



Issue 72, Winter 2020



## CHANGES IN THE WOODCHESTER WORD

It won't be a surprise for readers to hear that many tradesmen and businesses are struggling at the moment. This has meant that our income from advertising has dropped sharply during this year.

The Word is almost completely funded by the advertisers who place their adverts in each edition. The only cost involved in getting this issue to you is the cost of printing, all other parts of the production of the Word, i.e the editorial, design and distribution, are covered by volunteers. We are particularly grateful to our team of distributors who between them deliver the Word to every home in Woodchester and Rooksmoor, to Ann Bijerk (clerk to the Parish council) who deals with the finances and advertisers, and to Dave Fussell and his company Plus One Design who deal with the graphical design of the Word.

Representatives of the Parish Council and the editor recently met to discuss the way forward and to ensure that the Woodchester Word

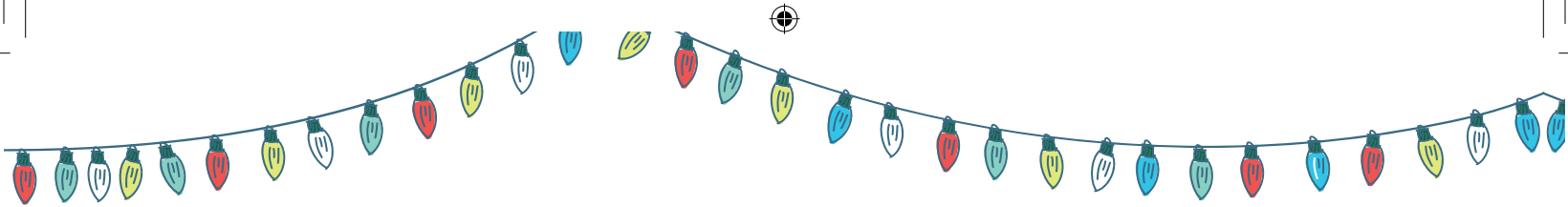
continues for the residents of Woodchester. After this edition, the Word the production run will be reduced from 600 to 300 and will not be delivered to every house but will be available in the village shop, in telephone boxes and in holders in the notice boards. Those with mobility issues or are unable to collect one will have the opportunity to contact the editor and request a copy be delivered. It is hoped that normally neighbours will pick one up for those they know are not able to collect one themselves.

Each edition will also be on the Woodchester Parish website ([woodchesterparish.org.uk](http://woodchesterparish.org.uk))

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This does mark a big change from how the Woodchester Word was distributed since it began many years ago, but by making these changes, importantly, it will continue to be available for everyone living in Woodchester.

If any reader knows of a resident who would like the Word delivered, or if any local companies would like to support the Word by advertising, please contact the editor, details below.

**Rod Harris Editor**  
Email : [woodchesterword@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com)  
Tel: 01453 872317/07775652379

*The Woodchester Word team wishes all our readers and friends of the village a very lovely Christmas and a happy new year, even if Covid-19 will be making it a different one for many of us.*



Photo by Andy Wang on Unsplash

# Fish and Chips

We all know that Niall at the Royal Oak provides take away fish and chips on a Friday evening. But do you know much about the history of our very British fish and chips?

Fish and chips were first served as a meal together in about 1860, although the origin is contested between two families in London and Manchester. Fish and chips became a stock meal among the working classes in England as a consequence of the rapid development of trawl fishing in the North Sea, and the development of railways which connected the ports to major industrial cities during the second half of the 19th century so that fresh fish could be rapidly transported to the heavily populated areas of the country. In 1930 there were 35,000 fish and chip shops in Britain. During World War II fish and chips was one of the few foods not rationed. The concept of a fish restaurant, as opposed to take-away, was introduced by Samuel Isaacs in London. He ran a thriving wholesale and retail fish business throughout London and the South of

England in the latter part of the 19th century. Isaacs' first restaurant opened in London in 1896 serving fish and chips, bread and butter, and tea for nine pence, (5p) and its popularity ensured a rapid expansion of the chain. The restaurants were carpeted, had table service, tablecloths, flowers, china and cutlery, and made the trappings of upmarket dining affordable to the working classes for the first time. They were located in London, Clacton, Brighton, Ramsgate, Margate and other seaside resorts in southern England. Menus were expanded in the early 20th century to include meat dishes and other variations as their popularity grew to a total of thirty restaurants. Sam Isaacs' trademark was the phrase "This is the Plaice", combined with a picture of the fish in question.

