

# The WOODCHESTER Word

Issue 29 - March 2010

## The Stroud Pound – making money work for the local community?

The Stroud Pound is a new 'voucher' system which has been set up to 'support the local economy in Stroud and the Five Valleys'. According to the leaflet being distributed locally, it is a 'creative and practical way of making money work for the local community' and points out that of each pound we normally spend 'a good portion goes to service debts in the global economy, drains resources away from the area and reduces the viability of local services'. We are told that by using the Stroud Pound we are 'helping to increase local trade, making a commitment to buying locally and encouraging the development of local businesses, increasing their turnover and creating more jobs'.

Bold claims indeed, but let's look at the reality of the scheme. To start off with you have to pay £5 to join the scheme, presumably to pay for administration costs. And if you don't spend the money, you can't change it back into sterling, and it devalues by 3% every six months (you have to pay to restore its value). So it costs consumers to join the scheme. According to Neil Buick, spokesman for Stroud Pound Cooperative, there may be no tangible benefit for consumers but the point of the scheme is to benefit the community not the individual. "It's not 'what's in it for me?' but 'what's in it for us?' The benefit to the community is the safeguarding of Stroud and the Five Valleys' independent and distinctive character and economy by supporting local enterprises that are continuously struggling against the bland encroachments of big business and the internet" explains Neil.

Local traders have to pay £5 per month to join the scheme and when they redeem Stroud pounds for 'real' money, they pay a 5% redemption fee. But if it's costing the retailer to be part of the scheme, surely all that means is a reduction in their profits? "Traders won't find a reduction in their profits. By joining the scheme they will be getting customer loyalty, advertising and increased sales" comments Neil Buick. "The 5% redemption fee is less than the fee charged by many credit card companies and could be less than the cost of a small ad in the local paper or another sort of promotion".

Day's Cottage Apple Juice is one of the participating traders – it's a family business which makes and sells award-winning apple juice made with apples from traditional, mature orchards in Gloucestershire. "We have only done a small amount of trading in Strouds" comments Helen Brent-Smith from Day's Cottage. "A few of our workers were happy to be paid a little in Strouds

during our apple season, and we have made a few sales because of taking Strouds, but it has been minimal so far. I think there is a critical number of members for it to work well and that has not been reached. Too many of the services provided are on the luxury end of things".

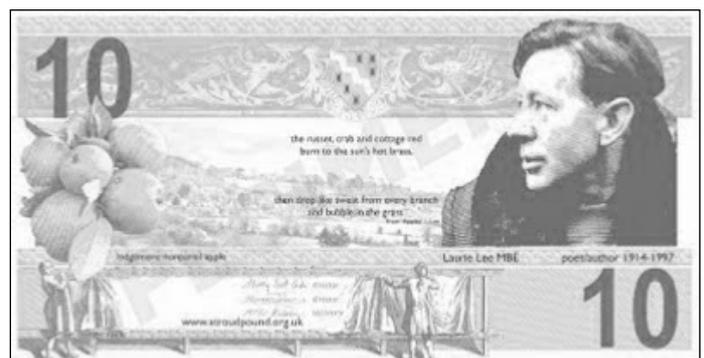
Paul Golding runs Gold Seal Photography in Stroud. "I joined the Stroud Pound because as a local businessman it is important to me to support initiatives aimed at strengthening the local economy. To date I have only received a couple of Stroud Pound payments but I expect this to increase as the popularity of the scheme grows and a critical mass of participants, both consumers and businesses, is reached" explains Paul.

According to District Councillor Philip Booth the Stroud Pound is all about strengthening our local economy, building new relationships and making us think about how we spend our money. "I love the reaction of people seeing the beautiful Stroud notes. It gets people talking. After all, listening and conversing is part of how change happens. Stroud Pounds aren't the whole answer but are part of the shift that needs to happen to relocalise and build resilience for our future."

There is also the charity fundraising aspect of the scheme - 3% of all Stroud pounds purchased are given to local charity - which has to be a good thing, even if many prefer to choose when and how to give money to charities. But long-term take-up must be in doubt at this stage - figures at the end of the first three months of the scheme showed only 135 members and 35 'Participating Traders'.

We should be encouraged to support schemes which genuinely offer support to local businesses, and many local people are already committed to buying locally – just look at the success of the Farmers Market. But it isn't clear at this stage whether the Stroud Pound will gain sufficient support to really make a difference to local trade.

