



What a Load of Rubbish!

One of the side effects of the pandemic and the resulting long winter lockdown has been the accumulation of litter of all descriptions, which has been scattered along the roads and lanes of our parish. Fortunately, several residents have been regularly picking it up in some parts of the parish but at our February Parish Council meeting it was decided that we

needed a litter pick on a grand scale. There was a bit of a hold up when the Forest of Dean District Council said that they were unable to supply the high viz jackets and picker uppers, but fortunately Richard Cook from Severn and Wye Smokery came to the rescue and supplied fifty of each, and we were able to set the date for 24th April. The power of social media was much in evidence

as our first appeal for volunteers on Facebook on 14th March brought well over 100 offers of help. I apologise if I failed to get back in touch with anyone who kindly volunteered, but with offers coming in via e-mail, Facebook, Facebook Messenger and the phone as well as in person, I'm afraid I began to lose track a little! However, by the time we were able to fix a date, the lockdown rules were beginning to ease and so not all the original volunteers were still available, but we still had an incredible turn out of over 60 people of all ages. Lots of fast food packaging, bottles and cans were picked up as well as a few unexpected items such as car tyres, number plates, a pair of jeans and some underpants! We followed Covid advice and met up at four separate locations where Simon Phelps, Debbie Hill, John Henry and I handed out the kit. The weather was beautifully sunny, the verges were brimming with spring growth and wildflowers, the birds were singing as if to encourage us and so who would have thought that clearing up other peoples' mess could be so enjoyable?

Westbury Young Farmers had nobly agreed to collect all the bags from around the parish and take them to the Parish Hall, from where the Council removed them on Monday morning. So it was a great community effort and many, many thanks to all those who took part. Several people suggested that we repeat the exercise, perhaps twice a year in future, so that we keep it tidy, and as I've already noticed a few bits of litter scattered where we have just cleared, I'm sure this will be necessary. Hopefully, with so many of us doing it, this will not be too arduous, but for the time being let us just enjoy our beautiful (and cleaner) surroundings.

Di Landon

Parish Council

I was late joining the Zoom Parish Council meeting this month but our clerk, Fiona, has kindly updated me on what I missed.

A minute's silence was held in memory of Prince Philip before the usual formalities, and there being no public comment, a start was made on the planning applications. Councillors had no objections to the erection of a single storey rear extension at Orchard Cottage in Rodley, or a first floor extension over the existing garage at Wintles Hill House. They supported the application for a portal framed agricultural building for cattle housing at Brook Farm and accepted the prior notification for the erection of a general purpose farm building at Boxbush Farm in Rodley. Note was taken of the discharge of conditions for work done at Wayside in Upper Rodley Road, and there were no objections to the proposed replacement dwelling and conversion of outbuildings at Keepers Cottage in Popes Hill.

Chairman Simon Phelps then gave an update on the proposed development at Churcham, with the news that, due to the large number of signatures on the petition against the development, this would now have to go before the full Council. As several councillors were standing in the County Council elections, the matter would therefore be delayed until the May meeting.

By the time I joined the meeting, the subject under discussion was Ley Woods, where there is still some controversy regarding paths and access rights, permitted buildings and the preservation of certain features, such as an ancient ditch which was recognised as

the parish boundary. Mike Townsend, who is a frequent visitor to the woods, says that there are often a lot of people about but he feels that most of the new owners are doing a good job in caring for their plot. Enforcement of planning regulations appears to be undergoing a lot of difficulties at present.

Following the review and signing of the accounts for the year ending 31st March 2021, we moved on to Highways matters. Pot holes, unsurprisingly, were the main topic especially those on the A48 near Minsterworth Butchers and at the junction between Hunt Hill and the A48. The sudden appearance of numerous trees planted on the roadside through the parish and in Minsterworth had been investigated and it appears that they were planted by Gloucestershire County Council as part of a scheme to replace the large number of trees that have had to be felled due to 'ash dieback'. Unfortunately, the Highways department of Gloucestershire County Council was not consulted any more than were Westbury or Minsterworth Parish Councils so many of the trees are not in the best position. However, it was felt that they should be left where they are at the moment as it is now the wrong time of year to move them, but that some may have to be moved next winter.

