

Woodchester Annual Parish Meeting 2009

Saturday 9th May 2009

Village Hall, North Woodchester

AGENDA

Welcome

- Receive apologies for absence
- Receive the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting April 3rd 2008
- Report on the Parish Council's business over the past year. Including introducing the Village Annual Report
- Opening remarks
- Village organisations and others asked to present any verbal reports
- Conclusion – Thanks

Verbal reports will be made by:

- Cllr Rhiannon Wigzell – Woodchester Parish Council
- Cllr Peter Lead – Village Design Statement
- Cllr Penny Brown – Forthcoming Village Fete

If you wish to address the meeting, please inform the Clerk

Woodchester Village Report 2008/9

Woodchester Parish Council– *Rhiannon Wigzell, Chairman*

In May 2008 a new Parish Council was elected, unopposed as seven people stood for seven vacancies. Councillors Brown, Lead and Syrett joined Councillors Bastin, Hamilton, Swait and Wigzell. Councillors Chestnutt, Hemming and Warnes, having served Woodchester for many years, did not stand for re-election.

Following the election the councillors each took on areas of responsibility:

Councillor **George Bastin**: chairman of the finance committee, the website and reviewing the Parish Plan;

Councillor **Penny Brown**: village events, member of the planning committee and footpaths;

Councillor **Gervase Hamilton**: vice chairman of the Parish Council, the village emergency coordinator, member of the planning committee, and reviewing the parish plan;

Councillor **Peter Lead**: chairman of the planning committee and the Village Design Statement;

Councillor **Malcolm Swait**: roads and traffic, member of planning and the finance committees, Parish Council representative on the Village Hall committee, snow warden;

Councillor **Paul Syrett**: flood warden, planning committee member, youth and environment;

Councillor **Rhiannon Wigzell**: chairman of the Parish Council, member of the finance committee, reviewing the Parish Plan and events.

A new Clerk to the Council, Simon Peirce, was appointed in March 2009. Duncan Hayes and his immediate successor Barbara Lewis both resigned due to changes in other areas of their lives. We were delighted to appoint Simon but sorry to have to choose only one of the high calibre applicants, all of whom had close connections to Woodchester.

The Parish Council has played a role in organising the litter pick, open gardens, carol singing and moving nativity play. It

has considered all planning applications in the Parish, responded to consultations, and addressed concerns raised by Parishioners. It has funded the Woodchester Word, provided wreaths for Remembrance Sunday and maintained the website www.woodchestervillage.co.uk. A village emergency plan has been formulated in case there is ever a major disaster. The bus shelter opposite Frogmarsh Lane has been replaced. Councillors have attended training courses. The routine mowing, weed control and general maintenance has been carried out. Reviewing the Parish Plan has been delayed, a casualty of the necessity to focus on recruiting a new clerk twice in the year, but a Village Design Statement is now in preparation. A fete is also being planned for 12th September 2009. Finally, the Council is always encouraged by the enthusiasm of the residents of Woodchester and appreciative of their help and support.

Planning Sub-Committee – *Cllr Peter Lead, Chairman*

This year has seen a relatively busy time with planning applications being considered.

A close liaison has been maintained with the Planning Officers and in nearly every case the opinions of the Parish have been upheld by the decisions made by Stroud District Council.

Changes to the planning appeal system for domestic applications will mean that the Sub Committee and any interested parties will need to submit full and well supported evidence if they want to object to an application. The new system means that if a refusal is taken to appeal the inspector will only consider evidence already submitted at the application stage and will NOT consider any further evidence. Further changes look likely to lead to planning officers making most decisions and only major applications will go to a committee.

These changes mean that the Parish Plan and Village Design Statement become important documents, as they help lead the planning officers to a decision and support the Parish in their observations and comments when considering a planning application.

Rarely do members of the Parish attend our meetings. These are generally held in the Undercroft at St Mary's Church and any one is welcome. As we consider all applications on behalf of the Parish, it would often be helpful to hear the opinions of others.

