



## Youth Project is back!



**W**e are hoping to restart the wonderful Youth Project from Thursday 9th September. It will take place every Thursday from 6pm to 7:45pm at Westbury Parish Hall. It is for ages from 8 years to 18years, everyone welcome.

This year we are starting late due to COVID but are hoping to put on a shortened performance on Friday 12th November to celebrate what the young people have been working on since September.

A very different year but we are hoping to fit in lots of all the good things we normally do, like workshops, script writing, singing, dance and acting.

Please give me a call for any more details, or just come along on the 9th September to join our merry band and see how you would like to contribute to this years theme for the show of 'Pandemonium'.

We would love to see you there. *Nicola Atkinson, Chairperson*  
07972 761345

## Parish Council

**A**ugust is the month that the Parish Council only meets if there is something really urgent to discuss and this year there were no urgent planning applications and so we did not meet. However, there were a few e-mails and so I can update you on some of the issues that have come up.

The Enforcement Officer has been in touch regarding the issues arising from a number of new constructions in Ley Woods. It seems that the FoDDC have decided upon reviewing all the evidence that they do not consider there is a case to pursue here. The reasons being that all of the constructions are of a relatively small size, even those based on a concrete foundation and would fall under “ permitted development “, including a piece of woodland which has the high wire fence enclosing it. We were not too happy about this but it seems that all we can do at present is monitor the situation and, should any larger developments occur, bring these to the FoDDC’s attention. As reported several times in the past, Chairman Simon Phelps has been having ongoing battles with Severn Trent about drainage and sewerage issues in the village. Recently, Peter Tonks found some interesting information on the riverstrust.org website regarding sewer storm overflows. These are designed to relieve pressure on the combined rainfall and sewerage network during heavy rainfall, which helps to prevent the flooding of streets and houses. However, they discharge the excess rainwater, mixed with raw sewage, straight into rivers or the sea, temporarily bypassing the wastewater treatment process. On the website, you can find out where sewage is being discharged into rivers and this shows that the

sewer storm overflow near Westbury Church spilled 52 times in 2020 for a total of 378 hours. Many thanks to Peter as this information will help Simon to apply more pressure on Severn Trent to improve the system here.

We have also received an e-mail regarding the consultation on the climate emergency strategy and action plan 2022 – 2025. The deadline for this has been extended to 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept as so many people are away in August. If you wish to take part in this consultation, these are the links. <https://www.fdean.gov.uk/about-the-council/having-your-say/consultations/>



**T**here was no difficulty in maintaining social distancing at the August meeting of the Parish Hall Management Committee. A combination of Summer holidays, illness, self isolating and covid anxiety all contributed to a turnout that fell below the minimum required for a quorum, so following a pleasant chat, the meeting concluded after 15 minutes.



For a committee that boasts a full complement of over twenty members, this is a very rare, if not unique, event. Our meetings are usually friendly, productive and social occasions, followed by a trip to the bar, so it was doubly disappointing to have this one curtailed, and we hope to be back to normal in September. *Ed*

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## Ben Waters



**Westbury on Severn  
Parish Hall  
Friday 1st October  
BEN WATERS ROCK 'N'  
ROLL PARTY**

**H**ow many of you remember several great evenings that we had at the Parish Hall many years ago, when Ben Waters came and played the piano in his fantastic Boogie-woogie style? We were so lucky to have him here

as he has played sell-out shows at Sydney Opera House and The Royal Albert Hall, and at some of the largest festivals in the world. He has also composed hundreds of songs and has been featured on TV and Radio all over the world, with the album 'Boogie for Stu' topping the blues charts worldwide.

Well the good news is that he's coming back!" On Friday 1st October he will back at our Hall for the Ben Waters Rock n Roll Party. You can get your tickets on his website at £14 each <https://www.benwaters.com>. He has posted "*I am going back to this beautiful hall after an absence of 20 years, I can't wait to see everyone*" - and we can't wait to see him.

