

Woodchester Annual Parish Meeting 2014

**Thursday 22rd May 2014, 7pm
The Endowed School, North Woodchester**

AGENDA

- **Welcome.**
- **Receive apologies for absence.**
- **Approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 23rd, 2013.**
- **To receive questions from the public and those attending in an official capacity.**
- **Presentation of the Village Annual Report.**
- **Village organisations asked to present any verbal reports.**
- **Presentation on proposed bike track.**
- **Thanks and close.**

Woodchester Village Report 2013/14

The Parish Council – *Cllr. Dr. Gervase Hamilton, Chairman*

Introduction

As in previous years the Parish Council has addressed a wide range of issues on behalf of the residents of Woodchester and the past year in particular has seen an increase in the number of central and local government initiatives on which the Parish Council's views have been sought. These include changes to local government consultation processes resulting from the 'Localism' initiative introduced by the government in 2012, changes and modifications to planning procedures resulting from the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework and the introduction of alterations to the way in which the local precept is raised and central government grants to District Councils are calculated and allocated.

Changes in the Precept

The precept that is raised in the Parish goes towards the maintenance and improvement of the environment locally-in particular on things like the bus shelters, dog waste bins, keeping the verges and public spaces in the village properly trimmed and free of litter. This year in particular has seen some of the precept spent on two initiatives which we believe will have a considerable impact on the life of Woodchester residents - the introduction of voluntary '20 is Plenty' speed limits throughout the village and preliminary work on finding a suitable site and planning a cycle track for young people.

The financial 'nitty-gritty':

In 2012/2013 our precept was £11,150 with no additional grant.

During the 2013/14 financial year additional government grants were made available to Local Authorities to meet shortfalls in funding. Our precept was then £ 10,557 with a grant of £593, making the total up to £11,150 as in the previous year.

This year we decided to protect residents by keeping the precept at £10,557, but the grant is only £555. To meet increased costs our budget this year has been set at £12,570. The shortfall will come from reserves.

It is not yet clear whether the government will maintain the grant system in 2015/16 as it is being gradually phased out. If we receive no grant then it may be necessary to increase the precept but we will keep this to the minimum bearing in mind our existing commitments.

Roads and Traffic

The severe winter of 2012/13 played havoc with our local roads with an increase in the number of potholes and surface cracks. The situation wasn't made any easier by water run off this winter resulting from the unusually heavy seasonal rainfall. Temporary repairs to the worst of the damage were carried out by the Highways Department of Gloucestershire County Council. The long standing problem of the deteriorating surface of Convent Lane and Cow Lane has recently been addressed by a full strengthening and resurfacing programme by GCC. This could not have been achieved without the sterling efforts of our District Councillor Rhiannon Wigzell and our County Councillor Dorcas Binns in lobbying for extra funds for the completion of this vital work.

The amount of traffic that passes through our village continues to increase as does the long standing problem of parking for those residents particularly of South Woodchester. The parking issue is an intractable one and the Parish council sees no immediate solution to resident's concerns. Parked cars slow through traffic but the Parish Council has been able to reinforce the need for a reduction in our local speed limit through the introduction of a '20 is Plenty' scheme throughout the village. This scheme, which received overwhelming support in a village survey, has been a proven success in other communities locally but it is voluntary and its success depends on the willingness of locals and through drivers to keep their speed down to safe levels. Signs have been erected at key areas throughout the village and it is hoped that locals and through drivers will see the sense in reducing their speed and the potential risk of accident and injury to pedestrians and other road users.

The Environment

As in previous years the Annual Village Litter Pick was held on Sunday April 6th. Less litter was collected than in previous years. One would hope that this was partly due to an increasing awareness of the anti-social nature of litter dropping but more likely this was due to the intervention of the working parties from Leyhill Open Prison who provide much-appreciated support to our own efforts on a regular basis.

