

THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 73, Spring 2021

WISHING ALL OUR
READERS A VERY
Happy Easter

Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

FROM THE EDITOR

Readers will be aware that difficulties in income from adverts have affected the Woodchester Word.

The Woodchester Parish Council feels unable to subsidise the Word. This means that this edition will only be available from North Woodchester Village shop, in St. Mary's Church and in the two telephone boxes in North and South Woodchester (if there is room) or collected from Ferndale, Selsley Road, if you are passing by.) However, if there are any residents who can't access a copy because of age or disability and would like one delivered, I personally will see to it that it is delivered through your letterbox. This edition is also reduced from 16 to 12 pages and instead of a print run of 600 copies, only 250 will be printed. It would be good to think that when the covid crisis is over and life begins to return to normal, we will receive more income from advertising and the Woodchester Word can return to a wider distribution. In the meantime, my thanks goes to those companies and those who have placed adverts in this, the Spring 2021, edition, to all our contributors and to all our distributors who are now made redundant!!

With best wishes to all our readers and hoping that you are keeping well and coping during these unusual times,

Rod Harris, editor

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Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

What a difference a year makes!

The half term holiday is upon us and I hope that all our children, families and staff are enjoying some respite and relaxation. During this time, I have set myself the challenge of a bike ride every day and, so far, it's mission accomplished. Whilst enjoying the varied and beautiful Gloucestershire scenery, I have reflected on the last twelve months and the journey we have travelled. Under present circumstances, Albert Einstein's quote, 'Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving,' seems rather apt.

In September, we were delighted to be able to welcome back all the children. With classrooms busy again there was indeed a feeling of optimism and enthusiasm for the months ahead. Also starting their journey at Woodchester were our new Reception children and teacher, Ms Pictet. It is always exciting to meet new children and teachers, all of whom bring their own individual talents to strengthen our Woodchester family. This year, of course, the usual transition arrangements for the children and Ms Pictet were very different yet they all deserve much praise for the superb way in which they have become part of the 'team'.

During the Autumn term, there was no doubt that everyone had to adapt to the many and new demands and challenges that occurred but we found our rhythm. For example, parents, carers and staff were very patient as we arranged and conducted our first ever 'on line' Parents' Evening. Our curriculum focused on supporting the children's return and wellbeing whilst the usual Christmas and Harvest celebrations had to be curtailed. We all missed those special opportunities

to come together as a community but we reached the end of the Autumn term without having to close a 'bubble' and we were all immensely thankful for that.

After the Christmas holiday, sadly, yet unsurprisingly with the second wave, school was only able to reopen for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. The systems set up to enable 'remote learning' worked well and, once again, the school community tried to make the best of a difficult situation. Compared with the first national lockdown, demand for key worker provision has been high and we have supported over sixty places in school in addition to organising remote learning.

With the Prime Minister's announcement, we jump back on life's bicycle and find out how things will continue to 'keep moving'. Whatever lies ahead, I take great courage from knowing that I am supported by dedicated, hardworking and professional staff, extremely supportive and understanding parents, a church and local community who encourages and contributes, and delightful, creative, caring and wonderfully inspiring children.

Undoubtedly, the biblical text that underpins our school vision, 'Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many' reminds us of the strength of our community and how this will carry us through these difficult times.

Mrs Pennington
Woodchester Endowed Church of England
Primary School



Photo by Taylor Heery on Unsplash

North Woodchester Post Office and Shop

Quite different from the first lockdown where we struggled to source supplies and on occasion had to fetch our orders from suppliers, we have found that this lockdown it has been much easier with suppliers well organised and in most cases able to fulfil our orders.

Lodge Farm are keeping us well supplied with their ready meals made with Herefordshire meat, free range chicken and locally sourced vegetables. They are very popular and have a range of single to family size meals including vegetarian and Gluten Free. Check out the range in our freezer and give yourself a night off cooking.

At Christmas we became a destination for a full range of Noel Tatt Christmas Cards as well as gift wrap and sundries together with reasonably priced activity items for children which we are continuing to sell as they have proved so popular.

Restricted to two customers in the shop at any one time we experienced some queues as, unable to visit friends and families more people chose to post gifts resulting in increased mail volumes. Thankfully customers were patient.

We have a range of cards ready for Mothering Sunday on 14th March and will replace those with Easter Cards at the appropriate time. We will also be selling Easter Eggs.