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## Churchyard working party



**W**hile churchyards have often been portrayed as haunted and spooky, they are now increasingly seen as places brimming with wildlife and history and as beautiful places to visit. Most churchyards, including ours, were established long before we began to lose many of our natural species and habitats, and as they have remained undisturbed, apart from grave digging, their plant and animal populations have tended

to survive where elsewhere they have not. There are believed to be around 20,000 churchyards in the UK and so preserving them as wildlife havens is enormously important.

Unfortunately, most of us grew up in the days when a well-maintained churchyard meant neatly mown grass throughout, giving easy access to all the graves, and it is sometimes hard to get used to the idea that this is not good for our wildlife or the planet. In Westbury, we were initially somewhat pushed into caring for our churchyard as a wildlife haven, when the generous funding of the repairs to the tower came with that condition attached. However, I think that many of us, especially those who have taken part in the monthly working parties, are now seeing the difference, with more wildflowers, birds, butterflies and insects than ever before.



Andrew and I were unable to be at the August working party but there were nine volunteers present and a lot of progress was made. Now is the time of year for cutting the grass that has been allowed to grow freely throughout the season. James Walkley-Cox has been concentrating his efforts on the northern part of the church-

yard while Simon Phelps has been cutting the grass to the east of the north door. A lot of tidying up was also done including along the wall next to Westbury Court.

So we would encourage everyone to take a stroll around at different times of the year to see the wildlife and enjoy the feel of the place, and if you feel like joining our working parties, they are on the second Saturday of each month, weather permitting, between 10am and 1pm. The next one will be on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September and all are very welcome. Please bring your favourite gardening tools and your refreshments.

*Di Landon*

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### Forest of Dean Climate Action



**A** new Met Office study has found that global warming will increase the frequency and/or severity of hot weather, droughts and flooding in the UK. Lead author Dr Helen Hanlon, said: “Our research clearly shows that the more we warm the planet through human-induced climate change, the more severe weather we can expect in the UK. Severe weather can impact us in a number of ways, from our health, to flooding, food availability and transport issues. Importantly, the paper shows that the increase in high-impact weather is reduced if global warming is kept as low as possible, showing that efforts to reduce human-induced climate change will curb the most severe impacts of future weather

in the UK.” Organisations across the Forest of Dean are being called on to join a new community-led partnership to speed up the response to the climate emergency. The Forest of Dean Climate Action (FoDCA) partnership is seeking members from a wide range of sectors who can help the district reach its goal of becoming net-zero carbon by 2030. Councillor Chris McFarling, ( Forest of Dean District Council) said: “While the District Council has a clear objective of reaching net-zero carbon in all council-managed operations by 2030, there is also the need for the district as a whole to get there too. The work of the partnership will be vital in helping meet this challenge.”

There is a new website to promote the work that is being done. In addition to being able to sign up to become a partner organisation, visitors to [www.forestofdeanclimateaction.org.uk](http://www.forestofdeanclimateaction.org.uk) can opt-in to receive updates and newsletters about the work of FoDCA as the project develops, and get further guidance on how to get involved locally. The site also has information about volunteering opportunities within the partnership for those with a few hours to spare each week and who may be able to assist with the initial set up of the local hubs and on-going promotions.

Forest of Dean Climate Action is open to any organisation - including parish and town councils, schools and colleges, utility companies, charities, housing providers, developers, public sector, community groups and businesses - interested in helping the district reach carbon neutrality by 2030. To become a partner visit: [www.forestofdeanclimateaction.org.uk/partner-signup](http://www.forestofdeanclimateaction.org.uk/partner-signup)

For more information call the sustainability team at the Forest of Dean District Council on 01594 810000 or email [climate.action@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:climate.action@fdean.gov.uk)

It is also important that, as well as avoiding and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases, we begin to think about what adjustments we need to make in order to adapt to climate change and whether our existing infrastructure would cope? Remembering the problems caused on the roads by the flooding last Christmas, I think we might struggle. *Di Landon*

### Correction

In last month’s WoSP, we added a picture to Tim Humphries’ article about that colourful member of the crow family, the jay. Only one eagle-eyed reader spotted our “deliberate” (if you believe that, you’ll believe anything!) mistake in showing a North American Blue Jay rather than a Eurasian Jay. So the “virtual” prize this month goes to Simon Phelps.



