

WATCHET CONNECTS

March / April 2026



Edition 42

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Editor's Page

Welcome to issue 42 of Watchet Connects

The answer to Life, the Universe and Everything?

This month we are in the great position of having too much copy to fill our pages, and having to defer some interesting items until the May / June **Connects**!

So I will keep my remarks very short (“Good”, do I hear you mutter?)

Just to say, let's hope the rain will stop and we will have a lovely early Spring. If you know anyone who could help **Watchet Library** with their search for a new Digital Champion or someone to conduct, or a piano accompanist for **Watchet Singers**, please get in touch with them (see relevant articles).

Special thanks this month go to **Maurice Chidgey** for sharing with us the research he has been doing into provisions for ‘the poor’ in past years. See page 8.

Thanks to the **West Somerset Railway Trust** for the cover image of the first train running from Minehead to Williton **50 years ago**. This is a very big anniversary for the railway. See article page 12.

And to the ‘usual suspects’ for their help in production and delivery of your **Connects**. This month Chris has been aided and abetted by Claire Gaffney in setting **Watchet Connects** and getting it ready for print. Thank you all.

Our thanks this issue go to Liz and Fiona and her delivery team.

Cover photo: Bagnall 0-6-0ST No.2996 ‘Victor’ departing from Minehead to Williton August 1976: Photo courtesy of the West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust. See article page 12

The deadline for **May/June** issue will be **1st April**

Please send any copy or updates on adverts to editor@watchetcct.co.uk

Contributors please note: to enable us to continue to make **Watchet Connects** free to all residents we accept free of charge editorial entries from local social and not-for-profit organisations up to **half a page maximum** (around 200 words, or fewer if including images). Beyond that we must ask contributors to support our printing costs by paying the standard advertising rates unless otherwise agreed: see inside back cover.

Find your favourite reading choices in this issue:

Community **Conservation & History** **Gardens & Nature**
Fundraising **Entertainment** **Churches & Faith**

Watchet Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC) Spring update 2026



Hello Watchet Residents - We Need You!!

The Watchet Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee (NPAC) need your view on 'Shape Watchet's Future'.

There is so much happening at the moment in relation to this 'Watchet' part of the world - consultations on the proposed tidal lagoon, Parsonage farm consultation, ground workers going out of business in the Normandy Way development and lots of thoughts and views on the options for the Wansborough Paper Mill or the B3191 Road Closure. Without even mentioning Watchet Town Council Ferrier Report proposals for enhancing the town.

Now is the time for you to tell us what you think about Watchet and all that goes on here!! We would like you to tell us:

- 1) What is good about the area?
- 2) What is bad about the area?
- 3) What are do you feel are the neighbourhood's qualities, as a place you live and work in?
- 4) What issues can you see affecting the area (now or in the future)?
- 5) What change would you like to see?

In the last **Connects** edition (41) we showed you the map - detailing the Watchet Parish Neighbourhood area, and the vision statements so far.

Since then the neighbourhood plan group have:

- Designed and are just about to install a Neighbourhood Plan Window in the Market House Museum, (thank-you Market house museum and donations from residents and organisations in Watchet)
- We have a logo!
- We are implementing a Neighbourhood Plan webpage on the Town Councils home page to keep you up to date: Watchet Town Council In Somerset
- We already have a Consultation Box in the Visitor centre for you to tell us your thoughts, and we have a Microsoft Form coming soon.

We hope to come and meet with every group in Watchet, invite you to open forums, attend WTC Annual Town Meeting - spread the word, listen to your views so we can craft a neighbourhood plan that reflects your opinion.

If you have a question, a suggestion, want to invite us along to tell you more about how to support Watchet Neighbourhood planning, please contact us through our suggestion box in the visitor centre - we will have more ways to contact us soon. Look forward to hearing from you.

Bernice Scott-Field - WCCT Director and Chair of the Watchet NPAC

WATCHET COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM

Free, confidential and non-judgemental support with **Benefits, Housing, Debt, Employment** or other life complications, big and small.

If we can't help we may be able to advise someone who can!

Email: advice@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk Phone: 0800 802 1808

Face to face: The Lane Centre, Market House Lane, Minehead 10am – 1.30pm. Locally, we regularly visit The Sanctuary in Watchet.



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Watchet & West Somerset



Watchet Community Choir

The Choir have been busy rehearsing for performances at Dene Lodge and the Singing Walk around Watchet on 18th April. We will be assembling outside the Boat Museum at 2.00 pm so please come and join us for a fun afternoon.

Ann Gedge - Watchet Community Choir

Watchet Carnival Committee Event in April

Duck Race, Sunday 19th April 2026. Starts at 2.00 pm. £2.00 per duck.

We shall be selling ducks at the Watchet Street Fair on Sunday 1st March on The Esplanade from Watchet Carnival Fundraising stall. Any remaining ducks will be sold before the race outside The Star Inn, Watchet (an hour before the race). Looking forward to having a quacking time.

Race Day

Ducks are released into the flowing water from Packhorse Bridge and swim their way down to The Star basin where they cross the finish line. The fastest duck wins the race and a prize of £100.

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NEW Watchet Open Gardens and Scarecrow competition

27th and 28th June.

Look out for the poster and brochure. Tickets £5.00 available from Visitors Centre and see posters for online ticket purchase from April. 10 local gardens to view raising money for the Salvation Army (homeless project) and Watchet Garden & Flower Show. Also a Scarecrow competition for anyone in Watchet to enter. Build one in your front garden (entry form from Visitors Centre, April onwards. Scarecrow entries in before June 20th £1.00 an entry). Rosettes for Scarecrow and Open Garden competition to be presented at Watchet Garden & Flower Show on July 19th.

What's On at The Backyard Theatre

Saturday 21st March 7.30pm **A Night of Terror**

An hilarious Victorian gothic ghost story, brimming with the silliness of classic British humour.

Friday/Saturday 3rd & 4th April 7.30pm **Flagship** - see below

Saturday 25th April 7.30pm **The Last Dance Saloon**

A moving play. Two people luckily form an attraction across the dance floor of a Tango class in Argentina but unluckily they literally live 'worlds' apart. Includes a Tango workshop after the interval. Limited seats available.

Book online for all events: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call the Ticket Source Box Office: 0333 666 3366



Flagship!

A comedy sketch show to be performed at The Backyard Theatre in Watchet, on Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th April, by **The Steaming Coasters**.

Nonsense and Nonsensibility in 2023, *Close Encounters of the Mirth Kind* in 2024 and *One Foot in the Mud* in 2025.

This 2026 show unites the most popular sketches, cherry picked from all three shows, and brings them to the stage for one final outing of manic mayhem. See above for tickets.

Update from Watchet Summertime

Our next fundraising event will be the **St Patrick's Day Ceilidh** (Friday 13th March 7pm, Watchet Bowling Club (£20 pp inc 2 course supper), ring Dan on 07514 332 603 for reservations).

This is followed by **Don's Summertime Entertainment Evening** at the Boat Museum (£10 pp inc mulled cider/apple juice & Somerset apple cake) Saturday 11th April.

We have started planning for our main event 18-22nd August, with a host of new music and events, mixing up our timetable to optimise attendance and ensure 2026 Summertime is the best ever!! See you soon!

Bernice and all the Watchet Summertime Committee.

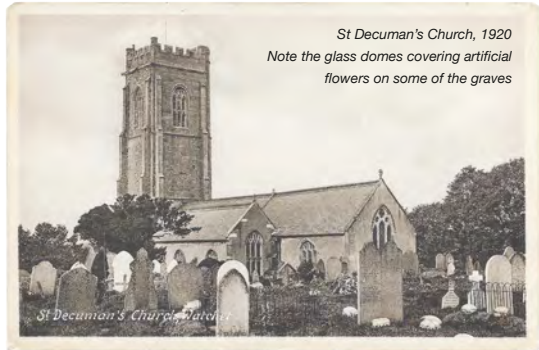
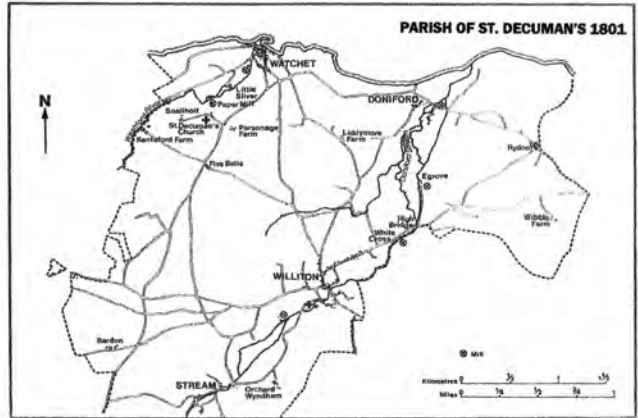
Looking after the 'Poor' of Watchet – Local Workhouses

By 1583 the churchwardens and sidesmen of St. Decuman's held approximately 15 acres of land and other property, income from these was used for the repair of the parish church, payment of charges on the parish, the maintenance of soldiers in Ireland or elsewhere, and in support of the poor. The estate almost certainly had been held by the pre-Reformation churchwardens, and some of it had been given for masses under the will of William Klere in 1403.

