during Christmas morning.' Whist Drives and fund-raising jumble sales were also held throughout the year.

CHANGES IN CHICKERELL SINCE 1976

Back in 1976 Chickerell was very much a rural village still. The Rashley Road, Spiller Road and Fairfield estates were newly built; there were still fields in Lower Way and opposite the football field. Putton Lane was very much a rural winding lane; fields stretched down both sides of Putton Lane apart from the old Brickworks and the Water Lilly Farm. The only other ways into Chickerell from the coast road were via East and West Street.

Lower Putton Lane, very much another rural lane for the first third of its course off Putton Lane, contained The Fisherman's Arms (where Podington Meadows is now). The school was still on School Hill and the parish council met there once a month for village business.

Changes came in the 1980s when the Putton Lane brickworks were finally all demolished for the new Chickerell Downs development and land set aside for The Woodland Trust's Chickerell Downs. Glennie Way was built in 1989.

Before the end of the 1990s Chickerell Downs was complete; a new school was built and occupied, and The Fisherman's Arms was demolished along with the old church hall which was near the Turks Head. A new hall, built with help from fundraising by a special fund-raising village committee, was opened along with new council offices in 1995. Chickerell went from being a parish council to a town council with a Mayor in the year 2000 and more development followed off Putton Lane and north of The Lugger Inn. The Persimmon development in fields off the end of Lower Putton Lane is next on the list along with a new road. Who knows what is to come in the next 50 years – but Chickerell is still very much a community and still has much to offer all of its residents, new and old, with countryside and the sea close by.

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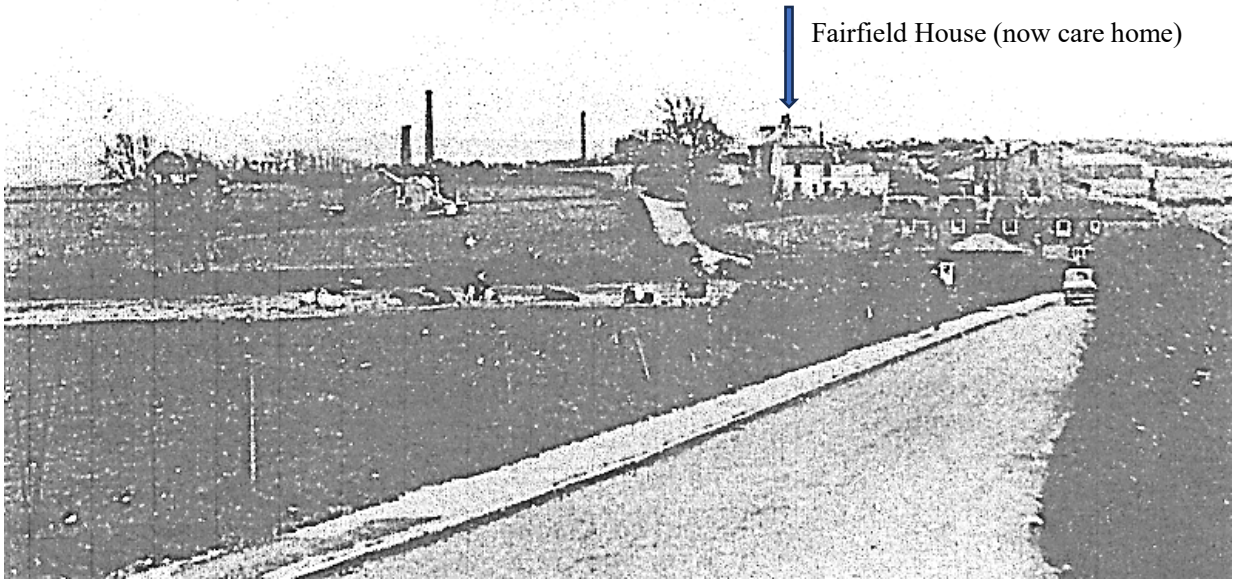
HISTORIC PHOTO from our magazine archives: Looking down Putton Lane to its junction with Lower Putton Lane & Lower Way – a view that did not change until the 1970s. You can just see the cows sitting down in the left field & the brickworks chimneys.



Nature Notes – what has been seen in and around Chickerell

The cold weather around New Year saw some interesting bird movements, with two **Lapwing** seen on the outskirts of Chickerell, behind the power station, presumably driven out of their normal feeding areas by the frost; they were probably looking for some soft ground to probe for food. Around the same time a **Yellow-browed Warble**r was found in Chickerell Downs. Breeding in Siberia, these are a rare but regular autumn/winter visitor, but need some care is needed to identify. To the 'untrained' eye, they are similar in size and appearance to Goldcrests (our smallest breeding bird); a species with which they often associate.