The ability to sell currency has not yet returned to the Post Office. Hopefully, this will return when lockdown eases and tourism again takes off. In the meantime currency can be ordered on line from Post Office Ltd and collected locally.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have continued to give their time in the shop and support the village.



The WI – Zooming In Hope of Reunion

Woodchester WI is proud of its continued activity and some innovative responses to a challenging year.

We have continued to make regular contact with all members via email, post and phone and it has been cheering for all of us to share each other's news and friendship. Committee members have enjoyed our monthly Zoom meetings so we have decided to repeat the experiment with our monthly sessions. Our January meeting, a chance to share books which were important to us, got us off to a good start so we have planned a quiz for February and have booked a speaker for March. We are hoping that more members, husbands, friends and family will join us to hear Ian Caskie, originally booked to visit us last year, who will speak to us about the SS Great Britain. Our small book club has also continued to meet virtually, the chance to see each other and to chat proving particularly important at present.

We were delighted with the members' response to the crafted poppy appeal with the assorted poppies skilfully turned into two

wreaths for the Woodchester and Wayside Cross Memorials. Keen to follow up this success, we decided to mark Christmas with a gift bag for each member, hand-delivered by a member of the committee. Ideas flew and plans grew as the committee's enthusiasm for the project took off. Bags were filled with jam, flower seeds, soap, pen, notebook, tissues, chocolate and a card. The response from members – cards, phone calls, emails and letters – only added to our enjoyment. We are now hatching plans for a Spring celebration of some kind.

Several Woodchester members particularly enjoyed watercolour instruction with the Quirky Bird arranged by the Gloucestershire Federation, achieving better results than we had perhaps dreamed of and certainly having much more fun. The on-line WI craft college, Denman at Home, continues to widen the range of courses available for anyone with an hour to spare at £5 a session.

Cookalongs, including a number of vegan and vegetarian options, craft sessions such as patchwork, fabric art, dry and wet felting and talks on everything from literature to travel are available via their website and are very enjoyable.

As the vaccination roll-out gathers speed, we are very hopeful of meeting again in person, perhaps outside for a picnic, before too long and are daring to dream that the tradition of our summer fish and chip supper may be revived. Despite our efforts to communicate with everyone, members who do not have access to the internet are missing out and we are missing them.

Anyone who is interested in joining us is very welcome to get in touch with Sally, Secretary, on **873003**.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Help make 2021 the tidiest ever on Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons

Though the last year has been an unsettling one for most of us, many local residents have also found a renewed appreciation of the beautiful place in which we live, and the precious resource Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons offers to our community.

Nationally, two-thirds of people think protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher priority after COVID-19, and we are asking everyone who feels they benefit from living beside the common to help us care for it in 2021.

It has been particularly inspiring to observe so many people voluntarily collecting litter on the commons. Many chose to pick things up as part of their regular walks, whilst passionate litter-pickers like the Five Valleys Wombles set out on deliberate expeditions to help keep the commons tidy. Though many visitors come from further afield, if local residents do our bit it can make all the difference. This could be by simply making sure we take everything home with us, or for those with access to the necessary equipment to collect safely, litter picking walks can be highly invigorating.

Many may also have noticed a more experimental approach to parking on the commons as visitor numbers increased last year. Most local residents are aware that they should only use the designated parking places and the National Trust have been working hard to encourage everyone to only use these. Parking outside these areas can damage this unique grassland habitat so that wildlife cannot survive and it can also impact the underlying archaeology. Please, if you are driving up to the commons, do set a good example by parking responsibly.

Though the National Trust do a fine job in caring for the commons, only by working together can we safeguard these unique places and protect them and them for everyone to enjoy.

Ann Finlayson, Chair - Minchinhampton & Rodborough Commons Advisory Committee



News from Citizens Advice – Help needed with employment problems during Covid pandemic.



Please let anyone with difficulties know that we are able to offer advice by Freephone and email, but sadly as yet, not face to face contact.

Unfortunately, the number of enquiries about Employment problems has soared over the last year. Many people have needed advice on whether they are entitled to furlough pay, how this is calculated, and whether they might be able to claim Universal Credit in addition.

Redundancy is also a big issue and many have concerns about how they will get a redundancy payment if their employer is unable to pay it. The reason so many people need further help to understand the system is shown in the following example.