Not many people know that a workhouse was established at Watchet in 1730. The workhouse was very overcrowded and stood close to St. Decuman's Church, actually on land which is now part of the old churchyard. In 1777 a parliamentary report recorded as many as 60 people could be living there.

By 1787 the income from the St Decuman's land was £6 4s. 10d. An area of the estate, about 12 acres, was called the Poores' Land. In later years this gradually converted into stock, and by 1901, the St. Decuman's charity, as it was known, comprised the stock, just over six acres of land, two houses and cottages and a printing office. There was a net income of £103 from real property and £33 9s. 4d. from investments, and 168 people received blankets.

Following a proposal in 1821 by a general parish meeting the Watchet Church House was converted for the use of the poor. There was a proposal in 1824 to re-open the Little Silver cloth mills at Watchet (originally near the top of the railway bridge), to dress cloth made by the poor. Hence the modern-day name Little Silver Court. This was later superseded by the acquisition of a house and mill at Watering Place as a workhouse in 1825,



somewhere in the area behind today's Swain Street. In 1828-9 it was in full use, stocked with raw materials, spinning turns and other machinery.

By 1977 all but one of the old cottages had been sold, and investments produced an income of approximately £1,100, applied to the repair of the parish church and in distributions to the old, the widowed, and the infirm of Watchet and Williton. In 1939 coal vouchers replaced blankets, and grocery vouchers were given in the 1970s; in 1979 each was worth £3.

Back in the nineteenth century, Watchet, vying with neighbour Williton in size of population, was an important parish in the original Poor Law Union, though all the while it was growing from the old St. Decuman's parish into a separate identity (in 1902, after the tremendous storm which did great damage to Watchet Harbour, an Urban District Council was set up for Watchet in order to raise funding for repairs, whilst Williton was overseen by a Parish Council. Watchet Town Council and Williton Parish Council later came under the aegis of West Somerset Council, and now under Somerset County Council).

Following the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, in 1836 members of a board of guardians, set up by the Poor Law Commissioners of England and Wales, came into Williton to hold their first meeting to plan the future guardianship of the poor at a Williton Union. The old Union covered a very large and rural area, embracing 35 parishes including Watchet and stretched across Exmoor to Oare and Culbone. The population was an estimated 18,000. All local Justices of the Peace living within this Union area were designated ex-officio guardians; they were to be joined by elected representatives from each parish. The guardians divided their territory into four districts, appointing a relieving officer for each at annual salaries ranging from £65 to £80. Negotiations were opened to acquire the old poorhouse at St. Decuman's, Watchet, for unmarried mothers and their young, but nothing came of this. Instead it was decided that a central workhouse would be built at Williton to hold 300 inmates. Until this was built paupers would get weekly relief.

BREAKFAST

All week: 8 ozs. bread, 1½ ozs. margarine,
1 pint of tea.

DINNERS

Sunday: 16 ozs. meat pie.
Monday: 3½ ozs. boiled beef,
6 ozs. bread, two vegetables and
6 ozs. fresh or dried fruit pudding.
Tuesday: 4½ ozs. roast mutton,
4 ozs. bread and two vegetables.
Wednesday: 3½ ozs. roast or boiled pork,
4 ozs. bread, two vegetables and
8 ozs. rice or sago pudding.
Thursday: 4½ ozs. roast beef, bread
and two vegetables.
Friday: 4½ ozs. cold meat, bread
and vegetables.
Saturday: cottage pie, bread pudding and
two vegetables.

Note for youngsters: 1 Oz (ounce) = 28 grams



The proposed new Union Workhouse at Williton was later named Townsend House, situated in Long Street, and was built in 1838-40 to the designs of Sir Gilbert Scott and William Moffatt. As it was such a large building it cost £6,000 to build. The completed building was regarded with dread by local residents and in later years was given the nicknames of 'Spike' and 'The Grubber'. The building was built to accommodate 200 inmates, with a large arch at the front and behind it two wings, with segregated accommodation for men and boys, women and girls.

When the Workhouse was first opened it provided very basic food for inmates. By the time the guardians were abolished in 1930, the "Grubber" was offering its clientele slightly more variety: see menu on previous page.

Priority was given to the mid-day meal. On weekday evenings, 1930s suppers consisted of 8 ozs of bread and ½ oz. of margarine. Occasionally inmates were allowed a small amount of jam and 2 ozs. of cheese and on Sundays a bonus – 3 ozs. of cake.

In 1948 the corpse of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act was finally interred. The dreaded name 'Workhouse' had long since been abolished though lived on in local memories for many years. Many Workhouses became district hospitals for the aged sick. Williton was originally among them, but early in 2006 the old buildings were restored and converted into 37 homes and 17 flats.

Maurice Chidgey

Alan Jones' article about the history of St Decuman's in 13th and 14th centuries will be in our next edition.

Watchet Conservation Society



Our first open meeting of the New Year was a talk by Paul Upton on **Five more Watchet Buildings** which was very interesting, giving us a picture of what Watchet was like and how the various properties have developed over the years.

During January, Heather has been working on the Fitzroy Barometer and is now waiting for the weather to improve so she will be able to paint the framework.

More Fossil signs are being erected, as Watchet was mentioned by a firm to be a good place to go hunting for them!

We have also 'been appointed' by the Committee of Management of the **Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society** to be their Honorary Agents for Watchet. This has meant we can take over and repair the old Mine on the side of the Esplanade, so that people can post in donations for the Mariners' Society.

Our next Open meeting is on the 17th March, and will be given by Jim Patterson: **Papermaking in Watchet**. We do hope you can come along.

Very Best Wishes from Molly & Committee.

War Memorial Pavilion Group

In early December we held a **Santa Run** which proved very successful despite the miserable weather. A great big 'Thank You' to all those that worked hard organising, volunteering on the day or taking part!

Our situation has improved somewhat, although there is still much to do. We hope to start some remedial work on the pavilion in the spring.

To make the best of our lovely Memorial Ground, more events are planned for 2026 including another Fun Run in the summer, this time on a maritime theme; another Santa Run in December; possibly as many as six Car Boot sales and a Dog Show as well as the now regular Gardening Show and the very popular Carnival Fete. Look out for details of all the events in due course.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to help with any of these new events should contact Lori Lee : 07935 318 022. Jim Nicholas : 01984 631 660

Article and Ad deadline for the May/June edition is 1st April

Join the team at Watchet Station

If you are looking for a rewarding and enjoyable activity to share in, come and join us at Watchet Station. Watchet is a very popular destination on the West Somerset Railway, the longest heritage railway in England: we are the middle of the 9 stations, and our lovely town has so much to offer holiday-makers.



We are all volunteers and we help visitors get the most when visiting our town. We give whatever time we can to the Station, for just a few hours a week during the “season” (March to November). There is a great camaraderie among the staff: we all love our “job” and some of us have been volunteering for 15 years or more. Around 50 volunteer men and women, who come from a wide variety of backgrounds, bring a range of valuable skills and experience, and many friendships develop naturally. There is a variety of tasks and roles to suit, and training will be given: shop, café, booking office, platform, gardening, maintenance, railway modelling and more. A bonus is that staff are eligible for free travel on most timetables after their first season.

Join us for a **“Cuppa, Cake and Chat”** on Wednesday 18th March 10am-midday and be surprised! Or call in to the station when passing if we’re open, or email fows.chris@gmail.com.

Looking forward to meeting you! Friends of Watchet Station

West Somerset Railway celebrates 50 years!

2026 marks the 50th anniversary of the reopening in 1976 of the West Somerset Railway after it closed in the early 1970s, and there will be many celebrations when our 2026 season starts on 28th March.

A small band of volunteers, including Watchet resident and current platform volunteer Brian Stainton, toiled endlessly to raise money and worked their socks off to restore the track and buildings.