On the 4th April a public meeting was held to present information about the Village Design Statement and encourage parishioners to form groups to work on different aspects of this document.

Encouragingly there was a strong turnout of 58 and many put their names forward to join the working groups. The names represent a good cross section of the Parish and they have already taken action with their first thoughts being presented here on the display boards.

It is important for everyone to understand that the job of these groups is NOT to decide how the Parish will shape up over the next ten years. IT IS THEIR JOB TO OBTAIN FROM YOU, THE PARISHIONERS, YOUR VIEWS, THEN COLLATE THOSE VIEWS AND PRODUCE A DOCUMENT THAT CONSIDERS YOUR OPINIONS. If you do not put forward your opinions when asked, your thoughts cannot be incorporated in this document.

The Village Design Statement is a document prepared by the people of the Parish to protect the best interests of the Parish. It is not being prepared by the Parish Council.

With that very much in mind and remembering the new planning rules that are coming into force, it has to be in everyone's interest to become involved in the making of this document.

Inishfree – *Andrea Sprenger*

Inishfree's main purpose is to help those who have given up drink and drugs stay sober, regain confidence and self respect and start a new life, reintegrating into the larger community. Our residents come from all parts of the country and stay between 3 months and 2 years.

During that time they are engaged in the garden, on the land, in building jobs and woodworking projects as well as in the kitchen and house. They benefit from the family like atmosphere of Inishfree and the sense of belonging and achievement they can gain here. They are engaged in a very challenging and courageous process of looking at their lives and their behaviour and are on a journey to make changes and strengthen their ability to remain abstinent.

Inishfree moved to Rooksmoor in September 2007 and have since made very good use of a very big house and about 3 acres of land and woodland, which the previous owners were unable to keep and use satisfactorily in the last few years.

- We have **grown a lot of our own vegetables** in an enclosed garden area as well as in the polytunnel and are now ready to provide a few boxes of surplus vegetables to our neighbours and members of staff.
- We have had our second lot of **lambs born** at Easter (4 in all) and we have raised and bought more chickens, and been quite successful in keeping them safe from the fox, by high security fencing and a good safe coop
- We have had some great practical **help from some of the parish councillors** in the past year as well as the support of the council with funding applications and even a donation for planting our orchard. We have also recruited a very faithful volunteer from the local parish who helps in the garden.

- We **built a clay bread oven**, which gets used on a weekly basis to bake our bread.
- A group of trainees is currently involved in making **nest boxes, planters and birdfeeders** to raise money for an activity. As a charitable organisation we have been very lucky to make some very helpful contacts to local sawmills and timber merchants so we get a lot of wood donated.
- The latest ongoing project is to **refurbish** a huge landing area and make it into a bedroom which will allow us to use the available space more appropriately.
- Our **neighbours** have been very helpful with transporting goods up the drive and helping out in all kinds of ways, most recently the neighbourhood got together to share the costs of resurfacing the drive, which leads up to our properties.
- Once trainees have been here for a number of months they have the opportunity to have **work experience** with a local company or farmer. We are always looking for new employers and opportunities.
- We welcome **volunteers** from all walks of life and interests and are also looking for **trustees** to engage with the bigger vision of Inishfree and its future development.

St Dominic's School – *Margaret Smith, Head Teacher*

Another busy and very successful year at St Dominic's School. As part of the implementation of a more creative curriculum, the children have been out on many trips to reinforce their learning. Places have included the Museum in the Park to learn about the local mills and homes from the past, a day being a Viking at the Wilderness centre and a material workshop at Gloucester Cathedral to name just a few. Music has also been a focus over the year with the choir

going from strength to strength and taking part in many functions especially during the Christmas period. Our sports teams have achieved well in local tournaments and inter school matches – and even when they haven't won they have thoroughly enjoyed themselves!

