

Woodchester Annual Parish Meeting 2011

Thursday 26th May 2011, 7pm

The Village Hall, North Woodchester

AGENDA

Welcome

- Receive apologies for absence
- Receive the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 20th 2010
- Report on the Parish Council's business over the past year
- Opening remarks
- Village organisations and others asked to present any verbal reports
- Conclusion – Thanks

Verbal reports will be made by:

- Cllr Peter Lead – Village Design Statement
- Cllr Parish Plan Update

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

Woodchester Village Report 2010/11

Woodchester Parish Council – *Cllr Dr Gervase Hamilton, Chairman*

Although the smallest of the branches of local government, parish councils continue to have an important role in representing the views of local residents and ensuring that those views are acted upon by district and county councils, regional agencies and central government. During the past year Woodchester Parish council has been engaged with a wide range of issues including the maintenance of historical sites, planning and design at village level, the environment, roads, footpaths and public transport, communications, and organizing village events as well as responding to impending changes in local authority services and to central government initiatives such as the Localism Bill.

1 Historical Sites and Buildings

The Great Orpheus Pavement

In early 2010, the Parish Council (PC) heard that the replica of the Great Roman Orpheus Pavement constructed by the brothers Woodward in 1973-1982 and displayed for some years at Prinknash, was to be put up for public auction. Although not in a position to bid for the replica, the PC was keen to see it retained for display in or near Woodchester. The PC facilitated the setting up of a sub-group of interested members of the PC, business leaders and long term residents to raise funds to buy the pavement. Unfortunately the group's bid was unsuccessful and the reproduction was sold at auction on 24th June 2010 to an outside bidder for £75,000. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

Interest in the sale of the replica coincided with a move by a number of local residents to have the original pavement re-opened to the public (it was last displayed in 1973). After consulting with the local Parochial Church Council who is responsible for the site, the PC agreed with them that the re-opening would be time-consuming, expensive and difficult to organize. It is unlikely, therefore, that this will happen in the foreseeable future.

The War Memorial

The Woodchester War Memorial was originally dedicated in 1920. Over the years its condition had so deteriorated that the PC, after taking advice from statutory bodies, agreed, along with a voluntary donors, to have it cleaned and restored. Partial cleaning and restoration was carried out in time for the commemorative 90th anniversary ceremony of dedication on November 11th with an excellent turn out of many villagers including local schoolchildren. To coincide with the re-dedication the PC funded a booklet on the fallen soldiers of Woodchester researched and written by Cllr Wigzell.

Convent of the Poor Clares

The order of Poor Clare nuns were established in Woodchester in 1860. With the decline in the numbers of vocations, and expensive buildings to maintain, the order has decided after 150 years in Woodchester that the chapel, convent buildings and farm including 25 acres of land should be put up for sale with the remaining five nuns joining a sister house in Devon.

The PC acknowledges the vital work the Poor Clares have made to our community over the years including running an orphanage, a school and employment workshops. The PC is continuing to monitor plans for the development of the listed buildings on the site including the farm and orchard where a number of the trees are the subject of Preservation Orders.

2 Planning

General Planning Applications

The PC's Planning sub-committee under its chair Cllr Lead has continued its vital role of monitoring local planning applications as they affect Woodchester and its environs (see separate report).

Village Design Statement

Following a detailed survey of local opinion and advice from Stroud District Council, Cllr Lead and the members of the VDS sub- group drew up a village design statement which lays down standards which the PC would like to see adopted for new and existing buildings in the parish (see report attached). Consultation on the document has recently concluded. It can be viewed on the parish website www.woodchesterparish.org.uk/community/vds-survey.

Parish Plan

The PC has also been active in setting up a local sub-group to update the Parish Plan originally drawn up in 2005 and modified in 2006. In the five years since then much has been achieved but more remains to be done. Cllr Bastin with sub-group members has prepared a report (attached) which is shortly to go out to residents for comments and suggestions. The intention is to have a final version of the plan available by late 2011.