Our front cover shows the steam loco that officially opened the section of line between Minehead and Williton on 28th August 1976. That very same loco - **Bagnall 0-6-0ST No.2996 Victor** - will be making a grand return on 28th March, celebrating the first journey between Minehead and Blue Anchor.

The **Spring Spectacular** in the first week of May will bring more steam to our heritage line. Expect a lot of enthusiasts in town!



Flying Scotsman passing through Watchet June/July 2025
Photo: Nigel Blenkinsop

The Co-op - Supporting Our Community in Watchet

Did you know that Watchet Coastal Community Team is this year's local Coop supported charity? By choosing them as your cause, you can help raise funds that make a real difference right here in Watchet.

Since 2016, Coop members across the UK have helped share more than £115 million with nearly 40,000 local community projects through the Coop Local Community Fund. These projects support people and bring communities together in meaningful ways.

How the Local Community Fund Helps

The Fund supports local projects that help people thrive by:

- Improving access to food
- Creating opportunities for young people
- Supporting mental wellbeing
- Bringing communities together
- Helping to build a more sustainable future

About Watchet Coastal Community Team

Watchet Coastal Community Team works hard to strengthen community life in Watchet. The funds they raise help them continue their valuable work supporting local people, community activities and the ongoing development of Watchet.

How You Can Support Them

If you're a Coop member, you can choose Watchet Coastal Community Team as your local cause in just a few minutes:

- Through the Coop App
- By logging into your membership account at www.coop.co.uk/membership
- By calling the Coop membership team on 0800 068 6727

Not a member yet? Joining is easy. You can download the Coop App or pick up a membership form at either of Watchet's Coop stores on Liddymore Road or Swain Street.

Get Involved

If you'd be interested in coming along to a Coop members' event in Watchet, I'd love to hear from you.

eve.warburton@coop.co.uk Facebook: Eve Coop

Introduction to Beekeeping Course – Spring 2026

Curious about keeping bees?

Our course, running in Spring 2026, is the perfect starting point for anyone interested in learning how to keep honeybees responsibly and confidently.

Designed specifically for beginners, this friendly course includes basic theory and practical sessions and covers the essential knowledge needed to get started, including:

- The life cycle and behaviour of the honeybee
- An overview of beekeeping equipment and hives
- Seasonal colony management
- Bee health, pests and diseases
- An introduction to honey production
- Safety, welfare and best practice in beekeeping

The course combines clear classroom teaching with practical apiary sessions, led by experienced local beekeepers, and is ideal for those considering keeping bees in gardens, smallholdings or rural settings around Exmoor. Three Saturdays followed later by four practical sessions at the Exmoor BKA Apiary. Cost £100 (includes refreshments). No prior experience or equipment is required — just enthusiasm and an interest in bees. Come and find out if beekeeping is for you.

Starts Saturday 7th March 2026 at Carhampton Village Hall. Booking & enquiries: exmoorbeekeepertraining@outlook.com
Places are limited, so early booking is recommended.

We look forward to welcoming a new group of beekeepers to the association.



Photo of two bees: Jackie Williams



The Exmoor BKA apiary

Watchet Garden and Flower Show July 19th

At War Memorial Recreation Ground from 10.30am. Look out for the posters. Pick up free seeds/Entry Form from the Visitors Centre from March onwards for your children to grow a plant and enter a class (all children's classes free). This year a new **LEGO class** with a Lego kit prize! Full schedule available from April. Would you like to enter the Mini Chelsea Show garden displays this year? We have 4 entries already and it would be great to grow this class.

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What's on in March

To Monday 4th May 10am - 4pm, Tuesday - Sunday (until April), and then 10am - 5pm, every day. Exhibition at East Quay Galleries 1 and 2. **Earthly Spirits by Pinkie Maclure**. Free entry. Artwork exploring the space between the sacred and the earthly, the spiritual and the natural through stained glass and sound.

To Sunday, 29th March 10am - 4pm, Tuesday - Sunday (until April), and then 10am - 5pm, every day. Free but donations welcomed. Project at East Quay Studio 10. **Refraction** by East Quay's Studio Artists and Geckoella, exploring the boundaries between science and art, our relationship with crystals and how they permeate into our daily lives.

Sunday 1st 10am – 4pm **Watchet Street Fair** on The Esplanade. Stalls offering hot food, arts and crafts, local cheeses, jewellery, clothing, butchers and more. Face painting for kids old and young. Live music in the afternoon provided by the amazing Secret Seven.

Enquiries please contact Molly Quint 07557 644 141

Monday 2nd Lent Lunch at the Salvation Army 12 noon until 1,30pm. All welcome. Suggested donation for Christian Aid £5.

Tuesday 3rd 5.30 – 7.30pm at East Quay Kitchen. **Folk Juice – Rituals and Symbolism**. Free – donations welcome. A monthly meet-up on Folk Culture. Share what ritual and symbolism mean to families, community and life today.

Thursday 5th 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. **Kitchen Conversation** with Pinkie Maclure and EQ Curator George Harwood Smith. Admission £15, inc delicious light bites from the kitchen

Saturday 7th 11am at West Street Beach Slipway. Wrap up warm for Watchet **Beach Clean and Litter Pick**. See article for more details.

Saturday 7th Introduction to Beekeeping Course starts at Carhampton Village Hall. See article. Booking and enquiries: exmoorbeekeepertraining@outlook.com

Monday 9th Lent Lunch at the Salvation Army 12 noon until 1.30pm. All welcome. Suggested donation for Christian Aid £5.

Wednesday 11th doors open 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. Adventure Film Night. The **London Mountain Film Festival** in Watchet! A wonderful night of short outdoor films to stoke your motivation and imagination. Tickets £5 from Anne Harrison 07557734795 or 01984 263103.

Wednesday 11th 7pm at East Quay. Music Club. **Music Lab – Outdoor Soundscapes**. Free – donations welcomed. During this Music Club session head outside to listen closely to the natural landscape, discover how the landscape shapes what we hear.

Wednesday 11th 7.30 **Watchet Market House Museum AGM** at Methodist School Rooms. Followed by light refreshments and a talk by Jeff Cox **‘Ada Lovelace’**.

Friday 13th Doors open 6.30pm for 7pm. Watchet Community Cinema at Knights Templar School. **The Choral** starring Ralph Fiennes. A small town’s effort to persevere in the arts during the 1916 WW1 campaign.

Friday 13th 7pm Watchet Summertime **St Patrick’s Day Ceilidh** at Watchet Bowling Club. £20 – inc 2 course supper. Ring Dan 07514 332 603 for reservations.

Saturday 14th 10am – noon. **Table-Top Sale** at The Methodist Church. To book a table please phone 01984 631 054

Sunday 15th **Mothering Sunday**.

Monday 16th **Lent Lunch** at the Salvation Army 12 noon until 1.30pm. All welcome. Suggested donation for Christian Aid £5.

Tuesday 17th 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. Monthly **Spoken Word Evening** with special guest Elle Dillon-Reams. Free but donations welcomed. Share your work, or just come to listen to others and our guest speaker.

Tuesday 17th 7.30pm Watchet Conservation talk at The Methodist Schoolrooms. Jim Patterson will speak about **Papermaking in Watchet**. All welcome.

Wednesday 18th **Watchet Station Open Morning** Come along for a “cuppa, cake and chat” with our volunteers. 10am to midday. All welcome!

Thursay 19th 7pm East Quay Kitchen. East Quay **Supper Club – Jamaican Cuisine**. Admission £35 (book 01984 263 103 or eastquaywatchet.co.uk) A delicious Jamaican meal, ackee, saltfish, patties and jerk. Vegetarian options available for all courses.

Saturday 21st 7.30pm **A Knight’s Tale** at the Backyard Theatre. Hilarious Victorian gothic ghost story, classic British humour and silliness. See article. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call Ticket Source Box Office 0333 666 3366

What's On March - continued

Tuesday 24th 6.30 – 7.30pm East Quay Kitchen **Drink and Draw.**

Admission free, donation welcomed. Regular, friendly, relaxed, untaught workshop, this time exploring **Positive and Negative paper cutting**. Explore Nature through paper collage, focusing on negative and positive space.

Wednesday 25th 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. **Monthly Music Club – Open Session.** A free-flow jam, everyone welcome to play and experiment with sound. Free donations welcomed.

Friday 27th doors open at 6.30 for 7pm. Watchet **Community Cinema** at Knights Templar School. Film to be decided - be surprised!

Sat 28th From today daily 10.30am – 4.30 pm **Harbour Community Bookshop reopening.**

Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th **West Somerset Railway** invites guest steam locomotive 2996 **Victor** back to celebrate 50 years since its first run on the newly reopened line since it was saved. See front cover and article.

