



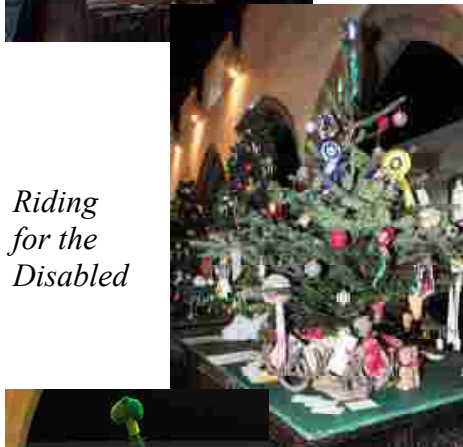
## **Westbury-On-Severn Parish Church Friends Christmas Tree Festival 2023**

**T**hank you so much for supporting us at the 2023 Christmas Tree Festival and making it such a success. We had well over a hundred visitors over the weekend despite ghastly weather and chill in the church. We had 24 trees, all very different

and all imaginatively decorated representing your society/ business etc. They really were superb and you have set an even higher standard than 2021. Thank you so much for all your time and effort. The voting was immensely popular and resulted in the following: -



*The Red  
Hart,  
Blaisdon*



*Riding  
for the  
Disabled*



*and Westbury  
School.*

The committee vote went to the Cricket Club and the magnificent hamper was won by Gill Western.

We have raised £1597.38 for re-wiring and essential electrical

work in the church.

On behalf of all the committee:

**THANK YOU** for supporting us and see you at our next Christmas Tree Festival in 2025!

*Frances Down  
Chair of WoSPCF*

## **FAMILY SERVICE**

**Northwood Green  
Church**

**Sunday 21st January  
10am**



**PRESENTS!**

**Did Jesus receive  
any presents ?**

**A Happy New Year to all  
our readers**

May all our troubles last as long  
as our New Year's resolutions!



**C**ommittee meetings are not usually top of anyone's priority list in the run up to Christmas, but the Parish Hall meeting was reasonably well attended and, following on from the previous meeting, we heard that the Wifi now seems to be working well. However, we had not all done our homework in checking the booking form to see if any changes are needed and we are still waiting to see what the fire assessment recommends as the maximum number of people for the Main Hall and Lounge. Mike Edginton and his helpers had replaced the sign on the A48 in spite of dreadful weather conditions, and their work was much appreciated.

**Treasurer's Report** The draft accounts had been circulated and these did not give a very hopeful picture of the Hall's finances. The high utility costs mean that the Hall is currently running at a loss and clearly this is unsustainable. Two schemes, one government run and one run by the Forest of Dean District Council, can provide financial help for work to reduce these costs and to lower carbon emissions, and a small committee was formed to look into the possibility of applying for this funding. A rent review is due in February, which will also look at the Hall's financial problems.

**Doctor's surgery** Western Power had still not supplied an estimate for the work needed to install a separate electricity supply for the surgery. Newnham Parish Council have been asked to make a contribution towards this cost.

**Projects** All these are on hold at present – partly due to Christmas and partly due to financial constraints.

**Severndipity (Bar)** Their meeting had had to be cancelled due to bad weather and will now take place early in January. Their accounts had been circulated to committee members and the Treasurer reported that there had been a disappointing profit for the month and that the cost of sales and wastage was a cause for concern.

**Fundraising** On a happier note, the Pre-Xmas Bash had been very successful and much enjoyed and had made a profit of £382. On 16<sup>th</sup> January, we will be meeting with the Friends of Westbury School to talk about joining forces to plan the 2024 Summer Show.

The next meeting will be at the Parish Hall on Tue 9<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm.



**A**nother year over and a new one just beginning and there will be some changes ahead, so keep an eye on what is happening.

We have had another good year at the hall with respect to private bookings and we have had some great fund raising events and those that have been involved have had a great time.

2024 already has some bookings ranging from our jumble sale in February (date to be confirmed) to the Flower and Produce Show on September 1<sup>st</sup> which, this year, will be a bit bigger than last year, with a small arena, craft stalls and fun side shows — more information to follow but put the date in your diary.

We even have a bee auction in May organised by the GBKA.

