

‘Blossom by blossom the Spring begins’

- Algernon Charles Swinburne

Snowdrops, primroses, cowslips, daffodils have all come into bloom in the churchyard since the start of the year, and the signs of Spring are now all around us. As Leo Tolstoy said *"Spring is the time of plans and projects"* and all the various organisations in Westbury are full of them.

The Parish Hall, the Church, the Sports

Clubs and many other local groups are enthusiastically making plans for things to fill the months ahead, and all hope that plenty of people will come along to take part or to enjoy the events that they organise.

So please join in the fun because, as Robin Williams said *"Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"*

Annual General Meeting



This month was the Parish Hall's Annual General Meeting and it was good to see sixteen members of the Hall Management Committee gathered around the table, all focussed on ensuring that the Parish Hall continues to provide a welcoming venue for community and private events. The minutes of the 2022 AGM were a useful reminder of how Covid had affected Hall events and finances and, on a lighter note, of how we had started the previous year with rabbit problems, are now beset with moles and have also had issues with mice— but all these are being kept under control.

Chairman's Report Our Chairman, Jan D'Ambrogio, then gave her report which showed that our community is now rousing itself again and that we have had some really successful events at the Hall over the last year. There had been a wide range of bookings from christenings, weddings and wakes to sports club dinners and the pantomime, which demonstrates what an important role the Hall plays in all aspects of community life. The fund-raising committee has been busy organising events to ensure that we have enough in the kitty to maintain and improve our facilities. These also provide opportunities for socialising, as at the monthly Nosh and Natters, and for some keen competition, as you will know if you have ever submitted entries in the Flower and Produce Show!

The Severndipity Club, which runs the

bar, has had a tough year. As Jan reminded us, in the past the bar would be heaving every Saturday night during the rugby and football season, but with only one team for each of these sports now, this is no longer the case, although the cricket club is thriving and has increased its use of the bar. However, it is clear that we need to find other ways to raise funds, for which we need the support and the input of the whole community, not just the committee. With high and still rising utility bills, this has become increasingly important.

Jan also reported that despite the monumental efforts of Gen Riley and Mike Edginton, the new lease for the Doctor's surgery has still not been signed.

Jan went on to thank all the committee for their support, with special thanks to the Treasurer, Sarah Mitten, Secretary Gill Smith and Vice-Chair Helen Cracknell. She also thanked Mike Edginton, who frequently deals with such problems as holes in the car park and blocked gutters, Mark Brill and Ed. who produce the fire risk assessment and others who have taken on various other tasks. She also rightly remembered to thank her husband, David, who keeps the place remarkably clean in spite of the occasional nasty finds in the toilets.

Treasurer's Report Sarah Mitten had circulated the accounts which showed that the cost of heating and lighting had almost doubled since the previous year. The cost of waste disposal had also doubled and this was partly due to the number of incidents of people putting large items of domestic waste in the Hall's bins. Maintenance costs were also higher but a lot of important work had been completed, including the replacement of the kitchen extractor fan.

Severndipity Report (Bar) Gen Riley reported that it had been a difficult year with wholesale costs rising and minimal

profits. The year had also seen the appointment of Neil Wyman as bar manager, and other bar staff.

Election of members The Committee is comprised of elected members and members who represent organisations which use the Parish Hall. All the elected members present were willing to stand again and were re-elected, but we would always welcome more. It is also important that organisations which use the Hall make sure that they send a representative to our meetings, which most of them do.

Election of officers I think we were all hoping that Jan, Gill, Sarah and Helen would be willing to stand again and thankfully they were. However, Jan pointed out that she has now been chairperson for 13 years, which we think breaks the previous record, and that we do need to find more people willing to fill this role in the future.

Having concluded the AGM we moved on to the monthly meeting.



Parish Hall Monthly Meeting

There were no major matters arising from last month's minutes so we moved swiftly on to the

Treasurer's Report

Sarah had circulated the figures and her forecast for the coming year, which includes cost increases for utilities and performing rights licences. Although the balance is reasonably healthy at the moment, it was agreed that we need to regularly review the hire rates to ensure that these cover the rising utility costs. How-

ever, the importance of fundraising was also stressed.

