

The WOODCHESTER Word

MARCH 2009

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

New Clerk

Unfortunately Barbara Lewis had to resign her position as Clerk to Woodchester Parish Council almost as soon as she started due to an unexpected change in her circumstances. We are grateful to her for continuing as long as she did, giving us time to get the recruitment process well underway. All being well Simon Peirce, who has lived in the village for the last seven years, will be ratified as Clerk at the next full Parish Council meeting in March.

Precept

The Parish Council has held the precept at the same level as last year.

Village Carols and Nativity

The Village Carols was generally acclaimed as the best yet. It was certainly the best in terms of weather and was encouragingly well attended. This year a moving nativity was incorporated into the evening. Mary and Joseph made their way down Convent Lane, obtaining directions from the nuns, through the village and eventually to a stable on the Church Green at St. Mary's, North Woodchester. Shepherds in the field that lies between Frogmarsh Lane and Atcombe Road were astonished to receive a visit from Angel Gabriel, sending them to search for baby Jesus. Three Kings wended their way around North Woodchester until they found the stable underneath a star. Thankyou to everyone who helped with shopping, mulling wine, lending utensils, serving, lighting, Christmas trees, setting up, allowing the use of the various venues, clearing away, music, costumes, props, acting, singing and generally joining in. The fact that so many participated and lent their talents and expertise made it a true Village event.

Annual Parish Meeting

This year's Annual Parish Meeting will be in the Village Hall on Saturday 9th May at 10.30a. m. It's a chance for every organisation in the Parish to apprise the residents of Woodchester of what they do. Most organisations provide a written report and then answer questions, so the meeting doesn't last too long. The Parish Council hope that a Saturday morning will be more popular than a weekday evening. All organisations are encouraged to give early consideration to their reports and to send them to the Clerk.

Emergency Plan

Following the 2007 floods Woodchester Parish Council, in conjunction with Stroud District Council has drawn up an Emergency Plan which will enable Woodchester and adjacent parishes to respond appropriately to local and national emergencies. A copy of the plan will be posted shortly on the village website. If you are aware of any particularly vulnerable individuals or groups who might need priority care or attention in an emergency, we would be most grateful if you could contact our Parish Clerk Simon Peirce on 01453 872859 email:council@woodchestervillage.co.uk. Their names will remain confidential and available only to the Parish Council Emergency Planning Group for contact if the plan is activated.

Design Statement and Parish Plan Review

During March there will be a public meeting to re-activate the production of the Village Design Statement and to revisit the Parish Plan. Both of these documents are important for the protection and shaping of our Parish. Please keep a close eye on the notice boards and our web site for the date of this meeting to be announced. For any one who would like to register their interest in becoming part of the 'steering committee' please contact Peter Lead 832383; peterdawnlead@aol.com

Street Lights.

You may recall that the County intend to reduce our "carbon footprint" and save money by switching off selected street lights between the hours of midnight and 0530. To this end I am pleased to inform you that selected Woodchester Parish street lights will be converted in the next few weeks to Part Night operation. This will be done with the normal routine maintenance work. However, the conversion takes 3 nights for each converted light to adjust to Part Night. We will be contacted when the work has been completed in our Parish.

I am also pleased to report that I have finally got to the bottom of the problem with the street light next to the War memorial at the top of Station Road. This was replaced nearly two years ago, as it had rusted badly, but was not connected to the mains! I have finally got "Highways" to sort this out, with the result that it should be connected by the end of May at the latest ... I will not bore you with the reasons for the continuing delay!

Snow

Generally the County coped with the snow as well as any other area, with priority given to Motorways and "A roads"; plus in the first week we did get a few "salting runs" through the village. However, as was announced nationally, central supplies of salt ran low and priority was then given to the main roads. Fortunately we started with well topped up salt bins, so were able to manage some "self help" and keep the village open, but not without a few skids and some quite major car damage. As Highways could not give a date to replenish the bins, we have had a large bag of salt dropped by the war memorial and I will try to top up the most depleted bins in the next few days.

Malcolm Swait, Parish Councillor

VILLAGE FETE

Saturday 12th September 2009
at OAKLEY HOUSE (and nearby locations)
Traditional Village Fete and Produce Show.
Proposed attractions: hog roast, licensed bar, ice creams, teas, competitions, and many sideshows. Commencing at 12 noon, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs George Bastin, in the garden of Oakley House, North Woodchester.
Applications are invited, from Charitable/Non-profit making organisations within the Parish, to run a stall for the benefit of their organisation, or nominated charity. It is proposed that there be a small charge for stalls (to cover the costs of the fete) and that the stallholders keep their profits.

