

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

# TheVillageNews

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024



Photograph by Jordie Riches



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## Village Directory

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Village Hall Secretary

Jordie 350992

Village Hall Bookings

Jordie and Andrew Wilson

01869 350992

### SOCIETIES

WESTON SOCIETY

WESTON WALKERS

FOOTPATH WARDEN

Graham Barnett: 01869 350707

GARDEN CLUB

Emma Bernard: 01869 350312

GOLDEN LEAVES

Alison Townsend: 01869 350569

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (WI)

Lyn Barnett: 01869 350707

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Bob Hessian: 01869 350662

NEIGHBOURS NATTER

COFFEE MORNING

Patsy Parsons: 01869 350331

### THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Non-Emergency Line: 101

### OCC

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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### WESTON ON THE GREEN PARISH

#### COUNCIL

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Neighbourhood Plan, Finance:  
07518 926880

Parish Council Clerk, Jane Mullane:  
350282

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John Miller, Works: 350511

Ben Lanham, Playing Field:  
07887 886138

Tracy Rowan, Finance: 07833 473357

# From the editor

A very warm welcome to the first issue of 2024.

2023 ended on a high with the SOS being awarded a Community Ownership grant of over a quarter of a million pounds towards the community purchase of Weston Pantry – congratulations and a massive 'thank you' to the SOS Committee.

However, January seemed to think it was March and roared in like the proverbial lion, bringing storms, floods and fallen trees. Another massive 'thank you', this time to John Miller and his team from Fir Tree Farm, Tom Thornhill, and Diane and Eric Bohm (the former with her Parish Council hat on, the latter with his Church Warden hat on) for working into the early-January evening to make sure the road was cleared as quickly as possible.

Gallos Brook flooded across the road, the School Field footpath was almost impassable and Christmas seemed just a distant memory ...

Weston also lost a great friend and personality late last year with the death of Norman Machin. Often seen being taken for a walk around the village by his dog Teddy, he played a major role in Weston life for over 50 years. My deepest sympathy to Liz and his family.

*Also*



Photo by Ruth Williams

Deadline for April/May edition:  
7th MARCH 2024



## Rector's sabbatical

Gareth is on sabbatical until early April. During this time he will not be responding to emails or telephone messages. All enquiries should be directed to other members of the ministry team or the churchwardens, if appropriate.

If you are unsure whom to ask, please contact our administrator, Julie Andrews, at [enquiries.akeman@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.akeman@gmail.com)

### St Mary's Church, Weston on the Green warmly invites you to join in our Advent and Christmas services

4th February 16:00 Evensong (BCP)
11th February 11:00 Café Church
18th February 11:00 Holy Communion
25th February 10:30 Holy Communion, Middleton Stoney
3rd March 16:00 Evensong (BCP)
10th March 11:00 Morning Worship
17th March 11:00 Holy Communion
24th March (Palm Sunday) 10:30 Palm Sunday Procession and Holy Communion, Kirtlington
31st March (Easter Sunday) 11:00 Holy Communion

For other services in the Akeman Benefice please visit: <https://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk/church-services>  
We look forward to welcoming you to our services.

## Show and tell

During Lent, there will be informal groups meeting in homes throughout the benefice to look at film clips from the blockbuster film *The Greatest Showman*.

For details of the groups, including the one meeting in Weston, see the website [www.akemanbenefice.org.uk](http://www.akemanbenefice.org.uk)

**FROM  
NOW ON**



Weekly groups during  
**Lent**

based on the film  
**The Greatest  
Showman**



**Discussion, Reflection and Chat  
over 5 weeks  
from week beginning  
February 19th**

**For more information or to register interest please contact:**

**Tel:** Joanna Clifford 07779 578088

**Email:** [joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com](mailto:joannaclifford.akeman@gmail.com)

**Tel:** Maggie Darby 07391 774640

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# Church roundup

The church's Christmas season is a highlight of the Christian calendar and life at St. Mary's was no exception this year.

Our Christmas festivities started with the Big Breakfast on 9th December. We served 69 adults, and 10 children under 14 and several infants also attended. Our thanks to Peter Driver for the cooking, both in terms of quantity and quality, and his team of volunteers, Roz Bullen, Sally Cole, Jennie Henderson, Mandy Jones, Andrew Simpson and Ali Townsend, for their help with cooking, serving, and cleaning up. This capable team also cater the Golden Leaves events. We also thank those volunteers who set up and manned the fund-raising stalls. We raised £740 after costs, which is very gratifying and greatly beneficial to any upgrade of the facilities in the church.

