

THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 71, Summer 2020

Aren't we indeed fortunate
to live in Woodchester!

WOODCHESTER DURING COVID-19

With Bournemouth beach resembling a human ant heap, with an estimated 500,000 people ignoring official advice and cramming themselves onto the sands on the south coast; litter, rubbish and human waste left at beauty spots including the lakes at Woodchester Park; riots when police tried to close down illegal street parties and raves in several cities; a complete lack of social distancing in many city pubs and bars.....

Aren't we indeed fortunate to live in Woodchester!

With glorious weather at the beginning of lockdown, Woodchester gardens have never looked so neat, tidy and loved; our village shop and post office has proved once again to be a lifeline to so many people from Woodchester (and further afield); volunteers have worked to support those in our village who needed support and help; the Head and staff at our two schools have worked tirelessly

to care for the children of key workers and the Reception, Y1 and Y6 pupils who returned on June 1st and provided home lessons, work and suggestions for activities for the pupils in other years; and at the same time, spring colour erupted in the countryside around us and matured into early summer, giving everyone the opportunity of appreciating the beauty of the hills, the commons and valleys in which we live.

Aren't we lucky!

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Parking in South Woodchester

As many residents will know, there has been a long-standing issue with parking in South Woodchester, particularly in the stretch of High Street from the Ram up to Bospin Lane.

In short, for 13 households there are 10 parking spaces, and though two households don't currently own any vehicles, many of us have two. Add in the odd visitor, builder or decorator, and it's not hard to see why there's a problem. There is some parking further south on High Street, but this is mainly used by other residents.

There was a time when we could park in the bottom Ram car park, and in fact, some people still do with permission of the landlord, but that's not the case anymore. Fair enough, it's private land.

So most of us have to park on the stretch of road that runs down to the war memorial below the Ram. But this lowest section of High Street narrows to such an extent that it becomes impossible to leave a car there. There is space for up to about six cars there.

And now we face a new difficulty – the Ram's owners have put the lower car park up for sale. They obtained planning permission for two three-bedroom houses on the plot and it's yours for £295,000.

If that goes ahead, it will put the cars of those residents who can currently use the car park onto the road – between two and four vehicles, we are not completely sure. Some of us have already found that, on occasions, there is literally nowhere to park. It's not impossible that in a few years' time, we will be regularly parking down by Frogmarsh Mill, a quarter of a mile away. First world problems, of course, but it's not something any of us relish!

So, are there any solutions? Well, maybe.

- * It has been suggested that enterprising local people could club together and buy the plot for themselves, and instead of putting houses on it, keep it for parking. The initial investment of £295,000 (it probably wouldn't sell for that much, so less) could gain a return by then renting out parking spaces for £100 a month – or £1,200 a year if you like. If there are 20



spaces (and we think there may be more), that's an income of up to £24,000 – a rate of return of more than 8 per cent!

- * But there are a number of problems with this plan. The first is who is suddenly going to fork out £1,200 to park in their own village when they weren't paying anything before? Many of us have already suggested we wouldn't pay half that. £100 a year? At a pinch. The second is that, even if enough villagers did stump up the cash to buy a 'parking slot', that leaves everyone else able to use the existing spaces for nothing. So there is little incentive to pay if you can get a guaranteed spot for nothing.
- * That's not to say those of us affected by this parking issue are dismissing the idea completely. Perhaps there is a way forward, we just haven't found it yet. Someone has suggested we could put charging points in so that when – in some halcyon future – we all have electric cars, there's no problem 'filling up', which is a lovely idea.
- * A second solution involves the much larger plot of land owned by the South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust, otherwise known as SWALT. Though some of this has been turned into allotments,

and much of it is very steep, there is a small flattish area just below the Ram that could, in theory, provide parking space for perhaps 6 cars, though it would probably require some landscaping. That wouldn't resolve all the issues, but it would mean that – were the building plot developed as intended – at least the parking wouldn't get any worse.

- * But this is far from straight forward. Stroud District Council is reported to have said they wouldn't grant planning permission for a parking spaces there because it would ruin the views of people in Amberley. Having said that, some of us have received a different response on this. Still, it would cost money to develop, and would by no means end all our problems.

I write this partly just to inform residents of what's going on in the village, but also to see if anyone can come up with an alternative solution or a better way forward. In the end, this parking issue touches many more residents than just those of us in the immediate vicinity. Please do get in touch with me if you think you have the answer.

Jim Fair
jimfair100@gmail.com

Letter to the Editor

Sir,

On behalf of those who have received help from those in the village that have been delivering papers, food, running errands etc. during the lockdown we would like to say a big thank you. We have not been clapping you on Thursday nights but we have been thanking you in our hearts everyday. Some of us are not so infirm and have been capable of some of things you have been doing for us but the guidelines have warned us against this. Others are not so lucky and could not have done without your help. So far by your actions you have helped keep the village largely out of the Covic-zone. We have much to be grateful for.

George Bastin

The Hazards and charms of Water Lane

Water Lane, which runs from Selsley Hill to Selsley Rd, North Woodchester will be closed for repairs by Gloucestershire Highways from August 17th to 21st.

Technically this beautiful sunken lane has been closed to through traffic for almost two years. This was at the request of the Parish Council after local residents found the potholes in the dip to be 18 inches deep and filled with water and some very evil looking mud. The Lane was therefore “closed” to through traffic for safety reasons.

The erection of numerous cones and ROAD CLOSED signs have managed to deter the majority of delivery van drivers who insist that because their SATNAV identifies the narrow, steep and overgrown road as a public road, they can use it as a convenient shortcut. At one point last year at least one van a month was getting stuck in a hole down Water Lane, requiring rescue by either a breakdown company, one of the local farmers or the Fire Service. During the pandemic lockdown the lane has been heavily used by cyclists and walkers and the occasional horse rider, all of whom have managed NOT to get stuck in the potholes.

