

Welcome to the year 2000!

THE HAWKINS TRUST

As usual we are delivering Easter Eggs on behalf of the George Hawkins Trust to each child in the area up to the age of 14. We hope the residents eligible to receive hampers and bottles enjoyed these gifts for Christmas and to welcome in the New Millennium.

PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

The retirement of Rosemary Berrie created a vacancy on the Parish Council which was advertised in the last newsletter. There were three applicants for the position, and the successful new person to join the Parish Council was Barry Quinn, who lives at Wistaria Cottage, Binnegar. To the two other people who applied, thank you for your interest. It was encouraging to see that all applicants had an interest in local affairs. We are now up to a full complement of seven.

INSTITUTE OF FRESHWATER ECOLOGY

Major changes are taking place at the River Laboratory which has been part of the East Stoke community since the original site was purchased by the Freshwater Biological Assn. In the late 1950's. Now the Laboratory has been incorporated into a new Centre for Ecology and Hydrology which brings the staff under the same management as the staff at the neighbouring Furzebrook Research Station. In early April both groups will be merged in a new Laboratory facility which has been constructed at Winfrith Technology Centre. Some of the research facilities at East Stoke will continue to be used by the staff from Winfrith and the Freshwater Biological Assn. is investigating possible uses for the rest of the site including the main buildings. Thankfully this is one so-called rationalisation which does not involve making staff redundant. Many will remember the Open Days run at the Laboratory which gave local residents and schools the opportunity to understand the work in progress there. Over the years members of staff have been involved with the community affairs in many ways, notably through the years off service on the Parish Council by Jack Morgan and Stan Shinn

PRECEPT

At the January meeting of the Parish Council it was proposed the Precept for the year April 2000 to March 2001 be increased by £100 to £2600. This was an increase in line with inflation as recommended by Purbeck District Council.

MILLENNIUM PROJECT

The proposals for a hedge on the east side of the churchyard have been put on hold. The Parish Council is considering other options such as the clearing and fencing off of the ruins of St. Mary's Church with the co-operation of the landowner.

CHURCHYARD

Once again we have put out tenders for maintenance of the graves in the Churchyard and we are pleased to be able to announce that once again Mike Welsh will be taking on this work and we look forward to appreciating his high standard of work in the coming year.

FOOTPATHS

Access to Footpaths and Bridleways in East Stoke have received two boosts this year. The most important being progress in the long disputed access to Bridleway No. 1 through Wareham Ball Clay site on the Binnegar Estate. This route has been closed by an official Temporary Closure Notice. SITA who acquired control of the site in December 1999 have now provided an agreed Alternative Route. This Alternative Route providing safe access by-passing a busy industrial site, is of excellent construction and is well defined. It is intended that this action is part of a process leading to a permanent solution for this long running dispute. Our thanks are extended to Simon Gladhill, Rights of Way Officer for Dorset East and Purbeck whose efforts have resulted in this much needed action. The second boost has been the maintenance work on the Markings for East Stoke Rights of Way. This Marking has been undertaken by volunteers from the Ramblers Association as part of their support for the D.C.C. Millennium Milestones Project. The Millennium Milestones Project has aimed at having all public footpaths in Dorset well publicised, properly maintained and well defined. If you encounter any problems with the few Public Footpaths and Bridleways we have in East Stoke please contact Roger Meaden, Parish Footpath Officer on 01929 462541 or 07971 159145.