

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

# TheVillageNews

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2023



Photograph by Joseph Coyle



## Village Directory

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Village Hall Bookings

Jordie and Andrew Wilson

01869 350992

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WESTON SOCIETY

WESTON WALKERS

FOOTPATH WARDEN

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#### GARDEN CLUB

Emma Bernard: 01869 350312

Gerald Bushby: 01869 351730

#### GOLDEN LEAVES

Alison Townsend: 01869 350569

#### WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (WI)

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#### NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Bob Hessian: 01869 350662

#### NEIGHBOURS NATTER

COFFEE MORNING

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# From the editor

It's been a year since I edited my first edition of the Village News. Looking back over that time it's extraordinary to think we've seen three Prime Ministers, two Monarchs, a jubilee, a state funeral and a coronation.

Alongside all the national ups and downs, Weston's calendar continues its cyclical path, from celebrating Harvest Festival to Christmas via village events such as commemorating 50 years of the Village Hall alongside a few royal occasions thrown in too. The village is fantastic at coming together for all the many different events and we are so lucky to have wonderful people prepared to give up their time to ensure things happen.

The SOS Committee have been doing just that and a huge amount of progress has been made since they formed in February. There's a report on what they've been working on in the past six months and an outline of their plan to save the Village Pantry and Post Office on p. 10.

However, as the report makes clear, they urgently need more volunteers to join the committee to help them through the next stages. Without more help, it's unlikely they'll be able to continue and the future of the Weston Pantry and Post Office will hang in the balance. We all lead exceedingly busy lives but if you feel strongly about how important the shop is to the village, it would be wonderful if you were able to join them.

In the meantime, despite the lack of sunshine at the moment, I hope you all enjoy your summer holidays.



**Deadline for October/November edition:  
5th OCTOBER 2023**



## A letter from the Rector

### Gareth Miller

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

Dear friends,

Two days ago I came back from a lovely week in Spain - lovely, but a trifle hot, with an average daily temperature of 34 degrees. And as I write temperatures in southern and eastern Europe are soaring into the 40s and the Parthenon has been closed to tourists.

Meanwhile, here at home I am sitting at my desk (on St

Swithun's Day!) watching torrential rain soak my garden while huge gusts of wind assail the trees and shrubbery.

Let no one doubt that climate change is happening, and seemingly at an exponential rate. I don't think it particularly helpful to lay the blame on past generations, on those who pioneered the industrial revolution. They were doing what they felt was right and obvious at the time, to make human progress and well-being more viable by extracting the earth's resources. We know now, of course, that these resources are finite, and that in large measure the use of fossil fuels contributes to the heating of the planet.

The Bible teaches us that we are stewards, not masters of creation. As our technological skills and knowledge increase, so may we find new and more wholesome ways of sharing the goods that earth affords, and in such a way that enhances rather than diminishes the lives of the poorest inhabitants of Mother Earth.

## BENEFICE NEWS

### Ordinands

Three ordinands, Sam Durley, Alistair Milne, and Fran Smettem, all of whom have spent time worshipping and learning with us in different ways over the past year or two, were ordained at Petertide: Sam at Oxford Cathedral, Ali at Guildford, and Fran at Wells. Gareth was privileged to attend the first two. Our warm congratulations and prayers for them.

### Swedish Visitors

In September we will be welcoming a large party (25!) of visitors from our link parish of Mönsterås och Fliseryd in Sweden. They will be here from 15-19 September, and will be joining in church and village life, meeting Bishop Gavin, and visiting local places of interest. Huge thanks to all those who have offered to accommodate them. You are very warmly invited to join them in a special service in Kirtlington Church on Sunday 17 September at 1100, especially (but not only!) if you have any Swedish connections.

### Deanery Walk

On Saturday 30 September we are holding our fifth Deanery Walk – this time an urban one, around the churches and places of interest in Bicester. Meet at St Edburg's Church at 13:30.

### Websites

A reminder to find out more about what is going on in the wider church by visiting the following websites:

[www.akemanbenefice.org](http://www.akemanbenefice.org)  
[www.oxford.anglican.org](http://www.oxford.anglican.org)  
[www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

Akeman Benefice

## Rise & Shine café

drop-in café for young and old. Play and crafts for little ones, tea and cake for everyone!

EVERY WEDNESDAY | 0915-1045  
KIRTLINGTON CHURCH

### August and September services at St Mary's Church, Weston on the Green

6th August	18:00	Evensong (BCP service)
13th August	11:00	Café Church
20th August	11:00	Holy Communion
3rd September	16:00	Family Service
10th September	11:00	Morning Worship
24th September	11:00	Harvest Service followed by Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall at 12:30 pm

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

# Balancing the books

In this issue we propose to address the difficult topic of our church finances.

There is a perception that the church is very wealthy and does not really need parishioners' money. Yes, the Church of England has assets in the amount of £10.3 Billion, but a sizeable portion is restricted by the conditions of donors' wills and endowments. Some of these assets consist of land and buildings, which cannot be easily sold and converted into cash.

As a parish, our church is left to its own devices to support itself financially and that is the reality we face. The wardens and the PCC are trying to engage with the church hierarchy to loosen their purse strings to invest in the future of rural churches, but that is a slow process.

The table below is the comparative financial data for the six months ended June 30th, 2023 versus 2022.

Category	2022	2023	Variance
Unrestricted Income	£7,746	£5,532	(£2,214)
Restricted Income	£0	£0	£0
Total Income	£7,746	£5,532	(£2,214)
Operating Expenses	£3,889*	£5,769	£1,880
Capital Expenditures	£0	£0	£0
Total Expenses	£3,889	£5,769	£1,880
Surplus (Deficit)	£3,857	(£323)	(£4,180)

\*The 2022 Parish Share payment (£1,988) was delayed until the third quarter 2022. Parish Share is our contribution to cover the costs of the clergy team.