Saturday 28th **Market House Museum reopening today**

Saturday 28th evening Watchet/St Renan **Town Twinning Quiz** at Watchet Bowling Club. All welcome. For details contact watchettwinning@gmail.com

Sunday 29th **Palm Sunday**

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What's on in April

3rd – 19th April East Quay Activities 11am – 2pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays. Free, donations welcomed. Two weeks of fun and free art activities inspired by wildlife and nature.

Week One: creating large group nature **Banners**

Week two, **smaller crafts** to take home

Foyer Craft Activities 10am – 4pm daily

Friday 2nd Maundy Thursday

Friday 3rd Good Friday

Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th 7.30pm at The Backyard Theatre **Flagship**. Watchet's **Steaming Coasters** present a raucous collection of their best comedy sketches. See article. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call Ticket Source Box Office 0333 666 3366.

Saturday 4th 10am – noon. **Table-Top Sale** at the Methodist Church. To book a table please phone 01984 631 054

Saturday 4th 10am – noon **West Quantocks Repair Café** at Watchet Community Centre. Bring items that need repair, and meet our menders!

Saturday 4th, Sunday 5th and Monday 6th The **Phoenix Centre** will be open to the public for refreshments etc

Saturday 4th April – Sunday 7th June 10am – 5pm daily at East Quay. **Maker Residency**. Bec Briar, local shepherd, spinner and weaver will be working with wool that has been hand-sheared from her own sheep, using natural dyes and inks to hand-spin and weave textile that celebrate local landscapes. Come and see!

Sunday 5th Easter Day

Sunday 5th 10am – 4pm **Watchet Street Fair** on The Esplanade. Stalls galore offering arts and crafts, hot food, clothing, jewellery, local foods, handcrafted chocolate and more. Face Painting for all. Live music in the afternoon provided by the incredible **Crystal Bliss**. Enquiries please contact Molly Quint 07557 644 141

Tuesday 7th 5.30 – 7.30 pm East Quay Kitchen. Monthly **Folk Juice** - medicinal herbs. Free but donations welcomed. What herbal remedies are passed down from family. What can we learn from the hedgerow? Join us and share memories.

Thursday 9th 11am – 3pm **Watchet Community Heritage Day** on The Esplanade. Talks, paper-based crafts, Show and Tell, Somerset Archives, oral histories, as well as Watchet Neighbourhood Plan discussion and consultation around the future development of paper mill site.

Friday 10th Doors open at 6.30pm for 7pm Watchet Community Cinema at Knights Templar School. **Nuremberg** - As the Nuremberg trials are set to begin, a U.S. Army psychiatrist gets locked in a dramatic psychological showdown with accused Nazi war criminal Hermann Göring.

Friday 10th from 4pm at East Quay. **World to Come Festival** and **Hatch Fashion Show**. Admission Free, donations welcomed. Come along for a clothes swap, live music, and family art workshops - all leading up to the Hatch Fashion Show finale at 7.30pm.

Saturday 11th at The Boat Museum. **Don's Summertime Entertainment Evening**. £10 pp inc mulled cider/apple juice and Somerset Apple Cake

Wednesday 15th 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. Monthly **Spoken Word** evening with special guest Alexis Tamar-Brooks. Admission free, donations welcomed. Share your work or just listen to others and our guest speaker.

Thursday 16th 7.30pm **Watchet Singers Spring Concert** at The Methodist Church. The theme of the concert is just generally 'music' which gives us an interesting breadth of repertoire choice and the closing collection is for a local charity.

Saturday 18th April 10:30am. **Wansbrough Walk**. Meet Watchet Visitor Centre. As part of **Watchet Walking Week** explore the history and wildlife of the former Mill Site by walking the perimeter with Chris Northam and Paul Upton.

Saturday 18th 2pm from The Visitor Centre. Watchet Community Choir **Singing Walk** round Watchet

Saturday 18th Time to be confirmed. East Quay Gallery 1. **Cathedrals in Sound Concert** with Tamsin Waley-Cohen. Free tickets for families, donations welcomed (book 01984 263 103 or eastquaywatchet.co.uk). Join this celebrated violinist for an intimate solo performance of classical music inspired by the sacred, nature and folklore, performed within Pinkie Maclure's current exhibition.

Sunday 19th 2pm at The Basin near the Star Inn, Watchet **Carnival Duck Race**. See article for details.

Thursday 23rd 7pm at East Quay Kitchen. **East Quay Supper Club – Greek Cuisine.** Admission £35 (book 01984 263 103 or eastquaywatchet.co.uk)
A selection of delicious food from sunny Greece, souvlaki, spanakopita, saganaki. Vegetarian options available

Friday 24th Doors open at 6.30pm for 7pm Watchet Community Cinema at Knights Templar School. **The Golden Spurtle.** Contenders from round the world descend on a picturesque village in the Scottish Highlands to compete to be World Porridge Champions. Warm and funny Scottish film about finding the greatest meaning in the smallest things.

Saturday 25th Salvation Army Hall 10am – 12noon A **Bits and Pieces Sale and Cake Sale.** Tea and coffee. All welcome.

Saturday 25th 7.30pm at the Backyard Theatre **The Last Dance.** A moving play, two people form an attraction across the dance floor during a tango class in Argentina, but unluckily they live ‘worlds apart’. Includes a Tango workshop after the interval, limited seats available. Book online: backyard-theatre-watchet.uk or call Ticket Source Box Office 0333 666 3366

Tuesday 28th 6.30- 7.30pm at East Quay Kitchen. Monthly **Drink and Draw – Mark Making.** Admission free, donations welcomed. Playful mark-making with a variety of materials, suitable for all skill levels.

Article and Ad deadline for the May/June edition is 1st April

Advance Notice for Your Diaries

May 17th Watchet Dog Show at War Memorial Recreation Ground from 11.00am. See article for more details.

27th and 28th June Watchet Open Gardens and Scarecrow competition.
See article for details. Go and see some lovely gardens in Watchet. Get involved with the Scarecrow competition!

July 19th Watchet Garden and Flower Show. See article with explanations how all the family can get involved.

Watchet Phoenix Centre will be open for refreshments and more on the following dates:

Spring Bank Holiday May 23rd – 25th

June weekend of 21st and 22nd June

Carnival Saturday July 25th

Craft Sales and Refreshments August 8th – August 24th

August Bank Holiday August 29th and 30th

Watchet's 40s Weekend Saturday 12th September

Diary – Regular Weekly Classes and Events

If you would like your regular class or club featured in this section, please let the editor know at editor@watchetcct.com

First and Third Mondays 10.30am **Knit and Natter** at The Phoenix.

Weekly Mondays 10am **Chair Fit** exercises at The Bowling Club.

Just come on down!

Weekly Mondays 7.30 - 9pm **Watchet Community Choir** meet at the Bowling Club. 07810 510 142

Last Monday 1.15 – 2.45pm **Carers Group** meet at The Sanctuary. Call Cath on 07535 279 359 for info.

Last Monday (February until November) 7 – 9pm. **West Somerset Family History Group** meet at The Phoenix £2 for members, £4 for non-members (inc refreshments). For info contact Alma Williams 01643 818 096.

Weekly Tuesday 8.50 – 9.45am **Yogolates** at The Bowling Club. 07775 632 807

Weekly Tuesday 10 – 11am at The Boxing Club, The Temple, South Road. Watchet Warriors **Ladies Boxercise**. First visit free, usually £2 session. Contact Craig for more info 07594 564 944.

Weekly Tuesday 10 – 11am **Yoga** at The Bowling Club. 07775 632 807

Weekly Tuesday 2.30pm in The Salvation Army Hall. **Change of Venue! Flexercise**. Chair based exercise for over 55s with some cardio, stretches and balance. Followed by tea and chat. £5 a session. Contact flexercizewestsomerset@gmail.com

Weekly Tuesday 7 – 8pm **Yoga** at The Bowling Club.

Weekly Tuesday 7.30 – 9pm **Watchet Town Band** rehearsals at The Bandroom, Market Street Carpark. All woodwind and Brass players welcome. Contact watchettownband@gmail.com

First Tuesday of month. 7.30pm the **British Legion Book Club**.

Weekly Wednesday 10 am – 12.30pm **Watchet Art Club**. The Methodist Schoolroom. Meet to paint and/or draw and have a cup of coffee. Occasional workshops. Contact Phyllis 07972 693 239.

Weekly Wednesday 10 am **Little Saints** toddler group in the Salvation Army Hall.

