

THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 70, Spring 2020

WISHING ALL OUR
READERS A VERY
Happy Easter



Photo by Melissa Walker Horn on Unsplash



Firstly, thank you to all those of you who are able to and have volunteered to offer support, which has been overwhelming.

We've had offers of shopping, dog walking, regular chats, IT support, even the offer of homemade soup!

It's been touching to see the village coming together to help those who are not able to do everything they would normally be able to do at this time.

If you haven't offered help and would like to, please contact Ann Bijkerk on **01453 873 456** or email **woodchesterparish@gmail.com**

Similarly if you would like any support, please do get in touch.

We have set up a place on the website with any information we receive from Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council and any services we hear about.

<https://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk/covid-19-advice-and-support>

The information from Gloucestershire County Council is updated daily and includes the latest Government advice.

If you know of any other support available locally, please let us know and we'll publicise it on the website.

See inside also for items about the management of the Village Hall, the playgroup, the need for more Woodchester Word distributors and the monthly church-run Lunch with Friends.

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A message to all villagers from the Rev. Peter Francis

Dear Everyone in Woodchester,

In view of the government's most recent Coronavirus measures, we have been asked to put public worship on hold and not to meet together on Sundays or midweek services, in lent or home groups and lock up our churches.

The Archbishops are adamant that at this time in the life of the nation, we should not be shutting up shop but become a different sort of church, focused on prayer and action and to use modern technology in our worship from home.

It is a challenge to us today to look outwards to the needs around us. St. Mary's Church is concerned to be able to help and support the community in Woodchester in as many ways as possible. If you have a need, please contact Rev. Peter Francis, Nick Vallender or Sue Pouncey (church wardens) or anyone linked with the church you may know.

Modern technology means **we can still join together for worship**. Using the Zoom app, an internet-based service for video- and audio- conferencing can be accessed from computers, tablets or smartphones that have internet connections. It can also be accessed from ordinary telephones.

How do we do it?



Access by internet:

- On tablet or smartphone, download the Zoom app if you don't already have it; then open the Zoom app
- On a computer, open your Internet browser program (Chrome, Safari, etc). Then to access any of our worship sessions type/click on the link: <https://zoom.us/join> Click on the Open Zoom pop up box.

You will be asked to type in the meeting ID which is: **883 864 9918**



Access by telephone:

- Dial **0330 088 5830** local rate number (or **0208 880 6591** if it's engaged)
- When asked for a meeting-id enter 883 864 9918 on the keypad, followed by #
- You will then be asked for participant-id but you don't have to answer this, just type another #

In worship, Peter will control the conference and can "mute" all participants except himself so that the rest of us can listen clearly. While the participants are unmuted, it is good if we can all minimise any background noise at home.

Technical problems using Zoom on a PC:

If you can't speak or your picture isn't shown on the screen, the following might help:

Click on the Windows start icon (flag type icon on bottom left of screen).

Select settings, then privacy.

From here you can select microphone and camera and turn them on.

In the meantime Helen Jackson has kindly offered to coordinate any needs of help from the Woodchester, Rodborough and Brimscombe churches. If you, or someone local you know, needs help please either email the Common Ground email address: cground101@gmail.com or email Helen direct at thejackson5@tiscali.co.uk and we will do our best to organise that help. Do also continue to pray for those in need in our benefice.

Rev Peter Francis

Bishop Rachel of Gloucester has also added the following :

We are already seeing the many ways worshipping communities across the Diocese are promoting emotional contact and connection at a time of increased physical separation.

Thank you for all you are doing. The phone, FaceTime, Skype, etc are increasingly going to be a gift to us and we want to encourage every worshipping community to think about how best to reach out as widely as we can in local communities. It is essential that we ensure that those who are vulnerable and isolated are receiving what they need. We also need to think about how we reach out to those who may not naturally speak their fears but who will be severely anxious about the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and their livelihoods. Although we have to self-isolate, none of us should have to live in isolation.

It is therefore crucial that amid the painful disruption of the coming weeks and months, while we rightly pay attention to the many practical issues and questions coming our way and the actions we must take, we place an even greater focus on how we care for one another and for our local communities. This is a time to share Christ's love and hope with renewed confidence as we join in with the work of the kingdom of God.

Woodchester Village Hall

The village hall is a unique part and asset of Woodchester village life. There can't be many village people who have not been through its doors to an event, celebration or meeting. It is a modest, well equipped and flexible hall that is used for a great variety of uses – from birthday parties to meetings of the local Buddhist groups. But, and this is a **BIG BUT its future is in question**. Why? Simply because the person who has been holding the role of secretary, treasurer and caretaker for the last innumerable years needs to step down.

Kath Gay has been the kingpin of the village hall's organisation. The trustees of the village hall have relied on her knowledge, experience and most importantly her willingness to look after the hall for so many years, have now to find three or four people to take on the one role that Kath fulfilled. Why three roles? Three roles because it is highly unlikely that anyone will volunteer to do the work that Kath lovingly did by herself.

The trustees are looking for:

1. A volunteer to act as booking secretary; this role is to keep a bookings diary, give information to people enquiring about making a booking and to send out conditions of hire, hold keys, etc.
2. A secretary who will keep hall course calendars, make routine appointments for services (boiler, alarms, electrical, etc.) deal with risk assessments, agendas for meetings, type letters as required, attend Trustee meetings (twice a year) and deal with any secretarial work required;
3. A treasurer who will keep accounts, issue invoices, receive/collect and bank rents (that are not paid by direct debit) prepare accounts for audit, complete any Charity Commission requirements;
4. A caretaker type of role which will involve keeping an eye on the hall's requirements – toilet rolls, hand towels, checking the infrastructure items -alarm system, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, heating controls etc – and reporting any issues for attention to the Village Hall chairman, Mr Alan Boulton.