We were delighted to appear so high up in the league tables for our SATs results but more importantly is our belief that the children are happy and enjoying their learning. As always we feel privileged to have such lovely children and supportive parents and we look forward to another 'non-stop' year!

Woodchester Endowed School – *Gordon Soutar,*
Headteacher

Since joining the school in September 2008 I have been extremely impressed by the team spirit at our school. The children, staff and parents all work really hard to make Woodchester Endowed a happy and thriving learning environment. This was probably most notable at the fantastic Tudor feast that we held in November where all of the pupils, staff and parent helpers dressed in full costume and enjoyed food and entertainment as it would have been around 500 years ago.

The school has continued to achieve excellent standards with 100% of our Year 6 pupils reaching the expected Government target of Level 4 in their SATs tests for Mathematics and English last July. The evidence for this year's cohort is equally encouraging and reflects the hard work of both our pupils and the staff at the school.

Our pupils have continued to achieve well on the sports field. Our boys made it through to two district football finals this year and finished one of those in second place overall from an entry of nearly 50 schools. The girls' football team also represented the school and although they were knocked out of their tournament played extremely well and made us all very

proud. Tag rugby, athletics, cricket and orienteering all feature along with our ever popular gardening club within the after-school opportunities being offered this term.

We have been working extremely hard throughout the winter months re-generating the outside space at the school. Lead by our very supportive PTA we have cleared the woodland, opening it up to the children to study wildlife and the environment. With some expert help the pupils have built living willow structures in our 'quite area' and an outside classroom has been developed in a shaded area for summer use. We have approached many local and national charities for grant funding for what we are calling 'The Woodpecker Project' (woodland play, education and conservation area). With the help of these grants and the support of parents and village residents at our fundraising events we have been able to put all of these improvements into place without the need to take from our general curriculum budget. The benefit to the pupils is clear to all who have seen and commented.

We are always keen for local people to be involved in our work and I would encourage you to contact me if you have a skill or experience that you think would be of interest.

1st Woodchester Brownies – *Jackie Hayes*

The leadership team at Woodchester Brownies were pleased to welcome Florence, a former Guide, on board, as she worked towards her Duke of Edinburgh award. The girls decided that her Guiding name would be Kingfisher, and she has encouraged the girls to try many new and different activities.

Over the past year the Brownies have taken part in many activities, including indoor and outdoor games, crafts, singing, badge work and Promise ceremonies. Some older girls have moved onto Guides and some new girls have joined. Themed evenings have been based on chocolate and nature and we had a Hawaiian evening, when 1st Nailsworth Brownies joined us. Every meeting last term had a food

theme, ranging from fruit and vegetable tasting to sweet making.

Other notable events were the completion of their fire safety badge, after a course of sessions at Stroud Fire and Rescue Station; a joint barbeque with 1st Nailsworth Brownies and Woodchester Guides; Pack Holiday with 1st Nailsworth Brownies at Cranham Woods; Remembrance Day Parade; a joint disco with Woodchester Guides, recycling over 700 Christmas cards (with Woodchester Guides), for the Woodland Trust; a joint pyjama party with Woodchester Guides; and most recently hosting another successful Easter theme evening, inviting the Brownies and Guides from the whole Nailsworth Valley District to join us.

1st Woodchester Guides – *Jackie Hayes*

The Guides participate in similar activities as the Brownies, but designed for the older age range; so they too have had regular evenings of indoor and outdoor games, crafts, singing and badge work. Their themed evenings have included chocolate and music. Last term's meetings were all based on food, but didn't just involve eating it! In the summer they enjoyed tracking and trailing around the village, and we're still trying to work out if getting a Guider lost in Woodchester was planned or not! A Promise ceremony held by torchlight on the cycle track made a memorable evening, as do the evenings held at Cainscross where we played ball games in the park and had a fish and chip picnic.