Mrs D was managing by having 2 jobs, this meant that in lockdown her income came from a mixture of paid work and furlough payments. It got further confused by a change in the National Minimum Wage during this time which gave her a small increase. She was then offered redundancy from one job, and again it was important to be aware of the calculation of her redundancy pay, and any other payments which she might

be due. Finally, she needed to know if she had any entitlement to Universal Credit to boost her income. Being uncertain of how she would be able to manage and what action she should consider, understandably caused Mrs D great anxiety. By having these payments calculated and explained to her by our adviser meant that she was able to make informed decisions and became able to cope with her situation.

We also advise on a whole range of other employment issues. The knock-on effects of job loss can cause financial as well as relationship and housing difficulties.

For help with any of these issues contact Stroud Citizens Advice on

Freephone:
0808 800 0510 or 0808 800 0511
Monday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm.

or Email:
<https://www.citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk/stroud-cab-email-advice.php>

Are you a European Citizen who needs to apply for Settled Status?

Following the UK's departure from the EU, the government has launched the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

If you are an EU national and have been resident in the UK by 31st December 2020 you can apply for settled or pre-settled status. EU nationals who do not apply by the deadline risk losing their right to live, work and study in the UK, and could also lose access to public funds, pensions and the opportunity to apply for British citizenship. The deadline for applications is 30th June.

Stroud & Cotswold Citizens Advice will be helping people to understand the scheme and how to apply up until 31st March. If you, or anyone you know needs help on this please contact Paul Lock: paul.lock@ca-scd.org.uk 01285 425871

Girlguiding Woodchester

Nearly one year ago the announcement of a national lockdown due to the Covid pandemic brought Girlguiding Woodchester to an abrupt halt – no meetings were allowed, plans were put on hold and no one thought we'd still be in this situation a year on. Girlguiding Woodchester, however, has now re-commenced Guiding activities by meeting weekly online, supported by email communications and we are having great fun. We have been joined by a couple of Nailsworth Brownies and In between playing games, Brownies have made 3D greeting cards, rainbow fruit kebabs and Guides have carried out some water experiments and had a mocktail (cocktail, without the alcohol!) party. Both Brownies and Guides are currently also working towards their first aid skills badge and in the next few weeks will both be having a pet evening online when those whose pets haven't already intruded on the Zoom meetings, will be introducing their pets to us. The Guides also have a cooking session arranged. 21st February was a very special day as we took part in the District online event for Thinking Day. One Guide read a poem and another girl made her Guide Promise. One girl also took part in the South West Region Thinking Day event. Even though we are not meeting face to face we are still able to accept new and girls aged between 7 and 9 (Brownies) and 10 and 13 (Guides) are very welcome to join us. Please email: woodchesterbrowniesandguides@gmail.com or phone Jackie on **01453 821258**.

Orchard Pastures

On the land - like everywhere - spring is beckoning, and allotment holders have begun to ready their plots and plan for the year ahead. Those tricky questions - whether to try a new variety of parsnip, or stick with the one you've used for the last five years. Dilemmas, dilemmas.

We were sad not to be able to hold our wassailing, which had been a fixture for the last ten years. It's a small thing in the scheme of things, and we can only hope we can assemble next year.

We are delighted that some new chickens have arrived recently, currently in a beautifully renovated mobile coop in the orchard. This is in addition to the existing happy hens, which are housed alongside the allotments.

We are also welcoming new allotment holders this season. It's so good to have new people, as well as chickens, involved! All our plots are taken for the current year, but do get in touch if you're interested or have any questions.

There is an area of our land that remains undeveloped – although it provides well for wildlife. If you have ideas for using it we would be very pleased to hear from you.

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 Cossins on **872407**.

An update from St Mary's Church

I don't suppose any of us will look back on the last 12 months with any fondness... very few of us will have come through the current pandemic unscathed, but isn't it wonderful now to see real signs of light at the end of the Covid tunnel. By the next issue of Woodchester Word we really hope to tell you that everything is back to normal with services and other events happening in the church, but despite the current restrictions, there's still been lots going on and we're going to focus on all the good news in this update:

Welcome in: Thanks to our conscientious key-holders, St Mary's is still open every day from 10.00 till 4.00. Wrap up warmly because there's no heating on, but if you need some time and space to talk to God or just reflect and think things through – come in and make yourself welcome. Drink in the peace of this lovely old building.

Business (nearly) as usual: We haven't been able to run the monthly Messy Church club in church since early last year – but a lot of families with primary and pre-school children in Woodchester have really loved our 'Messy-church in a bag' programme. Look at our web site www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk for more details.