Future projects

Estimates had been obtained for repainting the interior of the Hall and lounge, in order to ensure that they remain attractive venues for weddings and other events. It was also agreed that the furniture in the lounge was getting past its best and was due for replacement and that, if possible, something should be done to improve the lighting. There is some money set aside in the budget for projects like this, but the costings will need a closer look. A large projection screen is available, which would be useful for some events, but the siting of this needs to be assessed so that it does not affect the stage lighting.

Severndipity (Bar)

Gen Riley reported that the Severndipity Committee had met the previous week. Bar prices had had to be increased due to increased prices from the brewery and they were also having to repay the Bounce Back loan. They will be looking at possible changes to the pipework in order to reduce the waste from ullage and will be looking at their stock levels with a view to some reduction.

Fundraising Jan ran through the plans for the rest of the year which include the Easter Monday Funday, Coronation events, a food night in June, a craft fair in July, the Flower and Produce Show in September, a Burlesque night in October and the Pre-Christmas Bash in November. These are in addition to the regular monthly quizzes and Nosh and Natters.

Doctor's Surgery Frustratingly, there has been no progress via our solicitor with negotiations regarding the lease. Gen Riley and Mike Edginton will now see if they can arrange a meeting with NHS Property Services direct.

It had been a long meeting so there was very little appetite for any other business, but I think we all left feeling hopeful

about the Hall's future after the last few difficult years. We are so fortunate to have a spacious, well-used Hall and comfortable lounge, and possibly even more fortunate to have a strong committee who can deal with the problems that arise with good humour – I can't remember a single meeting where we haven't found something to laugh about.

So, if you feel able to help us in any way, just get in touch.

CONTACT DETAILS

☎ 01452 229570 or

✉ Info@wosph.co.uk



Nosh and Natter

Westbury Parish Hall

Thursday 13th April 2023

Food served between
12.30pm and 1.30pm

Soup of the Day

Turkey and Ham pie with
potatoes and vegetables

Tiramisu

£8.00 two courses
£10.00 three courses

Please call us to say that
you are coming
and let us know in advance
if you have any dietary
requirements

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



Parish Council

We were joined by two members of the public at our March meeting, as well as our County Councillor, Philip Robinson. After the formalities, we discussed the planning application for two glamping units at Sunnybank in Elton Lane. This was a modified application of one refused by the District Council two years ago. We had then raised no objections following a site visit, and as it appears that the current application has addressed some of the problems, we agreed to support the application.

Philip Robinson then gave us his report including details of the County Council budget which has increased to £567m, an increase of almost £46m from the previous year. This has meant a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, which equates to a £6.04 per month increase on a Band D property but Gloucestershire is expected to have one of the lowest County Council tax rates. Many of our roads are in a poor state but Philip pointed out that Westbury had had a good share of Highways funding, although Chairman Simon Phelps reminded him that our parish was larger than most with a corresponding number of roads. Having gone through the work that had been done, he suggested that we could still apply for some more Build Back Better funding. This raised the subject of entrance gates at either end of the village to remind drivers to slow down. We had understood that Highways were going to install these when they removed the white lines, as a speed deterrent some years ago, but they never materialised so we have been advised to talk to our Highways manager about this again and reapply for funding.

Philip was also asked about plans for Westbury Court, as the building remains empty and we still feel that the decision to close the home was a mistake and we

made our views on this very clear. He said he had been unable to find out what was happening to the building but the next day he let us know that “*The Cabinet have approved the disposal of the site and we are in the process of pulling*



together details in order to take it to the market. We have no plans to allocate the site for NHS use.” In view of the risk of flooding cited as a reason for the home’s closure, it will be interesting to see to what use it will be put.