Burial Ground extension Two estimates have been received for the drainage work required for the new school playing field but in view of the sums involved efforts are being made to get one or two more, before a decision is made. Both the District Council and Sport England require detailed plans and so we decided to see if we could find out whether any other parishes have been in a similar situation and

might have helpful advice. It has been established that no grants are available from the Sports Council at the moment but they are sending us a list of grant-awarding bodies. John Henry and Alan Hyett are also looking at the fencing requirements for the site.

Play Area Mike Townsend is going to repair the worn area of play surface under the swings and Greenfields will be consulted about the edges of the surface which are lifting.

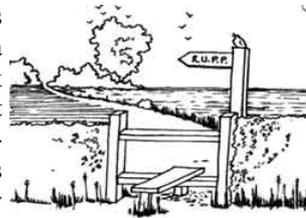
Footpaths

There has been quite a bit of work carried out on the parish's paths with a new bridge constructed and work done to clear a couple of paths near Frocester House in Northwood Green.

Climate Change and Environment

Our attention to the environment at the Parish Council recently has been focused on litter and the mess that this makes of our roadsides. The litterpick planned for 24th April (see page 1) was being well supported and had been greatly helped by Richard Cook's offer to supply 50 litterpicker sticks and high visibility tops, and the agreement by Westbury Young Farmers, via Ben Stephens, to collect all the full bags at the end of the day and take them to the Parish Hall, from where the District Council would collect them on the following Monday.

Dog Fouling This mainly seems to be a problem at Stantway and in the closed churchyard. This has been reported to the street warden and more signs will be put up.



Woodland Management As mentioned last month, the Parish Council had been asked if we were interested in managing an area of woodland at Poulton Court and it was agreed that we were, but as yet, no more has been heard about this from the Wildlife Trust.

Grass Cutting While we have had numerous compliments about the excellent standard of grass cutting in the closed churchyard, we have also had several complaints about the grass cutting elsewhere in the parish. Grass cuttings had been dumped over fences and two areas had not been mown at all, but these matters have been taken up with the contractor who has apologised, reduced his fee and agreed that this will not happen again.

Other matters There had been complaints that the parking spaces at the Strand are blocked by a breakdown truck which is parked there. There is a broken rail on the bench at Jordan's Hill which Mike Townsend will sort out and the District Council have said that they have decided to distribute FloodSax and Hydro snakes instead of sand bags to combat flooding in future.

The next meeting will be the Annual Parish Meeting which will be held via Zoom (as far as we know, at present) on Monday 17th May, starting at 6.30pm. If any of you would like to join the meeting, please email or ring our clerk, Fiona Wallbank, who will arrange this for you.

clerk@westburyonsevernpc.org.uk or on 01452 849178 *Di Landon*

The evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.



Chair Jan D'Ambrogio opened the April meeting of the Parish Hall Management Committee with a tribute to her late mother-in-law, Myra D'Ambrogio who had been an active member of the committee for many years, serving initially with her husband Joe, and latterly as the feisty representative of the Modern Sequence Dance group. Jan proposed a Sunday Tea sometime in July in her memory, and memorial dance night later in the year; all predicated on the course of this cursed pandemic.

Treasurer's Report

Sarah Mitten confirmed receipt of a small grant from the District Council to help us through these troubled times, which saved us from having to dip into our reserves for running costs, in the absence of any income. She went on to detail various outgoings, concluding that for the present the Hall finances are holding up. Replying to a question, Jan agreed to contact Biffa about waste disposal costs during lockdown. This is a tricky one, because although the Hall is not generating any waste, members of the public are still mistakenly using the bulk bins for their domestic waste. Clive Tempest noted that it was a remarkable achievement that we were surviving financially during the current crisis.

