This month we have our new Clerk taking over from Bella Snook who has held the position for some six years. To contact the new Clerk you can continue to use the email address of clerk@drewsteigntonparish.co.uk or if you wish to use the “old fashioned” way of writing or telephoning you may contact Lucy Bruckner, 2 New Park, Bridford, Exeter EX6 7LJ telephone 01647 252306. Please be aware that she may not be able to answer all your concerns immediately, it does take, as with any new job, a little time to settle in and know where the answers are! Many thanks to Bella for her hard work over the six years she has served you as your Parish Clerk.

Councillors were also given the news that Cllr. Hazel Hunt has reluctantly had to resign as a Parish Councillor. Hazel has been our link with the Playing Field Committee and served the Parish for several years. Her personal experience in planning matters has been of considerable use to her colleagues in deciding responses on applications both within the National Park and West Devon in the parish. Many thanks Hazel.

The problems caused by irresponsible dog owners have again been drawn to the Council’s attention. The answer is in 2014, West Devon Borough Council adopted orders made under the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005. Amongst other matters two apply to the latest complaint. The first is where a dog defecates on any land to which the order applies, and this is basically anywhere open to the public in the WDBC area (the whole of our parish), they must remove the faeces immediately or be liable to a fine. The second concerns the places where dogs should be on a lead and not running free. This includes car parks and churchyards. So, if you enter the churchyard your dog must be on a lead or you are liable to a fine. These orders apply if there are signs displayed or not. Many of us are dog owners so please, please be responsible for your pet and do not upset your neighbours!

Our parish lengthsmen has started to replace the wooden finger posts which have rotted and are falling over. Councillors were allocated their footpaths to walk and report on condition at the October meeting. If you know of a problem please let us know. We are also asking Devon County Highways what their policy is on giant hogweed & ragwort which now appears to be taking over our verges and hedgerows since DCC have cut back on the grass cutting. These two plants, especially hogweed, are particularly hazardous.

From the Annual Parish Meeting in April, Clare Rowe reported that Whidden Down village hall had been successful with bookings and events allowing maintenance work to be carried out. With the departure of Michael & Ann Hall they were looking for a new committee chairman.

Alison Chapman reported that Drewsteignton village hall now only had three committee members. Finances were reasonable but further funds would be needed to repair the windows which are the next priority.

From the August 2007 edition of the Parish Post it was reported Devon County Council were to implement a 30mph speed limit in Crockernwell. Well done to the Parish Council for the lobbying, now what about the notorious North Tawton junction at Whidden Down!!

Our next meeting is at Drewsteignton on Monday 21st August at 7.30pm.
September Events at Okehampton Library

**Thursday 21 September 19:00 - Author Graham Hurley**
Meet best-selling author Graham Hurley. His books have been described by The Guardian as “Britain’s finest and hardest-hitting series of police procedural novels.” Copies of Graham’s books will be available to purchase on the night.
Tickets £3 – book in advance at Okehampton Library

**Monday 25 September 10:30-11:30 – Dinosaur Story & Craft**
For under 5’s and their carers - Free no booking necessary
Children under 8 must be accompanied by a responsible adult to all events.
Okehampton Library, 4 North Street, Okehampton EX20 1AR   01837 52805 okehampton.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk
www.devonlibraries.org.uk

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**Whiddon Down Methodist Church**

**Harvest Festival Services**
on
Sunday September 17th at 6.30pm  
Preacher - Mr. J Powell
and
Monday September 18th at 7.15pm  
Led by Rev. Bruce Sawyer
Followed by the sale of produce.

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**Harvest Festival Weekend In The Church**

**Saturday 30th September & Sunday 1st October**
Concert, Exhibition, Harvest Songs of Praise and Harvest Supper

**Saturday 10-5, Sunday 10-4. Exhibition ‘A year in the life of our Church’**
Ever wondered where the money comes from to pay for the upkeep and fabric of the church and churchyard? Where does the money we collect go? Who does what in Holy Trinity and in the Church of England nationally? Can you book a specific burial plot in the churchyard? What is Advent? What are the origins of Simnel cake? All these questions, and many more, answered within displays of artefacts and flowers of the life of our church throughout the seasons.

**ENTRY £2.00 including detailed programme.**
Morning coffee & cakes, lunchtime, 12 - 2, homemade soup and puddings, afternoon cream teas & cake.

