

WoSP

**35P****ISSUE 231 CHRISTMAS 2021/
NEW YEAR 2022**

THE FRIENDS START OFF A TREE-MENDOUS CHRISTMAS

Westbury-on-Severn Parish Church Friends started the festive season in fine style with their Christmas Tree Festival on the first weekend of December. A host of local establishments, organisations and businesses each decorated a tree symbolising their activities for display in the church. At the evening viewing on the Friday prior to the festival, we were able to see one of the benefits of the Friends

fundraising as we walked down the path and saw it beautifully lit. One of the Friends' aims is to make the church better lit and to contribute to the complete re-wiring and lighting of the inside of the building. They also raise funds through their 100 Club and other events and if you wish to contribute or help in any way, please contact Frances Down on 01452 760270. Our beautiful old church and spire deserve our care and attention.

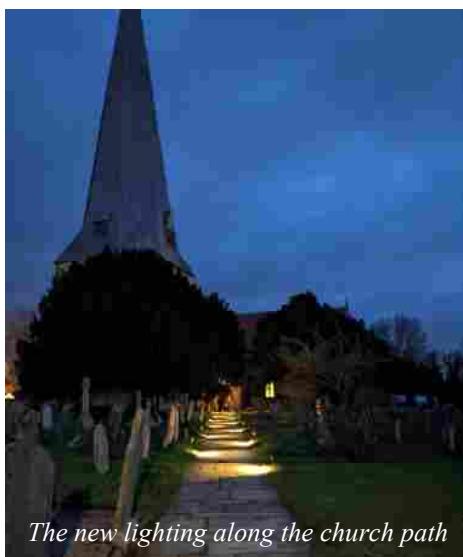


WESTBURY-ON-SEVERN PARISH
CHURCH FRIENDS'
CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL
SATURDAY 4TH DECEMBER & SUNDAY
5TH DECEMBER

With grateful thanks to all who exhibited, advertised in our programme or contributed in any way to the recent Christmas Tree Festival and to all those who visited over the weekend. It was wonderful to get the community together in a safe way and to start to celebrate Christmas by lighting up the church.

Westbury School won the favourite tree competition, closely followed by Walmore Hill School. Becky Hewlett won the main raffle prize of a Christmas Hamper. We raised just over £950 which will go towards much needed lighting at Westbury Church.

Frances



The new lighting along the church path

Parish Council

The December Parish Council meeting was as festive as a parish council meeting can be, when Covid numbers are rising and everyone is anxious about staying healthy so that they can enjoy Christmas with their family. We had been advised that it would be unlawful to hold the meeting remotely so a Zoom meeting was not possible.

After the formalities, our County Councillor, Philip Robinson, gave his report and advised us that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Chris Nelson, will be holding a meeting for parish councillors in January at Hartpury Village Hall. This will cover subjects such as antisocial behaviour, speeding and rural crime.

Planning The public comment this month concerned the planning application for the erection of a commercial building and external hardstanding for an agricultural machinery display and sales area next to Pound Farm. The applicant and a local resident were able to discuss various concerns about the application prior to discussion by the council. The application generated mixed feelings, as it is on a greenfield site and yet is relevant to local farming needs and would provide employment. After some discussion, the proposal to support the application was voted for by five members with two abstentions.

An application for an agricultural building at Bagley Farm was supported and there were no objections to the replacement of an outbuilding at Yew Tree Cottage, Flaxley. A retrospective application for a change of use of a barn at Adsett Farm to a retail and auction house was considered but it was agreed that the decision should be made by the Forest of Dean District Council. The discharge of conditions for Charlottes Farm was noted and Fiona reported that the applications

for a single storey extension at Stanton and work at the Manse had been granted. Chairman Simon Phelps then gave us an update on the District council's forward development plans. Progress seems to have stalled with these and as developers have been seen to be doing a lot of surveying in the Churcham area, the risk of a large development there does not appear to have gone away. However, there are now 26 parish councils in the district who are opposed to the plan, and other counties who have opted for dispersed development rather than new 'towns' have been successful. Herefordshire, for example, has now got a seven year supply of dispersed land sites in place and Monmouthshire has had its housing requirement reduced by the Welsh government. However, it appears that the Forest of Dean District Council is unwilling to go back to the government about this and there are fears that the east side of the Forest is going to be developed as an extension of Gloucester.