Weekly Wednesday **Watchet Town Market** on The Esplanade, weather permitting 9.30am – 4pm. (April until September)

Weekly Wednesday From 7pm **Ladies Darts Night** at the Bowling Club. Come on down!

Last Wednesday of month 5 – 7pm **Folk Club** at The Esplanade Club monthly. Free to attend, new players welcome.

continues on next page

Regular Weekly Classes and Events continued:

Every other Wednesday 10.30am **Forget-me not Club** at The Sanctuary all enquiries to Margaret Tatham 07973 638 030 or watchetdementia@gmail.com (4th March: Pond memories, 18th March: Railway memories, 1st April: Easter Crafts with Thea, 15th April: Somerset Foundation Trust, 29th April: Coffee, Cakes, Tea and chat. See article)

Weekly Thursday 9.30 – 10.30am **Tai Chi** at the Bowling Club. Come on down!

Weekly Thursday 10.30 – 12.30pm **Digital Drop-in** at Watchet Library.

Weekly Thursday 6.30 – 7.30pm. **Watchet Social Netball**. A fun, friendly, non-competitive group meeting at Watchet Community Centre MUGA weekly for all abilities 16+. £1 a session, first session free.

Weekly Thursday 6 – 7pm **Ceilidh Class** at the Bowling Club. Country Dancing, beginners welcome. With Judy Mapledoram, £5 session. No need to bring a partner. Contact Judy if planning to come, 07474 601497.

Weekly Thursday 7pm onwards **Cribbage** for all in the bar, the Bowling Club. Come on down!

Weekly Thursday 7.30pm **Watchet Singers** at Methodist Schoolroom. Spring Concert.

Weekly Thursday 7.30pm. Eyes down for **Bingo** at The British Legion.

First Thursday 1 - 2.30pm **Crime Fiction Book Club** at The Phoenix Centre £1.50 inc hot drink. (March 5th, April 2nd). Contact lorileeart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022 for details and costs.

First Thursday 2.30 – 5pm **Watchet Art and Crafts Group** at The Phoenix Centre £3 inc hot drink. (March 5th, April 2nd). Contact Lori 07935 318 022 or lorileeart001@gmail.com or Ann 01984 634 203 for details and costs.

Second Thursday 2.30pm **Thursday Circle** at Methodist Schoolroom. Everyone welcome.

Weekly Friday 9.30 – 11.30am Salvation Army **Coffee Morning**. All welcome.

Weekly Friday 5 – 6.30pm **Community Meal** at The Sanctuary.

Second and fourth Friday 7pm **Watchet Community Cinema** at Knights Templar School 7pm see local advertising for details. harrisonanne@hotmail.com

Third Friday 2.0pm **Gardening Club** at The Phoenix Centre £1 inc free raffle (March 20th and April 17th) Contact Lori lorileeart001@gmail.com or 07935 318 022

Weekly Saturday from 10am **Methodist Coffee Morning**. All welcome.

Useful Contacts

Watchet Town Council 01984 633 344

Watchet Visitor Centre 01984 632 101 info@lovewatchet.co.uk

GP Surgery Williton and Watchet 01984 632 701

Lighthouse Counselling Sally or Tracey on 07722 618 828

Village Agent Izzy Silvester 01823 331 222 / 07931 018 045
izzy@somersetccc.org.uk

Watchet Drives and BickWatch Community Car Schemes

Community Vehicle Co-ordinator Donna Stevens

07599 955 096 coordinator@watchetcct.co.uk

Working hours: Monday to Thursday, 9:00am-12:30pm

Quantock Food Bank quantockfoodbank@gmail.com or 07483 815 122

Wheels Journeys to hospital/clinic/health related/shopping/banking etc
For Bookings call 07891 821 861

Forget-me-not Cafe watchetdementia@gmail.com 07973 638 030

Magna Housing 0800 138 6107

Age UK Somerset Info / Advice 01823 345 613 www.ageuksomerset.org.uk

Somerset Sight Info / advice 01923 333 818 www.somersetsight.org.uk

Home-Start West Somerset 01643 707 304

Mind in Somerset Mindline Somerset 01823 276 892

Emotional Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Harbour Community Bookshop Jeff and Mary Bird 01984 634 749

Watchet Chamber of Trade (WACET) 07836 239 932 visit-watchet.co.uk

Market House Museum

Gill Williams 01984 634 001 or Gay Chilcott 01984 631 411

West Somerset Citizen's Advice

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays 8am-6pm

Direct Line: 01643 802 442 (Ext408) or 0800 802 1808

Email: advice@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk

Samaritans

If you need someone to talk to, we will listen. We won't judge or tell you what to do. Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

Churches

Contacts and Regular Weekly Sunday Services

Watchet Methodist Church

Rev Andy Day 01643 705 175 andy.day@westsomersetmethodist.org.uk

Rev Jane Sperring jane.sperring@btinternet.com

Regular Sunday Service 10.30am.

St Decuman's Church

Revd Mark Phillips 01984 639 669 revdmarkphillips@outlook.com

Regular Service (usually Holy Communion) is at 10.45am each week.

On the first Wednesday of the month there is a Communion Service at The Sanctuary at 9.45am – the next ones are on 4th March and 1st April.

To receive our weekly news sheet, please contact Sarah Lander:

sclarkelander@gmail.com

Watchet Baptist Church Minister Mike Sherburn 01984 633 755

www.watchetbaptist.org.uk or [youtube.com/watchetbaptist](https://www.youtube.com/watchetbaptist)

Regular meetings: 'big church' on 2nd, 4th and 5th Sundays; 'little church'

smaller groups various locations inc The Sanctuary on 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Watchet Salvation Army Samantha Searle 07979 575 453

Samantha.Searle@salvationarmy.org.uk

Regular Sunday Meeting 10.30am

Watchet Catholic Church Deacon Vincent Woods 01984 634 681

Regular Service Catholic Mass at The Methodist Church weekly Friday morning 9.45am.

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Donna Stevens Enquiries and Community Vehicle Co-ordinator

07599 955 096 / 01984 633 344 9:00am – 12:30pm Mon to Thurs

coordinator@watchetcct.co.uk www.watchettowncouncil.org



Knights Templar Community Church School and Nursery

Work at it with all your heart

Head Teacher: Mrs Laura Weaver, BA Hons QTS

Happy New Year from Knights Templar Community Church School!
It has been a very busy start to the year, and half term is nearly here!

Before Christmas, our Reception children with other local schools enjoyed a trip to 'Bethlehem' - organised and funded by local churches. We were taken back in time to Withycombe Farm, and greeted by shepherds who guided our journey; we had our names taken for the census, paid our taxes to the tax collectors, knocked on the inn doors and finally found a real-life baby Jesus in a stable. Our journey ended when we sang Baby Jesus a lullaby from our Christmas play. A fantastic morning, and we even learnt some new sheep jokes! Parties, plays and Christmas dinners filled our end of the term and a performance from the West Somerset Brass Band led us nicely into the Christmas holidays.

Head Girl and Boy for the Christmas term, Charlotte and Teddy did a fantastic job supporting the school in various ways including having the important job of choosing the school Christmas trees. They also represented the school at the November's Remembrance Service. For the Spring Term we have a new Head Boy and Girl – Jake and Renesmae – taking up the baton.

We were super excited to open the doors to our new library space, the 'Reading Realm'. This is a bright, welcoming space designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning. With expanded shelving, comfortable reading areas, the Reading Realm gives children a place to read, research, collaborate, and explore new ideas. This would have been impossible without the fundraising of the KTSCA and a generous donation from Anne Reeder, who runs the Charity Stall on Liddymore Road.

Despite the colder, wetter weather, we are thrilled that Key Stage 1 has once again embraced the joys of outdoor learning! Our outdoor space is not just a playground; it is a wonderful resource that we are continually transforming to enhance the learning experience.

It has been another busy and exciting period of learning in Key Stage 2. The children have been throwing themselves into their topics with enthusiasm (and occasionally a bit of Stone Age grit under their fingernails!). In History, they have travelled thousands of years back in time to explore the Stone Age. A particular highlight has been their work on Stonehenge – discovering when it was built, where it is located, and why it still fascinates historians today.

We are lucky because our school has been asked to be part of the Year of Brass project. On Friday 27th February three musicians came into school for the afternoon to work with our Key Stage 2 children: Eliza on the trumpet, Meggie on the trombone and Hannah on the French horn.

Behind the scenes, KSTCA are busy planning some exciting events for coming months. First up was their Silent Disco on 12th Feb with some special visitors making a guest appearance!

