

Woodchester Annual Parish Meeting 2012

Thursday 26th May 2012, 7pm
The Village Hall, North Woodchester

AGENDA

- **Welcome.**
- **Receive apologies for absence.**
- **Approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting May 26th, 2011.**
- **To receive questions from the public and those attending in an official capacity.**
- **Presentation of the Village Annual Report.**
- **Village organisations asked to present any verbal reports.**
- **Thanks and close**

Verbal reports will be made by:

- Councillor Peter Lead – Village Design Statement
- Councillor Peter Lead – Planning
- Councillor Peter Lead – Stroud Bee Keepers Association

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

Woodchester Village Report 2011/12

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

The work of a parish council is, in the words of Grey's 'Elegy': "a flower that is born to blush unseen". While political considerations take front stage in central and much of local government, parish councils "keep the noiseless tenor of their ways". During the past year Woodchester Parish Council has continued its role of trying to reflect the concerns and views of local residents and to bring forward strategies devised to protect and enhance the environment. This is done mainly through the work of its sub-committees, in particular the planning, transport and footpath and public rights of way committees.

Over the years the planning process has become unduly complex and bureaucratic and the role of parish councils has often been overshadowed by district, county, regional and central government decision making. However, the coalition government has at long last woken to the need to simplify the whole process by passing the new Localism Bill which reduces something like 1500 pages of existing legislation down to a more manageable 65. The new legislation lays down a presumption in favour of 'sustainable' planning. What exactly constitutes 'sustainability' remains to be clearly defined and could become a contentious issue in future planning applications. In its favour, the Bill enshrines the concept that parish and town councils should become more actively involved in the planning process through the introduction of 'Neighbourhood Planning' with opportunities for referenda and appeals against planning decisions made at higher levels. However the ultimate power of the Secretary of State for the Environment to force through decisions of wider than just local significance remains. We welcome the Bill as a long overdue recognition by central government that it is at parish and town Council level that democracy really begins, but how its provisions will work out in practice remains to be seen.

1. Planning.

At planning level Woodchester has been a leader in the field for some time. The planning sub-committee, under its chair Cllr. Peter Lead, has been actively involved in commenting on a number of planning applications affecting the village (See separate report) as well as devising strategies to maintain and enhance the appearance of local housing and lay down guidelines for future planning developments in Woodchester and its environs-in particular the Village Plan and the Village Design Statement.

1.1. The Village Plan.

A village plan was originally drawn up in 2005 following extensive consultation with residents and reviewed in 2006. However it was felt it ought to be updated once again to ensure that it reflected the community's aspirations and needs. A small sub-group, led by Cllr. George Bastin, reviewed what we, as a PC, had actually achieved since 2005, what we had failed to achieve and what we aimed to achieve in the next five years. It was gratifying to note that 80% of the targets laid down in the original

plan had come to fruition, but there is a need to acknowledge that the external environment has changed a good deal since 2005. The impact of local government spending cuts has become much clearer plus there is a need to reflect the climate change agenda as well as the likely effect of legislative changes in planning at local and national level.

The revised plan, published last month and shortly to be circulated to all residents, identifies key areas which Woodchester needs to address. These include under the heading of transport: parking issues in the village; speed limits both in the village and on the A46. As far as public services are concerned, a continuing effort is required to redress cuts in public services in particularly libraries, buses and a local police presence, all of which can affect the quality of life, particularly of our older residents, many of whom may also benefit from the provision of a lunch club currently under discussion. Younger couples will only be encouraged to stay in the village if we can ensure the provision of more affordable housing, initiate active measures to establish local employment, small businesses and/or home working and try to meet the need for better facilities for young people including clubs and sporting activities.

It might well be argued that much of what is in the Village Plan is outside the remit of the Parish Council but the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning in conjunction with adjacent parishes, will, undoubtedly, strengthen the hand of the Parish in negotiations with Stroud District Council and Gloucestershire County Council on a wide range not just of local planning but also of social issues as they affect Woodchester residents.