## Here are some more useless facts about Britain's favourite meal:

- 1 It is estimated that 382 million portions of chips are consumed in Britain each year.
- 2 Fish and chips was always served in newspaper until 1980
- 3 The longest running fish and chip shop still in operation is in Yeadon near Leeds
- 4 Fish and chips appear in Charles Dickens' novel "A Tale of two cities."
- 5 The Chinese serve fish and chips with sugar.
- 6 In steam train days, fish specials to bring the fresh fish from the North Sea and Atlantic ports were given express train status.
- 7 The editor would claim that the best fish and chips are from a café called the Magpie in Whitby, situated next to the Whitby fish Market.

# Are you being scammed?

**citizens  
advice**

## Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswold has the following advice

- Be suspicious if you are contacted out of the blue, even if it's from a name you recognise
- If it sounds too good to be true it probably is
- Never give out your bank details unless you are certain you can trust the person contacting you, although a scammer can sound trustworthy
- Don't respond to requests to make a bank transfer to a safe account
- Don't be rushed – you never need to make a decision straight away and if you feel pressured say "no", hang up the phone, or close the door
- Your bank will never ask for your full PIN number or password over the phone
- Your bank will only use the last four digits on your card
- You may be asked to log onto your bank account via a link they will send you - do not do this
- HMRC and TV Licensing will not email or text you about refunds or rebates, nor ask you for personal details
- Never click on links included in suspicious emails
- To check whether an email is genuine click on the arrow on the sender's email address, if it shows a personal email address or one which looks unusual be suspicious
- If you receive an email or text which you feel is suspicious open a new tab and do a search
- Look out for poor grammar or spelling
- Be suspicious of organisations which do not use your name



Photo by William Iven on Unsplash

You can register your landline with the Telephone Preference Service by calling  
**0345 070 0707.**

Talk to your phone provider to see what privacy services and call-blocking services are available. These services aren't always free but are useful in ensuring any call coming through is from a trusted or known source.

**To check if something might be a scam and for further information go to our website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams/check-if-something-might-be-a-scam/)**

**Or call us on 0808 800 0510 or 0808 800 0511 Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm – one of our friendly advisers will be able to help you.**



## Westonbirt Shopping Fair

This year Westonbirt Shopping Fair will be a Virtual Shopping Fair – open from Saturday 24th October until Sunday 29th November.

The Westonbirt Shopping Fair is one of the largest charity fairs in the West Country. It is a not-for-profit annual event and last year raised £37,000, all of which was donated to local charities. We know a virtual Fair doesn't beat the real thing but it will still be possible to browse our stalls via [www.westonbirtfair.org](http://www.westonbirtfair.org) There you can find the perfect Christmas present and at the same time support local charities. We don't want anyone to miss out this year.

Saturday 24th October until Sunday 29th November 2020. During this time all Exhibitors will donate 10% of your order value to Westonbirt Shopping Fair to help our hard-pressed Charities. Just be sure to add the code WSF behind your name when placing your order. This will help the Exhibitor to identify you as a Westonbirt Fair Supporter and ensure we receive the 10% donation. This does not affect the price you pay in any way. The Exhibitor list will be published on 24th October at [www.westonbirtfair.org/exhibitors](http://www.westonbirtfair.org/exhibitors)

You will have free access to all our Exhibitors via our Exhibitor link from Saturday 24th October until Sunday 29th November 2020. Normally the Entrance fee at the Door is £8. Why not consider donating £8 today. Or any amount you can spare to help our Charities in these difficult times. To donate go to [www.westonbirtfair.org/donate](http://www.westonbirtfair.org/donate)

Next year's Westonbirt Shopping Fair will be back at Westonbirt School House and grounds in October 2021, as normal.

# Update from St Mary's

## Welcome back

After 6 months of severe restrictions we are delighted to announce that St Mary's is once again open to all from 10.00 until 4.00 every day and that the main 11.00 am Sunday service is also being held in church. We ask everyone who uses the building to please wear masks if you are able and to respect the social distancing rules. Hand sanitizer is also being provided. However, the church is a wonderful big space, with plenty of room to spread out, so whether you just want to soak up the stillness or pray in peace please come in and know you are welcome.

The Sunday services will also be streamed live over the internet via Zoom, so those unable to get to church can still join in by phone, computer or tablet. Details of current services and midweek groups and how to access them are below. Please also keep checking our website for updates as government rules relating to covid change.

## Children and families

Messy Church was not able to meet in church during lockdown, but continued online throughout. It is a little different now that young people are back at school... For September, Messy Church families took home Harvest bags filled with crafts, stories, yummy cookies and bread to bake and celebrated Messy Church at home. It was a great success. Our next Messy Church, on 4th November, will follow the same pattern as we cannot all meet together safely yet.

