

**Westbury has
been lit up for
Christmas and
New Year**

**. . but
now
it's
Panto
time!**



The scenery is nearly finished, almost all lines are learned, although not always in the right order, songs are being fine tuned and small explosive devices are on order ! Yes, it's Panto season and Westbury Players are looking forward to bringing you Beauty and the Beast this year. The cast, both young and old have been rehearsing busily through the autumn and winter months to bring you this moving tale of love, deceit, treachery, violence, promiscuity and, ultimately, honour and justice. Something for everyone !

The evening performances this year are on Saturday 21st, Friday 27th and Saturday 28th January and come complete with an excellent meal, and a well stocked bar will be open to ensure a riotous evening.

For our younger, family audience we are also putting on the usual Sunday afternoon matinee at 3pm on 22nd January. Tickets are selling fast. The last Saturday is already sold out but a few tickets remain for the other evenings, so please call David on 01452 760630 to book yours. No need to book for the matinee *(cont on p11)*

Parish Council

Our December Parish Council meeting was rather earlier in the month than usual. Councillors Mike Townsend and Debbie Hill were unable to be there and County Councillor Philip Robinson was also unable to join us. There were no members of the public either so, after the usual formalities, we went straight on to the planning applications.

Planning We had earlier made a site visit to Chapel House in Broadoak, regarding the application for the erection of a two-storey rear extension and demolition of existing glazed outhouse, and felt that we had no grounds for objections to this. The discharge of conditions for Little Oaklands Farm was noted, as was the application for the change of existing garage/gym/workshop/games room into an ancillary annex at Fountain Cottage, in Rock & Fountain Lane. We decided to make no comment on this retrospective application, other than to point out that when the original application to develop this property came before the Parish Council, concerns were expressed that what has now happened, is exactly what would happen. We also pointed out our concerns regarding retrospective applications. An application for listed building consent for minor alterations to the internal layout, the conversion of garage to living accommodation and a small extension to Wintles Hill House, met with no objections as it was felt that matters regarding special architectural or historic interest are best dealt with by the planning department.

A recent application regarding the Lecture Hall, which is pending consideration, led to discussion regarding the parking problems in the area. Chairman Simon Phelps had recently attended an information session regarding the Fire Service

and the difficulties they encounter due to poor parking. This can make it very hard for fire engines to get close enough to a building that is on fire. The roadway through to the school entrance is quite narrow and there are fears that inconsiderate parking in the area could lead to an ambulance or fire engine being delayed in reaching the school in an



emergency. It was therefore agreed that we ask the District Council to make it a condition that there should be no roadside parking outside the Lecture Hall.

Fiona then updated us on the application for the removal of diseased trees in Westbury Court Gardens which had been granted. Chairman Simon and Peter Radley had been present at the Forest of Dean District Council site visit regarding the application for an Agricultural Trailer Sales and Servicing Depot at Elton. This application was passed at the November Planning Committee meeting only for the decision to be rescinded due to a technicality that occurred at the meeting. It was then scheduled to be reheard at the FoDDC Planning meeting in December, but was withdrawn from the agenda at short notice and is now presumably to be reheard at the January Planning Committee meeting.

Finance The month's accounts were agreed.

Highways Chairman Simon had attended a meeting of the Road Safety Liaison group and had raised again the problems surrounding Jordans Hill railway bridge. Network Rail have not cut back the scrub as requested and the strip of land on the Elton side of the bridge, which has trees

which impede the view of motorists, appears to have been taken off the market. There had been another accident under the bridge in December. At the meeting, Simon also heard that Gloucestershire has a poor record for road safety campaigning and reducing speeding, although there had been a slight improvement in the Forest of Dean area, and that two new Emergency Service Hubs, one of which will be at Newent, will see police officers and firefighters working from the same base. Simon had also met with Andrew Middlecote, the Highways officer for this area, to go through the pressing local road problems especially the recent flooding at the Glen, Adsett. Rodley Road has also deteriorated a lot recently. Parking for school drop offs and collections is causing a problem as cars are sometimes being parked under the lime trees outside the Lecture Hall (or old Post Office) which is damaging the grass.