The core cause for concern is the on-going decline in Unrestricted Income. This is a consequence of

the death of several parishioners during the Covid-19 epidemic who were consistent Stewardship donors, combined with the decline in attendance at Sunday services post Covid, resulting in the drop of collections.

As mentioned in previous articles, we have reduced our expenses to the minimum but we are facing increasing demands for maintenance of the building and churchyard. We also have a wish list of projects, such as the installation of a sound system, more energy efficient lighting etc.

There will be periodic fundraising activities to help undertake projects to improve the experience of attending church. We will also be launching a stewardship campaign in September to improve our financial situation.

Stewardship is not solely about money. It is also about giving time to support the church and the community as a whole. We need help to maintain the garden, to help repair equipment and our facilities. If you can help us please let the wardens know so we can establish a rota.

Finally, we need to re-establish our regular giving income to not only balance the budget, but also to ensure we have a constant income to meet our day-to-day expenses.

We hope you will generously consider joining our campaign.

## FROM THE REGISTER

### Wedding

22nd July Adam Chaplin and Eleanor Rose

### Harvest Service

This will be held on 24th September at 11.00 am followed by a Harvest Lunch in the Village Hall.

We very much hope this will be an occasion when we can gather as villagers to give thanks with those from the farming community.

All most welcome.



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# Chair's comments

**T**HE PARISH COUNCIL has had a very busy two months. The arrival of summer brought some beautiful days and some very hot days which reminded us of the heat wave of last summer. Time to check that you have everything handy that you will need to keep cool. Last summer the Parish Council tried to identify those who were at risk in the heat and provided fans and cool packs. The provision has been written into our Emergency Planning Policy.

## In the bank

The food bank collection continues the first Saturday of each month in front of the Village Pantry and Post Office from 9.00 am to 12 noon. The Parish Council works with the Village Hall Committee and St. Mary's Church to run this collection. Our July collection amounted to 107.66 kgs of food and toiletries. Thank you so much to those who contributed both food and cash. It was concerning to see so many empty shelves in the food bank and they are very concerned about being able to support the large numbers of people needing help with food and household supplies over the summer. I was shown the bags they put together and shelves

where people can help themselves – all very basic. The next collection takes place on August 5th.

## Neighbourhood boost

Good news from Thames Valley Police that the number of neighbourhood police constables is set to double across the Thames Valley. This will increase the number of officers available to deal with local crime in the region – 80

additional officers. Restructuring of the teams will re-establish policing at a local level. I've been reflecting on what this could mean for our village. It would be helpful to have quick response to the front door traders that have appeared lately. We would benefit from confidence that a reported issue or crime would be followed up in a timely matter.



### Volunteer drivers urgently wanted for our community van.

The service has helped a number of residents over the past few months! • Regular driving licence.  
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### Council matters

Representing the Parish Council, I attended the Oxfordshire County Council training day on June 27th. My full report is on the website ([westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk](http://westononthegreen-pc.gov.uk)) but one highlight was the address by the newly appointed CEO Martin Reeves. He stated that parish councils are important, that OCC needs to "reset, re-imagine some of the relationships" and is keen on partnerships. He stated that OCC is stuck in some areas by a lack of decisiveness and is overly fascinated with vertical structures. One large area that needs to change is discussions across historic structures to find resolutions more quickly. Hopefully, increased engagement will result in less frustration as the Parish Council tries to resolve issues (oak tree path and potholes).

The Cherwell District Council semi-annual Parish Liaison meeting was also in June. Again, my full report is on the webpage, but a key takeaway was that although Cherwell is doing well with the initiative of special food bins – collected 4,000 tons last year – the same amount of food is found in the green bin. It would be very helpful if all households used the food bin for all food waste. The issue of dogs, dog poo and dog bins are a long-standing concern. For the most part our dog owners

act responsibly. However, there are still some unwanted surprises left around the village and we could do more to reduce that by using the poo bags and bins. For householders and landowners who have planning concerns please note that the role of duty officer has been re-instated so that could be helpful if there are immediate questions and concerns. There is delay to responding to planning applications, but the team is working as quickly as they can with the resources they have.

### Waiting on traffic

The Traffic Advisory Committee has met and is attempting to push the application to have the speed limit on the B430 reduced in line with sections of the road that run through other villages. Again, we have been confronted with a long waiting period but will continue to work on behalf of the village to create a less frantic road. Traffic is compounded by the increased development in the area and the use of the road by lorries trying to avoid the chaos often found on the A34. We are affected by the road closures around and through Chesterton. Our concerns have been expressed to OCC Highways. The Great Wolf Resort team assured us and the Inspector at the Inquiry that they valued the local community and would work with us to mitigate any disruption

during the build. We don't see any evidence of this and are affirmed in our strong objection to the project.

We now need more volunteers to manage the grass, keep the children's play area by the weir tidy and help clear overgrowth. We'll be contacting those of you who have helped with the picnic clearing and hope that others will come forward and help us with this necessary work. Please give me a call or email me – contact details at the front of the magazine.

### Bio hero

The Parish Council is looking for a Biodiversity Champion! We touch upon it in bits, but the village would benefit from someone who could give it a look as a whole and guide us to actions that would benefit the natural environment. Future planning applications could refer to an updated policy about it in our Neighbourhood Plan. If you feel you could contribute please call Diane Bohm or contact any of our councillors to discuss the role.

Lastly, please feel free to contact the Parish Council Clerk or any member of the Parish Council if you have a problem. We do not get involved in social media discussion unless it is a clarification. Problem? Complaint? Please phone!

Diane Bohm, Chair

## OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Late opening for Recycling Centres

All recycling centres will be open until 8 o'clock every Thursday until 28th September 2023.

When you visit, please separate your items to maximise what can be recycled, including:

- Clothes and textiles e.g. old clothes, curtains, towels
- Scrap metal e.g. screws, saucepans, broken cutlery
- Small appliances e.g. iron, broken electric toothbrush or mobile phone



# Planning Update

Planning applications relating to the parish are discussed at each Parish Council meeting and a report is placed on the Parish Council website. Full information regarding each application is available via the Planning and Building section on the Cherwell District Council website.