Thank you to everyone that has supported the hall, and also to our regular hall users — a used hall is better than a closed one. If you would like to join us, then please contact us on [info@wosph.co.uk](mailto:info@wosph.co.uk) or ring 01452 229570

We will need to think about some other fund raising events in 2024, 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 Jan

## Nosh and Natter

Westbury Parish Hall

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Food served between  
12.30pm and 1.30pm

Carrot and coriander soup

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Cottage pie with vegetables and  
gravy

\*\*\*\*

Bread and butter pudding

£8.00 two courses £10.00 three  
courses

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

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

Please note that there will be a  
change of date for the Nosh n Natter  
in April

**It will be on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April**

(the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday that month)  
Sorry for the inconvenience and  
please change the date on your  
calendar



The third leg of the festive season (Christmas/New Year/Panto) is in the final stages of rehearsal and I am pleased to report that some lines have been learned. Props, costumes, songs, lighting, sets and scenery are in the final stages of preparation and we are (gulp) SOLD OUT for the final weekend.



*Panto stalwarts, Clive Tempest and David D'Ambrogio, rehearsing their roles*

Happily, for those who feared missing out on this cultural extravaganza, there are a few tickets available for the first Saturday and the Sunday Matinee. The Saturday price is an astonishingly competitive £17.50, which includes a meal worth at least £17, so you get

to see a Panto for 50p !

The matinee price is £5 per adult and one child free. Additional children under 16 are £3, which is good value for the heating alone — paradoxically ice creams will be available. Bear in mind the Dame is also the hall cleaner so don't spill anything!

Dates and times are as follows :

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm for 7:30pm meal. Curtain up sometime thereafter.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> 3pm for 3:30pm curtain.

To order your tickets please call David D'Ambrogio on 01452 760630.

Mark Landon

Westbury on Severn  
Parish Church Friends



at Northwood Green Social Hall

**FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup> FEB 2024**  
**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**

**Housing Needs Survey**  
(Your input will be much needed for  
this)

In many towns and villages, particularly in rural areas, housing has become less accessible and affordable. Many young people would like to live in the parish where they were born and where they have family and friends, but they struggle to get on to the property ladder. Also, many older people would like to remain in their home village but cannot find a home suited to their changing needs.

A housing needs survey helps to identify whether residents of a parish have access to the type of housing they need. This might be more starter homes for first-time buyers, larger properties for families to grow into or bungalows suited to residents with mobility issues. The current lack of suitable homes in villages is having an adverse effect on rural life. The young and old, individuals, couples, families and people from all walks of life may either have to move away from their communities or remain in housing that is unsuitable for their needs.

Our Parish Council was therefore pleased to hear that a Housing Needs Survey is to be carried out in our parish by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council in 2024.

***This message is for all our residents  
from Gloucestershire Rural Community  
Council***

***Dear Residents,***

***Would you like to have your say on  
housing need, affordable housing and/  
or community led housing? Can you assist  
in evidence gathering and awareness  
raising?***

***On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January, I will be speaking  
to the Parish Council about Housing***



***Need Surveys and I invite members of the public to come along to hear more. The parish of Westbury on Severn will be undergoing a housing need survey (HNS) in Winter/Early Spring 2024. This will be undertaken by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) on behalf of the Forest of Dean District Council – part of the wider Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership.***

***Help GRCC to enable local-led sustainable housing opportunities for Westbury on Severn Parish.***

***Cara Loukes,  
Affordable Housing Manager GRCC***

## Parish Council

**T**here were no members of the public present for our December Parish Council meeting and apologies had been received from our County Councillor, Philip Robinson, so we moved swiftly on to planning matters.

**Planning** There was only one planning application for consideration, which was for a garage at Beechwood House in Rodley, and this was supported.

**Finance** The financial statements were agreed. The grass cutting contracts are due for renewal in 2024 and so there was some discussion in order to clarify what needed to be done and the terms of the contract. Work on clearing the overgrown bus shelters has been done.

Our clerk, Fiona, had circulated the draft budget for 2024/25. This led to some discussion about play area costs. The wet-pour base has been showing signs of wear for some time, and Mike Townsend has patched up several worn areas. Enquiries about replacing the surface showed that this would be very expensive, partly due to the high cost of disposal of the existing surface. One solution would be to lay rubber tiles on top of the existing surface,

but as these are perforated it was felt that soil and dead leaves would soon fill the holes and grass would grow. We agreed to meet at the play area before making any decision, and to re-examine the budget after the grass cutting contracts have been agreed. (After examining the play area, we felt that the repairs that Mike Townsend has done are wearing well and, with a few more repairs, the surface does not need replacing at this stage.)

