

# The WOODCHESTER Word

MARCH 2008

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

### SOUTH WOODCHESTER POST OFFICE CLOSURE - HAVE YOUR SAY

Woodchester Parish Council was saddened and concerned by the recent announcement that the Post Office in South Woodchester is likely to close, as this may have a significant impact on many aspects of village life. We applaud and support the actions taken by our Member of Parliament, Mr David Drew, in writing to all residents with a questionnaire. Although we believe the six-week consultation period is unrealistic, we would encourage all residents of Woodchester to complete the questionnaire, and would also welcome the views of residents, either through comments on the village website at [www.woodchestervillage.co.uk](http://www.woodchestervillage.co.uk), or by contacting the clerk. The Parish Council is keen to assist both South Woodchester and North Woodchester post offices and shops to remain open for trade but has neither the funds nor the expertise to run a business. The Parish Council will assist in any way it can in securing any available grants and help that may become available in order to preserve the fragile infrastructure of the whole village. For further information please contact the Clerk Duncan Hayes at Cobweb Cottage, High Street, South Woodchester, Glos GL5 5EL Tel: 01453 873107 [council@woodchestervillage.co.uk](mailto:council@woodchestervillage.co.uk) [www.woodchestervillage.co.uk](http://www.woodchestervillage.co.uk)

### COUNCIL SETS PRECEPT BELOW INFLATION

Woodchester Parish Council voted at its January meeting to set a precept (the money raised through council tax) of £11,000 for financial year 2008/09. This is compared to the £12,500 raised through council tax in the previous year and is a reduction of over 13%.

### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

This year's annual parish meeting will be held on Thursday April 3 at 7.30pm. This is an opportunity for voluntary organisations, clubs and residents to get together and find out what's happening in the parish. The annual parish meeting is not a council meeting, although it is organised by the council. For details please keep an eye on the parish notice boards. If you represent an organisation that would like to submit an article for a written report or make a presentation, please contact the parish clerk.

### WOODCHESTER DESIGN STATEMENT

A working group is putting together a draft design statement for Woodchester. Essentially this is a documented review of what's special about Woodchester and what residents like and dislike. Once adopted it will act as supplementary planning advice to Stroud District Council when taking planning decisions. Once a draft is available it will be put to the village for widespread consultation. Please keep an eye on the parish notice boards for details of how you can contribute.

### HIGHWAYS

Caution signs have been placed at each end of the High Street in South Woodchester to warn drivers of children playing in the street. These were funded jointly by the Parish Council and Stroud District Council. The Parish Council is in discussion with the Stroud Safety Officer over parking and speed safety and is watching potential developments in the village in case land or funding could be made available. The new puffin crossing has been installed at Rooksmoor. After consultation with village residents the Parish Council has decided to go ahead with the county council's proposed move to part-night street lighting. During the spring some of the street lighting in the parish will be upgraded to allow it to be switched off for a period during the night. This scheme is being

rolled out across the county and is expected to offer considerable electricity savings and reduce carbon emissions. The police will be carefully monitoring to ensure the change does not cause problems, and the scheme can be fine-tuned with individual upgraded. Obviously some lights will have to be switched back to all-night operation if necessary.

### CAROLS

This year's carol singing evening was a big success with up to 150 residents joining from all parts of the parish. The evening culminated with mulled wine and mince pies beside the beautiful and festive Christmas tree in front of the spectacularly illuminated Church of St Mary's. Thanks go once again to Chinnick Theatre Services for illuminating the church and to Denis Brown & Son for providing the tree. Financial support was made available by the Woodchester Street Party 2007, Woodchester Parish Council and the Cheltenham & Gloucester Rural Initiative Fund.

### REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The 2007 Remembrance Sunday service was a coordinated effort between the Church of St Mary's and the Parish Council. After a moving service in the church, accompanied by a bugler, there was a procession of around 50 residents to the War Memorial, where wreaths were laid in the unseasonal sunshine.

### WOODCHESTER TODDLER GROUP – CAN YOU HELP?

Unfortunately the Mother and Toddler Group which was held every Friday, 1.30-3pm (term time) at Woodchester Playgroup has had to close as the organiser has returned to full time study. It was a very friendly group, supported by mums and toddlers both locally and from the surrounding areas and will be greatly missed. Therefore, we are looking for anyone or a group of people who might be interested in running this group again, so it is not lost forever. If you are interested please speak to Rebecca (Woodchester Playgroup Committee) on 878551. The Playgroup is a great venue as it is already set up for children's play both indoors and out, so a lot of the work is already done. The Playgroup is available every afternoon so the group could change day to fit in with your schedule. The PATA Toddler Support Worker is extremely keen to keep this toddler group going and would be happy to help the potential organiser with ideas/planning activities and general advice on how to run a group.