A semi-regular winter visitor to Chickerell Downs over the last three years is the **Woodcock**. They spend the day roosting within the downs, or perhaps in the Water Gardens, and are best seen when they leave their roosting area to head out to feed, often heading towards the Fleet. They fly around 40-50 minutes after sunset and standing in the middle of an open area in the downs can be a good place to see them. Around the size of a large pigeon, they are very distinctive, with a long bill, pointing down at around 45 degrees, and have a 'pot-bellied' shape. They often fly quite low, so can be hard to see against the darkening vegetation, but will lift to fly over hedgerows and trees when they can be silhouetted against the sky. A similar, but smaller looking bird, the **Snipe**, can also sometimes be seen at broadly the same time but, whereas the Woodcock is usually silent, the Snipe gives a harsh, grating kind of call as it lifts into the air and, if you see it, it will often be powering high into the sky.

It is also worth keeping your eyes out for **bats**, whose sometimes erratic flight can be seen 30 minutes after sunset on milder nights. The idea that bats 'go to sleep' in early winter and wake up in spring is wrong, especially in southern England, where individuals can be seen taking advantage of the milder nights, and the insects that fly, to top up their fat reserves.

One bird that has not, so far, been seen in large numbers is the **Redwing**. These visitors from northern Europe head here in winter to avoid the cold, with their thin 'tseeep' calls, at night, often a sign that winter is approaching. Perhaps the conditions on their breeding grounds are not cold enough for them to leave in large numbers. Finally, listen out for singing **Robins** as darkness falls. Their twittering high-pitched calls can be heard in numerous places around the village, near streetlights – one is singing outside my window as I write. It is a lovely sound, but unnatural. It should not be singing at night! It is thought streetlights cause them to think dawn is breaking, so they start to sing, to announce that they have survived the night and, perhaps, to stake a territory (they are a very territorial species!). It is a lovely sound but perhaps also a sad one, as the bird should be saving its energy to make sure it survives the winter.

- *<u>Compiler's note</u>: Many thanks to Nick T for this article & many apologies to the reader who sent in an item concerned that he had not seen the Buzzard family, barn owl and Sparrow Hawk which used to frequent the Chesil Reach area of Chickerell over recent years but in 2025 had not been seen by him. I mislaid the email, so it missed our December/January issue. Buzzards were seen on sunny summer days in 2025 soaring over the fields down by the allotments - and a Sparrow Hawk was spotted. No reports of the barn owl but a tawny owl has been heard near to Chickerell Downs. Regarding birds of prey - there do not seem to be as many kestrels as there used to be.*

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THINGS TO DO & SEE IN FEBRUARY & HALF TERM

NOTHE FORT

WEYMOUTH'S NOTHE FORT re-opens after its winter maintenance on February 14th, and it is all set to host an exploration of Weymouth's role in World War II over the half term holiday.

From **10am to 4pm from February 14th to 22nd**, families can collect job stamps when trying out a Weymouth World War II experience.

A sample of the jobs to try includes: Anti-aircraft gun operator; lookout duty and motorbike dispatch rider.

There will also be a World War II mouse hunt around the fort. For more information see the nothefort website.

****

WEYMOUTH PAVILION: (Box Office 01305 783225) Website: weymouthpavilion

Saturday 7th February from 7pm– Let's Dance (Performing Arts Schools) presents Inspirations, with performers of all ages offering an evening of dance and song.

TRIBUTE performances include: Tributes to: The Carpenters (8th February); Bon Jovi (13th February); Queen (21st February) and Abba (28th February).

FILMS include: A special showing of **ET**, the 1980s blockbuster on the big screen at 11am on **February 8th** and **H is for Hawk** (Certificate 12A) at **4pm on February 9th and 12.30pm on February 12th**. This stars Claire Foy and Brendan Gleeson and is the tale of a woman who, following the death of her father, finds solace in bird watching and decides to take on the challenge of training a goshawk.

SPECIAL EVENTS include a **Giant Quiz for Weymouth's RNLI Lifeboat from 7pm in the Ocean Room on February 21st.** This is the follow-up to the successful Monster quiz in aid of the RNLI at The Pavilion last September. Tickets from the Pavilion theatre.

SHAKESPEARE BY THE SEA: with performances by local schools, is set to be at The Pavilion from **6.30pm on February 11th**.

Finally, there are two special events to help with half term entertainment – **Dino Tales – Jurassic Rescue on February 19th at 2.30pm** - a family adventure – the audience needs to help a baby dinosaur – which comes with walking dinosaurs roaming on the stage. Then **The Unicorn Live at 1pm and 4pm on February 22nd.** This promises to be the ultimate Unicorn Party with song and dance and bright costumes plus a unicorn called Sparkle.