We still have a full schedule of **weekly services and other activities**, all available on Zoom. A typical week includes:

Sunday 11:00am	Zoom	Sunday Service with worship
Monday 9.15am	Zoom	Service of Morning Prayer
Monday 12:30-2pm	See mid-week activities on our web site	Homegroup ('Monday Mums')
Tuesday 9.15am	Zoom	Service of Morning Prayer
Tuesday 7-7:40pm	See mid-week activities on our web site	Prayer Meeting
Wed. 10:00am	Zoom	Midweek Service
Wed 7:30-8:30pm	Zoom	Bible Study – Lenten theme at the moment
Thurs 6-6:20pm	Zoom	Prayer for the nation and benefice
Thursday 7:30pm	See mid-week activities on our web site	Homegroup
Thursday 7:30pm	Ring Victoria Robson on 07824 806160	Alpha follow on

Wild and wonderful worship: We've continued our monthly '**Wild Worship**' sessions throughout the latest lockdown, but as we can't meet together physically, people are taking part independently.

In December we organised a walk around our beautiful area following the nativity story – with clues to open and read along the way and treasures to be found! In January we focused on taking care of the birds – resources were made available in the church porch for people to take away and make their own bird feeders and all participants were encouraged to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

February is all about love – loving our world and taking care of it by doing some litter picking!

Every Wild Worship session is family friendly and aimed at encouraging all of us to look at our natural world in a new light and find a way of connecting with God through His creation. We have a Facebook group called 'Wild Worship in Woodchester' where people can post photos of how they took part – or share their thoughts. Further information can be found by emailing Helen at cground101@gmail.com

Lunch-with-Friends: Guests and helpers alike have all been saddened by the suspension of St Mary's lovely monthly lunch club – missing each other's company and the joy of sharing good food together. Although we haven't been able to meet together for a year, help was at hand when the Brimscombe-based charity 'The Long Table' invited us to take part in their Comfort and Joy Christmas meal project.

Our wonderful team of helpers sprung into action like a well-oiled machine, locating freezers, phoning our regular guests and arranging deliveries of a top quality Christmas dinner. It was just a delight to be working together again, especially planning the contents of the Christmas gift bags with home-baked Christmas cake, prayer cards, Christmas decorations and Christmas cards hand-made by the children in our village school. On delivery day our team packed bags and delivered to delighted guests. It was a wonderful start to Christmas celebrations.

Inspired by our Christmas success, we have since delivered a New Year treat in January and a hearty home-made soup and flapjack lunch in February. Plans for Easter are already underway and we'll be working with The Long Table again to deliver a full seasonal lamb (or vegetarian) frozen dinner at the end of March. Although we'll be physically separated, the hope is that as many as possible can enjoy the meal 'together' on Easter Sunday – April 4th.

A Building for Everyone: Though Covid has undoubtedly slowed progress on our plans to make the church building more useful to the whole community, we are delighted to report that work on the next stage of our "Phase 1" project is poised to begin (awaiting one sign-off). This stage will complement the excellent new kitchen, and includes new storage and modern toilets, including disabled facilities. We are also relocating the rood-screen (currently between the chancel and the nave) to re-create the open church interior intended by the original architect. It will be good to get the work done whilst the use of the church is restricted.

Mother Rose Columba

Woodchester's links with South Australia through William Leigh of Woodchester Park are well known. He made investments in central Adelaide and partially funded the Catholic Cathedral, dedicated to St Francis Xavier. However, he is not the only connection. One intrepid resident undertook the journey to 'make a difference'.

Life in England

Sophia Charlotte Louisa Adams was born on 21 March 1832, daughter of wealthy Anglican parents James Smith Adams, an indigo manufacturer, and his third wife Elizabeth Emma, née McTaggart. There is some question as to where she was born as the census entries are inconsistent. The family was certainly living at Tower House in Woodchester at the time; James Smith Adams is recorded in a directory from 1830 and her siblings Elizabeth Emma and Charles John McTaggart were both baptised on 14 July of that year in the old St Mary's Church. However, Sophia may have been born in Cheltenham as that is the other option from the census and she was certainly baptised at St Mary's Church in the town on 25 November 1833 as Sophia Charlotte Laura (according to the register) with the abode given as 'Cheltenham of Woodchester Gloucestershire'. She was brought up at Tower House and educated both at home and at school. In 1851 or 52, she converted to Catholicism along with her older sister Cecelia Eliza, despite their father's disapproval, and in 1856 entered the Dominican convent at Stone, Staffordshire. She was professed on 26 May 1857, taking the religious name of Rose Columba. From 1866 to 1883 she was in charge of St Mary's convent (later priory) at St Mary's Church, Torquay.

