

The WOODCHESTER Word

Issue 33 - March 2011

Royal Wedding Party heads 2011 Village Events

We couldn't let this long awaited event pass without a village celebration and so a tea party is planned on the 29th April on the Church Green in North Woodchester, from 3pm to 6pm. There will be lots of activities on the day including a fancy dress competition for children, and wedding hats and button holes competition for the adults - see the panel below for details. Bring and share your own food or reasonably priced hot drinks and hot pies will be available to purchase. We encourage people to dress in style - choose your period - and we hope that elegance and glamour will be the theme of the day!

Produce Show 10 September 2011

This popular event will be held in the Endowed School for the third time. Format will be similar to last year with stalls and teas on the Church Green. However, this year it is proposed that stalls, with a craft or produce theme, will be open (subject to availability of space) to anyone with a connection with Woodchester. Woodchester Photographic Society will be holding an Exhibition in St Mary's Church on the theme of Woodchester.

Further details will follow in the next edition of the Woodchester Word but in the meantime for those wanting to plan their planting for the produce classes, these include: potatoes, tomatoes, onions, longest runner bean, heaviest marrow or pumpkin, most comical vegetable, collection of herbs, bowl of homegrown fruit, basket of any wild fruits. Floral classes include vase of garden flowers, a yellow or orange flower, and a miniature flower arrangement. Children's classes will be in three age categories this year (under 5, 5-9 and 9-12) and will include: largest sunflower head, miniature garden on a plate, decorated fairy cake, vegetable creature, any vegetable you have grown, decorated pebble, matchbox filled with item beginning with 'P'. For further information or to apply for a stall, please contact Dawn Lead on 832383.

Future Events

Next Year will be the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration and in addition to the Produce Show in September, we hope to organise a special event to coincide with the official celebrations in early June. The Events Committee would really welcome more volunteers to help with planning this and other events. Please let us have your ideas, and as much of your time as you can spare. We are all busy people and extra help - however much or little you can give - would be very much appreciated. It's fun to be involved.

In this Issue:

Parish Council update, Setting the precept, Speeding on the A46, Crime reduction, Focus on Local Business, Local elections, Annual Parish Meeting, Dates for your diary Village Design Statement, Nailsworth Festival, Parish Plan, What are our children missing? School Reports, Village Hall programme, And lots of local news.....

Royal Wedding Tea Party 29 April 2011



Fun and games for all the family to include:

- Fancy dress competition for children - theme: Princes and Princesses
- Wedding Hats and Buttonhole competition for adults.
- Morris Dancing, skittles, tug of war and other traditional diversions.

Children, please bring a decorated cup cake and help to build an enormous Wedding Cake.

PLEASE collect a free lucky raffle ticket (one per person) from The Ram, The Royal Oak or the Post Office in advance. (This will help us judge the numbers).

Look out for posters with more details nearer the day.



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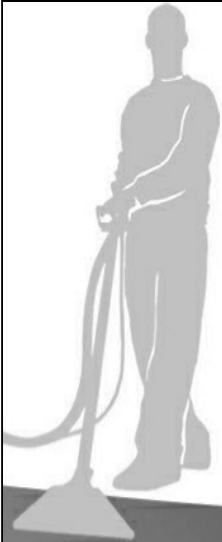
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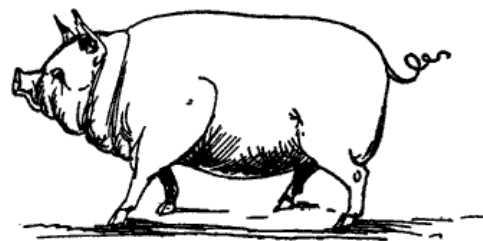
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News

Nailsworth Festival 2011

This year's festival runs from Saturday 21st May to Sunday 29th May. Festival Saturday events commence at 10:00am in Mortimer Gardens, with a varied programme of music, comedy and dance, designed to appeal to all the family. With market stalls and many activities happening across the town make sure that you're around Nailsworth during the day. On the evening of Festival Saturday a highlight will be the appearance of Hank Wangford and the Lost Cowboys, featuring some of the most respected musicians on the British Country & Western scene.

Events continue on Sunday with a performance of the Faure Requiem at Christ Church. On Monday there will be a talk by the "naked gardeners", formerly known as Barbara and Ian Pollard of Abbey House Gardens, Malmesbury. On Tuesday we have an appearance at Ruskin Mill of Andy Cutting (BBC Radio 2 Folk Award Winner Best Musician 2009 & 2011). The Katona Twins, Peter and Zoltán Katona, will be appearing at Christchurch on Wednesday. Critically acclaimed by the Daily Telegraph as "the classical world's best known guitar duo" they have given recitals in major concert venues throughout the world. Returning by public demand on Thursday 26th May are the Gasworks Singers.