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CHURCHES PAGE FOR FEBRUARY

ST MARY'S CHURCH, CHICKERELL www.stmaryschickerell.co.uk Parish Office: 01305 786043
Sunday Services at 9.30am, with coffee/tea and chat afterwards.

Midweek BCP Communion: Thursday 5th February at 10am with Rev Geoff Hebbern

February 1st Family Service: Nigel Uden
February 8th: Parish Eucharist: Rev Geoff Hebbern
February 15th: Parish Eucharist: Rev Dan Harland
February 22nd: Parish Eucharist: Rev Margaret Baker

THE BENEFICE OF WEYMOUTH ST PAULS WITH FLEET – Service at Fleet 2nd Sunday of the month

Holy Trinity Churches Fleet: The monthly service will be at 9am on **Sunday 8th February** (based on our usual 30-minute Eucharist service) in the New Church, taken by Fr Gregory/Fr Tony/Fr James.
There was a good turn out for the carol service in December although the weather had been a bit wet leading up to it. There were more than 40 people in the congregation and as well as a nice social evening, funds were raised for the appeal. Many thanks to all those that attended.
General queries: Geoff Taylor, Secretary 01305 782757.
Fund raising/events: 01305 778080 (churchwarden).

CHICKERELL METHODIST CHURCH: DT3 4DX On the corner of North Square & West Street. Home to the Ducklings Pre-school. Services Sundays, 10.30am with coffee served afterwards

February 1st Rev Gwyneth Owen
February 8th Rev Helen Harrell (Holy Communion)
February 15th Worship Leaders (Sue and Rosemary)
February 22nd Rev John Walker

See more about Methodist Church groups and regular events in the Methodist Church news section each month

LANEHOUSE ROCKS METHODIST CHURCH Lynch Lane, Weymouth. Services 10.30am Sundays

February 1st J Wilson
February 8th T Wells
February 15th H Harrell – H.C.
February 22nd P Brown

All services are followed by light refreshments. All welcome!

CHICKERELL GOSPEL HALL: Corner of Chickerell Road/East Street. Services Sundays 3.30pm

PRAYERHOUSE CHICKERELL, East Street, (by library). Contact David and Caroline White at chickerell@theprayerhouse.co.uk or 01305 759968 www.prayerhousechickerell.

ST EDMUND'S CHURCH Lanehouse Rocks Road. Rector: 01305 784649. Services 11am Sundays
Rector: Rev John MacKenzie

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS: 396D Chickerell Rd. Sunday worship service 10am. Games night 7pm every Wednesday. Contact volunteer missionaries 07800 614589.

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THE LIGHT WEYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST CHURCH Preston Village Hall, Preston Road, Weymouth DT3 6BH. Details on Facebook: The **church normally meets on a Sunday** and for special events; open to all. Facebook page for more details of all services. Thelightspiritualistchurch

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Gardening Notes for FEBRUARY 2026 by Carrie Dalby

It has been a soggy January with little frost, so the soil is cold and wet. Covering the ground with a layer of manure or compost will help; walk on a plank in areas to be sown. Check for animals asleep in the compost heap before using a fork. Cover the planting area for a week with plastic or cardboard to help dry it out. Cloches are ideal for this, as they allow airflow. Plan now for where plants are to go; weeding, adding compost and preparing the beds.

VEGETABLE PLANTING

Don't feed the ground before carrots; they will split. Set out potatoes to chit. Many vegetables can be started under glass to give an early crop and will be ready to plant out when the weather is right. Onions, shallots and garlic can be planted by the end of the month and must be kept damp or they will bolt.

FLOWERS

In the flower garden, clear weeds and move any perennials to their new positions; divide larger clumps if necessary. Share your spares! Plant snowdrops 'in the green' - divide existing clumps or buy new. When sowing seeds in pots or trays, add sand or gravel to peat-free composts and feed when germinated. Examine all plants for pests and diseases.

SHRUBS, HEDGES & TREES

Hedges and evergreen shrubs should be pruned into shape before the birds start nesting. Trim Wisteria back to two buds, and roses into shape. Bare rooted plants, especially trees, should be planted now to give them time to establish as the soil warms.

****

SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST: MEMORIES OF JACK – by a village resident from the June 1984 issue: Memories once again passed through my mind as I sat in the church for Mr William (Jack) Meadon's funeral. Here, perhaps, was one of our last local horse and cart village traders. As a girl, in my young days, one could hear Jack's cry of 'any rags or rabbit skins' through the village, and in the summertime, he would be in the Westham streets shouting: 'Local mackerel, fresh mackerel'. With a nod of his head, he would always wish you 'good day'. A very polite and quiet gentleman in his own way. Long after he finished trading, you would often see him striding through the village. He was even coaxed into taking part in the village carnival with Walt Talbot as 'Steptoe and Son' and they won! Jack, I shall miss you.

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