(Find out more about the Stroud Pound at [www.stroudpound.org.uk](http://www.stroudpound.org.uk))



The Stroud £10 note - showing Lawrie Lee



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## Woodchester - what is the future (and what is the VDS?)

Should more houses be built? Is conservation important? Should wind turbines be permitted? Hopefully by now you have heard of the Village Design Statement (VDS), which will incorporate our collective views on issues like those above and will then be lodged with the Planning Authorities and used to affect their decisions as they influence the future character of our environment. Without your views a 'Village Design Statement' cannot be written. Does it matter? Yes, very much so. That's why all households are receiving with this issue of Woodchester Word a copy of a questionnaire which seeks your contribution to this important document. We urge you to participate in this venture in one of two ways; either by filling in the enclosed form which will be collected from your door on Sunday March 28th; or by completing it online at [www.woodchesterparish.org.uk/vds-survey](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk/vds-survey)

If you would like to complete this online but either don't have a computer or are not sure how to go about it, the two village schools are making available their computer suites on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March (10:00-13:00) and Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March (13:00-16:00) at the Endowed School and Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March from 2:30pm at St Dominic's, for a 'tutored' session on what to do. Someone will be there to point you in the right direction - just turn up and 'Have your say for Woodchester'!

## Village Website is relaunched

Behind the scenes work has been ongoing to relaunch our village website; it has been fully updated and contains up to date details of village events and even pictures of last summer's village fete. We have changed the website address so please go to [www.woodchesterparish.org.uk](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk) to see the latest details and please tell neighbours about the new website address. The site has real potential to be a great source of information for the local community. To post items please contact Duschanka Sutherland, our Parish Clerk (at [council@woodchesterparish.org.uk](mailto:council@woodchesterparish.org.uk)) with details of events and local issues. Do look as it will now be regularly updated, perhaps you could even set it as your homepage! We also intend to introduce new features over time and have a new Webmaster, John Fairley, (his address is [Webmaster@woodchesterparish.org.uk](mailto:Webmaster@woodchesterparish.org.uk)) who can help you with any technical matters or improvement suggestions.

## Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Thank you so much for all your contributions in Woodchester to this year's poppy appeal. £330 was collected from the two schools, the shop, pubs and churches. Many people contribute to the Poppy Appeal, and each has their own reasons - many thanks to all of you for all your help.

*Norman Kay (Honorary Poppy Appeal Organiser)*

## Digital TV Switchover

The switch over to digital TV starts in our area on March 24, with most houses in Woodchester switching to digital during March and April. There is lots of information at [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)

## Home Composting

Jane and John Willoughby have just completed the Master Composter's course and are now happy to help others with advice and to encourage people to enjoy the benefits of home composting. Let us know if you would like advice on composting your garden waste, are having problems with your composting or if you would be interested in attending a short free workshop explaining the ins and outs of home composting. You can phone us on 872645 or email [jane@jwilloughby.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:jane@jwilloughby.fsbusiness.co.uk)

## Orchard Pastures

WASSAIL! This was the cry emanating from 40 or more people gathered at Orchard Pastures for Twelfth Night celebrations. The ceremony dating back to the Dark Ages ensures a splendid apple crop, so cider was sacrificed and a tree was decked with toast for the birds. Whether or not the ceremony was completely authentic, a well-deserved thank-you goes to instigator and choreographer, Stephen Wright. We look forward to January 5<sup>th</sup> 2011. The Wassail leads on to another festival to be arranged in February when planting of 35 sponsored trees will take place - thanks to the sponsors. We are endeavouring to plant species which are indigenous to Gloucestershire and any suggestions will be gladly received.

## Parish Council Update

On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Parish Councillors and villagers joined the congregation of St Mary's Parish Church for a short service of commemoration at the War Memorial.

Thank you to everyone who supported the autumn litter pick. If anyone has lost two golf clubs please contact the clerk. This year we're reverting to a Spring Clean on April 11<sup>th</sup> to tidy the Parish before all the rubbish is hidden by undergrowth. Look out for notices nearer the time.

The precept will again remain at £11,000 but as there are fewer qualifying households (due, for example, to empty Properties), there will be a small percentage increase.

