

## Councillors alarmed at housing plan

The 'gallery' view for our October Parish Council meeting on Zoom was the most crowded that we've had, a sure sign that we are about to discuss something that people are unhappy about. After the usual formalities, the time allotted to public comment showed that the main causes for concern were, as expected, the alarming plans now being backed by the District Council for large scale development in this area (of which more later), plus one of the planning applications. This was for the change of use of agricultural land in Elton Lane to provide three glamping pods for holiday use. Several people from neighbouring prop-

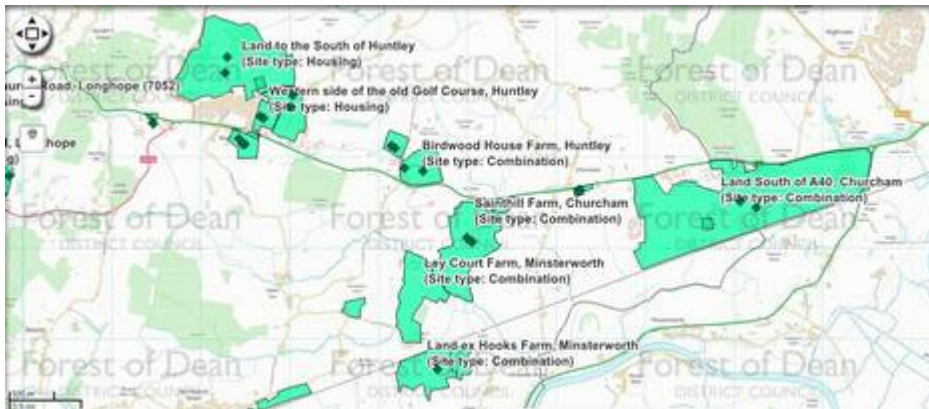
erties spoke against the application, on the grounds that the access lane was narrow and winding, with a dangerous junction with the A4151, and that it is a greenfield site which provides a habitat for wildlife. Following the public comment, we discussed the application and the various points for and against the development before a majority voted to object on the grounds that it would be a development outside the settlement area.

The second application, for the erection of a rural agricultural manager's dwelling at Moys Hill Farm in Strand Lane, was also fully discussed. This was a revised plan following an earlier appli-

cation and it was unanimously agreed that we had no objections to the plan, and the same went for the final application for a garage in Crowgate Lane. Fiona then updated us on the progress of some earlier applications before we moved on to the daunting subject of the District Council's housing plans. Chairman (and District councillor) Simon Phelps described to us the sequence of events since he had been to a poorly-attended meeting of the Forward Planning Group earlier this month, at which Chris McFarling, the Joint Deputy leader of the Council and Cabinet member for Climate and Planning, had announced a plan to build around 2000+ houses "close to Gloucester in the area served by the A40 and A48". Other district councillors appear to have been as startled by this announcement as Simon was, as there had been no prior notice of this. On 8<sup>th</sup> October, the plan was put before the Council's cabinet and was endorsed, and was then dis-

comes to objecting to this plan but the problem begins with the government's housing requirement for the district, which is in the vicinity of 12,162 new dwellings over the next 20 years. The current plan also includes the continuation of large scale development at Lydney, the expansion of Newent and a new mixed development at Beachley, but the choice of site for the new settlement seems to be based on the assumption that most people in the Forest work in the Gloucester/Cheltenham area, and therefore these houses would be closer to their place of work. It seems sad that the District Council is not doing more to encourage development and investment in Forest towns rather than building houses from which residents will travel to Gloucester or Cheltenham to spend their money.

When questioned regarding the effect this development would have on traffic congestion on the A40 and A48, the plan was defended on the grounds that



cussed at a full Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October. This was a stormy meeting, apparently, but the plan was supported by a majority of district councillors and is now open for consultation. It's hard to know where to start when it

it included a 'transport hub' and a 'park and ride'. From what we can gather, there is absolutely no chance of Network Rail building a station for the use of one settlement, and these facilities are unlikely to be used by commuters

from elsewhere in the Forest, as by the time they have driven to Churcham or Highnam, they are unlikely to be persuaded to leave their cars for a train or bus to Gloucester or Cheltenham. The use of green fields for this project seems to fly in the face of all the current warnings regarding the environment, the loss of wildlife habitats and the growing need for arable land if, as recently suggested, stricter controls have to be introduced on the use of fertilisers. I also find it strange that the plans are being actively supported by all six Green party councillors.