None of these roles are over-demanding in themselves but a commitment and some small amount of time on a weekly/monthly basis will be expected, of course.

As the classic and traditional poster said, **The Village Hall needs you**. Without volunteers to cover these four tasks, the village hall will close and we all will have lost a valuable village asset.



Can you help? If you can, please contact Alan Boulton (872387) or Rod Harris (872317) or Kath Gay (873348) for more information and/or to register your interest.

Many thanks, From the trustees

Woodchester Mansion

Before the coronavirus pandemic caused mayhem with organised events, Woodchester Mansion was planning to open for the season on Friday 5th April to be open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays until the end of October.

This year the Mansion will be also running an interesting programme of special events from Stone carving to Circus skills.

There will also hopefully be the ever popular outdoor Shakespeare with the Festival Players in August. Further information on all events, open

days, weddings and private hire at www.woodchestermansion.org.uk

Please LIKE and Follow Woodchester Mansion on Facebook too to keep up with all news and events.



Easter Did you know? The Paschal Candle



The Paschal Candle will be a focus feature in many churches at the Easter services. But do you know why and what it all means?

Very early on Easter Day while it is still dark, churches all over the world light a special Easter fire outside. From the fire they light a new huge candle called a Paschal candle to take into the church reminding everyone of the new life we all have in Jesus. The candle has several symbols in its form:

A cross in the centre shows that it is the Christ candle. The flame burns even though Jesus died on the cross.

Five nails or grains of incense represent Jesus' wounds

The year 2020 to remind us God is with us here and now.

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet – Alpha – 'A' and Omega – because God is the beginning and end of all things.



The Long Table in Brimscombe

The Long Table (based in Brimscombe) are offering meal deliveries.

You can now order ready meals from The Long Table if you are self-isolating from Coronavirus, know someone who is or would just like a tasty Long Table ready meal for dinner!

What can you do?

- Order our meals from today, email meals@thelongtableonline.com to book for next week. One portion for £5 or 7 for £25. We can offer delivery or collection

- Order meals for a neighbour who is not able to get out
- Spread the word around those who don't have access to the internet
- Buy a pay it forward meal for those who may be struggling financially

Check out the website if you would like to know more about how Long Table are looking to support our communities with food during these uncertain times. "If you are struggling financially let us know," said Tom from the Long Table. "Some people had already very kindly offered to buy meals for those in need and/or were unable to afford the food, so there were definitely some subsidised/free meals available to those who needed them."



The Phone number for The Long Table is 01453 367499. Do look at the website to learn about this community food hub. <https://www.thelongtableonline.com/ready-meals>

What is the Long Table?

The Long Table is a community kitchen and restaurant in Brimscombe Port that serves food that would have been binned or wasted. It employs 6 people and serves food on Monday, Thursday and Friday Lunch (12-2) and once a week on an evening. The space hosts older people in lunch clubs, discussion groups and cooking classes.

Woodchester Show – Saturday September 12th

Although at the time of publication we don't know if the Village Show will be able to go ahead as planned on Saturday 12th September, here are the Vegetable and Fruit classes that have been selected for this year's Produce and Crafts Show:



Photo by Sven Scheuermeier on Unsplash

1. VEGETABLES

- a. 3 Potatoes
- b. 3 Tomatoes (with calyx & stem)
- c. 3 Peppers or Chillies (with ~20mm stem)
- d. 3 Beetroot (leaf stalks trimmed to ~75mm)
- e. 3 Carrots (leaf stalks trimmed to ~75mm)
- f. 3 Parsnips (leaf stalks trimmed to ~75mm)
- g. 3 Onions (trimmed and necks tied)
- h. 3 Leeks (with roots and flags/leaves uncut)
- i. 3 Courgettes (max length of 150mm)
- j. 3 Runner Beans
- k. 1 Cabbage
- l. 1 Corn on the Cob (silks attached)
- m. Most exotic Squash
- n. Heaviest Marrow
- o. Most comical vegetable
- p. Any 5 different types of vegetable in a basket (judged on quality & presentation)



Photo by khloe arledge on Unsplash

2. FRUIT

- a. 3 Pears
- b. 3 Dessert Apples
- c. 3 Cooking Apples
- d. 3 Figs
- e. 6 Raspberries (with calyx & stem)
- f. 6 Blackberries (with calyx & stem)
- g. Any 5 different types of fruit in a basket (judged on quality & presentation)



Devils in Disguise?

It's no wonder that with their warty skin, large eyes and ungainly crawling movement that toads once gained the reputation of being devils or witches in disguise, being killed and used whole or in part in a witches' brew! Another good reason is that they emit a venom containing chemicals from the glands in their skin which can severely irritate a human skin.

However, toads in the garden are welcome because of their love of slugs as a tasty meal. Toads can live up to 40 years and after each winter's hibernation, they will return each year to the same spot to mate, (often crossing busy roads on their journey and therefore sometimes not surviving this hazard) the female then laying long streams of eggs in nearby water. A fertile toad's mating instinct is often so strong that it will act out its mating behaviour on stones or other objects of appropriate size and shape, so causing even further damage to its reputation!