The disposal of dog waste is always an emotive issue and the Parish council has attempted to address this by increased signage throughout the village and the replacement of the existing bins plus two new bins in areas of concern, one in Church Lane and the other on the layby on the A46.

Fortunately this winter did not see the severe frosts and snows of last year but the 'disappearance' of a number of grit bins throughout the village caused concern to local residents particularly in the hillier roads in the area. The Parish Council has placed three new grit bins at the top of Lawns Park, on Frogmarsh Lane and the bottom of Bear Hill. These will be kept topped up with grit in the winter months for use on the public highway only and residents should be sparing in the amount of grit applied to the road surface and adjacent pavement - a little is all that is needed!

Planning

Councillor Lead has provided a separate report on specific planning issues particularly with regard to the Convent and the major proposed residential development at Rooksmoor Mills. This is a revival of plans originally drawn up five years ago which did not come to fruition due to the recession but to a different design. The developers have made a number of changes following comments by local residents. Nevertheless the scale and nature of the development is causing continuing concerns though the need for housing development on the site is acknowledged.

Stroud District Council has now issued its revised Local Plan. It doesn't affect Woodchester for the reasons given by Cllr. Lead in his report but its recommendations must, of course, be taken into account when the Parish Council considers any new planning proposals. In this connection revised guidelines in the form of Pre-Application Protocols have now been issued by SDC which will mainly affect the larger developers. These outline the procedures to be followed before a planning application can be considered by local District Council planners.

However, the pressure is on from central and local government to encourage 'sustainable' development for housing and local businesses. Your Parish Council, along with SDC, has expressed its concerns that proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework could possibly see loss of open countryside and valuable landscape and heritage assets due to prioritisation of economic factors and presumption to develop on grounds of so-called 'sustainability' thus overriding the priority of Local Plans. While the SDC Local Plan is now in place and only awaits final approval by a government inspector and we are aware that SDC is supportive of our Village Design Statement and Parish Plan, it is very much the case of our being vigilant at all times and scrutinising any, particularly large scale, developments which might affect the quality of life in our village.

Planning - *Cllr. Peter Lead, Vice-Chairman*

This year has seen the usual spate of applications for extensions, alterations and tree felling and lopping. Generally we are supportive of applications and with tree applications we nearly always leave the decision to the tree officer.

We have however had a few applications where we have wished to comment.

The Convent has been bought and been transformed into a members club and performance venue apparently without needing a change of use application. A public meeting was held in the Convent when the owners presented their plans for the building. Whilst the proposed use was generally welcomed, there was surprise and concern from local residents that planning permission was not needed for the proposed use and that a new access was not going to be created before the use started. The owner did however state that an application for a new access on to the A46 was in hand and he anticipated that it would be created by April this year. One has now just been lodged that we will be discussing at our next parish planning meeting.

Rooksmoor Mills has again been the subject of an application for residential development and again attracted much opposition from the residents of Rooksmoor and others. There have been a few supporters of the proposal. Mainly the objections are about the density of the proposal and bulk of design that will impact adjacent properties. Our planning committee have lodged their concerns about the proposals, although like most support the principle of residential development. It is understood that the developers are still talking to Stroud District Council about detail.

Two other new builds have kept us on our toes, with neighbours in both cases objecting to the proposed development. In both cases we have reported to Stroud District Council the concerns and can then only hope that our and resident's concerns are considered.

Stroud District Council have been reviewing their Local Plan. It is now being validated by an inspector. It will have little impact on Woodchester. As the Parish has been stated as, 'a village that has a limited level of facilities and services that, together with improved local employment, provide the best opportunities outside the Local Service Centres for greater self-containment. They will provide for lesser levels of development in order to safeguard

their role and to provide through any Neighbourhood Plans some opportunities for growth and to deliver affordable housing.'

A reminder to all is that we post notices of our meetings on notice boards and our website at least three working days before we meet and welcome all to attend.