## BUILDING APPLICATIONS:

### Decisions Received – Permitted

23/01120/LB – Hazel Cottage, Northampton Road  
Variation of condition 5 (occupancy of building) of CHS.LB.601/86 - Condition no.5 states that the office can only be used as an architect's office.

23/01041/F – Gallos Brook House, Church Lane  
Removal of existing conservatory and replacement with single storey extension.

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.

23/00736/F – Williams Cottage, North Lane  
Demolition of existing single storey rear extension and entrance canopy and removal of existing detached shed. Proposed erection of replacement, single-storey rear extension, replacement entrance porch, replacement of existing timber windows and internal alterations to include works to existing first floor structure, relocation of first floor bathroom



and refurbishments. Window detail TBC.

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 the external stairs, the removal of two trees, and the extension of the garage and workshop/garden store.

### Awaiting Decision

23/00994/F – Family Farm, A34 South  
Installation of a new Outdoor Swimming Pool (10m x 3m), Associated hard soft landscaping and conversion of existing outbuilding into a swimming pool plant building.

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. Issues relating to Condition 4 (underfloor heating and finish).

23/00725/F – Kemsley Barn  
Construction of double garage with home office in roof space above.

23/01455/DISC – Kemsley Farm  
Discharge of condition – drainage scheme.

22/03709/F - Starbucks A34  
Addition of a drive-through facility and parking changes.  
The proposal is for the addition of a small serving window with flat roof overhead on the north-west face of the existing building and rerouting traffic in and out of the site. Highways wish to delay decision pending further assessment of traffic safety impact.

23/01351/LB – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane  
Replacing floor substructure in kitchen and bathroom. Material change to insulation layer of permeable slab.

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# News from Oxfordshire County Council



## OCC Seeks Government Permission to Adopt Lane Rental Scheme

Utilities and other companies who close Oxfordshire's roads could be encouraged to minimise congestion and disruption when they carry out their work or face financial penalties of up to £2,500 a day. OCC will ask the government to allow it to introduce a lane rental scheme (LRS) which allows organisations working on the county's busiest roads at the busiest times to face extra charges. If approved, the LRS would encourage those working on the highway to prioritise off-peak hours and to complete the work as quickly as possible to reduce their costs. Surplus money raised by the council would be used to help manage and improve the highway network.

## Pothole Innovation Trial

After a winter that saw the number of potholes reported in Oxfordshire double compared to the same period last year and heavy criticism from the public, a trial has taken place aimed at improving the repair process. On Monday and Tuesday, 26 - 27 June, OCC and its highways contractor Milestone Infrastructure used the road between Steventon and East Hanney as a test site to trial seven different methods of filling in potholes or repairing minor defects requiring 'patching'. Some of these methods are already used in Oxfordshire – including the Milestone dragon patcher – while the others were new ones sourced by Milestone. The Hanney/Steventon Road was closed and a 1km stretch was divided into sections. Each section had a different type of pothole or patch repair carried out to get a direct comparison of the various methods. Last year, Milestone Infrastructure, a part of M Group Services, repaired 31,413 road defects. This was against a backdrop of perfect pothole-forming weather conditions – a prolonged freeze over winter followed by a protracted period of wet weather, which led to an unprecedented increase in the number of emergency pothole repairs. The trial will allow comparisons of the type of repair, equipment, material, and labour used, and the time taken. This would include an understanding of the potential results, longevity of repairs, waste generated, carbon impact, use of recycled content and productivity that may be achievable. The next stage will involve contractors returning for at least four more days of work and additional testing and analysis to enable a longer-term review of the methods.

## SEND Ofsted Inspection

We were notified by Ofsted that an inspection will be carried out this month of local services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The services within the Oxfordshire local area partnership include Education, Health, Social Care and Families, and the inspection is designed to make sure the services offered by the council and our partners are effective.

The inspection will take place between 13 and 21 July. During this period, there will be five inspectors on site from 17 to 21 July, with specialisms across education, health and social care.



## £2 Bus Fare Cap

The Government have extended the scheme until 31st October 2023. From 1st November the bus fare cap will change to £2.50 for single tickets until November 2024.

**O**N THE 11TH JULY at the Village Hall, the Weston SOS Committee outlined their vision and plan for community ownership of the Weston Pantry Shop and Post Office. The attendance at the meeting was lower than we had hoped, although we're optimistic that it was a result of the summer holiday season and our limited ability to 'get the word out' rather than a lack of support!

After five months of evaluating the different options and the opinion of the local community from the survey, we believe that community ownership of the Shop and PO is the only way to ensure the long-term success of the Weston Pantry as an asset to Weston and the surrounding villages.

From the work that we've done, the Shop and PO doesn't offer sufficiently attractive returns as an investment opportunity and the idea of moving the Shop and PO in the short-term to an alternate premises is likely to take too long or result in the loss of the Post Office contract - essential to its continued operation. We have agreed that we would support sale on the open market to an interested party. However, no-one has expressed an interest and there is always a risk of a change of direction of the shop (products, service, or staff), that we end up in the same situation again in a few years' time or that it could close or eventually be redeveloped. This is why we believe community ownership to be the best course of action.

### Community shares

To summarise our plan briefly: We're pursuing the community shares route which will allow the local community to 'own' part of the Shop and PO and have a say in how it is run and operated through an elected management




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## An Update from Weston SOS on the future of the Weston Pantry

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committee. We'll keep the shop largely the same in terms of its products, services and staff but we have identified opportunities for improvement from the survey and our discussions – some renovation work, greater accessibility and increasing the café offering with additional seating.

More information on how we will achieve this will be posted to our website ([weston-sos.org](http://weston-sos.org)) and shared with residents over the coming weeks and months.