### BAG 2 SCHOOL COLLECTIONS FOR WOODCHESTER ENDOWED SCHOOL

Many thanks to all those who donated items in the blue bags scheme in November last year. The school raised a fantastic £340-00 towards the new hall. Due to the success of this scheme, we have decided to continue with it on a regular basis with 2 collections each year. The next one will be on Monday 28th April so if you have suitable items for this collection please hold on to them until then. Blue bags will again be delivered to each house in the village with further details nearer the time. The school receives money per weight of goods collected at the rate of £300 per tonne, so the more we collect, the more we raise. Suitable items for collection are: clothing, bedding, curtains, soft toys, shoes, belts & handbags.

## SCHOOLS REPORT

### ST.DOMINIC'S

As I write this report we are still in the middle of stormy January weather; the field is flooded and there appears to be very little prospect of sunshine for the week. However by the time you read this report it will be well into the New Year and hopefully Spring will be on its way.

This current period after Christmas is often a period of reflection; as we think about new year resolutions it is also appropriate to review the previous year. Working in school we get used to thinking of the end of year being the summer term, but January is the time we review progress towards meeting all those targets set in September-a 'where are we now' time. Our reflection this year has been supported by our visit from OFSTED just before Christmas. Although it came as a surprise (just when we were securely in festive mode) it has confirmed to our delight that our school is flourishing! As you will be aware we work hard to cater for all our children and to ensure that the curriculum is inspiring, therefore we were delighted to read the following judgement: 'Allowing pupils to grow towards their individual potential is central to the school's ethos, and their personal development is good. Their enjoyment of school is outstanding'.

Following our inspection it was lovely to welcome the residents of Crystal Fountain Village, The Steppes and members of Woodchester Parish Council to our infant plays. These were charming occasions enjoyed by the children and audience alike. The choir also visited the Steppes to sing carols -and were spoilt with 'treats'. The Pantomime in Cheltenham was a great success and the music concert demonstrated the talent within the School. The term ended as usual with the Christingle Service which for me is the real start of Christmas. So 'where are we now' and what does the New Year hold?

Our OFSTED action is to continue working on the implementation of individual targets, to promote personalised learning -something that we are already in the process of developing and will be supported by our Assessment for Learning project. It is brilliant to be able to look forward to 2008 with the affirmation of a good report behind us and we will be continuing to support our children with a broad, enjoyable curriculum that promotes learning and involves visits into the community and welcomes visitors into School. We have a very exciting visit planned for the summer term but as it is still a secret you will have to wait a while to find out-so watch this space!

### WOODCHESTER ENDOWED C. OF E. (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are delighted to announce that our school hall is ready and looking stunning. The finished design has exceeded all expectations and we can now offer a great new venue to our local communities of North and South Woodchester. I would be delighted to show anyone around our school, whether a prospective parent or interested resident. Just give us a call and we will provide you with a guided tour. (01453 872476)

The aim of this new building has always been to increase opportunities for all ages and we are looking to fulfill our promise, as soon as possible. By providing a large indoor space we are able to accommodate a very wide variety of activities and interests for everyone. The addition of a climbing wall over the next few months will add that 'wow' factor to what is already a much talked-about new resource. So what can we offer and how will you find out about events? We are going to have a 'What's On' page on our website: [www.woodchesterschool.ik.org](http://www.woodchesterschool.ik.org) and this is where you can find out about all our events. We will also post them throughout the village on notice boards otherwise, just give us a call or email



head@woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk.

Future events to look out for:

Dance - Friday 25th April 7-10pm. During half term we will also host a Multi-sports course for children in conjunction with an outside provider.  
Mrs Needham (Headteacher)

A BARN DANCE has been organised for 15th March, 6.30-10pm, in Woodchester Endowed Primary School's new hall. This is a community event and is open to all friends, neighbours and families of Woodchester School. Music will be provided by the renowned 'Downfielders' and there will be a licensed bar / food available. Tickets are priced £10 for a family or £3.50 per adult / £2.50 per child. Please contact Sylvia May on 873438 for further details / tickets.

## WOODCHESTER FRIENDLY CIRCLE

Regular meetings began again on 4th March and September 4th 2008 in the Village Hall. Members enjoyed a film of the last opening of the Roman Pavement made and presented by Geoffrey Adams. On October 16th 2007 the Circle celebrated its 50th Birthday with a lunch at The Castle, Moreton Valence. Shirley Gegg, accompanied by her husband was able to enjoy meeting old friends once again. Shirley had for many years previously been Chairman of the Club. Meetings had to be cancelled on the 8th January as the Hall was being decorated. We returned on the 15th January to a pleasantly newly decorated hall where tables had been set up for members to take part in a quiz, set by Rosemary Stockbridge. On the 22nd January Mrs Lunt gave a most interesting talk entitled "Concentration Camp Life through the eyes of a child" Mrs Lunt's parents were Officers in the Salvation Army and in the course of their work were sent to China, but were later interned. At the March meeting the Stanley Singers will entertain. Other future speakers will include a talk (with slides) on Woodchester Mansion and Photos of Stroud Valleys by Howard Beard. The last event in this Circle year until the Autumn will be the Spring Lunch on May 29th 2008. Meetings take place in the Village Hall on alternate Tuesdays. New members welcome.  
Enquiries 01453 872424.