St Mary's popular mother-and-toddler group **Little Stars** has restarted every Monday morning from 9.30 to 11.30 – please ring Sue Pouncey on 07866487911 for more information – we would love to see you.

We've also just started a new venture for St Mary's: **Wild Worship!** It's for those who feel closest to God outdoors, surrounded by nature and our wonderful countryside. This monthly event will include a guided walk with prayers and nature-hunt activities along the way. Current restrictions prevent us from gathering and walking together so we are providing instructions to allow you to go on the walk in your own time. There is then a follow-up meeting on Zoom to share findings and experiences. It's designed to suit to all ages and is an ideal way for families to enjoy God together. Email [cground101@gmail.com](mailto:cground101@gmail.com) for more information and for details of this month's walk.

## Introducing Sarah Haslam – our lovely new curate



Sarah has recently joined us from Poulton and will be working with Rector Peter Francis and the rest of the ministry team pastoring the benefice of St Mary's Woodchester, Holy Trinity Brimscombe and St Mary's Rodborough. Sarah's early career was in journalism before joining the Church and she is now living in Brimscombe with her three children Noah 12, Hope 10 and Elijah 8. Taking up her new post during lock-down has presented a few challenges, but after several months' delay Sarah was ordained by Bishop Rachel in a beautiful service in Gloucester Cathedral on September 19th

and her children are now all settling into their new local schools.

Sarah can be contacted on:  
[mrssarahhaslam@gmail.com](mailto:mrssarahhaslam@gmail.com) or **07870 126048** and she is looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible soon.

## Christmas Lunch-with-Friends (LwF)

Sadly, we haven't been able to host our normal monthly lunch club for Woodchester's more senior residents since lock-down began. However, working with a wonderful local charity called 'The Long Table', we may be able to organise the next best thing, at least for Christmas. Watch this space! Lunch-with-Friends regulars should be hearing from us soon by card and phone. If you are new to the village and would like to find out more please contact Liz on **872287** or Christina on **07968 159779** – we would be delighted to hear from you. In normal circumstances, LwF meets in church at noon on the 3rd Friday of every month for a home-cooked hot meal, followed by tea and coffee. It's a great chance to catch up with old friends and make

new ones. Please contact us if you would like to be added to our guest list or join our wonderful teams of volunteers.

## Bricks and mortar

Just a quick update on the church building: Quotes are now being sought for the second stage of our phase 1 Building-for-Everyone project and it is hoped that work on the new accessible toilets will begin soon. The clock repairs and draught-proofing are also now well underway, despite a few delays accessing parts, and it is hoped that the clock will be back in action very soon.

The success of Lunch-with-Friends and our children's groups is a reminder of how important it is for the church building to be flexible. Like many other churches, we are now considering replacing our pews with comfortable chairs that can be stacked away easily to open up space for more table-based activities and to allow different seating layouts for church and community use. Take a look at the notice-board inside church for a view of the proposal.

## Weekly services and important contact details

Sunday 11am service: In church and on Zoom

Little Stars Mother and Toddler group: Monday 9.30 till 11.30 held in the church

Midweek service: Wednesday 10am, in church

Regular Bible study or course: every Wednesday evening, 7:30-9.00 pm on Zoom

Rev'd Peter Francis: 01453 759680 or [peter@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk](mailto:peter@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk)

Rev'd Sarah Haslam: [mrssarahhaslam@gmail.com](mailto:mrssarahhaslam@gmail.com) or **07870 126048**

## How to access St Mary's church services and activities on-line:

You can access the above sessions via the link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8838649918?pwd=a1ZNU2FEN1VTUFNGS2g4b0VycSs1QT09>

Alternatively use Zoom meeting ID: **883 864 9918**

Password: **blessed**

Access by telephone is as follows:

1. Dial 0330 088 5830 local rate number (or 0208 880 6591 if it's engaged)
2. When asked for a meeting-id enter **883 864 9918** on the keypad, followed by #
3. You will then be asked for participant-ID but ignore this, just type another #
4. You may also be asked for a security code – enter **866912**



## Stroud Women's Refuge – coping in the lockdown

Imagine that your own home, the place where most of us feel most safe, is the place of most danger to you, the place where you know you'll be attacked, injured, maybe even killed, and the place where your children may become traumatised by witnessing what's happening to you.

During 'lockdown', incidents and reports of domestic violence have hugely increased as families and couples have been trapped together and women's opportunities to escape abuse have been dramatically reduced. Sadly, as lockdown eases, there is the expectation that many more cases will come to light.