3 The Environment

The VDS identified the beauty of the surroundings and the environment as one of the most important contributory factors to the quality of life in Woodchester. Late last year some local residents expressed concern about the run-down appearance, accumulation of rubbish and overgrown hedges of parts of the parish. Inspection by the clerk and chair confirmed that this was indeed the case. The PC purchased and erected two new bins for dog waste as well as chasing up Stroud district Council to deal with those areas of the village where they have a responsibility for cleanliness and keeping verges clear. In this connection the annual litter pick was held on 27th March. Thirty residents and their families joined in clearing the roads and verges and collected 30 bags of rubbish.

The harsh winter weather of early December wreaked havoc with local roads. Our snow warden, Cllr Swait was active in ensuring that grit bins were in place and kept topped up and Dave Excel used his snow plough to keep those roads not cleared by GCC open.

Unfortunately the freezing weather caused a new series of cracks and potholes to appear on village roads, including some repaired in 2009. The PC has kept GCC highways notified of those areas which need most urgent attention.

4 Roads, Footpaths and Public Transport

A continuing concern for local residents and PC is speeding traffic on the A46 and the danger to those crossing the road, especially near the bus-stops. The PC has been active with GCC Highways in seeking improvements in sightlines, lowering the pavement and erecting local bollards by the bus-stop in Frogmarsh to minimize danger to schoolchildren crossing the road there. At the same time the PC paid for replacement bus shelters and associated benches along the A46.

The PC continues to monitor the situation with regard to the cutbacks in local bus services especially as they affect many non-car owning elderly or disabled residents.

Traffic congestion and parking continue to be major issues in South Woodchester and 'rat running' traffic in North Woodchester. Consultation had taken place with GCC Highways and the Police to try and minimize the inconvenience to local residents but the problem remains an intractable one.

The PC has addressed the issue of barbed wire fencing close to public footpaths and of the need to replace steps/gates where these have been damaged or decayed.

The PC participated in a survey by Sustrans of the use of the local cycle track on the old Woodchester branch railway. In general the survey of local residents confirmed the track was well used by both cyclists and walkers but there were continuing concerns over the deterioration of the surface and the PC will liaise with GCC Highways over the improvements required.

5 Communications

Parish Notice Boards

The PC has replaced 2 of the village notice boards, one in North Woodchester to outside the Post Office and the other on the High Street in South Woodchester. The new boards were made by craftsmen in the village. Concerns raised by residents in Rooksmoor meant the PC did not replace or re-site the board in Rooksmoor as was originally proposed. Paul's Rise gained the board from Selsley Road and Convent Lane was given the High Street's old board.

Welcome Pack

The Clerk has produced a useful welcome pack for new residents and firms moving to Woodchester outlining the work of the PC and giving contact numbers and names of councilors and other organizations in the village.

Business Directory

Our webmaster and clerk have been collecting details of local businesses for inclusion on the village web-site. This should become available shortly.

6 County/District Council Facilities and Policies

Libraries

It was with sadness that the PC learned that the mobile library service used by a number of our elderly or disabled residents is to end in July. It is hoped that alternative arrangements, possibly including a housebound service, will be put in place. There will be three different types of library service depending on the degree of local involvement and the PC will continue to monitor how these actually work in practice.

Localism Bill

This is likely to have considerable implications for the work of County, District, Town and Parish councils in particular increasing the areas of responsibility for each of these bodies. The PC has commented on the initial draft but the Bill is currently going through parliament and the exact provisions have as yet to

be spelt out but it may result in a greater workload for parish councilors without an increase in the necessary resources.

7 Events

The PC's Events Committee organized two successful events in the past year which proved to be very popular with local residents-the Woodchester Produce Show held on September 11th with excellent sales of local fruit, vegetables and food and the Carol Service in December, The 'Open Gardens' scheme, popular in 2009, has been deferred till next year.

8 Changes at the Parish Council

Following the sad death late last year of our Gloucester County and Stroud District Councillor, Stephen Glanfield, a great supporter of the work of the PC, our Chair for the past three years, Cllr Rhiannon Wigzell stood down as chair and was elected as SDC's Conservative Party Councillor for Amberley and Woodchester. We will continue to draw on her expertise as she continues to act as a Parish Councillor in Woodchester. Cllr Dr Gervase Hamilton was elected as new chair and Cllr Peter Lead as Deputy Chair. Parish Councillors have specific advisory roles and also serve on the three committees of the council - Planning (Chair Cllr Lead), Finance (Chair Cllr Bastin), Personnel (No current Chair). Details of responsibilities and committee membership can be found on the web-site.

