



Load ‘ditched’ in Church Lane

On Tuesday 23rd February, Church Lane had to be closed when a lorry went into the ditch and hit the electricity pole. The power to several local properties was interrupted but Western Power had it back on by 10.30pm. A recovery team was

there until after midnight and started work again the next morning when they had to try and work out how to shift the lorry. In the end, it took three days to unload the timber by hand before the offending lorry could be hauled back on to the road and away by Caldicot Recovery.

Parish Council

February's Parish Council meeting was again held on Zoom, which is fast beginning to seem like the norm, with eight parish councillors signed in. Top of the agenda, after the formalities, was the only planning application this month, which was for a two storey extension at Perricks Farm in Northwood Green, which we agreed to support. Joining us for this part of the meeting was a childminder from Broadoak, whose planning application to use her home for childminding had been refused by the District Council. Her services are clearly much needed in this area and the refusal was solely due to objections by the Highways department regarding the exit on to the A48 and so it was suggested that she appeal against the decision.

Fiona had sent us the results of some other applications before the meeting. Permission had been granted for a variation in the plans for a single storey extension at Ridgeway in Stantway Lane, the enlargement of the residential curtilage and the siting of a log cabin at Boseley House and the erection of detached annexe accommodation at Brick House Farm, Northwood Green. An application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed erection of a building for agricultural or forestry use at Joe's Wood, Blaisdon, was approved. However, the application for the erection of a rural agricultural manager's dwelling at Moys Hill Farm in Strand Lane had been refused.

Churcham development Over 6,500 people signed the petition against this development, which entitles the public to demand that the matter is discussed

at a full District Council meeting and this is likely to take place on 12th April.

Ley Park A few parishioners have expressed their concern about several small buildings that are being erected in Ley Woods. The area has been divided into small parcels of land that have been bought by private individuals, some of whom have put up various small shelters and sheds. We were uncertain as to the planning regulations



A building in Ley Woods

that would apply in this situation and therefore consulted the planning enforcement officer, who has now been to have a look round and will send us his advice. As the buildings are generally temporary structures it is likely that most of them will be permissible. Local residents have been used to walking and jogging in these woods for many years and there are numerous public footpaths and bridleways through the woods which can still be used. However, the owners of these parcels of land are often keen to keep their land private, and so there is the potential for a clash of interest. We hope that everyone who gets enjoyment from this beautiful area will be tolerant of the needs of those who may wish to enjoy it in a different way.

At this point, our County Councillor Brian Robinson joined us with a report on the Council's recent budget meeting. It had been decided that an increase of 1.99% on Council Tax is necessary together with an extra 2.76% on the social

care levy. This is largely due to the ageing population and the fact that around 800 of the county's children are in care. Brian also reported that Children's Services are still inadequate, as they were when inspected by Ofsted four years ago, but a more recent Ofsted report describes them as "still on the road to recovery, with continued weaknesses in some areas." It also shows that staff turnover has fallen, as has the local authority's reliance on agency staff.

Highways Unsurprisingly, flooding was the big issue on our roads this month. However, the drains in Goose Lane had been rodded and the Internal Drainage Board had cleared the ditch, although John Henry reported that there was still one drain not flowing out into the ditch. Later that week, Chairman Simon Phelps toured the parish's trouble spots with Nathan from the Highways department and spent some time on the Flaxley Road where a jetter lorry was trying to get the water moving but apparently the pipes at the bottom of the field are now blocked. At that time, Adsett Lane and Poultons Hill were still flooded and Simon also showed him the bad state of Church Lane, Frowens Lane and Lower Ley Lane and reminded him about the dodgy drains along the A48.

On the subject of flooding, Simon is also meeting with Severn Trent as the main sewers are just not coping, especially after heavy rain. This affects Stantway, Northwood Green and the fields below Colchester Close.

Burial Ground

Mike Townsend has ordered two trees to replace those that had died and Simon has stakes to support them. Simon expressed his thanks to Pam Ensor and Mike Matthews who had

trimmed the hedge and removed the ivy to tidy up the area for the cremation graves.

A second contractor had been to look at the drainage project for the extension to the burial ground and another was due to view the area shortly.