The Guides, too, completed their fire safety badge after some intense, serious, but fun sessions at Stroud Fire and Rescue Station. Our many thanks go to the firefighters who took their valuable time to teach our girls about fire safety.

Remembrance Day Parade was participated in and one girl bravely helped the Woodchester Guiders provide some entertainment at the W.I. Christmas concert. Girls have also enjoyed a trip to Alton Towers with 1st Nailsworth Guides,

ten-pin bowling, swimming, and a retail therapy trip to Cribbs Causeway, trying to stop the credit crunch! The girls also took part in joint meetings with Woodchester Brownies which included the disco, recycling Christmas cards for the Woodland Trust, the pyjama party and the Easter evening. New girls are always welcome to join us, as are any offers to help run Brownies or Guides.

Woodchester WI – *Valerie Griffiths, Secretary*

Despite being one of the smallest WI's in Gloucestershire Woodchester is still very much a part of the local community.

The past year saw us being hostesses at our group meeting, where we entertained members from Amberley, Box, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth and Rodborough WI's and guests from the Gloucestershire Federation. It meant us chairing the meetings, arranging a speaker and entertainment and catering for everyone, both events were a great success.

Our annual Christmas Concert in the village hall seems to get better each year, there is such a wealth of talent locally. Our chosen charity this year was the St. Roses School Smile Hydrotherapy Pool Appeal, £180 was raised for a very worthwhile cause. Those that attended thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Volunteer performers for our 21st Concert in December would be very welcome.

Various members have taken advantage of events organised by our Gloucestershire Federation – currently celebrating its 90th anniversary. These have included a walk around Nailsworth, a craft day, singing taster session with a professional opera singer and the annual WI County Carol Concert at Cheltenham Town Hall; two of our members formed part of the choir.

We had to hold our Garden Party in the village hall at the last minute due to bad weather; but it did not stop us having fun. We had another enjoyable time when we had a "Reindeer

Drive” instead of a Beetle drive – we now know there are several very talented artists amongst our members.

January saw us holding our post-Christmas meal at “The Royal Oak”.

Speakers have included talks on “Aspects of Scotland”, antiques and collectables (whereby some members took items along to be shown) and a fascinating talk on the history of textiles and the woollen mills in the Stroud valleys.

We have debated national issues regarding The Inappropriate Imprisonment of the Severely Mentally Ill and a ban on sea bottom trawling in the fishing industry. All WI’s vote on these issues and delegates pass on these votes at the AGM. Our national WI opinions are frequently noted and respected by the Government.

We recently held a coffee morning at the village hall to raise funds to help our WI keep going. Amongst those present we welcomed our faithful regular supporters and some members from neighbouring WI’s – Thank You – this event gave everyone the chance to sit and chat over tea or coffee, browse amongst the book stall and bric-a-brac, buy a home made cake or preserves and even go home with a raffle prize!. Immediately following the coffee morning some members had volunteered to stay behind and make the tea and coffee for the village meeting as arranged by the Parish Council.

We are pleased to welcome a new member this year. New members or visitors are always welcome to our meetings. We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall. For more information please contact us on 01453 873314. Woodchester WI is now in its 52nd year, it would be a great shame if it had to close.

Woodchester Word – *Paul Lock, Editor*

The parish newsletter continues to go out three times a year in March, July and November with some requests for

coverage but most content coming from regulars contributors. The Woodchester Word is also posted to the village website (www.woodchestervillage.co.uk) where it can be seen at any time and back issues consulted.

There is currently an opportunity for a new Editor as Paul Lock would like to step down but will remain in post until a replacement is available. Additionally, a new volunteer is sought to distribute in the area of Frogmarsh Lane, Atcombe Road and the High Street in South Woodchester. If you feel you could help with either of these posts please contact paullock@incisecomms.co.uk

GCC Highways – *John Roberts, Stakeholder Manager*

An ongoing programme of routine maintenance will continue. There are no plans for any capital works in the financial year 2009-2010

Woodchester Historical Society – *Mike Warnes*

Woodchester Historical Society meets approximately 4 times a year, mainly in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church.