**Highways** The huge pothole at Cowleys Elm has been repaired, but the state of



*Stantway Lane*

Stantway Lane remains appalling. There are numerous potholes all along the lane and the situation is made worse by sewage leaks and flooding from the manhole

cover connected to the Severn Trent pumping station. This has been going on for years and we seem to be caught in a vicious circle where Highways do not resurface the road because of the flooding and sewage leaks, but Severn Trent are saying that the much-needed flood alleviation scheme has had to be “delayed due to current affordability challenges and regulatory requirements.” Clearly more public pressure is needed on both Highways and Severn Trent for this and other local highway problems to be seen as a priority, so please see pps 7-8 for how you can help with this.

The ditches along Rodley Road, near the

Parish Hall, are not draining properly. Chairman Simon Phelps has been in touch with the Internal Drainage Board but they say this is not their responsibility, so Simon has reported the problem to Highways.

A resident had asked that more litter bins be installed along the A48. After some discussion, it was felt that the current number of bins is sufficient and that it was better if people took their litter home for disposal.

The drainage gratings along the A48 are silted up and Highways have been asked to clear them but this has not yet been done.

When work has been carried out recently on the lanes, by Gigaclear and other contractors, several problems have been caused by the positioning of road signs which say 'ROAD CLOSED' but give no indication of where the obstruction is, leading to frustration for drivers.

#### **School Playing Field**

The lease of the new school playing field has still not been agreed but, as the rent was due in September, Fiona had sent the County Council an invoice for this. However, she was told that they had been advised to only pay rent for the school car park, so she will follow this up.

**Burial Ground** An estimate has been received for work on the burial ground hedge.

**Footpaths** Some waymarker posts have been removed in Ley Woods and the matter of the footpath to Walmore Common is ongoing.

**Climate Change** Simon Phelps reported on a meeting of the District Council at which councillors discussed the Forest of Dean becoming a UNESCO Biosphere. There are currently 714 biospheres in 129 countries across the globe, with 7 within the UK. The council has committed itself to exploring this status and employed an

officer and set aside some £80,000 in funding which they had been awarded from the UK shared prosperity fund. The current Green Party-led authority will continue to pursue it as part of their strategy to preserve nature and to explore the best ways of reconciling the protection of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The biosphere would cover the entire District Council area including Westbury.

**Correspondence** Concerns have been raised about the state of the telephone kiosk in Westbury which has become a bit of a dumping ground for books rather than the intended book exchange. It was agreed that notices need to be displayed explaining the 'One book in, one book out' policy.

Our December meeting is always helped along with Christmas style snacks and Pam Ensor, who also provides us with refreshments at meetings throughout the year, was presented with flowers to mark our appreciation.

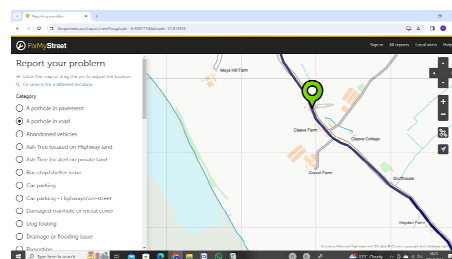
The next meeting is on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm at the Parish Hall.

*Di Landon*

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## **A Purge on Potholes**

The quickest and most effective way to get problems such as pot holes dealt with is for whoever spots them to report them online. To do this, you enter 'Fix My Street' on your search engine such as Google, which will take you to the Fix My Street website, where you enter a nearby postcode, or the street name and area.



This brings up a map on which you mark where the problem is, and then you pick the most appropriate description of the problem e.g pothole in the road or drainage or flooding issue. If the problem is a pothole, you then add information about its size and can also upload a photo if you wish. The Fix My Street website then sends it to the Council on your behalf. This does seem to get the problem dealt with a bit faster – and presumably the more people that report each problem, the better.

As far as flooding is concerned, the response from Severn Trent to reports of the flooding at Stantway included the following instruction. *“To ensure all future incidents are captured on our Hydraulic Flooding Risk Register it is essential that all floodings are reported through to 0800 783 4444. If possible, photos taken of the incident can be emailed to:-*

*WoGloWasteCounty@severntrent.co.uk which would be very helpful. This will help to substantiate the extent of the problem as often crews, especially during adverse weather may not be able to attend before flooding subsides.”*

So this may help —it’s got to be worth a try!

### Road Closures for January

**P**art of Upper Rodley Road will be closed from its junction with Rodley Court Road to outside the property known as “Kernow” for approximately 50 metres from 11th to the 12th January. This is for Severn Trent Water to renew a boundary box within the carriageway.

The Flaxley Road from Flaxley Church to Flaxley Abbey will be closed for approximately 50 metres from 22nd to the 24<sup>th</sup> January for Severn Trent Water to install a new water connection.