**Saturday Evening  7.30pm.** Concert by the ever popular Mains Gas with a programme of best loved swing and jazz songs from the great American Songbook.
**Tickets £8.50** including complimentary glass of wine and savoury nibbles in the interval, obtainable from Drewsteignton shop or Fowlers Estate Agent in Chagford.

**Sunday 4pm. Harvest Songs of Praise. “Raise the song of harvest home”**
**Sunday 5pm. Harvest Supper,** Ploughmans and Puddings and auction of produce.

**Supper tickets £5.00 for adults, children free, payable on the night.**
**All proceeds from service, supper & auction for Water Aid.**
**All other proceeds for Church Restoration Fund.**
Garden Waste with Cllr Sanders and Cllr Sampson

When West Devon Borough Council first introduced garden waste collections, the Council chose to provide the service free to residents, rather than charge. Now, due to financial cuts, the Council is no longer able to provide the service free of charge and is introducing a new subscribed service as it seeks to bridge a budget gap of £1.1 million by 2020.

Leader of West Devon Borough Council, Cllr Philip Sanders, explains: “We simply cannot afford to collect garden waste free of charge anymore. Collecting garden waste is discretionary, which means that the Council is not legally obliged to provide the service. However, we do recognise that many households value it and that is why we are introducing new ‘opt in’ garden waste collections instead of removing the service completely.

Residents can reasonably say that we can manage on less money, we have up to now, but we’ve had to start chipping away at some of the edges. This really illustrates the sort of level that we’ve got to with our budget gap, it is now so tight that we are having to review things like this.”

West Devon Borough Council has a duty to collect general waste and recycling, and receives an income from recycled materials which it collects from residents. For example, glass, cans and plastic have a resale value and the Council receives recycling credits from the County Council for every tonne of recycled material. Garden waste collections are different, since there is no requirement to collect it, the Council is responsible for the entire cost of the service and does not receive an income from collecting garden waste.

Cllr Robert Sampson, Lead Member for Commercial Services added: “This is not something we want to do, and it’s clearly not something our residents favour. However, we have reached a critical point where we have to make these difficult decisions. “The new charge would balance the books and offset the cost of providing the service. By recovering the cost of collection we can keep offering the service to householders across the Borough for those residents who wish to use it.”

Once collected, garden waste is passed to Devon County Council and the waste is processed into compost at a cost. Due to legislation, the compost can only be use on the farm site where it is produced. The compost cannot contain any other materials such as tape, polystyrene, cardboard or staples, which is why the Council has removed cardboard from the new garden waste collections. Cardboard can still be placed in recycling containers or taken to the recycling centre.

In the new service, sacks will be green and tagged with a brightly coloured permit so that they are easily identified by crews. They will also be slightly weighted to help prevent them blowing around in windy weather. In addition, the crews will soon have the benefit of new technology in the collection vehicles which show which properties have subscribed to the service.

If there is a problem, for example, a vehicle breakdown, the crew can report this instantly via the technology in the collection vehicles, which then shows the customer service team who can keep customers informed. In the longer term, the Council aims to communicate with customers through the Council’s website.

For more details of the new garden waste subscription service, the garden waste team will be on the road visiting the following areas:

- Okehampton Show - Thursday 10th August
- Harrowbeer Air Show - Saturday 12th August
- Chagford Show - Thursday 17th August

Residents who wish to sign up for the new scheme can do so at [http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/gardenwaste). The subscription service costs £40 per year and provides four sacks and four permits per subscription. If residents need assistance with the online form or would like to pay by phone, please ring 01822 813671.

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Woodland Trust

Fingle Forest Festival

Join us for this fun woodland and wildlife-themed fete. There will be lots to see and do for all ages - everything from tree climbing, bush craft and lumberjack Olympics to foraging, charcoal making and green woodworking demonstrations.

**Place:** Fingle Bridge Meadow, Drewsteignton, EX6 6PW.

**Date and time:** Saturday 19th August, 11am - 4pm

**Price:** Entry free but charges for refreshments and some activities

Find out more at: [https://woodlandtrusttickets.cloudvenue.co.uk/FingleForestFestival](https://woodlandtrusttickets.cloudvenue.co.uk/FingleForestFestival)
This has been another busy year.

Our new community minibus is being used for our Saturday Lifestyle Trips and also for group bookings, including the Parkinsons Group, Autistic Society, Okehampton Learning Community, Belstone Cricket Club, Fairplace Church and Okehampton Scouts.

Our driver, Gaynor Davey, successfully completed her DCC driver training so is now available to cover Mark for the Ring and Ride and School Contracts as well as taking our lifestyle trips.

