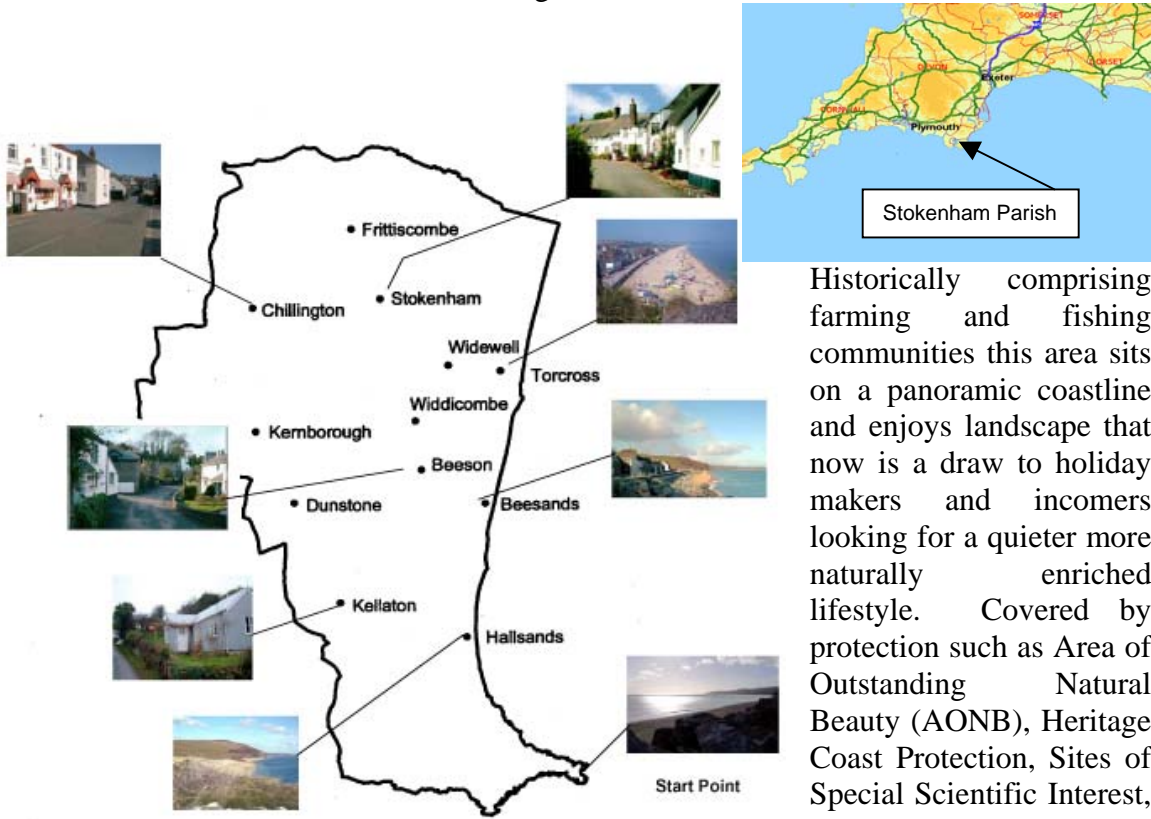


# INTRODUCTION

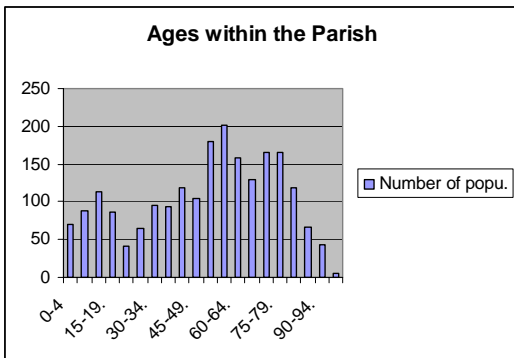
Situated in the South Hams Stokenham Parish is a geographically large parish of 20.6sq.km and includes the three villages of Chillington, Stokenham and Torcross together with hamlets Beeson, Beesands, Bickerton, Dunstone, Frittiscombe, North and South Hallsands, Kellaton and Kernborough.



Historically comprising farming and fishing communities this area sits on a panoramic coastline and enjoys landscape that now is a draw to holiday makers and incomers looking for a quieter more naturally enriched lifestyle. Covered by protection such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Heritage Coast Protection, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Conservation Areas and including part of a

National Nature Reserve those who work in and care about this area must also strive to seek a balance that enhances whilst protects.