1.2. Village Design Statement.

Following initial consultations in 2009, Cllr. Lead together with members of the VDS Sub-Group drew up a series of proposals to maintain and enhance the appearance of the village and to lay down guidelines to underpin any future discussions on planning and development in the immediate area. After input from Conrad Moore of SDC's Planning Department, and much hard work by VDS Sub-Group members, the final version of the VDS has now been accepted by the District Council and will ensure that the views of Woodchester residents are taken into account by the council before any planning application is finally accepted.

1.3. Neighbourhood Planning.

It has already been mentioned that the introduction of a National Policy Planning Framework enshrines the idea of Neighbourhood Planning as a core element of the Localism Bill. As far as Woodchester is concerned this means that the Parish Council is more likely to be involved in working closely with neighbouring town and parish councils in drawing up and implementing joint plans for their local communities. Having successfully pioneered our Village Plan and Village Design Statement, Woodchester is in as strong position to play an active part in such consultations. Preliminary discussions have already taken place with local councils in our area, led

by Nailsworth Town Council, to flesh out and improve the consultation process with SDC and GCC setting out a framework for a more formal stage in the development of neighbourhood planning with parish and town councils. This will, it is hoped, replace the current informal and somewhat unsatisfactory set-up whereby SDC feeds back its planning and related decisions to village cluster group meetings.

1.4. Stroud District Council's Core Group Strategy.

SDC's Core Group Strategy is designed to address the housing and employment needs of residents and businesses in Stroud district until 2026. Initial consultation took place with village and town councils, local residents and businesses earlier this year. The strategy envisages an increase in the number of houses in the area of 3,200 to meet anticipated need. Woodchester is, in general, supportive of the main aims of the strategy. However, we have expressed our concerns that SDC's proposals for small-scale cluster developments of 200 houses and associated businesses along the Stroud Valleys (particularly along the 'Canal Corridor') could result in infill or ribbon type development along the A46 detracting from the visual and rural quality of Woodchester. The Parish Council has previously identified a number of 'brown field' development sites in the village as suitable for housing-Rooksmoor Mills (where planning permission has lapsed), the Old Piano Factory (where planning permission is extant) and the Fenworth's site in Station Road which is more suitable mixed use housing and small workshops.

2. The Environment

2.1 Waste disposal

The Parish Council was asked in the autumn of 2011 for its views on the waste core strategy developed by Gloucestershire County Council which proposed the replacement of the existing unacceptable landfill scheme for the disposal of domestic waste by a combined incinerator and power generator at the Javelin park site in Haresfield. The PC supported the scheme with the proviso that strict environmental controls should be adhered to and greater use be made of the existing successful recycling schemes in use in the SDC area.

Closer to home, the Parish Council has raised concerns since the beginning of this year about the apparently irregular use of the land at the back of the Rooksmoor Mills site by the current tenants for the parking of commercial vehicles, industrial storage, and the irregular dumping (including of asbestos) and disposal by burning of industrial and other waste on the site as well as potential contamination of the Nailsworth Stream. Following visits by Parish Councillors and representatives of the Environment Agency as well as of the Planning Dept. of SDC, the position has improved but developments on the site will continue to be monitored.

As far as disposal of rubbish locally is concerned the PC was fortunate in having two visits earlier this year from prisoners at HMP Leyhill to clean up rubbish in the village. Notwithstanding their sterling efforts, the Village litter pick on 16th April resulted in

the collection of 26 bags of waste. It seems irregular dropping and dumping of waste still remains a regular problem in the village.

2.2. Land issues.

Although the PC is not directly responsible for the South Woodchester Amenity Land trust, it has always supported its aims and objectives and was pleased to support SWALT's planning application to improve access to the land at South Woodchester to allow vehicle parking and improved storage on site. The community orchard and allotment goes from strength to strength with strong support from local residents. SWALT along with the PC is looking to see if they can identify additional sites for a children's play area –a facility identified by many local residents as a high priority.