Planning The application for ground mounted photovoltaic panels at Gravel Farm was not discussed in view of the postponement of the open meeting. Our clerk, Fiona, is arranging another date for this as we feel that it is imperative that we hear people’s views about the development before we make our comments to the Planning Committee. In the meantime, any member of the public who wishes to comment on the application can do so on the Forest of Dean District Council website using the planning reference P1773/22/FUL. We had no objections to an application for a single storey rear extension at Oak Barn at Poulton Court Farm and the discharge of conditions for a barn off Goose Lane in Bollow was noted. It was agreed that the information supplied for an application for an agricultural building at Woodland View in Northwood Green was insufficient and there appeared to be no evidence of notification of neighbours.

Fiona then updated us on recent planning decision – the granting of permission for alterations at Northwood House and the refusal of an extension at Chapel House in Broadoak.

Finance The accounts were agreed and the internal auditor has been appointed.

Highways Chairman Simon is meeting the new Highways manager for our area and has a list of issues to discuss with him, as there seem to be potholes wherever you go. The layby outside the Water Gardens has been, and is still being, used for displaying used cars for sale and it also appears that a lot of heavy lorries are parking there, mainly at night, even though it is marked as a weak bridge. The PCSO will be informed of this and a larger 'Weak Bridge' sign requested.

Burial Ground extension and School Playing Field The estimated cost of the fencing that is needed has risen by £2000 since the original estimate and the new lease and rent has yet to be agreed with the County Council. The wooden summer house that the school would like to build will need planning permission and the Parish Council would be willing to apply for this on their behalf, if they wish.

Footpaths Mike Townsend reported that the footpath leading out of Ley Park had been ploughed up but this will be levelled again within the next couple of weeks, weather permitting.

Correspondence A site visit is being arranged to discuss the location of the new community speedwatch camera. A request for our usual donation had been received from Lydcare, but we currently have no driver to provide this part of the service in Westbury, so it was agreed to defer the decision on this until we see if any new drivers come forward.

Several people had contacted us about the difficulties in getting appointments at the Doctor's surgery but we regret that there is little that a Parish Council can do to address this problem.

The next meeting will be on Monday 17th April at 7pm.

Di Landon

PLEASE HELP!

For many years, Lydcare has been providing a community transport service for anyone in Westbury who needs to attend appointments or social events, and requires help because they are unable to use public transport. Several



local drivers have been volunteering their time for this and although we know that many people are

able to rely on friends and family on these occasions, this is not always the case. This service is therefore really important but we do not currently have any local drivers to provide it. So if you are willing to help out on these occasions, please let me know either by messaging me on Facebook or emailing diana.landon12@gmail.com.

Lydcare arranges all the journeys and performs DBS checks on all volunteers, and the driver's fuel costs are covered, with passengers paying a standard mileage fee for their journey. Past experience shows that there is not an enormous demand for the service, but it is less demanding if there is more than one driver in the area, so the more volunteers the better.

Di Landon

I just got fired from my job as a taxi driver. Turns out people don't like it when you go the extra mile for them.

A lorry overturned on the M6 loaded with Vicks vapour rub. Police said there would be no congestion

Cafe on the Green

If you did not manage to make it along on Saturday 4th March, you missed a treat, especially the super selection of homemade bakes – they were wonderful, thank you bakers.



The lively morning raised £226.80 for the Social Hall. This was achieved by the committee providing the

raffle, with lots of lovely prizes to win plus the sale of handmade felt chicks and several generous donations.

This magnificent effort will help ensure the future of the Social Hall. There is a wide range of activities that take place in the Hall. If you are new to the village, or maybe have not ventured there yet, why not look in the parish magazine or bus stop notice board to see regular fixtures and future events. These include Gardening Club, Book Club, and special events.

The next Café will be on Saturday 1st April.....no, I am not joking, and we will be supporting the Crohn's Society.

Kay Manning



at
Westbury Parish Hall
on

Sunday 2nd April at 8pm.

Teams of four at £2 per head



Memory Café
- Tuesday
11th April
2023

The Memory Café aims to provide a fun, friendly, safe and supportive space for people living with dementia or memory loss, their partners, families and carers.

Supported by Artspace, Cinderford as part of the Mindscape Project, people can expect to enjoy a variety of craft and activities.

11.00am arrival and enjoy a cuppa and a cake

11.30am activities provided by Mindscape tutors

12.30pm – 1.15 Soup and rolls served.
Finish

There is no charge for attending this event so why not pop along and join us?