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

In 2010/11 there were 36 applications in total. 27 applications were permitted, 1 was refused, 2 were withdrawn and there are 5 outstanding. With each application we liaise with SDC and if necessary speak to concerned Parishioners.

The Planning Sub-Committee also commented on Stroud District Council's Review of Settlement Boundaries within Woodchester and noted where there had been previous mapping errors, corrected arbitrary boundaries and identified areas not included in the original map.

Village Design Statement – *Cllr Peter Lead*

The consultation period for the VDS is now over and the document is being very slightly revised to take into account the various comments made. It will now be submitted to Stroud District Council for adoption and then sent for printing. Copies will be held in the Post Office, pubs in the Parish and by SDC. It can also be viewed on the village website www.woodchestervillage.org.uk/community/vds-survey.

Parish Plan Update - *Cllr Rhiannon Wigzell on behalf of Cllr George Bastin*

A Parish Plan is both a record of the features that contribute to the character of a village and an action plan for what local people feel should be preserved or changed in the future. Local Government at Parish, District and County level is committed to taking into account the needs and concerns of local residents when planning and formulating policy. Parish Plans are seen as one tool by which local people can participate in and influence this process.

Woodchester's Parish Plan was originally completed in 2005 and updated in 2006. It now needs to be reviewed and refreshed to ensure it reflects the community's aspirations and needs. The

Parish Council has moved forward over 80% of the actions from the original plan but, as the external environment has changed a good deal since 2005 (especially in the last six months when the impact of government spending cuts on County and District Councils have become clearer) it is now time to revise the plan. The climate change agenda has also become stronger in the past five years and our current plan does not reflect this.

In this document we look at what we set out to achieve in 2005, where we have succeeded and what we have failed to complete to date. The final section is what we want to add to our wish list of improvements. This section is to be completed by Woodchester parishioners, employers and visitors to the village over the next few weeks with another chance at the Annual Village Meeting on May 26th. We will then revise and rewrite the Parish Plan to be made public by the end of 2011. This will be your chance to be a part of the planning for the future of Woodchester. It is our village – let us keep it or improve it as we would wish it to be.

What have we achieved since 2005?

Roads, Transport and Travel

- Controlled crossing on A46 (Scott's Crossing).
- Flashing speed sensitive signs on A46.
- Improved and Enhanced crossing points on A46 near Frogmarsh Lane.

Public Utilities, Council Services and Community Safety

- Footpath information pack.
- Limited police presence.
- Mobile library service.

Housing and Planned Development

- Village Design Statement providing planning guidelines for future development.

Village Facilities, Shops, Volunteer Groups, Village Events

- One thriving Post Office and shop.
- Increased use of village hall facilities.
- New hall in Endowed School.
- Annual Village Fete and Street Party
- Christmas Carols and Nativity.
- Annual Flower and Produce Festival
- Village Website
- Open Gardens Scheme
- Renovated War Memorial and 90th Anniversary Commemoration.
- Bigger and better *Woodchester Word* which is nearly self funding.
- *South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust* (SWALT) providing land for allotments and play area planned.

Environment, Conservation, Recreation and Tourism

- Annual litter pick
- Opportunity for local B&B's to promote on Website.
- Woodchester Mansion improvements

Employment

- Piano Works now fully occupied.
- Business Directory for Website in progress.

Educational Facilities

- Thriving schools at full capacity and waiting lists.
- SBKA Apiary and wildlife garden in the St Dominic's School playing field.

What have we failed to achieve since 2005?

Roads, Transport and Travel

- Speeding along A46 and all village roads.
- Parking problems in South Woodchester.
- Other safe crossing points on A46.
- No reduction of speed limit to 20mph in the village.

Public Utilities, Council Services and Community Safety

- Maintain good council services.
- Maintain good police presence.
- Maintain good library services.
- Maintain good bus services.

Housing and Planned Development

- Development of Rooksmoor Mill.
- Building of-affordable housing for local residents.

Village Facilities, Shops, Volunteer Groups

- Retain one Post Office and shop.
- Playgroup struggling for need of new hall.
- No allotments apart from those administered by SWALT.
- No playgrounds outside school areas.