North American Blue Jay



Common Eurasian Jay

*Would the Standing Committee please be seated*

Give us a call – we're still  
here to help

Call us on 01452 527202

Or email [info@gloscab.org.uk](mailto:info@gloscab.org.uk)

We have suspended all drop-in services but we are currently giving advice by either phone or email

We provide advice on many issues including employment, housing, debt and benefits

For further information please go to  
<http://gloscab.org.uk/>



## What are Smart Meters?

Smart meters are being rolled out to all homes to meet the future demands of the gas and electricity system brought about by the changes in the way we live over the next 25 years.

A smart meter (Picture A) looks like a normal digital meter and you can still take a reading from the meter which will be shown in the green window in the middle of the meter. **Picture B**, although often incorrectly called a smart meter, is an In-House Display Unit (IHD) giving a digital display of the data being measured by the meter. The smart meter via the

IHD provides information not currently available with a normal meter. It provides information on the customer's usage and costs on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. Some IHDs enable customers to monitor their daily usage against a customer set target. And the IHD also sends meter readings to the energy supplier directly.



There is a wide range of estimates as to how much money smart meters could save the customer. The main lesson is that smart meters provide information which can help customers to alter the way they use their gas and electricity. By changing what they do in the home, savings could be made. If, after having a smart meter installed, the customer takes no action on the information of cost and usage provided, there would be no savings. How-

ever, if you see the effect on your IHD when you switch on, for example, a 150-watt bulb in a light - you will never have such a large wattage bulb in the home again and will switch quickly to low energy bulbs everywhere in the home. These sorts of actions could save money. Smart meters, via the IHD, provide the customer with usage information at any time. It is no longer necessary to scabble under the stairs to read the meter. Additionally, the smart meter sends the customer's meter readings directly to the energy supplier when required without any intervention from the customer. This eliminates the need for estimated bills. Customers with smart meters only receive bills based on actual readings. In the future, smart meters will provide a wider range of electrical tariffs such as a cheap night-time charging tariff and maybe a mid-afternoon 'top-up' tariff – all supportive of the increased use of electrical cars. We can expect increasing use of Smart Appliances like fridges and freezers which can be controlled by the smart meter to take electricity when it is cheaper due to lower demand. Increasingly, new houses will be predominantly fitted with smart meters, and when old meters are replaced, smart meters will be fitted preferentially. Eventually most homes will have smart meters.

**(Note that eligibility may vary to the details shown in this article and savings require customer action) For further information on smart meters, contact Citizens Advice on 01452 527202**

The fellow who laughs last may laugh longest, but he gets the reputation of being very slow witted.

*We owe a lot to Thomas Edison—if it weren't for him, we'd all be watching television in the dark*

## Road Closures

**Rodley Court Road** will be closed for approximately 50 metres between Court House and the junction with Bury Court Rd from 09.00 on 27/09/2021 until 16.00 on 30/09/21 for drainage work.

Part of **Church Lane, Northwood Green** will be closed for approximately 200 metres between Brimstone Cottage and Coldstream House from 23:25 on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021 until 06:15 on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021 for maintenance work on the level crossing.

Part of **Frowens Lane** between Broken Cross Farm and Broken Cross Cottage will be closed for approx 100m from 23.25 on 7/9/21 until 6.15am on 8/9/21 for maintenance work on the level crossing.



Whatever women do, they must do it twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily this is not difficult.