3. Footpaths and Rights of Way.

Over the past year the Parish Council has continue to work closely with landowners and the National Trust to keep footpaths and rights of way open and to ensure that fences, stiles and kissing gates are properly maintained. Responsible landowners around Woodchester do their best to keep footpaths clear but during the spring and summer months hedgerows often become overgrown making walking on pavements and footpaths difficult. The problem seems to have become more of an issue locally in the past couple of years. Following some preliminary work by Cllr.Syrett, consultation took place with Gloucestershire County Council Highways Authority (who remain ultimately responsible for ensuring overgrown hedges do not obstruct rights of way) and a revised three stage procedure was agreed. Initially the Parish Council, who tend to be aware of the problem and know who owns the land, will on behalf of GCC Highways, write to the local landowner whose hedges are causing an obstruction reminding him or her of their duty to cut them back. Land owners then have 28 days to take the appropriate action. If nothing happens, then a second letter will be sent direct from GCC advising the landowner that, if no action is taken within 14 days, either prosecution will follow or GCC will do the necessary work and charge the landowner for it plus an administration charge. If the landowner still does not act, then GCC would pass the matter to their in-house solicitors. However, this stage is rarely if ever reached.

As regards footpaths, concerns arose over the potential diversion of Footpath MWO18 from Bownhill Farm to the Woodchester Mansion drive in connection with the land owners' intention to plant a vineyard on the south facing fields. The proposed diversion was over steep ground and along a woodland edge and would have deprived walkers of the view of Amberley opposite. Following a site visit by Cllrs. Lead and Warnes with the landowner a satisfactory compromise diversion was agreed and submitted to SDC for approval.

4. Road, traffic and travel related issues

Woodchester Parish Council submitted responses to GCC's proposal to cut the number of bus routes plus late evening and weekend services due to a drop in the available government subsidies. This would have an adverse effect on older residents and those who do not own or have easy access to a car. Following submissions by the PC and a number of local bodies, bus services were retimed and amended to meet local residents' objections and enable them to reach Nailsworth and Stroud to access shops, libraries, and other essential services such as doctors and pharmacists. Use of the services will be monitored closely. In this connection the council was forced earlier this year to replace part of a relatively new bus shelter in North Woodchester damaged by vandals. Vandalism including graffiti is rare in Woodchester but, even with insurance, is a cost the Parish council could well do without.

Parking continues to be a major issue in Woodchester-especially South Woodchester. While street parking in the village is unavoidable, there has been some success in reducing speeding in the village by the erection of warning signs. However illegal parking on private land remains an issue for some residents and no satisfactory resolution to this problem has been achieved.

With regard to the A46 an approach has been made by the residents of Manor Gardens to have a crossing made in the vicinity to assist residents in crossing this busy road which is made more difficult by the absence of a pavement in the vicinity. The PC is pursuing this with Gloucestershire Highways.

Although this winter was not as destructive as the last, pot- holes still remain a major problem especially in some of the less well used roads. GCC Highways have endeavoured to address the PC's concerns under this heading but obviously have to prioritise their work on A and B roads in the first instance. Unfortunately recent heavy rain has undone some of the council's repair work.

Aware of the potential risk that snow and ice do to our roads, arrangements are now in place for Denis Brown's wood-yard to supply a snow plough and for supplies of grit and salt to be topped up by the PC who are hoping to fund replacements for some of the missing grit bins in areas where they have gone missing.

VDS – Cllr. Peter Lead, Vice Chairman

The Village Design Statement has been formally adopted by Stroud District Council and will now form part of the consultation process in planning applications.

A hard copy of the VDS will be kept by Stroud District Council, the Parish Clerk, the Parish Chairman, the Chair of the Parish Planning Sub-committee and will be available to all on the Parish website. For anyone not able to access the website, they may borrow a copy from the Parish clerk.