VE Day 8 May 1945

This year marks the 75th anniversary of VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) which followed the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany on 7 May.

The news that the war had ended in Europe was broadcast to the British people over the radio late that day. The BBC interrupted its schedule with a news flash announcing that Victory in Europe Day would be a national holiday, to take place on the following day. This did not mark the end of WWII as the war with Japan did not end until August nor did things return to normal. Rationing of clothes lasted until 1949 and food until 1954. Britain was practically bankrupt with the huge economic cost of the war resulting in many years of austerity.

Did Woodchester celebrate? Presumably, yes! The school had two days holiday.

The only photograph of the day that Barbara Warnes has is of the handbell ringers outside the church, having 'rung' during the morning.



From left to right: Bill Brunt, Gerald Townsend, Raymond Thain, Stanley Thain, Thomas Witts, Frank Garland, Michael Brunt and Alec Howell.

Please don't burn!

While everyone is at home and many people are gardening in the current dry weather, **PLEASE** resist the temptation to light bonfires to burn garden waste and other rubbish! In addition to being unpleasant and annoying, Bonfire smoke causes environmental pollution and can have a serious impact on people with asthma and other respiratory problems.

You could:

- Compost your weeds and chip your pruning waste
- Bag it, and take to the recycling centre when it is open again.
- Stack it in a corner of the garden to create a habitat for Slow Worms, hedgehogs and insects.
- Although we do not have local bylaws preventing us from burning, regular offenders could be fined by Stroud District Council Environmental Services if deemed to be causing a public nuisance on a regular basis.
- More information at: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/environmental-health/pollution-and-nuisance/bonfires-and-smoke-smoke-control>

Thank you.

KMcN



Photo by Annie-Spratt on Unsplash

Blacklow Close - What's in a Name

The highest side road off Selsley Road in North Woodchester is Blacklow Close, named after the Anglo-Saxon Hundred, Blacklow, which is recorded in the Domesday book. Hundreds were subdivisions of shires which raised taxes to send to the exchequer and maintained local law and order through the Hundred Courts.

At the time of the Domesday Book, Blacklow comprised the parishes of Frampton, Fretherne and Saul, Whitminster, Eastington, Stonehouse, Frocester, Leonard Stanley, King's Stanley and a part of Woodchester. The exact size of the part of Woodchester is apparently difficult to judge from existing documents but a sketch map I have seen suggests it was only the part of North Woodchester north of the footpath from Home Ground in Boundary Court and west of the footpath from the old churchyard towards The Bell. So it would have included Blacklow Close and quite a lot of modern North Woodchester. By 1220, Blacklow had become part of the larger hundred of Whitstone and at around this time all of the parish of Woodchester seems to have been brought together in the Longtree Hundred, which stretched from Woodchester and Rodborough in the west to Rodmarton and Shipton Moyne in the east.

So what is the origin of the name Blacklow or Blaec-hlaw? The second element is relatively straightforward - 'hlaw' is a hill or burial mound. However, the first element is less certain. Blaec-hlaw could be a mound named after a person such as Bla[ec]ca.



Alternatively, Blaec could be descriptive; confusingly it could mean dark (black), pale (bleached) or treeless (bleak); there appears to be no consensus. It is even possible that Bleac-hlaw refers to Doverow Hill, which was a prominent feature for most of the Hundred and probably had a white limestone cap before it was quarried in the 16th and 17th centuries. If this is the case, the Anglo-Saxons would have called Doverow Hill Bleac-hlaw. It is surmised that hundreds of years later, pronunciation changed becoming closer to Doverow perhaps linking it in people's minds to William Devereaux who was a claimant to the Kings Stanley manor in the 13th century and a cousin of the Giffords, who were lords of the manor at Stonehouse.

The Belties

Over the last three years, a herd of Belted Galloway cattle have grazed land in Boundary Court. As well as being delightful to look at, they are there for a purpose.

The work that the belties do is absolutely essential to preserving special habitats, and they perform a seriously significant conservation grazing operation. Where they grazed in the top field, near Selsley Common, they trampled the soil and kept the grass short enabling the National Trust to sow wild flower seeds to develop the field into a wild flower meadow. The Common and much of the higher land around Woodchester is limestone. Where in the 1930s, 35 % of all calcareous land in Gloucestershire was grassland rich in flora and fauna, now only 1.5 % is, much of it having been ploughed up for arable farming or has been taken over by scrub. Belties are very docile cattle and will be resident in Woodchester for some time, we hope. They also produce high quality, organic, traceable beef.



Woodchester lunchclub under threat

It is incredible to think that Woodchester's Lunch With Friends is in its 6th year!

The lunch club, which provides a hot meal once a month for some of our older residents and especially for those who live alone, has grown hugely. From the modest 22 guests we hosted at the first lunch, we now serve up to 60 each month and an astonishing 102 (including helpers) at Christmas. It is loved and valued by everyone who comes, guests and helpers alike.

The only downside of this success is that Lunch With Friends is now under huge pressure, and there just aren't enough people to provide the food and other help. We desperately need more volunteers to keep the lunch club going.

We continue to operate a three month system with three teams, so that nobody has

to volunteer for more than one lunch in each three month period, but the quantities of food required have become quite significant so our current cooks are really struggling to manage.

We are particularly appealing for more cooks to join each of the teams. The tasks aren't onerous - especially now we have our beautiful new church kitchen! It might just mean cooking a big pan full of potatoes or frozen vegetables, or for those happy to try something more, some of the pudding or main course. The menus are decided in advance by the group leaders who work out quantities needed, provide recipes if necessary and divide up the jobs according to who is available.