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*It's true hard work never killed anyone, but I figure why take the chance?*  
Ronald Reagan

### Northwood Green Gardening Club

September marks our return to the Northwood Green Social Hall, where Julie Richie of Hoo House nursery will give a talk about The Perennial Year. This event will be at 7.30 on Thursday 9 September. Julie will talk briefly about her business, and how the flowers progress throughout the year. This will be followed by a demonstration of a hand-tied bouquet, which will be donated as a raffle prize. Entry is free to members, and £3 for non-members. Annual membership costs £12.

On 23 September we are visiting the Rococo gardens at Painswick, with a talk by the Head Gardener. *Please contact [karen.f.johnson@btinternet.com](mailto:karen.f.johnson@btinternet.com) for details and prices if you would be interested in joining us.*



### The Red Kite

Pick up just about any publication on the natural world and it probably won't take long to come across an article that tells you that some species or other is at risk, endangered or even become extinct. But there are happier tales as well, and nearer home too. The Red Kite is one of them.

In less enlightened days, just about any bird with talons and hooked beak was seen as a threat by many gamekeepers and farmers. They were shot, trapped, and poisoned until their numbers were depleted, and they were pushed to the edges of their range. Then came the heavy use of DDT and other pesticides which caused further damage, the effects of which took a while to understand.

The Red Kite was just one species that suffered, and by the late 1980's there were only a few breeding pairs left, and these were keeping themselves to themselves in remoter Welsh valleys. Their numbers grew, thanks to the help of a local farmer who began feeding them. Also additional birds were released in Scotland and in the Chiltern Hills, where they are now pretty common.

It's taken a while, but they are now in our area. My wife has seen them while she was swimming on her back at Bathurst Pool in Lydney, but it was not until a

couple of weeks ago that we spotted one over our house at Elton – though Simon Phelps tells me they have been around the Blaisdon area for at least a couple of years.

Our first sighting at Elton was initially dismissed as a Buzzard, as it was some distance away and not a clear view, but as it drew closer its forked tail and pointed wings were a give-away – it was a Red Kite.

Kites are larger and heavier than Buzzards, but they have a wider wingspan and a longer tail. This light wing loading coupled with its long forked tail makes them very dainty and agile birds in flight.

Kites like to nest high up in a tall tree, laying just two eggs – hardly prolific when you consider that only around half of the chicks will survive the first year, and their typical lifespan is only around 4 years. The adults and the chicks have a very varied diet of insects, small birds and mammals, and reptiles, but despite the size of the birds themselves their feet are surprisingly small which puts larger prey literally out of their grasp.

It's also worth noting that these birds are very quick to learn. In some countries, including the UK, they have learned to associate smoke with food, whether the smoke is from wildfires, which drive prey ahead of the flames, or from barbeques where they have learned to snatch food from the grill or from the plates of diners. To learn more about these amazing and talented birds it is well worth a visit to the ICBP at Newent where you will be able to see these birds, and their cousins, the Yellow Billed Kite, being flown close up – and I do mean close up!

*Tim Humphries*

*For a real sponge cake, borrow all the ingredients*

*Thanks once again to Simon Phelps for his detailed monthly report on the local weather patterns.*

#### **Weather report for July.**

Warmest Days 18th/ 20th/ 22nd.	32c
Warmest Nights 20-21st.	16.5c
Coldest Day 30th.	16.5c
Coldest Night 28-29th.	8.5c
Wettest Day 30th.	20mm
Total Rain-fall.	92.5mm
Number of Days with Rain.	12
Thunder on 27th	
Predominant Wind Direction	South Westerlies
Average Maximum Temperature.	23.3c

## **Westbury Parish Hall**

### **A new venture**



*On my way to climb Mount Everest, I came upon a local villager who said he had a rooster that laid eggs.*

*"How is that possible?" I asked.*

*"Himalayan rooster," he replied.*

**Harvest Supper**  
**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October,**  
**7.00pm in**  
**Minsterworth Village Hall**