However, Simon is joining forces with the Chairs of Highnam, Minsterworth, Churcham and Huntley Parish Councils and they are working together on plans to oppose the scheme. There is now an 8 week consultation period but whereas we were able to air our views on the earlier 'eco-village' proposal at a large public meeting, the Covid restrictions will make a similar meeting impossible. It is therefore really important that we all write or e-mail our views to our district councillors and to our MP. You can do this online at <http://fdean-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>, by E-mail to [localplans@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@fdean.gov.uk) or by letter sent to: Local Plans, Forest of Dean District Council, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG. **But don't hang about as the consultation is only open from 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct to 17<sup>th</sup> Dec.** You can see the full thinking behind the local plan by going to :-

<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/LocalPlanPreferredOption>.

A letter has been sent from the parish council to Mark Harper, who has replied, uncontroversially, that "any new housing should be in keeping with the

surrounding area, both in style and scale" and that "any significant new settlements are best targeted at a l r e a d y developed brownfield sites." He



*Mark Harper*

acknowledges that the building of 2000 houses in the vicinity of the A48/A40 close to Churcham "doesn't seem to pass that entirely reasonable test" especially in view of the traffic congestion in the area and hopes that this "makes my position clear". It does - but unfortunately he does not say what he plans to do about it - perhaps he could try to persuade his colleagues in government that 12,162 new houses is an unrealistic expectation for an area that is largely classified as a) statutory forest, b) area of outstanding national beauty or c) prone to flooding.

For further information about the campaign against this development, please go to:-

<https://forestofdeanhousing.org.uk/>

So, having taken up more than my allotted space already, I will keep the rest of my Parish Council report brief.

**Highways** - the new manhole cover installed by Severn Trent has started rattling already and Simon is going to meet the Highways manager about this and several blocked drains. Various other problems will be reported but they have done a good job replacing the culvert by Boseley Mill Farm.

**Burial Ground extension** – our new adviser has suggested that we consult a land drainage company regarding how best to satisfy the demands of Sport England for the school playing field and has also advised that we must charge the market-value rent for the land.

**Grass cutting** – it was agreed that we put out the grass cutting contract to tender as the existing contract ends this year.

**Play area** – new signs have been put up with advice about Covid.

**Milestones** – Fiona has now found a record of these, but there seems to be one missing opposite the Greyhound.

**Book Exchange** – we have had a request for a site in the village for a book exchange, so if anyone has any suggestions, please let me know.

**Footpaths** – the footpath along the river now only has two stiles, the others having been replaced with kissing gates, which are more accessible for dog walkers.

Councillors wished to pass on their congratulations to Professor Charles Catlow FRS of Westbury-on-Severn, who was knighted in the birthday honours “in recognition of his many services to leadership in science and research.”

The next meeting (on Zoom again) will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.

*Di Landon*

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Nothing irks a politician as much as the discovery that other politicians are playing politics.

*The task of a politician is to keep ahead of several crowds, each going in a different direction*

Despite the promises of politicians, we shall never achieve an equal and satisfactory distribution of wealth, rainfall or parking spaces



**I**t is not by chance that Westbury has one of the finest community centres in the county. Not only does our Parish Hall boast one of the largest indoor social spaces outside the main towns, with a fine stage and proscenium arch, a well-appointed kitchen and a licensed lounge bar but it is also surrounded by extensive well-tended playing fields. The addition of changing facilities for players of rugby, football and cricket completes the picture of a rural facility catering for a rich diversity of activities.