Stokenham comprises of a predominantly older population. Many of who experienced the hardships of World War II and the frugal but nevertheless healthy lifestyle. They appreciate good home and locally grown food. This is no better demonstrated than by the enthusiastic support of the Stokenham Garden Society and the Societies Spring and Summer Shows.



Senior Citizens at Luncheon Club Christmas Party



## BACKGROUND

When Stokenham Parish Plan was launched in 2004 it was proposed that a business forum should be set up to share matters of common interest in relation to businesses, the importance of tourism and the economic sustainability of the parish. By bringing producers and users within the community together through the medium of Best Local Food Awards, the exchange of ideas and benefits has found a common purpose and goal without encroaching on valuable business and personal time.

At the outset it was decided to form a working group of two retailers, two councillors and the parish clerk, who would act as a contact point and initial organiser to:

- Promote and hold a one off Food Festival.
- Design a logo for labels for local produce.
- Approach the school and organise trips for the children to experience local food production.
- Design a leaflet expounding the virtue of local food and advising where it could be sourced.
- Involve the local hotel, pubs, shops, and consumers.

*To check on progress and see what we have achieved so far see Summary below.*

### INITIAL FOOD FESTIVAL - 8<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

At the initial meeting of the working group it was agreed that a food festival would be the main event to be held and Stokeley Farm Shop offered their premises as a large enough and suitable location to which to invite all local producers.

When approached some producers sent samples but most attended personally with their wares and took part in a very successful and enjoyable event.



The whole venture attracted so much support, attendance and was so well received that the working group have since agreed to run another at Christmas. It was acknowledged by the group that so often consumers are aware of local products but without tasting them they are reluctant to purchase. The idea of this food festival gave local people a chance to sample all manner of produce from cheeses to meats and cakes to fish. The Stokeley Farm Shop provided a pig roast along with a whole host of entertainment ensuring that people stayed, socialised and provided a unique opportunity for community networks of support to be set up between traders and users. [See 8-minute video film – also enclosed]

## FARMERS MARKETS

A high percentage of local producers also attend local Farmers Markets in the nearby towns of Kingsbridge (6 miles), Dartmouth (9 miles) and Plymouth (26 miles). It was the feedback from producers who attended the first local festival that informed the working group to change their initial plan and that it would be beneficial to hold a Christmas Food Festival when hopefully even more people will attend.



A catch ashore from local Start Bay.

## PUBS AND HOTELS

The following parish pubs, inns and restaurants all aim to cater with and are proud to promote the use of locally produced foods:

The Church House Inn, The Open Arms, The Tradesman's Arms, The Start Bay Inn, The Torcross Tavern and The Sea Shanty

STARTERS	FULL MENU AVAILABLE	MAIN COURSES
MEDITERRANEAN VEGETABLE SOUP £3.75		CHURCH HOUSE'S LIGHTLY BATTERED FISH PLAICE £8.95 HADDOCK £6.95 COD £6.95
MUSH ROOM, LEEK AND GOAT'S CHEESE TARTLET £4.75		PLAICE FILLET, PLAIN BAKED WITH JUST A TOUCH OF BUTTER AND LEMON
<b>DESSERTS - £3.75</b>		PLAICE FILLET WITH OUR LOCAL CRAB BUTTER
APPLE & BERRY OAT CRUMBLE		HAKE OVEN BAKED WITH ROASTED VEGETABLES
RICH CHOCOLATE TART WITH BINGER ICE CREAM		SALMON FILLET WITH A SMOKEY TOMATO AND SAFFRON DRESSING
CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE WITH VANILLA ICE CREAM		SANDY SCALLOPS WITH A BASIL PESTO AND ROCKET SALAD
CHOCOLATE BROWNIE & VANILLA ICE CREAM		DEVON'S BESTEST BASS WITH A VANILLA & ROASTED SUNFLOWER SEED DRESSING
PLUM FRANGIPANE		POLYNTA WITH ROASTED MEDITERRANEAN VEGETABLES & GRILLED BRATS CHEESE
MIXED BERRY DAVLOVA		TROUT CUTLETS WITH ALMOND BUTTER
ICED DESSERTS - £3.50		CHUNKY FISH STEW WITH CRAB AND SAFFRON
HONEYCOMB + VANILLA POT		T-BONE STEAK WITH ONION, TOMATO & FIELD MUSHROOM
TIRAMISU BRULÉE		WHOLE DOVER SOLE
CHEESE BOARD - £4.75		WHOLE RACK OF B.B.Q RIBS
VARIOUS ICE-CREAMS WITH CLOTTED CREAM £3.00		1/2 GRESSINGHAM DUCK, SERVED WITH PLUM OR ORANGE & PEPPER DRESSING
		SKATE WING OVEN-BAKED WITH BUTTER, CHEESE & CAPERS

