

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

# TheVillageNews

APRIL/MAY 2023



Photograph by Patsy Parsons



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WESTON SOCIETY

WESTON WALKERS

FOOTPATH WARDEN

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# From the editor

## Welcome to the Easter edition of the Village News.

When walking through Stonepits the other day I met a couple who had last visited the ford 40 years ago. They couldn't believe how little it had changed and were delighted that the area had pretty much stayed as they remembered it.

Although change can be for the better, this chance encounter got me thinking about the importance of continuity in small communities and how there can be things we may value without realising it until they've irrevocably altered or actually gone.

Nothing emphasised this more than last month's village meeting to discuss the future of the shop. The gratitude that night to Yasemin and her team for making the shop such an important part of the village was immense and it's fantastic that out of that meeting a group of volunteers came together to look into the various options to see if we can turn it into a Community Shop - see p. 11 for more details.

It was appropriate that such an important meeting was held in the Village Hall as this highlights how essential this building is to our village. This year it's celebrating its 50th anniversary since it was re-developed and our thanks must go to the Village Hall Committee for all their hard work in not only ensuring its longevity and making essential improvements to its facilities but for organising so many fantastic events for the village to enjoy throughout the year.

Happy reading!



Deadline for June/July edition:  
4TH MAY 2023



## A letter from the Rector

### Gareth Miller

Rector of the Akeman Benefice and Area Dean of Bicester & Islip

Dear friends,

My phone has a habit of showing me clips from old comedy programmes. I don't know how or why it does it (I guess I must have googled something once), but I must say I am very grateful for them. When a day is proving particularly testing, there's no better tonic than three minutes of Fawlty Towers, The Two Ronnies, or The Vicar of Dibley. Speaking of which ... it does sometimes feel as if Dibley is not such a fictional place after all!

One of the Dibley episodes is called "Spring". It's time for Alice and Hugo's baby to be christened. As Geraldine is one of the godparents the Bishop arrives to perform the ceremony. Somewhat surprisingly David proposes marriage to Geraldine, who says that she will consider it. However, after Sean Bean has appeared to her in a dream telling her not to go through with it, she turns David down!

Life certainly has its disappointments! Not to mention

things that give us cause to worry. A friend and I were chatting the other day, and noting all the anxieties in people's lives – Ukraine, climate change, the cost of living, the NHS, social media, etc. He felt that a lot of these big anxieties are manifesting in our personal interactions, and I think he may have a point. However, new life has a habit of popping up despite the evidence to the contrary, like the crocuses poking their heads through the unexpected March snow as I write. Spring arrives as a jolt to our winter pessimism, just as humour can serve to prick our depression and solemnity.

Humour, of course, needs to be handled with care. If deployed carelessly it can make a bad situation worse. But used thoughtfully it can defuse tensions and help put things in perspective. Tom Wright, the New Testament commentator, believes that Jesus was funnier than he comes across in our English translations! And Easter is God's supreme joke – that, despite all the evidence to the contrary, death does not have the last word. As someone once

### Easter Services

2nd April 10:00  
*Palm Sunday Procession and Service on the Green, Bletchington*

Maundy Thursday 19:00  
*Holy Communion, Chesterton*

Good Friday services  
10:00 *Family Worship, Bletchington*  
14:00 *An hour at the Cross, Middleton Stoney*  
20:00 *Compline (sung), Kirtlington*

### Special Services April/May 2023

30 April 16:00  
*Pet Service at Middleton Stoney - all pets (within reason!) welcome.*

18 May 19:00  
*Ascension Day, Sung Eucharist at Bletchington Church*

For other services across the Akeman Benefice please visit [www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services](http://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services)

said, "We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song." However dark things may seem, however tough the going, perhaps we can find a space in the day to say an alleluia, however soft it might sound.



## BENEFICE NEWS

### Deanery Walk

Our third deanery walk takes place on St George's Day, April 23rd. We had a really good turn-out for the first two. Do come along if you can. This is a longish walk (about 5.5 miles). Meet at Islip Church at 13:30 (parking at Islip Station or in the village). Circular walk via Oddington and Noke back to Islip. There will be rest breaks and a short history of each church at each village. Bring your own water. Tea at Islip on return and a

short Evening Service with the Akeman Church Community Choir at 17:30.

### Stewardship

During May we will also be holding a Stewardship Programme – an opportunity to reflect on the place of the church in the community, and also to think how we can best support our local churches, practically and financially. We will be preaching on the subject and distributing leaflets in each village.

# Coronation Celebration Service

followed by a picnic/BBQ  
at the Jubilee Playing Field  
Sunday May 7th @ 11:00 am

The major event in our calendar is the forthcoming coronation of King Charles III to be held on May 6th. This traditional ceremony is an important aspect of the fabric of Britain's cultural and political history. It is a cause for celebration. We will be holding a Celebration Service on Sunday May 7th at 11:00 am, followed by activities organised by our Parish Council. There will be more details closer to the time of the event. Please join us to celebrate this historic occasion.

Have you noticed the churchyard this early spring? The snowdrops are prolific as a result of the hard work by Ben and Connor clearing the leaves in the autumn and



early winter. At the time of writing the primroses are beginning to bloom and hopefully they will grace us with splendid, colourful displays as we approach the summer months. Our garden receives many compliments in our visitors' book, and we are grateful to those who help us maintain the churchyard.



Our church is heavily reliant on the work of volunteers supporting the day to day functionality of our church. We are blessed with talented volunteers who create the seasonal floral arrangements in and around the church. We are thankful for the people who keep the church clean and tidy, which is not an easy task.

We are fortunate for the contribution of the members of our PCC who bring a variety of talents to the life of our church. We need to recognise that society in general is increasingly reliant on volunteer work because of increased complexity and the diverse and rapidly changing needs of our citizens. In recognition of their contribution we will organise a special thanksgiving service for the many volunteers, not just those associated with the church, in Weston. We are hoping to incorporate a communal meal into the celebration.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) will be held on Tuesday May 2nd at 7:30 pm at the Village Hall. We have opted for the Village Hall this year in an attempt to increase attendance. Members of the Electoral Roll and the Stewardship Roll will receive invitations, which will include an information pack outlining the financial status and the plans for the church in our Weston community. The meeting is open to the general public and suitable publicity will be posted closer to the event. This is an important meeting, which can help the church move forward and increase its participation in our community. This will be a short meeting followed by some wine and canapes. We sincerely hope you will join us for this occasion.