Environment, Conservation, Recreation and Tourism

- Keep village in good order but room for improvement.
- Open Roman Pavement

Employment

- Better broadband for home workers.

Educational Facilities

- Encouraging parents to pool transport.
- Cycle shed at Endowed school

What do we wish to achieve within the next 5 years?

Roads, Transport and Travel

- Better parking facilities for South Woodchester High Street
- 20mph speed limits throughout the village.

Public Utilities, Council Services and Community Safety

- Improve police presence to ensure better parking.
- Keep library services.
- Improve bus services

Housing and Planned Development

- More affordable housing.
- Better control of new building.

Village Facilities, Shops, Volunteer Groups

- Locally produced meat and vegetables to be available.
- Greater use of village hall.

Environment, Conservation, Recreation and Tourism

- More wildlife habitats.
- Allotments and garden sharing schemes.
- Encourage use of solar energy and car share.

Employment

- More local employment.
- Encourage combined workshop/residential premises.

Educational Facilities

- More school facilities, clubs, play areas and young person's facilities.
- Resilience to climate change.
- Any action that forges community links from individual to organisational level.
- Ram Inn to become all day meeting place to fill gap in South Woodchester left by shop closure.

News from the South Woodchester Amenity Trust (SWALT) - Jo Hurn

SWALT was set up two years ago by a group of concerned residents primarily to ensure that the field behind The Ram, which was for sale, would never be used for building development at any time in the future. However, it was also intended that, as the ground was cleared of brambles etc, the space would become a resource for the village whenever possible.

This has been successfully achieved with the expansion of the area for allotments, the creation of an orchard and several social events for villagers.

Initially the area cleared was only large enough for interested members to have allotments. These proved to be very productive. Subsequently a further area was cleared in 2011 and fenced against deer. This has enabled five non-members of SWALT from the village to have allotments too and there is space for more.

The orchard was created with the help of local residents. All villagers were invited to sponsor a tree, and the response was so successful that the area to be planted was increased. A total of thirty one local and endangered species of apples, plums and pears have been planted and over half of these have been sponsored by non-members, often to celebrate a birth or to remember a life of a Woodchester resident. The bottom part of the land has been preserved as a wild life corridor.

There are still some areas of land available that could be used for projects by interested villagers e.g. bee-keeping or a hen house and run.

In addition, there have been a number of events throughout the year to which villagers have been invited and which have been welcomed and enjoyed by a large number of residents. These have included a traditional Wassail in January, a summer BBQ, an apple juicing event for Apple Day and a bonfire on Guy Fawkes night. Another summer BBQ is planned for June 18th at 7pm to which everyone in the village is invited. Details will be on posters nearer the time.

There is a planning application being considered at present to landscape the land nearest to Station Rd and the top of the field to provide safe access across the site. Although the current landlord of The Ram kindly allows access though the car park, this is discretionary and not an arrangement which can be relied on for the future. It is also hoped that a level area more suitable for social events can be created to which villagers can be invited.

For further information about any of these matters contact by email: swalt.org@gmail.com

Woodchester Endowed School – Gordon Soutar, Headteacher

Woodchester Endowed is a Church of England school serving the village of Woodchester and the surrounding area. With 134 pupils on roll (April 2011) the school is split into 5 classes: currently 4 mixed aged and 1 discrete Year 6 class.

We work hard to provide a family atmosphere in school and our Christian ethos and values can be seen throughout all that we do. Graded as 'Good' by Ofsted in 2010 we provide a high quality education for all pupils and pride ourselves not only with excellent attainment levels but with a clear understanding of every pupil in the school, their talents and needs.

For further information about the school please refer to our own school website which can be found at: www.woodchesterschool.ik.org or contact the school office on 01453 872476.

During the last year....

Our school has experienced a really good year full of wonderful opportunities for children to learn and achieve. We always try to enrich the curriculum with activities that stimulate and motivate as well as cover the essentials for future life. An example of this is the themed fortnight we are currently enjoying understanding the effects of World War II on our community. The older children will visit the Imperial War Museum in London, the middle of the school travel to Kidderminster to be evacuated by steam train and the younger children are visiting the steam museum in Swindon. It is through such experience that children learn best and contributes greatly to the enjoyment that our children tell us they feel.