The Covid-19 'lockdown' has also presented Stroud Women's Refuge with additional challenges and expenses. Initial difficulties related to the absolute basics: struggling to get food and hygiene items, such as sanitiser and additional cleaning materials. There's also the need for additional hygiene equipment for the staff and nine resident families and the additional cleaning of areas that are frequently touched, to keep the refuge as safe as possible. Local charities responded quickly by giving some immediate help, including food from 'The Long Table' and the Food Bank in Stroud.

The refuge is always full, with nine women and about 14 children living there, while they get back on their feet. Each family has one room. Imagine home schooling in these circumstances and the additional costs of frequently having to print off school work for 14 children. Families are already having to struggle with a life changing domestic abuse crisis in their lives. In addition, they're now having to overcome a range of additional lockdown difficulties such as access to transport, legal advice and childcare. The children have faced additional challenges. Living in a refuge all day, every day, with no school or external activities is not easy.

Stroud Women's Refuge has to find £300,000 a year to keep going. £5 buys emergency food for a woman on arrival. £10 buys toys for children who have left everything behind. £25 buys emergency toiletries, sanitary items and nappies. £50 buys bedding and pillows.

If you wish to support Gloucestershire's ONLY women's refuge, please donate on-line at: [justgiving.com/stroudberesford](https://www.justgiving.com/stroudberesford)

Or ... make a cheque payable to 'Stroud Women's Refuge' and post it to: PO Box 35, Stroud GL5 1YL.

## Thank you!

## Woodchester WI – We'll Meet Again...

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN

As the committee prepared for a first meeting since February, the new six only rule put an abrupt halt to our planning and we are now not expecting a return to meetings before next spring at the earliest. Fortunately we did manage our planned walk on Rodborough Common and hope to organise a second before the end of the year. We are hoping to rebook the excellent range of speakers we had planned for this year.

The committee has worked hard to encourage some joint enterprises amongst members. Knitted, felted and crocheted poppies are in production in homes in Woodchester and beyond as contributions to our own WI wreath for Remembrance Sunday. We don't expect to create anything quite as impressive as the poppy clad clock in Nailsworth or the cascade in Cheltenham Town Hall but are looking forward to combining craftwork in our own Woodchester WI tribute. As we look towards Christmas when our usual party will not be possible we are working on creative ways to remember each other and to share our celebrations.

All members have received regular updates from our Gloucestershire chair and news from members of our own committee. Communication is a challenge when some do not have access to the technology for email and Zoom but we have kept in touch with all members and will continue to do so. Gloucestershire Federation has set up a number of Zoom talks on subjects ranging from Bristol Zoo's Alfred the gorilla to talks linked to this year's WI campaign against modern slavery. Tickets are available to non-members too with tickets sold online by Eventbrite. We have also been invited to join in with Zoom meetings organised by local WIs too.

Sadly, another casualty of the lockdown has been the WI craft college, Denman, which had been in operation for 70 years providing an opportunity to relax, meet new friends and learn a new skill. Already financially challenged, it was unable to weather the economic storm and has closed its doors for good. The Denman at Home courses via Zoom (everything from talks on history to cook and craft along sessions) are proving very popular and very good value at £5 each. These are available to anyone and well worth exploring. The range of topics on offer is always expanding and includes activities to do with children during school holidays.

Like thousands of groups up and down the country, we are very much looking forward to the time when we can welcome members to a meeting and enjoy each other's company and have fun again. In the meantime, we will take all the opportunities we can to stay in touch and to support each other.

Sally Bull



## LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2021 ELECTIONS.

Following the postponement of the 2020 Elections due to Covid-19 we would like to provide you with a brief update as we start to look ahead to Thursday May 6th 2021.

Planning is already underway and we would like to reassure you that our highest priority is the safety of our staff and our electorate. We are currently undertaking initial work with regard to all aspects of our Polling Stations.

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

In anticipation of a possible shortfall in our usual Polling Station staffing levels, coupled with the need to be able to offer short notice cover for last minute cases of self-isolation we would very much like to add new staff to our Team.

If you think you would enjoy the experience of being right at the heart of the democratic process and would like to find out more about the role and rates of pay, please get in touch direct via email: [elections@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:elections@stroud.gov.uk)

All applicants must be over 18, not a member of a political party, eligible to work in the UK and available for the whole day and evening of **Thursday May 6th 2021**.

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

**DON'T LOSE IT**



## Woodchester Village Archive

For many years the Woodchester Village Archives have been managed by Jenny Bernard. Jenny stood down from this position at the beginning of 2020. Many thanks to Jenny for her commitment and organisational skills over the years.

Details of information held within the archive can be viewed via the Historical Society section of the Woodchester Parish website. Donations of historically important material relating to both North and South Woodchester is always welcome, please do get in touch.