The recent snow was the worst for 30 years, and although predicted, it came early causing a lot of people to be caught out. With Gloucester Highways understandably concentrating on the A and B roads, parts of the village were impassable for a few days. Fortunately Highways had responded to our request that the salt bins be replenished prior to the winter, so a passable route to the A46 was achieved for many at last.

This event also highlighted the need for a few more bins at strategic points. Please contact the clerk if you know of a bin that has 'disappeared' or with requests for additional bins ([council@woodchestervillage.co.uk](mailto:council@woodchestervillage.co.uk)). We are also approaching Highways about an official local snow plough operator.

The Council has decided to carry out a programme of upgrading the notice boards. This will entail: purchasing a double notice board for South Woodchester and re-siting the existing one to Convent Lane; purchasing a single board for Rooksmoor and moving it to a better position; re-siting the existing Rooksmoor board to the Paul's Rise area; and moving the existing board in North Woodchester nearer the Post Office.

### Woodchester Parish Council - who we are and what we do.

The present Parish Council was elected in May 2008 for four years. The team comprises seven unpaid councillors and a salaried clerk. It meets as a full council six times a year in the evenings of the first Thursday in January, March, May, July, September and November in the Village Hall. There are occasional variations of date or venue but all meetings are published on the notice boards and the parish website with at least three days' notice. All residents are welcome to attend meetings and may comment or ask questions at the beginning and end. The planning committee meets frequently, usually in the Undercroft of the Parish Church, whenever there are planning applications to consider. Anyone may go along to look at the plans and give their opinion. For anyone who would like to know more about the work of the council the minutes of all meetings are on the website ([www.woodchesterparish.org.uk](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk)) or may be obtained from the clerk (email: [council@woodchesterparish.org.uk](mailto:council@woodchesterparish.org.uk); tel: 01453 833313).

**George Bastin** runs an electronic engineering company designing and manufacturing power supplies and battery chargers. He has lived with his family in Woodchester for 30 years and has served on the Parish Council as chairman and councillor for seven years. He is presently on the finance committee. He is on the Court of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers and is a Presentee Governor of Christ's Hospital. His sporting interests include tennis, sailing, skiing and golf.



**Penny Brown** moved with her family to live in Atcombe Road in 2003 and became a member of the Parish Council in 2007. She takes the lead on the 'Events' portfolio on the Council, contributing to such activities as the Carol Singing and the Village Fete. Penny now works for the police, having previously specialised in highways and planning law as a local authority solicitor. She takes the lead on public rights of way on the Council.

**Gervase Hamilton** is a retired NHS consultant in Public Health Medicine and former JP who has lived in North Woodchester for seven years and been a Parish Councillor since 2005. He is a trustee of Home-Start Stroud and Dursley, a branch of a national charity for children and their parents. A member of the council's Planning Sub-committee, Gervase is also the Parish Council's spokesman on health care and environmental issues. His other interests are in transport, architecture and history. Married with no children, his leisure time is mainly taken up with walking and country pursuits.



**Peter Lead** is a semi-retired chartered surveyor with experience in property management, development and planning. He moved with his wife, daughter and granddaughter to Convent Lane some three years ago from Nympsfield. He was elected onto the Council following the retirement of Mike Hemming and took the Chair of the Planning sub-committee. Interests include bee-keeping and gardening.

**Malcolm Swait** is a retired national sales manager for an educational publisher, and previously worked for many years for Bird's Eye Walls. He has lived in South Woodchester for 30 years and been a Parish Councillor since 2005. He is a Trustee for Home-Start Stroud and Dursley, for Seys and Bridges and also for the newly formed South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust. A member of the council's planning sub-committee, finance sub-committee, village hall rep, snow warden and highways contact. Married to Wendy with three grown-up children, his leisure pursuits include sailing, tennis, and walking the dogs.



**Duschanka Sutherland** has been our clerk since October 2009. She lives in neighbouring Wind-soredge and is married with two children – a four year old son who attends St. Dominic's and a two year old daughter who goes to Woodchester Playgroup. She is the secretary of the Playgroup's committee and enjoys tennis, walking and reading.

**Paul Syrett** has lived in the Parish for nearly seven years although family connections go back over 50 years. He is married to Helen with four children, three of which attend Woodchester Endowed School where Paul is also a school governor. He is an Interim Director specialising in IT and Services with assignments for organisations such as Network Rail, BT Health and the Environment Agency. Having joined the Parish Council in 2008 he is the flood warden, takes responsibility for youth and is on the planning committee. He enjoys fly fishing, mountain biking and photography when time permits.