The story of the Parish Hall goes back some 80 years, and demonstrates how, when like-minded and determined people come together, united by a vision for their community, then anything is possible. Not all the names from those early days are familiar today, but their problems and the effort are. After three years of fund raising whist drives, organised by a Mr and Mrs Robinson., the first committee was formed in 1943, under the chairmanship of Mr. C.J Boughton, and so began a long succession of money raising efforts, beginning with a fete at Adsett Court.

In 1946, four acres of land was purchased and in 1951 a further two acres were acquired. It was hoped to provide enough space for football, hockey and cricket pitches and tennis courts.. On Coronation Day, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1953, Mrs Bernard of Adsett Court presided over the official opening of the playing



fields.

The fund raising effort did not flag, raising over £300 per annum. Following further fundraising, a loan raised by the Parish Council and a grant from Gloucestershire Education Committee, electricity was installed in the new hall in November 1956, and in March 1957, 180 chairs were purchased. The Hall was ready to be hired, with rates based on those charged by Ruardean Hall, and the Young Farmers hired it for their annual ball on October 19<sup>th</sup> 1957. Since then, successive committees have continued to expand and improve the facilities, including the addition of a comfortable lounge with licensed bar and purpose built changing rooms, while maintaining the fabric, installing a new floor and roof and replacing the wiring not to mention many decorating working parties. But we must never forget how much we owe to those early pioneers.

*...and so to the present*

As most people realise, not much is happening at the Parish Hall in these difficult times, but the committee still holds its virtual meetings on Zoom in order to stay in touch with such issues as may arise. Clive Tempest reported that the changing rooms were still used at football matches, with social distancing and track and trace regulations being observed. Our Treasurer, Sarah Mit-

ten reported despite the lack of income, the financial situation was stable, and in a worst case scenario, the Projects Account should last out until February or March. She suggested a review of fundraising activities, adding that there were a few small bills outstanding and a water bill of uncertain size. There was no immediate need to dip into reserves as we faced only general running costs and could probably survive for eight months without resorting to reserves. Jan confirmed that she had negotiated with Biffa to change from a weekly to a fortnightly collection.

For the Severndipity Club (bar), Gen Riley announced that the AGM would take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November, and the committee hoped to be able to extend the community bar after football and rugby matches. In the meanwhile they were taking care not to overstock in these unpredictable times, and would be applying for a 'Bounce back' loan. Fundraising continued, with Jan's cream teas raising £230, and these were so well received that she had agreed to repeat them at Christmas. Gumbies Pizza and the Fish & Chip Van in the car park would be asked back as a percentage of the takings is passed to the Hall.

The main hall was still being used by the Zumba classes and Diddy rugby, and Westbury School had booked the hall for rehearsals, and a wedding was booked for August.

#### **Odds & Ends**

It was agreed to acquire a first aid kit, enhanced to be covid safe. The chains supporting the pump in the sewage system would need to be changed and Jan proposed that quotes be obtained for the installation of a ventilation system.

Di Landon drew attention to the pro-



posed housing development in Churcham (see page 1) Mike Edginton said that the Short Mat Bowls Club were hoping to restart under new regulations and were seeking a 'Safe Bowls' certificate.

Jan confirmed that the November meeting would also be conducted via Zoom, when she would once again wear slippers. So we all waved and slowly disappeared from the screen. *Ed*

### Message from the Chair of the Parish Hall

The update for October - very few changes and very few bookings and it does not look like things will change dramatically in the next month. We make our kitchen Covid safe in for groups who wish to use it to prepare takeaway food, but unfortunately this assurance came too late for Westbury Young Farmers, who are always welcome at the Parish Hall. I would also like to thank Mike and Ed Edginton for setting the posts in cement around the car park.

Remember...  
Keep washing your hands  
Cover face in enclosed spaces  
Make space - 2 metres apart

*And Keep Safe  
Jan D'Ambrogio*

A man walks into a pub and there's a horse behind the bar serving drinks. He stares at the horse in amazement until the horse says "What's the matter, haven't you ever seen a horse serving drinks before?"

It's not that," says the man, "I just can't believe the parrot sold up".