With a performance of "Tom Jones" by the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School on Friday, the second Nailsworth Poetry Slam on Saturday 28th May and a range of other activities across the town the festival should be well worth waiting for. Tickets can be booked through the website at www.nailsworthfestival.org.uk or from the Town Information Centre, Fountain Street, Nailsworth or by post, using the form on the back of the brochure which will be widely available around Nailsworth. (Tim Hughes)

Crime Reduction

Police in Nailsworth are pleased to be report that crime in the area has decreased for the third consecutive year and that they are working to see crime figures fall further. The local policing team are asking the community to help them continue this trend by following some simple crime prevention advice and reporting any suspicious activity.

One crime that officers are eager to work with residents to clamp down on is burglaries from outbuildings. Such crimes tend to be committed by opportunistic thieves and can often be easily prevented. Inspector for the area, Kirk Harrison, said: "During the warmer weather it's very easy to be complacent about keeping your property secure, in particular outbuildings such as sheds and garages, which can be vulnerable if not fitted with adequate security.

"Many residents underestimate the overall value of items they keep in their sheds and garages, but the cost of items like bikes and powers tools can soon add up, making them very attractive to criminals. By following some simple but effective steps shed owners can dramatically reduce the chance of thieves striking." As the weather improves officers are also reminding residents to make sure they lock their windows and doors when a room is unoccupied or they are out in the garden. If you're out in the evening perhaps set up some lights on timers or simply leave a light on, just to put that bit of doubt in a burglar's mind.

Residents can be assured that local officers will continue to patrol the area and work to bring offenders to justice, but by giving some thought to what items you choose to leave out in less secure premises and properly securing those outbuildings you can help make life as difficult and risky for criminals as possible. To report an incident or any suspicious activity contact Gloucestershire Police on 0845 090 1234. You can also give information anonymously by contacting the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

Village Design Statement

Due to unforeseen circumstances the VDS has been delayed. It is now available to be read on the village website. We are asking for your comments to ensure that it reflects the views of the Parish. On the 10th April the consultation period will be closed and the document suitably amended. It will then be submitted to Stroud District Council for adoption so that it will help guide future development within Woodchester. A printed copy can be obtained from Peter Lead - call 832383.

Parish Plan

Many of you will recall that the Parish Plan (which 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) was completed in 2005. It now needs to be updated. Cllrs. Bastin, Hamilton and Wigzell with the Parish Clerk met recently to review what had (and had not) been achieved since 2005 before setting up a steering group to draft a new plan.

Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 26th May 2011

This will be held at the Village Hall at 7.00pm when the VDS will be available to be read and an invitation is extended to parishioners to comment on the Parish Plan both old and new. If any individual or organisation wishes to be involved in the making of the Parish Plan please contact the Parish Clerk.

Please come along to express your thoughts and support those who are striving to make the Parish

Parish Council Update

New Parish Council Chair

Following the recent District and County Council by-elections (see page 7), Cllr. Rhiannon Wigzell was elected as Stroud District Councillor for Woodchester and Amberley and stood down as Parish Council chair, a post she has ably served for the past three years. At the Parish Council meeting on 6th January, Cllr. Dr. Gervase Hamilton was elected as the new chairman with Cllr. Peter Lead as Vice Chair. Cllr. Wigzell will continue to serve as a Parish Councillor for Woodchester and we look forward to Rhiannon continuing her valuable work on behalf of the Parish.

Cleanliness of the Village and the Litter Pick

The clerk has received complaints from a number of residents about the rather dirty and down-at-heel appearance of parts of the village with un-emptied waste bins, dog fouling and scruffy, overgrown verges and hedge boundaries, particularly on Church Road and Berryfield in North Woodchester and along Convent Lane and Cow Lane in South Woodchester. The Chair and Clerk visited the affected areas recently and can confirm that there is a continuing problem.

The Parish Council employs a contractor to keep the more sensitive areas of the Village (such as Church Green and around the School, the War Memorial as well as some of the public footpaths) properly trimmed and cleared of leaves and overgrowth on a regular basis but this is a never-ending task. In this connection the Parish Council is holding its annual Litter Pick on Sunday March 27th. Please meet at the lay-by on the A46 at 2.00pm. The local schools will be involved in the previous week in a community awareness programme. Woodchester PC will provide tabards, gloves, pickers and plastic bags, so volunteers please turn up and get stuck in!

In the meantime the Parish Council would appeal for all villagers to adopt a responsible attitude towards the disposal of rubbish, overgrown hedges and undergrowth generally on their boundaries. We will, of course, inform Stroud District Council of the need to keep those areas of the village roads and verges that are its responsibility, clear of rubbish, dead branches, leaves etc. but, ultimately it comes down to all of us showing individual initiative.

We may not be a 'best-kept' village in the traditional Cotswold view of the word, but we can do our best to keep our environment clean and tidy. There is also an issue here of whether villagers would be prepared to pay a larger precept to cover the expense of a better kept village (see the information on the Parish precept below).

The Annual Village Meeting

This will be held on Thursday 26th May at 7:00pm. Please would the local schools, charities and voluntary groups in the Parish kindly ensure they contribute a short report (preferably no longer than 200 words) on their work over the past year to the Clerk for inclusion in the Annual Report by the end of April at the latest.

The Business Website Directory

Please would any local businesses, or those offering services to local residents, who wish their names and details to be included in a Website Directory currently being prepared by our Webmaster, let the Clerk have their names.