On a more concrete level during the last year we have refurbished our toilets, created a new library and learning support room as well as putting in place a fantastic play fort and 'tyre park' in the grounds. We are very fortunate that we have great support from governors and parents to help make these things happen. We are also very grateful to the wider community for attending fundraising activities and for the support that they give the school.

Like any public service we are beginning to feel the pinch as services and financial budgets get squeezed. Our challenge remains to provide the highest quality education for our children using the resources we receive. Despite such challenge our expectations remain as high as ever and reflect our motto recently created by pupils and adults involved with the school together: *'Learning for success; enjoying every day.'*

As ever, we are keen to be involved with our local community in any way that we can. If anyone has an interesting story to tell or a skill that can be shared with the children please do let us know.

St Dominic's Primary School – Margaret Smith, Headteacher

2010/11 was another successful year at St Dominic's school. The SATs results were excellent, with the school coming in the top 5% of schools in the Country, but more importantly the school managed to enhance its curriculum and forged community links with an inner city school in Gloucester and a school in India. We also further established a link with St Rose's Special School in Stroud and were able to take a group of children to see how these very special children access the curriculum with the help of new technologies. This made such an impression upon the children that they were eager to reciprocate and they invited some children to come and watch their Christmas plays. A highlight of 2010 was when the whole school sang and signed 'Away in a Manger' so that all the children could participate.

Like many schools we are currently researching the advantages and disadvantages of applying for academy status. Education is always on the change but it seems even more unsettled at the moment and the only thing that we know for sure is that it is important for small schools to work together. I consider that we are very fortunate to have such a strong cluster of schools in the locality and I hope that the next year brings even more strengthening of these ties and opportunities for further collaboration with schools and the local community.

Woodchester Playgroup – *Duschanka Sutherland, Secretary*

Woodchester Playgroup has been providing childcare to the children of Woodchester and neighboring villages over the age of 2 years and nine months since for over 30 years.

We have had another successful year and currently have 43 children on the register. We were pleased to have been able to extend our opening hours to provide 2 full days on Mondays and Thursday from 9-3 as well as a drop-in service. Sessions on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays are 9-12. The feedback we receive from parents continues to be extremely positive with most rating the Playgroup as excellent.

We depend greatly on the time and effort of our committee to fund raise throughout the year. This has entailed numerous cake stalls, a promises auction and our annual Christmas fete at the village hall. This has become more important than ever as we are still using the same pre-fabricated building we were 23 years ago and time and the weather have taken their toll and the building is in dire need of substantial refurbishment – insulation, new windows and a new roof.

We are trying to apply for a grant to help with the cost and would love to hear from anyone in the village who might be interested in helping us, either to raise funds or with the repairs themselves. If you are, please call Duschanka Sutherland on 01453 833313 or email duschankasutherland@hotmail.com

Priory Church of the Annunciation – *Jenny Bailey*

Our congregation continues to increase, with many young families, especially at the 5 pm Sunday Mass introduced in February. We are trying to form a new choir with an enthusiastic and well qualified musician as singing the liturgy is an integral part of worship. Our Christmas event in the 'quiet place' at the convent was well attended, with music and readings. This was followed by a St. Patrick's night ceilidh and then a Charity Curry Evening to raise funds for a group of disabled children's pilgrimages to Lourdes

In September two young parishioners went to the Papal service in Hyde Park, London, a never to be forgotten experience. There was also an open air Mass at the school with the theme of 'Heart speaks to Heart' [John Henry Newman] who was a visitor at the now demolished Dominican Priory over 100 years ago.

As we no longer have the use of space at the Convent, the possibility of building our own Parish Hall in the churchyard is being explored, as the school hall is not always available.

Several parishioners enjoyed school dinners as guests of the pupils and were pleasantly surprised at the improvement in quality and choice since their own school days.

Those of us who have entered classes at Woodchester Show over the past two years will be taking part again this year and will encourage more to participate. Thank you for inviting us and we hope you will come to our school/parish fete on July 9th. It is heartening that all the churches work together nowadays.