The surface of the lane suffered badly during the very wet winter of 2019/20, and silt run off from the Severn Trent pipeline works has caused the main culvert under



the lane to become blocked, leading to more flooding. Severn Trent contractors have now cleared the silt from the stream and removed the rotting bales of straw and strips of tarpaulin which were acting as silt traps.

Water Lane is thought to be an ancient route, possibly used in Pre-historic times and by the Romans. The spring that crosses the dip probably supplied water to the Roman Villa in North Woodchester. In later times it was used as a packhorse trail or a drove road

connecting the Nailsworth Valley with routes across the Severn Vale. The spring fed drinking trough on the side of the hill is probably several hundreds of years old and adds to the muddy charm of the lane. The lane is beautifully shaded by Hazel trees and lined with ferns. It is hoped that Highways will be able to remove some of the hazards caused by the potholes, but not destroy the rural character of the lane. In the end Nature, and water always find their own way through!

Please respect the countryside

We are very lucky in Woodchester to be surrounded by beautiful countryside. But apart from Rodborough, Minchinhampton and Selsley Commons, most of the land around the village is privately owned and should only be accessed via a public right of way, ie a public footpath (yellow arrow, on foot only) or bridleway (blue arrow, on foot, horseback or bicycle). You can walk or ride ACROSS private land, but you do NOT have the right to stop, play games, have a picnic, BBQ or just snooze in the sun.

Most of the grass fields around Woodchester and the Commons, are either used as pasture for grazing animals, or are cut and used for hay or silage crops. What may look like a nice picnic spot is actually dinner for a sheep, cow or horse, which makes it all the more important NOT to leave litter, cans, bottles, BBQ debris or dog mess. These can cause injury to livestock if stood on or eaten.

You should keep your dog on a lead wherever there are grazing livestock, and ideally if you are walking in a crowded place. Two sheep, grazing at Frogmarsh, were recently attacked by an out of control dog and one had to be destroyed. Dogs and livestock are a particularly sensitive issue at the moment. There is currently a requirement to keep your dog on a lead on the canal towpath and the Cyclepath. You should always pick up dog mess, put it into a bag and either take it home with you or put it into a litter bin or dog bin.

Please respect the countryside and help keep it in good order for everyone to enjoy. It helps keep our hard working local farmers and landowners happy too!

K McNealey





The Countryside Code

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo - bag it and bin it

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures



Children's Woodchester Quiz

How observant are you as you walk around Woodchester?



Q1. Where is this strange floor?

- a) St. Mary's Church
- b) Woodchester Mansion
- c) Selsley Common
- d) The village shop



Q2. This old building in North Woodchester was demolished over 100 years ago.

Was it:

- a) The Rectory
- b) The Piano Factory
- c) A mill
- d) A Roman castle



Q3. On this post box in South Woodchester are the letters GR. Does it mean:

- a) Grrr, beware of dogs
- b) George Rex (meaning that it was placed there when George V was king)
- c) Great Railway nearby



Q4. Which company is on the site of Workman's Timber Yard?

- a) Sofas and Stuff
- b) Brown's Woodyard
- c) Ecotricity
- d) Marks and Spencers



Q5. Who owns the lakes (and the surrounding land) on which this boathouse sits?

- a) Stroud District Council
- b) Gloucestershire County Council
- c) The church
- d) The National Trust



Q6. This window is in Frogmarsh Mill. Why is it so wide and large?

- a) So that the mill workers could read their newspapers
- b) So that the trade union reps could look out for the boss
- c) To let as much light in so the weavers could see to work effectively on the machines or looms
- d) So that the workers could watch the trains go by



Q7. This little carving of a lady's head is on the west entrance to St. Mary's Church. Who do you think it is a carving of?

- a) The editor's mum
- b) Maggie Thatcher
- c) The Rector's wife
- d) Mary, mother of Jesus



Q8. This post and the one opposite are on of the last remaining bits of the old railway that is now the cycle path. Is it:

- a) A signal post
- b) A sign telling passengers where to go
- c) A post that held up a level crossing gate
- d) Where passengers tied up their mothers-in-law to stop them from wandering off



Q9. This carving is in a wall near the spring in South Woodchester. What do the letters MM stand for?

- a) Latin numerals for the year 2000
- b) In memory of Michael Morpurgo
- c) Married Men
- d) Millimetre



Q10. Bird's Crossing is a short road off the A46. Why is it called this?

- a) Because it is where duck's can cross safely
- b) A custard factory was nearby
- c) Named after the Bird family that lived in Southfield House in the early 1800s and who needed to cross the river and railway to get to the road
- d) Birds enjoy sitting here watching the traffic



Q11. This building at Frogmarsh is known as the Teasel Tower but it was more likely to have been used as a:

- a) Baker's oven
- b) Store for cattle
- c) A wool drying tower with a central stove and chimney to dry the wool.
- d) Store for teasels



Q12. And finally, what were teasels used for in the old cloth mills (and still are today in some cases.)

- a) To scratch the back of the workers
- b) To comb the workers hair
- c) To raise the nap on the cloth (nap – raised fuzzy surface of the cloth)
- d) To catch flies and other insects in summer

Citizens Advice amid the Coronavirus crisis



When the lockdown began on March 23, Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts quickly mobilised staff and volunteers away from face-to-face interviews to give one-to-one advice over the phone and via email. Since then the charity has helped over 800 people. Help can be given with applying for universal credit, navigating the government's job support schemes, how to manage paying bills, relationship breakdown, as well as many other issues.