Burial Ground Extension and School Playing Field

Discussions continue regarding the rent for the new playing field. The County Council obviously want to keep their costs down but, as a Parish Council, we need to try to recover some of the large sum that has been spent on the field, which has had to come out of the Parish precept, part of everyone's Council Tax. The new field is looking very good now and is draining well.

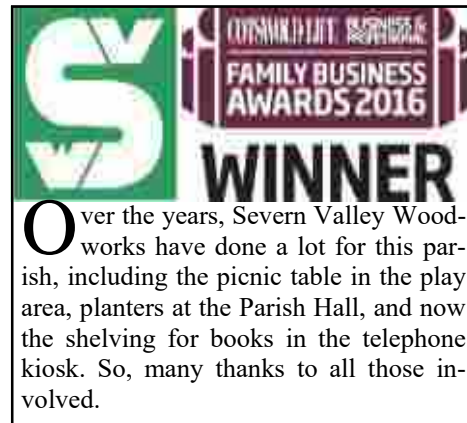
Around the Parish

As the leaves are all down in the play area now, we are planning a working party on 7th January to have a good clear up ready for the spring. We had received a report from Jeff Wheeler, the Public Rights of Way officer, regarding all the work that has been done recently on ten of our parish footpaths. With over 65 miles of footpaths in Westbury, we can certainly keep him busy. There is one

footpath which is inaccessible at the moment and which we are trying to get re-opened and this is the one going towards Walmore Common from opposite Broadway Lane (EWS81) so if anyone knows anything about the existence and use of this footpath since the 1950s, we would be glad to hear from them.

In Northwood Green, the adaptation of the telephone kiosk to a book store has been very successful and so it has now been agreed that we should do the same with the one outside the Lyon Inn. Simon, from Severn Valley Woodworks, had kindly agreed to install the shelving and the work has now been completed and it is all ready for the books to move in. So with that good news, our December meeting came to a close and we were able to share some Christmas refreshments before heading home.

Our next meeting is on Monday 16th January at 7pm in the Parish Hall lounge.



Over the years, Severn Valley Woodworks have done a lot for this parish, including the picnic table in the play area, planters at the Parish Hall, and now the shelving for books in the telephone kiosk. So, many thanks to all those involved.

Road Closure

The A48 will be closed between the junctions with Blaisdon Road and with Flaxley Road from 22:00 on 16th January 2023 until 06:00 on 17th January 2023 or until the works have been completed to allow a bridge inspection by Network Rail.



The Parish Hall Management Committee meeting in December was entirely concerned with the negotiations regarding the lease of the Doctor's Surgery. Since the original lease was signed back in 2011, numerous changes have taken place at the surgery, and the whole matter has become incredibly complicated – in fact so complicated that trying to describe it all would take up far too many pages of the WoSP!

Negotiations regarding the ownership, the lease and the rent have been stalling for some time and so it was very useful to have a full discussion with the whole committee so that we could fully appreciate the various aspects of the problem and decide how best to deal with them. Gen Riley has put in an enormous amount of work trying to solve all the issues and had supplied us with lots of relevant information, which certainly helped our understanding of what is involved. One of the main difficulties seems to be linked to not being able to sit down with all concerned to find a way through the problems that would suit everyone concerned, but it appears that this is not the way these things get done. Shame!

After considerable discussion, we agreed that our priority must be to try to make sure that Westbury retains a doctor's surgery, while at the same time we will need to get professional advice to ensure that in doing so we do not jeopardise the charitable status of the Parish Hall.

It was a tiring meeting and I think we

were all very glad to be able to retire to the bar afterwards for a well earned drink and some Christmas nibbles.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th January at 8pm.
Di Landon

Letter from Jan



We finished the year with some great events that included a Burlesque night, a night of

live music with Steel Weasels and our Christmas Nosh n Natter and the Christmas Quiz. Thank you to everyone that came along to these events, and also to our regular hall users — a used hall is better than a closed one.