Finally, after a Mass celebrated by Bishop Declan in the over-flowing Convent chapel and buffet lunch in a marquee, we have said farewell to the Poor Clares, now living with others of their

order in Lynton, Devon. The Convent is on the market for £ 2. 25 million with Knight Frank; we pray that a sympathetic use will be found for these hallowed buildings after 151 years in the service of the community, and thanks also to the author of its history, Tricia Dunbar, which has a market wider than Woodchester itself.

The Parish Church of St Mary – *Andrew Pemberton*

The Parish Church has continued to play an active part in the life of Woodchester over the last year. The church building was again illuminated at Christmas and the church green was the venue for the village carol singing (with accompanying refreshment) organized by the parish council – in suitably crisp, snowy conditions. Church members also staged a flower festival in September as part of the Woodchester Village Weekend.

The church building is open for visitors every day of the year. A Church website was launched this year, www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk, which is kept up-to-date with details of services, special events, activities for children and young people and contact details. A new curate, Revd Josh Maynard, has been appointed both to serve the benefice of Woodchester and Brimscombe and to be a pioneer minister in Stroud. Messy Church, a monthly event on a Wednesday afternoon for children up to year 6, accompanied by a parent or carer, has been very busy this year. It takes place after school and the programme includes refreshments, crafts, music and stories, ending with a short time of worship. The Church has continued to enjoy strong links with the Endowed School. A new crèche has been started for babies and toddlers during the regular Sunday 11am service.

Besides the major Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas, we held other special services including a pet service to give thanks for animals and pets, and a “Songs of Praise” on the Church Green with The Beacon Gospel Choir. We received visitors from our link parish in Nasby, Sweden, last October.

St Mary’s continues to support those in need. We help to fund partners in Nepal and Peru; we have supported “Operation Christmas Child” by sending out gift-filled shoe boxes to Eastern Europe; we have made donations to The Children’s Society through the Christingle Service. and to the Poppy Appeal from the Remembrance Service. We have organized the house-to-house collection for Christian Aid. Produce brought to our Harvest Service was presented to the Nelson Trust in Brimscombe. We have supported the Stroud-based charities *The Door* and *Marah*.

Most residents will have noticed ladders placed on the church spire, which is awaiting a major piece of renovation work. The cast iron cap on top of the spire, and the poise weight inside it, need to be replaced with an even more durable internal arrangement of steel to anchor the weathervane and weigh down the upper section of the spire against the worst of the weather. Also we plan to prevent rain entering through the quatrefoil openings in the spire and falling onto the bell frame below. Notwithstanding the odd spot of rain, our bell-ringers received a Certificate of Commendation in a best-kept belfry competition from the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association of Church Bellringers!

Woodchester Brownies and Girl Guides – *Jackie Hayes*

With the national celebrations of 100 years of Girlguiding drawing to a close the Brownies and Guides at Woodchester had an action packed summer term last year. Most girls achieved their Adventure 100 badge which was awarded for taking part in activities based around the 100 year celebrations. This included activities at weekly meetings and special days arranged elsewhere.

The term ended with fun, games and an ice-cream on Rodborough common. Some of the older Brownies joined Nailsworth Brownies on Pack holiday.

The new term started with the District's final closing celebrations of the 100 years of Girlguiding when the Woodchester Brownies and Guides joined their Girlguiding sisters from Nailsworth for singing and eating marshmallows on Rodborough common and also for a very well attended indoor street party (where our scrapbook of Girlguiding memories of people linked with Woodchester Girlguiding was displayed for the first time). During this term the Brownies also worked hard on their road safety badge, whilst the Guides enjoyed working towards their confectioner's badge. Brownies and Guides took part in the Nailsworth Remembrance Day parade and service, with both "colours" being paraded.

The spring term involved the usual Girlguiding activities of working towards badges, crafts, games, singing etc. In the half-term week a couple of the Brownies and 2 Guiders did a litter pick around Woodchester – protective equipment was kindly provided by Stroud District Council and Woodcock Lane Dental Practice. Brownies went swimming with Nailsworth Brownies, whilst the Guides went ten-pin bowling. The term ended with a joint party with an Easter theme.

Anyone interested in joining Girlguiding in any capacity should contact Jackie on 01453 821258.