Village Archive Contact: Dena Wray – [woodchesterarchive@outlook.com](mailto:woodchesterarchive@outlook.com)

## Made in Woodchester

**CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR**  
**SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020 : 1030 - 1500**

Due to Covid restrictions this popular annual event cannot take place in its usual format in the Village Hall this year.

So – Covid permitting – it will be run as a Craft Trail through the village instead with stalls located at individual crafters properties – one or two stalls at each – avoiding enclosed spaces as much as possible – ie largely using garages and carports. This will create more of an 'open market' atmosphere enabling visitors to be spread over a much wider area.

At the time of drafting this article there will be at least 10 stalls selling a range of unique and unusual hand crafted items all made in our village. Not all your Christmas shopping need come from Amazon this year!

Whatever Covid regulations are in force at the time will be strictly observed, the safety of visitors and stallholders being of

paramount importance. All visitors are asked to comply with such regulations on the day.

The route is planned to run from South Woodchester High Street, down Station Road then along Southfield Road as far as the junction of Southfield Road/Selsley Road. Properties hosting stalls will be clearly marked. Do please put the date in your diary and support this event if you can.

More information will be provided nearer the date both online and by way of leaflets distributed around the village giving an indication of crafts on sale and the precise location of each property involved.

Please direct any queries to the organiser – Mike Barnard on **07527 504493** or at [m.barnard.123@btinternet.com](mailto:m.barnard.123@btinternet.com)

Photo by Adam Winger on Unsplash



# Lest We Forget – The Final Chapter The Memorials to the Fallen of the Great War

## The YMCA Hut

After the war, along with the rest of the country, Woodchester considered the erection of a suitable war memorial and a meeting was held in February 1919 to discuss the matter. The suggestions from the committee were for a Wayside Cross on land between the two villages, facing the road leading to the station, on land which Mrs Bowles of Tower House had promised. There would also be a tablet in the church. However, the committee was not to have its way, the suggestion from the public was for a hall 'for the convenience of the young men of the neighbourhood' - no mention of the young women who had also played their part in the war effort! A vote was taken and the public hall was decided on with tablets in St Mary's and the Baptist Church. There was 'considerable disappointment amongst those who had favoured the Wayside Cross'. Nothing was said at the meeting about the Priory Church, presumably the Wayside Cross erected in 1917 was considered a most suitable memorial.

Around the same time, there was a proposal to provide village clubs under the sign of the Red Triangle (YMCA) as had existed for the use of soldiers in France and Flanders. Everything would appear to be fitting into place so far as Woodchester's memorials were concerned.

By April, the war memorial subscriptions for tablets in church and chapel had been well supported and sufficient funds were in hand. There were 18 names of men who lost their lives through the war to be placed on both tablets. The proposed hall was to be called the 'Victory Club and Institute' and to be affiliated to the YMCA. Fund raising was still going on apace for this and various whist drives, concerts and dances were held throughout the year.

As the calendar rolled over into 1920, Charles Frederick (Charlie) Boulton, aged 22 formerly of the Royal Garrison Artillery died as a result of gas poisoning in the war and was buried in St Mary's churchyard on 10th January. Thus Woodchester's roll of the fallen rose to 19 and 'C F Boulton' was added at the bottom of the memorial plaques in St Mary's and the Baptist Chapel. Both these plaques are now in St Mary's following the closure of the Baptist Chapel in 1981.

By this time, many villages in the Stroud area had already erected and unveiled memorials to their war dead. Woodchester seemed to be a bit slow but perhaps the reasons were around 'cutting our coat according to our cloth'!

A public meeting was called to consider whether the funds raised for a stone building to be called the Victory Hall should be applied to the 'fixing up' of a wooden hut provided free of cost by the YMCA. The meeting agreed that a stone building would be too expensive.

The Red Triangle Club (YMCA hut), the first in the Stroud valleys, was erected, largely by volunteer labour, on Selsley Road, by the then railway line. It consisted of several rooms and was obviously a substantial size. It was officially opened on Saturday 25th September 1920 by Her Highness Princess Marie Louise (granddaughter of Queen Victoria). Sadly, the hut was destroyed by fire during World War 2.

## The War Memorial

The reports say that when the Princess left, she proceeded to a cenotaph erected in memory of the men of Woodchester who lost their lives, on which she placed a wreath. This is presumably the following which had not at that time been officially unveiled.

An ionic cross made of Minchinhampton stone, at a cost of £180 was erected on land given by Captain and Mrs Bowles of Tower House, between the two parts, North and South, of the village. The money was raised from public subscriptions by a committee of the Anglican and Free Churches. This money may have been that raised for the Victory Hall which was not used.