Her mother died on 23 December 1843 and her father on 19 March 1860. Both are buried in the old churchyard at Woodchester. Her half-sisters Helen Emma (now McTaggart, as she married her step mother's half-brother!) and Harriet Jane (widow of George Matthew(s) a London merchant) continued to live at Tower House for many years. Cecelia Eliza died in London in 1902, a recluse allowing virtually no one into the house.



Life in Australia

Elizabeth Baker and her mother Isabella (also Catholic converts) established Adelaide's first Catholic Hospital in Strangways Terrace and managed it and its successful school of nursing. They requested, via Bishop Christopher Reynolds (later to become the first Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide), the help of Dominican sisters to nurse the sick in Adelaide. As a result, Mother Rose Columba led a group of six professed sisters and two postulants leaving Tilbury in July 1883 in the Orient.

Mother Rose Columba expected that they would care for women but realised on arrival that they were to nurse men as well, which their order's constitution did not allow. It was perhaps unfortunate that this had not been recognised by either side before they set out. The dilemma was resolved by temporarily managing the hospital and opening a select school at Strangways Terrace, later in Molesworth Street, North Adelaide, to teach Catholic, Protestant and Jewish pupils. Unfortunately, this did nothing to overcome the problem of nursing the sick. The school still exists today as St Dominic's Priory College, an independent girls' school on the same site.

Building a Chapel

In 1887 many of the sisters' dowries were forwarded from England, and Mother Rose Columba decided that they would be used to build an appropriate chapel for the Molesworth Street convent. She designed the building and its furnishings but died before its completion. Her own substantial dowry of £6250, was used to complete the chapel of the Holy Spirit, one of the best examples of Gothic architecture in Adelaide.

Mother Rose Columba died from kidney failure on 30 December 1891 at the convent and was buried in West Terrace cemetery, Adelaide.



Woodchester Parish Council

What do you think needs changing in Woodchester?

Do we need more outdoor facilities for young people? Should we improve support for older people? Do we need to make our roads safer, do more to help local business thrive, encourage green strategies, or just stop people littering?

With local elections coming up on 6th May, Woodchester Parish Council is looking for new councillors to help serve their community and make a difference to everyone in the village.

Our main responsibility is to provide effective and accountable local government for Woodchester residents, which includes things such as:

- allocating our share of local council tax to schemes to improve the environment and facilities in the village
- managing Parish resources (such as bus shelters, grit bins, notice boards and dog bins)
- working with statutory authorities on issues such as planning and highways matters
- ensuring that plans for housing, roads, transport and employment are designed to meet local needs
- generally supporting the local community.

Anyone who has lived or worked in Woodchester for the last 12 months can stand for election. If elected you are required to attend Parish Council meetings, which are held six times a year and last about two hours. If you wish you can also get involved in special interest sub-committees, such as planning, road safety or rights of way. "By standing as a Parish Councillor you are providing a vital service to your local community and can really make a difference in your village" commented Parish Council Chairman, Gervase Hamilton.

Further detail about the roles and responsibilities of Parish councillors can be found on the National Association of Local Councils website at www.nalc.gov.uk. Serving Parish Councillors would also be happy to talk about what it means to be a parish councillor and what you can achieve. Contact the Parish clerk at woodchesterparish@gmail.com.

St Marys leads local call to reflect on Covid with planting of 'remembering' flowerbed

By Rev Sarah Haslam, Assistant Curate of St Mary's Woodchester.

On Tuesday March 23rd it will be one year on from England's first lockdown day - March 23 2020 – which will be marked by many as a National Day of Reflection, where we mourn for those who died during coronavirus lockdown.

As early as September last year, the end-of-life charity Marie Curie called for there to be a national day of mourning for those who died during coronavirus pandemic. Then last month Dame Esther Rantzen joined this call. In her Channel 5 documentary "Living with Grief" she met people who had lost loved ones to the virus and as The Sun newspaper reported, she believes a new Bank Holiday should be declared to remember all the victims of the Coronavirus pandemic.

So what should we, as a community do? This was the question that many in the church of St Mary's Woodchester have been reflecting on over recent months.

The conclusion we have come to is 'to remember' – which we will do symbolically through the unveiling of a large new area of planting along the inside of the churchyard boundary with Southfield Road.

The lavender 'Remembering' bed will be a joint work, with members of the church and Woodchester C of E Endowed Primary School planting the lavender on behalf of the wider community.