Then in March, KSTCA are funding an author visit for World Book Day which we are all very excited about! Our Easter Eggstravaganza in March is set to be a great event for everyone!

Market House Museum

The Museum will re-open for the 2026 season on March 28th.

Information about the Neighborhood Plan will be available in the external south window.

New in the museum for 2026 will be artwork by Anton de Clercke, a prolific Belgian-born Pierhead Painter of the 19th century. Presenting a contrast to our own Thomas Chidgey, he painted several Watchet-owned ships in bold colour and with precise details of their design and rigging. Other paintings from our collection will be on display, including a fine example of Thomas Chidgey's work, **The Yacht Eleanor** (on loan from Watchet Town Council).

We know very little about this painting, so if anyone has information about it we would be glad to hear.

The tidal system of the Bristol Channel is explored through information boards and photographs, while a fresh display has been made of 19th and 20th century Watchet souvenirs.

Remembering Watchet Paper Mill, 10 years after its closure, will figure in our involvement with the Heritage Day, planned for April 9th on the Esplanade. It is hoped that the oldest painting in our collection, an oil painting of the paper mill, from the early 19th century, which is being restored, will be ready for display at this event.

Jim Nicholas

01984 631 660

Article and Ad deadline for the May/June edition is 1st April

Knight's Tales

It's another wet miserable day in January and as I've walked to St. Decuman's to organise settings for the Tower Lightings a Robin has joined me as I strolled through Church Fields.

Looking across the Mill wastelands, I remembered heavy rains back in the 1960's. Extreme flooding by the River Avill at Dunster meant that School 'commuters' to Minehead had to head upstairs on the double decker bus. This flooding led to the preventative works we see today, a great success. Then, we returned home early and once we got to Watchet we headed to what is now St. Audries Court and Werren Close to see the Washford River overflowing and making a large lake in the fields. It came as a surprise when many years later the area became housing with what would appear the flooding problem overcome!

This brings my thoughts to December 29th (my Dad's birthday) 1962 when the first massive winter blizzard came, during the Christmas holidays. We were not at all prepared for what followed throughout January, February and on into March. The heavy snow in 1963 resulted in no vehicles being able to use the road where I lived (Woodland Road) until March. Then came what was billed as 'the night of the century' in Watchet. Remarkably, the tide in our harbour completely froze over - see photo, right. I think this is something my generation will never forget.

Between 14 and 22 degrees of frost around the whole area meant that we had deep snow and ice everywhere - it became known as the Great Freeze. Amazingly those of us attending school in Minehead only missed one day of schooling, though we did regularly finish the school day an hour earlier daily so we could get back to Watchet before dark on the bus. Workers locally in Williton or in the Paper Mills in Watchet relied on Shanks' Pony!

In more recent years, heavy snowfalls have been rare (other than the 'Beast from the East') but it always seemed to be the top of Liddymore Road that was the last to be cleared. Folk used to walk across the fields to collect milk from White's Farm whilst locals would walk past on their way to employment in Williton offices etc. rather than risk getting their cars out on relatively untreated roads. The arrival of Knights Templar School was thought to ensure the roads would get cleared in future however that didn't materialise as, if there was any snow, the school closed!

Looking forward, here's hoping we'll have a lovely spring and with the lighter nights this wet drab winter will become a distant memory. Snowdrops out before the end of December followed by daffodils in Maglands.

Time waits for no-one!

Tony Knight



Thanks to MH Museum for letting us use this photo of the frozen harbour



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Watchet/St Renan Town Twinning

The number of visitors from Saint Renan this spring may be as many as 28, which is very exciting for us, and we are busy putting together an interesting and varied programme of events for their entertainment. The visit will take place from the 13th to 17th of May. If you have never been involved in our Twinning Society this would be a very good time to join us.

We shall need to find hosts for all those who come. If anyone is prepared to welcome a French person to their home they should contact us asap.

*marilyn.binding349@outlook.com CynthiaPWebb@outlook.com
watchettwinning@gmail.com*

The cultural advantages of sharing experiences with friendly overseas visitors are enormous. It is rare to have communication problems even if you don't speak French, but finding out how others live is so interesting, as is comparing food and drink habits; not to forget the likelihood of being able to visit them at home in France when our turn comes round.

If you feel able to host anyone please get in touch, and if not, keep your eyes out for French visitors in town during May, and give them a Watchet welcome.

Also our Annual Quiz will be at Watchet Bowling Club on March 28th. Everyone welcome.

Watchet Phoenix Centre

By the time this is printed you would have recovered from Christmas and New Year! Before Christmas club members enjoyed a free Christmas lunch and each member was presented with a box of biscuits.

Thank you to all the regular volunteers. Fiona and John for running the Tuesday club with their helpers and the Wednesday Club cooks and helpers as well as drivers.

Also thank you to the Radstock Co-op and their customers. Their collection box continues to support us, to the tune of about £30 every two months.

Watchet Phoenix Centre will be open over the Easter weekend, pop in and see us!

Ann Lewis

Article and Ad deadline for the May/June edition is 1st April

Watchet Beach Clean and Litter Pick Saturday 7th March



Join us for our spring Beach Clean and Litter Pick!
Here's all you need to know...

- Meet at 11:00am on the slipway to West Street Beach. Wrap up warm, wear suitable footwear and bring gardening gloves. We'll provide litter pickers and sacks.
- We'll be picking up litter along the beach, coast path and around the town. After about an hour, all those taking part are invited back to The Sanctuary in Swain Street where all that's collected will be sorted and refreshments served.
- Come with friends or as a family group. All under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.



For all the latest info on the Plastic Free West Somerset campaign follow us on Facebook at '**Plastic Free Communities in West Somerset**' or email plasticfreewestsomerset@gmail.com

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NEW! Watchet Dog Show May 17th

To be held at War Memorial Recreation Ground from 11.00am. Look out for the poster. Mini Fun agility Course and other classes including '**Resist the Sausage!**'. Entry forms available from April onwards at Watchet Visitor Centre. Rosettes, goody bags, medals for agility and overall trophy. Your canine friend could be a winner!



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£15.00 per session. To book or for more information contact:
admin@watchetct.co.uk



In your Garden with Alan Jones

As I write this in January despite the icy blasts, the garden is already waking from the winter. This is because daylight length is more important than temperature in regulating nature. This is why plants from the Southern hemisphere soon adapt to our conditions and are not tempted to flower in their native timetable.

One of my flower beds contains purest white snowdrops, cyclamen and hellebores, together with variegated ivy beneath a 6' variegated holly. Elsewhere in the garden red and purple Pulmonaria tells me spring is only just around the corner. I first encountered Pulmonaria when a past vicar gave me a clump of it in the sixties. He told me it was 'soldiers and sailors', maybe that was a Yorkshire name as I have only ever heard it called lungwort in the South. If anyone knows where the name "soldiers and sailors" comes from or have ever heard it used for Pulmonaria, I would love to know.

You will have noticed hazel catkins if you use the path leading to St Decuman's church beside the old vicarage. Every year they seem to defy winter with their boldness in the coldest of weather. There also used to be an abundance of hazel bushes along the Mineral Line. Another harbinger of spring is the furry Pussy Willow buds which are just waiting to burst open, as are the equally furry buds on the Magnolias.

When we first moved to Watchet 23 years ago a friend gave Ellie a container full of Ipheions as a thank you for driving her to the doctors. I had never heard of them and have only seen them a few times since. The star-like flowers can be pink, white or blue and flower from January through to April, they don't have a 'common' name, but I would love them to be more widespread and I shall be splitting ours when they finish flowering and sharing them with Watchet Gardening Club members.

We have a regular clientele for the assorted bird food we put out, the most frequent visitors are goldfinches and greenfinches, other regulars include sparrows, blackbirds, wood pigeons, collard doves, blue and great tits and an occasional robin. Other birds seem to visit for a few weeks and then not again for months. Birds like siskins, long-tailed tits, blackcaps, goldcrests, sparrow hawks and lesser spotted woodpeckers have all been just occasional visitors.

The cooks amongst you may like to grow something different like Blueberries. These delicious fruits are thought to help your balance, improve your memory, give some protection against cancer and heart disease and, it is thought, could slow down ageing – now that's got to help it's promotion – pity it's too late for me! They like the same peaty acid soil as

continues on next page



Rhododendrons and Azaleas, so if you can grow these plants, then you will have no problem with Blueberries. They also make a good container plant in ericaceous compost and are relatively easy to look after. Keep the compost moist, but not soaking wet or too dry. They prefer rainwater as tap-water will raise the pH level and lower the acidity of the soil. Feed container plants every month using a liquid fertiliser formulated for ericaceous (lime-hating) plants, following the manufacturer's recommendations. Pruning is rarely needed in the first two years, but after



that prune in late February to early March. Once you start pruning, you should aim to remove a proportion of old wood every year to keep the plant productive. The plants are self-fertile, but growing two different varieties will give a bigger crop. Or of course you could just go up on the Quantocks and pick wortleberries!

