

THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 75, Winter 2021

We wish
you a
happy
Christmas

Photo by Laura Nyhuis on Unsplash

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I wish firstly to thank all those who have attended our last two Parish Council meetings. It really helps us understand some of your concerns and enables us to help you. It also makes our meetings more enjoyable.



Many of you have asked us to carry out actions that are beyond our remit. We can control only the spending of our precept money. We use that to manage and enhance our village but we are very much restricted in

what we can do by Government Policies and rules that we have to adhere to.

For example we can encourage the reduction of speed and sensible/considerate parking by requesting that this occurs. Enforcement is by the Police and signage is controlled by Gloucestershire Highways who have little money and are subject to stringent and restrictive laws. This is frustrating for us all, as too often their actions are reactive not proactive.

All our news is in the bulletin for you to read and of course, as usual, on our website, including the detailed minutes from our meetings.

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A letter from the chairman continued.

A major requirement in our Parish is more volunteers. With Covid restricting interaction between folk and the shortage of care workers our elderly and infirm are in need of support. If you feel you can offer any time or support please contact our Clerk.

You can see from our minutes that we are supporting the Climate Emergency action. I do not have to say how important this is. We can all do our bit by reducing our individual carbon footprint and making sure our gardens and open spaces are insect and wildlife friendly. I find it very frustrating trying to shop and avoid plastic and buy British. However, I am sure the more we, the public, demand local produce and non plastic wrapped goods the quicker the suppliers will follow our demands.

If any of you, young or old, would like to bring to our next meeting ideas for our Parish to adopt that will help reduce wastage and our carbon footprint then please do come along.

Finally I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. Do not forget to join our Carols on the Green for a hearty singsong and sharing of Christmas love.

Cheers, Peter Lead

Dog show

The annual produce show couldn't take place this year because of the problems with the pandemic but an afternoon on the church green was enjoyed by all in September.

Activities included children's circus games, tea and refreshments provided by the members of St. Mary's Church and a dog show.



Smart Meters

citizens
advice

Stroud
& Cotswold
Districts

Smart Meters are being talked about a great deal these days and many people are having telephone calls to encourage them to have one in place of their old meters.

If you would like to know more about smart meters and the in-home display unit and find out what assistance they might be – perhaps as a way to help monitor your use of electricity and gas and possibly save you some money – then contact Citizens Advice on Freephone **0808 800 0510 / 0808 800 0511**.

As well as providing smart meter information, we can also discuss any other energy questions or concerns you may have. Information is also available on our website – www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Please note that eligibility of smart meters may vary and savings require consumer action.

North Woodchester Shop and Post Office

We look forward to seeing you in the shop and hope to solve some of your Christmas shopping needs.

Once again we are able to offer a full range of Noel Tatt Christmas Cards including many Charity Cards. We also have a range of FSC sourced, eco friendly, fully recyclable gift wrap, bags and tape, together with suitable post and packing materials.

Our Advent Calendars this year include traditional, vegan, gluten and dairy free and for the first time Yogi and Pukka Teas Advent Calendars, they would make a lovely pre Christmas gift!

We have a choice of Faith in Nature toiletries gift packs which are eco and skin friendly with no SLS or Parabens, Shampoos, Conditioners, Body Wash, Hand Creams and Soaps. There is also a lovely range of Faith in Nature Dog Shampoos for the hound in your life.

Dangerfield's are supplying their delicious Bread, Christmas Cakes and Mince Pies and we have a choice of cake boards and cake frills to display them. You can also be Environmentally Friendly by reducing your food miles with our local products including Woodchester Wine, Woodchester Honey, Stroud Brewery Beers not forgetting Woodchester Meats.

Miss Daisy is again offering vegan, gluten and sugar free Christmas Puddings to order (by 7th December) and her delicious Gluten Free Brownies you really don't have to be gluten free to love these, they are delicious.



In the Post Office

Christmas Stamps are now available together with details of the latest recommended posting dates. Several recommended dates have already been brought forward so the message from Royal Mail this year is to post early.

We also have our One4all Gift Cards that can be used in over 130 High Street Stores, Garden Centres and online so a great way to send a gift.

The Santa Post box is in place. Letters should include the writers name and address, be addressed to Santa at Santas Grotto, Reindeerland XM4 5HQ and placed in the box by Friday 10th December so that Santa has time to reply. Don't forget to put a stamp on the envelope.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

Those of you who live in the village will have noticed that during the summer holiday we had the builders in!