Projects

Jan confirmed that the plan to paint the exterior of the Hall would have to be

postponed, however it was agreed to spray the walls with mould remover, and a working party with knapsack sprayers was quickly assembled.

Severndipity Club (bar)

Gen Riley reported that the Severndipity committee had met the previous week, and noted that they had secured a grant from the Forest of Dean District Council. The balance in the bank was adequate and included a 'Bounceback' loan. It was agreed that the Severndipity Club would pay 50% rent until their income was restored. It was also agreed that a representative of the main committee and the Severndipity committee should meet monthly to review the financial position between the two.

Gen went on to explain that expenditure would be required for equipment as well as stock. She was acutely aware that the sports clubs were anxious to return to normal service, but under current regulations only outdoor table service was permitted and she asked for volunteers from the sports clubs to assist when, and if, matches resumed. Replying to a comment, Gen agreed that a strict cleaning regime would also be required.

We are becoming accustomed to these Zoom meetings, and they proceed with increasing efficiency, it was nevertheless a bit of a surprise to hear a whoop of delight from the direction of Jan's section of the screen. She was able to explain that in another room Bayern Munich had scored, which for some reason had pleased her husband. *Ed*

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused pain-killer during a root canal operation? His goal: transcendental medication.

Myra Jean D'Ambrogio (nee Grey)

My mother, Myra, was born in Stanley Town, Rhonda Valley on 13th August 1927, her father having gone from Westbury to Wales for work in the early 1920's, during the depression. She attended school in Wales up to the age of five and was very proud of her Welsh heritage. The family moved back to Westbury and stayed with her Granny Grey, who was Westbury's midwife, and her Uncle George Grey who lived at Ridgeway, Stantway Lane. There her younger brother Edward was born, delivered by Granny Grey.

Myra, her parents, older brother Leonard and Edward then moved to Popes Hill where the kids walked to Littledean school through Chestnut Woods.

When Myra was twelve, the family moved to Adsett Cottages, and Myra's father worked for Mrs Hoddell of Grange Court Farm. Myra attended Westbury school, riding her bike to school and leaving it at Mr Ayland's coalyard. She started there on the same day as the new Headmaster Mr G G Price.

Adsett Cottages in those days were three 'two up two downs' so at the age of fourteen, when Myra left school, she went to Adsett Court, which was then owned by Mrs Bernard who had come over from Ireland with her housekeeper, cook, chauffeur and other staff. Myra was offered a job in service helping in the kitchen, where she learnt such a lot. The family later benefitted from her cooking skills. She always said that they treated her so well giving her her own room, bathroom and flush toilet (tin bath and outside toilet at Adsett

Cottage) and she said she would do it all again. During the war she worked at a factory in Newnham for the war effort where they polished metal parts for the military.

Myra first met my father, Joseph, when he was working at Boxbush Farm in Rodley, where he had been placed with his brother, and was working for Mr King and his sister. Myra was riding her bike with her friend, Annie Bullock, who also was at Adsett Court, when they came across Joseph and his brother walking down the road. Joseph was whistling a tune that she later found out was Solemente Una Vez (Only once you belong to my heart). This was played at Mum's request at the end of her funeral service, as it was at Joseph's when leaving the church.

After the war, Joseph's brother returned home to Italy as he had a wife, but Joseph stayed and married Myra and they went to live at Gatwick Farm, where the house was split between them and Ben and Mary Bennett. In February 1950, Myra's parents moved to one of the new council houses at Stantway Lane and Myra, Joseph and my sister, Alba, then moved into Adsett Cottage. Joseph and Myra's Dad both worked for Mrs Hoddell at Grange Court Farm.



I was born at Adsett Cottage in the December of 1950, followed by Diana in 1956, by which time the people had moved out of the middle cottage and they became two three bedroomed cottages with a bathroom and flush toilet! We had a very happy childhood and Joseph had a prolific vegetable garden, chickens and ducks, and the occasional pig, that Myra used the cooking skills learnt at Adsett Court to turn into meals.