Stroud Beekeepers Association - *Peter Lead*

Preceding the closure of the Convent we had to move our bees to a field at Bagpath to over-winter. We had agreed with St Dominic's Primary School to create a new apiary on the western edge of their playing field off Convent Lane but had to move them 3 miles away before they could be moved along the lane.

Due to mole and badger activity in the playing field a large part of the playing surface has become uneven to the extent of it not being safe for the children to play sport on. Research was carried out to see whether a wildlife area incorporating an apiary was a safe and suitable alternative use.

The Governors decided that the proposal of a Wildlife Garden and Apiary was an exciting project and a valuable asset to the school. Therefore a SBKA working party set too and created an enclosure to house up to 8 hives that are now buzzing. Since then we have held a training day for new beekeepers when 22 people, young and old enjoyed talks at the school with hands on experience at the apiary.

Further plans involve the creation of a bog garden, planting of trees, shrubs and flowers that will enable the children to get to understand the world of insect and wildlife that surrounds them. It is hoped that a partnership between SBKA members and the children and parents of St Dominic's will enable all of this to come to fruition.

As to the bees, they are building up in numbers and getting themselves established in their new homes. Honey, I think, will not be that plentiful this year, but then that is not the main reason for this apiary. It is set up as a centre for education; honey is a bi-product.

For details of training days, or the reporting of swarms, contact Peter Lead 832383

Woodchester Historical Society – *Nigel Brooke-Smith*

The 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 programme for the rest of this year consists of a walk around Painswick, a talk by John Cull on 'the rise and fall of the Wotton Mosaic' and the AGM with a talk by Paul Barnett on the Purton Hulks

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 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:- Jill Merriott-White 01453 872999 or Nigel Brooke-Smith 01453 872586 (or nigelbs@mac.com)

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Woodchester WI – *Gail Birch*

Once again it has been a busy year in Woodchester WI. We may be few in number but have managed to take part in both local and national WI Affairs, namely sending the delegate and a visitor to the AGM in Cardiff.

In June we provided refreshments at the Atcombe Court Open Gardens serving a wide variety of cakes made by our members. Several members namely those with "flower arranging fingers" produced a wonderful display for the Church flower festival in September, supported by others who provided refreshments to the flower arrangers.

In December we once again hosted the Village Concert raising money for The Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Two members joined the choir again for the GFWI Carol Concert in Cheltenham which many of us attended.

We have enjoyed several "foodie" evenings, our garden party in June, fish and chip supper in August, bring and share favourite recipes in December and our January "Christmas" meal.

Our speakers have been varied from slides on the tidal Thames in a narrowboat to British sign language, from a history of hats to laughter for health! We enjoyed a dabble evening which we hope to repeat later this year with different crafts. Some members joined other WI's for Skittles and attended the twice yearly group meetings.

We faced the challenge of producing a pennant for the 2012 Olympics and enjoyed working together on it so are now planning another.

All in all another lively year in Woodchester.

Woodchester Football Club – *Stuart Harrison*

We are a long established Stroud League Football Club (1905) and last year we converted into a Sports Charity known as a CASC – so legally the club belongs to everyone who lives in Woodchester (North & South) and is purely for the benefit of Woodchester residents.

Come and Watch - Your hearty support is always welcome and if you wish to check out our league progress or access our fixture list please go to: www.stroudleague.co.uk and you will find us in Division 7.

Charitable Contributions Welcome – The club is non-profit making and runs on donations from the local community so please if you wish to support your own village feel free to contribute no matter how small – even as little as £20 helps and because we are a CASC it is tax deductible.

We are looking for a few local Dads & Mums and of course Juniors - who wish to help us establish two junior teams to play in the Stroud junior leagues – probably an under 12's team and an under 8's team, but this is not set in stone until we can assess the level of response and playing ages - Please help!

Our pitch and clubhouse facilities are free every other Saturday and every Sunday – also weekdays for training (with flood lights). All duties will be shared and your commitment will be an occasional Saturday afternoon on a mutually agreed but flexible rota – our children would love and deserve this opportunity.