Work to improve the school premises began in April as the new entrance was built. No sooner had the children left for the summer holiday than work began on creating larger and more suitable learning spaces within the existing school. This created an enormous amount of dust and hard work but we were able to begin the new academic year with a lovely new library and extra learning spaces for the children. The children were very excited to start using these new spaces and the School Council are currently considering names for these rooms. As we are a voluntary aided school, the governing body have to contribute 10% of the cost. This is an enormous undertaking and more details can be found on our fundraising page of our website: <http://woodchesterprimary.co.uk/fundraising/fundraising.html>

We were delighted to welcome our new Reception children in September. They have settled in well and have been looked after by their Year 6 buddies. The Year 6 children not only make sure our youngest children feel welcomed but also love the responsibility of being a buddy and take great pride in this role. Also, in September, Year 6 children travelled to Viney Hill Christian Adventure Centre for their residential visit. Being away from home brings its own challenges alongside negotiating the exciting activities

that were on offer such as mountain biking and climbing. The children enjoyed this new experience. The weather was amazing and we were blessed to be in the heart of the Forest of Dean, making many new memories and building strong friendships along the way.

Love, Learn and Flourish Together is our school motto, and is one which recognises that working together makes us stronger and helps us to achieve more. I have just received certificates for all children who took part in the Young Leaders' initiative during the last nine months. I am very proud of everything they have achieved and the positive difference they have made to the lives of others whether that be donating books to children in a school in the Gambia, creating a lavender bed in the church yard, growing our kindness tress by recognising acts of kindness, creating cards for 'Friends who Lunch' or organising a collection of good quality clothes for a local charity 'Bundles for All'.

As we enter the season of Advent, we look forward to Christmas, and send prayers of peace and love to everyone at this very special time.

Mrs Lynn Pennington
Headteacher



Guitar lessons in the new school library



Main entrance to the school



New entrance area



Inside the new intervention room

County Councillor's Report

Highways

Just like residents, I was very disappointed when the total resurfacing of Selsley Road was 'pulled' at the last minute. This was due to the weight of the machinery and the weight limit on the bridge. The work will now take place in the near future when Highways has worked out a plan which will exclude using the bridge.

Surface improvements funded by my Local Highways Budget are to take place at the junction of Church Road and Southfield Road, and also on St Mary's Hill. The cost of these two resurfacing improvements is £11,000 – funds don't go very far!

The weed encroachment on the pavement on the A46 from Culver Hill to Inchbrook will be scraped back, allowing two people to walk side by side.

Gigaclear

The rollout of the fast broadband has proved to be very problematic throughout the district. This has not been helped by the Complete Utilities, the main sub-contractor for rural areas, going into liquidation. Hopefully a new sub-contractor will be found so that work can continue without any further delay.

Drains/Gullies

This time of the year is particularly difficult with leaves blocking drains. I would ask residents if they could clear the leaves from the top of the drains if they are able and it is safe to do so.

I would like to wish all residents a very joyful Christmas and a peaceful New 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.robison@gloucestershire.gov.uk
01453 834270

Lunch with Friends

The LWF monthly lunches for our village seniors have been a regular feature of St.

Mary's Church for several years. Of course, the covid pandemic halted the monthly lunches for 18 months but now they are back with a bang, (crackers?!), organised by a team of members of the church and friends. The Christmas lunch always receives an early visit from Father Christmas and he distributes gifts to all those at the lunch. The children from the school come to sing carols and the event is a very happy occasion, given that many of the senior members of our village don't have the opportunity to get together so very often. The picture below was taken at the 2017 Christmas lunch.



Woodchester Village Hall

We are so fortunate to have the village hall in our village.

It is a venue used by a wide variety of groups and individuals from dancing to W.I.; from art groups to Parish Council meetings; from craft events to political (in all senses of the word) meetings. Since the recovery of near-normality after the pandemic hit us and when everything was in lockdown, the regular users are back although some groups have experienced a slow return to their activities. Most regular bookings are on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays which means that most Thursdays and Fridays, as well as the weekends are available for villagers (and people not living in Woodchester too) to book and use the hall. It is an exceptionally well maintained and well resourced facility, with an excellent kitchen, and plenty of tables and chairs appropriate for all types of events – let's use it to its full potential. Rental for regular users+ is £6.50 an hour, increasing to £7.00 an hour in April or £10.50 an hour, increasing in April to £11.50, (both increases required to help cover the increased gas and electricity charges.)

Booking Secretary is Rod on **872317** or **0777 565 2379**.



Woodchester Historical Society

The society meets approximately monthly in the Church or the Church Undercroft. The programme of meetings meet all sorts of historical interests, but usually on a local to Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire or Cotswolds locality. Membership is £2 per year and the cost of each meeting is £2 – excellent value!

The coming programme for 2022 includes a talk on the historic kitchen of Windsor Castle, Jennifer Tann on "Wool and Water – the Gloucestershire Woollen Industry in the Industrial Revolution," a guided walk round Malmesbury, Nick Herbert on the medieval towns of Gloucestershire, a guided walk along Woodchester's old tracks and Chas Townley on Margaret Hills – "From Suffrage to Citizenship."

Details of the Historical Society are always on the Woodchester website.

Girlguiding Woodchester

Woodchester Brownies and Guides have re-commenced face to face weekly meetings, with lots of Covid safety measures in place.

Girls are once again enjoying playing games, learning new skills, trying new activities and working towards badges. Early in November the Brownies and Guides met together for a firework and bonfire theme night, which included pipe cleaner crafts.