Planning – *Cllr. Peter Lead, Vice Chairman*

Our planning sub committee has had a relatively quiet year with just a few applications that we opposed. We now can use our VDS to support our comments.

We are, with other councils, asking Stroud District Council to re-consult with us when they do not agree with our views before making their decision. If they agree to this it will enable us to challenge or, possibly, to understand their opinion.

We have had instances when neighbours or near neighbours have not been notified of applications that may affect their property. We are not always able to pre-empt this situation and therefore would suggest to any who are concerned about this happening to them to register on line with Stroud District Council who now have a warning system of upcoming applications.

SBKA – *Cllr. Peter Lead, Vice Chairman*

The new apiary is now well established and used each week by the trainees. Improver's classes and other branch meetings are held monthly. For our full programme please visit our website www.stroudbeekeepers.co.uk

Our junior club, the Buzzclub, now has 38 members ranging from 5 to 11 who meet on Fridays. For dates of meetings and news of our club, visit our website www.stroudbeekeepers.co.uk

South Woodchester Amenity Trust (SWALT) – *Gary Brown, Co-ordinator for SWALT*

Over the last 12 months SWALT have continued to make Orchard Pastures (the land adjacent to Station road) more productive whilst consolidating existing initiatives and engaging with villagers. The new allotments proved very productive and allotment holders have again been busy planting a wide variety of produce.

A planned barbecue, open to all villagers last June, was abandoned when the heavens opened – we hope for better weather this year! However, we had a successful 'open allotments' day, in August, apple pressing in October and our third annual wassail in January – attended by over 60 people - and featured in the local press. In addition we had a stall on the village green for the village produce show in September, raising nearly £50 for Inishfree through sales of blackberry jam, mirabelle plum jam (all fruit picked at Orchard Pastures), and produce from the allotments.

Since last year a local bee-keeper has installed hives, and we now have some resident chickens in a mobile coop. The latest venture is the building of a soft fruit cage which we erected in April. We are now investigating a suitable site for a small vineyard.

Our planning application for improving access to Orchard Pastures, and building a shed was approved. There is now a level track across the top of the field, providing safer and easier access. The area below the gate on Station Road has been filled in creating a level area

across the stream. Work should start in early summer to create a level area by the gate itself and to create a track from the gate, across the stream and by the near allotments to join with the existing track.

We will continue to advertise village events on the parish notice boards and in the Woodchester Word.

For further information, or, if you would like to get involved, please get in touch by email: swalt.org@gmail.com.

Woodchester Endowed School – *Gordon Soutar, Headteacher*

We have enjoyed another extremely busy and rewarding year at school. Our pupils have taken part in a huge range of activities from nature quizzes and rugby tournaments to music recitals and underwater studies! As ever the staff, parents, pupils and governors work really hard to ensure that every day has benefit and every lesson is important.

In March this year we were visited by the schools' inspectorate, Ofsted. We have been graded as 'Good' in all four inspection areas (Attainment, Teaching, Behaviour & Safety, Leadership & Management). We are very proud of these judgements as it demonstrates the efforts and achievements that everyone associated with the school has put in. The headline quote from Ofsted reads, "Woodchester Endowed is a good school. Pupils achieve and thrive in a safe, happy environment and their attainment regularly exceeds the national average."

As a Church of England school our Ofsted inspection was quickly followed up by an inspection by the Diocese into our Christian characteristics, values, RE teaching and Leadership. We were delighted to receive an 'Outstanding' grade for all areas of this inspection framework with our report commenting that "a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school and learners present as happy and confident in their unmistakable Christian faith based community. Relationships are strong and reflect the caring ethos of a church school."

Having recovered from these two exhausting processes we are now focussed on being part of two of the country's most historic occasions; the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and The London Olympics. Needless to say we will be entering fully into the learning opportunities and celebrations associated with both to provide lasting memories for all pupils at the school.