**NEWS FLASH:** The church reduced its carbon footprint by 40% in 2022! We emitted 0.6 ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, in 2022 down from 1 ton in 2021. Every ounce counts.

Eric Bohm, Church Warden

## April and May services at St Mary's Church, Weston on the Green

9th April:	11:00	Holy Communion
Easter Sunday		
16th April	11:00	Morning Worship
23rd April	10:30	Holy Communion Benefice Service, Kirtlington
7th May	11:00	Coronation Service
14th May	11:00	Café Church
21st May 1	1:00	Holy Communion

For other services across the Akeman Benefice please visit:  
<https://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services>



## The Old Flight House

The Old Flight House is a refreshingly different antiques centre. It has a fantastic range, from quality traditional antiques to vintage and retro items and stunning painted furniture, all set out in beautiful light and spacious surroundings. A licensed cafe serves good coffee and freshly prepared lunches with a lovely outside terrace for sunny days. Open Monday to Saturday 10am-5pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. Northampton Road, Weston on the Green, Oxfordshire, OX25 3TJ

01869 343441

 @oldflighthouse

[theoldflighthouse.co.uk](https://www.theoldflighthouse.co.uk)

# Chair's comments

**P**ARISH COUNCILS should not be static bodies but should evolve and reflect the changing demographic of the village. Since we last went to election, the council has seen some changes in membership and this year we felt it was time to get a full complement of councillors which is eight. We have managed with six councillors for several years and have found it difficult to cover the range of tasks needed.

In the time following Covid, we have reached into the community to encourage people to put themselves forward to join the council. We've been very successful in that we have co-opted two new councillors since the start of the year. We have a third individual requesting co-option at the next meeting which is April 5th and past the deadline for this article!

Ben Lanham was co-opted at 1st February 2023 Parish Council meeting. He, Kate and three children have lived in the village

since 2019. Ben grew up in Abingdon where he was captain at the cricket club for several years and on the club committee assisting with the running of the club and local activities. Ben is a Senior Forensic Scientist and Team Leader and as such will bring to the council a wide range of skills. He is currently a Trustee of the Chesterton Play Group. Ben is keen to be involved in a variety of opportunities on the council including the development of the playground and the spinney which seem to hold a lot of his interest! He would like to contribute to the future of the village.

Jack Maxton was co-opted at 1st March 2023 Parish Council meeting. Jack and Andrew moved into the village in spring of 2022 and felt at home very quickly. Jack is a director for a high growing Strategy & Digital Consultancy company and is used to business planning and growth efforts in new markets. He has previous experiences of village life and feels that Weston on the Green has all

the attributes of a lovely place to live. He summed up his desire to make a difference by the following statement: "I am motivated by the opportunity to join the council to use my skills to develop and enhance the village, championing our needs in a complex and changing landscape of developments, planning, transport, technology, and new services. I can help us to cut through this complex picture and ensure we are developing our vibrant, welcoming village".

People's lives move on and often require a shifting of responsibilities. Such is the case of Neil Mullane who has resigned having served this village as a councillor for six years. His leadership on the Traffic Calming Advisory Group has driven the work forward. It is no secret that he is known as "Mr. Twenty's Plenty"! The next piece of the traffic puzzle requires someone of his patience and foresight and I'm sure they're out there. We have valued Neil's clear and insightful comments at our parish council meetings. He has been easy to get along with and has led people with efficiency and humour. Thank you, Neil, for your generous service to the community. You have set a fine example for future councillors.

## Technology

The Gigaclear project is fully underway with cables appearing around the village. If you want updates on this full fibre broadband please register your interest using this address: [gigaclear.com](http://gigaclear.com). There is no obligation at this stage. Please note that this is not the Open Reach project which we applied for as the funding did not come through. Gigaclear is a single provider and brands itself as "operating the UK's largest, exclusively rural, fibre-to-

## Family Picnic and Parade – a celebration of the Coronation

The Parish Council is working with members of the community to organise a family picnic and parade on the afternoon of Sunday, May 7th. The parade will leave the car park of the Village Hall at 1pm and process to the playing field led by a vintage car! Surprises are in store!! Games, food and fun are being planned.

Families can bring a picnic or buy hamburgers freshly barbequed! Fancy dress is optional!

Lots of good fun is guaranteed.





the-premises (FTTP) network". Please check the website for pricing. There have been a few teething issues, largely based on communication but we'll get there in the end. The advice to all homeowners and especially those who live on the edges of the villages, possibly on farms, is to send questions to Gigaclear about being hooked into the project from the beginning and get advice on pricing. Questions can be sent directly to Resia.Khan@gigaclear.com

### Bus Service and Community Transport Van

We are delighted that Bus Service 24 is operational. Many villagers have told us how they appreciate the service. Villagers have been able to go to Bicester or Oxford and various stops in between – great value at £2 until the end of June. The service is being assessed in this initial stage so please let us know of any difficulties. Contact Graham Barnett at: gblmb@btinternet.com

The Community Transport Van is ready for use. To book please call Sarah at 07557 557304. If you need help getting to an appointment call us! We have drivers ready to assist. There is room for four passengers plus one wheelchair with passenger. We've suggested a route to Blue Diamond as it is wheelchair friendly and has lots to see plus a place for lunch! Currently, there is no charge

for the journey but that will be reviewed for the new financial year. Remember – use it or lose it!

### Neighbourhood Plan and Survey

The Parish Council is reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan to conform with the updated Cherwell Local Plan which is now in advanced draft form and should come into effect at the end of 2024. In the meantime, the housing and land supply targets have been revised which means that our Neighbourhood Plan also needs some review.

While this will be of limited scope, we are also planning a major review to come into effect after 2024 when the newly adopted Local Plan will include new strategic policies in housing supply and biodiversity. We will be circulating a survey to establish the current priorities for parish residents and businesses so that these can be reflected in our policies. A draft survey has been compiled and will be tabled for approval at the April 2023 Parish Council meeting. Please look out for this coming to every door and we need and welcome your views through your answers.

The parish continues to be under pressure from development of greenspace land both in and around the parish, most recently by a housing development proposal of 147 dwellings at Chesterton. The extra pressure that this will exert on traffic density in and around our

parish, healthcare in our region and other infrastructure, should not be underestimated and we continue to voice our concerns directly to Cherwell District Council and through other consultations.