**Rhiannon Wigzell** has lived in Woodchester for 10 years, joining the Parish Council in 2005. She is the current chairman, is on the finance committee and is contributing to upgrading the website and the Village Design Statement. She is married with three children in their twenties, one based at home when not at university. Rhiannon shepherds a flock of around thirty Kerry Hill sheep for their meat, wool and grass eating and is a professional life coach. Her other interests include sheepdog training, horse related activities and walking and skiing in Switzerland.

## Around the Village

### Village Carols

In spite of the inclement weather, more than 50 people joined the annual village carol procession. Joseph and Mary left from the Convent, the Angel Gabriel appeared before the shepherds and the kings joined the procession across fields, candlelit paths and lanes, as carols were sung in various parts of the village. Hopefully the weather will be kinder next year and more people can join this magical Christmas event which was enjoyed by adults and children alike.



### Woodchester Girlguiding

Whilst we wait for the lighter evenings to approach, Woodchester Brownies and Guides plan to finish working towards various badges we have started. All the new Brownies who started last term are preparing to make their Promise at a very special ceremony in February, and both units will be joining the District in Nailsworth to celebrate World Thinking Day. Various activities are planned throughout this year to continue celebrating 100 years of Girlguiding. Girls aged between 10 -13 years are welcome to join Guides. Girls aged between 7 -9 years may join Brownies. Please contact Jackie on 01453 821258 for details about Girlguiding in Woodchester.

### Historical Society

The next meeting of the society will be on Tuesday 2nd March at 7:30pm in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church, North Woodchester. Ian Mackintosh will give a talk entitled 'Into the Picture' - A study of the C18th picture of Wallbridge. Admission is £2 for members, £3 for non members. All Welcome.

### Woodchester WI

The Village Christmas Concert on December 18<sup>th</sup> raised £156 for The James Hopkins Trust. The varied programme involved many talented performers; everyone is thanked for their attendance and support.

2010 - A new year, a new decade - Woodchester WI extends a warm welcome to new members; we are a friendly group of various ages who aim to be involved in the local community and further afield through our County and National Federations. Our programme for this year includes talks on Thailand, The Grand Canyon, Icing Craft, The History of Hats and a "Dabble Evening". What is this? Join us and find out. We meet on the third Thursday of each month in Woodchester Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. For more information contact Muriel McTiffin (01453 873314) or Fleur Vallender (01453 766038).

### St Dominic's School

Christmas is over and a New Year begins! As I sit here on the first day of the new term there is an eerie silence; instead of the sound of excited voices there is stillness with the snow falling gently outside. This is not the beginning to the term one would wish for - unless you are a pupil!

The end of the year was as exciting as ever. The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School performed their version of the Nativity story and it did not disappoint. The image of Mary being pushed to Bethlehem in a supermarket trolley accompanied by Shrek's donkey is one that will stay with me for many years! One of the highlights of Christmas must be the production of 'Simeon' at Christchurch. I was delighted that the school choir could join the adults and the result was a very memorable experience. I would like to record my thanks to Louise Cook, who prepared them so thoroughly whilst also preparing them to sing at The Steppes, Woodchester Mansion, Craddock Court and St Georges, all of which were lovely occasions.

This term will see more sporting fixtures (weather permitting) as well as getting back to work in earnest before the half term break in February. Class Four will be starting off their 'Roman topic' with a trip to the Roman Baths, which I am sure they will enjoy and hopefully will inspire them to want to find out more. Class Two will be studying a village in India. If anyone has any experiences or resources they can share with the children to support these topics we would be very happy to hear from you. (Margaret Smith, Headteacher)

### Woodchester Endowed School

It has been a strange start to the new year with all the disruption caused by the snow. Hopefully now we can get fully into the swing of the term. It has been lovely to welcome a number of new children into our school this term and equally pleasing to see how our existing pupils make such an effort to get to know and help them during their transition.

As ever, we have a lot going on this term. Juniper class are spending four mornings at Archway School working on a Design & Technology project. This is proving to be a great experience with an opportunity to use machines and equipment that we couldn't possibly have at school.

Our Years 5 & 6 are beginning to practise songs ready to take part in The Stroud Schools Music Festival. They will eventually join together with a large number of other schools to produce a concert that will be held at Stratford Park Leisure Centre.