Further information and application forms for stalls/sideshows, available from Cllr Penny Brown, (01453 873431) or download from the Parish Council website: www.woodchestervillage.co.uk

Please return (with a cheque for the stallholder charge), to Penny Brown, Winslow House, Atcombe Road, South Woodchester, GL5 5 EP if possible by 30th April 2009.

Please see village notice boards from 1st May, for details of the classes for the Produce Show

WOODCHESTER GIRLGUIDING

At one of our weekly meetings we had a disco run by a professional DJ. The Brownies joined Nailsworth Brownies again for an evening of fun and games and preparation for the Nailsworth Goodwill Evening. Both Brownies and Guides made Advent decorations, and the Guides finished the term off by going ten-pin bowling and swimming. One Guide supported Woodchester Girlguiding Leaders as they took part in the Woodchester W.I. Christmas concert.

The girls recycled nearly 700 Christmas cards in aid of the Woodland Trust. This term the Brownies have gradually been completing their sports badges and have been working hard towards their communicator badges. This has involved learning sign language, using the telephone and the phonetic alphabet. The Guides meanwhile have taken part in a variety of activities all based on or around food. This has included transporting an egg (theoretically without breaking it!) over an obstacle course, making vegetable monsters and edible greetings cards and cooking pancakes on tin cans.

Due to bad weather conditions the Guides have had to postpone a retail therapy trip to Bristol, but this will be rescheduled. Plans for the immediate future include a pyjama party and hosting an Easter Egg hunt for the District. The Brownies will be having evenings based on food activities, whilst the Guides will be working towards their team player badges. In the Summer term, both groups will be joining the District on a visit to Cattle Country at Berkeley. If you would like to join Brownies or Guides, or would like to help a Unit in anyway please telephone Jackie on 01453 821258 or Louise on 01453 832025.

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, NORTH WOODCHESTER

There will be another 'Brill, Brill Mega Skill' craft weekend on March 14th & 15th for youngsters from school years 2-7 which will be run by our Junior Church leaders together with Steve Hutchinson from Scripture Union. The craft workshop will be held in the school on the Saturday and will include woodturning, buzz saws, pyrography and lots of other crafts. On Sunday morning Steve will be leading our family service. Come and join us for a real 'hands on' weekend! To find out more please ring Liz Hale on 765422 - booking is essential. Once the youngsters have had their fun it will be time to remember the mums - on the following Sunday March 22nd there will be a special family service for Mothering Sunday at 11am.

Easter falls this year on April 12th when our main celebration will be at 11am, with the service beginning on the church green and then moving into church. For other services leading up to Easter please see In Touch or the church notice boards. Newcomers are always most welcome.

WOODCHESTER W.I.

The WI held its AGM in Nov and the President Muriel McTiffin, secretary Val Griffiths and treasurer Kath Gay all remain in office. A happy Social took place after the meeting with a 'take off' of a beetle drive, a reindeer drive. There are some funny species of reindeer around! Our January meeting was held in the Royal Oak, where we enjoyed a post Christmas meal. On the Friday evening before Christmas the WI welcomed people to the Village Hall for the now annual Christmas Concert. Tastefully decorated with seasonal greenery, flickering candles in the windows and staging in place, the hall was transformed. The concert was once again a success and our thanks go to all who took part. The charity this year was St Roses' SMILE appeal for their new hydrotherapy pool. A cheque for £180 has been sent to the appeal. Thanks also to the Bottle Green Co. for their donation of Speed Berry Cordial and to WI members for mince pies. On Sat 4th April we are holding a Coffee Morning in the village hall from 10.00 - 12.00 with coffee/tea and biscuits at 50p. There will be cakes, books and a raffle, all in aid of WI funds and we look forward to seeing you there. The WI meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Our group is small but welcoming so do come along. Coffee Morning - April 4th. Village Hall 10 - 12. Cakes, Books, Raffle etc. In aid of WI funds.

COBALT WALK

Do you enjoy a walk? Why not join the Cobalt Sponsored walk on April 19th from the cycle track at the back of Egypt Mill to Dudbridge and back. This will be the 25th walk arranged by Arthur McTiffin. From last year's walk £7,350.00 was presented to the Cobalt Breast Cancer Clinic. Sponsorship forms are available from Arthur McTiffin 873314. Due to ill health Arthur cannot walk himself, but will be there. Please support this great cause.

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

The Chairman Bob Ludlow is pleased to announce that the Hearing Loop/PA System has been installed and working perfectly and has been well received by the groups who use the hall. The system gives excellent reproduction and will be an enhancement for those groups who wish to stage music, drama and entertainment, especially when in use for the Christmas Concert - considered to be a great success by all who attended the performance in 2008. This installation has been achieved by the hard work of members of the Management Committee in applying for grants from public bodies and by the receipt of donations from villagers. The Trustees would like to acknowledge and thank the following donors: 'Awards for All' National Lottery £3,000 : Age Concern £500 : The Langtree Trust £300 : The Friendly Circle £150 : Woodchester W.I £140 - additionally we wish to thank the family of one of our founder Trustees Bill Ryan, for their very generous donation in his memory.