Finance The proposed budget for next year was reviewed. The costs for work on the school playing field, which is a planning condition of the extension of the burial ground, have risen since the original estimate was given, but the current price will now be held until May, by which time work must have commenced. We have still been unable to have any discussion with Gloucestershire County Council or the school about their contribution to the costs beyond the £5000 originally agreed. The total cost is now likely to be around £84,000 (the VAT will be reclaimable) which will add around £8 per annum to the precept for an average household in the parish. Over the ten years of the loan

repayment, the total cost per household will be around £80 and while we recognise that this is an extra cost that we could all do without, it is unavoidable if Westbury residents are to continue to have the option of being buried in their own parish. The current burial ground is almost full, Yew Tree Brake is no longer taking bookings and the costs of a burial outside of the parish would cost hundreds of pounds more than Westbury charges. Correspondence has been received from parishioners who are not happy with the increase and who suggest that the precept cannot be raised more than the current level of inflation, but the Chief Finance Officer at the Forest of Dean District Council has advised that there are no regulations of this sort. While we had hoped to hold a consultation about this, there is no longer time available to arrange this and it would also add to the costs. However, residents are always welcome to come to our meetings to raise their concerns and put their point of view.

Highways Concerns have been raised about speeding traffic at Broadoak, which endangers pedestrians crossing the



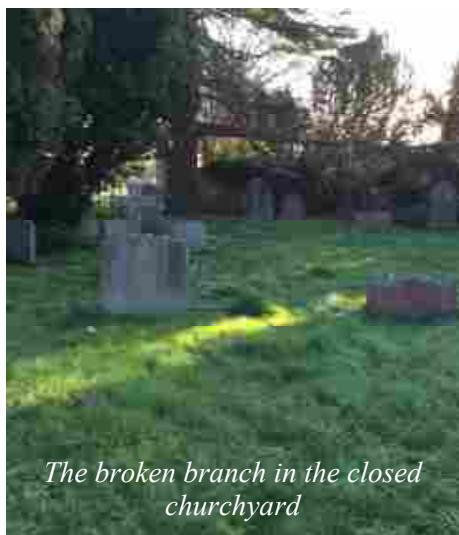
road. A vehicle activated speed sign is, at various times, placed on this stretch of the road to discourage speeding but has to be moved regularly throughout the parish. However, it does measure how often the speed limit is broken so when this information has been obtained, it can be passed to the police who may then consider it necessary to take further action.

The state of the parish's roads is also a cause for concern. Hunt Hill is particu-

larly bad and Councillor Robinson has agreed that some of his local fund can be put towards this. The road between Stanton Way and Gatwick House is also in a very bad state and has been awaiting resurfacing for a long time. This had been delayed while awaiting the completion of work by the Severn Trent on the pumping station, but as this has now been completed, there should be no reason for further delay. There are also deep potholes on Rodley Road near Beechwood House.

Climate Change The Forest Climate Group is planning an action day in February and the Climate Action Steering Group at the FoDDC is hoping to set up a resource/information library and a list of trusted installers, which will be helpful for those wanting to switch to greener forms of energy and improve insulation. The provision of flood sacks was discussed but these are intended only for houses that are unexpectedly exposed to the risk of flooding. If a house is flooded repeatedly in wet conditions, the householder is expected to provide their own defences.

Around the Parish A branch had broken off a cedar tree in the closed churchyard.



The broken branch in the closed churchyard

James Walkley-Cox has dealt with this but there are more hanging branches which will need the attention of a tree surgeon. In the play area, the netting on the climbing frame is worn but the only estimate that we have at present for repair costs is £626 + VAT so Michael Townsend is looking at alternatives. He is also mending the springboard and will be carrying out some more patching on the wet-pour. There are various problems with footpaths in the parish and it was agreed that Geoff Wheeler, the Public Rights of Way officer, should be invited to our meeting to discuss these.