War Memorials

Thanks to the generosity of Richard Hains of Woodchester House, the Parish Council is in the process of cleaning and repairing the Woodchester War Memorial on Station Road. It was possible for only a limited amount of work to be carried out in the time available prior to last year's November 11th service commemorating the 90th Anniversary of the dedication of the War Memorial. The remaining work will be carried out this Spring. An appeal is also to be launched to clean and restore the war memorial in the grounds of the Catholic Church in South Woodchester in time for this November's commemoration.

In connection with last year's memorial service, the village raised a magnificent total of £937.44 on behalf of the British Legion including donations from a house-to-house collection, Woodchester Parish Council, Woodchester Endowed School, St. Dominic's School, CPS furniture, Nailsworth Garden Machinery, The Ram Inn, Woodchester Post Office, The Old Fleece, and The Catholic Church.

Road And Transport Issues

Following concerns about the dangers of children and adults crossing the busy A46 at South Woodchester near the bus stops at Frogmarsh Lane, the Parish Council approached Chris Riley of Gloucestershire Highways. Enhancements to improve sightlines and lower the kerbs at this point have now been carried out. Although care is still needed when crossing this busy road, we hope these enhancements will improve the safety of pedestrians generally. The Parish Council is now installing benches in those refurbished bus shelters in the village that were without seating.

Setting the Precept

The Finance Committee of the Parish Council has to meet in November or December each year to decide how much it is going to request from Stroud District Council in the form of a precept to pay for the services it has to deliver to the parishioners and council tax payers. The Council is well aware that it is taking money away from all council tax payers to meet its statutory obligations. It is not Parish Council money but Parish money it is spending so it has to be very careful that the funds it is administering are spent wisely only on those things from which the majority of the parish will benefit. (*continued on next page*)

Around the Village

(Parish Council continued)

There are guidelines set out by various government authorities and these are followed closely by the committee. The Parish Council has to spend about 70% of the money it raises on meeting its legal obligations. We could not operate without a Clerk who has to be trained as do some of the Councillors; its accounts have to be audited; the Council has to insure certain fixtures and fittings around the village; the council has to meet in a public place and this has to be paid for.

The final 30% of the precept can be spent on those areas that are of benefit to the Parish as a whole. There are the common areas of the village that have to be maintained; notice boards to display information about village events have to be erected and maintained; the costs of *Woodchester Word* are underwritten; the village website has to be hosted and kept up to date; the bus shelters rebuilt and looked after.

With the possible forthcoming decentralisation of government it is also important for the village that the Parish Council becomes what is termed a '**Quality Council**'. This jargon means little at present but could be important in the future when only *Quality Councils* will be able to raise a precept and have an influence on the affairs of their Parish. With this in mind the Parish Council is taking steps to earn Quality status by employing a clerk who is undergoing training to become qualified and meeting other criteria necessary such as having a Parish Plan and a Village Design Statement. All these initiatives cost money and take a councillor's time and energy. The Parish Council think it is worth the effort and cost.

There are very firm guidelines as to how much money the Parish Council has to keep in reserve. A Council that runs out of money and is bankrupt is no use at all! There are a number of possible events that could happen and cost the Parish money. It is not unknown for a parish council election to be forced upon us by having more than one candidate offer themselves for election. The cost of running an election is about £2000 but we don't have to raise that from our precept every year so it is kept in reserve. The latest Government initiative is the *Decentralisation and Localisation Bill* which might force Parish Councils to hold referenda on local issues for which the Parish will have to pay. Gloucester County Council and Stroud District Council are being forced to cut expenditure. The result may be that they pass down some of the expenditure and responsibilities they have thus far been fulfilling to parishes. That will cost money but we have no idea how much. We have to maintain robust reserves to meet these and other potential liabilities.

The Finance committee met in a dark and cold meeting room just before Christmas to decide how much it would raise next year. Its overriding responsibilities are that it had to meet its legal obligations, keep sufficient reserves and be seen to provide value for money. All expenditure was looked at in detail and considered on its merits. At the end of the process the committee managed to balance its books and proposed to the full council at their meeting in January to request a precept in line with the previous two years. They will be asking for £11,000 from Stroud for 2011/12. This request is then divided by the number of households that pay council tax. The number of council tax payers fluctuates by a small number each year so the cost per council tax bill will also marginally change.

Historical note: Death of a railway porter

An inquest was held at Woodchester on 27 October 1871 into the death two days earlier of John Edward Newth, a railway porter, aged 18, at Woodchester Railway Station. It was reported that Newth had been riding on the step of one of the carriages when the train was in motion and having placed his foot on the platform, fell between the platform and the carriages. He was so severely crushed and injured that he died almost immediately from the effects. The coroner, John Garlick Ball, recorded a verdict of accidental death. The jury was made up of people with names well known to us in Woodchester. So, who was John Edward Newth? He was born in Minchinhampton in 1853, the son of Enoch, a millwright's labourer and Emma. In 1861 they were living in Box. By 1871, J E Newth, Assistant Porter was lodging with Elizabeth Birt at Churches.