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 School – *Margaret Smith, Headteacher*

We have had another busy year at St Dominic's School. Since my last report the School has gained Academy status. This created a great deal of work; however we have greatly

strengthened our links with St Peter's High School and The Rosary School while maintaining our links with the local schools. The main impact of becoming an Academy so far has been the greater ownership by the Governors who are now called directors. They are now in a better position to have greater control over the future of the school.

The 'Buzz club' is now established and thanks to Peter Lead the children and local community are able to enjoy the nature related activities provided in our top field as well as learn about the bees. The club is gradually fund raising to buy 'bee suits' for the children so that they can 'get up close' to the bees. Our first St Dominic's honey was on sale at the Christmas bazaar –and very quickly sold out!

During the summer we are having an extension built onto Class 4 this is very exciting and will provide valuable space for our older pupils as well as a flexible area for meetings.

We are looking forward to celebrating the Jubilee with 'A Right Royal Event' which is a Cluster musical event that will be held at Wycliffe School over two evenings in May. We will also be holding a 'Street party' on Friday 1st June. Also in May we will be welcoming the Bishop of Clifton who will be visiting School and helping us celebrate our Academy status.

The Parish Church of St Mary - Andrew Pemberton (Churchwarden)

This has been another busy life in the year of the Parish Church.

In November our Rector, Revd Stephen Bowen, left us after some 14 years, to take up a very demanding job as Team Rector of the West Cheltenham group of Church of England parishes. We are now in what is called a "vacancy" period and hope to have a new Rector in place by the end of 2012, but in the meantime our worship is led by Revd Mick Wright (assistant priest) and Revd Josh Maynard (Curate), assisted by the retired clergy living in our near the parish, especially Revd John Cull and Revd Dr David Stoddart. The church is officially the responsibility, in this interim period, of the churchwardens, Andrew Pemberton and Alex Stuart, and we have a good team all round.

A key activity last autumn was our Alpha Course, for new Christians and those uncommitted but interested to learn more of the Christian faith. Each weekly session comprised a meal, a speaker on an aspect of the Christian faith and a discussion. The Church's work with children and young people has continued to expand this year. Messy Church, which is held monthly after school for children up to year 6, accompanied by a parent or carer, continues to be very successful with about 70 children attending. Junior Church, and the crèche, on Sunday mornings have continued to thrive. Revd Josh Maynard has started a new Woodchester, Brimscombe and Faithnet Youth Group for young people in school years 9-13 which meets twice in the month.

Woodchester Parish Church, together with Brimscombe church, has formed a link with the parish of Näsby in the Diocese of Vasteras in Sweden. The choir from Näsby stayed in the area for a weekend in October and gave a concert at St Mary's. During this evening a covenant of partnership between the parishes was signed in the presence of Rt Revd John Went, Bishop of Tewkesbury.

The church building continues to be used for community events – for the Village Weekend in the autumn and for concerts given by The Capriol Chamber Orchestra and Opera Sulis. The church green was the venue for the village carol singing organized by the parish council. The church building has been open every day of the year for visitors, and anyone can use it for some peace, contemplation and prayer.

We had substantial work carried out to repair the spire and re-gild the church clock. The cockerel weathervane was brought down, mended of its bullet holes (!) and re-gilded. The Endowed school children were given the rare chance to jump over it .

The Church has continued to raise money for good causes. In addition to supporting church charities, we have raised money for ‘Marah’, the Stroud charity working with the homeless and disadvantaged. We have supported The Children’s Society through the Christingle Service, The Poppy appeal through the Remembrance Day Service, we have given harvest gifts to Nelson Trust, supported Operation Christmas Child through the shoebox appeal and collected door-to-door for Christian Aid and collected for the DEC East Africa appeal.

All are welcome!