As the meeting closed, we were able to enjoy some festive refreshments – and I can assure parishioners that the coke we consumed

at the Parish Hall was the canned variety, rather than the sort apparently found in the toilets of the House of Commons!

Our next meeting will be on Monday 17th January at 7pm and will be (at the time of writing) at the Parish Hall. *Di Landon*



Why was the snowman looking through the carrots?

He was picking his nose.





It was back to a Zoom meetings again for the Parish Hall committee this month, which put a bit of a damper on proceedings, but there were a few Christmas jumpers in evidence so the Christmas spirit was not lost.

One matter arising from last month's minutes sounded like something from a Beatrix Potter book, as Peter Rabbit and

his kin are now causing less trouble on the playing field than Squirrel Nutkin and his cronies, who seem to have taken up residence in the surgery roof.

More importantly, the fire risk as-

essment had been sent to all on the committee and it was agreed that a list of action points is needed. A full review of the report will be carried out next month. Enquiries are being made about getting a keyless system for operating the fire and burglar alarms and costs for this will be available for discussion at the next meeting.

The treasurer's report showed a satisfactory balance and Sarah Mitten is working on the end of year figures. There are a number of projects being considered with fans for the kitchen being high on the list. A more reasonable quote for their installation has now been received and the committee gave the go ahead for this to



be done. The question of ventilation and air purification for the hall is also important and a local company was coming to carry out an assessment at the hall later in the week. Jan then reported that the hearing loop proposal had "gone very quiet" – ho ho ho! – as some doubts had been cast as to their effectiveness. Further advice will therefore be obtained before this is installed.

There is some tree surgery to be done at the Hall due to ash die back and other safety issues and this will be carried out in the New Year. County Council Highways have been asked to check the trees along the boundary.

Jan D'Ambrogio reported that the Covid team at the Forest of Dean District council had visited the Hall to review the arrangements and it was agreed that there should be a limit of 40 people at events in the lounge. This is potentially a problem when football and rugby home matches coincide. There was no rugby representative at the meeting and the problem has since been temporarily solved by the cancellation of matches due to rising coronavirus figures. It was agreed that the Rugby Club should be encouraged to send a representative so that this can be discussed more fully at next month's meeting.

Severndipity Club (bar) report

Gen Riley reported that the dispute regarding the card machine contract has not yet been resolved and that, as yet, there had been no applications for the job of bar manager. This makes the future of the bar at the Hall very uncertain as there is no obvious solution if there is no-one to run the bar. As user groups, we have all got used to being able to have a bar whenever we need one, but the bar cannot be run at a loss, and some measures, such as no longer providing draught beer, may be necessary to reduce running costs.

There is also a vacancy on the Severndipity committee and this and the role of the bar manager will be on the January agenda.

Gen also reported that our broadband contract has finished and enquiries are being made about getting better coverage throughout the hall and lounge.

Fundraising

Jan announced a fundraising meeting to be held on 1st Feb 2022 and all ideas and offers of help will be welcome. There will also be a rent review on 22nd Feb.

Other news is that the building inspector is due to visit the cricket building to sign it off and that the Cricket Club are hoping to arrange a social event (even if not their usual dinner) in 2022. Football club rep Clive Tempest says that football is looking good and he is hopeful for the future. The December Playgroup for Grownups was cancelled because of Covid but we hope to meet again in January. The next Hall committee meeting will be on Tues 11th January.

So the last Hall meeting of 2021 ended, with waves and Christmas wishes and glasses raised to the assembled faces on our screens.

BAR MANAGER REQUIRED

£12 per hour

For Westbury on Severn Parish Hall

Hours are variable due to a range of bookings from sports bars to weddings, parties & other social events but with a minimum five hours per week guaranteed Bar management experience is preferred but not essential as training will be provided.

If you have a friendly attitude, love a mix of busy & steady bars & want to help keep our community bar running please email for further information to Severndipityclub@outlook.com

Update from the Chairman



What an end to the year, having had our final Parish Hall meeting of the year just as we started the year - with a zoom meeting - and we hope that in 2022 we can go back to face to face meetings. But we will have to be led by Government guidance which could have changed by January.