What are our children missing?

Walking the dogs gives me time to think and to observe the countryside around us in Woodchester. At certain times of the week (usually a fine, warm and sunny Sunday afternoon), it can be a very sociable activity, meeting people out walking or families on a wander round the countryside. But for the majority of times, it is usual to complete an hour's walk without meeting a soul. Where is everybody and because the whole of my working life involved children and young adults, where are the young people?

In today's 21st century world, the home environment is much more enticing to children. Much of their play and friendships are conducted through modern technology – entertainment systems (X-Box, PlayStation, etc), texting and social networking sites on the computer. This, together with the concerns that modern families have over letting their children out in the countryside, has meant a serious loss of contact between many children and the great outdoors. If we are going to encourage children to have a love of the countryside and to understand about conservation and their environment, we must give them the opportunities to enjoy and safeguard the countryside where they live. Children who grow up with little experience of the countryside, wildlife and the natural world are unlikely to grow up with a passion for protecting these precious things.

What can be more fun than walking across a field and hearing a fox bark or seeing a roe deer leaping away from you to safety or watching a sparrowhawk chasing a small bird through the woods? Children who don't share these experiences miss out on so much. Like many modern aspects of life, it has to have a label. Those who know better than I do call it "nature – deficit disorder!" (Rod Harris)

Around the Village

Woodchester Endowed School

Interested in a small part-time job working in your local school to help the children of this community? If so, you may be interested in the position we have available for a lunch time supervisor. Despite a number of adverts placed locally we are yet to fill this position and would be very keen to speak to anybody who feels that this is something they could help with. It is a term time only, paid position that can be very rewarding and fun to do. Please do ring the school office on 872476 if you would like to discuss further. (*An enhanced Criminal Bureau Check is required*).

Our pupils were thrilled earlier this month to see the installation of a 'tyre park' within the playing fields. This is a great resource that the children can play on and create all sorts of imaginary games. It has been funded by our wonderful PTA through their fundraising activities. Our thanks as ever go to all who have helped support the school at our various events throughout the year. Our recent music quiz was an excellent example of the mix of fun and fundraising that takes place making a fantastic £880 for the school.

Later this month our older pupils will visit Stroud Magistrates' Court to take part in a 'mock trial'. They will be pitched against pupils from The Croft School in Painswick to battle out a 'real life' case for the defence or prosecution. Such opportunities form part of our citizenship curriculum helping our pupils learn about living within the wider community. Some of our older pupils will also help out with the village litter picking this year as we encourage our children to 'give back' a little to their community.

Towards the end of May the whole school will be carrying out a 'focus fortnight' on the theme of life in World War II. We would be really grateful to hear from any local residents that have stories to tell or artefacts that can be shown to our children. Please give the school a call or drop in if you can help out with this project. Real life experience can not be beaten when helping children to learn!
(Gordon Soutar, Headteacher)

St Dominic's School

St Dominic's is as busy as ever! As I write, a sense of quiet hangs over the school owing to the fact that the infants have taken their packed lunches and set off for the day to the Steam museum in Swindon to enjoy a workshop session on Brunel, and Yr 6 have caught the bus to Stroud to have a guided tour of the cells in the Magistrates Court. The infants will be applying and consolidating their knowledge of transport and the juniors are beginning their preparation for the Mock Trial that takes place later in the term.

For anyone who has not heard of the Mock Trial it is a very exciting and challenging initiative, providing the opportunity for different schools to take on the role of either prosecution or defence and act out a scenario. Last year was the first time we had taken part and we were so delighted with the valuable experiences that the children gained that we felt it was well worth repeating. Other exciting events coming up are Class 2 visiting Bristol Zoo, a K'Nex Control day for Yr 5/6, musicians taking part

in the Hereford festival and a visit for all children from the Life Bus.

Class 4 thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Cadbury World and are now authorities on the chocolate making process. Not only was the trip 'One of the best ever' (according to the children), but it has also given rise to recounts, instructions, persuasion text and lots more writing and making opportunities.

Some of you may have heard of our plans to develop part of our top field into an apiary. This initiative, ably led by Peter Lead, is very exciting and hopefully will be a wonderful additional resource for the local schools and the community. I will keep you informed as it develops.
(Margaret Smith, Headteacher)

Priory Church of the Annunciation

Since February 6th Father Bill has said a Family Mass for us at 5 pm. each Sunday evening. This has proved to be very popular, especially with the number of young families we have in the parish, and has provided a much needed Sunday evening Mass for the whole of Stroud Deanery. The children have a very active part at this time undertaking some of the readings and 'Prayers of Intersession', written for their level of understanding. The children also join Father at the Altar for the Lords Prayer and then bring the 'Sign of Peace' to the congregation. We sing a Taize chant during Communion and the whole service is relaxed and at the same time spiritually uplifting for everyone.

On the strength of these young families Eileen Jay has been appointed to the role of Family Co-ordinator. Eileen is liaising with the families sharing good practice and ideas and also facilitating new and re-kindling old family-based activities. Their first project is to arrange a family social event to celebrate the Feast of St Patrick. If you wish to contact Eileen her number is 01453 872617, also contact Eileen if you would like to join us for St Patrick's Celilidh in St Dominic's School on Saturday March 19th at 7pm.