Currently both Brownies and Guides are working on a skills badge, called "Influence". This is encouraging them to think about the issues the girls care about and how they can communicate their ideas to the wider community.

In response to an early Covid safety measure preventing singing, Brownies and Guides are learning to use sign language to sign Brownie Bells and Taps (traditional end of meeting songs).

We are always willing to accept new members and girls aged between 7 and 9 (Brownies) and 10 and 13 (Guides) are very welcome to join us. We'd also like to hear from any adults who may be interested in helping. Please email: woodchesterbrowniesandguides@gmail.com or 'phone Jackie on **01453 821258**.

We've Met Again - in the Village Hall

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

We have been delighted to resume face-to-face meetings, starting with our traditional fish and chip supper in August.

Members particularly enjoyed a lively and inspiring talk by Chris Evans from the Butterfly Garden project at Cheltenham. 40 minutes flew by as he spoke about the birth of the project and its extraordinary growth to provide a range of experiences and training from woodwork to cooking to performance and music to recycling. We were particularly impressed by his many-coloured knitted coat which made our efforts with Easter wreaths look insubstantial.

We expect to keep to our programme from now on and are very much looking forward to finishing the year with our Christmas party, another chance to enjoy food together. Plans for next year's programme which should include some music, a craft session and talks on a local charity and on Woodchester Park, are well underway and we hope to have copies in the post office by January. We may even finally complete our Woodchester banner, originally planned in response to centenary celebrations in 2019!

Our craft and chat sessions in the village hall, normally on the first Thursday of the month between 2 and 4, are open to non-members and you are very welcome to join us for a small charge. As you would expect from the WI, refreshments are an essential part of the afternoon. A few of us responded to the WI Green Week focus by combining a cycle-track

walk with a litter pick, accumulating a large sack of rubbish between Paul's Rise and the A46 layby. In January we hope to venture as far as Tetbury to sample their footpaths and café opportunities, without our litter-picking sticks this time.

Occasional activities are shared with our linked Wis, Minchinhampton and Nailsworth. On December 2nd we are holding a carol concert for our group at St Mary's and are looking forward to an early Christmas celebration of carols, poems and readings, followed, of course, by some home-baked refreshments.

If you would like to try us out, come along to a meeting (you can attend three as a guest before committing yourself) or phone the Secretary, Sally, (**873003**) or the President, Gail (**873692**), for a chat. We know that the WI has a reputation for being for "old" ladies, meaning younger villagers give us a wide berth! It would be lovely to attract a wider range of members, bringing their own ideas and interests and keeping the group moving forward. We are very keen to hear suggestions for new groups we might offer or ideas for a more varied programme. Unlike some groups, we meet in the evening with most meetings on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 in Woodchester Village Hall.

Woodchester Open Gardens 2022

Is your garden beautiful, colourful, wildlife friendly or just quirky and interesting?



Would you like to throw it open to your Woodchester neighbours and share your enthusiasm? The Village Events committee is considering holding an open gardens event in early July 2022. We are considering doing this in combination with a Made in Woodchester Craft event?

We did this in 2015 and 2017 when we had up to 16 gardens open around the village. It was very enjoyable and raised some useful funds for local charities. We do need a good variety of size and type of gardens in different locations around the village. If you would be willing to open your garden and to help plan and organise this event, please drop an email to Katharine McNealey at Kathinwoodchester@gmail.com

News from Longfield

The following are events organised by Longfield Hospice:

Longfield Reindeer Romp 2021!

We're excited to announce that our fabulous festive Reindeer Romp is back! Join us for a festive 5k walk, jog or run through Stratford Park, Stroud on Sunday 12th December at 10am. Pop on your free antlers and join us with your friends, family and even your dog and enjoy our Christmassy challenge to raise funds and help us support our patients and their families? To find out more please visit <https://www.longfield.org.uk/event/reindeer-romp>

Light up Life Celebrations

Light up a Life is an opportunity to remember and celebrate family and friends who are no longer with us.

The Light up a Life Appeal culminates with two 'celebrations' with reading of remembrance, poems and uplifting music.

Join one of our Light up a Life Celebration being held at:

Friday 3rd December at Gloucester Cathedral which will have taken place by the time this edition is in your hands.

Friday 17th December at Minchinhampton Parish Church

For more information about how to dedicate a star to someone special and to book your place at our celebration events please visit : <https://www.longfield.org.uk/light-up-a-life/>

Christmas Tree Recycling Campaign

Longfield Community Hospice in Minchinhampton has launched its annual Christmas Tree Recycling Campaign, where, for a donation, local volunteers will pick up your tree at the end of the festive season and take it to be recycled.

To book your Real Christmas Tree for collection please visit www.just-helping.org.uk/register-tree and make a suggested donation of £10 or more. Registration will close on Monday 3rd January 2022. We will collect between the 9th – 11th January 2022 from households across Stroud District.