At 3pm on 31st October 1920, the Woodchester War Memorial, was unveiled by William Dillon Ricketts, brother of George (missing presumed dead in 1916) and his predecessor as headmaster of Woodchester School. The weather was, of course, inclement but despite this, a large crowd assembled. The Stroud Military Band was in attendance. Prayers were led by the Rev R Nott of Ebley (Congregational Minister). The Scripture reading was by the Rev W J Fox, Pastor of the Baptist Church. The Rev E H



Hawkins (Vicar of Holy Trinity, Stroud) read the solemn dedication and the Rector, the Rev G E Watton read the names inscribed. A two minute silence was kept.

The names of nineteen men were carved in stone. The dates of their deaths range from 1914 to 1920 – killed in action, died of wounds, died or missing presumed dead. Of these, only three were laid to rest locally (one of whom was far from home) so the memorial may have been of some comfort to the families.

In March 2020, the Parish Council started to discuss commemorating the centenary of the unveiling of the War Memorial. Unfortunately, before the plans were very far advanced, events in the form of the current coronavirus pandemic overtook us and it now seems certain that we will be unable to have any sort of service.

Barbara Warnes

# Parish Council News

## Issues at Woodchester Park

Thankfully, with the onset of colder weather, the issues with visitors to Woodchester Park have subsided. The Parish Council will continue to work with and put pressure on relevant authorities to minimise the issues which will otherwise inevitably begin again next year.

## Litter in the Village

Unfortunately we were unable to hold our annual Village Litter Pick this year, but would like to pass on thanks to those residents who help keep the village tidy. We are aware that a number of you pick up litter as you walk through the village or make special trips out for this purpose. Thank you.

## Repair to Water Lane

Gloucestershire Highways began work to repair the lowest section of Water Lane. Work then came to a halt, making access for walkers very difficult. The delay is caused by the need to bring in a pump to remove the water before work can recommence. The Parish Council and County Councillor Steve Robinson continue to chase the issue.

## Parking in the Village

Just a polite request that when parking in the village, access to property is maintained. There have been a couple of incidents recently when gates were blocked by parked cars, in one case preventing access with a buggy.



Reminder....the village has both a website and Facebook page with information posted about local issues.  
[www.woodchesterparish.org.uk](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk)

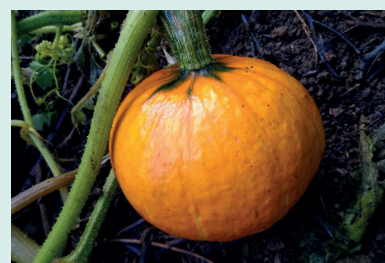
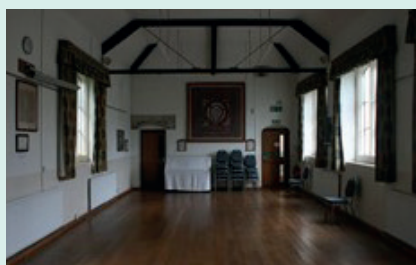


## Woodchester Village Hall

**The village Hall has had some refurbishment during the last few months when its use has been limited due to covid-19.**

The window surrounds have been cleaned and painted with a paint that will prohibit the mould growth and the store room has been reorganised, including donating the stage units to Maidenhill School. The whole area of the hall has been thoroughly deep cleaned and it now abides by all covid regulations. Dena Wray has now taken on the role of the village archives are now being and Rod Harris will take over as bookings secretary. Bert Cossins is to be the treasurer. Kath Gay remains in a post as hall administrator while Alan Boulton remains as Chairman. Both Alan and Kath have devoted many, many hours to caring for and running the administration of the village hall in the past and without their efforts and time, we would not have such an important village facility available to us. The arrangements for the handover and administration of the hall are in discussion at the time of going to press so more details of these changes will be in the next edition of the Word. Users of the hall will be pleased to learn that rental charges will remain unchanged.

Hopefully in the not too distant future, the village hall will be back to full use by residents and the organisations that at the moment are unable to use it.



## Orchard pastures, Autumn 2020

**We've had a good year on the allotments, with some new families getting plots and, like all of us, enjoying the swings and roundabouts of growing your own.**

We have three sets of allotments fenced to stop deer getting in, which is essential if you want anything left to eat yourself. However, other animals are harder to exclude and a happy family of moles tunnelled away making little heaps of perfect potting compost. They don't eat the plants, but are so determined that they can disturb the roots. In the battle of the badgers one allotment holder successfully kept them away from his delicious sweet corn with a combination of old double glazing panels and wood.