We made a decision to increase our Ring and Ride bus fares by £1 per journey from 30th May, these had not previously been increased for 9 years.

We also took part in the Community Transport Week again with the Transport For Your Community Roadshow taking place in the Co-op Car Park. Liz and I spent the morning chatting to members of the public and also had a book sale raising £38.50.

There has been an increase in demand for our services again this year, this is putting increased pressure on both the drivers and administration to try and fulfil all the requests received and at the current time we do need more drivers to help keep the service running smoothly, including some willing to drive our wheelchair accessible vehicles. Although we have successfully recruited several new drivers during the last year, we have several who are currently not available due to personal commitments, holidays etc. We would particularly like another driver in the North Tawton area and one in Chagford.

Statistics for the year ending 31.03.17 show that our Voluntary Car Scheme carried out 5,394 passenger journeys covering 99,899 miles! Our wonderful volunteers also gave over 8,560 hours of their time.

Our volunteers really are amazing people, recently I had a telephone call on our emergency mobile during the evening requesting help to transport 21 clients from a residential home to other locations due to a fire. After some frantic calling back and forth, 5 of our drivers were deployed to help, some not returning home until midnight! Our drivers are undertaking many more evening and weekend appointments as these are also on the increase.

Many of them are using the Handibars which I was able to purchase thanks to a grant from the DCC Localities Budget.

We held a cream tea to show our appreciation to the volunteer drivers in June at Country Lanes, it was a sweltering hot day but we enjoyed the get together. We also had a Christmas Meal at Okehampton Golf Club attended by a large proportion of our drivers and partners.

As always, thanks must go to Mark for doing such a tremendous job. Mark also keeps all our vehicles looking clean and carries out regular checks to ensure safety and comfort for our clients and undertakes the wheelchair training for our volunteer drivers.

Unfortunately, due to an accident while our bus was stationary in the car park, it spent 7 weeks at the repair garage awaiting parts. The replacement vehicle is not as comfortable as our own and, due to this, Mark was unfortunately not able to work due to a back problem, so we were grateful to Carmel Coaches who managed to find cover for us for several weeks to help us out. It also meant that Mark was not well enough to attend the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace for which I had managed to secure an invitation, as gratitude for his long standing service to our community.

We continue to work closely with a number of agencies, healthcare providers and care facilities to provide transport for both medical and social requirements.

Our fantastic knitters have continued to produce Twiddlemuffs, which we have been able to distribute to both Dartmoor Ward at Okehampton Hospital and several local care homes, including Kent House, where they are much appreciated by the patients and residents.

The 100 Club continues to be popular, currently we have 152 members.

We held coffee mornings in April and November raising £935. We have been particularly grateful this year for the generosity of our clients, who have donated a number of items for us to sell via social media, at car boot sales and coffee mornings, raising £745.00. We are also grateful to the family of one of our clients who collected £406.00 in memory of their mother at her funeral service which was donated to us.

I continue to work with Transport For Your Community, Southern Area Car Forum, Transitions Project (Previously Advice West Devon), Volunteer Organisers Forum, Okehampton Older Peoples Network (which has recently changed its name to Okehampton Health and Wellbeing Alliance) and other groups to share knowledge and information to ensure we provide the best service for our clients.

Cont. on page 5
Thank You Judy

As a regular customer, I’m sure that I speak for many others who would like to thank Judy for all the years of cheerful, helpful serving behind the counter. You are very much appreciated.

Cont. from page 4

I have attended Parish Meetings and Ladies Probus, Simmons Park Bowling Club, Devon Carers and Riversedge Court to give a presentation and promote our services. I have also attended events such as the Dementia Information Day organised by the Memory Café and the Okehampton United Charities annual event showcasing some of the groups they have supported. I attended the TFYC Conference and we retain good connections with other CTA groups in the County, many of whom have been to our office to look at the Optimise system and who are now happy to be also using it including TASS, Exmouth CTA and Blackdown Support.

Liz and I were invited to attend afternoon tea at Waitrose to celebrate and network with the other groups who had receiving funding via the green token scheme during the last 12 months. We were chosen by the Co-op to be one of 3 local charities to receive a share of the Community Fund. The final total was £2,730, we are very grateful to the Co-op and their members for their support.

I have been involved in the Save our Beds campaign for Okehampton Hospital attending various meetings and preparing statements to try and influence the CCG. This is an ongoing cause and we are not giving up the fight!