PARISH bulletin



Selsley Road Resurfacing

We were all very disappointed when the long-planned resurfacing of Selsley Road was cancelled at the last minute when GCC realised that weight limit on the bridge on Selsley Road would not support the weight of the heavy plant required to carry out the resurfacing. Because there is nowhere for these large vehicles to turn around on Selsley Road, a one-way system was planned, with vehicles entering at the bottom of Selsley Road and exiting at the top, so the lack of access from the A46 precluded the work from being carried out. District Cllr Steve Robinson reported to the recent Parish Council Meeting that he is continuing to put pressure on Gloucestershire Highways department to carry out the work as promised but avoiding the weak bridge at the bottom of the hill. This is ongoing.....

Dogs on the Cycle Path

The cycle path is subject to a Public Space Protection Order made by Stroud District Council, requiring dogs to be under control and on a lead at all times. The Dog Wardens did put some stickers on gates and access points this summer to remind dog owners of this responsibility. Maybe proper signage is required on the cycle path. What do you think?

Hedges

The Park Field hedge overgrowing the pavement on lower Selsley Road is a perennial problem, and the owners are very good about getting the hedge cut at the end of the summer. It is an offense under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 to damage the nest of any wild bird and as sparrows nest in that hedge, it cannot be cut between March and August.

A resident recently reported concerns about overgrown hedges along Southfield Road. The site was inspected by GCC Highways and "no defect(s), in line with the Gloucestershire County Council Highways Safety Inspection Policy, were identified".

If you have a hedge that overgrows the pavement outside your house, it is a legal requirement that you must keep your hedges cut back off footpaths.

Crime

According to the Crime Data Map, Gloucestershire as a county is ranked in the top five safest places to live in the UK. You can find out more about specific areas at <https://crimerate.co.uk/>. 29 crimes have been reported in Woodchester so far this year, the same number as last year, with no residential burglaries.

If you have a concern about criminal activity of any sort in Woodchester, you can report it to our local Neighbourhood Policing Team for Nailsworth, Woodchester and Horsley.

PCSO Steve Phillipson (Stephen.Phillipson@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk) and PC Katie Finch (Katie.Finch@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk). Or you can use the Gloucestershire Police website at <https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/>. Public information about crime in our area is also available via <https://www.police.uk/pu/yourarea/gloucestershire-constabulary/nailsworth/>.

Report Scammers!

We all receive numerous scam communications every day. Reporting allows national law enforcement and telecoms companies to take down telephone numbers and email domains being used to target people. You can help stop scammers by reporting them.

Our local PCSO tells us how to do this:

- To report a scam text, forward the text message to 7726.
- To report a phishing email, forward the email to report@phishing.gov.uk.
- Report a fraudulent phone call attempt at www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing.

Photo by Pickawood on Unsplash



You Asked, We Did....

At a recent village event, we asked local residents what they wanted the Parish Council to sort out. As a result, we have actioned the following:

- The lidless rubbish bin outside the school, which was the subject of regular seagull vandalism, has been replaced with a new lidded bin.
- The faded zig-zag lines outside the school have been repainted.
- Overgrowth along the A46 railings at the bottom of Selsley Road, which was negatively affecting sightlines for vehicles exiting Selsley Road, has been cut back by our Parish contractor, improving the safety of this junction.
- The Parish Council is continuing to progress the possibility of creating a play area in Woodchester, something which is regularly requested by parents in the Parish. Two possible sites have been identified, with a meeting planned with GCC regarding one of these sites in early December. Some National Lottery funding has already been successfully raised by the Council to kick off the project.
- Had a path created alongside the A46 opposite Selsley Road, to make access easier to the southbound bus stop.
- Grit bins have been refilled for the winter.

Rooksmoor Hill

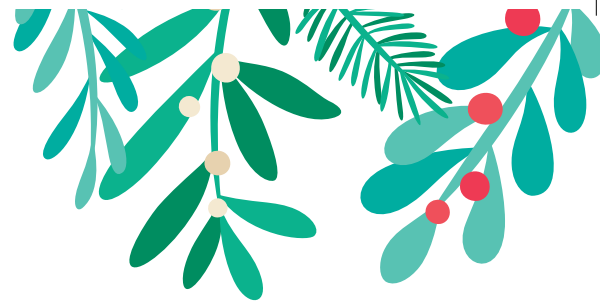
Discussion continues with GCC Highways and Rooksmoor Parish Council about vehicular use of Rooksmoor Hill, and the danger this poses to pedestrians using this steep, narrow roadway. Local residents have carried out very helpful traffic and pedestrian surveys which have been shared with GCC. We are awaiting the date of the next meeting with the Highways Team to discuss possible solutions.

Village Traffic

We have all noticed the increasing amount of traffic in the village. Traffic volumes have increased nationally by 42 % in the last 25 years and this increase is projected to continue. There is little the Parish Council can do about traffic volumes other than encourage people to use different forms of transport.



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



Woodchester Mountain Bike Trail.