As a lot of us are involved with the panto at the end of January, there are no fund raising events organised, but if anything does materialise we will let you know by way of social media, email or a phone call.

During the course of the year the Playgroup for Grownups changed its name to Westbury Bunch (WB) and the week day also changed, but there has been a core number of us meeting once a month and planters have appeared with more to come. We have had several crafty sessions, which started with bauble wreath making in January and finished with a natural foliage wreath making session in December, with hot chocolate and food along with chat and laughter. If you would like to join us then please contact us on info@wosph.co.uk **or ring 01452 229570**

We will need to think about some fund raising events in 2023, and if you would like to help with this, then use the contact details as above, we would love to hear from you.

Happy New Year from WPHMC

Cafe on the Green



What a fantastic finish to a year of cake munching & cuppa sipping. The Cafe team and supporters have raised a total of £1616.95 this year, with the December cafe raising £134 for Art Shape.

The charities supported this year were

Art Shape - £265

Crohn's Society - £357.70

Gloucester Samaritans - £312.50

Pied Piper £229.75

Riding for the Disabled - £222

Shepherds House Day centre - £95

Westbury Church fabric Fund - £135

The Cafe team look forward to welcoming you back on

Saturday 7th January 2023.

We wish you all a healthy festive period and a Happy New Year

Vale of Castiard WI

Our first meeting of the new year will be on Wednesday 18th January at 7.30pm in the Old Schoolroom at Flaxley. The talk will be about volunteering and community projects in the Forest of Dean.

Visitors and new members are welcome to join us for any of our meetings. For more information, please contact our President, Gill Western, on 07879 532060 or Secretary Karen Johnson on 01452 760970.



Northwood Green Gardening Club

Our new programme of events begins at 7.30pm on Thursday 12th January, when Perry Sladen will give a talk about his experience of growing grape vines at his Oakle Street vineyard.



Meetings are held in the Northwood Green Social Hall. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Non-members £3, annual membership £12. Please contact

karen.f.johnson@btinternet.com or call 01452 760970 for more information.



Have you recently been diagnosed with dementia?

This can be a difficult thing to come to terms with. Joining a course gives you the opportunity to meet and talk to others who are going through the same experiences as you. This course is for anyone who has recently had a diagnosis of dementia (in the last year), and is run by a skilled therapist who has been trained to run the course. Spaces still available for the next course at: The Cornerstone Centre, Cheltenham, GL52 5QA

Every Wednesday afternoon 12:30pm - 2pm for 10 weeks, from 18th January 2023 - 22nd March 2023. Please contact Maggie Grady on 07889 286684 or maggie.grady@mindsong.org.uk for a referral form to join this course or information on future courses.

The Robin

Has anyone in Westbury used the Robin? If so, please could you contact me on 01452 760531 or diana.landon12@gmail.com and let me know how it worked for you?



The Robin is Gloucestershire County Council's new on-demand bus service - a pilot rural minibus service which is now running in

the south of the Forest of Dean (including Westbury-on-Severn) and in the Cotswolds. It is intended to provide an on-demand service to fill a gap where there is no bus provision, complementing existing services by providing a link from bus stops in hamlets or village centres to local transport hubs and train stations. The service is for travel within the specified area and any out of district bus stops are for drop off only – you can't get picked up outside the Forest of Dean area. The fare varies but is £2.50 for a single journey under 7 miles, £1.50 for under 15s and free for those with a concessionary bus pass.