This year is Woodchester's turn to have the three main Easter services - remember we share Father with Stonehouse Parish. These are : Maundy Thursday 7 pm, Mass of the Lords Supper; Good Friday 3pm The Lords Passion with Communion; Holy Saturday 9pm, Easter vigil; Easter Sunday 11am Mass of Easter Day and 5 pm Family Mass. A warm welcome is extended to you all at the Priory Church at any event and through this paper I would wish you all Easter Blessings from our members.

Woodchester WI

Our year started with a very enjoyable meal at The Royal Oak, we Laughed for Health and Happiness in February; other talks planned for the year include The Thames Tideway by Narrowboat, British Sign Language, Stroud Workhouse and Things you are Dying to Know.

At present we are making a pennant (or 2!) in response to an appeal from London 2012 - the pennants will be presented to the competitors. June 11th sees us again providing the refreshments at Atcombe Court Open Garden. Whetted your appetite? Contact Gail on 873692 or Muriel on 8733314 or join us at the village hall, 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30 p.m.

Around the Village

Speeding on the A46

Over the past few weeks Police have been targeting speeding on the A46. This is currently a priority for the local community after various reports of speeding vehicles and Road Traffic Accidents. Information gathered from a mobile device identified that the main problem was at times of low volume and was probably only a few drivers who would be hard to target. Police have tackled this issue of speeding with the use of the Speed Board and Police Patrols including Operation Sunfire led by PC Emma Keeble. The aim of this is to increase awareness of the problem in this area by making members of the public aware of the speed they are travelling. The patrols have been varied in time and place in order to maintain awareness and will continue over the coming months.

Operation Sunfire was part of the Christmas drink drive campaign, but which served to assist with the speeding issue. Obviously funding for targeting drink drivers is not so forthcoming most of the year but when we receive specific information we are always keen to respond and try to catch the offenders. Please call in to the contact centre on the telephone number below with information.

You can contact me, PC Paul Matthews and PCSO Steve Phillipson on 0845 090 1234, or email stonehouse-sct@gloucestershire.police.uk. (PCSO Steve Wadley)

Christmas Carols, December 2010

Village Carols are now firmly established as an annual event. Once again groups of singers and musicians, each accompanied by characters from the Nativity, started at either end of the Village and met on the Church Green for mulled wine and mince pies. For the first time players from the Nailsworth Silver Band joined us in North Woodchester and then played around the Christmas tree on the Green whilst the Nativity tableau formed beside them. We were blessed with a perfect evening – crisp snow under a still starry sky – a perfect start to Christmas.

To all who took part and to the many people who helped behind the scenes, organising costumes, refreshments, publicity and the Nativity scene, a very big 'thank you'. We were especially grateful to St Mary's Church for the use of the Undercroft and the Green, to Dennis Brown and Sons for the Christmas Tree, to Clive Chinnick for flood lighting the Church, and to the 'Ram' and the 'Royal Oak' for making the carol singers so welcome.

Inishfree – your local charity working with people in recovery from addiction

Dear Woodchester folk, we just wanted to update you on recent events and future aspirations. We have had such a successful 12 months - a full house for some considerable time now and our clients known as trainees, are all fully engaged in our land based activities with the new introduction of 2 Gloucester Old Spot piglets! - much to the delight of all and especially, one of our younger Trainees who is caring for them. They were put into a safe confined area to settle in and recover from the move, sharing with our ducks who rather took exception to them and vacated their shed! However, careful handling and introductions made good in the end and we are all very happy to have these delightful piglets as part of the programme. We are also fortunate to have a volunteer

biodynamic farmer who is overseeing all the animals and land.

The firewood business has been very successful – orders locally are still coming in. Apologies though to all those who had to wait for their delivery in January until the supply of wood was flowing again – we had a problem at source as they say. However we are cutting again now and throughout the year so that come next autumn supplies will be plentiful. Please remember us, the income is desperately needed.

As for the future – we are now working with others who are helping us to forge the bigger vision of realizing a farm and social enterprise. We are looking to raise funding to buy land (in the medium term) and revenue for our volunteer farmer in the short term (or we will likely lose him). We are also looking for people who might be able to introduce us to potential donors. We've been made aware that such people are out there and encouraged to raise our profile in the hope that some individuals may come forward having been given the opportunity to do so – how wonderful it would be if people could give because they wanted to rather than being asked!

As a parent myself and witnessing my own daughter fall prey to heroin addiction I know the amount of distress this puts on family life, loved ones and friends – I also know there is little support for family and friends when in this situation, or recovering from it. Quite often when you have been through something like this people actually want to support the charities or agencies that can best work with that problem. Setting Inishfree up was in part to address the gap in services for friends and family but the lack of human and financial resources have limited that aspect of our work. Its always been very hard asking for any financial help and we try to be quite sensitive not to burden our regular donors. Perhaps the 'Word' can spread the word for us? If anyone can help, advise, or donate please speak to Lyn Townsend Tel no. 01453873624

Stroud District Council Election

On Thursday 3rd February 2011, elections were held for the election of a District councillor for the Amberley and Woodchester District Ward. Our own Parish Councillor, Rhiannon Wigzell, was elected to represent Amberley and Woodchester.