Footpaths – *Cllr. Barbara Warnes*

Yet again it has been a difficult year for our footpaths. The excessive amounts of rain caused many of them to become difficult if not impassable with very few options other than just staying off them. The cycle track became an almost constant focus of attention as so many branches and trees were being brought down. Gloucestershire Highways do an excellent job of clearing them but it is important to remember that they will not deal with something they do not know about. Blockages should be reported to the parish clerk who will pass them on.

I should like to draw dog owners/walkers attention to Stroud District Council's Dog Control Orders which came into effect on 1 December 2012. I do not intend to give full details here as it is available on their website. As far as we are concerned it requires clearing up after your dog, keeping it on a lead on paths used to access the Primary Schools, which should be clearly marked, and also that, 'Dogs shall be kept on leads on all allotments, cemeteries, car parks, canal towpaths and designated cycle paths'.

A new 'dog bin' is in position on Church Lane which will be of benefit to dog walkers on several footpaths and another bin has been ordered for the layby at Frogmarsh.

On a positive note, following the drier spring, the footpaths have improved and are now in better condition. We are always grateful to the landowners for cutting back vegetation, especially nettles, to allow us to walk through.

Gloucestershire Highways did some work on the drain under the cycle track at Frogmarsh where we had considerable flooding which did not fully dry up last summer. This seems to have been successful and the track is now dry most of the time and will hopefully continue to improve as the ground at the side dries out.

The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens repaired a stile on the path from Bownhill down towards the vineyard. We are always appreciative of their work.

We have added another walk from Woodchester and a tree walk to the website, so please take a look and walk our footpaths.

Woodchester Endowed School – *Gordon Soutar, Headteacher*

Woodchester Endowed School has continued to thrive during this academic year. Most of our year groups are at full capacity with our number on roll currently at 141 children. We have a full intake of 20 children allocated for the new term in September and plans are already in place to make this a smooth transition for all concerned.

This year we have been re-designing parts of our curriculum to fit in with the new National Curriculum for Primary Schools that has been devised by The Department for Education. Whilst this inevitably creates change, we are taking this as a real opportunity to fine tune our curriculum to meet the needs of our children and to reflect the environment in which they live. As ever, we are always keen to hear from local people with local stories to tell. Please do get in touch if this is something that you can or would like to offer.

We have again taken part in the Rotary Club Young Writers competition. The theme for writing this year was 'The day that changed my life'. This proved to be a very inspiring title and led to some very personal and moving accounts of events within our children's lives. Winners from each year group were presented with book tokens from Nailsworth Rotary Club along with a number of commendations for effort.

Sport has continued to be an important part of our school life and we enter a whole host of local competitions for the children to experience. This year we have had some real success with one of our Year 6 girls qualifying to represent Stroud in the county cross country finals and most recently with our Year 3 & 4 children (mixed team of boys and girls) winning the Stroud Primary Schools' Football League. This was a great occasion, enjoyed by all – children, parents and staff.

Our annual Shakespeare production is now not too far away. This year we will be embarking on a performance of Romeo & Juliet. Casting is due to take place very shortly and rehearsal will begin soon after the half term break.

Many of you may have already heard that I will be moving on from the school at the end of the summer term. I have recently been offered the position of Headteacher at St. Lawrence School in Lechlade and will take up this role in September. It has been a huge privilege to serve the community of Woodchester during the past six years and I will leave with many fond memories.

Could I take this opportunity to thank the community of Woodchester for your support over the past years and ask that you give the new Headteacher the same welcome and support that you have provided me.

St. Domininc's School – *Briege Ward, Headteacher*

As many of you will know St Dominic's Primary school head teacher Mrs Smith retired in December 2013 and I have been fortunate in being appointed as the new Headteacher to this thriving school on St Mary's Hill. The last few months have gone by extremely quickly and I have been made to feel extremely welcome by all in the school and the community.

Part of my role is to ensure that the school runs smoothly throughout this transition from one head teacher to another and this I feel we have been doing successfully.