Please contact Stuart Harrison (Vice-Chairman) on 01453 872542/07977 455350 or stuartroyharrison@gmail.com

St Loes Exhibition Fund – *George Bastin*

The Trust is continuing to support pupils at the Woodchester Endowed School and Amberley Parochial School with prizes for the leavers together with donations for their libraries. The Trust is also supporting eight students through university and also supporting two children with musical grants in the village. Despite the constraints imposed on the Trust by a depressed financial market we have been able to continue our help to those born or resident in the Parish who are under the age of twenty five and in need of financial assistance in further education to pursue their chosen career.

The Trust was fortunate in finding Malcolm Swait to replace Geoffrey Yates as Honorary Treasurer this year. Geoffrey had been Treasurer for over 15 years and had served the Trust with good advice throughout. We are presently wishing to appoint a representative from Woodchester Parochial Church Council. The post is not time consuming with attendance of two or three meetings a year necessary to fulfill the role which can be interesting and rewarding. If you are interested please contact the Honorary Secretary Jennie Varley on 01453 832251.

The National Trust – *Michelle Oliver, Ranger*

In Woodchester Park work has started on the HLS (Higher Leven Stewardship Scheme as provided by Natural England) – most of which is currently above the Mansion. In the winter of 2010 we removed some trees on the LH side approaching the mansion (as part of our historic parkland restoration project and to increase the feeding area for the bats). We are clearing the brash created from this ready to grind out the stumps, and mulch the regeneration and bramble. The area will then be reseeded with grass and a wild flower mix, and fenced ready to be grazed.

We also have an archaeological dig taking place behind the mansion investigating the area of Coach and Stable buildings. See poster for opportunities to get involved that I sent out last week.

We have carried out some felling along the track edges throughout the park to open up the trackside to encourage ground flora, and light onto the woodland edges. This will also benefit the invertebrates too.

St Josephs Primary School in Nympsfield also had a visit into the park with the Ranger, Michelle.

The usual maintenance projects eg clearance around the boathouse and new bench installation, coppicing and clearance work, view point clearance to name a few have also taken place in the park.

The Village Hall – *Malcolm Swait*

The Village Hall has enjoyed yet another successful year, with bookings at even higher levels and finances healthy. It has therefore been decided that there will be no increase in booking fees for yet another year. The new boiler has been installed, which together with the low energy lighting has helped to keep down the running costs. The Hall regularly receives highly complimentary appraisals from visitors and casual bookings.

Some of the regular groups are falling in numbers, due to the aging of the members, and most would welcome the injection of new blood. Details of the bookings are on all the Parish notice Boards and displayed in the Hall. Although the booking Calendar is quite full, if anyone is interested in running a course, please contact Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340.

If anyone knows someone who would be interested in helping with the running of the Hall and eventually taking over the role of Chairman, Bob Ludlow would be pleased to talk to them.

Saturdays and Sundays are 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.

Parish Councillors and Clerk

Dr Gervase Hamilton (Chairman)	872837
Rhiannon Wigzell	872353
George Bastin	872526
Penny Brown	873431
Peter Lead	832383
Malcolm Swait	873254
Paul Syrett	878553
Duschanka Sutherland (Clerk)	833313

District and County Councillor for our area

Rhiannon Wigzell	872353
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The Woodchester Village Report 2010/11 was produced by the Woodchester Parish Council for the Annual Parish Meeting 2011. A large print copy is available upon application to the Clerk to the Parish Council Duschanka Sutherland 01453 833313.

Finance Report for Woodchester Parish Council (unaudited)
Period until March 31, 2011

Opening Balance	£24,715
Receipts	
Precept	£11,000
Interest	£11.04
VAT refund	£121.02
Advertising revenue	£390.00
Total receipts	£11,522.06
Subtotal	£36,237.06
Payments	
Gen admin	£920.81
Insurance	£871.90
Accommodation	£180.50
Subscriptions	£328.04
Website	£169.20
Stationery	£165.63
Newsletter	£1,686.00
Travel	£79.91
VDS	£133.00
Training	£945.65
Maintenance	£5,115.68
S137	£100.00
Chair	-
Audit fee	£243.63
Salary	£4,449.54
Bank charges	-
Total Payments	£15,389.49
Closing Balance	£20,983
Lloyds 7527828	£20,138
Lloyds 437181	£1,268
Lloyds 41030868	£-
Uncleared credits	-
Uncleared debits	£423
	£20,983