### Significant progress

We've made significant progress on our plan already – we've been awarded a fully-funded support package from the government's community ownership fund (COF) and the Plunkett Foundation to assist in the development of our business plan. We've carried out surveys and valuations as part of our due diligence on the current shop. We've had a successful Expression of Interest from the COF and passed through Stage 1 for a large grant – if we're successful that's a funding package worth up to £300,000 towards the purchase of the Shop and PO.

At the meeting, we identified four major risks to our plan – the

current size of the committee, being unable to raise sufficient funds, finding a replacement sub-postmaster, and making sure that the timescales are acceptable to the current owner. The first of which, the size of the committee, is our most pressing concern.

When the committee first formed in February, we were open minded about the vision for the shop – as we've narrowed down to a plan of community ownership, some committee members have left due to differing views about the shop's future and some due to personal reasons (and I am grateful to them all for putting themselves forward and their support).

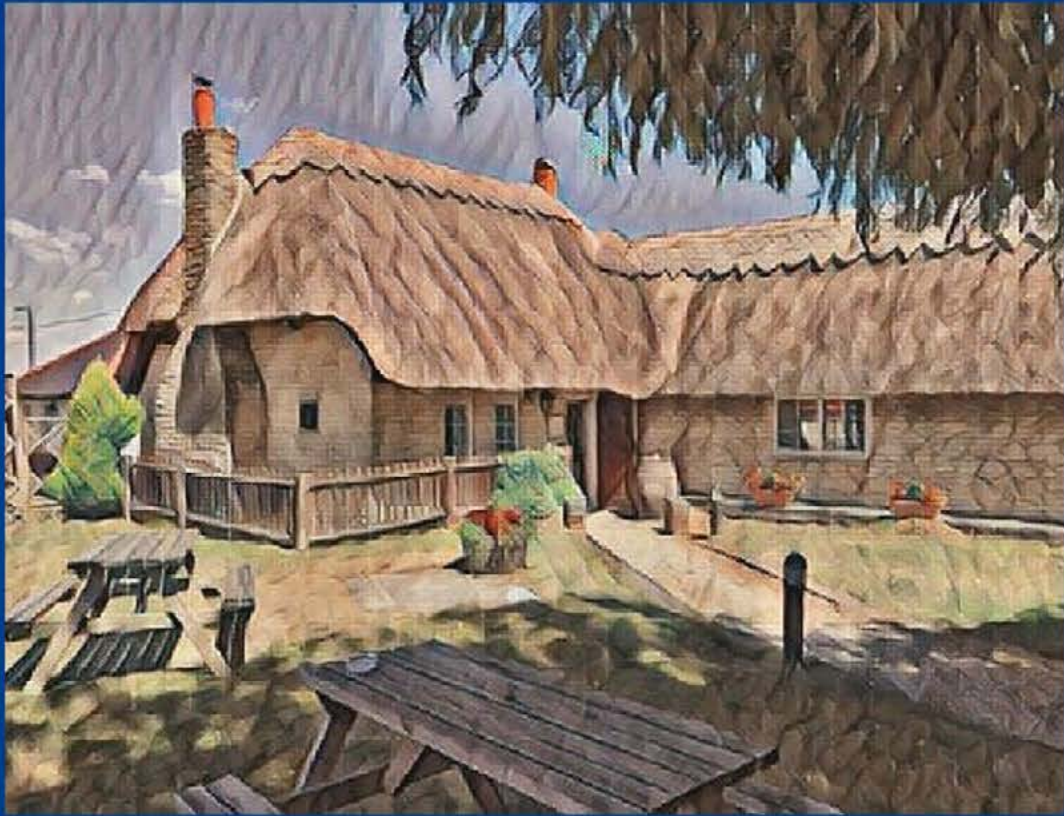
### Additional support needed

The committee is now reduced to just four members, including the loss of our treasurer and secretary. Without additional committee support, we will be unable to proceed with our plan and the Shop and PO will be sold on the open market. I would encourage anyone who wants to 'Save our Shop' and can spare some time to support the committee to step forward at the earliest opportunity.

As always, you can find out more on our website ([www.weston-sos.org](http://www.weston-sos.org)) or by emailing the Committee ([committee@weston-sos.org](mailto:committee@weston-sos.org)) or myself, the Chair ([chair@weston-sos.org](mailto:chair@weston-sos.org)).

Now is the time we most need your support, or we will have no choice but to recommend that the current owner sells the Weston Pantry on the open market and its future will be uncertain.

**Sam Sharp**  
Weston SOS Chair  
[chair@westonsos.org](mailto:chair@westonsos.org)



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## Flower power



We have received lots of lovely comments about the garden and the fantastic show of foxgloves, roses and alliums. The roses, in particular, have been stunning so far this season. As ever, our thanks go to Ed and Sally who help us maintain the garden and to Graham for keeping the lawns in such pristine condition. We'd also like to send our get well wishes to our previous Village Hall gardeners, Bill and Joy, and look forward to seeing them at the Hall very soon.

## Totally floored by changes

Villagers using the Hall may notice some changes in recent weeks. As part of our on-going maintenance programme we have recently upgraded and replaced the flooring in the loos to match the flooring in the foyer. The old flooring had

served the Hall for many years and had worn away in places so the new floor is very welcome.

We have also added a lovely piece of art work to the foyer, a watercolour of Mrs Abraham's

cottage (the thatched cottage next-door to the shop), and we are very grateful to the family of Julia and Ian White for gifting the painting to the Village Hall.



## 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

*Many thanks and happy reading!*

## Save the Date!

For those villagers on our email list you may have read our advance notice for the annual firework night at the playing field. The event will be taking place on Saturday 28th October with the gates opening at 6.15pm and the display starting at 7pm (for approx. twenty minutes). We will be serving hot snacks, mulled wine and other drinks as in previous years. Once again, the entrance fee is a minimum donation of £1 with any profits going towards the 2024 display. We do hope you can save the date and join us for the evening.