## 1ST WOODCHESTER BROWNIES

Sadly we have to report that some of our leadership changes haven't gone to plan. We have lost both of our Young Leaders and Tawny Owl. As we haven't been able to replace any of these valued people, we have had to start a waiting list for new Brownies to join; in order to maintain the adult:child ratio. If you'd like to become a leader (male or female) please contact Louise on 01453 832025, or to join the waiting list to become a Brownie, please contact Jackie on 01453 821258. Since our last report we have been swimming in Stroud, with Woodchester Guides, and one new Brownie made her Promise in the swimming pool. In November three girls joined the rest of the District in Nailsworth to carry and escort our flag/colours at the Remembrance Day parade. We've also all gained our craft badges which involved tie-dyeing, marbling and tea-bag folding. We ended the term with two joint meetings with the Guides (see Guide report). One of us joined a Guider at the W.I. Christmas concert and bravely led the singing of a song, "It's a Good Time to get Acquainted" to the well-known tune of "It's a long way to Tipperary". We started the new term in January in the school hall. It's wonderful to have the use of this lovely new facility. We re-organised the Sixes and sorted out groupings for badge work. This term we have been participating in games and activities based around the five senses. These have included drawing/writing with our feet, counting money blindfolded, making sandwiches blindfolded and tasting foods that were dyed a different colour. Some girls have just started working towards their hostess badge and all the new girls are working hard to make sure they are ready to make their Promise in a couple of weeks time, at the Guides Thinking Day party.

## 1ST WOODCHESTER GUIDES

In October we went swimming in Stroud with Woodchester Brownies. Two of our number made their Promise in the swimming pool. The time up to Christmas was spent working on our confectioners badge. This involved icings, chocolate, food flavourings and colourings, biscuits and decorations. In November we participated in the Nailsworth Remembrance Day service with the rest of the District. We provided a Colour party to carry our flag and one of us helped take the collection. We joined

with the Brownies for the last two meetings of the term. The one was based on the theme of snow; we made a snowman cake decoration, a snowflake tree decoration and a polar bear card. The last meeting was a Christmas party where we played games, sang songs and had lots to eat and drink.

We got the new year off to a good start by having a good (well overdue) clear out of our Patrol boxes whilst we got to know our new Unit Helper, Kathryn. We've done a lot of Patrol activities this term, working towards our Go-For-It certificates, as well as activities and games based on the five senses, organised by our Guiders (see Brownie report). We also made lemon/orange sherbert.

Some girls are currently working towards their party planner badge. They are organising a Thinking Day Party for the Brownies, at which we also to plan to celebrate a new Guide making her Promise. We have also been invited to join Nailsworth Guides on a trip to see High School Muscial and also to join them on a winter indoor holiday weekend in a few weeks time. If you'd like to join Guides please contact Jackie on 01453 821258. There are still places available before we start a waiting list.

The next meeting of the Woodchester Historical Society will be on Tuesday 11 March at 7:30pm in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church, North Woodchester. Ray Wilson will speak on 'Stroud's Other Industries (More than just cloth!)' All are welcome. Admission £2 members - £3 non members.

## DON'T MISS OUT!

If you haven't yet got your FREE copy of 'Your Essential Flood Guide' from Gloucestershire County Council, you can now pick up a copy from your local library or GP surgery. During November and December over 260,000 copies of the guide have been sent out to homes across the county as part of the county's recovery operation following the 2007 summer floods. The guide explains what happened during the emergency and provides important practical advice to help local people cope with future emergencies. It includes a 'pull-out' guide as well as advice on health, safety and insurance. Residents are advised to keep the 20 page A5 brochure somewhere safe for future use. The guide can also be downloaded directly from the council's website at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flood](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flood)

## DOG WALKER APPEAL

Could dog walkers please clean up after them? We've had several appeals to run this message for specific areas - rather than keep repeating the message, this is a general appeal to protect children and others from the dangers associated with dog faeces.

## VILLAGE HALL NEWS

The Village Hall has been re-decorated, and looks very bright and cheerful, so we can start the 2008 season confident that all those who hire/use the hall will benefit from the 'new look'!