You can book between two weeks in advance and up to one hour before you want to travel and you can book over the phone - call The Robin call centre on 0345 2638139 – and pay the driver (cash or contactless). You can also book on the website. Absolutely anyone can travel on the service. Online bookings can be made by over 16s. A journey can also be booked on behalf of someone younger who'd like to use The Robin. There is a lot more information on the website <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/the-robin/>

Westbury on Severn Parish Church Friends



at Northwood Green Social Hall

FRIDAY 3RD FEBRUARY
7PM FOR 7.30 START

BYOB* Raffle Nibbles

BINGO					
10	18	40	53	74	
3	23	37	55	70	
15	24	★	51	62	
5	30	43	54	65	
1	28	33	58	67	

Bingo cards £2 each



Prizes for winning cards

Raising vital funds for replacement wiring in

Westbury-on-Severn St Mary St Peter & St Paul Church

Please call Jo on 07946664514 if you would like to reserve a table.

***Bring your own Booze**

Residents asked to give their thoughts on Forest of Dean District Council budget



Residents and businesses across the Forest of Dean are being asked to give their views on the District Council's spending plans as it prepares its budget for the next financial year, with a consultation running until 20th January 2023.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Cllr Richard Leppington, said:

"We have seen significant cuts to our budget, and this year is no different, especially amid rising inflation. We are expecting these Government cuts to carry through the coming years as economic recovery continues, but we are committed to continuing to deliver a high quality service for our residents"

Forest of Dean District Council is responsible for a number of local services such as waste collection, planning, licensing, housing, parking and leisure with the County Council delivering other services such as maintaining roads, adult social care, education, children's services and public health. The District Council receives only 10% of the total council tax bill residents pay, which is split between the district council, county council, police and fire service. Residents can see the exact split in their council tax bill.

To view the Council's proposal for the 2023/24 budget, visit: <https://fdean.gov.uk/budget>

As well as continuing to provide its services, the Council will also be supporting

the Levelling Up projects with the regeneration of Five Acres, the new enterprise education facility at Hartpury University and College and the regeneration and redevelopment of facilities in Cinderford. To pay for the budget, the Council is proposing to raise council tax by 11p a week for a band D property.

If residents or businesses would like to share their views on the budget proposal, or have any questions, they can send emails to Andrew Knott, Chief Finance (S151) Officer for the Forest of Dean District Council – section151@fdean.gov.uk

The deadline to respond to the consultation is 20th January 2023.



Forest of Dean District Council will pick up real Christmas trees from all households fol-

lowing this year's festive celebrations as it urges residents to reduce waste over Christmas and New Year and make the most of their kerbside recycling services.

Residents wishing to recycle their trees will need to present them on their scheduled garden waste collection day between Monday 9 to Friday 20 January in order to be collected. The service is available to all households, including those without a current garden waste licence.

Please make sure all the lights, decorations and any stands have been removed. To assist Biffa's crews, residents are asked to reduce larger trees down to around 1-metre lengths which can either be left ready at the kerbside or put inside the green garden waste wheeled bin, if available. Trees need to be presented by 7am on the scheduled collection day.

Once collected, trees will be composted and turned into a soil improver for use on agricultural land.

Nosh and Natter

Westbury Parish Hall

Thursday 12th January 2023

Food served between
12.30pm and 1.30pm

Soup of the day

Cottage pie

Pineapple upside down pudding
with custard

£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



November's Weather

According to provisional Met Office figures, November 2022 was the third warmest November on record for the UK and certainly Simon Phelps's records concur with this, with the average maximum temperature for the month being 11.4C and the average minimum temperature, 3.5C. The warmest day was 12th at 16C and the coldest was 29th at 4.5C. At night the warmest temperature was 11C on 10th/11th and even on the coldest night 28th/29th it only fell to -1C and there were only 3 nights with frost. However, there were 22 days with rain and the total rainfall for the month was 193.5mm, with 24mm falling on 15th. The winds were predominantly westerly.

What to expect in January!

When the oak trees bend with snow in January, good crops may be expected.

*If the sun shine on St. Paul's Day (25th)
it betokens a good year;
if rain or snow, indifferent;
if misty, it predicts great dearth;
if thunder, great death of people that year.*

The last twelve days of January rule the weather for the whole year.