We have all good intentions for 2022 and we have put in the diary a fund raising meeting on Tuesday 1st February at 7.30pm – you do not have to be on the Parish Hall Committee and we are looking for people to join us so that we can get the hall going after the last couple of years. If you are interested in any of the above then send an e-mail to: info@wosph.co.uk

A lot, of course, will depend on what the COVID virus is doing but we need to try and move forward.

So, we say goodbye to 2021 and welcome 2022. Happy New Year everyone



Nosh and Natter

Subject to Government Guidelines that may change between now and January

**Westbury Parish Hall
Thursday 13th January 2022**

**Food served between
12.30pm and 1.30pm
(Please note change of time)**

Butternut Squash Soup

Normandy Chicken

Pineapple Upside Down Pudding

**£8.00 Two courses £10.00 Three
courses**

Please call us to say that you are coming and please let us know in advance if you have any dietary requirements other than the above

**Please either see in person or call
Gail on 760495/ Jan on 760630**

Looking forward to seeing you all and of course, if you have not been before, we look forward to meeting you too.



A Spring Song Concert

sung by

Marilyn Taylor and Tim Wilcox,
accompanied by Richard Price

Featuring songs with a Spring sentiment from across the centuries, including songs by two Gloucestershire composers, Ivor Gurney and Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose 150th anniversary is celebrated this year.



Sunday March 13th 2022

at
Westbury-on-Severn Parish Hall at
3pm
Tickets £12 including a cream tea! Contact Jan 01452 229570

Playgroup for Grown-Ups

should be back on
**Wednesday
19th January 7.30pm**
in the lounge

All are welcome so come and join

us





Cast and crew have been working hard on preparations for Snow White Goes West and most of the cast, with a couple of entirely predictable exceptions, are almost word perfect. Set and costume preparations are in full swing, but at the moment we have taken a break from rehearsals to reduce the chances of Covid transmission amongst the cast before Christmas.

We have been masked up, except on stage, and dutifully doing our lateral flow testing up to now. We have, unfortunately had a couple of the characters laid up with Covid, but the younger cast have cheerfully applied themselves to stepping in accordingly, doing so with much gusto!

We have developed plans for any last minute drop outs on the night which, we think, will not detract from the story line and may add an extra comedic aspect to the performance - the show must go on! However, like the rest of the country, we can only await developments. The Hall Committee is taking steps regarding air quality in the hall and we have reduced hall capacity.

Everyone is doing what they can to bring you a safe and yet blockbusting performance! We hope this will be in January as planned but, may be slightly up in the air, notwithstanding it will be an excellent evening whenever. In the meantime, we all wish you a very merry Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year

Mark Landon

Why is Cinderella rubbish at football?

Her coach was a pumpkin.

Westbury School

Friends of Westbury School would like to thank everyone for helping make this year's Christmas Craft Fair such a success. As a result of everyone's efforts and the hard work of the Friends committee, £1,300 was raised for the school. In such difficult and challenging times, this is a wonderful achievement, for which we are so very grateful. Once again, you have demonstrated just what our Westbury Family can accomplish when we work together. Thank you.



Following the Craft Fair we held a surprise 'Cake and Tea with Mr C.' event which was attended by many pupils, governors, staff and families both past and present. Many thanks to all those who came along to celebrate with Mr C. and to relive some memorable moments of his headship. Here is a message he would like to pass on to everyone.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you all, my Westbury Family, for the wonderful afternoon tea you put on for me last Saturday afternoon. It was extremely overwhelming and lovely to see everyone. I was very moved by the display of warmth and appreciation for my thirteen years of Headship here at Westbury and was so very grateful to have received your generous gifts. I will put them to great use!"

Cafe on the Green

Many thanks to everyone who baked, helped & supported the Coffee Morning on Saturday 4th December, which was in aid of Sheppard House - a Day Centre in Newent which provides friendship and company to people who may be isolated. There was a lovely atmosphere, the hall was decorated, there were nice raffle prizes and everyone seemed in festive mood. An amazing £125.25 was raised.