### Annual Village Meeting (Save the date!)

The Annual Village Meeting will be held on April 18th, 2023, at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. This meeting will specifically review the highlights of the past year and provide an opportunity to comment on future plans. Topics: Impact of development in our area, Technology, Transport and traffic, Jubilee playing field and water courses through the village. There will also be an opportunity to hear from the SOS (Save our Shop) Committee.

### Food Bank

Thank you for being so generous with the March food bank collection. We donated 137.10kg of food. When we got to the Bicester Food Bank, we were shocked at how empty the shelves were. We'll continue collecting food on the first Saturday of the month in front of the shop, April 1st, June 3rd (not the day of the coronation in May).



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# Planning Update

Further information on applications can be found on the Cherwell District Council Planning Register: <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/> or please contact Councillor Susan Davies.

## BUILDING APPLICATIONS:

### Decisions Received – Permitted

22/03510/DISC – Kemsley Farm  
Discharge of conditions relating to riding surfaces (multi-washed silica sand complex); access tracks (permeable stone); arena fencing (timber to 1.95m height); shed roofs (grey fibre cement with timber boarding to walls). Lighting strategy document submitted.

22/03504/LB - Manor Country House Hotel, B430  
Remove and replace stone tile roof on Coach-house. Additional repairs to roof structure and guttering.

### Awaiting Decision

22/02733/F – Milestone Cottage, 3 North Lane  
Single storey ground floor extension and extensive revision of internal space and roof line. Replacement of rear garage with 3 bay structure.

22/03709/F – Starbucks, A34  
Addition of a drive-through facility and parking changes

22/03463/AGN – Now resubmitted as 22/03463/F Manor Country House Hotel B430 –  
Erection of a logstore.

23/00155/DISC – Discharge of conditions for materials used on roof repairs to Coach House.



23/00154/F – Dower House, Church Road. Single storey extension to rear.

Proposed extension to rear for use as a garden room adjoining the kitchen. Includes 8 conservation rooflights and bi-fold doors to terrace. Resubmission of similar permitted extension in 2013 and 2018, but smaller in scale.

23/00148/LB – Manor Hotel, B430. Part retrospective repairs to dry stone walls, stone piers, steps around the Sunken Garden.

23/00200/REN56 – Quick Fit Garage, A34 north adjacent to BP station.

Installation of a PV array on the north-east part of the existing roof, both pitches. 8 PV panels in total.

23/00270/DISC – Manor Hotel, B340.

Discharge of Conditions 4 (flooring

method statement), 5 service routes method statement), 7 (radiators & flues), 8 (internal joinery), 9 (rooflight details) and 10 (insulation) of 22/01553/LB

23/00201/LB - Manor Hotel, B430. Proposal to remove temporary freestanding bar and replace with new bar

23/00278/CLUE - Family Farm House, A34(South).

Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use for the retention of Family Farm House as a C3 dwellinghouse.

23/00345/F - Erlinstoun, Shepherds Close.

Removal of front and rear single storey extensions and erection of new front and rear single storey extensions.

23/00419/DISC - Kemsley Farm. Discharge of Conditions 3 (Land Contamination Survey), 8 (Architectural Detailing) and 11 (Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme) of 21/00873/F

23/00533/F – Westfield Court House, North Lane  
Replacement of the single storey rear extension with a part two-storey, part single-storey rear extension, the removal of external stairs, the removal of two trees, and the extension of the garage and workshop/garden store.

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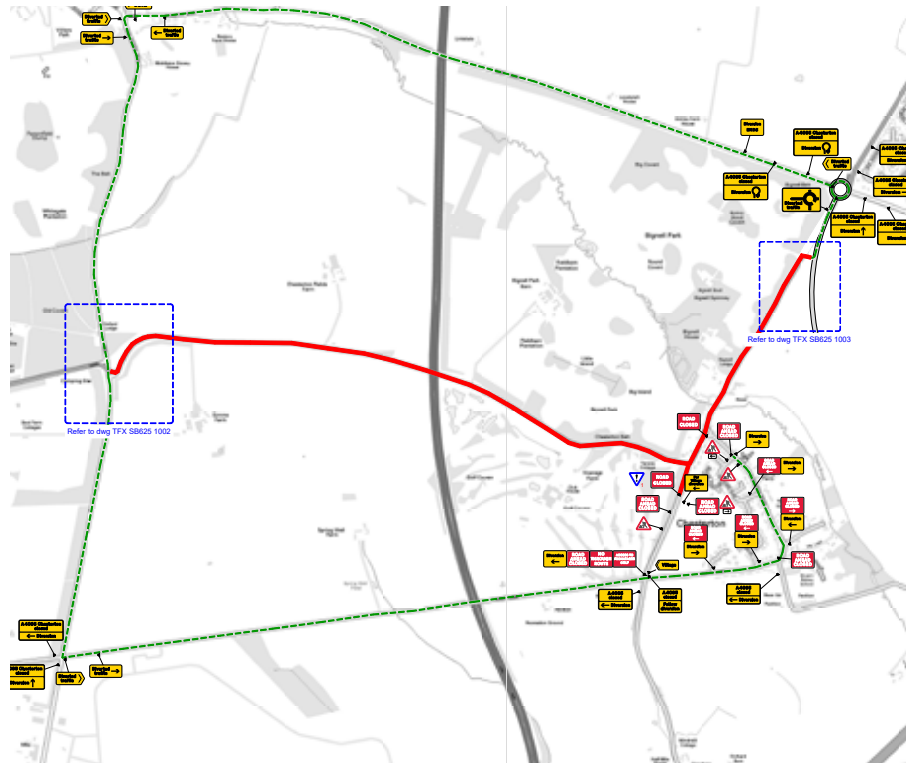
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# Advance Notice of Road Closure

## A4095 Kirtlington Road for Great Wolf Development Works

OCC have advised of a road closure to a section of A4095 Kirtlington Road (between B430 Oxford Road and B4030 Vendee Drive) whilst essential S278 highway works and installation of new services for the Great Wolf Lodge development works are undertaken. The temporary closure will operate from 24th April 2023 up to and including 21st July 2023. This is a 24-hour road closure.



## Traffic Calming – Wheelie Bin Stickers

To raise awareness of the 20mph speed limit through the centre of the village and to support the work being done by the Community Speedwatch team, traffic speed safety stickers for wheelie bins have been delivered to residents.

Church Road and Church Lane residents have received 'Safety Zone 20 Please Drive Carefully' and 'Please Slow Down in Our Village' stickers and those residents on B430 have received the latter sticker.