If you are reading this and think you could offer a couple of hours to cook every twelve weeks or so, please do consider joining us. All out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed so there is no cost except for your time. The lunches are happy events and so worthwhile to the guests and the community as a whole. The current volunteers come from all areas of the village and are not all churchgoers. Over time new friendships have been formed between the team members and all the volunteers are very welcoming.

If you would like to have a chat and find out more, please contact Christina Lewis (**873481 christina.lewis222@gmail.com**), Sally Bull (**873003**) or Liz Cole (**872287**).

Derek Oakey has submitted these two photos of Woodchester School. One is of a bus trip to London about 1951/2 which must have been some journey without the M4! The other is a class of infant children in the early 50s. I love the school caps!



Was that a deer or a dog?!

How many times has a reader driven along a road at dawn or dusk and seen a dog like animal wandering across the road?

You might have heard a loud barking or even screaming (quite a frightening sound if you are out alone at night!) Almost certainly, this will be a muntjac deer, also known as a barking deer, for obvious reasons, many of which live in the fields and woods around Woodchester. A muntjac is our smallest deer, very stocky in size and shape, weighing about 10 to 18 kg and about 50 cms tall at the shoulder. They are gingerish brown with stripes on their face and short antlers.

Muntjac were brought from China to Woburn Park at the beginning of the last century. Some escaped, some have been deliberately set free and now there are many feral populations around the country. They like to live in wooded territory or even overgrown urban gardens



but unlike other deer, don't do much damage to growing timber, although being browsers they eat shoots and small shrubs. In fact, the only major impact muntjac have on human interests is collisions with cars!

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

Although the spring term has come to a rather unexpected and abrupt end, we have packed in quite a lot!

ISingPOP came to Woodchester to brighten up a dull, wet January. We had a fantastic time, learning new songs and jazzy dance moves as well as recording our very own CD. At the end of the week, we celebrated with two concerts at St. Mary's church, sharing the occasion with families and members of the church community. Thank you very much to St Mary's for supporting ISingPOP; it was lovely to welcome Emily and her team back after a number of years.

Academic learning is very important to us at Woodchester but we also value a 'holistic' education, one that recognises the impact of the wider curriculum including creative subjects such as music and art. This term, we were delighted to receive two awards, a Music Mark in recognition of our commitment to providing high quality music education and Health School status. This recognises the work we do in school to promote healthy living and wellbeing. We remain motivated to continually develop these very important aspects of school life.

With emphasis on 'Working Scientifically', Science Focus Week was a hive of activity. We mixed the children up into their 'Big Friend, Little Friend' groups and they conducted a number of different experiments to learn more about how

the world works. This was an inspiring week with lots of opportunities to learn new things as well as to develop new relationships and friendships.

This term, our Christian value has been 'Perseverance' and if there was ever a time when this attribute would be required of us all, as individuals, leaders, families and members of a local, church and world community, it is now. I am sure that some will find comfort and inspiration in words from Philippians 4:13, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me'. During Collective Worship, staff and children explored times when we need to persevere, what this feels like and the difference perseverance can make to lives. During Lent, we began to 'look in' and reflect on our lives. From this, we thought about how we could 'look out' by making a positive difference to the lives of others, our friends, families and our school community. Unfortunately, we cannot continue our journey through Lent together at school, but by keeping positive and trying to 'look out' to others during this extraordinary time, it must surely help.

Keep well and safe and our love and prayers to you all from Woodchester Endowed CE Primary School.



Working together to test 'Rocket Balloons' during Science Focus Week.



Here are our Key Stage 1 children learning an ISingPOP song and dance with Emily.



Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswold – Attendance Allowance

This is a benefit that helps with extra costs if you have an illness or disability, either physical or mental or both, and severe enough to require someone else to help you with your personal care needs. You can make a claim for Attendance Allowance if you have reached State Pension age or are older, and it is normally payable after six months of needing the care. It is paid at one of two rates, £58.70 or £87.65 per week, depending on your care needs. Attendance Allowance is tax-free and not means-tested, which means your income and savings will not affect the level you may be entitled to.

You do not need to have someone actually caring for you in order to make a claim. The claim form can be obtained from the **Attendance Allowance helpline on 0800 731 0122** by providing your contact details. Please note that the form is complicated and lengthy and you may wish to get advice and help before completing it. If you would like more advice on this or other matters please contact **Stroud Citizens Advice** weekdays 10 am to 4 pm on Freephone: **0808 800 0510**. Further information can also be found at **www.citizensadvice.org.uk** and then search for attendance allowance.



State of Nature

Every three years, a report called the State of Nature is published. It is a collaborative effort by more than 70 wildlife organisations and this year for the first time includes input from the government.

It is thus a comprehensive assessment of how our wildlife and land are faring. Released in November 2019, the report found a 13 % decline in the average abundance of wildlife since scientific monitoring began in the 1970s, with a fall of 41 % in the numbers of species studied.

Butterflies and moths fared particularly badly – down by 17 % and 25 % respectively. More than 26 % of mammals are in danger of extinction with the wild cat (not a Gloucestershire species, of course) and the greater mouse-eared bat at particular high risk. We all know of the decline of the hedgehog as well, once so often a visitor to our gardens. It is so important that we all work to halt the decline of so many of our mammals, insects and birds by protecting and creating new habitats in which they can thrive. Much good work has been done recently in Gloucestershire, for example with the reintroduction of the Large Blue butterfly and improving the limestone grassland habitat of the Duke of Burgundy butterfly on our commons. In many ways, together with the issue of climate change, preservation and conservation we are at the crossroads of humanity where we need to work together with actions rather than words.