This completes the second 5-year plan to bring our 1834 Hall into the 21st century and up to an excellent standard. The upgrading of equipment is an ever on-going task, and currently we are in need of replacing chairs, therefore if any public-spirited person could help us either by fund raising or donation, this would be very welcome and gratefully

received. Please contact Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340 for your offers, comments or ideas.

Yoga - This course is now cancelled, which leaves Wednesday evening free for hire. All other courses are still running and are published on all Village notice boards and on the telegraph pole outside the Village Hall.

The Healthy Lifestyles Gentle exercise for the over 50s, Thursday morning 10 am - 12 noon, has vacancies. This class is socially orientated as well as being good for well-being. So everyone is welcome - just come and enjoy yourself. Contact Dorothy Turner Tel: 01285 885766. There is a possibility of running a similar course on a different day - details will be posted on the notice boards.

There are some vacant slots during the week; If you would like to start something new, please contact Kath Gay on 01453 873348 or Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340. Don't forget, the hall is available for your private function at weekends for the very reasonably priced £9.00 per hour (including heating, lighting and full use of the kitchen) and is easily the cheapest in the area. All on-going weekly courses are priced at £5.50p. per hour. Chairman - February 2009

FRIENDLY SOCIETY

The Christmas celebrations were very much enjoyed on December 9th which included sherry and mince pies. The meeting for 6th January had to be cancelled but it is hoped to arrange for the Speaker to come at some other time. We look forward to welcoming new members at any time. Meetings are held on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2.30 p.m. in the Village Hall from September to May. Enquiries 01453 872424.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The next meeting of Woodchester Historical Society is: Tuesday 3 March at 7.30 pm in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church where there will be a talk by William Harris on 'Sharpness Docks and the Traffic on the River Severn from the 18th Century'. All are welcome. Admission is £2 members £3 non-members. The following meeting is on Tuesday 2 June at 7.30pm in the Undercroft; a talk by John Loosley on 'Gloucestershire Almshouses'

LOCAL BUSINESS WINS AWARD

The national winner in the British Small Business Champions 2008 Awards was The Castle Fine Arts Foundry which has a studio at Inchbrook. They were chosen from the six national finalists from across the UK, winning £10,000 to be spent to the benefit of the business. Castle Fine Arts Foundry will spend it on improving facilities for its staff. Castle Fine Arts Foundry Ltd, Oswestry, started in 1990 and is one of the country's leading art foundries with studios in Llanrhaedr um Mochant and Inchbrook. The foundry works closely with local, national and international artists to cast high quality bronze sculptures: from small scale gallery pieces to monumental public commissions that are seen in many towns and cities in the UK and abroad.

ST DOMINIC'S CHURCH

A great deal has happened since my last report. The hall and kitchen refurbishment are now complete and with the help of the new audio visual facility the hall has been transformed into a wonderful resource (if anyone wants to hire it please contact the School).



All the Christmas events went very well. The infant plays were delightful and the choir and chime bar group were busy playing at several venues including Woodchester Mansion (see below) and The Steppes residential home.

This term we are continuing to develop cooking within the curriculum and extend it to after school provision. This is proving to be very successful with twenty-one children from Class 3 coming along to cook with Camilla Chandler in the after school club.

This term we are also looking forward to developing an outside reflective area. This will take the form of sculpture/sculptures, made by the children, and situated at the bottom of the field. The project will be led by Imogen Harvey Lewis, a local sculptor. This has been a long term plan which will provide another dimension to our outside environment. As always we are eager to forge links with the Community and if anyone would like to come and help in School or is interested in looking around please let us know on 832682 or admin@st-dominics.gloucs.sch.uk. You can always 'keep an eye on us' by checking out our website www.st-dominics.gloucs.sch.uk

NIGHTSTOP

Do you have a spare room? Could you give the gift of a home for a night? Gloucestershire Nightstop, is the safest emergency accommodation in the County for 16 to 25 year old young people. They are looking for more host families to offer a bed for a night at a time. Free training is given and expenses paid. To find out more, phone us on 01452 331330 or email to development@gloucestershirenightstop.org.uk

POST OFFICE

Terry and I would like to thank everyone for making us so welcome. We have had a steep learning curve by arriving at the post office at start of the Christmas season but the patience and support of everyone who passes through is amazing. We so enjoyed the W.I. Christmas concert and were surprised that there is such a wealth of talent and expertise in the village. We really appreciate the friendship and look forward to being here for a long time to come. Yours Sincerely Linda Walters

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 2009 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