Play Area A working party is planned for next month and new seats for the swings are on order.

Footpaths One of the footpaths in Ley Woods has been washed away in the recent bad weather and the footpath from the A48 at Hartland Hill over to Walmore Common is still blocked.

Dog waste bin Fiona had details of a company that will supply and empty dog waste bins. It was felt that the village would benefit from one of these and that the best site would be somewhere close to the churchyard.

Climate Change I reported on a recent Zoom meeting about climate change that I had attended and suggested that we join the national Greening Campaign. However, this does require the help of a good number of local residents and as I have not been able to enlist many enthusiasts at the moment, we felt that it was better to wait until enough people came forward before we join.

Other matters The amount of litter scattered around our lanes is appalling. We know that several residents have done their best to clear the debris but it was agreed that we should organise a litter pick on a grand scale. High viz waistcoats and litter pickers can be provided.

Our new closed churchyard gardener, James Walkley-Cox, has got off to a great start and it was agreed, at his suggestion, that we get five new nest boxes to place in the trees and these are now in situ.



COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

If you would be willing to help with this, please contact either Simon Phelps on 760765 or me (Di) on 760531. Date to be arranged.



The perils of Zoom meetings were all too apparent recently, with angry men shouting at a very calm woman at a Parish Council meeting and a participant in a meeting in the US being turned into a cat. So far the meetings of the Parish Hall Management Committee have all gone reasonably smoothly, but we'll all be on our guard next month.

The Hall is still closed, with no definite re-opening date, so there is not much activity to report. Maintenance continues, with the boiler being serviced and the pot holes in the car park being filled in by Mike Edginton. He has used a heavier aggregate on this occasion in order to ensure a longer life. Gentle use during lockdown might help it to bed in

more firmly.

Our fixed costs remain, but our Treasurer, Sarah Mitten, was able to report a healthy cushion in the various bank accounts. Chair Jan D'Ambrogio had finally located the water meter, and after a succession of estimated bills, it was a relief to find that we only owed £108, which has been paid.

Jan and Sarah have submitted another grant application, specifically for alterations to make the Hall more amenable to people with dementia associated problems. Replying to a question, Jan confirmed that the rent holiday for user groups, currently from March to September, would be extended to December, but stressed that the Hall still had outgoings.

Severndipity Club (bar)

The bar has been closed for some months now and so is currently showing a loss.

Fundraising

Jan confirmed that there was to be a Flower & Produce Show, virtual if necessary, and the schedule would be published in the Parish Magazine and here. Mark Brill asked if he would be required to supply a virtual barbecue!

Jan confirmed that we were taking no bookings until further information was available, but that we would need a rent review when the Hall did eventually re-open. She added that the AGM would be postponed until further notice, a decision ratified by the Charities Commission, and asked user groups to see if they could recruit members from amongst their number to stand as non-aligned members of the committee.

Odds and Ends

The public were using the Hall Biffa bin, which was now over full. This is another of the Hall's fixed costs, but we

don't want to lock it, so if you or someone you know is dumping household rubbish on us, please stop.
Finally, Jan had received a request from a local pensioner for a gymnasium at the Hall. We left that one hanging *Ed*

An update from our Chairman

The hall remains closed due to the lockdown and with the new Government Guidance we may see activity later in the month, but it will be limited. You will also see that the Flower and Produce Show is going ahead on Sept 5th and we are hoping that we will be able to build a Summer Show around this, but again we will have to see what we can and can't do and what the pros and cons are too.

At our February meeting we agreed to postpone our AGM, which should have been held in March. If you read my piece at the end of last year, you will be aware that up and coming committee members are few and far between and we have not been able to get out into the wider community and do a personal recruiting drive, due to the restrictions imposed on mixing and meeting during the pandemic.

Our current committee is great, and those who use the hall and playing fields are indebted to you for the work and support that is carried out, but our numbers are dwindling as committee members leave and are not replaced – as you will appreciate leaving a committee is relatively easy whereas finding a replacement is harder. One evening a month, and then some hours fundraising to maintain the infrastructure of the hall, is all we ask, and in return you could make new friends and feel a special bond with the hall and its future.