Are you a sucker for seed and plant catalogues? I can't resist them and, of course, once you subscribe they keep coming for years after. I sometimes try to be strong-willed and throw them out without looking at them, but if the front cover is good, I'm hooked. Over the years I have been delighted with many of my purchases if somewhat surprised by how small the packages are when they arrive. I remember my first ever mail order when Ellie and I had our first garden in 1963. We wanted some heathers and saw advertised a collection of 12 heathers for just £1, good value even in the 60's. Imagine our surprise when they arrived, all 12 plants in a small envelope each plant 1½" high, no more than a rooted cutting. But carefully potted up until they were large enough to plant out, they soon spread out to form a dense mat. I had learnt my first gardening lesson, patience. 37 years later I ordered a collection of Clematis from Thompson & Morgan, 10 plants for £10. When they arrived, my memory went back all those years to the heathers. My Clematis were little more than rooted cuttings, but again I carefully potted them up and in three months, 3 had flowered and the Spring flowering varieties had grown 8ft tall and gave a marvellous show.

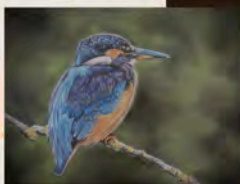
Happy gardening, Alan

ART EXHIBITION

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FOOD & DRINK

KITCHEN & BAR: Closed on Mondays until 6th of April.
Open Tuesday – Sunday, 9am – 5pm, serving breakfast from
9am – 11am and lunch from 12 – 3pm.
After the 6th of April, open daily, and also on Thursday, Friday and
Saturdays from 9am – 8pm for evening service.



EXHIBITIONS

SHOWING IN GALLERY 1 & 2: EARTHLY SPIRITS by Pinkie Maclure.

An exhibition by Scottish stained-glass artist and musician,
Pinkie Maclure, which explores themes of environmentalism and
the natural world. 31.01.2026 – 04.05.2026.

SHOWING IN STUDIO 10: REFRACTION – a collaborative project
between East Quay's studio artists and Geckoella, exploring the
boundaries between art and science. 21.02.2026 – 29.03.2026.

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EVENTS

Loads happening in March and April — from film nights and spoken
word to our World to Come Festival and Hatch Fashion Show.
Check out the Connects events listings for more information.

www.eastquaywatchet.co.uk 01984 263103



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Forget-me-not Cafe

We ran a very successful fundraising meal at the Spice Merchant in early January and we are now planning for Dementia Action Week in Mid-May. The regular meetings of the Forget me not Cafe are as follows-

- 4th March Pond Memories with Christine from Somerset Wildlife Trust
- 18th March Railway memories with Rachel from West Somerset Railway
- 1st April Easter Craft with Thea from East Quay
- 15th April Visit of Mobile Research Unit with Gemma from NHS Somerset Foundation Trust (we helped design the art work for the van)
- 29th April Coffee, cakes, tea and chat

For more information about the Forget me not Cafe and activities for people living with dementia and other memory problems please contact

Margaret - 07973 638 030 or watchetdementia@gmail.com

Watchet Singers - Help needed!

The Watchet Singers will be holding their **Spring Concert** on Thursday April 16th at 7.30 in the Methodist Church. The theme of the concert is just generally 'music' which gives us an interesting breadth of repertoire choice.

Following this concert, we may well be asking for help from everyone with musical connections in Watchet. We shall be losing both our Musical Director and our accompanist this summer, and have already begun an anxious search for replacements. Neither rôle will be easy to fill as there is a shortage of such talent in this area. We are a small choir, though expanding once more, and we cannot offer a salary for either post: however it would suit any young newly retired people moving here, a great experience to get to know people and form new connections.

Anyone who is interested in taking on a fully functioning SATB choir as conductor, or becoming our accompanist should initially contact:
thewatchetsingers@gmail.com

As you read this please have a little think in case you know someone who might be willing and able to help us.

Many Thanks, Mary Rhodes

Currently, *Watchet Connects* is being sponsored by
Watchet Coastal Community Team
and **Watchet Community Choir**
To sponsor or advertise, please see the inside back page

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West Quantocks Repair Café

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April 4th, June 6th, August 1st,
October 3rd, December 5th

Venue unless otherwise notified will continue to be:

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Watchet Library News

Spring is fast approaching and our thoughts turn to our gardens and hopefully some better weather. We have lots of gardening books at the library if you need advice or inspiration, whether it's growing vegetables in small pots or cultivating sweet peas. Call in and have a look. If we don't have what you want, we can always order it for just £1.30.

Our **Teddy Bear Sleepover** was very popular with the brave teddies of Watchet and if you missed seeing what they got up to then have a look at our Facebook page – Somerset Libraries Watchet. It's worth following to see what other activities we have organised as we will be arranging events for children over the Easter Holidays but at time of writing they're still to be finalised.

We've had to pause our **Digital Drop In** for the time being as our lovely volunteer has decided to stop. We're very grateful for all her help over the last couple of years and we will miss her. There is still a need to support those less 'technically minded' in Watchet, and if anyone feels like they could help once a week or even once a month then please get in touch with us as it would be lovely to start our Drop In once again. You supply the knowledge and we'll supply the tea and biscuits!

Mich & Fiona

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Change of Venue
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Sequence Dancing in Carhampton Village Hall

We are a small group of Sequence Dancers in Carhampton Village Hall hoping to keep our group going as our numbers are declining. Tuesdays 2pm – 4.30pm, £2.50 per head, includes refreshments. We would welcome new dancers, contact Geoff 01643 705 522 if interested.

All very welcome. Mrs S Dodd.

Harbour Community Bookshop

We are very pleased that we will be re-opening the Bookshop on Saturday 28th March 2026. This will be our 18th season since we opened in 2009. We have been donating to the **Cystic Fibrosis Trust** ever since we opened, and this year we are aiming for a target of £200, 000. As well as this, we are usually able to give plenty of grants to local voluntary groups and events.

Thank you to all the kind people who have donated books to the Bookshop and to all the lovely people who visit the shop and buy the books. We rely on you all, and look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Our opening hours will be the same: 10.30 – 4.30 every day. Any enquiries can be made to our contact number : 01984 634 749.

Mary Bird - Harbour Community Bookshop

Watchet Gardening Club

We had a great time doing a workshop making bird fat balls and peanut butter cones in January. Seed swap in February. Come along on 20th March (a talk on square foot vegetable gardening) or 17th April (for a talk **Slugs, friend or foe**). We are a friendly group of like-minded gardeners, both novices and experienced. 3rd Friday of the month 2.00pm at Phoenix Centre. £2.50 Inc hot drink and raffle ticket.
More info Lori Lee 07935 318 022.

Watchet Arts & Craft

Friendly group meeting 2.30pm 1st Thursday of each month. We bring our own projects ranging from zentangles, life embroidery and other sewing projects, knitting, painting, paper crafts.
£3.00 inc hot drink at Phoenix Centre.

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Watchet Methodist Church

Thank you for your generosity at our community coffee mornings every Saturday which start at 10am and finish when everyone has gone home!

In March we are raising funds for **Open the Book** resources and in April for Williton hospital.

Details of the **Lent lunches**, our Thursday Club (2nd Thursday of month) and our **Table Top sales** are in the calendar. All welcome.

We read the Bible together and discuss the passages on Mondays March 9th and 23rd and April 13th & 27th.

We start at 2.30pm and have a cup of tea at 3.30pm.

Everyone is welcome to join us.

Our Sunday services, led by a variety of preachers, at 10.30am and followed with refreshments.

Watchet Salvation Army

Can you believe we are already in March? The snow drops have blossomed, the lambs are starting to be born, and there are signs of new life everywhere. We are well into Lent, and started on our journey towards Easter when Jesus died and rose again, for each one of us.

Lent lunches are on Mondays 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd of March. 12 noon until 1.30 at the Salvation Army Hall on Brendon Rd.

Sunday 29th March is the start of **Easter week**. Our hall will be open 10am to 12 for prayer and reflection, everyone welcome.

On April 2nd at 6.30pm, share in the **last supper**: lamb casserole and apple crumble etc.