## 250 CLUB RESULTS

### June 2023

*June & December are 'bumper' draws with prizes of £90, £45 and £15. Congratulations to the winners.*

1st prize £90	184	Diane Bohm
2nd prize £45	13	Diane Bohm
3rd prize £15	182	Mandy Jones

### July 2023

1st prize £18	107	Robin Stafford Allen
2nd Prize £12	220	Tony Holt
3rd Prize £6	02	Carole Sweetnam

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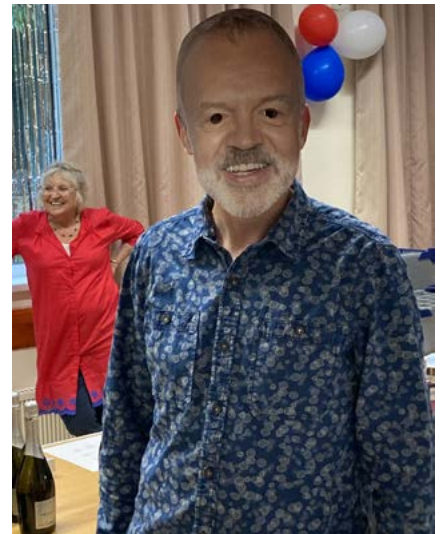
## Birthday BBQ

The current Hall celebrated its 50th birthday on 19th May, but having already hosted the Coronation Tea and Eurovision within a week of each other in May, we pushed the celebrations into July. Once again, the Hall was decorated with bunting, the BBQ was lit and the Aunt Sally was all ready to go.



## Eurofun

We'd like to thank everyone who supported our Eurovision event back in May. Just over sixty villagers joined us for the evening (some in Eurovision costumes!). We were also joined by three Ukrainian families and we were delighted to share the evening with them. The Hall was bedecked with flags from all the participating nations, with extra Union Jacks and Ukrainian flags as table decorations and interspersed with the other flags on display in the Hall, glitzy metallic fringe curtains, 'nul' and 'douze' points placards to wave and lots of balloons.



The buffet table was groaning with food and a big thank you to Toddy for the Coronation chicken and Mandy for the chilli. The event was streamed live from Liverpool and we had a Eurovision quiz and Eurovision cliché bingo to keep us entertained. Of course, we also had voting cards and the Weston winners of Eurovision 2023 were Finland with 'Cha Cha Cha', closely followed by the 'real' winner, Sweden's Loreen with 'Tattoo' and in third place, Norway with 'Queen of Kings'. It was a great evening with lots of audience participation and Eurovision spirit!



Our thanks go to Peter, Andrew (Taylor) and Eric for the BBQ, Andrew, Clive and Paul for the bar, which included the ever-popular beers from Wiggly Monkey, Robin for setting up the Aunt Sally kit and backdrop, John Miller for the chairs and the Donnes for the picnic benches. The 70s inspired raffle proved to be very popular with the space hopper being one of the most coveted items!

The Aunt Sally match was, as ever, full of good-natured rivalry and fierce competition. The eventual winners were the North of the Village with 17 'dolls' to the South's 11. Special congratulations go to Sally and David of North Lane who scored 5 of the 17 dolls to give victory to the North.

Thank you to everyone who supports the Hall in whatever way. The support at events, clubs and societies keeps the Hall at the heart of the community and part of village life. Here's to the next fifty years!

# Ben Jonson

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## UNDER

## NEW

# MANAGEMENT

## Welcoming You Back Soon

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# Walking Weston's we



*Monk's Walk looking from the Manor towards the village. the central line of stones is clear, the width of the cart track just shows to the right of the centre line marked by a break in the lie of the stones and to the left of the centre by an indentation. The track falls away on the left in the middle distance – possibly due to carts pulling 'downhill' with an arm of the moat making ground softer.*

**M**ONK'S WALK IS A PATHWAY, within the grounds of Weston Manor Hotel, linking the Manor and the church and/or the mill. When I first came to Weston, in the early 1970s, it was just that, and I often used it to shorten my journey to the Post Office. However, it became overgrown and ill-kept and, until recently, was no longer used much. In the late 1990s the area was cleared by volunteers, their labour being paid for in the form of a donation from the then-owner of the hotel towards repairs on the church. At the time one parishioner wrote down the findings of investigations into the origin and construction of the path.

He described it as an overgrown, grassy and tree-lined path and it took several weekends to cut and slash back overgrown boxwood, holly, limes, elderberry and other shrubs and to cut through tree and ivy roots which had grown between the stones of the path. The number of species growing in this hedge line would indicate an age of at least 5-600 years, pre-dating the Reformation. Having cleared the area the construction of the path was investigated.

The path runs in a more or less straight line from East to West from what had been outbuildings associated with the Manor along an embankment between a ditch to the north and the lawn of the hotel to the south. This lawn shows a darker stretch of grass where part of the originally three-sided moat was filled in sometime in the second half of the 19th century.

## **What's in a name?**

The name of the path suggests that it pre-dates the ownership of the manor by the Norreys and then Bertie families and could date from the 16th century or earlier. Before the Reformation, the Manor was part of Oseney Abbey - the house of Augustinian canons founded in Oxford as a priory in 1129, becoming an abbey around 1154 – and was lived in mostly by a bailiff responsible for overseeing the production of produce for the abbey.

The 80 metres or so of the path still existing is a well-laid surface more than 2 metres wide made up of narrow stones, laid on edge, laterally across the 2 metre width. There are 3 rows of single, narrow stones, also laid edgewise, running the full length of the path. Two of these three form a kerb on each side and the third forms a central division of the path into two halves.

It is thought that this represents quite an investment in materials and labour and must have been used for



# Well-trodden path

heavy traffic – maybe the transport of grain from the Manor barns to the mill for flour production. The path shows evidence of heavy usage by wheeled vehicles, probably hand carts with a width between the wheels of about 1.5 metres and wheels with rims of about 4-6cm.