The next Coffee morning will be in Northwood Green Social Hall on Saturday 8th January 2022 (as the usual first Saturday of the month falls on New Year's Day) between 10am and 12noon and we will be supporting the Pied Piper Appeal, which helps sick and disabled children in Gloucestershire.

Northwood Green Gardening Club

Great fun was had by all at our Christmas party, which began with a garden-themed picture quiz. After mulled wine and a wonderful buffet provided by the members, teams were tasked with creating a Christmas decoration out of plant pots, sticks and wrapping paper, which resulted in some very artistic and original creations - and a lot of laughter.

Our next meeting is at 7.30pm on Thursday 13 January in the Northwood Green Social Hall, when Matt Smith of Forest Edge Landscape Services will give a talk on garden landscape and design. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Visitors £3, annual membership £12. Please contact karen.f.johnson@btinternet for more information.

Westbury Court



We at The Orders of St John Care Trust are looking for some amazing people to join our volunteer team at Westbury Court. If you haven't heard of us (OSJCT) before, we are a not-for-profit care provider (registered charity) with 17 homes across Gloucestershire.

Our residents are at the heart of everything we do and our volunteers help us to help them live fun and fulfilled lives in our homes.

With the recent challenges that the pandemic put upon us and visitors to our homes, we find ourselves in need of Volunteer Visitor Hosts.



So, if you are outgoing, confident, enjoy being with people and can offer a friendly welcome to our visitors, this is a great opportunity to join our volunteer team.*

If you would like to find out more, message me here or email: s.dewhurst@osjct.co.uk

*There are some volunteer restrictions in place, but we'll tell you all about that when you get in touch.

Christmas Waste

Christmas is a time of celebration but it's also a time when traditionally our rubbish bins are at their fullest. To help residents reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible over the festive period, here are the Forest of Dean District Council's top tips for a greener Christmas:



Opt for wrapping paper and Christmas cards that can be easily recycled. Foiled or glittered paper isn't recyclable so choose unadorned, coloured versions instead.

Planning the Christmas food shop is an easy way to cut back on food waste. Food production is a massive contributor to carbon emissions so cutting down will not only save your pocket but help the planet too. If you do have any food waste, remember to use your weekly kerbside collection service. Check the use-by dates regularly on food items in your fridge and if you are not going to use them in time, freeze them for later.

Real Christmas trees will be collected for all households between Monday 10 January to Monday 31 January 2022. Trees need to be presented on the scheduled garden waste collection day.



Small trees should be put in the garden waste bin (if you have one). Larger trees can be left outside of the bin but must be reduced to 1.5m sections in order for crews to collect.

FoDDC Carol Service



This year, Westbury Church was chosen by the Forest of Dean District Council as the venue for the Chairman's Carol Service which was held on Wednesday 8th December. The church looked magnificent and all the favourite and traditional carols filled the church, with Pillowell Silver Band accompanying the congregation as we sang. The service was conducted by Rev Sarah Hobbs and there were readings by several district councillors including our own Simon Phelps. The service was followed by mulled wine and mince pies, by which time we all felt very much in the Christmas spirit. The collection was divided between Westbury church funds and the Forest Voluntary Action Forum.

What is a parent's favourite Christmas carol?

Silent Night

What's the most popular Christmas wine?

"But I don't like Brussels sprouts!"

November Weather

The warmest day was the 18th. 14C
Warmest Night 9-10th and 10-
11th 9C
Coldest day was 27th 4C
Coldest night 28-29th -4.5C
Wettest Day 1st 5mm
Total Rainfall 16.5mm
Snow fell on the night of 26-27th
Nights of Frost 11
Average Maximum Temperature 9.9c
Average Minimum Temperature 2.7c
Predominant Wind Direction West to
North West

Thanks to Simon Phelps for these figures.

Road closures

Church Lane, Northwood Green will be closed from its junction with Grange Court Road to outside Brimstone Farm (approximately 530 metres) between 09:30 and 15:30 on 7th January 2022. The reason for the closure is for a safe working zone on an overhead structure.
Grange Court Road, Adsett will be closed between the hours of 09:00 and 16:00 on 20th January 2022 from outside Adsett Trading to Adsett House for a distance of approximately 197 metres. This is to locate and repair damaged internet ducting.