If you wish to obtain any of the wheelie bin stickers, please contact the clerk.

For more information on the Community Speedwatch scheme please contact Graham Barnett (01869 350707)

## Voter ID – New Requirements

The government now requires voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station. This will apply for the first time when the district council elections happen on 4th May 2023.

Which forms of ID can I use to vote?

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)

Visit [www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID) for a full list of accepted photo ID, or call 0800 328 0280.

You can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate at [voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk](http://voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can complete a paper application form.



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IT IS with great pleasure that I write to you, the villagers of Weston on the Green, as the appointed Chair of the newly founded Weston SOS ('Save our Shop') Committee, following our initial meeting on the 27th of February.

Despite being a successful, viable business and hub of the community (even in the wake of COVID and recent postal strikes), the current owner, Yasemin, is now looking to sell the Weston Pantry. Her concern, and one that was felt by the rest of the village at the village meeting on the 22nd of February, is that a new owner may not be so community-focused; or that the shop may eventually be converted into a residential dwelling and lost as an amenity to the village completely.

### Huge impact

I wish to reiterate the comments of support for her during the meeting – it is clear she has made a huge impact on the village and grown it as a hub for the residents and businesses of Weston and surrounding villages alike. I would also like to thank Diane for organising and chairing the village meeting and those that spoke as this was the catalyst for our existence.

I hope that I can serve you, the village and the committee to preserve the future of the shop and post office as I was moved and buoyed by the outpouring of support in its favour at the village meeting. For those that couldn't attend, the official record will be posted to our website (see below).

Weston SOS has been formed with a simple aim in mind – to maintain a Shop and Post Office amenity and ensure it serves as a community hub within the village.

Nothing is off the table in terms



Designed by Joanne Timan

## Weston SOS (‘Save our Shop’) Committee

### Sam Sharp

(Chair), Church Close

### Andrew Carr

(Vice Chair), North Lane

### Wendy Williams

(Administrator), Knowle Lane

### Paul Beecroft, Church Lane

### Kate Burdett, Northampton Road

### Emma Gubbins, Church Close

### Clive Hamilton-Gould, Mill Lane

### Fiona Spensley, Church Lane

### Peter Welham, Blacksmith Close

of how that can be achieved. As was obvious at the village meeting, we also have multiple different perspectives for how that can be achieved within the committee which we must carefully evaluate. We will need to ensure that any proposals we put forward have the support of the village and are also financially viable/feasible within a timeframe that is acceptable to Yasemin.

We have quite the task ahead, but I'm confident that we have a great committee of nine members from different backgrounds and parts

of the village, each of whom bring unique skills, insight, and perspective to the cause – I wish to thank them for stepping up and for putting their faith in me as Chair. Of course, this is a complex undertaking so we need all the help we can get (!!)

– so please do get in touch if you think you can help in any way, whether that be acting as special advisors, to share feedback and ideas or offers of financial support.

Thanks to those of you that have already come forward – we will be in touch soon!

### Village survey

We will be engaging with the village and local businesses over the coming weeks/months – most likely with a survey of residents and talking to businesses to assess the feasibility of various options such as raising funds for community ownership. We will also share information via our website and, where appropriate, further village meetings or consultations.

To reach me directly as chair, you can contact me on [chair@weston-sos.org](mailto:chair@weston-sos.org), or for general comments/enquiries, please email or speak to the committee (see below).

### Find out more

If you would like to follow our progress or find out more, we have set up a website ([weston-sos.org](http://weston-sos.org)) and a Facebook page ('Weston SOS') – you can also email us at [committee@weston-sos.org](mailto:committee@weston-sos.org) if you have anything to share.

*Sam Sharp, Chair of the Weston SOS ('Save our Shop') Committee*



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### Part of the community

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00008280



# An eventful time of year

We have a busy couple of months ahead of us with lots of different events in the Hall and we hope there will be something for everyone amongst this write-up.

It is lovely to see villagers returning to the Hall for our events. Over forty villagers joined us for a Fish and Chip supper and a screening of the sequel, 'Fisherman's Friends: One and All'. The new projector and larger screen was certainly much appreciated by those attending and we're looking forward to using it for future film nights and other 'live' televised events.

The start of March saw the return of the Quiz Night to the Village Hall for the first time since before the pandemic. Forty villagers joined us for an evening of friendly rivalry and fierce competition. Andrew assumed the role of Quiz Master for the evening, emerging from an abundance of rose gold foil streamers to start proceedings and to welcome some new and returning quiz teams. There were a series of rounds to challenge, confound and to cause merriment and these ranged from UK festivals to road signs, general knowledge, 2023 anniversaries and the ever-popular music round, amongst others. There were prizes for the best quiz team name (Quizzly Bears), and for the bottom and top

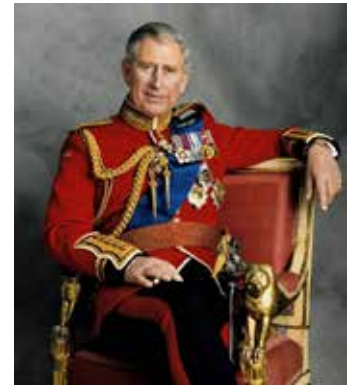
teams but the eventual victors were Les Quizerables with 124 points beating Quizzee Rascals by just a single point.

We hope we can replicate this fun-filled atmosphere at our Eurovision Party on Saturday 13th May. For the first time in 25 years Britain will be hosting the Eurovision Song Contest (on behalf of Ukraine). To celebrate the occasion we will be hosting a Eurovision Party, with the whole show live from Liverpool on the Big Screen, a buffet, licensed bar, Eurovision Cliché Bingo and more Ukrainian-UK bunting than you can shake 'a puppet on a string' at. Booking is required to help us with the catering requirements so don't delay, it's time for making your mind up ...! To book a table please RSVP to westonvillagehall@live.co.uk by 30th April, including any dietary requirements and number of spaces you would like to reserve. This will be the first time we have shown Eurovision in the Hall and we hope villagers will be able to come along and join us for the event.

The week before will see the screening of the King's Coronation, followed by an Afternoon Tea. Thank you to everyone who has booked for this event. We have just 12 spaces left so please do contact us if you would like to reserve a seat/table for Saturday 6th May. At the time of writing we are still waiting for final timings from Buckingham Palace regarding the structure of the day's proceedings so we will email those attending with the finer details nearer the time. This event has been made

possible by our very generous sponsors and we would like to send our thanks to Dalcour Maclaren, H2H Storage Solutions, Smith & Sons Ltd of Bletchington, Weston on the Green Parish Council and members of our very own Village Hall Committee for their support.