The Priory Church of the Annunciation – *Jenny Bailey*

We are still greatly concerned at the fate of the Convent, as there is around the parish. Although there has been a lot of interest it still remains unsold which gives us hope that a Christian use may be found for it, and that the Chapel, which is still consecrated, will continue to be used for worship as it has been for over 150 years, even if part of the buildings have to be converted for other uses. It is still very much a part of the Woodchester community which is why we have made a D.V.D. with interviews, and waiting to be edited, which will be of interest to many residents.

Woodchester Historical Society – *Nigel Brooke -Smith*

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 Minchinhampton, a talk by Rose Hewlett on ‘Village Life in mid Victorian times’ and the AGM with a talk by Jeremy Hill of the Old Priory.

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)

Woodchester WI – *Gail Birch, Secretary*

It has been another busy year for our members. Once again food featured highly with our bring and share garden party in June but with the cold weather became an indoor party, fish and chips in August, a light supper provided by the Committee in December and our annual roast dinner/Christmas meal at the village pub in January. Our talks have been varied, from the role of a funeral director to a colourful display of designer machine knitwear, from bonsai tree growing to a short history on the Stroud workhouse. We must not forget our very successful dabble evening with activities to suit all abilities and a bagful of goodies to take home.

Most members were able to go to the Gloucestershire WI Carol Concert with 3 members taking part in the WI choir. We sent a delegate and visitor to the GFWI AGM in March. Several members have been on federation trips and walks and attended a new speakers evening. We sent 2 pennants off to London for athletes taking part in the 2012 Olympics. Once again members provided an excellent array of cakes for refreshments at the local Open Garden event.

Thanks go once again to Muriel who was willing to stand as president rather than see the WI close. We have been pleased to welcome several new members although two have left so our numbers remain stable.

Girlguiding – *Jackie Hayes, Leader-In-Charge, 1st Woodchester Brownies and 1st Woodchester Guides*

1st Woodchester Brownies highlights of the summer term include the meeting with 2nd Nailsworth Brownies on Rodborough Common and going on Brownie Pack Holiday with 1st Nailsworth Brownies. The term ended with a party in Mcdonalds in Stroud.

1st Woodchester Guides ended the summer term by making and flying kites on Rodborough Common.

At the beginning of September a leader moved away meaning we lost Barn Owl and Lefty Nicky from Brownies and Guides. We were very fortunate to replace her with Jasmin, known at Brownies as Sapphire Owl. Our Young Leader, known as Kingfisher turned 18 over the summer and has been renamed as Gold Owl by the Brownies. Although she is now at University she still comes and helps out whenever she can. A very successful bring-a-friend evening was held by the Brownies.

Some Woodchester Brownies took part in a County event called, "Hit the Stage", where the girls had fun learning and taking part in the performing arts.

Community events attended by Woodchester Brownies and Guides include the Remembrance Day parade and Church service in Nailsworth, Nailsworth Goodwill evening and the Woodchester WI Christmas concert.

Thinking Day was celebrated in February at a Division event in Tetbury where girls took part in various activities celebrating cultures from around the world.

Woodchester Guides benefitted from the generosity of Sainsbury's Active Kids scheme with a donation of a Paralympic sports kit.

Over the Easter weekend Brownies and Guides from Woodchester joined other girls from the Nailsworth Valley District for a sleepover.

Over the weekly meetings girls have achieved badges, worked on various crafts, taken part in active games and have fully participated in the Girlguiding programme.

If you'd like to know more about Girlguiding in Woodchester please contact Jackie on 01453 821258 or look us up on our new website, www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com or the District website, www.girlguidingnailsworth.wordpress.com.

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

Meetings

The trustees met twice last 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 new fencing. Four families received funding towards PGL trips.

St Dominic's School was given £1,000 for the purpose of funding swimming lessons for 5 pupils and other curriculum-related activities, e.g. educational visits. A special grant was given to the school to assist a family where the children's education was suffering because of family circumstances.

Twelve individual grants were given towards school uniform and extra-curricular activities.