There has also been a surge across the South West for the National Citizens Advice website with 78,483 visitors during the busiest week.

Martin, a volunteer Adviser said: "This service is vital now more than ever. There's so much anxiety around this virus and what it means for people's health, wellbeing, jobs and finances. As a volunteer, it feels good to be able to help and it's a privilege to work with such an experienced team of advisers."

Sarah Telford, Chief Executive said: "I am so proud of our volunteers and staff who

have quickly rallied round to ensure no-one needs to face the financial challenges of Covid-19 alone. So if you're in need don't hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us a message, our advisers are ready and waiting to help."

The Helpline numbers are **0808 800 0510** or **0808 800 0511** Mon to Fri 10am to 4pm, calls are free from landlines and most mobiles. For email enquiries visit our online email page <https://www.citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk/stroud-cab-email-advice.php> and complete a short online form with a few sentences about your problem.

St. Loes School Exhibition Fund

The Governors of St Loes School Exhibition Fund invite those under the age of 25 and leaving secondary education who were born in the Parishes of Woodchester and Amberley to apply for a grant for financial assistance to help with the costs of apprenticeship or further education at university or college. Please apply before 30th September 2020 to the Chairman of the Governors at Goring House, Selsley Road, North Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5NG.

What is the St. Loe's Fund? In 1697 Nathaniel Cambridge, probably a clothier and described as a merchant of Hamburg, founded a school. He left £1000 to be used to purchase the Seinkley manor estate which was converted into a master's residence and schoolroom. Here boys between the ages of 6 to 16 drawn from Woodchester and the Rodborough tithing in the Minchinhampton parish were to be taught reading, writing and arithmetic or accounting.

A few years later in 1702 John Yates left a further £100 for the use of the school. Richard Cambridge, probably the son of Richard and a London merchant, bequeathed £49. The Reverend Richard Bond became the first master of St Loe School in 1699 followed by his son Nathaniel. The school obviously flourished so that by 1794 the trustees asked the master to reduce the large number of boarders that he was taking.

In 1826 there were 30 boys being taught but only 10 were scholars paid for by the St Loe's Exhibition School Fund which still exists today. In 1908 the school was closed and the income applied to apprenticeships and the maintenance of libraries. This fund is still available to those children leaving secondary education who were born in Woodchester or Amberley who require financial assistance. They have to be under the age of 25 and entering into an apprenticeship or going on to university or a college of further education. If anyone is interested in a grant they should apply before 30th September 2020 to the Chairman of the Governors at Goring House, Selsley Road, North Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5NG.

Update from Woodchester Mansion

Woodchester Mansion has been closed to the public since the Coronavirus lockdown in March. However, this has allowed some essential conservation work to be done to the upper part of the brewery gable wall on the north front of the Mansion which was in very poor condition. Temporary remedial repairs have been done by the conservation contractors Croft Construction Ltd., to stabilise the gable until funds are raised for a full restoration. The temporary measures have been largely funded by a grant from Historic England. The area has been inspected by our structural engineer, and the repair work is now finished.

It is hoped that the Mansion will be able to open before the end of the season, and consideration is being given to how this can be done while following Government social distancing guidelines. Open days at the Mansion are dependent on the availability of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer at the Mansion please email : info@woodchestermansion.org.uk

For other news from Woodchester Mansion please check the website at www.woodchestermansion.org.uk or follow Woodchester Mansion on Facebook.



The photograph shows the visible damage to the coping stones on the gable wall of the Gable end.