Reducing plastic waste – we really can make a difference

Following the article in the Autumn 2018 issue of the Woodchester Word describing the May family's attempts at a plastic free month, and horrific news images of plastic contamination of the world's oceans and beaches and the damage it is doing to marine life, we were inspired to see how much we could reduce the use of single-use plastic in our family.



The UK generates around 5 million tonnes of plastic waste every year – that's a quarter of a tonne of plastic waste each year for a family of four! And when we looked in our recycling bin each fortnight, we realised how much plastic we are throwing out, a lot of which simply cannot be re-used.

So we started by targeting the things that filled up our recycling bin. The two worst offenders were empty plastic water bottles and milk cartons. We started using a water filter jug instead of buying bottled water (I hate the taste of tap water!). A taste test proved that we all liked the taste of filtered water as much as bottled water and an unexpected bonus was that I no longer have to scrub the limescale out of our glass kettle every week – I haven't had to touch it in over a year!! Now we use a small plastic filter cartridge every month, but that's a major improvement compared to the mountain of plastic bottles we were discarding previously. We also started getting our milk direct from the dairy in Minchinhampton in refillable glass bottles. It's organic, from grass-fed local cattle, guaranteed fresh, and it tastes delicious!

We changed to Ecover washing up liquid and Faith in Nature body wash, shampoo and conditioner, all of which are available from the village shop and all of which can be refilled at Shiny Goodness in Nailsworth – we have been reusing the same bottles for

all these products for over a year, another significant reduction in the number of plastic bottles being discarded.

We swapped our plastic washing up sponges for natural loofah sponges, which work really well, last for ages, and can simply be composted when they eventually wear out.

Another major culprit in our recycling bin was plastic food trays, a lot of which can't be recycled at present because of their colour. So we have started buying fish and poultry loose from supermarket counters or local suppliers in paper bags, and avoiding plastic-wrapped fruit and vegetables in favour of loose products.

It's amazing how little plastic we have in our recycling bin these days – I reckon we could manage with a collection once every other month instead of fortnightly.

So, thanks to the May's for inspiring us to change. I'm not saying that all of these measures are easy to implement, especially for busy families - reducing your use of plastic takes time, effort and a new mind-set. But you can make a difference if you really want to. If we all made that effort, think how much difference that could make to our planet, and the positive impact it would have on the future of our children and grandchildren.

Iain Dunbar

St Mary's Church, Spring 2020

Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 our church building has had to be closed, however the church community is still very much 'open for business'!

PRAYER: At this time when people are particularly worried for friends, family and even themselves, do let us know who and what is on your heart and we will promise to pray for them, in confidence. Send any prayer requests to thejackson5@tiscali.co.uk or speak to/leave a message with Rev Peter Francis on 01453 759680.

SERVICES: When we are physically isolated, it is great to be able to see others and join together to worship online, to sing and learn together and to pray for our community and the nation at this time. We are still meeting at 11am each week, but now via the Zoom video-conferencing system. See details to access via phone/computer/tablet etc below.

MESSY CHURCH: With children being home-schooled, we have now started a 'Messy Church at home' page on the church website, with craft activities, puzzles and even a bible story, they can watch on Youtube. And we will continue to update the page with new activities.

LUNCH WITH FRIENDS: We are really sad that this cannot continue at present, but we will do our best to try and keep in touch with our guests, although there are a lot of you. Our friends at the Long Table (run by the chef Tom Herbert, who enjoyed visiting lunch with friends so much we set up a Lunch with Friends together in Brimscombe!) have

turned their social enterprise restaurant into a kitchen providing fresh home made meals for delivery. They are selling these for £25 for 7 meals. However, there are a number of free meals available, that people have kindly paid for, to help those who are isolated and who would struggle to pay themselves. Email MEALS@THELONGTABLEONLINE.COM or call **01453 367499**.

Rev Peter Francis, Rector of Woodchester, Brimscombe & Rodborough

Easter Services (on zoom)

9/4 Maundy Thursday Services 7:30 pm
10/4 Good Friday Meditation, 2-3 pm
12/4 Easter Praise service 11:00 am

Contact information for St Mary's

If you'd like to get in touch with us to ask for prayer for yourself or someone you care for, please use any of the contact details below or approach one of us over coffee after the 11 am Sunday service.

Rev Peter Francis: **01453 759680**
peter@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Reader: Richard Spencer: **01453 872686**
richard@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Church wardens:

Mr Nick Vallender: **01453 766038**

Mrs Sue Pouncey: **07866 487911**

Zoom - Worshipping together using the internet and telephone

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- When asked for a meeting-ID enter **883 864 9918** on the keypad, followed by **#**
- You will then be asked for participant-ID but you don't have to answer this, just type another **#**

New Homes at Southbank

The five new homes being built by Stroud District Council at Southbank, opposite St Mary's Church, after a long wait, have been progressing well. However, the contractor Speller Metcalfe is currently undertaking a project specific risk assessment in order to ascertain whether the public health guidelines for site working during Coronavirus can be met. During this time works on sites will remain paused, apart from any

essential work required to make the site safe and security attendances. It is hoped that the properties can be completed this year/early next year, if operations on site can be re-started soon. Three of these new homes (1 x two bed house, 1 x three bed house and 1 x four bed house) will be rented properties managed by the Council and allocated via Homeseekerplus (www.homeseekerplus.co.uk); the other two will

be available for shared ownership through the Government's 'Help to Buy: Shared Ownership' scheme and will be advertised on the 'Help to Buy' website. The two shared ownership properties are two bedroom semi-detached houses, with direct views of the church and grounds, private parking and south facing gardens. If you would like to express an interest, you must be registered on www.helptobuyagent3.org.uk. For more information, email Stroud District Council on newhomes.regen@stroud.gov.uk.