Our sporting teams are off to a winning start again this term. Just yesterday the Years 3 & 4 football team played two matches winning them 11-0 and 10-0 respectively! In a couple of weeks' time some of our children will also compete in district competitions for cross-country.

Please do join us if you can for our next PTA fundraiser - our very popular 'Race Night' will be taking place again this year on the evening of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March. Please telephone the school if you are interested in buying some tickets. (Gordon Soutar, Headteacher)

## Village or Not?

The comments about the Parish are very true. The geographical nature of the Parish inevitably creates a fragmented village. The communities of Frogmarsh, North and South Woodchester are separated by fields and Rooksmoor by the busy A46. There are two schools, two pubs and two churches, one of each at each end of the Parish, and a third pub in Rooksmoor. The centre of South Woodchester is very compact with more typical Cotswold properties whereas North Woodchester is more spread out with a large number of modern properties.

There is no one central place for folk to meet, i.e. a village green, square. However, the events such as the Fete, Street Party and Produce Show definitely act as a catalyst to create unity between the communities, and would seem to be very much enjoyed by all who attended. One Village perhaps we are not. One community perhaps we could be. *(Name and address on file)*

## Twin to tackle poverty?

Twinning became a popular practice in Europe after the Second World War, as a way to bring people into a closer understanding of each other and to promote cross-border projects of mutual benefit. However, the concept has been criticised in many quarters as an unnecessary and expensive endeavour (the E.U.'s twinning support scheme for example has an annual budget of many millions of euros) with little accountability or obvious signs of economic development resulting from the arrangement.

I know a lot of people don't like Jeremy Clarkson, but occasionally he makes a lot of sense, and on the subject of twinning he has typically strong views. "Councillors spend an inordinate amount of time twinning themselves with some agreeable little hamlet in France or Germany so they can go on exchange visits. It's hard to conceive of a more useless way of spending public money. But what if your local council twinned itself with a town in Africa? When your village has been given responsibility for a specific village in Africa, abdicating your responsibility to keep the people in that village healthy is not an option".

It's a fair idea. Why shouldn't we 'twin' ourselves with a poor village that really needs our help, and provide that help directly? As Clarkson says, "Poverty is a global problem. But the solution, I suspect, is local." *(RSD)*

## Woodchester F.C.

Many locals probably don't realise that we boast a long established Stroud League football club - Woodchester F.C. (est' 1905). The Club is open to anyone from the local community - new players and hearty support are always welcome.

Over the years the club has built a small club house and because the facilities lie dormant on Sundays and alternate weekends it would be interested to know if any local parents wish to establish a junior team to play in the junior leagues.

The Club is also looking for a local sponsor after the last sponsor ceased trading - please contact me on 872542. *(Stuart Harrison, Vice-Chairman, Woodchester FC)*

## Litter, traffic and beer

I have just read the November issue of the 'Word' and enjoyed it as I always do. We live the other side of the A46, but we're still in Woodchester and I do like the village. Our family has been here since 1960 and I have lived here since 1963 when I was born. I went to Woodchester Endowed School from 1968 to 1974 and it was a good school as I am sure it is now. Our church is awesome though sadly I have not been in it since 1974 when Revd John Cull was the minister.

The village is pretty quiet and well kept apart from too much litter - it's the same all over the UK! I think there are too many cars and people drive too fast - I'd say 90% of vehicles go too fast - and there are too many 'Chelsea Tractors' - I expect only one in ten owners really need them. The village's two pubs are very good but my two moans are that they stock predictable beers and are very pricey, but the Ram Inn does keep their beer very well! So I drink mostly in Nailsworth where there is more variety of real ales (I'm CAMRA) and it's cheaper beer.

I like to sit in the seat in South Woodchester near the War Memorial on warm days and I like the cycle track. I read each issue of The Word with interest and get my copy from the excellent, friendly and useful new post office. Good luck with the magazine and a grand 2010 to you all.