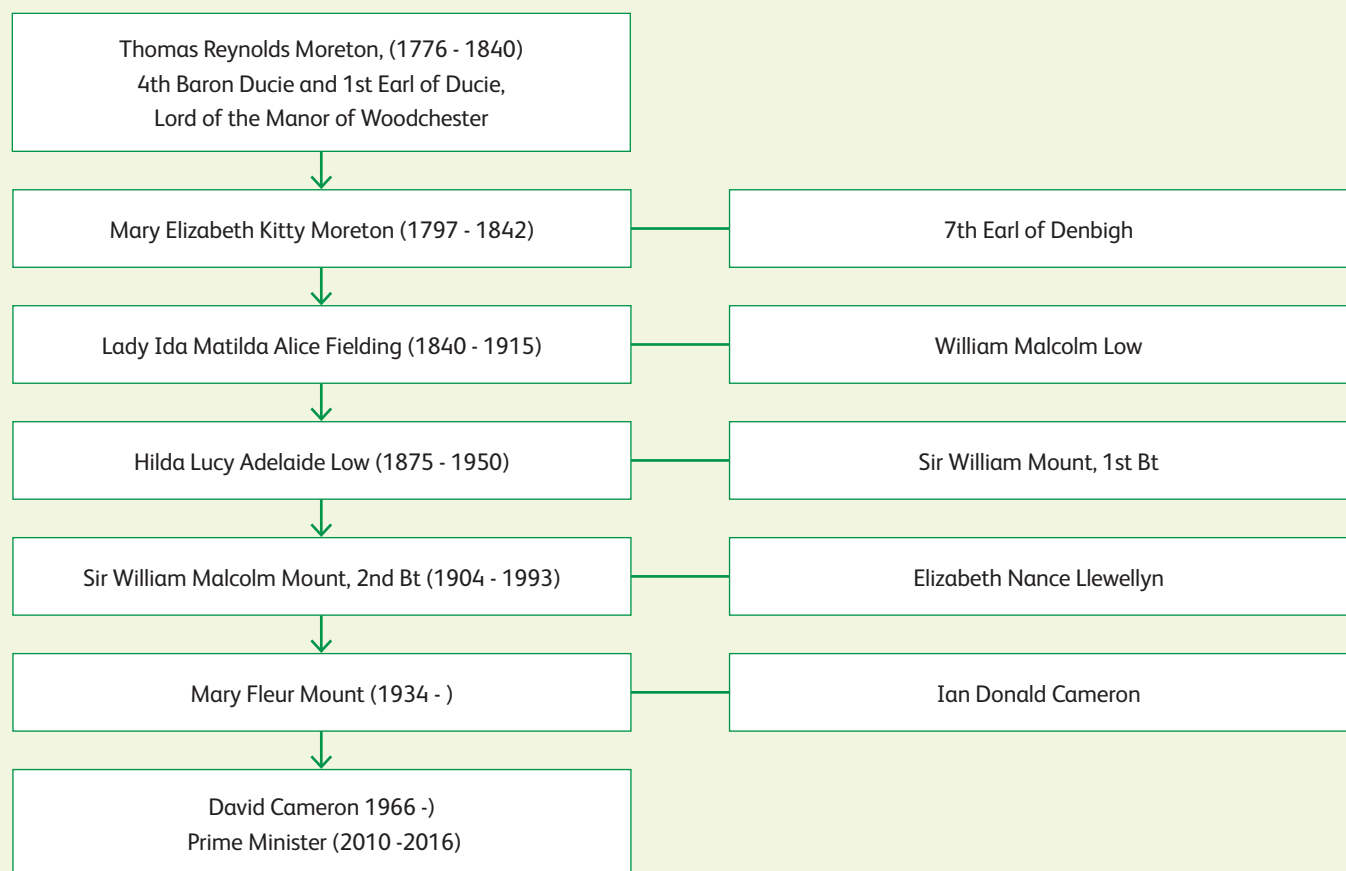


Despite very clear signage that Woodchester Park was closed, there have been numerous examples of people entering the park and swimming in the lakes during the hot weather recently.

David Cameron - A Famous Descendant of the Lord of the Manor of Woodchester ?!

On 8th May 1822, 24 year old Mary Elizabeth Kitty Moreton married the 7th Earl of Denbigh in Woodchester Church. Mary was no ordinary girl, she was the daughter of Thomas Reynolds-Moreton then 4th Baron Ducie, Lord of the Manor of Woodchester and later the 1st Earl of Ducie. Mary's mother, Lady Frances Herbert, was the daughter of Henry Herbert, 1st Earl of Carnarvon.

When I looked on Wikipedia I discovered that Mary was not only descended from two earls but was also the 4 times great grandmother of former Prime Minister, David Cameron.



Mary's first child, the 8th Earl of Denbigh, and also her second, fourth and fifth children were born in Woodchester. Her other five children were born either in London or at the Denbigh country seat at Monks Kirby in Warwickshire. Mary died in London at the age of 44 on 16 December 1842, soon after the birth of her last child. She was buried at St Edith's church in Monks Kirby together with her husband and many of her children. Mary seems to have been much loved by the boys of the Denbigh villages as a monument with the following inscription was erected in her memory.

THIS LITTLE MONUMENT
IS RAISED BY
THE PEASANT BOYS OF THE VILLAGES OF
MONKS KIRBY AND PAILTON,
IN GRATEFUL MEMORY
OF THE KIND INTEREST TAKEN
IN THEIR WELFARE BY THE GOOD LADY
MARY, COUNTESS OF DENBIGH,
WHO PASSED FROM EARTH
TO HER HOME IN HEAVEN,
DECEMBER 16TH 1842.
"BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS AND
SO FULFIL
THE LAW OF CHRIST." GAL. V1 _2

Mary's family the Moretons were an established Staffordshire family since the 13C, but in the 17C they gained both Tortworth Court and Woodchester Spring

Park (the site of Woodchester Mansion) through the marriage of Edward Moreton to Elizabeth the daughter and heir of Robert Ducie. Their son Mathew was an MP for Gloucestershire in the early 18C and in 1720 he was created Baron Ducie. In 1837 Thomas Reynolds Moreton, the 4th Baron Ducie, was created the 1st Earl of Ducie and in 1845 his son, Henry George Francis Reynolds-Moreton, sold Spring Park to William Leigh, the builder of Woodchester Mansion.

Mary's maternal grandfather was 1st Earl of Carnarvon; his descendant, the 5th Earl of Carnarvon, George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Herbert (1866–1923), paid for the expedition which discovered Tutankhamen's tomb.

WOODCHESTER F.C.

Established 1905

A Community Amateur Sports Club

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

The football club is looking to re-launch itself for the 2021 season as this season due to Covid etc. we decided against registration and playing in the Stroud League.

We are looking for a new manager and welcome all players of any standard and would ask you to register your interest

- **MANAGERS ROLE** (playing or non-playing) needs around two to four hours a week available during the season (plus some support from a Secretary/Treasurer/Wife/friend) – main roles are to help pick the team, call the FA with the result once a week and to bank the subscriptions every 2 weeks in Stroud.
- The club Captain runs the playing side on the pitch
- Players of any age (from 16 to over 50!)
- Very sociable club, with drinks at The Ram after playing
- Playing commitment can be as regular as you wish



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



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



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

News from St Mary's Parish Church

Going to Church Online

Our Sunday morning Zoom services at 11am are now well-established, and accessible for anyone with the most basic computer skills on PC, laptop, tablet, smartphone, - or on plain old telephone. Please feel free to join in – All welcome. We may lack the polish of a broadcast Songs of Praise but there is music to join in with, time for prayer, for learning and reflection, and after the service for having some social time in "break-out rooms" (bring your own coffee...). Some of us can put more names to faces than when we met in church before lockdown!