In the last few weeks, the outer perimeter overgrowth has been cut back from the cycle path, the tracksides have been cut back and tidied, and volunteers have constructed a new berm and overflow pipe which we hope will contain the seasonal pond created by spring water.

Gloucestershire “20 is plenty” scheme

Encouraged by the fact that neighbouring Oxfordshire County Council have just approved a similar county-wide scheme, Woodchester Parish Council continues to support this and is encouraging extensive lobbying of County Councillors.

Postbox at Rooksmoor

The Post Office removed the post box at Rooksmoor Mills at the start of the development work. In spite of repeated representation by the Parish Council, they have declined to re-instate the box because there is “no longer a place for the post van to safely stop”. The Parish Council has pointed out that the new bus stop layby is a safe place to stop and are continuing to make representation to try to get the post box re-instated.

Southfield Road closure

Southfield Road will be closed from the corner of Station Road to Southfield Mill from 13th to about 20th December 2021 to repair a streetlight. Diversions will be in place.

Frogmarsh Bus Stop triangle

Thanks to Zillah Boulton and Brenda Highfield part of the triangle of land that sits between the A46 and the access to Frogmarsh has over the past 5 years been transformed into a wildflower meadow. Donations of plants, bulbs and money from residents and a local business helped to get it started. More recently seven volunteers from Stroud Valleys Project helped clear a larger area.

Whilst both Zilla and Brenda wish to continue to improve and care for this land they have no longer the muscle power and endless energy to do this by themselves. Their ambition is to plant more native wildflowers and to have a picnic bench that will look over the stream where otter and kingfish appear.

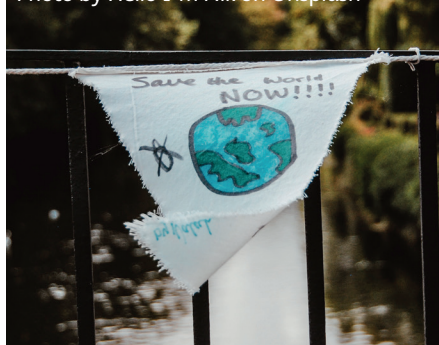
If you are able to offer help to Zilla and Brenda, or donate towards a suitable bench please contact our Clerk

Cotswold Warden

Julian Foxon, our local Cotswold Warden, reports that most of the activity over the summer has been keeping the footpaths clear of vegetation. Wardens have improved the steps from Woodchester Valley Village and improved the waymarking helping people to stay on the correct paths when accessing Woodchester Park from the Eastern end. Access here is still work in progress. They are also liaising with Woodchester Vineyard to improve waymarking at the top end below Bown Hill as they frequently get ‘lost’ people wandering across their land there. The boggy patch of land north of the Priory is being handled by the King Stanley Warden.

Across the South District of the Cotswolds (Hawkesbury up to Stroud) Cotswold Wardens are working to promote existing rights of way for disabled access (all forms of disability not just wheelchair use, so mental health, hearing impaired, learning difficulties etc). The idea is to increase awareness of existing routes. One route under consideration is the Boundary Court Footpath from Lager Lane to the Selsley Road and back. Julian is aware there is no effective parking at the northern end and will make that clear and that it wouldn’t be suitable for wheelchair users in its current state. He is in contact with the NT about this.

Photo by Hello I’m Nik on Unsplash



Woodchester recognises the Climate Emergency.

On 4th November Woodchester Parish Council joined over 300 local councils who have declared a climate emergency. In practice this means we recognise the impact of climate change on how we live, and that we need to ensure all our policies and actions contribute to creating a more climate friendly environment. We will be identifying ways in which we can do this as we revise our Parish Plan.

A46 Flooding

Torrential rain on October 30/31st led to more serious flooding on the A46 Outside The Fleece.

Following a site visit from Glos CC Highways it was advised that the drains are functioning, but they could not cope with the sheer volume of water which fell over a short period of time. The problem is made worse by run off containing grit and gravel down Selsley Road, Culver Hill and Rooksmoor Hill. All road drains are scheduled to be cleaned in the near future and in the meantime it would be helpful if residents who live near a drain help to keep it clear of fallen leaves, mud and other debris. A stick or a stiff broom should do the trick!

The run off from the building site at Rooksmoor Mills collects in two large storage tanks underneath the site. Water is held in these tanks and discharged into the storm water drains lower down the valley. So it is unlikely that the Rooksmoor development has had an impact on the A46 drainage.

Please remember if you do have to drive through floodwater, drive SLOWLY to avoid causing damage both to your own car and to nearby property.

How you pay tax to Woodchester Parish Council

Every year the Parish Council requests a ‘Precept’ from Stroud District Council. The Parish Council needs to agree a budget before it can set its Precept and both must be agreed by the full Parish Council, which has to explain and justify any increases in the precept. Once a Precept has been approved by the Parish Council, they inform SDC and it is then added to residents Council Tax bills. There is no cap on how much a Parish Council can levy via their precept, but you will be pleased to know that Woodchester is in the bottom four councils in the district in terms of how much we charge our residents to maintain Parish Services. In the next Parish Bulletin, we will explain how the precept is spent.