## Steep camber

Probably in an attempt to keep the surface of the path free draining, there is a camber along the length sloping towards the south and the former arm of the moat and in some places this edge has degraded while the northern kerb is virtually undamaged. At some points, the wheel ruts deviate, maybe because the camber was too steep or because of overhanging branches on the north side of the path and damaged areas have been infilled with coarse gravel. I guess heavy hand carts were like present-day supermarket trolleys and would have a mind of their own. In one place the wheel rut on the northern (higher) side of the path is only 20cm from the centre of the path and the lower wheel rut on the south side, close to the moat, is well outside the original line of the path.

And so villagers gave up their weekends, worked hard, raised money for the church and exposed a path which had probably been in use when Oseney Abbey acquired Weston in the 11th Century. The hedge along the length of the path probably dated from the 12-13th century and it was not until the 16th century that private ownership of the Manor (and the village) might have changed its usage.

However, even after the Reformation the village and Manor remained just part of much larger holdings and it was not until the middle of the 19th century that the owners lived in the manor.

As a final addition to the story, the original mill in Weston was close to the Bletchington road, not far from the end of the path and was only moved to its present location off Mill Lane in the 18th century, but would still have been approached via the same route. The mill continued in use until the early 20th century, milling corn grown in the parish to supply flour to bakers trading here.

I am thankful for the notes gathered by Mr Brian Wilson, which he gave to the village archive before his death.



*Monk's Walk looking towards the Manor, again the centre line is clear. Here the vegetation has encroached on the left hand side of the track but the general pattern remains.*



## Weston-on-the-Green WI

The talk at our May meeting was given by Jill Saint, a member from Bletchington, on her experiences in the early 1970s as a dresser and wardrobe assistant at the Oxford Playhouse. It was a very illuminating account of what happens behind the scenes, from the hilarious to the mishaps! She worked with many stars, most of whom were very friendly and co-operative, a few less pleasant! We won't be able to watch anything at the Playhouse now without wondering what is happening backstage and if the safety pins are handy.

Our social meeting on the 21st June was a meal at the Chequers when 25 members and guests enjoyed delicious meals and entertaining quizzes. Our last meeting before the summer break is on the 19th of July when Sheila Churchill's talk is entitled TB or not to be. Although we don't have a regular meeting in August, a lunch and coffee mornings are being planned. On the 20th September we have a welcome return visit by Mariella Bliss who will demonstrate more Italian cooking and tell us about her life growing up in Italy.

An 'extra' outing for several members and friends was on Saturday, June 10th to Primrose Cottage garden in Steeple Aston. Richard Preston had visited us in

January and showed some beautiful slides of the, one acre, garden which he and his wife have planned and planted over the last 20 years. It was a lovely afternoon and we sat in the sun afterwards and enjoyed tea and cakes prepared by his wife.

We would like to invite all ladies to join us and several are already from Bletchington and other villages. If you are new to either village or even a long, time resident it's a great way to make new friends. 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 7.30pm. In addition, we have theatre and other visits, plus occasional coffee mornings and lunches. We also have a craft afternoon on the 4th Monday at 2pm and walks on the 2nd Monday at 1.30pm, both which were WI initiatives although you don't need to be a member to take part.

We'd love to see you - please contact our secretary Lyn Barnett on 01869 350707 or email her on wotg.wi@gmail.com if you would like to know more.

**Lyn Barnett**



## Weston Society

As we were able to squeeze our last report into the previous Village News and as we only meet bi-monthly we do not have a meeting to report on this time, but our next meeting will have been on Monday 10th July when Liz Woolley, a favourite of the Society, will be talking on "Axtell to Zacharias. The men who built Oxford"

The next meeting after that will be our AGM, when

annual subscriptions will be due, on Monday 11th September and we are expecting Mark Davis to give a talk on "Alice's Adventures in Oxford"

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 meeting.



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## Weston Walkers

For our May walk we parked up at Stoke Wood, did a 3.5 mile circular walk across to Stoke Lyne and then wandered back through Stoke Wood to enjoy the magnificent display of bluebells.

Unfortunately, due again to the weather, our June walk had to be cancelled but as of writing this we are hoping to walk on Monday 10th July, with Ed leading us.

Our August walk is planned for

Monday 14th and September on Monday 11th.

All are welcome to join in as and when, there is no commitment to every month. So to enjoy sociable company, conversation and exercise please come along and join in or speak to me.

There are now also several local walks 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

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Photo by Joseph Coyle

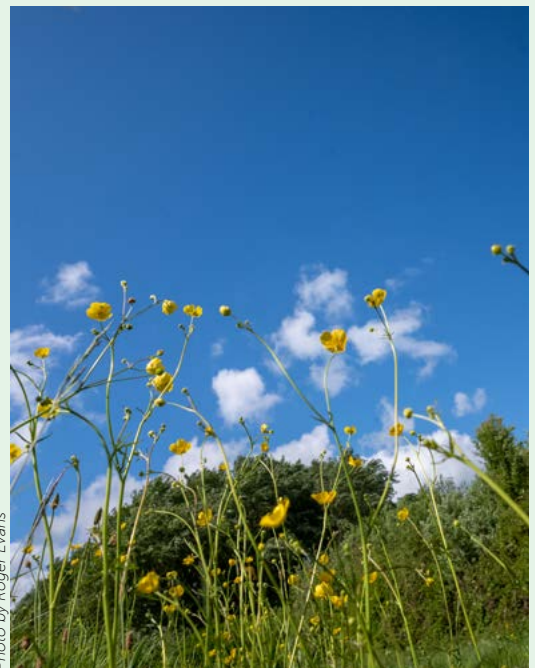


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# "Oh the Birds and the Bees..."

LONG, COLD AND WET winters can spell doom for hives of bees. We lost a few colonies ourselves but we know of bee-keepers who lost all their colonies and if you keep bees as a business then that can be a financial disaster. We (my daughter Kate & I) are both on a list that is available on the internet, of people who are prepared to remove/collect swarms of bees in the area. We've collected about fifteen swarms over the last 2 months and so we've been able to replenish the hives we lost over winter and strengthen some of the weaker colonies.