A reminder of how to join: Zoom meeting number **883 864 9918**, password "blessed" (or from a telephone dial **0330 088 5830**, use the same meeting number, and passcode 866912).

We also have a short online service of prayer on Monday mornings at 9.15am and a study group on Wednesday evenings at 7.30. You can use the same Zoom connection details for these.

At other times

We have a "daily reflection" for you to follow, and we have "Messy Church at Home" with activities for children, which you can find by visiting our website www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk and following the links.

Church Opening and Services

You may have heard or seen in the media that from 15th June churches were permitted to open for individual prayer and for funerals, and that from 4th July church buildings can be used for worship services with limited numbers of people. Weddings and Baptisms in church are still not permitted, and no singing will be allowed*, as at the time of going to press, but further announcements may take place during July and August.

These relaxations of lockdown measures are, however, accompanied with stringent guidance on the importance of maintaining social distancing and hygiene. Someone also needs to be in attendance while the church is open, so in Woodchester we are starting with small steps and will increase access as soon as we are able...

... In any event, the good news is that St Mary's is now OPEN for individual prayer on **Monday mornings between 10am and 12 noon**. If you know of people who need to be prayed for, or if you're at a loss and need time to reflect and take encouragement, please drop in.

**at our on-line services you CAN sing – sing your heart out at home (whilst you are muted on Zoom) and no one will complain about the noise (unless your windows are open and the neighbours can hear you!)*

Foodbank Collection – Woodchester Families thinking of others

Woodchester Village Events Committee would like to thank all those families who kindly donated to the Village Foodbank appeal. Over 17 crates were filled at the warehouse in Brimscombe.

More than 1,000 provisions for the local Foodbank were donated after residents were asked to delve into their store cupboards for items that hadn't been used during the coronavirus lockdown..

The people of North and South Woodchester were asked by the village events committee to find items in their own homes rather than go out and buy new products from supermarket shelves. More than 70 families answered the village appeal, filling 17 crates with food, toiletries and some pet products which were delivered to the food bank warehouse in Brimscombe Port.

The items donated will go to local families and households in Stroud, Nailsworth and Stonehouse, who are struggling to buy daily necessities during the economic downturn caused by the Covid-19.

The Stroud District Foodbank has been experiencing surging demand for its services as more people experience joblessness.

Georgie Brooks, a member of the village events committee, who organised the

appeal said: "By asking donors to look in their larders, rather than go and buy new stock, the hope was that villagers might have a few spare tins, some longlife or packaged goods which they could spare for the huge increase in demand which our local food banks are experiencing.

"Villages all over Britain could try this as the need is great and there is so much uncertainty for many with regard to their jobs. Food banks, founded in 2011 as a temporary measure, are now an accepted need of everyday life for many."

Village school pupils took an active role in promoting the appeal, just as they have played a leading role in decorating their homes with beautiful rainbows to thank the NHS and care workers who are risking their lives every day on the frontline.

A special thanks to those kind villagers, Caroline, John and Nick, who took time off work to help in the collection of these items.

Woodchester Village Events Committee

St. Dominic's RC Primary School – very sadly, the last report

After providing education for children of the parish and surrounding areas for nearly 150 years, St. Dominic's School will close its doors permanently at the end of this term.

The school opened on 21st March 1884; numbers fluctuated several times over the years, notably when the Franciscans discontinued their orphanage in 1927, and again in the 1950's; however, by the 1960's the school's fortunes had changed and a new extension was built in 1961. The school celebrated its centenary in 1984 with a visit from the Bishop of Clifton at the time, Bishop Mervyn Alexander.

The school has had a number of successes over the years, including charity fundraisers, sporting accolades and some excellent years' academic results. The local Duck Race is one of the most recent and notorious community events! The children here also still remember their 'ISingPop' concert. There are children attending the school who are the third generation of their family to do so, with many years of association with the school behind them. Everyone connected with the school will be very sad to see it go; sadly, with falling rolls the Trustees made the difficult decision to accept closure.

Due to current guidance, the school is unable to have any kind of celebration to mark the closure; children will be taking part in virtual services and productions, and an artwork is being produced which will be gifted to the Annunciation Church on completion. However, once restrictions are lifted enough to permit, there will be a Celebration Mass led by Bishop Declan to give thanks for the work of the school over the years.

Rebecca Lansdown, Acting Headteacher

Woodchester WI in Lockdown

We were delighted with the programme planned for 2020 and saddened to see session after session disappear as the pandemic has taken hold. In common with groups up and down the country, we have found ways of staying in touch, including Committee meetings on Zoom (with the Secretary inadvertently and incompetently keeping one member in the waiting room for the whole meeting), frequent emails, phone calls and, of course, old fashioned letters. The Gloucestershire Federation has inundated us with communications so we have certainly never felt forgotten. Our county Chair, who should have been replaced in April at an Annual Council Meeting which had to be cancelled, has soldiered bravely on, writing weekly to Secretaries and sending poems, a quiz and stories to keep members entertained. We have been offered lectures via Zoom, encouraged to create our own rainbows, invited to emulate a climb of Cleve Hill by wearing out our stair carpets and encouraged to organise a very own socially distanced Summertime twist party in the garden with recipes for food, suggestions

for entertainment and a playlist supplied. The Gloucestershire WI archivist is eagerly awaiting the arrival of photos of these events and of any other lockdown crafts, gatherings (real or virtual). We are hoping that there are no reports of WI-generated rowdiness across the county on the last Saturday in June!

Denman, the WI College offering tuition to all (not just WI members) in a range of crafts, history, music and literature courses, has, of course, been closed. However, it is now possible to book for online sessions (Denman at Home) to watch cooking and baking, a needle-felting session, fitness and history sessions and a lot more for £5 a session. It is possible that the college may open again for residential courses in July.