If you are interested send an e-mail to:
info@wosph.co.uk *Jan D'Ambrogio*

'Playgroup for grown ups'

is an idea being mooted by a few of us. Having been stuck at home for some considerable time with our socialising skills not being used, how about an evening when those who want to have a change of scenery can get together for a chat and a laugh, but with some structure attached to it too? Of course, this is all subject to Covid 19 guidelines and restrictions.

I am a total novice at gardening but that does not mean that I am not interested in it and, as a starter for the 'playgroup for grown ups,' I would love to see seeds being planted and maybe some raised beds made and placed around the Parish Hall. This would not only enhance the hall but would be another step towards becoming a greener community and give some of us encouragement to do this at home too. This is just an idea and if there are like-minded people out there I suggest that, when we know what we can and cannot do, we meet and see how many of us there are and take it from there.

New year, old ideas, new ideas, old friends, new friends.... Getting back to normality as best as
If interested let Jan know
info@wosph.co.uk



"So far so good. He's turned up"

Closed Churchyard

We are looking forward to the spring and the end of lockdown so that we can get back to our monthly working parties in the churchyard. Our new churchyard gardener, James Walkley-Cox, has got off to a flying start and has created a wildlife friendly plan, mown the paths and put up five new nest boxes.

Perhaps it is the extra time that we are spending at home, but I think many of us have been taking a more active interest in the birds that visit our gardens, and after James saw a handsome male blackcap while working in the churchyard, he has been inspired to start a churchyard list. So far he has seen the following: rook, jackdaw, carrion crow, magpie, wood pigeon, collared dove, blue tit, long tailed tit, great tit, blackcap, song thrush, fieldfare, redwing, blackbird, robin, starling and house sparrow. A pretty impressive list - so if on your walks through the churchyard you see any more to add to it, please let us know.

Our working parties will re-start on Sat 13th March from 10am until 1pm and we welcome anyone who would like to join us. At the moment we will still need to bring our own refreshments and please also bring your own tools. The primroses and snowdrops have been magnificent this year and we look forward to seeing what else springs up this year. *Di Landon*

Road Closure

Church Lane will be closed for surveying works for a distance of approximately 100 metres between Brimstone Cottage and Coldstream between the hours of 08:00 and 17:00 on 30th March 2021 or until the works have been completed.

Greening Westbury

Are you or your organisation interested in helping to create a 'greener' Westbury?

As we begin to come out of Lockdown, we could be looking towards a better, cleaner and greener future, but we need to start to build that future now. Many other communities have started successful 'greening' campaigns which encourage and support local people and businesses to take easy and straightforward steps to reduce energy consumption and waste – and working together in this way makes it more fun as well as achieving meaningful changes. If you are interested in this project, please let me know. diana.landon12@gmail.com

This month's suggestions are:-

1. Halve your food waste by making a meal plan and using up leftovers – this can save you an estimated £252 per year and save 312kg per year of CO2 emissions.
2. Adopt reusable containers for food. The average child's school lunch generates 67 lbs of packaging waste over a year
3. Recycle all your paper Recycling one ton of paper saves 7,000 gallons of water, three cubic yards of landfill space and 4,100 kilowatt-hours of electricity
4. Close the curtains at dusk in the winter. This keeps the warmth in your home. When warm air touches the cold window it cools and so you need more power to warm your home. This will reduce your CO2 and save you money.
5. Turn the tap off when you brush your teeth. This saves water and reduces your water bill each month. A running tap uses up to nine litres of water a minute.

Di Landon

EU CITIZENS LIVING IN THE UK

The EU Settlement Scheme is open for applications for all EU, EEA (European Economic Area) and Swiss citizens (including any non-EU family members) who live in the UK, and want to continue to have the right to live, work and study in the UK following Brexit.

The deadline for applying to the EU Settlement Scheme is 30 June 2021.

To protect the rights you currently have in the UK, including access to health-care, benefits and pensions, please apply at: [gov.uk/eusettlementscheme](https://www.gov.uk/eusettlementscheme). Irish citizens or those with valid indefinite leave don't need to apply.