THE ROYAL British Legion will not be collecting door to door for this year's Poppy Appeal due to the coronavirus crisis. Instead, Beryl and John Watts have placed collection boxes in the places listed below and one can also donate at supermarkets and online. The Legion's work is more vital than ever this year as they support people from all generations who have new hardships as a result of Covid-19, so please give generously. Boxes are at **Chaxhill Garage, Chaxhill Care home, Westbury Dentist, Severn and Wye Smokery, The Lyon Inn, Elton Country Store, Elton Garage, Westbury School, Westbury Church and the Barn Auction House, Adsett.**

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### Church Times

**November 1st at 3.00pm**, Westbury Church, All Souls Service.

**November 8th at 10.45am**, Minsterworth Churchyard, Remembrance Service for Westbury and Minsterworth.

**November 29th at 10.00am**, Westbury Church, Benefice Communion for Advent.



*Where's the toilet? The food's faster than I thought*

## Walmore Hill News

**W**e have just started our half-term break and hope the sun shines so that we can go on some autumn walks. The past weeks seem to have flown by...the children have been working hard and it has been a pleasure to work and play alongside them.

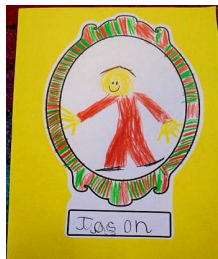
Much of school life is the same as before Covid...The children feel safe and



happy and continue to flourish. They are able to follow our guidance and are used to

washing their hands more often! Some things are different, such as not sitting together in the hall for school assemblies, but Reverend Steve leads his weekly assembly via Zoom each week. We also have to teach all of our P.E. sessions outdoors. The children in both classes are really enjoying their Friday rugby sessions with Sam, who is based at Gloucester Rugby Club. Our younger children are always excited to see Sam and love running around the playground with him before the lesson starts, once he has set up the equipment! I have included some photos of the children's work from Cygnets Class. They have produced some lovely art work over the term.

*Mrs. Suzanne Loten, Cygnets Class Teacher*



## Weather Record –September

**Y**ou may have a vague recollection of what the weather was like last month, or you may have a very precise memory of when the sun shone and when it didn't. Either way, **Simon Phelps** provides his handy check...

Warmest Day 14/9/20. 26.5c

Warmest Night 8/9/20 14c

Coollest Day 26/9/20 12c

Coollest Night 28/9/20 0c

Wettest Day 24/9/20 12mm

Total Number of Wet Days 7

Total Rainfall 27mm

Average Maximum Temperature 19.3c

Average Minimum Temperature 8.1c

Predominant Wind Direction South West

The 8, 14, 15, 16 were very humid days

The 21, 22, 28 had misty dawns.

## Road Closures

**Chapel Lane** in Ley will be closed from 8am until 4.30pm on Mon 23rd November in order for a BT pole to be replaced and **Goose Lane** will be closed from 8am until 4.30pm on Tues 24<sup>th</sup> November for the same reason.



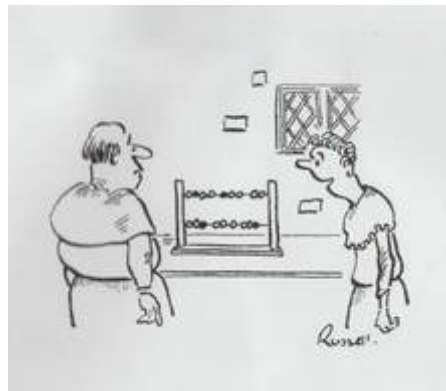
*"Local character with a fund of interesting stories. Buy me a pint and I'll clear off"*

## Food at the Parish Hall

Although most of our usual social occasions at the Parish Hall have been knocked sideways by the coronavirus, we were still able to enjoy a culinary treat when Made Without Gluten brought their catering van to the Hall car park on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Delicious fish and chips were much enjoyed by Ed. and family and we hope that many others had a night off from cooking. The next offering will be from Gumbie's Wood Fired Pizzas on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov (see ad on right) and you will need to pre-order as I don't think we were the only ones who were too late on their last visit.