Since January 2014 we have been preparing as a staff for the onset of the new curriculum and for the changes in the provision for children with special educational needs. We have also been working to ensure that we are providing specialist PE coaches with the new funding from the PE and Sport Premium funding. This funding has insured that we are able to provide resources and training courses in PE and sport for our staff. Along with the other cluster schools in the area we are able to continue to run sport competitions and try to increase pupils' participation in school games and after school clubs.

As Headteacher I feel it is very important that the children make the most of the area which they live in and the surrounding attractions. An excursion out with school is something that stays in the mind of every child long after their school days. We have this summer term begun to use our school field in Cow Lane every week for sporting activities. It is a delight to see and hear the children walk excitedly with the staff for their PE lessons. We have had many visits this academic year and still have a few planned for June and July. The children this weekend are very excited about the Nailsworth festival and the 'Duck Race' I am also excited about this event! Some of the trips this year have been to the Swindon Steam museum where the children went by train with parents and staff, Toddington Railway in Cheltenham, SS Great Britain in Bristol, The Maths challenge at Westonbirt, The Roman Baths in Bath and to the apple store in Bath. As you can see there is a lot going on in school and a wide variety of excursion to ensure the children are engaged in tier learning. As a school we keep up our strong links with The Priory Church of the Annunciation. We had a very successful Mothering Sunday mass where many families joined us for mass and the children continue to visit the beautiful church on our doorstep every Friday.

This year our school has been opened for 130 years and we hope to mark this occasion in the autumn term during a school day. I would welcome any ideas or contributions for this event and ensure that we continue to thrive for another 130 years. I look forward to continuing the good work and relationships St Dominic's school has with the Woodchester parish and with the wider community.

Woodchester Playgroup – *Meryl Smith, Play Leader*

Once again we have had an excellent year. We have been full to capacity, and have a healthy number on our registers for the following two years.

We are all enjoying the new cedar cladding and double glazed windows that a previous committee amazingly achieved. This not only looks wonderful, but we also benefit from greatly reduced heating bills and greater comfort to work in.

We continue to maintain a happy, safe and educational environment for all our children, so giving them a good foundation for their future.

The Parish Church of St. Mary - *Andrew Pemberton*

It is worth a reminder, to start with, that the parish church is not just a building, it is home to a church community which is open to all; we hold our regular Sunday and mid-week church services plus, of course, special services for weddings and funerals.

In September there was a special weekend celebration to mark the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the church building. On the Saturday there was a coffee morning and history exhibition in church together with fun activities for families on the green. Meanwhile a team of bell-ringers ran a full peal of 5040 changes, which lasted about 3 hours. In the afternoon there was a guided walk around the parish. The day finished with a barn dance and barbecue. On the Sunday there was a service of celebration, a shared lunch and a balloon race. The Church was especially pleased to welcome some visitors from our link parish of Näsby in Sweden for the weekend.

The monthly 'coffee and chat' has continued on Saturday mornings, with the purpose of providing company and welcoming people to church. The monthly event called Messy Church, held after school on a Wednesday, still attracts many families to the church; they also often attend special services such as Mothering Sunday, the Christingle Service and the Crib Service, as well as the monthly all-age worship on Sunday mornings.

The Church has maintained its close links with the Endowed School over the year – our clergy have taken school assemblies throughout the year, and school has held its end-of-term services in the church. But there are other links besides, through governors and various school activities.

The Church has fostered its links with Christians from other countries this year. Many church members hosted members of the Ostrava TenSing Youth Choir from the Czech Republic last July. The Tensing choir performed a number of concerts locally, including one in Gloucester Cathedral. We have continued to support Christian mission partners in Peru and elsewhere. We have collected donations for The Poppy Appeal and the Children's Society at the Remembrance Service and the Christingle Service respectively; and we have supported Stroud District Food Bank with both money and food. There was a door-to-door collection around the village for Christian Aid Week. Shoeboxes containing Christmas gifts were collected for Operation Christmas Child which supports children in Eastern Europe.