For further information:

Call:07926 986 247

The centre has on-site parking, disabled access and facilities. Stagecoach Bus No 22/23 also stops and departs every ½ hour from outside the centre.

The Harvey Centre, Main Road, Minsterworth, Gloucester, GL2 8JH

Come and join us – a warm welcome awaits!



Give it to me straight, Doc. How long will my car have to spend in the car park?

Church News

Our Family Service will be on
Sunday 16th April at
WESTBURY CHURCH at
10am

This gives us more space and opportunities for coffee and cake afterwards!
WALKING AND TALKING: TALKING AND WALKING that's how Jesus showed himself to his disciples after Easter. Come and sing some great songs; be busy with an activity and walk to the back for talking and coffee afterwards.
 I do hope you can join us in April.

Rev Sarah 01594 517157

Churchyard Working Party

The weather has stymied two or three of our working parties this winter but we are hoping that the sun will be shining for our session in April. We usually meet on the second Saturday of each month but as this is the Easter weekend, we have decided to meet up the following Saturday instead.
 So we will meet up on:-

Saturday 15th April
10am until 1pm

or however long you want.

Tea and coffee provided but please bring any tools that you might find useful.



The churchyard is looking beautiful but there is still plenty to be done to keep it that way and to protect the wildlife so please come and join us.
Di Landon



Northwood Green Gardening Club

There was an unplanned change of schedule for our March meeting, when the speaker brought the wrong presentation! We nevertheless enjoyed an informative and entertaining evening on the subject of Berried Treasure, all the beautiful - and sometimes surprising - fruit that brings a splash of colour to the winter garden.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 13 April, when Neil Jones will give a talk about Growing Herbs in the Kitchen Garden.



Neil and Niamh Jones, RHS Gold Medal winners in 2022, run their own specialist nursery in Newent. We are hoping they will be able to bring some plants for us to buy.

The meetings are at 7.30pm in the Northwood Green Social Hall. Non-members are always welcome, entry fee £3. Annual membership £12.

For more information, please contact karenfayjohnson@gmail.com or call 07879 386573.

Man to florist: 'I'd like a bunch of flowers, please.'

Florist: 'Certainly, sir. What flowers would you like?'

Man: 'Er.. I'm not sure... . . . '

Florist: 'Let me help you, sir - what exactly have you done?'

Vale of Castiard WI

This month we enjoyed a lively talk by Pamela Holland about her experiences as a travel rep in the holiday hot-spots of Europe.

Our April meeting, on Wednesday 19 April, is our Resolutions meeting, when we will discuss the issues that have been put forward for WIs across the country to campaign on and support this year. This will be accompanied by a Bring and Share supper. As usual, the meeting will be held in the Flaxley Schoolroom at 7.30pm.

For more information, contact Gill Western, President, on 07879 532060 or Karen Johnson, Secretary, on 07879 386573.

Litter Pick



For the last two years, many of you have joined in with a parish-wide litter pick in the Spring,

and gathered up an enormous amount of rubbish. This is needed as much as ever this year but we are postponing the litter-pick so that we can do it on **Monday 8th May**, as part of the Coronation Big Help Out. (see Page 4)

This aims to encourage people to try volunteering and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas. Unfortunately the grass verges will have grown more by then, which will make it a bit harder to see and pick up the litter, but there will be refreshments back at the Parish Hall afterwards and hopefully the weather will be better. More details next month or if you want to sign up now, please email me diana.landon12@gmail.com

February Weather Report

England had its driest February in 30 years according to provisional figures from the Met Office, having had less than half the average rainfall for the month.

In Westbury, Simon Phelps's records show that we only had seven days with rain, with a total of only 12mm falling during the month, with the wettest day being 4th Feb. This was in comparison with a total rainfall of 110.5mm in February 2022. It was also colder this year than in February 2022, with an average maximum temperature of 10C and average minimum of 0.4C this year in comparison with max of 10.4C and minimum of 1.26C in 2022. This year we had frost on 12 nights, the coldest being 5th/6th and 7th/8th when the temperature fell to -7C, and the coldest day was 27th when the temperature was 6C.