"I'd like to say thank you for all the support and encouragement I've received from the community" Rhiannon told the Woodchester Word. "It's too early to know what difference a District Councillor who lives in Woodchester will make, but I hope it will be a useful one. It's an interesting time to become a District Councillor because it looks probable that local government will change as the *Big Society* concept takes effect. As I strongly believe that both small communities, such as Woodchester or Amberley, and larger ones, such as the Stroud District, can be relied on to know what is in their best interests, I hope any changes will lead to new opportunities. In the immediate future, I will participate in the review and refreshment of Woodchester's Parish Plan and would hope to be able to facilitate delivery of it in both my Parish and District roles. I accordingly urge all residents to make sure their views are heard."

Around the Village

Woodchester Brownies

After another busy term at Woodchester Brownies, we are looking forward to the lighter and warmer evenings ahead. Over the next few weeks we will be working towards various badges and hoping to spend more time outside during our meetings. Some girls have also been given the opportunity to go on Pack Holiday with Nailsworth Brownies, a trip that always proves hugely popular and rewarding. We also have plenty of games, craftwork and food related activities planned before celebrating the end of term with a lively Easter Party.

Woodchester Guides

Woodchester Guides are preparing for another activity filled term. We are going ten-pin bowling soon, and will be following this up with a "Ready, Steady, Cook" evening after which we will also be proving that Woodchester Guides have "The X-Factor" when we will hold our own mini-competition. Badge work may be fitted in between other activities and we will end the term with an Easter theme meeting. Anyone interested in joining Brownies or Guides should contact Jackie on 01453 821258.

Woodchester FC

We are still researching the history of our club so that hopefully we can chart and log every year from 1905 until present day. Therefore we would like to appeal again to all readers for any further information, photographs etc. – who knows there might be a few surprises but probably no premier league stars.

Our season so far: we are currently just above mid-table but unfortunately out of both cups. Spectators are very welcome and for more details about our fixtures etc. please see: <http://full-time.thefa.com>

We are still looking for new players to strengthen our squad – particularly attackers, our youngest player is 16 and our oldest is 53 – so there is room for everybody!

Please contact Stuart – 01453 872542

Benefice Weekend

Due to popular demand, the Holy Trinity and St Mary's Benefice Weekend is back, and promises to be even better than before. The weekend of worship, fellowship and relaxation is at a new venue this year, at The Glade in Northleach, on 8th-10th July. There are fantastic facilities for all ages and lots of opportunities for everyone to get involved, as well as time to sit back and relax.

You can either camp at the site (£45 per person) or stay at a local B&B (£119 per person) and the costs include the provision of a marquee, and light refreshments. To book your place, or for more information, contact Andrew Pemberton (07973 187923) or Victoria Robson(0771 516 5184)

The Senility Prayer

Grant me the senility to forget the people
I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do,
And the eyesight to tell the difference.

Woodchester Historical Society

The next meeting of the society will be on **Tuesday 7th June**. It will be a guided walk round Painswick – meet in Painswick Car Park at 7.00pm.

On Friday 4 August 1916, the Stroud News reported the following: *'Mr H Brinkworth, caretaker of Woodchester Mills possesses a hen which on Sunday morning laid an egg 6oz in weight and containing 3 yokes. The following morning, the same hen laid an egg which contained 2 yokes.'*

For those who only understand metric measures, 6oz (ounces) is just over 170 grams or to put it slightly differently, equivalent to 3 medium eggs.

From the school log book, week ending July 19 1918: *'On arriving at the School on Monday morning, I found a good deal of marking had been placed on the school walls, some reflecting on the staff and other disgraceful words. I called the managers' attention to this and asked that the perpetrators should be found and punished as it will interfere if allowed to pass unnoted, with the discipline of the school.'*

July 18 1918: *The boy, A N Other, wrote an apology and expressed his regret for what he had written on the school walls respecting the staff and this was accepted and further procedures stayed.'* (The boy's name has been withheld as there may be descendants in the village).

To show that some things never change, from the Parish Council Minutes 12 January 1925.

'Letter from Mr F E Workman re the danger caused by obstruction to traffic when people leave their vehicles or tie up horses at the foot of Bospin Lane.'

He must have had other grievances or the first part of the reply from the Clerk would be meaningless: *'A protection against the dangers of people falling over the retaining wall into the road below is considered desirable and for this purpose alone the Council would subscribe £5 towards putting up the substantial fence you propose provided it be put up in a position and to the satisfaction of Mr Wise and Mr Woodward, two of the councillors. As regards tying up places near the spring, it is considered the matter is one for the Rural District Council. The Parish Council raises no objection provided the use of the spring be not interfered with.'*

So was anything achieved?