We are hoping to create a Woodchester WI record of our lives in lockdown. Members have been given card and instructions to create a lockdown picture on one side (with lots of wild hairdos anticipated) and thoughts on the reverse about what lockdown has taught them about themselves. These will form a record book for the missing months of this year.

Like lots of other clubs across the county, we do not know what the future holds but we remain very hopeful that we will meet again some sunny or wintry day and pick up where we left off. Members have expressed particular concern that they may miss out on the annual fish and chip supper! Our numbers are strong and our group has a bright future, despite the current challenges and uncertainties. It would be lovely to think that we might rescue some of our remaining programme and that the ACM, reorganised for October, and the Cheltenham Christmas Concert may happen in some form.

Just in case readers and in particular WI members had not heard, Beth Price passed away in early May, following a fall causing a broken hip.. Rod and Ali are planning to have a service of celebration of Beth's life at sometime in the future when normal or "new normal" times return.

Sally Bull

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Woodchester Village Hall

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

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

The trustees are looking for:

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

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

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

Can you help? If you can, please contact Alan Boulton (872487) or Rod Harris (872317) or Kath Gay (873348) for more information and/or to register your interest.

Many thanks, From the trustees



Tales from the Village Shop

Wow, well what a few months we have had! We think that the decision to save the village shop really proved itself during 2020.



Our first thought was to ask our more senior volunteers to step down in line with government advice, in their place we were fortunate to recruit a whole new team of volunteers who were hastily trained and put into service. Huge thanks are due to them for their sterling service in keeping the shop open (and to the husband of one who very kindly volunteered his wife!)

Footfall certainly increased as customers weighed the benefit of a short queue outside the shop against that of a long queue outside the supermarket.

Stocking our shelves became a real challenge as we experienced the usual shortages notably baking ingredients, staples, soaps and disinfectants. Suppliers were under increasing demand.

Thankfully Dangerfield's Bakery and The Cotteswold Dairy were able to meet increased demand and maintain daily deliveries.

Ice Cream and Alcohol sales were both up possibly due to the lovely warm weather or you can come to your own conclusions! Plants were extremely popular and the quality and variety that were supplied by our fantastic Plant Lady, Jean, received much positive comment.

Throughout all this the Post Office continued to function. Postage volume increased and at times resembled Christmas as customers sent parcels to relatives they were unable to visit and home shopping returns increased.

We have met many new customers and again received many positive comments - Gratitude that volunteers have stepped forward and allowed us to remain open and not require them to risk visiting the supermarkets, surprise from new customers at the range of products we stock and the availability we have managed to maintain.

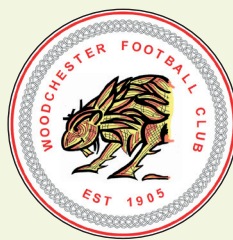
Examples of the lovely comments "Thank goodness you are here", "That's us for the week, now we don't need to go anywhere else", "You've got such nice things here", customer visiting with a friend "Why didn't you tell me about this place before? It's got all the nice things I like to buy".

Life in retail is now returning to a new semblance of normal. The Post Office will return to normal opening hours from 6th July 2020.

We have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of working through the pandemic even though it has been hectic at times, and are pleased to have been available to meet the villagers needs. We would ask you to remember how useful the shop has been throughout this period and to continue to use us weekly so that we remain viable and can remain open serving the village for the future. The old adage applies "use us or lose us"! I think we can all agree what a lucky village we are to have a Village Shop and great Local Pub that have continued to serve throughout this time – let's make sure we keep them!

Press Release June 2020

Woodchester F.C. score with funding success



There's good news for Woodchester F.C. as the Club have been awarded a Pitch Preparation Fund grant from the Premier League, The FA and the Government's Football Foundation.

The Pitch Preparation Fund was set up in support of the game, which is currently facing unprecedented challenges because of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Fund is providing grants to clubs that have lost out on normal revenue streams during this difficult period.

The funding will enable Woodchester F.C. who played in the Stroud League, to prepare their football pitches so that they are match-fit for when it is safe to play football again, following Government advice. Woodchester F.C. are aiming to relaunch the club for the 2021 season starting August 2021 and are looking for players and a new manager as soon as possible to take us forward.

They can use their grant towards to help pay for the cost of materials, work such as verti-draining, chain harrowing, rolling, over-seeding, fertilising, weed-killing, and routine preparatory work such as grass cutting and the setting out and line-marking of pitches.

Robert Sullivan, Interim Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, said: "This is a vital grant to help Woodchester F.C. get their pitch match-fit.

"The Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation exists to help provide quality infrastructure at the lower-levels of the game. Pitch Preparation Fund grants like this one are giving a helping hand to clubs across the country to get their playing surfaces ready for when the game is allowed to begin again following government advice."

The Football Foundation is a charity funded by the Premier League, The FA and the Government, through Sport England.

For more information please contact:

- Stuart Harrison, 07977 455350
- Football Foundation Communications Team at events@footballfoundation.org.uk

Background: The Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation is the largest sports charity in the UK. It champions and supports fair access to quality football facilities for everyone, regardless of postcode, gender, race, disability or place. The Foundation receives money from the Premier League, The FA and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, through Sport England. This is matched with partnership funding and awarded as grants to create outstanding grassroots facilities that enable better games and attract more players, helping to transform communities.

The Football Foundation celebrates its 20th anniversary next year. Since 2000, it has awarded more than 17,300 grants to improve facilities worth more than £684m – including 829 artificial grass pitches, 3,175 natural grass pitches and 1,100 changing facilities. This has attracted an additional £870m of partnership funding – totalling over £1.5bn investment in grassroots football so far.