### November weather

Warmest Day. 23rd. 13.5c  
 Warmest Night. 18-19th. 8.5c  
 Coldest Day. 30th. 3c  
 Coldest Night. 24-25th. -5c  
 Nights of Frost 7  
 Wettest Day. 13th. 19mm  
 Days with Rain 21  
 Total Rainfall. 110mm  
 Predominant Wind Direction, Westerly, 26 out of 30 days, Easterly Wind between 4th and 7th.  
 Average Maximum Temperature 9.76c  
 Average Minimum Temperature 2.3c  
***Some interesting comparisons to November 2022,***  
 Warmest Day 16c,  
 Coldest Night -1c  
 Average Maximum Temperature 11.1c  
 Average Minimum Temperature. 3.48c  
 Two days of heavy rainfall 15th, 24mm and 23rd 23mm  
 Total Rainfall. 193mm  
 Days with Rain. 22. *Simon Phelps*

*What do you get if you cross a wizard and a blizzard?*

***A cold spell.***

*How do snowmen get information?*

***They use the winter-net.***

### Vale of Castiard W.I.

**O**ur first meeting of the new year will be on Wednesday 17 January, when we will be making earrings. The meeting will be held at 7.30pm in the Flaxley Schoolroom.

Visitors and new members are welcome. Visitors £5, plus £2 for materials. Please contact Gill Western, President, on 07879 532060 or Karen Johnson, Secretary, on 07879 386573 for more information.



### Northwood Green Gardening Club

**O**ur Christmas party was great fun, especially the traditional after-dinner game, which this time involved members dressing up 'volunteers' in Christmas wrapping paper and recycled materials. There were some diverse and very inventive costumes, including Sherlock Holmes and an exotic dancer, complete with tassels!

On a more sober note (we did get through quite a lot of mulled wine at the party), our programme for the new year begins with a welcome return by Jackie Smith, a master composter, who will give a talk about wormeries. The meeting will take place on Thursday 11 January, at 7.30pm in the Northwood Green Social Hall.

Visitors are always welcome, £3. Annual membership £12.

Please email

[karenfayjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:karenfayjohnson@gmail.com) or call 07879 386573 for more information

### Planting trees at the Parish Hall in 1979

We don't often have much spare space in the WoSP but as we have a spare column this month, we thought you might enjoy some reminders of times past in Westbury. These photos show lots of key Westbury figures at a tree planting ceremony at the Parish Hall in 1979—can anyone remember whether it was linked to any special occasion?



## Forest of Dean Recycling

*Recycling in the UK can be very confusing so here is a guide as to what can be recycled in your green kerbside boxes.*

### Green box 1:

- plastic bottles (includes milk bottles, fizzy drink and squash bottles, shampoo and conditioner bottles, empty bleach bottles, detergent bottles. Please remove tops and triggers)
- tins and cans
- metal biscuit and sweet tins
- metal lids
- empty aerosols
- aluminium foil or containers (must be clean)

We cannot collect and recycle the following:

- plastic pots, tubs, punnets and trays
- cat food pouches
- cartons (such as Tetra Pak)
- plastic film and plastic bags

### Why we do not collect mixed plastics

such as food trays, punnets, tubs and pots:

- the lack of market for mixed plastics
- limited space at the recycling depot
- costs of transporting and sorting plastics

In the Forest of Dean, the collection vehicles need to be narrow to allow access to lanes in our mainly rural district. This limits the vehicle capacity and means that we need more vehicles compared to an urban area for the same number of households. To recycle mixed plastics effectively they have to be sorted at a Material Recovery Facility (MRF). There is no

local MRF so collecting more types of plastics would increase the environmental impact and cost of transport and sorting. If we collect mixed plastics then we cannot guarantee there will be a market for them.

There is a demand for plastic bottles for reuse and so we can be confident that they are being recycled.<sup>7</sup>

### Green Box 2

- Glass bottle and jars but please remove the lids first, put lids in your box for tins and cans.

Please do not recycle broken glass, glasses and tumblers, sheet glass, light bulbs or fluorescent tubes.

Old-style incandescent light bulbs can go in your general waste bin, everything else should be taken to a recycling centre.

Put any textiles in a tied carrier bag to keep them dry and separate from the glass. The bag must fit easily in the green box.

We can collect:

Clothing and paired shoes  
Hats, gloves, belts, scarves  
Handbags

We are not able to collect carpets, rugs, bedding, wet textiles, curtains.

## Refuse Collections

### Week commencing 1 January 2024

All refuse, recycling and food waste collections will run a day late this week due to no collections on New Year's Day (Monday 1 January).