Lots of villagers asked us about the possibility of a picture of the King for the Hall and in preparation for the Coronation we now have a portrait of the new monarch in place.



Prior to these events we have a Table Top sale and coffee morning on Saturday 22nd April from 9.30am - 12.30pm in the Hall. We have a number of 'table tops' for you to peruse, including fresh bread and baked goods by Dough & Dine, stationery and beautiful cards for all occasions by Flamingo Paperie (formerly Phoenix Trading), gifts by Peck & Feather, curios, antiques, toys, trinkets and other pre-loved and new items. Entry and a warm welcome is free and we will also be serving teas, coffee and cake during the morning. We hope lots of villagers will be enticed to come along!

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# 250 Club

## Recent Results

### FEBRUARY

1st £18 138 Lucy Mill  
 2nd £12 180 Paula and Bob  
 Hessian  
 3rd £6 62 Chris Parsley

### MARCH

1st £18 227 Tricia Harris  
 2nd £12 71 Richard Evans  
 3rd £6 38 Pam Dyer

At present there are more than 20 unallocated numbers available for purchase £6 each.

To purchase, please contact  
 Paul Warren Cairn Cottage,  
 Church Lane Tel: 350770.

# 50 years and counting



May 19th 2023 sees the 50th anniversary of the opening of the new Village Hall, replacing the wooden Hall from 1921. Over the last fifty years the Hall has been home to a variety of clubs, societies (some still running, like the WI, and some now past), Big Breakfasts, soup lunches, Royal birthdays, weddings, Jubilees (and a soon-to-be Coronation), film nights, pantomimes, dance classes, visiting choirs, barn dances and ceilidhs, table tennis, art exhibitions, race nights, keep-fit, coffee mornings, guest speakers, quiz nights, pop-up pubs, Christmas tree lights switch-on and Father Christmas, the annual Aunt Sally match and a host of other events.

The Hall has been updated, renovated and modernised and many villagers have played a role in the life of the Hall. To that end, the current Village Hall Committee will be looking to celebrate the Hall's anniversary in the early summer and there will be more details of the Anniversary Event in the next Village News.



## Phone Box Library Opening Times for 2023

The phone box is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, from early morning until dusk when it is then locked up for the night.

Please feel free to borrow a book to read. We only ask that you return it in a good condition for the next person to borrow.

Stock will be rotated on a regular basis.

Please could we ask that book donations are not left in the phone box. If you wish to donate books please email [westonvillagehall@live.co.uk](mailto:westonvillagehall@live.co.uk)

Many thanks and happy reading!



Weston on the Green Memorial Village Hall

## Eurovision Song Contest Party

Eurovision on the Big Screen - Live from Liverpool!

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2023



You are invited to join us for some Eurovision fun!

Eurovision themed Bingo & Quiz

Buffet

Cash Bar

RSVP: [westonvillagehall@live.co.uk](mailto:westonvillagehall@live.co.uk) by April 30<sup>th</sup>  
to secure your place/table!

Weston on the Green Memorial Village Hall

## The Coronation of King Charles III

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023

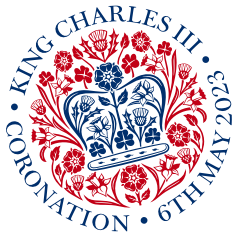


Live on the Big Screen

Followed by Afternoon Tea

The Coronation will be shown live from Westminster Abbey on the Big Screen followed by a complimentary Afternoon Tea. We will also have a craft table for children to make their own Coronation crown.

Booking is required. RSVP to the VH by 20<sup>th</sup> April via our email [westonvillagehall@live.co.uk](mailto:westonvillagehall@live.co.uk) or call 350992 to reserve your place.



## VERY SPECIAL THANKS

# The King's Coronation & Afternoon Tea May 6th 2023

Thank you to everyone who has booked a place for the screening of the Coronation to be followed by Afternoon Tea.

This event would not be possible without the very generous support of our sponsors:

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Committee

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# The Village Hall 5

**F**IFTY YEARS AGO, in May 1973, the present village hall was officially opened. It was a replacement for the original hall, opened in 1921 and dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives during the First World War. This had been a second hand, wooden hut and was itself a replacement for the Reading Room which had stood in the courtyard of the Vicarage and provided, during the winter months, since at least 1910, a place where club members could enjoy a hot drink and the newspapers. We were one of the first villages in the district to get a Village Hall in the post-war move to provide a central place for each community.

A committee set dates of opening, arranged entertainments and provided both cleaning, lamp oil, fire lighting and general upkeep as well as maintaining a presence at each open session. The hall had been built on land donated by Mr T Read, who had bought the site at the village sale in 1918. There had once been a cottage on the site, destroyed by fire many years before. This cottage had been the home of one of Weston's 'night schools' and the hall built on the site became an extra classroom for the village school, both when overflowing and when evacuated



*L to R: Hubert Williams, Rev'd John Westlake, Frederick Godwin*

children arrived in the village in 1939.

The ground around the hall was let as a garden and, during the Second World War, it was part of the 'Dig for Victory' scheme. The names of those who did not return in 1945 were added to the original dedication.

Membership had been 1/- a month and there was a monthly dance, a smaller Saturday night hop and weekly drama classes, keep fit and folk dancing. There was a piano and a local band would be hired for dances and the aerial strung across the hall roof,

between two trees, gave access to 2LO radio for dance music. At one point the club membership was over 80 members and over 100 regularly attended the dances. Whist drives, film shows, socials, pantomimes, tea parties, civil defence meetings, a library, Parish Council meetings and concerts were all remembered during the lifetime of the old hall.

During the Second World War the hall was the workplace of the Bristol Packing Mamas – ladies who packed airplane parts for distribution across the country. The wooden packing cases were covered with cloths and moved to the sides of the hall whenever there was a dance. How the old floorboards supported the weight was a small miracle and the brick piles underneath were regularly checked.

The youth of the village had a billiard table, and all ages were provided for; from babes in arms attending the clinic, through toddler groups, playgroups, after-school activities, Sunday School and the Horticultural Society to national groups like the Brownies, Guides, and the WI.