*(Jim Clarke)*



*This picture of St Mary's in the recent snow was taken by Tricia Dunbar. If you have a photo of the village you would like to see in the 'Word', just email it to the editor*



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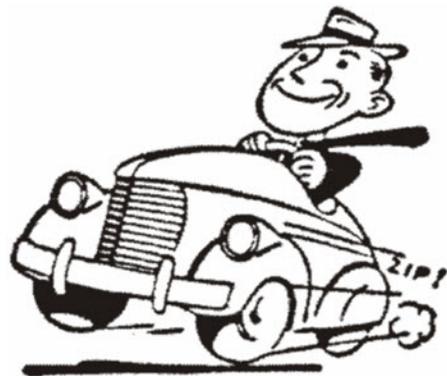
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## Sundays

I've been coming here on Sundays  
For seventy year or so,  
'Twas here that I was christened  
and 'tis here I'll want to go.

Now I know you gets all vexed  
About changes in belief,  
Well frills on top don't matter  
If you're comfy underneath.

I never lets it bother  
If I'm high or low or what,  
While I've got me ten Commandments  
I shan't go wrong a lot.

Now I like old-fashioned prayer book  
And they like A.S.B,  
And they can have what pleases them  
And I'll read what suits me.

And half the hymns they sing these days  
I've never heard before,  
But I can stand and listen  
And perhaps I'll learn some more.

All these guitars and instruments,  
It's no more than they had,  
Afore they put the organ in  
When my granddad was a lad.

And I don't suppose God'll worry,  
He wouldn't make a fuss,  
As long as all the singing's  
Meant for him and not for us.

We've had clergy straight from college  
Full of summat new,  
From incense on the altar  
To posters in the pew.

And I lets 'em all get on with it,  
Cos all these fashions pass,  
And you'll still do the flowers me dears,  
And I'll still clean the brass.

I got this seat I always have,  
No draughts and nice and near,  
So I can hear the organ  
And see the vicar clear.

And I tell God what's been happening  
And what a week I've had,  
And I thanks him for the good times  
And He helps me through the bad.

'Cos all that really matters  
As far as I can see,  
Is that I, down here, remembers him,  
And He remembers me.

*(anon. Courtesy of Bride Valley News)*

## Produce and Craft Show

This year's village Produce and Craft Show will take place on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September at the Endowed School, with teas and stalls on the Church Green. A full schedule of classes and rules for entry will be published in the next issue of the 'Word'. The organising committee would like to hear from anyone who would like to help with the show, and also any local organisations who would like to have a stall on the green. Contact the Chairman, Peter Lead at peterdawnlead@aol.co.uk or on 832383.

## Dates for your Diary

### Friday 12th March

Concert at St Mary's Church at 19:30  
The chapel choir and instrumentalists of Bromsgrove, an independent school in Worcestershire, will be giving a concert prior to their tour in New York in the summer. The concert includes music by Stanford, Parry, Sumsion and Stainer. Tickets, priced at £7, are available on the door. Proceeds will go to St Mary's Church.

### Friday 12th March

Race Night at Endowed School (tickets from school)

### Sunday 14th March

Mothering Sunday service at St Mary's, 11:00am.

### Good Friday, 2nd April

Services at St Mary's at 10am and 2pm.

### Easter Sunday, 4th April

Holy Communion at St Mary's at 9am  
Service of Easter Praise at St Mary's at 11am.

## Village Hall Programme

### Monday

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

### Tuesday

1000-1200 Art Group (01453 873689)  
1400-1630 Friendly Circle - alternate weeks (01453 873566)  
1700-1800 Ballet (01453 834356)  
1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 01453 766116)

### Wednesday

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

### Thursday

1000-1200 Healthy Lifestyles (01453 885766)  
1830-2130 Parish Council (1st in month)  
1930-2130 Women's Institute (3rd in month 01453 873314)  
1930-2130 Morris Dancing (2nd, 4th, 5th, 01453 759150)

### Friday

1000-1200 Art Class U3A (01453 872044)  
1500-1700 Ballet (01453 834356)  
1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 01453 766116)

The Village Hall is available for hire at weekends, for information contact Bob Ludlow on 01453 872340

## In the next issue.....

**We have plans for a number of new features in the next issue, and with the generous support of our sponsors and the Parish Council, plan to increase the 'Word' to 12 pages. We would love to have more contributions to the 'Word' from villagers. If you have anything to say about your village, have a photo you would like published, or would like to write an article for a future issue, please contact Iain Dunbar on 01453 872185 or email [iaindunbar@btconnect.com](mailto:iaindunbar@btconnect.com).**

## Woodchester Woes

**Get it of your chest! If there is something that bugs you about the village or the area, this is your chance to have a good whinge about it. Just send it in to Woodchester Woes - starting next issue!**