The Woodchester Churchyard Yews

Many readers will be aware of the avenue of yew trees in the old churchyard off Church Lane. Yews are often found in church yards or growing close to a church, so, why is this?

It is no accident that the yew is found growing in churchyards. While there are half a dozen or so in the old Woodchester churchyard, we can't compete with Painswick's 99 yews! Back in medieval days or perhaps even longer ago, yews were planted because of the belief that they protect against evil, to symbolise everlasting life and as a sign of purity. To cut down a churchyard yew or even to damage it or burn the wood was believed to bring ill-luck. Sprigs of yew were often put into a dead person's shroud and mourners would carry branches of yew, the branches then being put into the grave with the coffin.

More practically, yews were probably planted because they were poisonous

to cattle and therefore to deter cattle from roaming in churchyards but also are very desirable for their wood which was used for centuries to make longbows. It was also invaluable for spears and one has been found in Clacton, Essex that has been dated to 25,000 years ago.

Today, yew wood is popular for the making of bowls and decorative furniture because of its often intricate and beautiful patterns in its grain. Interestingly, yew trees are either male or female, the latter developing poisonous seeds, each surrounded by an innocuous bright red fleshy covering. Thrushes and other birds aren't poisoned because they eat the whole fruit and the seed passes through their intestines without being digested.



WOODCHESTER F.C.

Established 1905

A Community Amateur Sports Club

The Club was established in 1905 and has a long, respected standing in the local community with one or more teams playing in the Stroud League for over 100 years. The home ground is at Villa Park, Selsley Road, North Woodchester.

This season, due to several circumstances (mostly lack of players), the club was unfortunately forced to form a merger with Alkerton F.C. in order to survive. The pitch and changing block have remained unused since then.

It would be tremendous to re-establish such a longstanding community club, to which end a new manager and core group of players are urgently sought by the middle of April, to facilitate re-entry to the Stroud and District Football League:

- **MANAGERS ROLE** (playing or non-playing) needs around two to four hours a week available during the season (plus some support from a Secretary/ Treasurer/ Wife/friend) – main roles are to help pick the team, call the FA with the result once a week and to bank the subscriptions every 2 weeks in Stroud.

- The club Captain runs the playing side on the pitch
- Players of any age (from 16 to over 50!)
- Very sociable club, with drinks at The Ram after playing
- Playing commitment can be as regular as you wish

Please contact **Stuart Harrison** urgently on **07977 455350** to register your interest or to ask any questions.



The Woodchester team of 1936-37, replete with cup silverware ...



...and their counterparts of 2015-16 celebrating their Bill Bick cup victory

Village Speed Limit

Last year the Parish Council agreed that a 20mph speed limit throughout the village would be supported, and asked to be included in a Multi-Site Traffic Regulation Order being proposed by Stroud District Road Safety Group to reduce speed limits in a number of locations across the District where current speed limits are considered inappropriate.

One reason for working with SDRSG is the cost of the Traffic Regulation Order required to change a speed limit, which was a minimum of £15,000 and outside the budget of Woodchester Parish Council. SDRSG advised that the Gloucestershire County Council Highways Commissioner had promised that the cost of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) would be "reduced significantly" from April 2019 when this function was brought in house by GCC, and that by combining a number of such speed limit changes on one single multi-site process, this would further reduce the cost, potentially making it affordable for the Parish Council.

After many months of consultation and meetings, SDRSG have reported back to Woodchester Parish Council that the cost of TRO's has not in fact been reduced by GCC, and that most of the sites proposed for speed limit reductions would not be supported by the GCC Highways team, including Woodchester. Speed surveying on Selsley Road, carried out for the Parish Council by SDRSG, showed that the average speed on the lower part of Selsley Road (from the bend above the Post Office to the A46 junction) is currently 24mph. Advice from the Highways team and Police is that a new speed limit would therefore make little difference to actual driving speeds on this road, which are already low, and that enforcement would not be prioritised.

"It is now clear that unless the locations chosen for possible speed reductions are focussed on areas where there is a history of serious road traffic collisions, and a consequent likely improvement in Killed and Seriously Injured accident statistics, they will not be supported by the authorities" Iain Dunbar, Chairman of SDRSG, told the Woodchester Word. "The proposed Rural Multi-Site Traffic Regulation Order to reduce speed limits across the District is unlikely to be prioritised over other existing schemes by the authorities, will take a long period of time to complete, and will subject each participating Council to significant costs, even if it were to be successful. Because of this, Stroud District Road Safety Group have taken the decision that we would be better focussing our limited resources on our mobile Vehicle Activated Speed Sign campaign (working closely with Gloucestershire Constabulary), whilst supporting participating councils in targeted local speed reduction efforts (including TRO's) where there is a history of serious road traffic collisions, as well as hopefully implementing other new road safety initiatives such as a district-wide Community Road Watch scheme."