## LOCAL SCHOOL

When this project commenced an initial approach was made to David Griffiths, the Headmaster, of Stokenham County Primary School in order to involve the children. He agreed that the children could benefit from visiting the local farm shop to go on an educational tour, plant an apple tree and follow their tree's seasonal progress. Another community benefit of this involvement will be that the children can use the recently installed community permissive footpath to access the farm shop, on foot, safely from school. An employee of the farm shop will be available to walk the children around and also highlight seasonal produce and allow them to dig up and pick various produce. It is hoped that this will continue to be an ongoing learning process.

In line for a lunch of local foods



From further discussions David Griffiths has now advised of a special success, he met with Devon County Council and was given permission not just to source school dinner produce from Devon but actually local providers within Stokenham. When the School later encountered reticence from Devon County Council finance department due to one local producer not already being on their contract list the school challenged them that due to the Local Food Awards this information had already been placed in the public domain. Devon County Council therefore agreed for the School to go ahead and this information has been passed to the local Community College in Kingsbridge and they are using this argument to allow them to also purchase their meat from the butcher in Chillington, Stokenham Parish!



Liking local foods.

Preparations are, as detailed above, complete for an educational visit by local school children to the pick your own fields to learn about seasonal produce and plant an apple tree, donated by the farm shop. Local producers have also agreed to supply a Christmas Food Hamper comprising of local produce to raffle through the school, pubs, shops and local organisations with the aim to raise awareness of what is available and grown locally. All proceeds from this are going to the school and therefore the children. This will hopefully raise awareness and inform parents, grandparents and friends alike within the community.

### **LUNCHEON CLUB**

The most important fact about this organisation is that all the produce they use is sourced locally and cooked by volunteers to provide those attending with a fresh, nutritious, well balanced meal, once a week. This very special section of the community is brought together by an exceptional band of people every Thursday during school term time. For the last 17 years those who are older and may be unable to travel and have little if any contact with others due to location and circumstances are so very lucky to be supported by such a willing team, and it is acknowledged that many of those helping should be amongst those sitting down to dinner!



The Women's Royal Voluntary Organisation within Stokenham runs a superb Luncheon Club catering for up to sixty people per week with a waiting list to be envied. There are volunteers that cook, or those that serve or transport but all together they give a service that provides health, well-being and social companionship within their peer group for a vulnerable older generation.

Added to this are the Easter and Christmas parties together with the summer party that is open to all senior citizens! This summer special occasion provides sandwiches, cakes and jellies to over 100 people and made with local produce.

### **WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

As nationally recognised the Women's Institute are renowned for encouraging members to buy locally and support local producers and shops.

In furtherance of this Stokenham Evening Women's Institute rose to such a challenge and provided recipes for the local products on offer at the food festival. Cakes and pastries prepared and cooked by the Stokenham Women's Institute were on sale at the recent Food Festival together with the recipes to encourage young and old to sample and try themselves.

## **GARDEN SOCIETY**

Stokenham also has a thriving Garden Society that supplies seeds, holds Plant Sales, Flower and Vegetable Shows and offers advice to the many gardeners around the parish. The young are also welcome and encouraged to enter competitions and design vegetable animals. With such beautiful soil and temperate climate this is a prime area to be aware of natural produce and the joy of growing your own food. This makes it so important for the school trips to see what is grown and educating the children to respect and enjoy their environment.



## **LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS - THE FOOD FESTIVAL**

### **BRITANNIA SHELLFISH LIMITED**

Locally caught crab, lobster, scallops and a varied range of fresh wet fish are supplied by this local company who started business in 1995. Situated on the Beesands seafront within the parish of Stokenham their premises contain holding tanks for crab, lobster and scallops ensuring maximum quality and freshness of the product. Involved with Dartmouth and Kingsbridge Farmers Markets, the Devon County Show, South Hams Food and Drink Association, Devon Food Links, Yealmpton and Totnes Shows and Dartmouth Regatta this company strives to supply to many local hotels, restaurants, local shops and garages, specialist fish shops/mongers and wholesalers nationally. Building on their local reputation mail order is now available to ensure local fish to your door.