Citizens Advice and Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS) are partnering with Gloucestershire County Council to offer free advice and help to any individuals or families applying to the EU Settlement Scheme. Please contact Citizens Advice (jennie.watts@gloscab.org.uk / 01452 527202 ext 262) or GARAS (admin@garas.org.uk / 01452 550528).

Newnham Post Office

The Parish Council has now received official notification regarding the decision to move Newnham Post Office into Shop at the Ship at High Street, Newnham, where it will be operated by a retail partner. The letter states that "All the feedback we received helped us in making our decision. . . After careful consideration of the feedback received, we remain confident that the layout and location of the new branch will continue to meet customer needs . . . whilst securing the long-term viability of Post Office services . . . further information will be provided in branch once the dates have been agreed."

This communication from the Post Office has been shortened for reasons of space. Ed

Hetty Pritchard



Viv Hargreaves paid tribute to Hetty at her funeral on 22nd February. Sadly we did not have space for the full tribute.

Everyone loved Hetty. She had that rare ability to capture the hearts of all who were lucky enough to meet her – including Bob and me.

I was trying to think back to the first time our paths crossed, sometime in the mid-1990s at Birdwood garden centre, and I remember her beautiful smile, her friendliness and laughter. And at about that time, she and Glyn brought Nathan down to the parish hall for junior rugby sessions, where my sons played and I helped out.

You could tell straight away which parents were going to be a help or a hindrance. She and Glyn were firmly in the former category. They would transport our young players to away matches and do anything you asked of them. Hetty would often help me make hotdogs after the training sessions. It was a great time for the junior club and it was lovely to see Nathan reviving this in recent years. A few years later, Hetty and Glyn moved into the crossing keeper's bungalow at Broken Cross and a long and wonderful friendship began. They were

the best neighbours ever – and I know Pip and Gill Woodman felt exactly the same.

Hetty and Glyn were great gardeners – and Glyn was something of an expert wine maker. We'd often enjoy the fruits of their labours together, listening to Glyn's anecdotes on life as a woodman and their story as a family. He even created a Chateau Broken Cross with our grapes one year!



Hetty was an essential source of background knowledge for me when I was editing the Forester – simply because she knew everyone!

I will always remember the time she came with me on our Save our Hospitals protest to London with 400 other Foresters. After a torturous journey we all made it to the Houses of Parliament and presented a petition at No 10. We saved the hospitals in 2007 but things are a little different today... Despite her love of life, things didn't run smoothly for Hetty and her family, starting with the tragic loss of daughter Louise in a road accident on the A48. And later the death, six years ago, of the love of her life, Glyn. This was another body blow, compounded by her own failing health.

Hetty's resilience and courage in the face of adversity was unparalleled. I

don't know how she managed to stay positive – at least on the outside - as her own health deteriorated. But I do know that her family and the army of friends she had attracted over the years certainly helped.

I will always picture Hetty sitting at her kitchen table using our own special sign language through the window. A little robin keeps reminding me of her presence as I try to see her face in the window.... *Viv Hargreaves*

Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks?

If so, Walking in Gloucestershire www.walkinginengland.co.uk/glos is the website for you! With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is there in one place.

Walking in Gloucestershire is part of the Walking in England suite of websites www.walkinginengland.co.uk – one for each county in England - so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

Some historic misprints

“Here the couple stood, facing the floral setting and exchanged cows”.

“Why rend your garments elsewhere when our up-to- date laundry can do the work more effectively?”

“Len Hutton carried his bath through the innings”



ageUK Gloucestershire has launched a campaign to make Gloucestershire the best county in which to grow older. Population forecasts suggest that by 2040 the over 65 population in the county will reach 206,000. To ensure that everyone has a chance to enjoy their later life, we need to remove the barriers that older people face to participation in their communities. This would mean:-

Public transport that helps older people get around safely and efficiently.

High streets and public spaces with seating, toilets and paving that gives older people the confidence to get out and about.

Options for housing that support people as their needs change.

An end to ageism – with older people valued and not dismissed because of their chronological age.

Easily accessible information which will help people make informed choices about how to live their lives.