*L to R: Mr Charles Taylor, Mr Hubert Williams and the vicar, Rev'd Bond-Thomas*



# 50th Anniversary



L to R: Frederick Godwin, Hubert Williams, Cissy Beecroft

In the early 1970s, after 50 years of service, the hall was well past it's sell-by date (although it was passed on to a Scout Group, once dismantled) and the village needed to raise the money to fund a new hall. By this time the 'men only' membership and winter only opening hours had long gone. The committee set about fund-raising. They were aiming for just what we got – purpose brick built, good heating, lighting and a sprung floor for dancing. Unlike the old hall, there would now be a fully working kitchen and toilets. Previously, waste water from washing cups after a social event was thrown into the hedge of the nearest cottage. I dread to think about previous toilet facilities.

Funds for the Old Hall had been raised by Captain Margesson, then living at the Manor, and others in the village, gathering donations and holding fund-raising events like whist drives and social teas.

This time round one of the major fund-raising efforts involved a group of women who put on short entertainments. Their fame spread and they would travel quite long distances to give hour-long shows. Named The Reviewers, they gave their last performance in the newly opened hall.

A Village Weekend was organised with displays of old crafts illustrating the rural way of life which was fast disappearing and the 250 club was started – a lottery well before the National Lottery began. Other fund-raising activities included a series of postcards, local history leaflets, dances and produce sales.

Those who had worked so hard were rewarded with a celebratory dinner at Weston Manor and the official opening of the new hall was followed by a dance, despite the lack of a dance floor which had not yet been laid.

Since the building of the present hall it has been used by many: the WI, the Horticultural Society, Sunday School, Playgroup, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Haywains, bowls, youth club, exhibitions, fund-raising for charities as well as the hall itself, services of worship, Oxford touring theatre and amateur productions and pantomimes, fairs and bazaars, parties and private functions, business meetings, computer and craft classes – the list is endless.

For over 100 years a committee of dedicated volunteers has continued to earn the appreciation of the village. Their efforts have ensured we have a flourishing hall – both as a Memorial to those who gave their lives during two conflicts and a community asset for those living here now.

Paula Hessian



## Weston-on-the-Green WI

Our first meeting of the new year took a different format. Two residents of Weston, Dr Natalie Bohm and Debbie Obied talked about their very different but demanding careers. They told how they progressed in what was still a man's world, and how they also managed to balance their work and family life. It was a fascinating evening getting to know them and the experiences of two strong, determined women.

In February Richard Preston came to tell us, with slides, about his beautiful one-acre garden in Steeple Aston. It was originally the walled garden for the Manor House, then became a market garden from which he and his father grew and sold vegetables around the local villages. Now he and his wife have turned it into a lovely garden with ponds, statues, trees, shrubs and flowers, which we have been invited to visit in June.

On the 19th of April we will have a visit from Pam Newall who will take us on a journey to Transylvania.

Our May meeting is on the 17th and one of our members, Jill Saint, will tell us of her work at the Oxford Playhouse.

We would like to invite all ladies. If you are new to the village come and make new friends and if you have been here a while come and give us a try. You will be very welcome. Our WI meets at Weston Village Hall every month except August, on the third Wednesday at 7.30.p.m. We also have a craft afternoon on the 4th Monday at 2.00p.m. and walks on the 2nd Monday at 1.30p.m. both of which were WI initiatives although you don't need to be a member to take part in these.

We'd love to see you so please contact our Secretary Lyn Barnett on 01869 350707 or email on wotg.wi@ail.com if you would like to know more.

**Lyn Barnett**



## Weston Society

Weston Society began when a few like-minded people met in the Ben Jonson one night and discussed their mutual worries that the village they then knew might be under threat. This threat, from developers, was successfully overcome but the original group became interested in the preservation of the village and its environment and slowly became a group who met monthly to enjoy speakers on many topics ranging from local history, the environment both built and natural and the people and activities specific to our area. We now meet on the second Monday of alternate months to hear speakers on a variety of topics.

The Commanding Officer at RAF Brize Norton spoke on the history of the RAF at Weston on the Green in our January meeting, which proved very interesting for those

present - he also found it of great interest in researching the details. For our March meeting we are expecting a representative from Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Our May meeting is planned for Monday 8th May, when John May of this parish will be describing the responsibilities of Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire. This day is a Bank Holiday for the Coronation so should be an ideal way of finishing off the weekend celebrations.

All are welcome free of charge to their first meeting, there is an annual subscription of £10 per person for anyone who then wishes to join, which enables us to pay for speakers and to share wine and nibbles after the meetings.

**Graham Barnett**

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## Weston Walkers

Our first walk of the new year was on Monday 13th February, when we enjoyed a sunny afternoon on Kingsmere in Bicester, which does not necessarily sound very appealing but there is a surprising amount of green space and water in amongst the houses.

There is also a very welcoming café in the Sports Centre where we inevitably ended up!

At the time of writing our March walk is planned for Monday 13th March, our April walk would be Monday 10th but that being Easter Monday we may change to a different week and May would be 8th but that being King's Coronation weekend we may also have to change that.

All are welcome to join in as and when, there is no commitment to every month, so if you wish to enjoy

social company, conversation and exercise please come along and join in or speak to me.

There are now also several local walks to enjoy published on the Weston on the Green Parish Council website, under Health and Wellbeing.

If while out walking you encounter any problems with overgrown vegetation, damaged stiles or footbridges, or any other issues, please let me know for Weston Parish or Katie Holt (01869 350219) for Bletchington Parish, in order that they can be reported to the County Council for repair..

**Graham Barnet**  
01869 350707

## Spring thoughts

With Spring on its way, thoughts turn to walking in the beautiful English countryside.

If you're looking to find new and interesting walks, 'Walking in Oxfordshire' has loads of walks to download and print, free: <https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire>. It also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

Cherry Blossom by Jordie Riches



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## Fires and how to light them

Noting that kindling is being burnt faster than supply, herewith is a short guide on fires and how to light them

Before attempting to light the fire, check the following:

- You have to hand, firelighters, kindling of sufficient amount and length to fit neatly into fire hole and either dry logs or coal.
- Note that logs and coal can be obtained from parents or gullible neighbours.
- Ensure that flue is not blocked by falls of soot or petrified birds (not frightened, fossilised)
- Thoroughly clean out ash tray and ensure fire bars are clean.
- Ensure that air slide at bottom of fire bars is wide open.
- Insert firelighter and set it alight. Make sure you have permission from a responsible adult before you use matches.
- Carefully lay kindling over firelighter to form a nest-like cluster about 3 sticks deep. A bit like a Jenga stack.
- Close door and allow this to mature into a steady blaze.