Swallows

The sight of Swallows gathering on telephone lines ready for their migration is usually tinged with regret. It means an end to their aerial acrobatics until next year, and is a reminder that we have winter ahead. This year was a little different; we were actually pleased to see 'our' Swallows ready to leave.

Our garage was built in 2012, and was immediately adopted as a nest site for Swallows. It's been used by one or two pairs ever since, sometimes raising a second brood, as happened this year. The parents' plan was working well - until the evening of August 14th.

Just before dark I went into the garage and was met with a scene of devastation. The nest had become detached from its place up near the ridge, and crashed to the floor. Two of the five chicks had been killed, and the remaining three were shivering, and not looking good. There was no sign of the parent birds.

What to do? The nest was totally destroyed, so no chance of wedging it back in place. Could we raise the chicks ourselves? Next to impossible we decided, especially as neither of us is adept at catching insects on the wing.

By now it was dark. Time was running out for the chicks when we remembered the nest vacated by an earlier Swallow family. The only chance seemed to be to put them into the empty nest and hope that the parents would find them.

Getting them there was a challenge. The only way I could squeeze between the joists was to have the ladder tied in place vertically. The spiky strips we'd put on top of the joists to deter the Wood Pigeons also deterred me, but eventually after three wobbly climbs the chicks were installed in their new accommodation. We'd seen no sign of the parents, but there was no option but to retire indoors

and hope that the chicks survived the night, and that the parents found them. Next morning we crept into the garage, half expecting the worst. If the chicks had rejected their new home they could have fallen to the floor like their siblings. But no, there had been no overnight jumpers, though we had no idea if they had succumbed from shock, cold or hunger. Then, as we were leaving there was the unmistakable twittering as the adult birds flew into the garage. They circled us before leaving to perch on the power line. We left, but later crept out for another look. They had found their chicks and were feeding them; great relief all round! The next week or so had us on tenterhooks wondering how many of the chicks were still alive, but I wasn't about to climb up and have a look; we'd just have to be patient.

It wasn't until about ten days later that we were able to see two tiny heads poking out of the nest waiting for their next meal - quite a feeling of relief that at least two had survived. But what of the third?

Days went by with no sign of Number 3. We were giving up hope. Then, almost a week later the third head appeared.

The parents continued their dawn to dark routine of feeding. The chicks grew, and two could sometimes be seen standing on the edge of the nest waiting for Ma or Pa. Then, quite suddenly there were four Swallows on the power line, with the fifth joining them a few days later.

They all stayed on to delight us with their flying, and then, as suddenly as they had arrived, they had gone.

It was rather a bittersweet moment. They had six thousand miles ahead of them to sub-Saharan Africa, and although we were sad to see them go, we were glad to have played a part in enabling them to make that journey. We hope they'll make it back again next year. *Tim Humphries*

Rugby

On 4th December, several Westbury players joined our friends in Cheltenham Civil Service 2s and helped them to a victory over Cainscross winning 48 -22. Rugby was the winner on a bright, breezy and seasonally chilly afternoon at Tewkesbury Road. Smiths teamed up with Cainscross to ensure that everybody got a run out at a time when so many games are not able to go ahead. Tough competition at the breakdown, strong running by the forwards and creative magic from the backs saw the score-line remain close until the last quarter, when Service pulled comfortably ahead. A huge thank you to all involved - see you on a pitch very soon!

Westbury-on-Severn skipper Robbie Pritchard's hat trick probably helped the cause and a few WoS boys scored tries Alex Pearce, Robbie & Max (braveheart) Kaufmann, Ben Stephens & Jordon Well done Westbury lads and CCSRFC players.

WoSP NOTICE

If you have bought your printed copy of WoSP, please consider having it e-mailed to you free of charge each month instead. You can receive either a version that you read on screen or one that you can print out at home, or both if you prefer—just e-mail your request to the address below.

We would also love to hear from anyone with news of local events or organisations as we would like the WoSP to be full of everything that is going on in our parish.

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