“Walter! Is that mother’s picture?”

The census is coming

By taking part, you can help inform decisions on services that shape your community, such as healthcare, education and transport. The census is a unique survey that happens every 10 years. It gives us a snapshot of all the people and households in England and Wales – the most detailed information we have about our society.

It’s important that you fill in your census questionnaire. Without the information you share, it’d be more difficult to understand your community’s needs and to plan and fund public services. In one way or another, your information touches the lives of every single person living in England and Wales, whether it’s through using census information to plan new schools, doctors’ surgeries or bike lanes.

Because these things matter to us all, everyone needs to complete the census. Do not worry, government officials dealing with applications you’ve made or payments or services you receive cannot see it. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) runs the census in England and Wales and is independent from government. Your details are protected by law and information published is always anonymous.

Census Day is Sunday 21 March 2021. You can fill yours in online as soon as you get your access code in the post. Everyone should have the support they need to fill in the census. If you or anyone you know needs help, there’s a wide range of support services available. These include a contact centre that can give you assistance over the phone and guidance in a range of languages and accessible formats, including paper

questionnaires and large print.
If you need help or have any questions,
visit www.census.gov.uk

You can request support for yourself, or
someone else, including:

- guidance and help in many
languages and formats
- a paper version of the ques-
tionnaire, if you prefer
- accessible census guidance, for
example, in braille
- If your household circum-
stances change on Census Day,
you can let the ONS know.

Northwood Green Gardening Club

Thursday 11 March.
ZOOM Presentation

Hellebores

Andrew Mikolajski is a well-known
gardening writer, who regularly contrib-
utes to gardening magazines and the
RHS.

Visitors £3 - please contact
karen.f.johnson@btinternet.com or call
01452 760970.

New members are very welcome at an
annual fee of £12.



Walmore Hill News

So some positive news at last...we
are looking forward to welcom-
ing all of our children back to
Walmore Hill on Monday 8th March.

I wonder how we will settle back in to
normal lessons again? I'm sure the chil-
dren will be keen to learn and will love
being with their friends again. We are
really fortunate to have such beautiful
grounds at Walmore Hill and are wait-
ing for a dry and sunny day so we can
do some gardening with the children.
Our outdoor planters are full of spring
bulbs, a cheerful reminder that Spring is
not far away.

We have continued teaching in school
and adding activities to Google Class-
room every day. Several staff have
learnt how to use Zoom and have loved
teaching the children and having a chat
with their families each week. I even
look forward to teaching via Zoom
now, after feeling anxious initially
about the technical side of things! It has
been a lovely way of keeping in touch
with some of the children who have had
to stay at home over the past term.

I can think about planning for the rest of
the term now and am pleased that we
will be in school to take part in some
joyful Easter celebrations. I am sure we
will be working hard in our English and
Maths lessons, but will be keen to en-
rich the children's experiences by
spending time outdoors, participating in
art and musical activities, as well as
P.E. sessions. Hopefully I will have
some photos to share when the next
edition of the magazine is published.

With best wishes,

*Mrs. Suzanne Loten,
EYFS and Key Stage 1 teacher*

Church Times

Dear Parishioners,
Due to the retirement of the Reverend Steve Taylor, the Parish (and the Benefice) has entered a period of Interregnum, or in other words has gone into Vacancy. This means that we will be without a resident clergyman until a replacement is appointed. Due to various reasons, this could be the situation for at least twelve months or more.

During such times it is usual for the Church Wardens to assume some of the administrative duties of the vicar. Under these circumstances if any parishioners wish to make contact with the Parish Church, both Annette Ellis and I acting as Church Wardens, will be happy to assist you with any matters that you may wish to discuss, the Reverend Sarah Hobbs has also volunteered to work alongside us.