So, what about April? There's a saying that if it thunders on All Fools Day (1st April) it brings good crops of corn and hay but although that seems a doubtful way of predicting the weather, the Met Office believes that there is some truth in the saying that 'March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers' as 'April does tend to be a showery month,



Something to look forward to in April

and the warmth of May soon follows bringing the familiar colours of the UK spring."

We know that April weather can be changeable but I think that Mark Twain's claim that "In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours" may be a slight exaggeration.

Westbury-on-Severn CE Primary School

Our school will be celebrating its 175th anniversary at the beginning of the next academic year. Plans to mark the occasion are in the early stages, but I would love to hear from past pupils about their memories of their time at school, and also if anyone is happy to share photos they may have of the school. Please feel free to share this with other members of the community, I'd love to hear from them!



This photograph was taken in 1924 of Form 1 A+B with Teacher Miss Margaret Watkins

Please contact me on s.landon@westbury-on-severncofe.gloucs.sch.uk if you have anything to offer. Thank you.

Mrs Sian Landon

Sycamore Class (Y2/3) Teacher

'A small school, dreaming big.'



Westbury School — soon to be 175 years old

Cricket Fixtures 2023

1ST XI		
GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY DIVISION 1		
6/5/2023	LANGFORD	HOME
13/5/2023	LYDNEY	AWAY
20/5/2023	ASTON INGHAM	HOME
27/5/2023	HAWKESBURY UPTON	AWAY
3/6/2023	CHIPPING CAMPOEN	AWAY
10/6/2023	ROCKHAMPTON	HOME
17/6/2023	KINGSHOLM	AWAY
24/6/2023	APPERLEY	HOME
1/7/2023	POULTON	AWAY
8/7/2023	LANGFORD	AWAY
15/7/2023	LYDNEY	HOME
22/7/2023	ASTON INGHAM	AWAY
29/7/2023	HAWKESBURY UPTON	HOME
5/8/2023	CHIPPING CAMPOEN	HOME
12/8/2023	ROCKHAMPTON	AWAY
19/8/2023	KINGSHOLM	HOME
26/8/2023	APPERLEY	AWAY
2/9/2023	POULTON	HOME

2ND XI		
CGFL PREMIER DIVISION		
6/5/2023	WITCOMBE	AWAY
13/5/2023	FOREST EXILES	HOME
20/5/2023	RUARDEAN HILL	AWAY
27/5/2023	ANDOVERSFORD	HOME
3/6/2023	BREAM	HOME
10/6/2023	STANWAY	AWAY
17/6/2023	ULLENWOOD BHARAT 2S	HOME
24/6/2023	ST PHILIPS NORTH	AWAY
1/7/2023	ARCADIANS NINE ELMS 2S	HOME
8/7/2023	WITCOMBE	HOME
15/7/2023	FOREST EXILES	AWAY
22/7/2023	RUARDEAN HILL	HOME
29/7/2023	ANDOVERSFORD	AWAY
5/8/2023	BREAM	AWAY
12/8/2023	STANWAY	HOME
19/8/2023	ULLENWOOD BHARAT 2S	AWAY
26/8/2023	ST PHILIPS NORTH	HOME
2/9/2023	ARCADIANS NINE ELMS 2S	AWAY

3RD XI		
CGFL DIVISION 2 WEST		
6/5/2023	WOODPECKERS 2S	HOME
13/5/2023	ST BRIAVELS 2S	AWAY
20/5/2023	ASTON INGHAM 3S	HOME
27/5/2023	HIGHNAM COURT 2S	AWAY
3/6/2023	RUARDEAN HILL 2S	HOME
10/6/2023	UPTON ST LEONARDS 2S	AWAY
17/6/2023	PARKEND 2S	HOME
24/6/2023	NEWENT 3S	HOME
1/7/2023	LYDNEY 3S	AWAY
8/7/2023	WOODPECKERS 2S	AWAY
15/7/2023	ST BRIAVELS 2S	HOME
22/7/2023	ASTON INGHAM 3S	AWAY
29/7/2023	HIGHNAM COURT 2S	HOME
5/8/2023	RUARDEAN HILL 2S	AWAY
12/8/2023	UPTON ST LEONARDS 2S	HOME
19/8/2023	PARKEND 2S	AWAY
26/8/2023	NEWENT 3S	AWAY
2/9/2023	LYDNEY 3S	HOME

Rugby

It was an enthralling encounter at the Ken Boulton stadium of light on 4th March. Definitely a game of two halves, Cirencester came out all guns blazing in racking up all the points to go in to half time leading the home side 22-5.