Applications from eligible individuals are welcomed at any time and should be sent to the Clerk.

I submit this report on behalf of Mrs Liz Ewart-James and myself, the two trustees appointed by the Parish Council.

St Loe's Exhibition Fund - *George Bastin*

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.

2010/2011 saw an 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.

We welcomed two new Trustees. They are Canon Mike Tucker from Amberley and Gordon Soutar, the Head at Woodchester Endowed. We also have a new Honorary Treasurer Councillor Malcolm Swait from Woodchester to replace Geoffrey Yates after 20 years in office. We are extremely grateful to Geoffrey for his many years service but also fortunate in finding such a capable replacement.

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 Goring House, North Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 5NG. Telephone 01453 872526

Village Hall – Cllr. Malcolm Swait

The Village hall has had another successful year with bookings continuing at a healthy level. Takings were slightly down this year but this relates to a reduction in Ballet Classes whilst the instructor has been on maternity leave. The finances however are healthy, and the rates for hire fees have been held for yet another year.

There has been some Hall maintenance to retain the high standard of decoration; and it there are now plans to improve the locks on the archive cupboards and resurface the Car Park in the near future.

The main concern is that we still require a volunteer to take over as Chairman from Bob Ludlow, as he feels that after 17years in the role, and a new hip, he would like to hand over the reins. Bob is more than happy to offer support and guidance to a new Chairperson who would inherit a Hall in a very strong position, as it is both structurally and financial secure.

If anyone is interested or would just like more information, will they please contact Bob on: 872340

Inishfree - *John Rankin, Business Director*

It's been a busy year for Inishfree, the Woodchester-based residential community that helps people in recovery from drink and drug addiction. Our social enterprises are gathering momentum: in addition to the sale & delivery of firewood to local customers and our pet care services, we have started a new initiative: making top-bar "Kenya" beehives from recycled oak off-cuts. Community activities included a well-attended Inishfree stand at the

Woodchester Autumn Fair, and a talk by a member of our staff and an ex-trainee to the Woodchester branch of the WI in early February. Highlight of the year however has to be a visit to Inishfree on 13th December by HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex who opened a wooden roundhouse built by an ex-trainee. For more information please call Inishfree on 01453 873624.

Woodchester Mansion - *Hannah McCanlis, Manager*

During 2011 we received funding from Natural England towards securing our Bats Roost & Hibernaculum, for tools to clear vegetation and protective clothing for all jobs. The outside of the Mansion has also has some much needed tidying up work and tree felling of diseased trees and is looking much better, our newly laid hedge has just started to spring back into life!

Towards the end of 2011 we completed the roof repairs that were funded by The Country Houses Foundation, Ventilator repairs that were funded by The Summerfield Trust and we have just sent our Evaluation to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the recent visitor improvements and interpretation facilities now installed around the Mansion that they funded.

Woodchester Endowed School came up to the Mansion to plant a variety of saplings within our newly laid hedge. The pupils were also lucky enough to have a chat to our training manager about the current repair going on at the Mansion.

During 2012 we will endeavor to apply for major funding from both English Heritage (chapel repairs & restoration) and also to The Heritage Lottery Fund for a major programme of works that not only covers the Mansion but also some of the surrounding grounds.

For details of events, please visit www.woodchestermansion.org.uk

Parish Councillors and Clerk

Dr Gervase Hamilton (Chairman)	872837
Peter Lead (Vice Chairman)	832383
George Bastin	872526
Iain Dunbar	872185
Malcolm Swait	873254
Barbara Warnes	872181
Ann Bijkerk (Clerk)	873456

District and County Councillor for our area

Rhiannon Wigzell	872353
------------------	--------

Brian Oosthuysen

872193

The Woodchester Village Report 2011/12 was produced by the Woodchester Parish Council for the Annual Parish Meeting 2012. A large print copy is available upon application to the Clerk to the Parish Council Ann Bijkerk on 873456