- Open door carefully and shovel on several heaps of coal, ensuring it is heaped on top of the blazing kindling and not just sat at the front getting warm. Alternatively, place on logs instead of coal.
- Close door and allow fire to burn up to welding heat.
- Close air slide and the fire will tick over nicely.
- Before applying more fuel open air slider to ensure draught from below.

- Open bottle of wine and sit and contemplate, or just sit.

Here endeth the first lesson. In lesson two we will be dealing with house fires and when to call the fire brigade out!

Lesson three will deal with insurance and why you should have had some before attempting the practical module of lesson one.

The Wood Fairy

## Natter, natter, natter...


We have a good old chinwag as you can see from our March Natter.

We now have a Magazine Swap, with titles for cooking, gardening, stories and more. Bring yours or borrow!

Do come along - all welcome!



Join us for  
**Neighbours' Natter** 2023

 Magazine Swap

**Weston-on-the-Green Village Hall**

**Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> and May 11<sup>th</sup> 10am - Noon**

**£1.00 for coffee or tea and a biscuit**





# Community transport

Our generously donated Community Transport vehicle is now registered, taxed and insured, with a number of volunteer drivers ready and waiting to provide transport to hospital or surgeries as required.

We obviously do not want to compete with our new regular bus service but if there are those residents with mobility issues that prevent you from using the bus, then our Community Transport can also be used for trips to Oxford or Bicester as necessary. The vehicle is equipped with a wheelchair hoist.

Please in the first instance contact Sarah Smith on 07557 557304, giving as much notice as possible and Sarah will co-ordinate with the drivers.

Any questions or enquiries in the meantime please contact me.  
Graham Barnett, 01869 350707



## Early birds

A diary entry for Monday, 13th February 2023: 'Got up early and walked to the bus stop near Oxford Court/Ben Jonson, in order to catch the first service of the new No. 24 Bicester – Weston on the Green – Oxford bus.' I assumed that I would be the only mad person to catch a bus at 06.38 in the morning!!! However, Graham B. had thought similarly so we travelled into Oxford together – the first passengers on the new route. We had an hour in Oxford (in MacDonalds) before catching

the 08.30am bus back home to Weston.

The bonus of the going to Oxford at that time of the morning is that most of the shops are closed and there's not many people about. The downside is that the 'old person's bus pass' doesn't come into operation until later in the day so we had to pay. I've yet to try the Bicester part of the service. Such is the excitement of being a senior citizen and a Village News reporter!!!



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## Buzzards and Flying Teaspoons.

For the last few years I've often seen a pair of buzzards sitting in trees or on top of hedges near the airfield. On a warm summer's day they would be soaring effortlessly on the thermals looking out for young rabbits. But in winter it's easier for them to scavenge on 'road kill' and this is what one of them was doing near the Akeman Street junction a few weeks ago.

Unfortunately, they are not a bird that can quickly fly off and this one was hit by a car and left lying in the middle of the road. I thought it might possibly be still alive and stopped to pick it up. There was hardly a mark on it but it was definitely dead. I took it home and gave it a proper burial in the 'wild-life and pets cemetery' at the bottom of the garden but not before taking a few pictures of it.

Back to ornithology. No news of the barn owls - they are using the nest box in our roof to roost in during the day but have yet to lay any eggs (end of March, early April is the normal time for this). I'm spending a small fortune on bird food and the highlight so far this year has been the gangs of long-tailed tits that seem addicted to the suet balls. The record currently stands at ten birds on one feeder. Groups of birds have such wonderful collective nouns,



such as a 'charm of goldfinches', a 'clattering of jackdaws' and a 'banditry of long-tailed tits' – I especially like that one as they do go round like a gang of excited

schoolchildren. They also have the nickname of being called 'flying teaspoons' – very appropriate.

Bob Hessian

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Coronation Family Picnic & Parade**






 **May 7th  
2023**

 **1pm Parade  
from Village Hall Car Park**

 **2pm Games, Crafts, BBQ  
Jubilee playing field**

 **Fancy Dress (optional)  
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**Weston on the Green Memorial Village Hall**  
**Table Top Sale & Coffee Morning**



**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

**9.30am-12.30pm**

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## John Howell MP writes...



**I**N ORDER TO MEET the copy deadlines for many of the parish magazines published in communities across the constituency I have to write in the first part of the month. This month my deadline comes ahead of the Spring Budget which I know many await, hoping that some of the Government support towards the cost of living will continue. Much is widely heralded, and I have no advanced insights beyond those already published in the media. However I am optimistic that the energy support will be extended to get us through the rest of the colder months this year. As always there will be much comment in the public domain when the Budget Statement is made by the Chancellor and the Treasury publish the details.

Most people will have received the energy support automatically through their energy provider. However there are a number of households not on mainstream supply or who have other specific arrangements, such as Park Homes. In February the alternative scheme to ensure that support is available to such households went live for everyone and applications for support to the Alternative Energy Support Scheme can be made online.

With the coming of Spring we are perhaps a little more aware of the countryside around us and in recent weeks I have had

a number of people contact me to comment on the litter that we see on verges and in other public places. I agree that this is an eyesore and we need to keep drawing attention to the need for people to take their rubbish home or use the bins provided. In recognition of the problem the Government published its National Litter Strategy in 2017 which set out a number of ways to tackle the problem. This has been regularly reviewed and initiatives such as The Great British Beach Clean and the Great British Spring Clean have been well supported by volunteers across the country. This year the Great British Spring Clean will take place between Friday 17 March and Sunday 2 April. Our District Councils take the lead on this and you can find full details on this, including health and safety advice, information on loan of equipment and collection of filled bags on SODC website. As far as I can see Cherwell has yet to publish information.

Thankfully most of our children progress through mainstream education with little problem. However there are some children who have special educational needs and I know that accessing this is not always easy. The delays can cause considerable stress for children and their families and the time lost can be critical. This is not just a local problem and the Department for Education has been looking to see what changes

need to be made to improve the system. Following consultation the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan has just been published with the aim of ensuring that the right support is given at the right time and in the right place. This is fully supported by the Department for Health and Social Care. There is much work to be done in this area but the publication of this plan and the associated measures for improvement are an important step in the right direction. It is backed with substantial funding and oversight of reform will be provided through a new national special educational needs and disabilities and alternative provision implementation board, chaired by senior ministers.