You can find out more about Stroud District Road Safety Group, including when their open meetings are being held, at www.strouddistrictroadsafety.com

Orchard Pastures

We had a wonderful wassail on a rare dry winter day in January.

Our wassail manages to combine tradition with a little chaos, as well as the attractive prospect of a warm gathering in The Ram afterwards. Thank you to landlord Phil McAsey for hosting us, with delicious mulled cider.

The Rodborough Folk Orchestra provided the accompaniment to our singing. They are fabulous, and fabulously enthusiastic about the annual Woodchester Wassail.

Work is starting in earnest by allotment-holders and the blossom is just beginning to open in the orchard, now in its second decade.

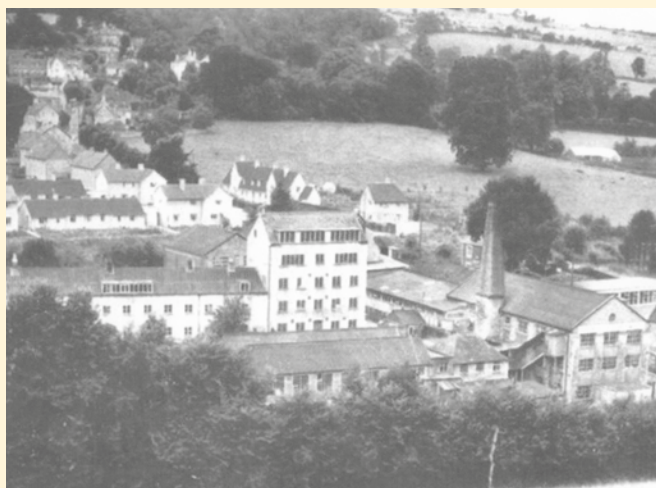
Orchard Pastures is the land below The Ram owned by a group of villagers. For more information, please email: swalt.org@gmail.com or phone Bert or Glen Cossins on 872407.

The annual Wassail in January at the South Woodchester Allotments



The annual Wassail in January at the South Woodchester Allotments

Two old photos of Woodchester



The first picture is of Woodchester Mill, post 1963 (Beech Grove) and pre 1989 (Piano Works fire)



The second is 1985 – demolition of Arthurs Press to make way for Pauls Rise and the Garden.

Parish Council News

Work to the Cycle Path

Resurfacing work is progressing, with much of the work now complete. Work is currently being carried out on the section just north of Pauls Rise, which floods regularly. This section has been raised to prevent sitting water at this low point.

As part of the Wild Towns Funding from the Wildlife Trust that is enabling the resurfacing of the cycle path, Stroud Valleys Project is contracted to put in two benches along the stretch from Dudbridge to Woodchester. One of these will be in Woodchester Parish. This is planned for a clearing between Station Road and Frogmarsh.

Stroud Valleys Project are also planting some native shrubs with berries along the cycle path. By planting shrubs rather than tall trees they are making the path safer for the future, as mature trees can't anchor their roots very well into the former railway line substrate and tend to be blown over when they reach a certain height. The native shrubs will also add more variety as food sources for birds and bees. The shrubs have been chosen carefully, so that they will increase diversity rather than adding more of the same. In Woodchester Parish they have planted guelder rose, wayfaring tree, spindle, hazel, dogwood, wild pear and bird cherry.

Rooksmoor Update

The owners of Rooksmoor Mills attended a Parish Council meeting at the beginning of March to give an update on the development. Unfavourable weather over recent months has left the ground very boggy, putting the development up to five weeks behind schedule at that time. Piling for Block F is complete and the ground beams are in place. Contractors are currently working on the retaining wall. At the time, completion of Block F was expected in July/August.

Work was expected to commence on Block B in May/June with a nine month contract for completion. Mr. Cooper confirmed that all piling will be augured, creating less noise for local residents.

Following flooding outside The Old Fleece in January, contractors reported blocked drains on the A46 to Gloucestershire Highways. Some concern had been raised at the time of a possible link with the Rooksmoor Development. Mr. Cooper confirmed that all water courses were checked with dye during the planning phase of the development. Only one drain was found to go into the site from Rooksmoor Hill, which has not been affected by the development. The excessive rainfall and blocked drains were the cause. The drains have now been cleared by Gloucestershire Highways.

Retirement of Ian Smith

Ian Smith has a strong connection with the village and is known to many of you. Ian has carried out the maintenance work in the village for the past 19 years.

Ian will retire at the end of March. He will be presented with a farewell card and box of wines on behalf of the village, very kindly donated by Woodchester Valley Vineyard.

We welcome Tim Curtis who will take over from Ian from April.

Grants Available for Projects to benefit the Village

If you are part of an organisation looking for funds for a project to benefit the residents of Woodchester, the Parish Council have made a small sum of money available for this purpose.

An application form along with information on eligibility and conditions are available from the clerk (woodchesterparish@gmail.com) or from the village website (www.woodchesterparish.org.uk).

Applications will only be considered once a year and the closing date for these applications is the 31st May.

Reminder....the village has both a website and Facebook page with information posted about local issues.
www.woodchesterparish.org.uk



Woodchester connected landscape project

The National Trust, working with local landowners is developing a connected landscape experience in Woodchester. The plan is to link the Mansion and parkland with local landscapes to make visiting the area a full day experience for everyone visiting.