April 3rd **Good Friday**. At 9.45am gather at the cross, then reflections at the hall which will be followed by the Walk of Witness in town at 11am.

Sunday April 5th **Easter Day** at 10.30am we have a celebration of the risen Lord.

April 25th A **Bits and Pieces Sale** and **Cake Sale** from 10am-12noon tea and coffee.

Our coffee mornings are on every Friday, from 9.30-11.30am. Everyone welcome.

Remember our God is a great big God and he holds us in his hands.

Sam

St Decuman's Church

We were optimistic that our new energy-efficient heating could be used by the New Year, but unfortunately due to the long wait for EDF to fit a new electricity meter, we haven't been able to turn it on! So, during the colder weather we have been holding our 10.45am Sunday Communion service at Holy Cross Chapel. We are planning to be back in St Decuman's church for **Palm Sunday** on 29th March, or maybe earlier if the heating can be used.

Special Services coming up:

15 th March	10.45am	Mothering Sunday	Holy Communion
29 th March	10.45am	Palm Sunday	Holy Communion
2 nd April	7.00pm	Maundy Thursday	Holy Communion
3 rd April	2.00pm	Good Friday	Reflective Service at St Peter's, Williton
4 th April	8.00pm	Holy Saturday	Service of Light
5 th April	10.45am	Easter Day	Holy Communion

The church is usually open during daylight hours for prayer or quiet reflection.

Tower Lighting – the church tower can be lit up in memory of a loved one or special event/birthday etc. Dedications are posted on Watchet Facebook groups and in the church newsletter, with a copy in the church porch. For terms and bookings please contact Tony Knight on 07891 688 448.

For up-to-date details about services and events, please see our website on www.achurchnearyou.com

St Decuman's Christmas Tree Festival – thanks for all your support!

Tony Knight would like to thank all those who supported December 2025's **Christmas Tree Festival** which went ahead despite all odds and the complications of electrical works within St. Decuman's.

The support of so many local organisations in entering trees plus all who visited to help contribute to its financial success is so very much appreciated.

Thank you all!

Article and Ad deadline for the May/June edition is 1st April

Watchet Baptists

Do you like your life? Would you like a new one?

In past years, I holidayed with my family in North Wales. One year, the place we stayed was right next to a small field full of very cute lambs. There was spring sunshine and flowers and it felt like the whole world around us was getting to have a go at a new life.

The idea of spring cleaning also lends itself to new life. Old things are swept away and new light seeps in to chase away shadows. Traditional thinking about Easter lies behind all this. Eggs are about new life. Lambs and rabbits start appearing as the year warms up, and green shoots and leaves start popping up everywhere.

Easter itself is a festival of new life – with the Christian perspective being about Jesus beating death and coming to life again (see Luke 24:1-11 for more).

Would you like a new life? If the answer is 'yes', or even 'maybe', come and find out more from us at WBC, drop me an email: mike@watchetbaptist.org.uk, or visit our website: watchetbaptist.org.uk (which also tells you where and when we're meeting).

All good wishes, Mike.

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What's On at The Regal, Minehead

Tuesday 3rd March 7.15pm The Royal Ballet Live from The Royal Opera House – **Giselle**.

Saturday 7th March 11am – 1pm **Coffee Morning** in the Bar.

Saturday 7th March 2.30pm **Amazing Animals with The Animal Guyz**.
For all ages, from toddlers to grownups. Book for all the family

Tuesday 10th March 7.30pm (TBC) The Regal **Film Society Screening**
(Cert 15).

Saturday 14th March 7.30pm **Kast Off Kinks** The Kast off Kinks, has always included former members of the legendary band 'The Kinks'. All the hits.

Tuesday 17th March 7.30pm Exhibition on Screen – **Turner and Constable**.
Unmissable new documentary which celebrates the 250th anniversary of their births. Find out about the 2 artist's intertwined lives and legacies.

Thursday 26 – Saturday 28th March 7.30pm **Barnstormers Easy Virtue**
Written 100 years ago, a sharp, sassy, sometimes savage, sometimes sad attack on the hypocrisy of conventional British middle-class values – a forgotten gem in the Coward repertoire.

Monday 30th March 7.30pm **Pirates Of Penzance** Somerset Opera returns with Gilbert & Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance.

Tuesday 31st March 2026 5:15pm The Royal Opera Live from The Royal Opera House - **Siegfried** . The third chapter of Wagner's Ring cycle.

Saturday 4th April 2026 11.00 -1pm **Coffee Morning** in the Bar

Tuesday 7th April 2026 7:30pm The Regal **Film Society Screening** - TBC
(Cert 15)

Saturday 11th April 2026 19.30 Abba Tribute – **Take a Chance On Us**
Fantastic, fully live Abba tribute show. Experience Abba's wonderful songs. For all ages.

Thursday 23rd – Saturday 25th April 2026, 7.30pm **Waterfront**

Sunday, 26th April 2:00pm **The Magic Flute** (Opera) As Live
Mozart's fantastical opera with a star cast. Sung in German with subtitles.

Tickets for all events may be booked in advance online at <https://regaltheatre.co.uk/whatson> or from the Box Office (Tel 01643 706 430) between 9.30am and 12.00pm Monday - Saturday;



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Watchet Connects Advertising

Watchet Coastal Community Team CIC

Watchet Connects is the **free not-for-profit newsletter** distributed to **everyone** who lives or works in Watchet. It is probably the most well-thumbed reference for the town's inhabitants, even in this digital age.

Generally, not-for-profit and charitable organisations can submit articles for free up to half a page (*for community entries - e.g. charities, social enterprises, churches etc - approx 200 words or less if images included. Please adhere to this limit to ensure we can continue to provide **Watchet Connects** free of charge*). **Watchet Connects** depends very much on the generosity of local organisations to support our cause via advertising and sponsorship.

Watchet Connects is published bi-monthly and is distributed to around **2,200 households** in Watchet by **volunteers**. The handy A5 booklet is usually around 48-52 pages and is available to outlying villages at cost.

Advertising and sponsorship rates are extremely affordable for even the smallest of shops, clubs, pubs, cafés, self-employed and other local businesses. We can design your advert for a very modest charge – or even free if you book a series of ads. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Copy deadlines are before the start of the month preceding publication.

Interested?

If you want to promote your local organisation or business in this up-and-coming coastal community get in touch.

Contact liz@solveitbookkeeping.co.uk
or editor@watchetcct.co.uk

Registered Office: Watchet Coastal Community Team CIC,
7 The Esplanade, Watchet TA23 0AJ

Watchet Connects Advertising Rates from April 2026

Please contact us for sponsorship and advertising rates for our new financial year, April 2026-2027.

As our circulation is increasing in line with Watchet new-builds, our printing costs are rising too.

The future of **Watchet Connects** relies largely on the continued support of our sponsors and advertisers, and very many of our readers look to **Connects** as their “go to” source of local information, a tangible reference booklet even in this age of internet information.

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March / April Dates

Sunday March 8th
Levi & the Bean - 3.30pm

Sunday March 15th
Black Velvet Irish band - 3pm

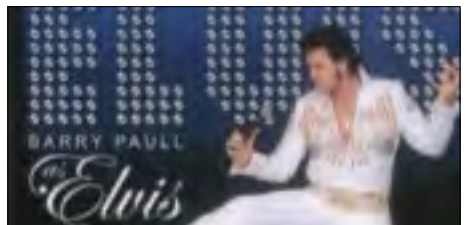
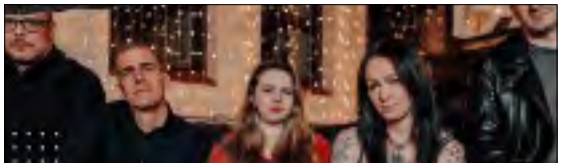
Sunday March 22nd
Quay Tones - 3 till 6

Sunday March 29th
Decade - 3pm

Sunday April 5th
Tim Pitman - 3pm

Sunday April 12th
Deadwood & Whiskey - 3.30pm

Saturday April 18th
Elvis (Barry Paull) - 8.30pm



*Other dates may be added so keep an eye on our Facebook Page
Every first Tuesday of the month - the Legion Book Club*

Opening Times:

Monday	5pm-11pm
Tuesday-Thursday	7pm-11pm
Friday	4pm-12am
Saturday	12pm-12am
Sunday	12pm-11pm

*More dates to follow:
keep an eye on our FB page
for any updates to our
entertainment nights*



*Opening hours may be subject to change on
quieter nights (Bar Discretion)*

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