In the orchard, the four Ashmeads Kernel trees were really productive this year. We picked loads and sent 200kg for pressing for juice. If you are thinking of getting an apple tree, the Ashmeads Kernel is the loveliest of apples. It's late to mature and stores well, with a good balance of sweet and sharp flavour. It's a russet type, but also turns a rosy hue in the sun. And it hails from Gloucestershire!

We have set a date for our annual Wassail – Sunday 17th January at 4pm. However, it is tentative because of Covid-19, so please look out for posters nearer the time.

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](mailto:swalt.org@gmail.com) or phone Bert Cossins on 872407.

## Ash dieback

As a charity, the National Trust cares for around 850 hectares (2,100 acres) of woodland in Gloucestershire. Ash trees are a common feature in these woods as well as in the wider landscape.

Like many other organisations, we're concerned about ash dieback. Ash dieback is a fungal disease that's sadly now present in all the woodlands we manage in Gloucestershire. It's a disease that is having a devastating impact on the countryside up and down the country. As ash trees succumb, they can drop limbs and branches, collapse or fall. Once a tree is infected the disease is usually fatal.

The extremely dry spring we've just experienced coupled with the thin limestone soils of the Cotswolds has resulted in the rapid deterioration of infected trees in the county – making it one of the most severely affected areas in Britain this year.

Over the past few months, the ranger team has been assessing and monitoring the health of the ash trees on land that we manage. As a result of these surveys, we have identified a large number of trees across the portfolio that pose a risk to public safety and unfortunately are now in urgent need of felling.

Not all affected ash trees will be felled. Wherever it's safe to do so, we'll be leaving both standing and fallen deadwood so that wildlife can benefit. The felling will only take place in high risk zones where infected trees pose a risk to public safety. This includes those that are along public highways, rights of way, well used paths, permissive routes and near residential areas and car parks.

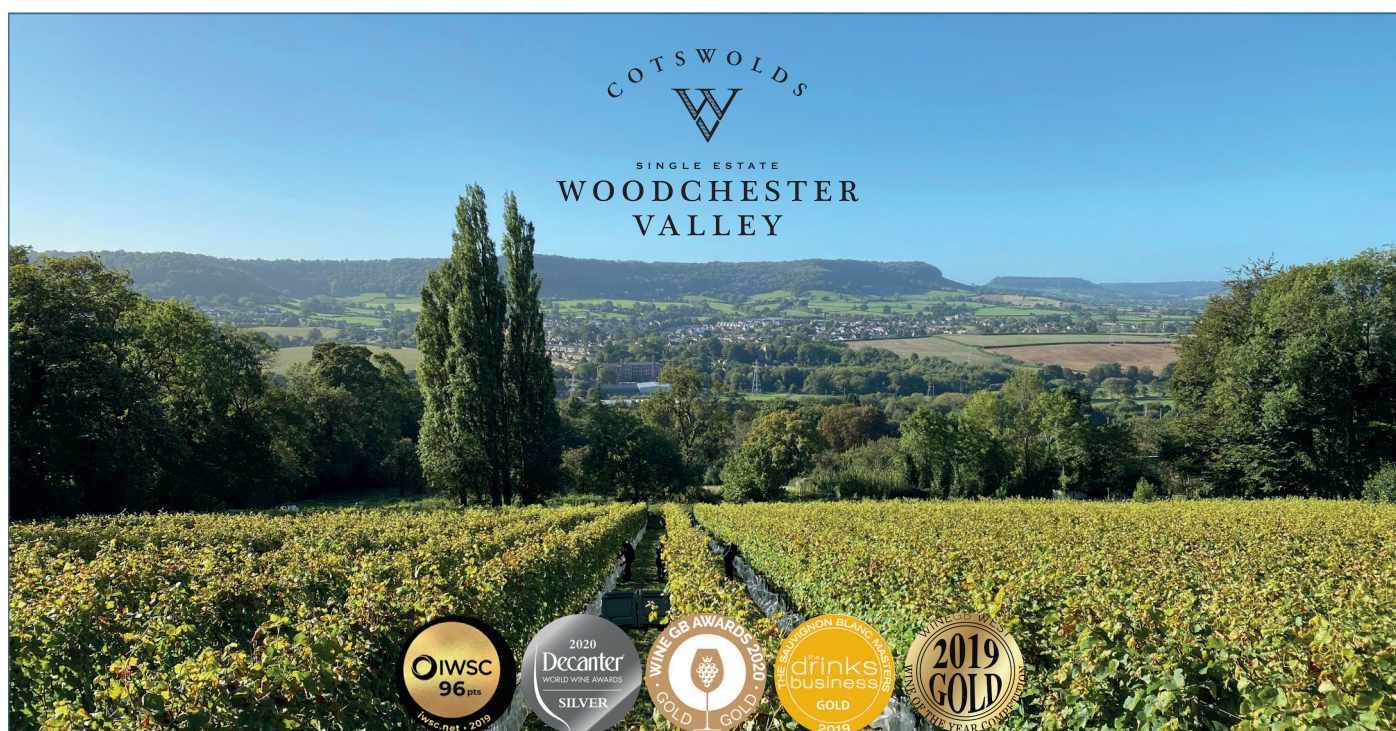
The felling works will take place at Newark Park, Crickley Hill, Woodchester Park, Haresfield Beacon, the Stroud Commons, Coaley Peak, Pope's Wood, Littleworth Wood, Dover's Hill, Horton, Chedworth, and on the Ebworth and Sherborne Park Estates. The work will be carried out by specialist contractors and will begin this autumn.