One such swarm was in an electricity meter box, close to the front door of a property situated near the stocks in Weston. Not a large swarm, but easy to reach. No ladders required but a real pain to remove. I ended up scooping them up with a small shovel normally used for removing cat poo from litter trays!



As for the birds, no sign of the mandarin duck that I mentioned last time, seen sitting on a Knowle Lane chimney pot. However, one morning last month, as I opened the front door, I nearly trod on a small bird sitting on the door mat. I can only assume that it had flown into a window and got stunned. It didn't attempt to fly away when I picked it up and I was able to check it over for any injuries but found none. I took it indoors so that I could photograph it. It's not often you get that close to Britain's smallest bird, and the picture clearly shows why it's called a Goldcrest! As soon as I took it outside, off it

flew, none the worse for its visit to our home!

As for the long term residents of our house, the news is that four eggs were laid, of which three have hatched. The photograph shows them at around four weeks old. They're due to have a ring placed on one of their legs w/c 10th July and should be out flying by the first week of August. If all goes well, this will take us to just over 50 as the number of barn owl chicks raised and fledged since the nest box became occupied in 2012 (not by the same parents I hasten to add!!!).

Bob Hessian



# The Wood Fairy's July musings

You may have noticed that outside the shop are two wooden chairs painted a fetching pastel green. They were dropped off at the grotto with the enquiry "what can you do with these?" Well, the first thought was kindling, this was not received well at all. Apparently, the chairs had been saved from a skip, they were there for a reason.

Undaunted, they were stripped down to individual pieces and sanded up. The legs had the rotten bits cut off the bottom before being extended with oak. Finding some old bearers from a pallet, these were cut up to make new slats for the seats. The ironwork to the back was given a coat of Hammerite and the beading was filled with acrylic filler before being given two coats of paint all over.

The chairs were then reassembled using the original greased bolts and taken to the shop where they were tested by the youth opportunity worker who sorts out the morning papers for you. This was very brave as they were originally for display purposes only!

At time of writing the Fairy is still awaiting a delivery of pallets to be turned into kindling for when the weather breaks. Bizarre as we have just had the hottest week of the year.



Everyone is Welcome to....

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# Bonfire & Fireworks



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**7pm Firework Display**

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## John Howell MP writes...



**P**OPULATION GROWTH and new housing bring many changes and challenges to our communities as we well know. One change brought about is the review of representation in Parliament. Under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 the Boundary Commission is required to review the parliamentary constituencies in England every 5 years. This is to ensure that MPs represent roughly the same number of people and therefore have around the same number of people eligible to vote for them. The latter is known as the 'electoral quota'. Another key factor of a review is that boundaries respect local links between areas. Constituency names can also be changed to reflect growth. I am writing about this as there will be changes coming forward which will affect this constituency, not least that the name will change from the Henley Constituency to the Henley and Thames Constituency. This reflects the growth of Thames and the fact that it is now a larger town than Henley and indeed the largest in the constituency. It is also geographically more central to the constituency. There will be more significant change for residents to the north and west of the constituency as they will be moved to a different constituency altogether.

All of the villages which come under Cherwell District Council will come out of this constituency and be part of a new constituency which will be known as the Bicester and Woodstock Constituency. The

northern boundary of the Henley and Thames Constituency will be the same as the northern boundary of the area covered by SODC. This is, in fact, as it was when I first became the MP here! This will affect residents in Bletchington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Fencott & Murcott, Hampton Gay & Poyle, Heathfield, Horton-cum-Studley, Kirtlington, Islip, Merton, Noke, Oddington, Shipton-on-Cherwell & Thrupp, and Weston-on-the-Green.

To the West of the constituency all of those currently in the Sandford and Wittenhams Ward will move to the renamed Didcot and Wantage Constituency, currently known as the Wantage Constituency. This is a sensible change as the Ward is currently partly in my constituency and partly in the Wantage Constituency. The Boundary Commission do not like split Wards as this makes local representation more difficult. This affects residents in Clifton Hampden, Culham, Marsh Baldon, Nuneham Courtenay, Sandford on Thames, and Toot Baldon. If you would like to know more about this you can read all the details on the Boundary Commission website at <https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

### Environmental crimes

And now to something much more local and immediate, I am

sure that the news that the upper limits for Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and fly tipping have been increased will be welcome. I know that environmental crimes like these are of concern to many. I hope that we can get wide publicity of the increased fines to deter more people from such damage. The increases come into effect from the end of this month. The upper limit of fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti and fly-posting offences will increase from £150 to £500; for household waste duty of care offences from £400 to £600; and for fly-tipping offences from £400 to £1,000. This is part of the Prime Minister's Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan which was launched in March. The Government is also looking at ringfencing the money raised from these fines for enforcement and clean up activity.

### Summer recess

Parliament will soon be going into the summer recess, but work continues. Although the House is not sitting ministers continue to work on their briefs and I continue with my work. The summer break does give a chance to catch up with things and my team and I will also be taking short breaks as do many others at this time. 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 July 2023

It has been so lovely to have such sunny weather recently and we have been using it to get out and about in Launton and Otmoor meeting with residents. There are just a few things from us this month:

### Cherwell District Council Administration

At our last update, we were hopeful that talks would be able to resume between the Progressive Oxfordshire Group (made up of Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and one independent) and Labour to form a majority administration on Cherwell District Council. However, as widely reported, the Labour Party were instructed not to go back into talks and so, at the last Full Council meeting on the 23rd May, a Conservative minority administration formed.

We are saddened by this as many residents had made it clear that they wanted change at Cherwell. However, we will continue to hold the Conservative administration to account and advocate for residents of Launton and Otmoor.



### Local Plan

We now have new, provisional, dates for the 2040 Local Plan. The plan is proposed to go to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 1st August and the Executive on the 4th September. If both of these Committees are happy, we believe the Local Plan will go to consultation in late September for 6 weeks. We will keep you updated as we know more.