The church building has been maintained through repairs to the stonework of the chimney and we have replaced the broken stone cross at the East end of the nave roof, to mark the 150th anniversary.

The church building has also been used for wider community events such as a concert by the Capriol Chamber Orchestra and the village Christmas carol singing organized by the parish council. It continues to be opened every day of the year for visitors. The Undercroft room is also available for hire by village organisations.

We publicize our activities through the monthly Apex newsletter, the website www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk and on posters around the village. And we do our best to welcome everyone warmly!

The Priory Church of the Annunciation – Jenny Bailey

We share Fr. Bill with St. Joseph's, Stonehouse as there is a shortage of priests. Woodchester's boundary extends as far as Rodmarton, so we are fortunate to have him. We share our organist too with Stonehouse, our reformed choir now numbers twelve and we have held two Taize services as well as supporting Sunday Masses.

Our main focus for the past year has been fund raising for the repair and restoration of the Wayside Cross. Last June we had a weekend of events, including a flower festival in the church and the film 'War Horse' in the school which was memorable and extremely moving. In February the Stuart Singers held a concert, and we were given a grant of £1000 from Renishaw's local charities' fund; when added to donations, this means we are now able to start work. This involves re-cutting some of the names, reinstating the fencing and gates to their original shape and pattern, plus work to the cross and steps. We are also grateful to be one of the beneficiaries of the Great War events being held in Nailsworth this month.

After the quinquennial report we learnt that the Doom painting on the chancel arch was becoming loose from the stone, meaning more expensive specialist repairs. [This fresco was the work of Henry Doyle, the uncle of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and has a counterpart in Turnham, Nr. Lancaster]. We hope that ours will be much brighter too once it has been reattached and cleaned.

Our main charity is CAFOD, but we also support Churches Together in Nailsworth with Christian Aid Week and hosted Women's World Day of Prayer. The monthly coffee and cakes after morning Mass continues to attract more parishioners and the church is very popular for weddings; the last couple to be married were following in the footsteps of the bride's grand-parents in 1959, both Polish.

There are many Polish families in Gloucestershire, who found refuge here after the Polish Resettlement Act of 1947 in one or other of five camps, the closest of which was on Babdown airfield. This forms part of a local history research project. Did any live or work in Woodchester? On Easter Sunday we took part in Sweiconka for the first time, the blessing of the food baskets, a Polish / Ukrainian custom.

We now have an outlet in Nailsworth for our full colour quarterly magazine at the Computer Shop. How about Woodchester? We participated in the village show and gained several places, and are looking forward to entering again this Sept. The French conversation class started by members of our church last autumn is now well established and meets fortnightly, both fun and stimulating.

Village Events Committee – Penny Brown

5th Annual Flower and Produce Show.

This took place as usual on the second Saturday in September and was again well supported by individuals and families who have a connection to Woodchester. The cup for the 'Best in Show', for the entrant who scored highest in awards across all categories, went this year to John Hale, whose many high quality entries in a wide range of categories made him a worthy winner. The David Brown Memorial Salver, kindly donated in 2011 by Stephen and Rhiannon Wigzell was awarded jointly to Elizabeth Faulkner and John Hale who gained equal awards in the fruit and vegetable categories. The 'Best in Show' in the junior classes was Lauren Turner.

Although we had at times to take shelter from the rain, competitors and spectators alike were able to enjoy teas and stalls on the Church Green.

There was a fascinating art exhibition in the Church, put on by the Woodchester Art Group to whom the Committee is very grateful for adding this additional interest to the occasion.

Once again we are grateful to the Endowed School for the use of the School buildings for the Show, to St Mary's PCC for making the Church and Green available, and to all those who gave up their time to undertake the difficult but critical task of judging the entries. Finally our thanks go to all those who with considerable skill and commitment, (not to mention fore-thought!) planned, planted, nurtured and otherwise created and assembled the many splendid entries on which the success of the show depends. Please continue to support it. This year it will be held on Saturday 13 September.