The Parish Bulletin section of the Woodchester Word is funded by Woodchester Parish Council.



Woodchester's part in the Death of Edward II

When Edward I of England died in 1307 he was succeeded by his fourth son Edward II. Edward senior had been a powerful and successful king, famous for being the 'Hammer of the Scots' and was also the conqueror of Wales. Edward junior was not made of the same stuff. His English army was pushed back in Scotland and decisively defeated at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 by Robert the Bruce. This reduced his authority and the support of his barons, and it was further eroded by his granting of great power to favourites. Ultimately his wife, Isabella, daughter of the king of France, also turned against him. In 1326 she returned from France with her lover, Roger Mortimer, and a small army to invade England. They were successful and Edward II was captured in November and died in Berkeley Castle in September the following year.

Woodchester, or at least our Lord of the Manor, John, 1st Baron Maltravers (or Mautravers) had an important part in Edward's death. He and his brother-in-law, Thomas 3rd Baron Berkeley were appointed keepers of the captured king when he was moved from the Earl of Lancaster's fortress, Kenilworth Castle, to Thomas' home at Berkeley, which was considered to be more secure. It is reported that 'while Thomas acted with humanity towards the prisoner, Maltravers treated him with much harshness' and further that it was Maltravers who ordered Edward's death.

John, 1st Baron Maltravers was an active and influential player in the politics of England at this time and there is quite an account of his life in "The Dictionary of National Biography". He was descended from Hugh Maltravers who held lands at Lytchett in Dorset in 1086 and presumably came to England with William the Conqueror. A John Maltravers held lands in Woodchester in 1199 and in 1262 John Maltravers (later Sir John) became the Lord of the Manor of Woodchester. He was Baron John's father. At some date in the last quarter of the 13th Century the Maltravers family gained the possession of 'Archards' (The Achers) in Rooksmoor, where their steward lived, and in 1300 the family also owned Dudbridge Mill.

Baron John was born around 1290. In 1314 he fought in Battle of Bannockburn and is believed to have been taken prisoner. He was clearly released by 1318 when he was chosen 'Knight of the Shire' for Dorset (effectively the MP for Dorset). By 1322 he joined the Earl of Lancaster who had taken up arms against the king. They were defeated in the battle of Boroughbridge in March 1326, which resulted in Lancaster being executed and Maltravers fleeing overseas. In October that year he returned to England with Queen Isabella and Roger Mortimer, which resulted in the death of Edward the following year.

Over the next few years Baron John served the new king (Edward III) but after Mortimer fell from grace and could no longer protect him Maltravers was condemned to death as a traitor for his part in the death of the Earl of Kent. Before he could be arrested, he fled to Europe where he became very wealthy, although he subsequently lost much of this wealth. In 1345 John met Edward III in Flanders and was pardoned and allowed to return to England and in 1352 he received his lands back. When he died in 1364 his lands in Woodchester passed to his wife and on her death to their granddaughter Eleanor, who had married the son of the 3rd Earl of Arundel. Their grandson became the 6th Earl of Arundel in 1415. Woodchester remained in the Arundel Family until 1558 or 1559.

Volunteering in the Village

Do you have a bit of time and energy to spare? Would you like to meet people and make new friends? Perhaps you have some special skills and experience you could share with the local community? There are lots of opportunities to volunteer in Woodchester, and with some local charities too.

Woodchester Village shop.

This is a community run shop and we always need people to volunteer behind the counter. The role includes serving customers, filling the shelves, sorting newspaper and magazine deliveries. It's a great way to get to know people in the village. You can sign up to volunteer and see our online rota on the website www.woodchestershop.or.uk/volunteers or give John Willoughby a call on **01453 872645** or drop into the shop and have a chat to one of the existing shop volunteers.

Lunch with Friends.

Offers a sit down meal and friendship to anyone who may be housebound or alone. Lunches are usually on the third Friday of each month, in St Marys Church. Volunteers are needed to help prepare food, set up tables and place settings for lunch, serve meals, collect and transport people who don't drive, help clear up afterwards and most importantly to join in and chat. For further details contact Liz Cole **07974 911016** or Christina Lewis **01453 873481**

Woodchester Brownies and Guides

Brownies and Guides meet on Tuesday evenings and meetings, events and activities are always lots of fun. Adults over 18 are needed to become leaders, and older teenagers 14+ can also volunteer to become Young Leaders. Contact Jacqui Hayes on **01453 821258** or email woodchesterbrowniesandguides@gmail.com. More information on www.girlguiding.org.uk

Woodchester Mansion.

This amazing unfinished Gothic revival house is open Friday, Saturday and Sundays from Easter to October and relies on volunteers to act as Tour Guides, mini bus drivers, and sell tickets. We also need people to help with practical conservation and restoration projects. For further information call Katharine on **01453 873814** or email info@woodchestermansion.org.uk

And a little further afield.....