### Christmas trees

Real Christmas trees will be collected for all households (including those without a current garden waste licence), on their scheduled garden waste collection day between Monday 8 to Friday 19 January. Please remove all decorations and reduce larger trees down to sections no longer than 3ft to assist crews.

## Rugby

Westbury on Severn 29 Cainscross 17.

In sub-zero temperatures, Westbury on Severn RFC welcomed Cainscross RFC to the KB Stadium of Light in this Gloucestershire Merit Table clash. Following the heavy frost, it wasn't until the second pitch inspection at 11am that it was deemed - game on!

With the going good to firm, both teams



*Westbury RFC v Cainscross on 2nd Dec*

started the match at a blistering pace. Cainscross, blessed with some heavy artillery up front and a skilful back line, were always going to be a handful for the men in blue and white. After some great play by the visitors, Westbury forced a turnover and stitched together a number of phases to put Paul Reddan into space (with plenty of work to do), he opened Westbury's account with a well taken try. Cainscross immediately rallied to even the scores 5 - 5. Following the initial tit for tat, an arm wrestle of biblical proportions ensued. Both teams sought to play an expansive game and showed great endeavour but often came unstuck by a ball like a bar of soap and ferocious defence by both teams. The half time whistle sounded and Westbury were trailing 10-12.

Westbury looked a different team in the second half, with defensive patterns and attacking moves from the training field

being deployed to great effect, which was fantastic to see. Particular mentions must go to forward of the match Luke Reeves and back of the match Aaron Morgan for making some great runs and digging in doing the hard graft when needed. Going into the final minutes, it still could have gone either way, with the score at 22-17. Having worked their way upfield through direct running and quickly recycled ball, Westbury were back in Cainscross's 22. Having spotted a gap, Hooker Rory Pritchard put the game beyond doubt with an excellent try. Huge thanks to our visitors, Cainscross RFC who were a handful throughout, supporters that braved the cold and of course our sponsors. Westbury try scorers Rory Pritchard, Aaron Morgan, Max Kaufmann, Paul Reddan, Lee Prince. Conversions: Aaron Morgan, James Colwell. MoTM x 2 went to Luke Reeves & Aaron Morgan

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Westbury 48 Cheltenham North 17

It was a mild and calm day at the Ken Boulton Stadium of Light on 16th December when Westbury on Severn RFC welcomed Cheltenham North RFC United to the perfectly manicured pitch. The game kicked off and saw WOS grabbing an early try ....a good even game ensued with some great runs and tackles from both



both sides and the score at mid way sat at 21 - 7 to WoS.

The second half was a bit more of the same run ...maul...run maul... a great spectacle for the thousand or so spectators (okay 20!) and the game finally ended 48-17 to WoS. A few performances worthy of mention from Harry J (some great yards & a couple of meat pies bagged), Max (Braveheart) Kaufman, scrum half JC and full back Paul. Well done all to a man — a great end to 2023.

Kudos to the North for coming over - really appreciated lads (& supporters) and well done to the ref who was coming back from injury, Charlie Gayther. Top work fella and good to see you healing well.



*Snowman Robbie Pritchard  
looking good*

**NEW YEAR New Start,** are you looking for a New Year's resolution that'll make a difference?

Look no further - Come & join **Westbury on Severn RFC** training every Tuesday from 7pm! All welcome - great coach, facilities, social scene and a competitive fixture schedule for 2024 — you know it makes sense .

## Football

### HOWLE HILL 5. WESTBURY UTD 1

On the last Saturday before the Christmas break Westbury visited the unbeaten League leaders at Weston Under Penyard. Howie Hill immediately played a tough pressing game although keeping five at the back. The ex pro Scouser, who has clearly been doing weights for the last 100 years took Morgan out in the first minute with a horrendous two footed, off the ground tackle. Surely a red card but the ref compromised on a yellow.... Shots rained in to the Westbury goal but we stood firm until half time. 0-0. The scouser fired a penalty wide! We had made three chances.

The President was sent to run the line in the second half and immediately noticed that our back four was like a dog's hind leg and spread far too wide. Defences need to stay compact. Alas, the scouser was running through the open channels and Westbury opened up like a tin of sardines. Goals suddenly poured in. Ackeen scored as brilliant goal in reply. But it was too late. The only consolation was a pint of Bass at the local pub. Harry Howells was man of the match. The evening Christmas get together in town was a loss as well as all the old players were back home to glumly watch Match of the Day.

*Clive Tempest*

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