Football Friendly

This was a 'first'! Held on Saturday 26 October 2013 on the Village football pitch in North Woodchester. The Village turned out a magnificent team to take on the 'professionals' and the skill and enthusiasm of all who played was reflected in a two all draw. Thank you to all who took part, provided refreshments and attended to cheer the teams on.

Village Carols

Another village 'institution' these were held last year on Monday 23rd December and were very well attended, despite the inclement weather necessitating a (planned) retreat to the Church when the two parties of carol singers converged from their pre-ambulations around North and South Woodchester. The Nativity was played pretty much according to 'script', albeit, part of the fun and impact of a 'Living Nativity' is the occasional element of surprise when the characters take on a personality of their own!

The Nailsworth Silver Band turned out in force and greatly added to the enjoyment of the singing around North Woodchester and in the Church. The carollers in South Woodchester meanwhile were treated to the excellent accompaniment of our local musicians.

Meanwhile in the kitchen a small team of volunteers were busy mulling wine and heating mince pies. I hope those who were involved in any way, felt as I did, that the Christmas Festivities were truly under way.

A very big thank you therefore to all participants – actors, musicians, caterers and carollers, and also to St Mary's for the use of the Church.

This year we plan another Produce Show and Carols, and hopefully, by popular demand, another football match. There is also a possibility of a Cricket match against the team at Selsey. Look out for details on the Village Notice Boards. Sadly there was not room in the Woodchester Word for our Spring entry about this Year's events to be published and so we will have to rely quite heavily on the notice boards and the parish website. This year's produce show Schedule was however printed in full in the April edition of the Woodchester Word and I would encourage everyone to keep their copy and enter as many classes as they can.

Woodchester W.I - *Gail Birch, Secretary*

Woodchester WI continues to thrive in the village and thanks go to Val who took over as president from Muriel following the AGM in November.

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30pm in the Village Hall where we enjoy listening to speakers on a variety of topics, play games, enjoy food and even partake in physical activities on occasions. Once again we all enjoyed the origami evening and the ladies are booked again for July. As a result of the talk from Dr Lamb in September from the League of friends of Stroud Hospital, WI decided that this charity would be the beneficiary of the retiring collection from the annual concert in December for which £250 was raised.

As in previous years we have focused on food in several meetings namely the fish and chip supper, Christmas party and post-Christmas meal. Once again the garden party had to be cancelled due to weather so a bring and share supper in the hall was an enjoyable alternative.

We have joined in village activities hosting a stall at the Village Craft and Produce Show and providing refreshments at the Open Gardens at Atcombe Court. Several members have attended courses at the Denman WI College and enjoyed learning new skills. Activities organised by the Gloucestershire Federation WI, various trips, the annual council meeting, the Christmas concert and walks have been attended and enjoyed by members.

If anyone is interested in joining our friendly WI our contact details can be found on the village website and copies of the programme for 2014 are available from the village shop.

Woodchester Historical Society – *Katherine McNealey*

Woodchester Historical Society has continued to meet four times a year. We have three indoor meetings which are held in the Undercroft at St Marys Church, and a summer meeting which involves an outdoor guided walk.

Future meetings for 2014 include a walk round Cirencester on June 3rd; a talk on the Fab Fifties on September 9th and a talk on Woodchester at the time of World War 1 on November 4th.

We currently have around twenty members. New members and visitors are welcome. You do not need to be a Woodchester resident or an expert on local history to come along to any of our meetings or events.

As part of the activities to commemorate the outbreak of the First World War, Barbara Warnes has researched and prepared an exhibition about Woodchester in 1914. This includes maps, photographs and stories about the people who lived in Woodchester and were involved in the Great War. The exhibition will be on show in St Marys Church over the weekend 13/14th September.

There will also be two guided walks over that weekend to explore the villages, one round North Woodchester and Rooksmoor, and one round South Woodchester. Do come and join us and learn more about what our community looked like in 1914.