*A newly married couple had decided to be responsible and make their wills. Waiting in the solicitor's office they talked to each other in hushed tones. "I'm so glad we decided to do this darling", said the earnest young man. "I want you to know", he continued, "if something happened to me, I wouldn't mind if you got married again. The only thing I would ask is that you don't let him wear any of my clothes." "I understand, darling," replied his bright eyed young wife, "you've no need to worry, they wouldn't fit him anyway".*



*"Come on, Dad. You should make an effort to understand the new technology"*

A fellow was strolling along the bank of a river one lovely summer's day when he came across a fisherman. "Is this river good for fish?" he asked casually. "It must be" came the reply, "I can't get any of the beggars to come out."



# Westbury Sport

## Rugby

**W**ith the ongoing COVID saga, and with the RFU not having announced any future return to playing plans, Chairman Ken and Vice Chair Simon along with coach Stan have decided to suspend training until further notice.

There was much sorrow amongst the players, perhaps a Westbury Rugby V Westbury FC or Westbury players football game could be on the cards.

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## Football

### *Huntley FC 5 : 2 Westbury Utd FC*

**O**n a weekend when the Premiership champions conceded seven goals and the self styled "biggest club in the world" shipped in six goals, Westbury Utd outperformed these Goliaths by only conceding a mere five goals at Huntley on Oct 3rd.

On a gusty, sodden day, soaked in seemingly permanent twilight Westbury travelled to Huntley, having spent the entire week trying to recruit a goalkeeper - an effort including checking availability within the press corps.

However, cometh the hour young Geraint Williams stepped into the soggy breach and took up the challenge. Sadly within 5 minutes Westbury found themselves 2 goals down as the wind, rain, and a lack of inches all conspired to allow Huntley to find the net from crosses into the box.

However after that Westbury fought back well and played some fine football given the conditions, although some of the passing seemed to be a little wayward and it is hard to remember a single header won in

midfield. Akeen twisted and turned in intricate patterns with great displays of close control until he was inevitably bundled off the ball by the Huntley defence. Ben Macinerney was excellent in attack and defence and Joe D'Ambrogio had a very encouraging debut on the right side of midfield. Tom Landon won more balls in the air than he did the previous week when he was allowed to catch it, despite wearing what seemed like his py-jamas under his football strip.

However, despite a string of excellent saves from Williams, now growing into the role, Hunt-



ley continued to pour forward and scored regularly.

When all seemed very gloomy at 5-0 down a sudden surge of flowing football allowed firstly Akeen through to score and then soon after Cuds pulled another back in the last minute which dulled some of the pain of defeat.

Director of Football Tempest was somewhat downcast, his efforts at raising the team's morale by dressing as Trebor mint was unsuccessful and he was reduced to gloating to the crowd that his neoprene lined Wellington boots gave superior warmth for his toes than the rest of the crowds cheapo Tesco efforts.

However in one respect Westbury

dominated, our supporters outnumbered the Huntley contingent to a ratio of 10:1, (well we had 10 supporters).

In an unexpected twist, your correspondents decision not to write up detailed match reports for the subsequent two miserable losses to Harrow Hill and then Howle Hill backfired when the following game, an expected glorious victory (and write-up) against Ruardean Hill Reserves was cancelled following a COVID 19 outbreak in their club, forcing all their games to be binned. Thus I am forced back onto my faltering memory to report on the two games against two identical sounding teams with similar results. I'll be brief though. Harrow Hill Reserves should have presented no great problem for Westbury 1st XI but a lethargic opening saw them concede 3 goals before, in a last gasp effort, they hauled two goals back. The game was marred by some poor officiating with poor Anthony Owens conceding a penalty for a phantom trip in the box as the Harrow Hill player theatrically hurled himself over Owens' innocent thigh. His protestations unfortunately led to a red card from a referee clearly conscious he was being assessed by league officials. Tom Landon was also sent to the sin bin for arguing (welcome to my last 25 years, ref) and Westbury finished with 9 men on the field. On the plus side there were fine goals from Morgan and Akeen and a welcome debut for Alex Gray although he subsequently went off for a knee operation (unrelated to the football, I hasten to add).