There may be temporary road closures and restricted access along some routes and pathways at the places we care for during these essential works. Where this is the case, we'll ensure that temporary diversions are in place to keep residents, contractors and visitors safe. We hope to keep the disruption to a minimum.

Despite the tragic loss of trees, we'll be seizing the opportunity to increase the biodiversity in areas hardest hit. Where we've removed dying ash trees, we will leave some areas to naturally regenerate, in others we will replant with native broadleaves like beech, whitebeam, cherry and oak while in other areas you will see us adopt a mixture of both types of woodland management.

Our long-term aim is to improve the resilience of the woodlands against threats such as climate change and disease. By increasing species diversity alongside improving the natural age structure of the woodlands we can help their long-term survival.

If you have any questions, the ranger team can be contacted via email at [cotswolds@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:cotswolds@nationaltrust.org.uk).



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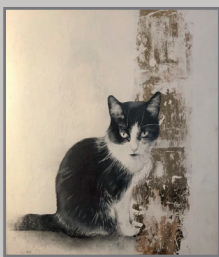
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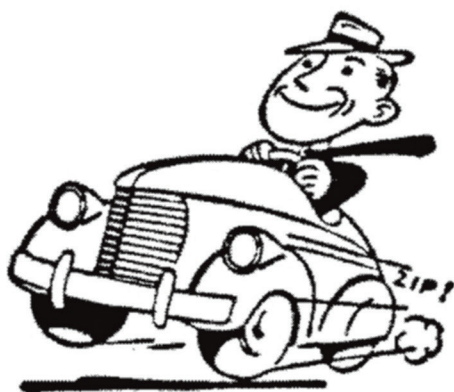
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Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

## Christmas at the Church of the Assumption, South Woodchester.

### Christmas Eve Vigil service

Carols and Mass at St Joseph's Church, Stonehouse - 6pm (this is STC and restrictions under government guidance at the time)

### Christmas Day:

Mass and Carols St. Josephs Stonehouse 9am  
Mass and Carols at the Priory Church Woodchester - 11am

## Useful Village Contacts

### PCSO:

Steven Phillipson  
T: 101  
or visit [www.gloucestershire.police.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk)

### Neighbourhood Warden:

Chris James,  
T: 01453 754512, 07753 725185  
E: [chris.james@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:chris.james@stroud.gov.uk)

### County Councillor:

Steve Robinson,  
T: 01453 834270  
E: [steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

### Village Hall:

Mrs. Kath Gay,  
T: 01453 873348  
E: [wvh888@btinternet.com](mailto:wvh888@btinternet.com)

### Parish Council:

Ann Bijkerk,  
T: 01453 873456  
E: [woodchesterparish@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterparish@gmail.com)

### Gloucestershire Highways:

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/)  
T: 08000 514514  
E: [gcchighways@amey.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com)  
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**Copy deadline for next issue: February 28th 2021**

## WARNING



## Dog thefts are on the increase



### Help protect your dogs:

- Keep an ID tag on your dog at all times (your surname, mobile number and address only)
- Secure gates using bolts at the top and bottom, along with a heavy-duty padlock and gate alarm
- Never leave your pet in the garden unattended
- Purchase a driveway alarm so you are alerted to any intruders, these can also be used in rear gardens and yards
- Make sure your dog is microchipped and their details are updated so that they can be returned if they are stolen and subsequently found.
- Avoid leaving a dog tied up outside a shop or left alone in a car, even for a few minutes
- Take lots of photographs of your dog to prove ownership if it's stolen, pay particular attention to any distinguishing markings on your dog.

**If you notice any suspicious activity, contact Gloucestershire Constabulary on 101.**