For further information contact Jill Merriott-White 01453 872999 or Katharine McNealey 01453 873814 or email kathinny@hotmail.com

Girlguiding – *Jackie Hayes*

There was much publicity about the new wording of the Promise which Brownies and Guides make when they join Girlguiding. Discussions with the girls were interesting and we had an entertaining evening when the Brownies (supported by the Guides) had a coffee evening to raise funds for CLIC Sargent and some girls made the new Promise and everyone renewed their Promise using the new wording.

We have participated in our usual list of annual events, Nailsworth Remembrance Sunday parade and Church service, Nailsworth Goodwill evening and the Woodchester WI Christmas concert. Girls have earned many badges, enjoyed playing games, singing, participating in crafts and other activities. In February we joined the rest of the Mid- Glos Division for a Thinking Day parade through Stroud and samba-danced in front of the Sub Rooms.

Woodchester Guides are currently in the process of trialling activities at Westonbirt Arboretum to encourage youth groups to use the arboretum. Some Brownies will be attending Pack holiday with Nailsworth Brownies and the Guides are attending camps organised by Girlguiding Gloucestershire County and by Nailsworth Guides.

For more details about joining Girlguiding as a Brownie, Guide or Leader please contact Jackie on 01453 821258 or go to www.girlguiding.org.uk or www.girlguidingnailsworth.wordpress.com

Woodchester Football Club (Est. 1905) – Stuart Harrison

Charity (CASC Registration – 05772)

Woodchester F.C. ran our third successful youth football camp at Easter - over 100 children (ages 6 to 11) enjoyed the camp. After the first morning, the weather was perfect and we were able to enjoy the football in perfect conditions. Some of the highlights were in our tournaments where we saw brilliant goals, wonderful tackling and quality sportsmanship. By the end of the camp children's confidence had grown and lots of players had progressed to a new level- next stop the World Cup.

Woodchester F.C. Senior Team play in the Stroud League running the club with a fun ethic. The senior team is now recruiting for the 2014/15 season – open to anyone from the age of 16 up to 60 on a play if you can basis.

Junior Team - We are now recruiting players for a new team next season from the ages of 6 to 11 – we also need a couple of Mums and Dads to help run the team on a rota system. Please contact Stuart: 07977 455350

Friendly Match with the village – Rhiannon Wigzell

The first friendly match between Woodchester Football Club and Woodchester village was played on the afternoon of 26th October 2013 on the club's home pitch at Villa Field in North Woodchester. The game was hard fought and competitive from the opening moments to the final whistle. The teams were evenly matched, reflected by the final score, a two all draw.

The village team had never played together before, but no one would have known from the assurance with which they deployed their combined talents on the field. The slope of the pitch tested the legs and stamina of everyone.

Woodchester residents turned out in pleasing numbers to watch, cheer and compliment the teams on the standard of play. Members of the Events Committee produced half time oranges for the teams and flapjack and gingerbread for spectators.

After the match The Ram hospitably welcomed the teams and their supporters with fortifying hot dogs and chips. The Club signed up several new players from the opposing team, but with the promise they could play for the village again next year.

Thank you to everyone who supported the inaugural local derby, especially Woodchester Football Club, the village team, The Ram, the Events Committee, Woodchester Word, and everyone who came to watch.

TO BE REPEATED!!!

StroudBeekeepers - supporting beekeeping in the five valleys – Peter Lead

This year has seen a good start for the bees, with almost traditional spring weather following a mild winter. Our training apiary has eight hives and this year we have 20 trainees that have attended five evening courses and are now attending the apiary each Saturday morning. During the winter we held monthly meetings, including our honey show. Membership is now in the region of 70 adults and 30 children.