On that subject I must update that Jerome Lee is unfortunately out for the season as result of his knee injury (and not the hapless remedial efforts of the Director of Football).

After such a poor display an improvement was required against Howle Hill (I appreciate this is beginning to sound like a speech therapists exercise class, but this is honestly a different team). However, despite dominating possession throughout the game Westbury conspired to lose courtesy of a penalty conceded by young Ivo who, in shame, promptly left the country for Bulgaria until next March. Who said the Director Tempest doesn't rule with a rod of iron?!

Attentive readers may remember that Baccary was likened to a man who couldn't hit a barn door with a banjo last season such was his profligacy in front of goal. Well this season poor Cuds endured a similar day at the sharp end although he has more of the demeanour of a man preferring to sit and play the said banjo whilst being blissfully unaware of the swinging barn door behind him. Only the introduction of veteran Robbie Snelgrove, bustling barrel chested and bouncing defenders around like a pinball operator, brought hope to the crowd and his high quality free kick in the dying moments was agonisingly tipped away by an equally high quality save by the equally barrel chested keeper. Thus Westbury slumped to another narrow defeat. In a terse post-match interview Director of Football Tempest lambasted everybody saying “mmmmppphh phmar



warghh....” before being reminded he still had his face mask on. By the time he had removed it he had to put it on again to go into the bar and then tried to drink his beer through it. This pandemic is beginning to take its toll in a wide variety of ways. *Mark Landon*



### The Lyon

**G**ood news is in rather short supply at present, but the re-opening of the Lyon certainly fits the bill. On Mondays to Wednesdays, it is open from 5pm until 10pm and on Thursdays through to Sundays from 12 noon until 10pm. Takeaways are available from Mon –Weds while the restaurant menu and daily specials are served on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings with the traditional Sunday roast— on Sundays.



### What’s On at the Pictures?



**T**he Palace Cinema in Cinderford, which is one of the oldest cinemas in Britain, has been working hard to ensure that you can safely have a night at the pictures. Both their screens are operating but at reduced capacity to keep you safe. You will need to book in advance either on the website [cinder-pal.com](http://cinder-pal.com) or by calling 01594 822555.

*It will not have escaped the notice of our more astute readers that in these covid plagued times of limited social and community activity, we are a little short of content. So here are a few gratuitous pictures with little relevance to anything, except perhaps nostalgia.*



*Westbury United 1917*



### *Ready for Guy Fawkes Night in 2005*

*Unfortunately, some Saturday night revellers took a shine to our Guy and kid-napped him before we had a chance to put him on the bonfire!*

### **Bygone Westbury** (from 2005)

Anyone with a little time to spare, and an interest in Westbury's past, could do worse than spend a while studying the tithe map of 1841. The name of each field tells us something about its past, and their shape and form is the result of many changes in farming over the centuries.

Such names as Daffydilly Ground, Leaping Orchard and Parting Meadow conjure up images such as those we associate with the novels of Thomas Hardy – a time when the majority of a less crowded population earned their living from the land. Some fields acquired their names from what grew there, such as Persh Bed where osiers grew, or Bannatree Piece, from the old name for a walnut tree.

Others were identified by who had once owned or farmed them, such as Aston Gast, after William de Aston or Capons Hay - Capon being a 13<sup>th</sup> century surname. Some were descriptive of the



*2009 - The Third year of Westbury Youth Project. What a lot of growing up has happened since then.*

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Everything perishes through use...should I not rejoice at being useless?  
*Zhuang Zi*

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terrain – Little Hammocks, from 'hommock' meaning 'rough ground' or The Nigh, which meant a water meadow – and others described the size or shape of the field, such as Fifteen Acres or Leg and Foot.

The names also give clues to the wildlife, with the buzzards still often seen over Buzzards Piece, although whether there are still badgers in Badgers Meadow I do not know. Lastly, we can also gain insight into past uses of the field for

Playsteads was clearly a place for games and Malsden apparently means "speech hill" and was therefore possibly the original assembly place of Westbury Hundred. My favourite, however, is Patience Landon Meadow - although patience is not always a strong Landon trait! *Di Landon*

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