Including a Talk by  
**Pete Wilson**

Radio Gloucestershire Presenter  
On his life in radio and other stories



**Ploughman's Supper - £10**

**BYOD**

Tickets from  
Jo 01452 750709,  
Anne 01452 751295  
or Liz 01452 750401

**Proceeds to Minsterworth Church  
and Village Hall**

**National Heritage**

**Weekends**

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> &  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> Sept**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> &  
Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> Sep-**

**Westbury-on-  
Severn Church**

will be open from  
11am – 4pm

**Guided Tower Tours**

**Church open**

**Refreshments**

**Produce Stall**

**Garden Cliff Walk**



We will be holding our

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

on **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept at 8pm**

**in the Parish Hall Lounge**

All members and those interested in participating in future productions are invited to attend as we plot our way out of lockdown. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas. As always, volunteers for committee roles, helping backstage or treading the boards are all welcome. If you have any queries, please contact May Brass (Secretary) tel 01452 760506 or email [maybrass@btinternet.com](mailto:maybrass@btinternet.com)

## Westbury Sports

*Our sports reporter is away, so his mother has stepped into the breach, and nicked the following from various social media pages*

### Cricket

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, Westbury gave a brilliant performance in the County Trophy semi-final away against Tewkesbury, bowling the home side out for 108 and knocking them off for the loss of only 3 wickets in 21 overs. So they are through to the County Trophy final against Langford which will take place on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September with a 1pm start at Coalpit Heath Cricket Club, Serridge Lane, Coapit Heath BS36 2TT. All support would be welcome.

On 19<sup>th</sup> August Westbury Ladies played Newent Ladies away – a great all round performance and won by over 70 runs.



WESTBURY ON SEVERN

### Football

August saw the start of the pre-season West Dean Charity matches. Despite an encouraging performance in the first game against Broadwell, Westbury lost 3-2.



*Westbury United v. Harrow Hill,  
August 10th*

The second game also resulted in Westbury losing out to Harrow Hill Reserves by a 92<sup>nd</sup> minute goal, which was hard to take when they had battled hard throughout the game. However the third game saw them come away with a point after drawing against Redbrook and there were a lot of positives to take from the games into the new season. Training is on Tuesday evenings from 7pm at Westbury Parish Hall ground

### Rugby

If you're over 18, at a loose end or need to get fit . . . . . ever thought about playing Rugby? Westbury-on-Severn RFC is looking to recruit players



old, new and willing. Training is on Tuesdays at 6.45pm for 7 at Westbury Parish Hall ground and a warm welcome is guaranteed. On 17<sup>th</sup> August training was followed by a players meeting and BBQ. Around 20 players have been to training and will be making a concerted effort to be fully prepared for the first away game of the season versus Brockworth on 4<sup>th</sup> September at 3pm. Other Sept matches are away versus Gordon League on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept, one yet to be arranged on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept and on 25<sup>th</sup> Sept, away to Bredon Star. Come on down. Why not follow us on twitter at @WOSRFC

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*Sport is one area where no participant is worried about another's race, religion or wealth: and where the only concern is "Have you come to play?"*

*What vegetable can work as a sports announcer?  
A common tater.*

Charity No 301644

Westbury On Severn Parish Hall

# FLOWER & PRODUCE SHOW

**SUNDAY 5th SEPTEMBER 2021**

Hall open 12 noon until 3pm  
for viewing & discussion of  
exhibits

Lunch  
£8.00 per  
person

**Ploughmans Lunch**  
**Served 12noon to 2pm**

Pre-ordering necessary to order call Jan 01452 760630

Scotch Egg with chutney  
Rustic Pate with red onion chutney  
Honey Roast Ham with chutney  
Poached Salmon with lemon mayonaise +£3.00  
All accompanied with cheese, bread coleslaw, salad garnish

If you would like your WoSP e-mailed to you each month, free of charge, please just e-mail us and let us know whether you would like the read on screen or printable version.

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