### **BURTS POTATO CHIPS LIMITED**

Starting by producing hand fried potato and parsnip chips in 1997 in the Old Parcel Shed of the train station in Kingsbridge and having gone from strength to strength they are now members of the South Hams Food and Drink and Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) groups supplying mainly small independent farm shops and delicatessens together with Waitrose and Oddbins. With the introduction of the 'No Salt' lines many schools and hospitals are also supplying their products.

### **DURRANTS BUTCHERS**

This local butcher situated in Chillington a village also within Stokenham parish has been providing meat, sausages and cooked meats to the community for 40 years. Reaching out to the people through their own shop and local abattoir they supply surrounding local shops, hotels and restaurants with locally reared meats.

### **HOME BAKERY**

Based within the South Hams but a little further out from Stokenham, Home Bakery have been bakers and confectioners for 22 years. This provider relies totally on the support of shops, schools, restaurants and pubs to promote and market their wares

## **JILLY'S FARM FRESH MEATS**

Locally reared and produced in Dartmouth, pork, lamb and beef which is then sold through farmers markets and Stokeley Farm Shop.



Locally produced milk goes to local dairies for the production of milk and dairy products.

## **LANGAGE FARM**

Attending trade fairs and farmers markets whilst also supplying supermarkets, pubs, shops and hotels this dairy product business provides products such as ice cream and cheese since 1980.

## **LODDISWELL CHEESE**

Loddieswell Cheese was established in 2002 producing a wide range of cheeses using local milk. The recipes are unique and they specialise in having taste with low salt levels.

## **MIKE'S SMOKEHOUSE**

Based in Loddieswell Mike's Smokehouse smoke such products as salmon, duck, chicken and others in Manuka Wood from New Zealand. The business started two years ago and supplies to selected delicatessens and farmers markets.

## **PORTLEMOUTH PASTRIES**

Living in Stokenham Sandra Stone runs Portsmouth Pastries and supplies fresh home-baked cakes and other products from her shop. She also provides private catering for all occasions and supplies other local outlets together with National Trust, village shops, and restaurants whilst also attending farmers markets, fairs and farm outlets.

## **RED EARTH KITCHEN**

Since opening a delicatessen in Kingsbridge 2003 Red Earth Kitchen have been supplying products for the delicatessen and wholesale market together with farmers markets across the South Hams. Providing items such as pates, dips, soups and frozen meals together with bespoke catering for the delicatessen and farmers markets Red Earth

Kitchen have now expanded in May 2005 with a kitchen unit just outside Churchstow to provide locally produced food on our parish doorstep.

### **SOAR MILL SEEDS – WILD BIRD FOOD**

This Company was set up in September 2000 to grow, produce, manufacture, and retail through local outlets and mail order distinctive wild bird seed. Maybe not Local Food for people but important for the environment and marketed at farmers markets, National Trust shops, farm shops, trade fairs and part of Business Link.

### **SOUTH HAMS BREWERY**

Members of the South Hams Food and Drink this recently formed company is based at Stokeley Barton in Stokenham brewing real ale to supply local pubs.



### **START BAY HONEY**

Collected since 1980 from hives around the Stokenham area, Start Bay honey provides the finest honey to local shops and retail outlets.

Pictured local hives

### **STOKELEY FARM SHOP, STOKENHAM**

Mark and Sally Brooking took over the running of Stokeley Farm Shop situated in Stokenham in 2000 and have built upon the business culminating in upgrading and increasing the farm shop facilities only this year. Since the beginning they have encouraged the sale of local foods and ensured that as much as possible is sourced from their own land. They also attend farmers markets and provide wholesale fruit and vegetables when they have a surplus to do so. Also working closely with the community they provide cut-price goods to the WRVS weekly Luncheon Club and others. Visits by the local school children are also arranged for them to learn first hand about locally grown food.

## **THE CHEESE COMPANY**

Owned by a farmers co-operative several of whom are local to this parish and consisting of 2300 dairy farmers mainly from Devon and Cornwall this company provide their cheeses to shops, hotels, cafés, schools, farmers market and trade fairs.