Myra and Joseph had their first car in the early 1960's, which gave them freedom to travel on holiday. During the mid to late 60's they helped form the Olde Tyme and Modern Sequence dance club that ran for almost 30 years at Westbury Parish Hall, and Myra was their representative on the Parish Hall Committee. They made a great number of friends, running a dance every Saturday night, and they visited other dance clubs in Gloucester. The friendships made resulted in weekends away with dancing clubs in Torquay and the Isle of Wight.

When eventually Alba, Diana and I left home and were married, Myra always treated her sons and daughters in law as her own, and even more so when grandchildren and great grandchildren arrived. She would put on a Nana tea for them when they visited and we are

looking at putting on a Nana Sunday Tea later in the year for friends and family, so we can get together and share our happy memories.

Myra coped very well with living on her own after Joseph passed away. She went on some of the dance trips, was a regular at Northwood Green Café on the Green and Lent Lunches. She was also a regular at the Nosh and Natter at the Parish Hall, and again made a lot of new friends with her natter, together with Golden Age and Age Concern and occasional lunches at the Belfry, Littledean. The cards we received have some nice and humorous comments about Myra's mischievous humour and they are a testament to her social interaction with people.

Fortunately Myra was not ill for long, going into Hospital for the first time in her life in February and staying in for a month, where she made friends with patients and staff, and said how good the food was. We think it was a bit of an adventure for her. It was very difficult during these restrictive times that we are all living in, as the family was not able to visit her.

She wanted to be at home, and the Doctors thought that best too and she had care from Great Oaks Hospice, who made her comfortable. She laughed and joked with them, loving them all, and we think they quite liked her too. A huge thank you to them and any donations are all going to Great Oaks Hospice as a massive thank you.

Myra eventually passed away very peacefully, surrounded by her three children, within thirteen days of coming out of hospital, always believing she was going to be reunited with Joseph, and she passed away on his birthday.

David D'Ambrogio

Westbury weather

Thanks to Simon Phelps for these figures. Our apologies that we ran out of space for the weather report last month, so this month you can catch up on both February and March.

February

Warmest day 24 and 25 15c

Warmest night 23/24 10c

Coolest day 13 0c

Coolest night 10/11 -6.5c

Wettest day 20 19mm

Total rainfall 116mm

Number of days with rain 17

Predominant wind direction Southerlies

Snow 5 Days 7/8/9/10/13

Nights with frost 13

Average maximum temperature 7.8c

Average minimum temperature 0.5c

March

Warmest day 31 22c

Warmest night 28/29 8c

Coolest day 2 5c

Coolest night 6/7 -6c

Wettest day 11 9mm

Total rainfall 39mm

Predominant wind direction Northerlies

Hail 9 and 13

Nights with frost 12

Average maximum temperature 11.7c

Average minimum temperature 1.5c



'What's happened to you? You used to be so young.'

**Northwood Green
Gardening Club**

Thursday 13 May.

A Zoom talk about the

Land Girls by Fiona Warin.

Fiona, a very popular speaker with this club, returns with her much anticipated talk.

Non-members £3 - please contact Karen Johnson 01452 760970 or email karen.f.johnson@btinternet.com for a link.

Saturday 15th and 16th Plant Sale.

A self service stall with honesty box outside *The Glen, Adsett GL14 1PH* (near the campsite). Open from 9am to 5pm each day.



The personnel officer of a large company was interviewing a nervous young man for a junior position. In line with her advanced recruitment skills training, she asked some unusual questions.

“If you could have a conversation with someone, living or dead, who would you choose?” she asked.

The young man thought carefully, and finally answered confidently, “Definitely the living one”.

Fly Tipping



This was the scene on Rodley Road one morning last week, a load having been dumped there during the night. Fortunately Simon Phelps called the street warden and by the next day, the Council had removed it. Today, we reported a mattress that was spotted during the litterpick submerged in a nearby ditch, and the street warden has already found it, it has been dragged out and is awaiting collection. Great service from our street warden and the FoDDC.