We are a small group of people and would be happy to welcome new members. It is not necessary to know anything about the history of Woodchester to join us.

Our program for the rest of this year consists of a guided walk around Frampton on Severn and talks by John Loosley on "Gloucestershire Almshouses" and by Phillip Moss on "Old Inns of Gloucester". Please check the Parish website for more details

We continue to work towards computerising village records, censuses, baptisms, marriages, burials etc., building up a database of village residents mainly in the nineteenth century and supporting the Village Archive. We will also be supporting the Village Fete with an exhibition in North Woodchester Church

We have prepared leaflets of self guided walks around both North and South Woodchester with an historical theme which can be purchased for a nominal sum.

For further information contact:- mike.warnes@tiscali.co.uk
or 01453 872181

Village Hall – *Bob Ludlow*

Village Hall Courses – The Course Calendar is posted on all the notice boards, and there is one on the hall notice board.

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

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.

Calligraphy at Woodchester – *Josie Brown*

Our group fluctuates between 9 and 13 people at a time, depending on who's had a hip replacement, is away on holiday or broken their collar bone! Luckily we support each other (literally too) by offering lifts, carrying heavy equipment around and retrieving walking sticks when they've fallen down.

Members come from quite a wide area to enjoy the facilities of Woodchester Hall, where we find the good light, sturdy tables and well-equipped kitchen ideal for our purposes.

At the start of the year we spent a term doing large broadsheet pieces, incorporating all sorts of subject matter and different scripts, which developed our 'design' capabilities. For the remainder of the year we have been studying some Gothic scripts, including presenting findings from historical research, analysing decorative elements within ancient manuscripts and then applying these in a contemporary manner. We have

explored techniques with watercolour and egg tempera painting, to use for decorated initials and other embellishments – making our work beautifully colourful.

Quite a few of us are also members of Gloucestershire Lettering Arts who will be having an exhibition at Nature in Art, Twigworth, from 29 September to 18 October. The museum is the only one in Europe dedicated to all sorts of arts that have been inspired by nature, and is well worth a visit in its own right, so do go and enjoy the calligraphy there later this year as well.

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Kath Gay, who pops in now and again, always showing an interest in what we do and ready to help with anything that comes up. She is a friendly and reliable stalwart, no doubt invaluable to the smooth running of Woodchester Hall, and much appreciated by us. Thank you, Kath.

Woodchester Friendly Circle – *Mary Olpin*

Meetings began again after the summer break on Tuesday 2nd September 2008 with films presented by Geoff Adams on Nightmail and the Guild of Gloucestershire Craftsmen which were most enjoyable.

The circle members meet on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm in the village hall and enjoy various speakers with tea and biscuits served by male members. The purpose of the membership is to provide a social atmosphere for men and women together which has proved to be very successful. Speakers this year have included a representative from the Poppy Fund, a quiz devised by one of our members, trading standards and how to deal with rogue traders and an auction in order to help with club funds.

We look forward to the Spring lunch on May 9th which is again this year at the Clothiers Arms on Bath Road where we have previously been very well looked after. The club subsidise the meal for every member by £5.00. The

committee work hard to organize pleasant and interesting meetings and look forward to welcoming new members at any time. Enquiries 01453 872424

Woodchester Art Club – *Vera Naumann*

We are a group of ten to twelve people who meet every Tuesday morning to paint or draw together. We enjoy a relaxing couple of hours while painting and chatting.

We have room for more members and, if you think you would like to ‘have a go’ at art you will be welcome to join our group. The cost of the hall is divided between us according to how many there are there. It is never higher than £2.00 and is usually £1.50. We do not have tutors but help each other and many of our members have arrived saying “I haven’t done much painting before but I’d like to have a go”.