Our Buzzclub is now based at the SWALT allotments where we have three groups meeting every other Monday. We have bought a trailer that you might see being towed through the village that houses all the equipment that is needed and acts as a traveling classroom. We visit schools and other organisations giving talks and continue to work closely with St Dominic's Primary School on whose land our training apiary sits.

www.stroudbeekeepers.co.uk

Village Hall – Kath Gay

The village hall continues to be popular for hire from within the village, surrounding areas and further afield.

Rents, our main source of income were increased on 1st September 2013, the previous increase was September 2008, although now set at £6 an hour for regular bookings and £10 an hour for casuals our charges still offer value for money. Hall usage for our last financial year shows a total of approximately 600 hours for regulars and 80 hours of casual bookings which is mostly at weekends. Praise is frequently received about the hall and the facilities it can offer. The hall is still run on a volunteer basis.

The position of a new volunteer chairperson remains open, for more information please contact Bob Ludlow on 872340.

A guideline of weekly/monthly hall bookings can be found on village notice boards and the village website, it is impossible to keep these completely up-to-date, sorry! For accurate information on hall availability contact Kath Gay on 873348 or email wvh888@btinternet.com.

SWALT – South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust – Bert Cossins

This annual report reiterates the continued industry of all parties' commitment to SWALT's land based activities. We were favoured by a fruitful season; clearly the January '13 wassail fully achieved all requirements of that ceremony – excellent singing, generous toasting, a cacophony of sound to scare off the sprites and generous bread portions to sustain the bird's interest in Orchard Pastures. We have our fingers crossed for the success of this year's wassail.

The orchard flourishes with over forty trees and the very recent additions of medlar and quince trees; the plums and some varieties of apple had their initial crops last autumn. The 'allotments' also flourish with eight SWALT holders and eight tenants – undoubtedly we all greatly benefit from Anita and Peter Brown's generous donations of well-rotted muck.

It is pleasing to report the return of bees to Orchard Pastures – we welcome all three sections of Buzzclub – may their stay be both enjoyable and successful.

We have yet to decide on the ultimate use of the south facing bramble patch adjacent to Station Road; any suggestions to swalt.org@gmail.com please.

Our future events will be advertised locally; a mid-summer barbecue is anticipated, participation in the Village Produce Show and Apple Day (mid-October) will again be celebrated by a pressing – all interested villagers are welcome to attend.

Seys & Bridges Educational Foundation – *Diana Fowler, clerk and trustee*

Meetings

The trustees met twice last year. As is usual following the end of the financial year, the annual accounts were presented to the May meeting and subsequently reviewed by an outside examiner.

Grants awarded

The annual grant of £100 was made to the Governors of Woodchester Endowed School. A further sum was allocated to the Governors to help fund window costs.

Nine grants were awarded to individuals to assist with PGL visits, music and drama lessons.

Applications from eligible individuals are welcomed at any time and should be sent to the Clerk.

I submit this report on behalf of Mrs. Liz Ewart-James and myself, the two trustees appointed by the Parish Council.

St Loe's Exhibition Fund – *George Bastin, Chairman*

St Loe's School Exhibition Fund or St Loe's Trust, as it now known, was founded by Nathaniel Cambridge in 1697 to provide financial assistance to pupils attending the maintained primary schools in Woodchester and Amberley who seek further education. The trust now provides beneficiaries grants to assist funding students at universities, training colleges and those entering a trade or profession.

2012/2013 saw an encouraging increase in applications for funding at a time when our investment income has fallen slightly. Applicants have to demonstrate a financial need and

this sometimes discourages some applicants. However the Trust awarded grants to eight students. This enabled one Woodchester undergraduate to travel to France to study ceramics which she would not have been able to do without her grant. They also provided £300 each to the Woodchester and Amberley schools for books for their library and a book to each school leaver in both schools.

During the course of the year Mr John Foreman has taken on the responsibilities of auditing our accounts and we welcome his wise counsel and professional expertise.

If there any parishioners who wish to apply for grants they are urged to apply as early as possible after the award of a place at university and by 1st September at the latest to the Chairman or Secretary at Goring House, North Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 5NG. Telephone 01453 872526