There must have been some rousing words for Westbury, as they came storming back with tries from Max Kaufmann, Shay Lewis, Lee Prince and Rychknyx McKenzie, all scoring one each, and Paul Reddan kicked three conversions.

Number 8 Max Kaufman and Lee Prince were outstanding throughout, carrying



and tackling well in a fantastic all round team performance. Credit must also go to Cirencester who never gave in with two great chances to win the game in the last few minutes.

Westbury 26 Cirencester 22

On 11th March, the final score at Chosen Hill saw the Blue & whites going down 20 points to 7. It was the last league game of the season and we finished 2nd in the table. So, well done lads - not too shabby. Some performances of note from the 'Pritchard'

lads, Max, Shay, Marc R & full back Paul for bagging the only



WOS meat pie (& kick).

Massive thanks & well done to Chosen Hill Former Pupils RFC - a very enjoyable afternoon in the Mud! *Simon Roberts*

Football

There was drama on and off the pitch on Saturday 11th March as Westbury Utd hosted Ruardean Hill Ranger Reserves.

As the teams limbered up for a crunch



bottom of the table relegation clash the press gallery was assailed by

complaints relating to some minor typos in previous reports, including getting a couple of names wrong. The charge was led by club secretary for the last half century David D'Ambuster and team manager Derek Whatshisname but we apologise to Jamie Ward and Akeen Wright for previous errors. In our defence, the management committee are often a little vague on the players' names themselves.

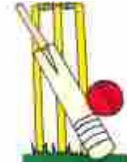
The game itself was an astonishing spectacle as Westbury ran riot in the first half with Akeen banging in four goals in the first 20 minutes as they raced to an incredible 8-0 half time score line. At one point their first seven shots had yielded six goals. Such scoring efficiency left Director of Football / Club President Tempest clutching his head in amazement and disbelief. Ex Westbury Captain Tom Landon and now Ruardean Rangers 1st team regular, who had unwisely come along to watch, quickly slunk away to the other side of the pitch to avoid Tempest's exultations along the touch line.

The 2nd half began a little more balanced until the goals started raining in again. Young Harry and also Lewis managed to bag hat tricks as well with some fine strikes and clinical finishes from all angles.

Club Secretary David D'isestablishmentarianismio struggled to find any reason to complain, until he discovered that the players had eaten all the post match pizza and not left him a slice. But apart from that it was a glorious afternoon in the annals of Westbury United FC as they ran out 12-1 winners. The only minor irritation being the news filtering down the A48 that Newnham had won 12-0, wouldn't you know it !

Mark Landon

Westbury and Newnham Junior Cricket Club



Westbury and Newnham Junior cricket season is just around the corner and we are currently all doing sun dances

every spare moment of the day to try and get it to stop raining long enough to be able to prepare the pitches!

Lots of fabulous work has been happening at Newnham with the Archery Club helping to get the Club House ready to continue with the Westbury/Newnham U15 collaboration which was a huge success last year. We have indoor nets starting for 3 weeks at the end of March for our U13 and U15 sides in preparation for the league season. Our outdoor season starts at Westbury cricket ground on Friday 21st April and we cannot wait to see all our lovely junior cricketers back on the field having fun! Here's hoping for some dry weather so we can wear trainers rather than wellies to practice!

WoS & Newnham Junior Cricket team

Editor: Andrew Landon
Everything else: Di Landon
diana.landon12@gmail.com
Hayden Farm, Rodley, Westbury-on-Severn
GL14 1RE 01452 760531