Cotswold Canal Trust. Like getting muddy?

The UK's biggest canal restoration project relies on a huge volunteer work force to help with digging and dredging, towpath work, litter picking. Or you can stay dry and volunteer in the bookshop or in the Canal Trust visitor information centres at Stroud and Saul junction. Further details www.cotswoldcanals.org/volunteer

Woodchester Word distributors.

Explore Woodchester while you deliver a free copy of the Woodchester Word to households around the village. Delivered three times a year. Contact Rod Harris

Christmas news from St Mary's Church

In this festive edition of Woodchester Word we'd like to give you a quick update on the last few months and a preview of all our Christmas plans and services:



Building works and what comes next...

We're delighted to be able to tell you that the latest phase of work to improve the inside of the church and make the building more useful to more people has now been completed.

The new toilets (including a larger fully-kitted-out facility for easier access) are up and running at the back of church, and work on draught-proofing the two main doors is already helping us make the building warmer. The look of the church has been transformed by the relocation of the wooden screen to the back of the church. It now looks much more open, as the architect originally intended, allowing the beauty of the place to be fully appreciated.

The church is open every day between 10.00 and 4.00 – so if you haven't already seen the results for yourselves, just go in and take a look round.

After Christmas we will start thinking in earnest about the next stage of redevelopment. We have already said that we will tackle a third stage of work to open up the base of the tower to give access to the monuments inside, and solve some of the consequent storage challenges!

Some of the other ideas being discussed include:

- Trading some of the rows of pews for free-seating to make the space more flexible for clubs, the school and other community activities.
- Adapting the heating system to make the building warmer in the winter
- Reducing heat loss through the windows, if we can, without losing the beauty of the stained glass

If you have any views on these ideas and/or if you have any other suggestions you would like to put forward – PLEASE TELL US. Just contact: Andrew Pemberton on **07973 187923**.

Messy Church, Lunch Club and Little Stars

After the long and gloomy months of covid lock-down, it is such a welcome relief to have been able to restart many of the clubs and community groups that meet in the church....

Messy Church is now live and is running, as usual, one Wednesday afternoon each month in term-time. Open to any child up to School Year 6, with their carers, St Mary's Messy Church offers something for everyone with snacks, tea and squash, games, craft activities and much more. November's 'Light Party' was a real highlight, with the church interior bedecked with fairy lights, and the children more excited than on Christmas morning! Look out for the 2022 dates on our website. All are welcome – no need to book.

Lunch-with-Friends has now also restarted at its usual time of 12.00 till 1.30ish on the 3rd Friday of every month. The lunch club is for senior members of our community, who welcome the chance to share conversation with neighbours around a hearty home-cooked meal. We started tentatively with an afternoon tea outside on a sunny afternoon in August and then with a simple lunch menu in October and November inside the church. However, we hope to push the boat out in December with a fantastic Christmas feast, gifts for our guests and all serenaded by Year 6 school children singing parts of their Christmas concert. Please contact Christina (**07968 159779**) or Liz (**872287**) for more information if you would like to join us in 2022. We can cater for vegetarians and meet most dietary requirements. And thank you to all the volunteers from inside and outside church, who make Lunch-with-Friends such a joy to be part of each month.

Little Stars meets in church each Monday morning from 9.15am to approx 11.30am. All preschool children are welcome with their carers. We have coffee, tea, cake and a lot of chat. We love to sing and play with toys and other children. Mums and other carers are

great at mutual support and it is the place to be if you just want to relax with a little one. We do not charge for the group but as winter chill sets in any small donations towards heating are gratefully received! Please tell your friends and come and make new ones. Contact : Sue **07866 487911** and Elaine **07974 208714**

Our website www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk also provides more information on these and other events.

Rev Peter Francis

Many of you will already be aware that our lovely Rector Peter Francis has not been well throughout the second half of this year, but he thanks everyone for their good wishes and is starting to feel much better. Peter plans to start back part-time in time for Christmas. He thanks everyone who has been asking after him and praying for him and HUGE thanks also to Rev Sarah Haslam, our wonderful Curate, and the whole ministry team, who have been able to keep church services going while he has been off sick.

Christmas services

It is great to be planning a full programme of Christmas events and services this year and the main details for your diary are as follows:

Christmas Messy Church
Wednesday December 1st, 3.20pm

Christmas Eve:
Crib Service at 3pm
Carol Service at 6.30pm

Christmas Day:
Christmas Praise (for all ages), with Holy Communion, at 10am

Covid-19: Please note that we are still encouraging people to stay distanced in church, and to wear masks when singing, so our capacity for the Carol Service will be smaller than in the past.

Wishing you all the happiest Christmas and a happy and healthy new year. God bless.