English lavender has been chosen because of its status as a hardy native plant, loved by bees, visually stunning and widely known for its fragrance and associated soothing and healing properties.

Headteacher, Mrs Pennington, remarked that, 'Being part of the village and church community is such a special part of our school life and the children, staff and governors are delighted to share in this act of remembrance.'

There will also be a short service at 11.45am on 23 March via zoom, at which names of any loved ones remembered in the flowerbed may be read out.

The landscape of our lives has been irrevocably changed since the arrival of COVID, and our faith calls us to remember, lament, and look forward with hope.

While common sense perhaps dictates that an act of remembering is something we should not do alone, it is our faith in Jesus that absolutely teaches us to reach out to others, to come together and do this collectively – as one community.

It is hoped that not just regular churchgoers but the toddler group, those who benefit from Lunch with Friends, school-run parents, walkers and visitors to the area alike will enjoy the lavender bed, see it change with the seasons and join the church in reflecting on the landscape that we live in.

One year on, and we look around and see signs not just of life but of growth and of beauty that perhaps we hadn't noticed before the pandemic, of experiences to be celebrated and of positive changes to embrace. That is why it is so important to remember all that we have been through, and also to look forward to the new life that is emerging – as we do – from this latest period of lockdown.

Should you wish to pledge a donation towards the cost of a lavender plant in memory of a loved one, for someone you have loved to be remembered by name at the service, or simply for more information about the service at 11.45am on 23 March, please contact Rev Sarah Haslam at mrssarahhaslam@gmail.com

St Loes, Seys and Bridges

These names will ring a bell if you were at school in Woodchester: these are the two educational charities whose founders endowed money to provide a means of equipping the local children and young people to earn their living.

St Loes dates back to 1697 when Nathaniel Cambridge left a sum £1000 in trust to convert St Loes House into a master's residence where boys between the ages of 6-16 were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic. A further bequest was left to the school by John Yeats in 1698 and again in 1722 by Richard Cambridge who bequeathed £100.

Elizabeth Seys left £400 in 1705 for the education of girls and Robert Bridges bequeathed £100 for apprenticeships for boys in 1722.

These various endowments have developed over time into two registered charities which both make grants from investment income. The respective trustees of the two charities have recently decided to merge into a single charity which will be known as the St Loes, Seys & Bridges Foundation under the existing St Loes registration. The trustees of the Seys & Bridges Educational Foundation have transferred the assets over and closed the charity.

The charity will continue to make grants to young people in both Amberley and Woodchester and to the primary schools in both villages. In a future issue of Woodchester Word, we will explain more about the grants we make and how to apply. The Trustees wish to make this new old charity fit for the next three hundred years. For more information at this stage please contact George Bastin, Goring House, Selsley Road, North Woodchester, GL5 5NG

Priory Church of the Assumption, South Woodchester

We were all very upset that our school did not reopen last Sept; it had been an integral part of our parish life since it was built by the Dominicans in 1884, with Peter Falconer's extension of 1963 when pupil numbers increased. Sadly they decreased after the prolonged period of ill-health suffered by the headmistress. The remaining pupils found places elsewhere. Jo Heffernan, who sadly died last year, was a pupil there, along with her sister. Jo was our church Sacristan for many years and a very talented flower arranger. Known to many in Nailsworth too she is sorely missed.

There is a hope that a teaching order of nuns or a convent may wish to relocate to St. Mary's Hill House, the former presbytery, in South Woodchester. I have been writing to two orders to ask if they might be interested in relocating to an area of outstanding natural beauty and giving details of the accommodation and land available. This would be an exciting project for those with vision – sustainable land use, education and training!

Jenny Bailey

Parish Council News

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.

Change of Clerk in the Parish

Ann Bijkerk stepped down from her role as Clerk to the Parish in early January. Ann, who will be well known to many of you, has been an invaluable member of the Parish team for around nine years. As a teacher in the past, Ann has moved to a role in a local primary school. She leaves the Parish in a very well organised state!

We welcome Sylvia May to the role. Sylvia has lived in the Parish for 19 years and has two children who went to Woodchester School. Sylvia can be contacted on 07863 098710 or at woodchesterparish@gmail.com

Work to the Cycle Path

Unfortunately, during some planned resurfacing work to the footbridge between Pauls Rise and Birds Crossing, the contractors discovered that the substantial 'bearers' were badly rotten in places. The Parish Council has been advised that the path will not be safe for public use until they had been replaced, which will probably be in late March or early April. Unfortunately, this means that this section of the 'cycle path' will remain closed for the time being. We will update the Woodchester Website and Facebook page as soon as we have further information.