It’s amazing how quickly these people get going and become proficient in several areas of art. We have very relaxing and happy mornings and you are welcome to join us. If you are interested please ring Vera Naumann on 873689.

St Loes School Exhibition Fund – *George Bastin, Chairman*

St Loe’s School Exhibition Fund or St Loe’s Trust, as it now known, was founded by Nathaniel Cambridge in 1697 to provide financial assistance to pupils attending the maintained primary schools in Woodchester and Amberley who seek further education. The trust now provides beneficiaries grants to assist funding students at universities, training colleges and those entering a trade or profession.

2008/9 saw a change of governance with George Bastin taking over as Chairman from Michael Maltin after nearly 30 years and Vera Naumann stepping down as Secretary after 10 years in office. The job of Secretary was taken over by Jennie Varley who had served as a governor previously. The

Governors wish to thank both Michael and Vera for the many years service they have devoted to the Trust.

2008/9 saw a very encouraging increase in applications for funding at a time when our investment income has fallen slightly. Applicants have to demonstrate a financial need and this sometimes discourages some applicants. However the Trust awarded grants to 8 students. They also provided £300 each to the Woodchester and Amberley schools for books for their library and a book to each school leaver in both schools.

If there any parishioners who wish to apply for grants they are urged to apply as early as possible after the award of a place at university and by 1st September at the latest to the Chairman or Secretary at the above address.

Seys & Bridges Educational Foundation – *Diana Fowler, Trustee and Clerk*

Meetings – The trustees met twice last year. As is usual following the end of the financial year, the annual accounts were presented to the April meeting and subsequently reviewed by an outside examiner.

Grants Awarded – The annual grant of £100 was made to the Governors of Woodchester Endowed School. A further sum was allocated to the Governors to help fund the cost of the new school hall. Both the Endowed School and St Dominic's Scholl were given £1,000 for the purpose of supporting curriculum-related activities, e.g. educational visits. One individual grant was given towards school travel costs. Applications from eligible individuals are welcomed at any time and should be sent to the Clerk. Report submitted on behalf of Mrs Liz Ewart-James and myself, the two trustees appointed by the Parish Council.

National Trust – *Michelle Oliver, Area Warden*

It has been a quiet year at Boundary Court and Woodchester Park with very little to report from both sites.

Woodchester Park - most of the work has fallen outside of your parish boundary, however coppicing has been continuing to restore our coppice blocks and get them back into rotation. The works on the bottom dam (park mill) is now completed. A Parkland/Conservation Plan is being written for Woodchester Park which will steer our management for the estate for the next 5-10 years. This is something that I understand the Parish council will be contacted about in the future by the consultants writing the plan.

We have been invited to house the Woodchester Mosaic, which we would be very keen to do, we are still currently investigating options available to house it within Woodchester Park.

Public Rights of Way – *Sarah Elli, Public Rights of Way Officer*

Completed Projects

- Tree cleared from MWO 13 (off Southbank) ahead of the Christmas Carol Service
- Path MWO 18 from Crystal Fountains towards Park Lane was levelled, steps installed and drainage sorted following complaints about its slippery surface. Work carried out by Cotswold Wardens on behalf of Public Rights of Way and with the consent of new landowners, Mr and Mrs Stevens. The work has been very much appreciated by the Crystal Fountain residents.

Potential Projects

- Further request from Crystal Fountain residents to change stile at top of slope on MWO 18 on Park Lane, to a kissing gate. Mr and Mrs Stevens who own the land have agreed to this and the work will commence in May or June.

- Following an email sent to relevant Parish Councils, Woodchester has requested that Footpath MWO 7, between Selsley Road and Church Road be put forward for improvement should the funding be granted. This proposal has been submitted and PROW is awaiting the result.

Photos of MWO 18 overleaf







Finance Report for Parish Council (unaudited)
Period until March 31, 2009