Churchyard Working Party

During the lockdown, our monthly working parties have been rather small but we are hoping that some new helpers may join us as restrictions ease and the weather improves. The plan to foster the wildflowers and wildlife in our churchyard has made good progress and it is now a lovely place to visit. We no longer have to battle with ten foot high brambles and are instead able to reveal some of the stonework that has been hidden for many years. It now feels as much about history and archaeology as gardening, so if you fancy joining us, please come along between 10am and 1pm (weather permitting) on Saturday 8th May. Please bring your own gardening tools and refreshments, and if you just want to come and see what we do, you would be most welcome. *Di Landon*

Walmore Hill News

We have been enjoying the Spring sunshine at Walmore Hill and making the most of our beautiful surroundings. It is great to see the children running around full of energy at play-times. We can now venture on to the school field and have even more space to play.

We enjoyed our Easter egg hunt before the Easter break, as well as meeting Elliot's lamb. Elliot's mum brought the little lamb in to school for us all to see. She didn't seem nervous when we sat down together and stroked her soft woolly coat.

The Cygnets and Swans Classes are continuing to expand since the Easter break. More families have joined us again and we have welcomed two more children into our pre-school group.

My Cygnets Class are enjoying their topic 'Wriggle and Crawl'...we have started our topic by using one of our favourite stories, 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and looking at the life cycle of the butterfly.

Swans Class have started their topic, 'Misty Mountain Sierra', learning about mountain environments around the world. The children were busy using magnifying glasses to look closely at different rocks in their science lesson today.

I hope you like the photos of some of our artwork, the Easter tree, the tiny lamb and some amazing toucans drawn by our Key Stage 2 children.

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



Don't Forget to Vote

The local elections take place on 6th May and Forest of Dean District Council is preparing to make sure all the polling stations available for those who wish to vote in person are safe and Covid secure. Voting in person will be different this year with polling stations following the covid secure rules seen across shops and other indoor locations during the pandemic. This will include voters wearing masks, using hand sanitiser, social distancing and making sure items touched in the polling booths are cleaned. Staff will also be taking the necessary precautions to keep safe and have received additional training to help advise and support voters.

Voters are encouraged to bring their own masks and pen or pencil on the day to reduce wastage, however these will be available for those that need them.



Westbury-on Severn Parish Church Friends

Update & Forthcoming Events

As we emerge from lockdown, WoSPCF is re-launching the **100 Club** for September 2021. Annual cost is £12 for 4 draws: October, January, April & July. First prize: £50, 2nd prize: £20, 3rd prize: £10. Existing number holders will be contacted as to whether they wish to retain their numbers. New numbers are available as well.

Would you like to take out a subscription to the Friends? We ask for a minimum of £5 a year.

AGM: Wednesday 7th July, 7:30pm in Westbury Church

Everyone is cordially invited.

Please come and have your say on how we are run and future events you would like us to put on.

Important dates:

Heritage Weekends: 11th/12th September & 18th/19th September

The church and bell tower are open all day, 10-4. Refreshments in the church.

We are planning an event or events over this time. More information to follow.

Christmas 2021: we propose to run another Christmas Tree Festival in the church. More information to follow.

Can you help?

We require help with our finances either as a Treasurer or someone who has experience with registered charities, gift aid etc. who could advise.

*Frances Down, Chair of WoSPCF
frances.down47@gmail.com*

Westbury Sports

By Mark Landon

As the Westbury Utd committee worked furiously through the night, making frantic phone calls to the US and Middle East and exchanging texts with a host of Russian oligarchs, it became increasingly clear on Tuesday that an invite to join the mooted European Super League would not be forthcoming.