Parking in the village

Just a polite request that when parking in the village you avoid parking too close to road junctions. The highway code states that drivers should not park 'opposite or within 10 meters (32 feet) of a junction' (Rule 243) this is because doing so restricts visibility and space on the road. The Parish Council have developed a flyer which can be placed under the windscreens of repeat offenders. For copies, please get in touch with the Clerk at woodchesterparish@gmail.com.

Annual Litter Pick

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 the Parish council have taken the decision to again cancel the annual litter pick. We are particularly grateful therefore to those members of the community who continue to pick up litter in our village... We know there is a small army of you! If anyone would like to join them, we have litter pickers available to borrow for use in the parish. Please get in touch with the Clerk at woodchesterparish@gmail.com for further information.

Bus stop and Flooding at Rooksmoor

We are aware that some residents are unhappy about the removal of the bus stop outside the Rooksmoor development on A46. The Parish Council are awaiting a visit from Gloucestershire CC's Road Safety officer to advise on a suitable location for a new bus stop. We also continue to push Gloucestershire County Council to deal with the flooding problems on the A46 outside The Old Fleece.



Reminder...the village has both a website and Facebook page with information posted about local issues and the Woodchester Word will be available on the website too.
www.woodchesterparish.org.uk



Calling all Golfers

Having promised myself that I would have a go at golf when I retired, last summer I booked some lessons. I soon learned that if the ball goes right it's a slice, if it goes left it's a hook, and if it goes straight it's a miracle. After six lessons I bought some second-hand clubs, and ventured out onto Minchinhampton Old Course, where I discovered that it's an easy game, it's just really hard to play. The first time out on the course was humiliating, and I couldn't wait to do it again. I tried spending hours on the practice range, but whoever said "practice makes perfect" obviously never played golf. But within weeks I had the bug and was playing twice a week. I realised that no matter how badly you play, it is always possible to get worse. I bought a new driver and a new putter, both of which added around six shots to my usual score. But a lovely new bag definitely improved my game. Then Lockdown 3, and the crazy situation where I can go for a walk with a friend on the common, but not by myself if I take my sticks and a ball! Oh well, hopefully we will be back out there soon, hacking around to our hearts content.

I was talking about this to a friend in the village recently, who then owned up that he plays as well. And it got me wondering how many others there are in the village who play, even if their swing, like mine, looks like they are fighting off a swarm of bees.

So, if you play regularly or occasionally, and fancy meeting some like-minded locals who might enjoy some company to mitigate the disappointment and bad arithmetic of their next game, let me know and we can think about swapping numbers and maybe forming an informal village golf group. You can call or text me on 07484 228024 or email me at iaindunbar29@gmail.com. And remember, even the great Gary Player said, "golf is a puzzle without an answer".

Iain Dunbar

County Councillor's Report

Steve Robinson

As your County Councillor for the last 4 years I have attended the majority of Parish Council meetings and regularly delivered reports. I have also worked closely with the Clerk and Councillors to make small improvements around the village. Each County Councillor as a small Highways and Community budget to spend in his/her division each year. My division includes Amberley, Horsley, Kings Stanley, Nailsworth, Woodchester and Selsley, so funds do not go far. I am pleased to have been able to fund the resurfacing of some small sections of highway (with plenty more to do), new signage, the cutting back of overhanging shrubs etc. Much of the work has been achieved working in conjunction with the Parish Council.

During the last 4 years I have been proactive in persuading GCC to resurface the A46 and I was pleased for it to be included in this year's budget. Another valuable scheme was getting GCC, SDC and others to work together to resurface the cycle track. This has proved to be of great benefit to all ages in the community. The two small remaining sections will be completed as soon as the temporary fence at the new Rooksmoor apartments is removed.

Under my Community Budget I was able to help towards funding the outside areas at the Primary School and the Play Group.

I am pleased to say that Selsley Road, from the A46 up to the common, will be completely resurfaced in the next financial year. I have also requested that St Mary's Hill and Church Road be considered for resurfacing as they are both in a poor state. From my highways money I would like to have the slopes on the cycle track, which cross The Priory drive, resurfaced in the next financial year.

As your County Councillor I pride myself on being approachable and responding to the concerns of residents as quickly as possible. If anyone has any concerns please contact me by email or phone.

steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk
01453 834270



ELECTIONS JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Have you ever considered working at one of our Polling Stations?