We have been chosen by DCC to take part in some filming for a short film about services available in Devon. In July we had a visit from Adrian who filmed Mark on his daily Ring and Ride journey and also visited me in the office – this will be available on the DCC website – we will share details when available.

Our Facebook page continues to attract more viewings and is now a very useful way of keeping clients up to date with information.

I would like to thank Liz Westlake who has covered the office for me, (sometimes at very short notice) when I have to attend meetings or events.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of our Committee for their support over the last year, especially Graham Harding.

Sue Wonnacott
Co-ordinator
Bird Notes
The swifts have now left us and will now be well on their way back to their winter quarters in South Africa. My last sightings were of one over Churchgate at 7.30 am, and just after that, I saw four over Netherton on the 27th July, and then on the 28th, four high over Fingle bridge at 6pm hunting insects in the drizzle, but these could have been birds passing through. Since they first arrived back in the beginning of May, the skies over Drewsteignton have been alive with the sight and sound of their frantic screaming parties as they chase each other over the rooftops, and the village is now an emptier and quieter place. It has been a real joy to watch them in such good numbers over the last three months, and the mainly consistent warm weather has been good for them, with plenty of insects and flies present for them to catch. This has been the best year we have had for breeding in our nest boxes on Churchgate, with eight confirmed breeding pairs, with eleven chicks fledging although one has been reported to the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology, the organisation that runs the Ringing scheme), which I suspect means it was found dead in the village. Of the eight nests, six were successful and two late clutches failed when the weather turned wet towards the end of July. We also had one natural nest in a cavity under the eaves on my house that is normally used by house sparrows.

Malcolm came up over a few evenings in mid-July and ringed all the juveniles in the nest boxes, and caught a few adults in the boxes to check ring numbers or to put leg rings on the un-ringed birds. This has been done for nearly ten years now and is building up a good picture of the dynamics of our swift population here. With the nest boxes at Hillmorhayes and new ones up in Knowle lane, there are now many more nesting opportunities for swifts, and each year, the number of breeding birds is increasing, and when the weather is good, it results in many more birds over the village through their brief three-month visit. The two nest boxes that went up in Knowle lane were installed after the swifts had arrived and both had swifts entering within a fortnight of going up. One pair of swifts even laid eggs, but too late in the short window of their presence here to incubate fully, and the breeding attempt was abandoned.

By catching adult swifts and checking the ring numbers, Malcolm was subsequently able to confirm some interesting facts. A swift ringed as a juvenile at Churchgate in 2014 bred this year in one of the nest boxes on Hillmorhayes, which is the first record we have of one of our juvenile swifts returning to join our breeding population in the village. A non-breeding adult caught here in 2014 has moved two miles east down the valley to the growing colony at Upperton and bred this year, and the oldest swift we could age from the ring number was caught as an adult here first in 2010, and then recaptured in 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and this year too, indicating this bird is at least eight years old. This is great as the average age is about 5.5 years, even though the oldest ringed swift on record lived to the age of 21 years. Swifts only weigh 40 gms, (which is about the weight of a Cadburys Crème egg!) and so the average age of 5.5 years is regarded as a long life-span for a bird of this size.

Swifts just fascinate me and I find the sound and sight of them darting over the rooftops in Drewsteignton really exhilarating, but they are in dire need of our help. They have declined by 47% over the period from 1995 to 2014 according to the RSPB, and this is mainly due to loss of nest sites as home improvements and improved insulation will often deprive them of their nest sites in cavities under our eaves. A recent article on swifts in the RSPB magazine, ‘Natures Home’ reported that the daily average distance of covered by a swift is 800km, or nearly 500 miles, which seems to me to be an amazing fact, and distance. That equates to a staggering 2 million km, or 1.24 million miles travelled in the average swift lifetime.

Swifts do not land other than to prospect a nest site for future use, lay eggs and incubate or brood young, and so their entire life is spent on the wing catching minute flies and airborne spiders. They eat, sleep and even breed ‘on the wing’, and while in flight. Early in July, when we had good numbers of swifts, sometimes up to 30 individual birds chasing over the rooftops, I often tried to keep track of groups of screaming swifts as dusk approached and their flying parties got higher and higher in the skies. Even with very good binoculars, it was tricky keeping them in sight as they got higher and the calls got fainter, but I was interested in seeing how high I could see them go as they roost at high altitude and are known to ‘half sleep’ whilst keeping their heads into the wind and maintaining altitude through the night, but are often displaced from their starting position by up to 100 km by dawn.