### Activate Holiday Clubs

Booking is now open for the Cherwell summer holiday clubs which will be held between Monday 31st July and Friday 1st September at Spiceball Leisure Centre, Bicester Leisure Centre and Kidlington and Gosford Leisure Centre. The clubs are for children between 5 and 11 to try various sports, arts, crafts and games. You can find more information on the Cherwell website: <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/3/leisure-and-culture/795/holiday-hubs>

### Home Upgrade Grant

Residents can apply for the Home Upgrade Grant to upgrade energy-inefficient properties not using mains gas for heating. It is open to homeowners or privately renting tenants with a gross income of £31k or less or receiving means-tested benefits. You can find the eligibility criteria and more information at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/home-energy-efficiency-grants>

### Get in Touch

As always, please do get in touch! Our emails are [gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.coton@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) and [julian.nedelcu@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:julian.nedelcu@cherwell-dc.gov.uk) or phone us on 01869717712.

All the best,  
Gemma & Julian

John Dovey

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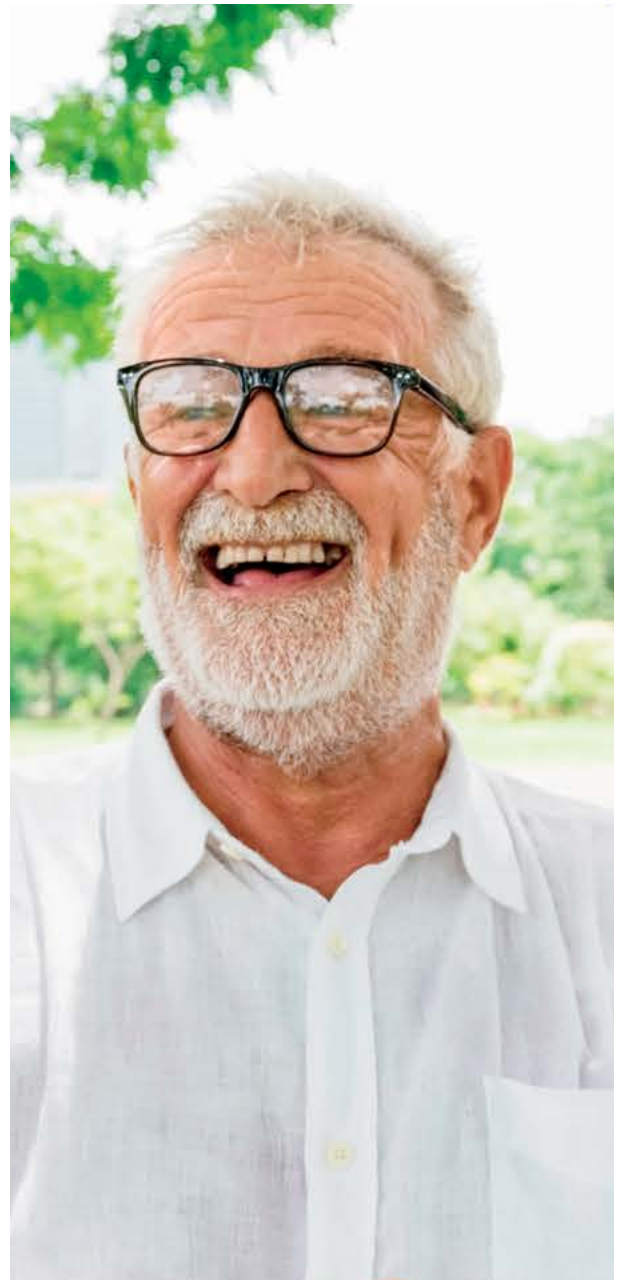
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## Dates for the Diary

2nd August	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
10th August	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
14th August	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
6th September	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
11th September	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
11th September	7.30 pm	Weston Society
14th September	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
20th September	7.30 pm	WI Meeting
24th September	12.30 pm	St Mary's Harvest Lunch
30th September	10.30 am – 12.00 pm	Macmillan Coffee Morning
4th October	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
28th October	6.15 pm	Bonfire Night, the Playing Field



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VILLAGE PANTRY & POST OFFICE

### FRIENDS PRODUCE

As ever a huge thank you to Mick, Corinne, Toddy and to those of you who have started to trickle through produce from your gardens. The total raised towards St Mary's Church and the Village Hall since the last edition is £84.72.



Photo: Jennie Henderson

WORLD'S BIGGEST  
**COFFEE  
MORNING**

**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**



**Saturday 30th September  
10.30 am - 12.00 pm**

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

**Come and enjoy raising lots of  
money with chat, tea,  
coffee and cake**

==== 50th Anniversary ====

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1972-2022 

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Whatever success looks like to you

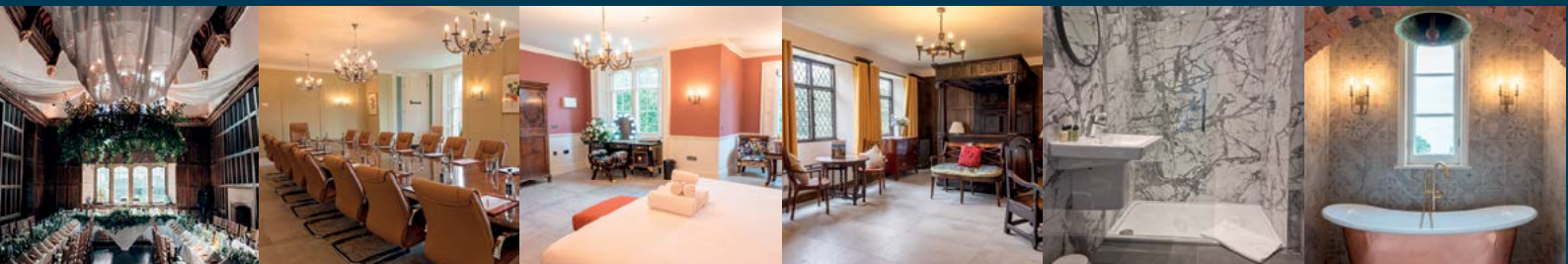


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# *Weston Manor Hotel*



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