Through the Foundation, the Premier League, The FA, DCMS and Sport England have come together to create the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS) that will guide work over the next 10 years to transform many more local facilities. Local Football Facility Plans (LFFP) are being created to identify priority projects where demand is greatest, and the impact will be strongest and help stimulate the action required to deliver them.

Visit footballfoundation.org.uk for more information on the Foundation.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

At the time of writing my last article for the Woodchester Word, the nation had just gone into 'lockdown' and schools throughout the country instructed to closed their doors to all but key worker children. The virus had crept up on our little school, village and nation and taken away normality.

There was great uncertainty and many new challenges to overcome as our families and staff grappled with reorganising their lives at speed before closing their doors. School, usually a wonderfully social environment, where classrooms, playgrounds and corridors normally buzz with rich and varied human interaction, was suddenly silent.

With little notice, we battled to set up many new systems, including establishing new ways of working with IT, reorganising staffing, providing for our key worker children, organising home learning, delivering free school meal hampers, writing risk assessments and getting to grips with new hygiene expectations. The vocabulary of teaching and learning was suddenly snatched away and replaced with a new set of words such as PPE, social distancing, 'bubbles', shielding, to name but a few. As we prepared for the phased reopening of schools in June, signage, tape, bacterial spray and lidded bins magically appeared and very quickly became the norm.

Since June, we welcomed back our Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children alongside our key worker children. They have been organised into 'bubbles' of no more than 15 and many children are in another classroom and with a different member of staff but that doesn't seem to matter. They adapted to the changes wonderfully well and the school is once more buzzing with the energy that only children bring. Never far from our thoughts are our children in other year groups, who with the support of their families have risen to the demands of home learning. Many children have sent us photographs of their work and their experiences and it has been an absolute joy to share in these. Through phone calls, zoom quizzes and assemblies we have tried our best to keep in touch.

Next week, we look forward to welcoming the rest of the children back for some morning sessions before the summer holiday and we cannot wait!

Have a lovely summer holiday and fingers crossed for a safe and full return in September.

Mrs Pennington

Woodchester Community Outreach Group

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

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

If you would like any support, please do get in touch by contacting Ann Bijkerk on 01453 873456 or email woodchesterparish@gmail.com

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

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

The information from Gloucestershire County Council is now updated twice weekly and includes the latest Government advice.

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

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 1st September.

Issue of Wild Swimming at Woodchester Park

As the weather has been favourable, this has again drawn crowds of people to enjoy swimming, picnicking and partying at Woodchester Park lakes. For residents at that end of the village they have again been frustrated by visitors parking irresponsibly.

The recent issuing of parking tickets by the Police may have deterred some from visiting and The National Trust recently met and agreed measures to discourage unauthorised entry from the bottom end of the Park.

There may be an added problem as the Annunciation Church has been obliged to install a gate to prevent unauthorised entry to their car park.

Affected residents have recently received letter from the Parish Council with a standardised email to use following an initial call to 101 to inform Gloucestershire Highways and the National Trust of the ongoing issues residents are facing.

It is hoped that continued pressure on the authorities will bring about measures to improve the situation for our residents.

Highways Issues

The Highways and Rights of Way Committee met at the beginning of June.

The '20 is Plenty' signs were discussed. Recent evidence locally has found these signs to be ineffective in reducing speeds. As a result, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) are no longer funding signs of this nature. Councillors agreed that the '20 is plenty' signs in the village be taken down. They have been up for a number of years, are worn and tatty, and it was agreed, no longer have an impact on driver behaviour.

There has been much discussion with Gloucestershire Highways, particularly in the past year, on the possibility of reducing speed limits both within the village and on the A46. In recent discussion with the Local Highways Authority it was made clear that unless there is a history of serious road traffic accidents, the current Highways Commissioner and the Police have no interest in seeking to reduce speed limits. Therefore unfortunately Councillors were forced to make the decision that this is currently not worth pursuing.

Councillors agreed priorities and to request funding for 'Unsuitable for HGVs' and 'vulnerable road user' signs for Selsley Road, 'Welcome to Woodchester' signs/village 'gateways' and the resurfacing of the bottom of Bospin Lane. These four priorities will be costed for a funding application.

Road Closures

Resurfacing of the A46 was planned for early in the year, but was put on hold due to the pandemic. Provisional dates for this work have now been set from mid-July to mid-August and therefore by the time this goes to print, work may have begun!

Water Lane, which has been closed now for a prolonged period, will be repaired from 17th to 21st August. Access to properties at either end will be maintained.

Retirement of Ian Smith

Ian Smith has a strong connection with the village and is known to many of you. Ian has carried out the maintenance work in the village for the past 19 years. Ian retired at the end of March. He will be presented with a farewell card and box of wines on behalf of the village, very kindly donated by Woodchester Valley Vineyard.

We welcome Tim Curtis who took over from April.

Thank you

The Parish Council would like to thank:

- Georgie Brooks who recently organised a team to carry out a collection for Stroud Foodbank. Nineteen crates of food were collected.
- Loz Rawlings-Johnson for the wonderful job he's done on replacing the bookcase for the Book Swap in the North Woodchester telephone box.
- The volunteers and Pauline who have kept the Village Shop running through these difficult times.
- Dave Fussell, who has kindly agreed to assist the editor Rod Harris in producing the Woodchester Word, following the stepping down of Iain Dunbar.

Many thanks for giving up your time.