Bag-2-School collections for Endowed School

Many thanks to all those who donated items in the recent blue bags scheme. The school raised a fantastic £632. Due to the success of this scheme, we are continuing with it on a regular basis with 2 collections each year. The next one will be in May 2011, so if you have suitable items for this collection please hold on to them until then. Blue bags will again be delivered to each house in the village with further details nearer the time. Suitable items for collection are: clothing, bedding, curtains, soft toys, shoes, belts & handbags.

Local Business



The Little People Company are now happily ensconced in their new home in Market Street Nailsworth. Come in and see us at our new shop for toys galore: puzzles, games, pocket money toys, dressing up, lunch bags, drink bottles, musical toys, arts and craft, dolls, puppets, castles, dolls houses, activity games, baby clothes, soft toys, cards, scooters, role play, traditional wooden toys, balance bikes, paddling pools, swimming aids, bath toys.

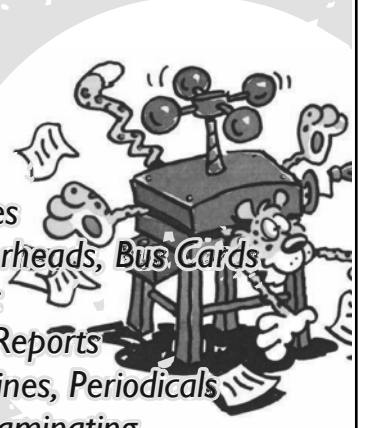
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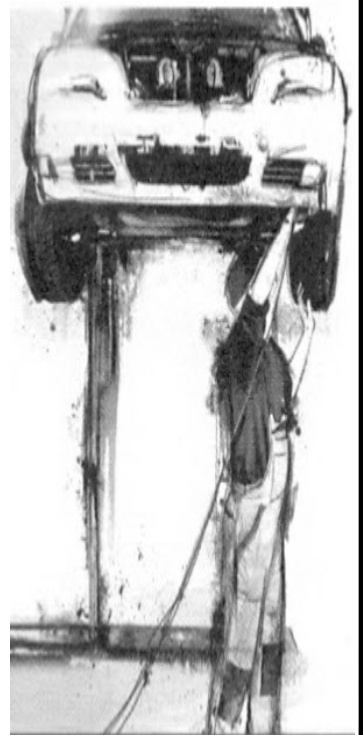
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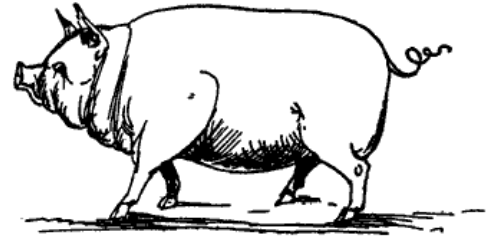
01453 873355
07778 334611



Focus on Local Business

Amberley Vale Foods

Amberley Vale Foods opened a small unit in South Woodchester in 1991 for the purpose of manufacturing pork products such as bacon, hams and sausages. The main aim was to produce products that were of high quality, with excellent taste and appearance, using traditional methods and locally sourced meat.



Today it remains a family-run business, now employing seven staff and still based in Woodchester. We breed our own free-range pigs, but also source meat from local herds to meet our production needs. We supply pork products to local high-class restaurants and shops, as well as to clients in London. We also cut, process and package organic meat destined for farmers markets, school and organic establishments.

Being a small local business means that we can process pigs, cattle and lambs from smallholdings and local farms. The meat is packaged according to the customer's needs, individually or in family-sized or catering packs. We specialise in producing smoked and unsmoked bacon, ham and sausages. Our sausages are available plain, or with the addition of herbs or a variety of seasonings including traditional, Old English, Stilton, leek, hops, honey and mustard, spring onion and ginger, apple and cider, and chilli.

If you would like to know more about our products, you can call Danny Tyler on 01453 873400.

Creative Landscape Gardening with 15 Years of Experience.

Steven Barker started on his creative journey by studying sculpture and design, expressing his artistic ability through landscape design and construction. He completed a National Certificate in Horticulture while working part-time in the trade.

In 2000 Steven embarked on a three-year world travel during which he designed and built gardens in the United States, New Zealand and Ireland. On returning from his travels he decided it was time to start his own landscape gardening business and created Revo Landscapes.



Revo Landscapes has been in business now for more than eight years, during which it has built up a strong and satisfied client base in both Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, concentrating on hard landscaping and design.

Steven can creatively re-use existing materials and enhance existing features to create a new feel to a garden or do a complete re-design. Revo Landscapes enjoys the challenge of building on unusual or difficult sites and caters to a range of budgets.

Steven has a good knowledge of highly trained reliable professionals in the area that he can bring in when needed on particularly large projects. He employs a qualified assistant who trained under him as an apprentice.

For information about garden landscaping, call Steven Barker on 0789 026 6801 or visit the website at www.revolandscapes.co.uk.

The Little People Company

The Little People Company are now based in Market Street in Nailsworth, a bustling destination full of fabulous boutiques, gift shops, cafes and homewares. "We have been overwhelmed with the support we have received from our fellow traders here and have settled in nicely" Manager Rachel Smith told the Woodchester Word. "Its been great that our loyal following of customers love our new location too."