And one that fits nicely for 2023

If the first day of the New Year falls upon a Sunday, a good winter, a windy spring and a dry summer.

Thanks to Simon for finding these old weather sayings and let's hope for sunshine on St Paul's Day 25th!

Closed Churchyard

The weather put paid to our Churchyard working party in December as it was very cold and icy. However, we hope to be back at work on Saturday 14th January if the weather permits. Since we started these monthly working parties back in November 2018, a lot has been achieved and lots of people have come to help. Some photographs taken at our first session give an indication of the improvements we have made.



If you are able to spare an hour or two on the 2nd Saturday of each month between 10am and 1pm, we



would love to see you. If you are unsure about whether it is happening due to bad weather, please call me on 760531. Please bring your own tools – and don't worry, we do stop for refreshments mid-morning.

Di Landon



Tawny Owl

In mid-January, and with the temperature dropping to -4C or -5C overnight, most of us would consider it an odd time for amorous advances outdoors. Not so the Tawny Owl. Undeterred by the temperature, Tawnies are one of the earliest species to begin breeding by making a start in late winter.



Most of us have heard the 'Hoo-hoo-hooo' calls of the male Tawny Owl, but the female's answering call is a much quieter 'kee-wick' call, not always easy to pick up.

These owls aren't too particular about their nest site and will happily use a hole in a tree trunk, an abandoned building or the nest of one of the Crow family. In his book 'Sketches of Dean's Birds', John Christian describes one such bird making use of a Raven's nest, complete with eggs, after the Raven had been shot. There is no record as to the outcome of the young Ravens, if and when they hatched!

The Tawny lays a small clutch of 2 or 3 beautifully mottled eggs. These will be incubated by the female, and will hatch in around 30 days, with the young birds fledging in around 35-36 days. It's not unusual for chicks to fall from the nest when they are nearly ready to fly and topple over when exercising their wings. Often they are able to scramble back up to their nest using their talons and a bit of frantic flapping.

While growing, Tawny Owl chicks will be fed constantly by their parents, the diet not being restricted to the usual mice, voles or rats as we might expect. They will take small birds roosting at night, young rabbits, and even earthworms when prey is scarce.

Oddly their night vision seems to be on a par with ours. Like other members of the owl family they have tubular eyeballs. This prevents the eyeballs moving in the eye socket, hence the necessity to be able to rotate its head through almost 360 degrees. Their acute sense of hearing is the main weapon that makes them such efficient hunters. They have a facial disc which is shaped and positioned in such a way as to direct the sound toward the owl's ears. The ears are highly unusual in that the left one is higher on the skull than the right, while a passage through the skull links the eardrums. This degree of variation means that sounds arrive at the ears at fractionally different times, enabling the owl to pinpoint the source of the sound.

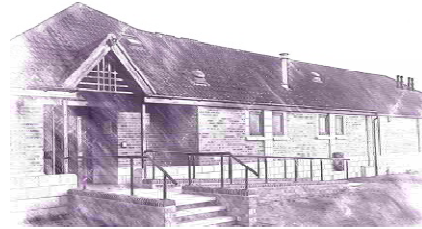
Tawny Owls are our most common owl, though they, like many other species, are on the RSPB 'Amber' list as being 'at risk'. They do a huge amount to keep the population of rodents on their toes, and will readily make use of a suitably positioned nest box – there are many plans and instructions for siting available online.

Tim Humphries

“

"Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual."