## **THE COCOA TREE**



Working with the seasons The Cocoa Tree specialises in hand made luxury chocolates, fudge, confectionery and drinking chocolate. Whether it is picking their own fruit from the local farm shop or harvesting elderflowers from the hedgerows they aim to provide delights such as summer syrup centres of raspberries and strawberries or winter fondants of blackcurrants, apples or plums to name but a few. Keeping the ingredients local they also use produce such as Devon butter in their fudge.

## **THE COTTAGE KITCHEN**

Operating out of a unit in Kingsbridge for the last 10 years Cottage Kitchen aims to produce cakes, quiches and meringues using traditional methods of baking and rediscovering flavours that mass production loses. Selling their products through garden centres, local shops, restaurants, Plymco supermarkets and the National Trust together also with Kingsbridge Farmers Market and local shows they are reaching a wide local audience.

## **UNDERWOOD ORGANICS**

Farming in Beeson for over a century Mr and Mrs Rogers have brought their expertise and knowledge into the organic field and supply local shops wholesale throughout Devon. In raising awareness of good food they also provide organic food to London through the 'Box Scheme' and are part of a group of farms supplying Heart of Devon Organics and Mandala Organics.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**

Using locally produced food helps sustain the economic viability of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty illustrated by producers helping to maintain some of the traditional activities such as agriculture and fishing. Maintaining a working landscape alongside alternative employment, tourism and social enjoyment is essential to continued protection of the visible aspect of this area. In addition the more locally produced and purchased food reduces food miles incurred, again to the advantage of the environment.

## ONGOING PROJECTS

This project is now moving on to a new stage. From a questionnaire circulated to all producers who took part in the initial Food Festival it has become apparent that most feel logos do not make any difference. Through discussions and advice the working group have now taken heed of comments and agreed to pool resources for the intended logo and leaflet and use the fund obtained instead to produce a one off leaflet/newsletter to be delivered to every household in the parish. It was decided to design a newsletter that will highlight what has been achieved so far, what is planned together with contact details for the local producers (see draft enclosed). This newsletter will be distributed by post to all households and businesses in the parish. The intention for this newsletter also is that it will be in place for the 2006 tourism season and can act as a directory of local producers for the community to direct visitors to. Along with this newsletter outlining all that is on offer will be a questionnaire for all parishioners and businesses to complete providing us with valuable information of what they would like to access and what barriers there are.

The incentive for responding to this questionnaire will be the chance to be entered into a free draw for meals for two at participating local pubs and of course all meals will be made with local foods!



Christmas Hamper of Local Produce

As mentioned above a Christmas Food Hamper containing produce from all participating producers will also be raffled. Tickets will be sold through the local school involving the children, parents and grandparents along with outlets such as pubs, shops and the farm shop. It is hoped that everyone within the community will become aware and involved in this project and raise awareness of what is locally available.

## SUMMARY

When the question of entering Local Food Awards was raised within this parish concern was expressed as to whether there was much a small community such as Stokenham could put into such a venture. What has become apparent is that there is far more within this parish than envisaged and it has an abundance of producers, consumers and outlets, with so many interested in becoming involved and this is out of tourist season!

Simply taking the time to sit down and discuss what could be done has illustrated to the working group possibilities and provided an example of the many ideas and local opportunities to provide, source and add value to what is already available.

The ongoing sustainability of this project will undoubtedly benefit from the links forged from this competition in bringing together producers, potential business users (such as pubs, hotel and B&B's) and customers by promoting through the Best Local Food Awards 2005 what this area has to offer. The involvement of the children in visits and making them aware of seasonal produce will stay with them as an important lesson well into the future and make them aware of growing seasons and locally farmed fresh produce, which in itself is a lesson of value.

Success stories such as sourcing food locally for school dinners (and now the Community College in the nearby town) and being the catalyst for the creation of a local Food Festival has inspired producers to continue coming together to support each other, possibly for further Food Festivals in 2006, without the ongoing need for parish council to guide them. The interest of local shops, Bed & Breakfast accommodation and others will also be encouraged through liaison during these festivals.

By reducing barriers to accessibility and knowledge of what produce is on offer and where, together with the commencement of the 2006 tourist season, it is anticipated that local businesses can continue to support each other, prosper and as a consequence help sustain the viability of this outstanding area of natural beauty for generations to come.

**“Local Food Doesn’t Cost the Earth”**