There will also be a 2.7km innovative and imaginative natural play trail, developed by a company called Touchwood in the parkland with 12 key elements to introduce challenge and discovery in the parkland area, creating opportunities for natural play, sensory experiences, encouraging children to climb, swing, crawl, balance, get their fingers into the earth and explore the sounds of the wood. Exciting stuff!



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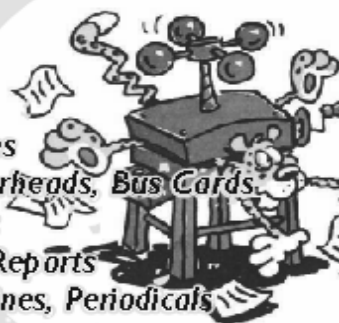
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WOODCHESTER
WORD TEAM
WISHES ALL ITS
READERS A VERY
Happy Easter



Photo by Melissa Walker Horn on Unsplash



Bank Staff/Casual Cover required - Start date: immediately

Woodchester Playgroup are looking for qualified bank staff/casual cover.

Financial Administrator - Start date: 1st April 2020

If you are interested in either role, please email woodchesterplaygroup@eygloucestershire.co.uk or call us on **01453 873004**, with a few details about yourself including relevant experience, qualifications and a contact number.



Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

Governor Vacancy

We would be delighted to hear from anyone who:

- Is interested in education and our school
- Has spare time, enthusiasm and energy for the role
- Can work as part of a team and learn new things
- Has experience in finance or business (not essential)

If you are interested in becoming a governor and would like to find out more about the role, please contact the school office on **01453 872476** or admin@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk

Word Distributors

I hope you are enjoying this edition of the Woodchester Word. Although at the present time, we find ourselves in strange circumstances, when life returns to normal (hopefully, in the very near future) we will need at least three volunteers to help distribute the Woodchester Word. We have lost three loyal and long standing distributors, Kath, Sue and Muriel for various reasons, and need to replace them. Delivering the Word, usually about 25 – 40 copies in one area of North or South Woodchester, only takes no more than an hour of your time.

If you can help, please contact Rod on 872317 or 07775652379 or woodchesterword@gmail.com

Many thanks in anticipation



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What's on in Woodchester

Dates for diary section

Assuming not cancelled because of coronavirus

Saturday 16th May.

10.00-12.00. Fundraising coffee morning and games swap in aid of Minchinhampton Riding for the Disabled group.

Woodchester Village Hall.

Details Katharine 873814

Sunday July 5th

Woodchester Open Gardens. (to be confirmed)

Saturday September 12th

Woodchester Village Show.

Useful Village Contacts

PCSO: Steven Phillipson

T: 101 or visit www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Neighbourhood Warden: Chris James,

T: 01453 754512, 07753 725185 E: chris.james@stroud.gov.uk

District Councillor: Philip McAsey,

T: 01453 873329 E: Cllr.philip.mcasey@stroud.gov.uk

County Councillor: Steve Robinson,

T: 01453 834270 E: steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Village Hall: Mrs. Kath Gay,

T: 01453 873348 E: vvh888@btinternet.com

Parish Council: Ann Bijkerk,

T: 01453 873456 E: woodchesterparish@gmail.com

Gloucestershire Highways

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/

T: 08000 514514 E: gcchighways@amey.co.uk

Woodchester Post Office and Village Shop: T: 01453 872581

St Mary's Church: Rev Peter Francis, T: 01453 759680

Church of the Annunciation: T: 01453 832120

Woodchester Village Hall

Monday

Circle Dancing: 11.00 – 13.00, Weekly

(Chrissie Grice, 07814 011980)

Circle Dancing: 14.00 – 16.00, Fortnightly

Table Tennis: 19.15 – 23.00, Sept – March

(John Bunn, 07702 058754)

Tuesday

Art Group: 10.00 – 12.00

(Vera Naumann, 01453 873689)

Dru Yoga 13.30 – 14.45

(Elisabeth Noblet, 07973 877029)

Table Tennis: 19.15 – 23.00, Sept. – March

Wednesday

Calligraphy: 10.00 – 16.00, Fortnightly

(Josie Brown, T: 01452 387768)

Creative Sewing: 10.00 – 17.00, Monthly

(Catherine Kingzett)

FMC Dance Academy: 17.00 – 19.45, Subject to Sewing

(Fay Cottrell, T: 07931 253116)

Ballet: 20.15 – 21.15

(Sophie Makosch, T: 07887 671956)

Thursday

Senior Health & Fitness: 10.00 – 12.00

(Dorothy Turner, T: 01285 885766)

FMC Dance Academy: 16.30-20.30, Subject to PC & WI

Parish Council: 19.00 – 21.00, 1st in alternate months

WI: 19.30 – 21.30, 3rd in month

(Gail Birch, T: 07875 028671)

Friday

Circle Dancing: 14.00 – 16.00, Monthly

Private booking: 17.00 – 18.30

Weekends

Available for Private functions

All Village Hall sessions are subject to change and are guidelines only.

For bookings/late availability contact: Kath Gay,

T: 01453 873348 or vvh888@btinternet.com.

Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at woodchesterword@gmail.com Production: Iain Dunbar. Advertising: Ann Bijkerk. Printed by Leopard Press. The Woodchester Word is an independent publication and is funded by advertisers. Please mention the Woodchester Word when replying to the adverts in this edition. The views expressed in this publication are those of the editorial team. We reserve the right to edit or omit any material submitted for publication. No liability is accepted for loss or damage arising from any omission of copy or advertising.

Copy deadline for next issue: June 30th 2020