— Mark Twain



**Struggle a bit with
your short-term
memory?**

**Come and join us
for a quiz where
all questions are
pre 1990!**

**Westbury Parish
Hall
Sunday
8th January 2023
then first Sunday
every other
month.**

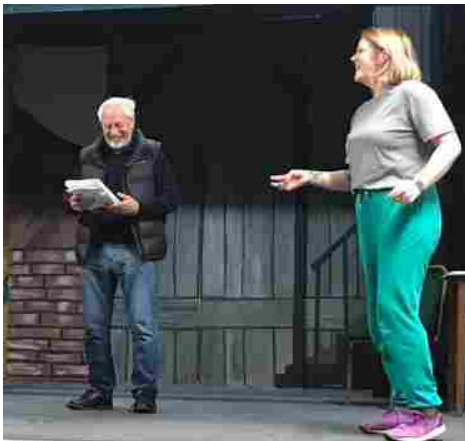
**7pm start.
Bar and sand-
wiches.
£1 per person**

(continued from p1) So come along and watch our local school teacher



A couple of photos from panto rehearsals this winter

singing her heart out and our Director of Football striding the stage like King Lear (admittedly the bit towards the end where he goes mad) and the



thrills and spills that ensue throughout, brought to you by the regular crew of Thespians.

Mark Landon

Westbury Players

Beauty
AND THE
BEAST
A PANTOMIME

WESTBURY PARISH HALL

PERFORMANCES - 2023:
 FRIDAY 20TH JANUARY (NON MEAL)
 SATURDAY 21ST JANUARY (INCLUDES MEAL)
 SUNDAY 22ND JANUARY (NON MEAL MATINEE)
 FRIDAY 27TH JANUARY (INCLUDES MEAL)
 SATURDAY 28TH JANUARY (INCLUDES MEAL)

TICKETS:
 MEAL NIGHT: £17.50
 NON-MEAL NIGHT: £7.50
 MATINEE: £5
 £3 CHILD UNDER 16 (child free with every paying adult)

SOLD OUT

TICKETS AVAILABLE: CALL 01452 760630

Football

Only one result for December and that was a 4-1 defeat by Lydbrook Athletic at home on 10th December.

Forthcoming matches are league games v Ellwood at home on 14th January at 2pm, and v Bream Amts at home on 11th February, also at 2pm. On 21st January, Westbury takes on Rodborough and Caincross Old Boys Firsts away in the County Cup.

My New Year's resolution is to read more, so I've turned on the subtitles on my TV.

New Year? I only just got used to the last one!

Rugby

Saturday 3rd December was a cold day at the Ken Boulton Stadium of Light, where WoS RFC welcomed Smiths 2's in what promised to be a close fought encounter & it didn't disappoint. The first half saw some great scrummaging from WOS & some deft handling skills from Smiths ...real grass roots running rugby.



WoS's first try was scored by Morgan Arron with kicker Oggy hitting the mark, only to be matched by the lads from Smiths. Half time saw the WoS scoreboard (being driven by injured prop Max Skipsey) at 7-7 with it all to play for. The amassed crowd enjoyed the half time support act of Mariah Carey singing her heart out in the sub zero northerly wind (*Well it looked like Mariah – but it could well have been Max (the scoreboard) Skipsey yawning*)

The second half ensued with skipper Robbie Pritchard's words ringing in the player's ears and what a second half it was - end to end stuff, try matched by try, kick matched by kick, lineout matched by lineout - but still the WoS scrum driven



by Justin Thackray was dominant and there were some great runs from the WoS

back row of Jordan Ryland & Lee Prince. There were a few injuries that held up play (luckily none serious) and, as we entered the fourth quarter, the ever try-hungry Arron Morgan (with great support) crossed the white wash twice more with 10 Oggy slotting the conversions. A last ditch drive by Smiths couldn't change the tide with WoS winning out at 26-21 - a good day at home with great food, beer



& banter. There were too many performances to single out (the pack were awesome) and it was great to see Robert Green back in the blue and white. Oh – and did I mention that we're top of the league!

Sadly matches due to be played on 10th and 17th December had to be cancelled due to the weather. However, the Westbury on Severn RFC Xmas gathering still took place on 17th and also celebrated a happy 21st birthday for Prop Max Skipsey. *Simon Roberts*

Thanks to Pete Wilson for the photos

The next game is away to Gloucester Old Boys RFC on 7th January 2.30pm kick off.

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