However, following the collapse of the aforementioned scheme, Director of Football Tempest gave a hastily arranged but sparsely attended press conference the following day, held in his porch, where he stated in his trademark Yorkshire accent adopted for the benefit of the working class attendees, "I am proud to announce that Westbury Utd will play no part in this cynical ploy to market our great game around the globe as far as the distant wastelands of Monmouthshire and Wiltshire with no regard to our fan at all. The prospect of one day taking the field against such great clubs as Barcelona or Ruardean Hill is what motivates us all and to have had that cruelly ripped away was too much to bear. I am proud that we will now continue to live our dreams and serve up cardboard flavored pizzas after the match as before."

He took no questions and quickly jammed his flat cap back on his grizzled head and marched back inside to be mauled by his two whippets.

In actual football news, Westbury Utd travelled to Walls Sports ground on 24th April to play Robinswood FC in a memorial game for Jason Evans who sadly passed away earlier this year after a long illness.



Many from Jason's cohort came along to support and indeed play in this fixture between two teams whom Jason represented over the years and shared many happy memories with his friends and family. Jason's brother Dave Evans manages Robinswood FC having also played for Westbury Utd in the past and so this game was played in good spirits and hopefully will be a regular fixture in years to come.

Although the result was a secondary matter it should be recorded that Westbury won 4-1 (mainly because I don't know when next we will be able to record a win) and also Gary Morgan scored an astonishing goal, twisting and weaving along the byline and when all assumed that scoring was geometrically impossible, he managed to squeeze the ball past ex Westbury goalie, Shaun the Keep, on the near post. Other goals followed from John Westby, Cudsie and an increasingly huge Leon Mendy who made a rare appearance.



Regan Warrington, despite having clearly been nibbling his way pretty heavily through lockdown, was man of the match for Robinswood FC, as twinkle toed as ever and a class apart in distribution.

Cricket is back ! Like buses to Gloucester, you wait for ages and then two sports come along at the same time. In a friendly match Westbury CC travelled to Lydney CC on the 17th April to play a much anticipated pre season warm up . Lydney won the toss and elected to bat, which wasn't very friendly, but nevertheless they were restricted to 185-4 in their 40 overs. Pick of the bowlers was Karl George (8 overs 1-29) who bowled excellently with swing and movement off the seam. Andrew Cueto made a welcome return to bowl a couple of overs and other 1st team regulars such as Ed Edginton, Dan Hockaday, Charlie Gayther and captain Greg Artus all chipped in.

Westbury set off on the run chase with father and son duo Neil and Alex Wyman opening the batting. Neil departed early but Alex Wyman batted magnificently to make 96* not out in 90 balls pinging the ball around the ground with gusto striking 16 fours in the process. He was mainly supported by Dan Hockaday (36) as Westbury cantered to victory by 6 wickets. All four of their dismissals were out bowled which probably has some technical significance although in broad terms, once the others stop missing the ball, they will be a formidable batting unit.

The first league matches start 1st May so we hope for continued success throughout the summer !

A Footnote on Footpaths

Back in 1949, each parish was required to map all its footpaths but whereas some parishes were thorough, others were more sketchy and some did almost nothing. The number of footpaths in this parish suggests that we were in the former category but the government has now set a deadline of January 2026, by which time any footpath which is not on the map will be lost.

With the lockdown, walking has become even more popular, and so the maintenance of our footpaths is increasingly important. The Public Rights of Way team at the County Council has done a lot of work here but many more paths need their attention and they do not have limitless resources. If you already enjoy walking these paths, please let someone on the Parish Council know if you come across any blockages or problems, and if you have never explored this aspect of our parish, please think about giving it a try.

It can be daunting as it is possible to get a bit lost, and so it might be a good idea to form a walking group of some sort, so that people can share information and perhaps get guidance from seasoned local footpath walkers before setting out. If anyone has a favourite footpath walk, please send us a description and directions to it, with a photo if possible and we could share these in the WoSP. Plenty of people walking these paths would help us monitor them and ensure that they remain protected rights of way for future generations.

Di Landon

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