Hearing loop/Audio system - the Management Committee is still waiting for estimates, which, once received, will enable us to proceed with grant applications for funding. In the meantime, it is still essential for us to raise funds from private donations, so we shall be very grateful for any offer to help. We are very grateful to the W.I. for donating £140 collected at the Christmas Concert towards the Hearing loop/Audio system.

As usual the Christmas Concert turned out to be a very enjoyable evening, with an all round splendid show from the performers. The Chairman and Trustees would like to thank the performers and the ladies of the W.I. for putting on a great show, and thanks to the people who helped erect the stage and get the hall ready for the evening.

Village Hall Courses - The Course Calendar is posted on all the notice boards, and there is one on the hall notice board. We regret to announce that the Needlework Group has closed due to the lack of support. The Trustees thank Mrs Kath Gay for her past work in running the course.

JUNIOR TAE KWON-DO : A new time for this class 4.30 pm - 5.30 pm Monday.

If any one is interested in running a course, please contact Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340.

THE FOLLOWING SLOTS ARE AVAILABLE  
MONDAY 12.30 pm - 4.00 pm & 6.00 pm - 10.00 pm  
TUESDAY from 12.30 pm - 6.45 pm (alternate weeks)  
From 5.00 pm - 6.45 pm (every week)  
WEDNESDAY from 5.00 pm - 10.00 pm  
THURSDAY from 4.00 pm - 6.00 pm (2nd & 4th

Thursdays 4.00 pm - 10.00 pm)

FRIDAY from 12.30 pm - 6.00 pm

Saturday and Sunday available for private events at an all-in cost of heating, lighting and cooking facilities. Please contact Mrs Kath Gay on 01453 873348 for availability.

AND FINALLY - The Village Hall is protected at the request of Health and Safety and Insurance cover, by dusk to dawn security lighting. The 3 low energy security lights burn less than 100watts and are positioned to light downwards. If anyone wishes to express concern regarding the lights, please contact Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340.

## SPONSORED WALK APRIL 20TH

On Sunday April 20th there will be a sponsored walk via the cycle track in aid of the Cobalt Appeal Crack Cancer campaign. The walk will take place between Egypt Mill and Dudbridge and back, approximately 7 miles. This year it will be the 24th walk organised by Arthur McTiffin, and is a lovely way to spend a couple of hours. Over £60,000 has been raised over the past 23 years for this worthy cause. If you would like to take part, a sponsor form can be obtained from Arthur McTiffin, 4 The Avenue, Selsey Road, North Woodchester, tel: 873314. There is no registration fee and all money raised goes to the Cobalt Appeal.

## W.I.

How time flies! Another Christmas has come and gone. We have had another successful Christmas concert in the village hall; if you missed it you also missed the visit of a V.I.P. News of our popular Christmas Concert travels far and wide, so far in fact that Father Christmas himself decided to pay us a visit, causing great excitement. This year's concert was in aid of the Village Hall Hearing Loop and Amplification Fund. Thanks to the generosity of all those taking part, who gave their services free, and to donations from the audience we were able to give the Village Hall £140.

The Woodchester W.I. Is a small Institute and is probably very different from what people envisage. We are friendly and welcoming, and our organisation has been active in the village for 50 years. At our meetings we have many different speakers and activities, and social events. We also discuss national events and lobby the Government on various subjects. This year our Christmas lunch was at The Royal Oak, where the landlady, Bunny, did us proud.

Our meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday each month in the Village Hall, new members are always welcome and any information can be obtained from Mrs Muriel McTiffin on 873314. Age is no barrier, everyone has something to offer --- you don't have to sing Jerusalem or make jam!!

## ROAD CROSSING TO HONOUR SCOTT

A pedestrian crossing, built in memory of 11-year-old Scott Cook who died in a road accident in 2005, was opened in February. Scott's sister, Abbie performed the opening ceremony on the A46 at Rooksmoor. 'Scott's Crossing' was installed following a campaign by people that encouraged Gloucestershire Highways to carry out a feasibility study.

The crossing offers altered kerb lines, enhanced footways and better lighting. Scott's parents also took part in the ceremony along with local schoolchildren. His parents Diane and Russell said: "He was so sensitive towards others and totally unique. "We are absolutely devastated to have lost him, but we feel gifted to have been given him."

## STORIES PLEASE

If you have any stories about local events, people or issues, please send them to us. We can't promise to publish them all but we'll do our best. Send to any of the team by 1st June for the July 2008 issue.  
Paul Lock paullock@incisecomms.co.uk  
Shelagh Woodhouse shelagh.w@wanadoo.fr  
Katie Beard katie.beard@btinternet.com  
Or post your news to Paul Lock at Lower Berrymore Cottage, North Woodchester, GL5 5PH