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

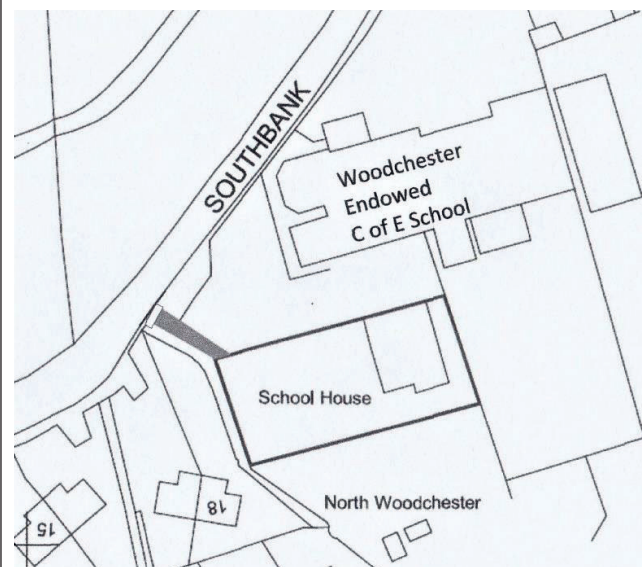
Advertisers in the Woodchester Word – a note to readers

If readers use any of the companies advertising in the Woodchester Word, please make it known to them that you saw their advert in the Word, and if you are reading this and you run a business please consider advertising in the Word. Publication costs are completely covered by advertisers, which means that every household in Woodchester receives a copy free. Without income from advertising, there will be no Woodchester Word.

Thanks, Rod

Public Notice for the purposes of s121(2) of the Charities Act 2011

The Trustees of Woodchester School intend to undertake freehold sale of the School House driveway (shaded area marked in bold on the map below) which is currently part of the property of Woodchester Endowed C of E Primary School, Church Road, North Woodchester, Glos GL5 5PD. The sale will take place by public auction later this year (subject to pandemic restrictions).



Any objections or representations concerning the proposed sale must be sent in writing at the latest by Monday 10th August 2020 to:

Woodchester School Trustees

c/o The Grange, Selsley Road, North Woodchester, Stroud, Glos GL5 5PJ

Woodchester "At Home"

During these strange times we thought we would attempt to create a positive record by taking portraits of households outside their homes.

This will hopefully lead to a collection of images that will serve to remind us of this time when we were all "at home".

We've already taken a fair number of pictures but if you'd like to get involved please do get in touch to arrange a time.

It's very informal & should only take around 10 minutes of your time.

A long lens is used so social distancing is maintained at all times.

We will endeavour to provide everyone with a hard copy of their portrait and also access to all images on an online album.

There may be scope for a small local exhibition at a future date.



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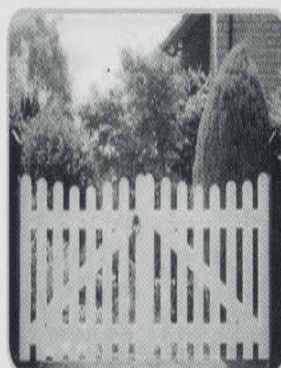


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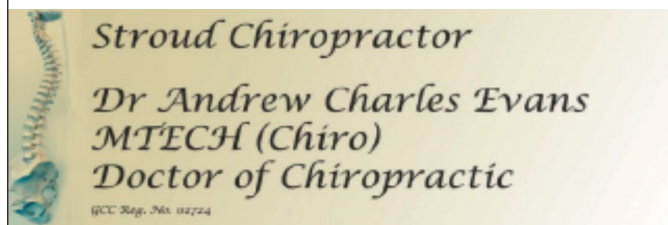
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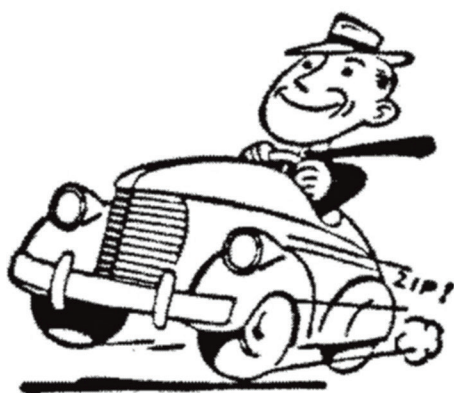
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Woodchester Show

Sadly, there will be no village show this year due to all the restrictions on public gatherings as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The Village Events committee are so sorry about this, but thanks to everyone who has participated and helped in previous years, from bakers and jam makers, to Musicians and Dog Owners.

Let's hope we can have some sort of gathering at Christmas when perhaps 'Outdoor Singing' might be permitted!



Open Gardens

The planned day for open gardens in Woodchester was July 5th. Like so many events this summer, this had to be postponed but here is a selection of pictures of gardens that we might have seen if times had been normal.

Useful Village Contacts

PCSO:

Steven Phillipson

T: 101

or visit www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Neighbourhood Warden:

Chris James,

T: 01453 754512, 07753 725185

E: chris.james@stroud.gov.uk

District Councillor:

Philip McAsey,

T: 01453 873329

E: Cllr.philip.mcasey@stroud.gov.uk

County Councillor:

Steve Robinson,

T: 01453 834270

E: steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Village Hall:

Mrs. Kath Gay,

T: 01453 873348

E: wvh888@btinternet.com

Parish Council:

Ann Bijkerk,

T: 01453 873456

E: woodchesterparish@gmail.com

Gloucestershire Highways

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/

T: 08000 514514

E: gcchighways@amey.co.uk

Woodchester Post Office and Village Shop:

T: 01453 872581

St Mary's Church:

Rev Peter Francis,

T: 01453 759680

Church of the Annunciation:

T: 01453 832120

Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at woodchesterword@gmail.com
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