We are looking to recruit motivated staff to fill a number of important paid roles on election day.

On Thursday May 6th 2021 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, County, District and Parish Council elections will be taking place.

Planning is already underway and we would like to reassure you that our highest priority is the safety of our staff and our electorate. We will be adhering to Government Guidelines, so our Polling Station may look a bit different. And in order to deliver this plan, we will need extra staff at many of our Polling Stations.

These are paid roles across the whole of the Stroud District. And the Elections Team are keen to hear from you.

More information about the role and how to apply can be found here: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections/elections-job-opportunities>

Applicants must be over 18, eligible to work in the UK and not affiliated to any political party.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



In order to vote in the upcoming Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, County, District and Parish Council elections taking place on May 6th 2021 you must be registered on the Electoral Roll.

Planning is already underway and we would like to reassure you that our highest priority is the safety of our staff and our electorate. We will be adhering to Government Guidelines, so your Polling Station may look a bit different, please help us to help you keep safe by following the guidelines.

To register to vote, please go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. You will need your date of birth and national insurance number and registering only takes a few minutes.

If you are not able to cast your ballot at a polling station or would prefer not to vote in person you can apply for an "Absent Vote".

Stroud District Council Elections web page has all the information you need:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/elections/how-do-i-vote>

From here you can find out all about how to vote including:

Check if you are registered by using a quick link.

Register to vote deadline - Midnight, Monday 19 April 2021

Voting by Post –request or download an application form

Postal vote deadline - 5pm, Tuesday 20 April 2021

We must receive your application by post or email by 5pm on Tuesday 20 April to ensure you are able to vote by post. To vote by post, you must complete an application form which can be found below.

Voting by Proxy – request or download an application form

Proxy vote deadline - 5pm, Tuesday 27 April 2021

We must receive your application by post or email by 5pm on Tuesday 27 April to ensure you are able to vote by proxy.



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CASH PURCHASE

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OR EMAIL
INFO@MOUSEABOUTTOWN.CO.UK

I have long wanted to lead a more sustainable lifestyle, where my children can understand how they can help make a difference to current global environmental issues. To achieve that goal, I am looking to build a completely sustainable, zero carbon home. The surrounding land would be dedicated to supporting British wildlife conservation to create new and diverse wildlife rich habitats. The project would also help to grow my business, "From The Ground." This is a fledgling project designed to encourage more environmental learning uptake in schools. Ultimately, I want to teach others about how they can reduce their environmental footprint and in so doing encourage them to live in a more sustainable way.



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FROM APRIL
12TH FOR FOOD
& DRINK ON THE
TERRACE AND IN
THE COVERED
MARQUEE



FULLY OPEN
INSIDE AND
OUT FROM
MAY 17TH!



WE CAN'T WAIT
TO HAVE YOU
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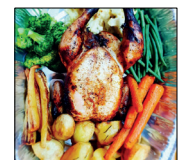
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Thank you to everyone who donated to the sponsored litter pick for Crisis at Christmas. **Together we raised an amazing £832 and shifted lots of litter!**

The sponsored litter pick is back this year, and Helen Latham and I are raising money for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. GWT do fantastic work to protect and develop natural spaces for wildlife here in Gloucestershire. Helen and I plan to do at least 50 hours of litter picking to raise money to support their work.

If you'd like to support us, please scan this QR code (with the camera on your smart phone) to get to our just giving page (address below) or there is a box for donations in the village shop. Thank you. Sylvia May.



www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sylvia-may1



Photo by Ricardo Arce on Unsplash

Woodchester Mountain Bike Trail.

The Mountain Bike Trail adjacent to the Stroud to Nailsworth cycle path has proved very popular since it was installed by Woodchester Parish Council. Although the Parish Council pays for certain maintenance tasks and an annual safety inspection, it is down to a small team of volunteers to carry out weekly inspections of the track, and to meet a couple of times a year to keep the track clear and safe. We would welcome some more volunteers to help out the team. If you would like to help keep this much used facility open and safe, please contact Cllr Iain Dunbar at iaindunbar29@gmail.com.

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

County Councillor:

Steve Robinson,

T: 01453 834270

E: steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Village Hall:

Mrs. Kath Gay,

T: 01453 873348

E: wvh888@btinternet.com

Parish Council:

Sylvia May,

T: 01453 873438

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

Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at woodchesterword@gmail.com
Advertising: Ann Bijkerk. Design: Plus One Design.
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Copy deadline for next issue: June 30th 2021