The company recently moved from its old location in Bridge Street. "The decision was made to move due to the horrendous floods which affected us so badly three times in the last five years and as you can imagine the insurance became prohibitive" commented owner Emma Branch. "We just love Market Street and are looking forward to continued success doing what we love most - selling toys and making little people happy."

The Little People Company prides itself on being a 'one-stop-shop' for children's toys and games, including traditional wooden toys, as well as arts and crafts, musical toys, dolls and puppets, dolls houses, baby clothes and soft toys, scooters and balance bikes, swimming aids and bath toys.

Visit The Little People Company at their new Market Street shop, or call Emma or Rachel on 01453 839010 for information about their current stock of children's products.



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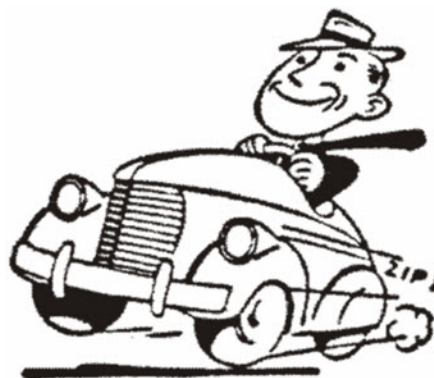
Sunday night quiz from 8:30 - cash prizes.

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Outdoors in a Storm

In February, I did something for the first time in my life. I spent a night outdoors in Stroud to raise money for Marah, a charity which helps the homeless and marginalised. So a group of us slept under the night sky, fortified by a cup of soup before we settled down to sleep. After the severe weather in December, I was worried about being cold, but it turned out to be a mild damp night. But what will stay with me forever was the tremendous wind that blew all night. It felt like being on the deck of a ship crossing the ocean in stormy weather.

As you can imagine, it was hard to sleep and as I lay awake I thought of Shakespeare's King Lear. He spent a night outdoors in a thunderstorm. And he found himself with homeless, poor people, the kind of people he never met at his court. The experience softened his heart and he cried out:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoever you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?
O, I have taken too little care of this!

When we woke at dawn we were given a bacon butty and coffee and then it was back to home comforts.

But when I got into my warm bed the next night, I had a thought before going off to sleep. There's always a danger that we mix with people just like ourselves; that we don't come into contact with people who have radically different backgrounds and circumstances to us. One of the striking things about Jesus is that he mixed with all kinds of people, from the rich and powerful to the poor and vulnerable.

And when he was asked what was the single greatest commandment he refused to give one, he gave two. 'Love God and love your neighbour as yourself.'

(Rev. Stephen Bowen)

Odd facts about our village

An excursion from Woodchester to Inverary in Scotland by steam train and steamer cost 32 shillings and 9d (£1.64) in 1932

The Old Priory, built in 1610, has been known as The Farms and the Manor. At one time, there was a covered passage a few feet off the ground that went from the Priory grounds to the old church. Tradition has it that one of the owners of the Priory quarrelled with the Rector and vowed he would never enter the church again. Afterwards, wanting to attend the services and not break his vow, he put the bridge up placing his pew just outside the church.

Woodchester Park plays host to at least four ghosts, including a Roman Centurian, a dwarf in rags, a headless horseman (Sir Rupert de Lansingny,) and an Earl who rides up and down the drive.

When William Leigh was building the Mansion he spent about £20,000 on it. Today how does this compare with the costs of restoring and maintaining the building?! (Rod Harris)

Dates for your diary

Sunday April 3rd

Family Holy Communion at St Mary's for Mothering Sunday, at 11am.

Thursday April 21st

Mass of the Lords Supper at The Priory Church at 7pm.

Friday April 22nd

Good Friday services at St Mary's at 10am and 7.30pm.

The Lords Passion with Communion at The Priory Church at 3pm.

Saturday 23rd April

Easter vigil at The Priory Church at 9pm.

Sunday April 24th

Easter Holy Communion at St Mary's at 9am.
Easter Praise at St Mary's at 11am.
Mass of Easter Day at The Priory Church at 11am.
Family Mass at The Priory Church at 5pm.

Wednesday May 18th

Messy Church at St Mary's at 3.20pm for children up to year 6 accompanied by an adult - there will be cakes, craft activities, stories and music.

Village Hall Programme

Monday

1000-1200 Short Mat Bowls (01453 872340)
1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Tuesday

1000-1200 Art Group (01453 873689)
1400-1630 Friendly Circle - alternate weeks (873566)
1645-1730 Ballet (07887 671956)
1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Wednesday

1000-1600 Calligraphy- alternate weeks (01452 387768)
1830-1930 Movement to Music (01453 886953)

Thursday

1000-1200 Healthy Lifestyles (01285 885766)
1400-1800 Adult Ballet (0788 767 1956)
1830-2130 Parish Council (1st in alternate months)
1930-2130 Women's Institute (3rd in month 873314)
1930-2130 Morris Dancing (2nd, 4th, 5th, 731752)

Friday

1000-1200 Art Class U3A (01453 872044)
1400-1800 Ballet (01453 834356)
1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

For all bookings, including weekend bookings, please contact Mrs Kath Gay on 01453 873348.