It is always difficult to determine the exact causes of a species decline, but even more so when they are only with us for three months of the year. There may be reasons for their decline due to the distance they travel to their over wintering grounds in south Africa, or food availability there.

Cont. on page 7
Hi everyone
The clocks have arrived! The Library and Billiard Room is now jam-packed full of 2000 clocks which are part of the art installation ‘Harrison’s Garden’. Thank you to everyone who kindly donated clocks to the artwork. It is going down really well with visitors and we love hearing people’s memories of family clocks. The artwork will be with us until the end of October half term so you have plenty of time to pop in and take a look.

We are recovering from a pretty hectic couple of weeks of school visits at the end of term. Wild Week was attended by over 300 local primary school children and lots of fun was had by all. We are now geared up for the summer holiday and keeping fingers crossed that the weather is kind.

I must, of course, mention the building projects. Work to the turbine house is flying along and we are optimistic that we will be up and running by the end of September. Work on the Castle is going well too, although I must confess that the sound of drilling is rapidly losing appeal! A massive thank you must go out to all the Castle Drogo staff and volunteers for their patience and support during this intensive period of dismantling.

Just a couple of dates for your diary… Heritage Open Day is back on Saturday 9 September, 11am-5pm. This is the day when you can come and visit the castle and grounds for free. Also, our Edwardian Country Fair returns on Saturday 16 & Sunday 17 September, 11am-5pm, with lots of traditional fun and games for all the family. Normal admission prices apply for the Fair though – please don’t get the two dates confused.

Take care everyone and see you soon.

Paula
Community Engagement Officer, Castle Drogo
01647 434130, paula.clarke@nationaltrust.org.uk

Drewsteignton Playing Field

Fort
We are very grateful to Castle Drogo for giving us their old fort and Wendy house. The Wendy house still needs some work but the fort is up and running. This is a great addition to our field and provides more variety of play. Particular thanks are due to Jimmy Bell for all the hard work he put in to get the fort ready for the Family Fun Day.

Family Fun Day
If you came, thanks for supporting us and I hope you had a great time. You will know that we had a slide to start the water slide this year. The weather was kind to us, especially considering some of the weather we’ve had since, and we made £693 which is excellent. Many thanks to all the people who helped before, during or after the event. There are a lot of you and it’s greatly appreciated. Alison Chapman

Cont. from page 6

However, while the species is in decline, it is not all doom and gloom, and there are many great efforts being undertaken to help swifts by organisations and individuals across the UK and Europe. One of the best of these is www.swiftconservation.org which I think is a great organisation and has some really good examples of what can be done for swifts on a wide variety of buildings and environments across the UK. Check out their website.

I often see swifts over the villages of Cheriton Bishop and Crockernwell, but do not know of any nest sites there and would be fascinated to hear if they are breeding, or if anyone would like to get some nest boxes up, then please do get in touch via the Parish Post.

Nick
Positive People Project

These are the details of a project running in Devon, which the organisation helping to run it (Cosmic) have asked me to promote around all four corners of the County, including using the reach into communities that have elected Members. It focuses on long-term unemployed people over the age of 25 and is to support and improve the lives of those who are socially and digitally isolated.

The project is run by Pluss and community partners (including Cosmic), and funded by the Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund.

The project aims to help people overcome challenges, develop their skills and confidence, and find work. It focuses on those who are the hardest to reach and in particular developing their digital skills and confidence with using IT. The digital element of the programme offers 1 to 1 support, which can be tailored to the needs of the individuals, as well as workshops and courses.

The list of planned sessions so far is: [https://www.cosmic.org.uk/portfolio/positive-people/devon](https://www.cosmic.org.uk/portfolio/positive-people/devon) and includes Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot, Torbay and Plymouth. Further events are expected in other locations and we have asked for further outreach into rural areas.

**Jamie Evans, Economy Team Manager – Employment, Skills and Inward Investment**
Devon County Council
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter EX2 4QD
Telephone: 01392 382165

The Parish Post

The Post is designed to keep everyone in touch with life in the Parish. We’d love to hear about your forthcoming events, hair-raising experiences, fundraising efforts, funny stories, memories, recipes. Your thoughts, opinions, comments, views and concerns are important too. Please tell us. You don’t have to be a great writer, just email or phone John Shiell or Pauline Rowe, details below. *John and Pauline*

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The Parish Post reserves the right to edit contributions and wishes to state that views expressed are not necessarily those of the Parish Post.

Contributions for the next edition by
1st September - Thank You