Julie Shere-Massey Art *Pet Commissions*



Contact Julie to discuss your unique piece

T: 07743 001812

E: julie.shere-massey.art@hotmail.com

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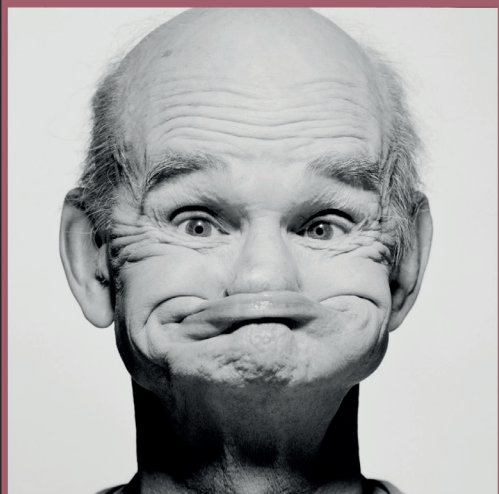
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The Traditions of Christmas

Christmas is full of delightful traditions, some originated in pagan times, some from Christian beliefs. Yes, we know about the manger, the stable, the Wise Men and the shepherds but do you know why we have Norwegian Spruces in our houses, shops, churches and in Trafalgar Square, why do we eat mince pies, why do we use holly and mistletoe at Christmas.....?

The Christmas tree, usually a Norwegian Spruce, but sometimes a different species of coniferous tree, was first used by St. Boniface as a symbol of Christianity – it is evergreen representing Jesus' everlasting love for us, it is triangular in shape representing the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit,) and it points to heaven.



Holly is used because it reminds us of the crown of thorns worn by Jesus at his crucifixion and mistletoe was used by the Romans as a sign of peace, love and understanding and from this came the tradition of kissing your loved one (and others!!) at Christmas time.



Mince pies are meant to be eaten in silence as you make a wish. Their shape reminds us of the crib in the stable. Christmas puddings, sometimes called figgy pudding or plum puddings (mistakenly, because the Victorians used raisins which they called plums,) according to the old tradition, should contain 13 ingredients, to remind us of Jesus and his 12 disciples. I remember my mother making the Christmas pudding well before Christmas and placing three or four silver sixpence pieces in the pudding for us to search for on Christmas Day.



The day after Christmas Day of course is called Boxing Day because this was the day when tradesmen were given a "Christmas box" and the alms boxes in churches were opened and money shared with the poor of the parish.



Street Party June 2022.

It has been suggested that we might celebrate several things on the weekend of the 5th of June. Both are in the balance but there is hope. The Queen will celebrate her jubilee and we as a community will celebrate the coming out of the pandemic. Woodchester has in the past enjoyed many celebrations and it has been mooted that we have a street party. A road closure for South Woodchester high street has been requested and then there is the planning. At this point we need a group of people willing to assist in the organization, people with any expertise that they think would be relevant, people who would just like to help. Please contact katharine@woodchesterparish.org.uk

All offers of help will be gratefully received.

Orchard Pastures, December 2021

Our apple crop this year was, perhaps, smaller than in recent years, but some trees did well where they haven't in the past. All the apples in the orchard are old Gloucestershire varieties. We 'picked' Arlingham Schoolboys apples - mostly windfalls from the ground, and by shaking the trees. They produced over 150 bottles of delicious juice once they were processed by Days Orchard. We can only juice small quantities ourselves, and having it pressed and pasturised professionally means it keeps much longer. We've made perry ourselves in the past successfully, and this year we are having a go at cider making.

The allotments this year have been good, with some new villagers joining us bringing fresh ideas and huge enthusiasm. We have an allotment available for rent, at a very reasonable price. Please get in touch if you're interested.

We have set the date for our annual Wassail – Sunday 30th January at 4pm. Please look out for posters nearer the time. Fingers crossed that any Covid-19 restrictions still allow us to go ahead this year.

If you're interested in having an allotment or for any other information, please get in touch at any time.

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**.

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

Bookings: Rod Harris

T: 01453 872317/07775 652379

E: WVH2021@gmail.com

Parish Council:

Sylvia May, Clerk to Woodchester Parish Council

T: 07863 098710

E: Clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk

Gloucestershire Highways:

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/

T: 08000 514514

E: gcchighways@amey.co.uk

Woodchester Post Office and Village Shop:

Shop: 01453 873218

Post Office: 01453 872581

St Mary's Church:

Rev Peter Francis,

T: 01453 759680

Church of the Annunciation:

T: 01453 832120

Due to editorial delays in production of this edition has meant that, with apologies, some dates mentioned in one or two articles are out of date.

Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at woodchesterword@gmail.com. Advertising: Sylvia May, parish clerk. Design: Plus One Design. 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: March 31st 2022

Photo by David Beale on Unsplash



Sing around the villages with Nailsworth Silver band Tuesday 21st December.

Our annual Christmas event.

Meet at Frogmarsh, 6.30pm.

Walk through the village along the candlelit path to North Woodchester and sing outside the Royal Oak 7pm.

Village Green 7.15 approx followed by mulled wine and mince pies. All Outside. Dress warmly. If torrential rain this will be cancelled.

Donations to cover costs would be most welcome.

More information Andrew Pemberton 872813