Should you wish to contact one of us, our telephone numbers are as follows:
Reverend Sarah Hobbs 01594 517157
Annette Ellis 01452 760233
Simon Phelps 01452 760765

With regard to Church Services we are awaiting guidance from the Government, it is hoped that we will once again be in a position to recommence some of the usual services, albeit on a limited basis to begin with. I am pleased to be able to relate that the PCC are about to instruct that the work of restoring the Tower Clock to full working order, can soon begin. We all look forward to the life of the Parish returning to normality.
Simon Phelps Churchwarden

An apology is the superglue of life. It can repair just about anything
Lynn Johnston

Community Transport

Lycare seems to be operating, although no further details are available. Telephone Edna on 01594 544414 for further details

Lydney Dial a Ride is still operating for essential journeys and that will include those attending their vaccination appointments. Due to the pandemic it is a reduced service and spaces are limited. However they have a small team of dedicated drivers, along with a fleet of wheelchair accessible minibuses and they are operating from 9am until 4pm Monday to Friday.

All passengers have to join as members but the information can be taken over the telephone and will only take a few minutes. It is a door to door service and all the drivers have undertaken training as well as being fully DBS checked. If you do know of someone who needs this service, please contact them on 01594 843809.

For hospital transport please contact E-Zec medical transport who will check your eligibility *Tel: 01278 726968*

With signs of spring all around, January's cold and snow seem far behind us. However, Simon Phelps's weather report will bring it all back to us.

Warmest Day: 13th and 28th 12.5c

Warmest Night: 19/20th 7.5c

Coolest Day: 8th 0.5c

Coolest Night: 24/25th -7c

Wettest Day 20th 24mm

Total Rainfall 131.5mm

Days with Rain or Snow 22

Snow fell on 2nd, 8th, 22nd, 24th, 25th and 31st

Nights with Frost 20

Predominant Wind Direction Northerlies

Average Max Temperature for January 5.6c

Average Min Temperature for Jan -0.7c.

Fantasy Sports Report

Traditionally this would be the period of the year when football training sessions are at their coldest, bleakest and most sparsely attended and likewise rugby training goes on under refrigerated conditions with floodlights illuminating forwards and backs splashing and rolling around on a shadowy muddy patch of field that last saw a blade of grass in December, before it was pummelled below the surface by soggy size 10 boots. It's usually about now when cricket gear is pulled out from under the bed / out of the shed and dusted off and taken to nets so that aged batsmen can get peppered by stir crazy wannabe fast bowlers and later, to add insult to injury, then have to drive them home because they haven't passed their driving test yet.

Happy days then, as we are locked in and reduced to watching sport on TV. That's my spin on it anyway. In news terms, now that the Director of Football has stopped whinging about his jab - having eventually been called in by the long suffering vaccination team - and the club secretary has finally decided against taking the knee in support of the Big Noses Matter campaign on account of his creaking knees then little has been heard from the football club. Cricket, one can only imagine, involves thousands of imaginary cover drives being played in bedrooms and kitchens around the village with a variety of objects used as proxy for a bat in readiness for the upcoming season - whenever that may be. The smart money is the first game of the season seeing a complete batting collapse as everyone is bowled out playing an expansive cover

drive to their first ball, a shot that went for four when it was played in the sitting room with the TV remote as a bat. My indoor rowing campaign has been somewhat truncated due to domestic complaints about the loud grunting and groaning interrupting work from home efforts and its far too cold to go running. Therefore I can't give any fitness tips but I can confirm that a Liverpoolian Newnham-it's top tip for dieting (eat as much as you like and maintain normal carbohydrate intake via bread and potatoes) doesn't work.

Anyway, the evenings are stretching out so with any luck and a following wind, bats, balls, nets, arguing with the referee and throwing cricket bats to the ground in disgust will soon be back on the agenda ! *Mark Landon*

Mrs Ed, as some of you know, is a bit of a local historian, and when researching some subject, be it the workhouse, an industry, or a parishioner, she found that parish magazines from the period are extremely informative. It is for that reason that a few years ago we offered copies of the WoSP to the archivist in Gloucester, who accepted with some alacrity. We shall soon have a further bundle for him. I mention this only to let you know that in a few hundred year's time, when perhaps Westbury is part of the large Gloucester suburb of Westminsterworth, some future historian may discover what a delightful place it was to live in back in the 20th and 21st centuries, although they may be confused to discover that it appeared to have a Lord of the Manor called Dirk Storm.

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