There are, of course, many big issues which affect us all which are well rehearsed in the national media and which the government is already working to address. If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. If you would like to know more about my work on behalf of the Government, and in the Constituency, please do look at my website. The address is [www.johnhowell.org.uk](http://www.johnhowell.org.uk). My contact details are also on the website.





# From your local councillors

## Launton & Otmoor District Update March 2023

Spring really is just round the corner hopefully, although the recent cold snap reminded us that winter had not quite given up yet. As always, we hope you are staying safe.

### London Road level crossing

Some of you have asked how this is progressing, and the sorry answer is, very slowly. We are committed to keeping the crossing open to avoid cutting off half of Bicester and requiring people to go round the ring road to get to the other side of town. There are several options which keep coming to the table, yet no decision has yet been made. These include an overpass or underpass for pedestrians and vehicles, or a cycle and foot bridge only. There are more consultations planned, and we meet regularly with EWR to question them on this. We have support from OCC members on this as well. This missed opportunity when the Bicester Town station was re-developed is a real pain point for all us and we will continue to represent your views on this and push to a resolution, with a recent motion passed at the full Council meeting in February.



### Local housing land supply and the Local Plan

As we mentioned last month, the Local Plan came before the Leadership Executive committee at CDC and a decision was postponed indefinitely while they considered comments from the Overview and Scrutiny committee. No change there I am afraid, however one positive development (no pun intended) to note is a new Housing Land Supply figure was agreed.

The UK government requires councils to plan for and accommodate a housing land supply that exceeds 5 years. Essentially calculating the number of houses needed and the amount of land available in the area. We have been short on that figure, 3.5 years, and so speculative development has been fairly rampant, including in Launton, as developers point at this and say "you need to build these houses anywhere". The CDC Executive recently passed a revised land supply figure of 5.4 years due to a number of recent changes. Pending ratification by

HM Planning Inspectorate, this will close that "loophole" and should make this development much more difficult to approve.

Keep an eye on up to date information on closures and more details can be found at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/future-transport-projects/ploughley-road-a41-junction>

### Voter ID for elections 2023

Just a reminder that you will need a form of ID to take with you to the polling station for the May elections. You can find out more at <https://www.cherwell0dc.gov.uk/voterid>.

You can find out more about Voter ID at the CDC website: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/voterid>

### That's it!

Thank you for reading all the way to the bottom if you have! Please do get in touch on 01869 717712 or via email at [gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or [angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:angus.patrick@cherwell-dc.gov.uk).



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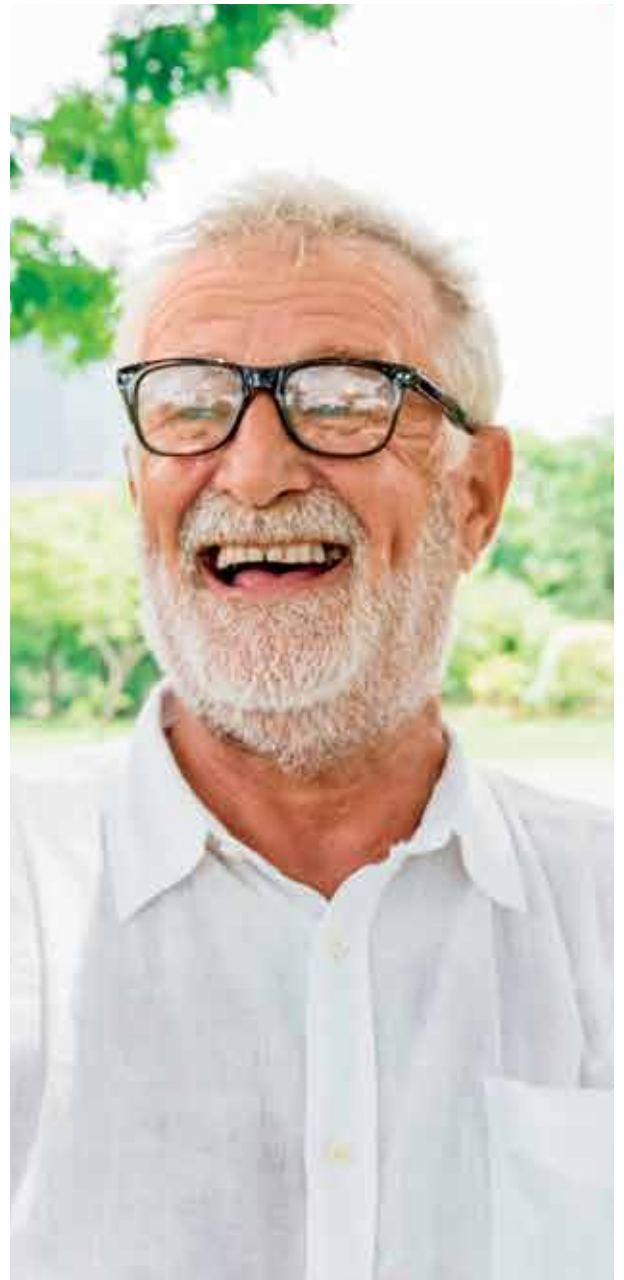
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# Dates for the Diary

1st April	2.30 pm	Garden Club Spring Show
4th April	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves lunch
5th April	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
13th April	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
18th April	7.30 pm	Annual Parish Meeting
19th April	7.30 pm	WI Meeting
22nd April	9.30 am – 12.30 pm	Tabletop Sale & Coffee Morning
2nd May	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves Lunch
3rd May	7.30 pm	Annual Parish Council meeting
4th May	7.00 am – 10.00 pm	Local Elections (NB: photo ID needed to vote)
6th May	Timing TBC	Coronation & Afternoon Tea
7th May	1.00 pm	Coronation Picnic and Parade
8th May	7.30 pm	Weston Society
11th May	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
13th May	Timing TBC	Eurovision Song Contest Party with Bingo
17th May	7.30 pm	WI Meeting



**WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN  
VILLAGE PANTRY & POST OFFICE**

## FRIENDS PRODUCE

As ever thank you to Mick AKA The Wood Fairy, to Corinne AKA The Brownie Queen, to Toddy AKA The Jeweller of Nature and to Mandy AKA Weston's Mary Berry for their contributions towards this initiative raising funds for St Mary's Church and the Village Hall. The total raised in the shop since the last edition of the Village News is £362.14

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