One of the highlights of our festive season was the Lessons and Carols service held on 17th December. We invited five young people to read the lessons and are very grateful to Maddie Lee, Esmé Elvidge, Emily and Daisy Donne and Rebecca Jones for their support. They all read with great clarity and poise. We are thankful for the flower arrangements by Sally Brown which added to the celebratory service. The congregation was in superb voice

accompanied by our organist, Roz Bullen. We raised £220.00 for the Bicester Foodbank and three boxes of children's toys. Our community is very generous, and the recipients of that generosity are most grateful.



At the time of writing we have experienced a very severe windstorm. As the pictures will attest, a large tree in our churchyard fell over the wall and blocked Church Lane for several hours. It can be attributed to a miracle that the grave site immediately adjacent to the uplifted root plate was not damaged.



While events of this nature can be distressing, we are fortunate that no one was injured and the damage restricted to property only.

We are now in the process of clearing up the debris and repairing any physical damage. The lives of the Churchwardens are never dull!

As you will have read elsewhere in this Village News, we are saddened by the passing of Norman Machin. Norman was a great friend of the church and volunteered in several capacities such as one of our mowers of the churchyard. He was very knowledgeable about the preservation of ancient buildings and his advice to me was cherished and very beneficial to the understanding of the significance of small details of the church building. His architectural expertise was second to none.

More importantly, I shall miss our conversations.

Eric Bohm  
Church Warden

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# Chair's comments

**T**HE PARISH COUNCIL has been in planning mode for 2024 for several months. Our financial year is from April 1st – March 31st but we need to submit our precept (amount of money requested from Cherwell District Council) by mid-January. We need to begin our considerations in the September prior to the financial year so the council has time for discussions.

We have an extended development plan, but this relies on having the skills on the Parish Council to take a project forward. Fortunately, this year we have a new member of the team, Ben Lanham, who has taken on the playground/field development project. The Parish Council is in the midst of making a decision to upgrade the playground. By the time this edition of the Village News is in your hands, some work will have been approved. What comes next is the middle to longer term development. Ben is looking for volunteers for a playground/field committee to consider the future of the area. Please contact him if this is an area of interest. Parish Council contacts are at the front of the magazine.

Weston on the Green Parish Council's Finance Advisory Group are currently preparing the 2024/2025 budget. Whilst we do not have the final data from Cherwell District Council, we have planned an increase for band D properties of approximately 4.5 % (£4.16/yr., £0.35/month for band D taxpayers). Last year we managed to secure a reduction of -0.2%, although inflation is coming down, we have still had to absorb the very high inflationary rates from the first half of 2023, making it impossible for us to avoid an increase in the precept.

The key items of expenditure in

2023/2024 will be on:

- Grass cutting
- Hedge trimming
- Community bus scheme
- Dog litter collections
- Clerk's salary
- Playing field loan repayments
- Playing field maintenance and development
- Neighbourhood Plan Review

During 2024/2025 we will continue with those items listed above, plus the usual costs of Parish Council work e.g., subscriptions, insurances, and audit. In addition, we are keen to make progress with larger projects including the Oak Tree foot path, fence work, footpaths, and other community projects.

The Finance Advisory Group reviews all expenses and plans (sometimes over several years) and secures funding for the larger projects we are keen to undertake.

If you have any questions/comments, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Parish Council.

## The Storm

A great challenge for the Parish Council and St. Mary's Church was the great wind from storm Henk that caused a huge tree to fall over the church wall, across Church Lane and crushed part of the stone wall around the Dower House. It was nearly dusk and as lead for the Emergency Plan, I was aware that road safety was the key issue. One of the church wardens is my husband, Eric Bohm, and we were able to work quickly as a team to try and contact official teams to come and put-up warning lights and break up the tree. It was impossible to get through on the phone lines and

darkness was descending, so we decided to reach out to the village and see if we could get help. We were very lucky in that one of our villagers Tom Thornhill has a work vehicle and works in traffic management, had all the lights needed plus safety cones. He was hampered from driving down the road and so set up a warning system near the small roundabout. A team from Fir Tree Farm arrived with a very large machine (!), lights and power saws and proceeded to cut the tree in sections and lift it into the church yard. The road was cleared and although Gallosbrook had flooded the end of the road, folk could get home from work if they lived down Church Lane or Church Close.

I learned a huge amount about managing an emergency within the village when county services are overrun. Turn to the village – we have a small army of knowledgeable people who will help. If anyone has further ideas for how to reach out do contact me and let me know. Just for info: we have an emergency plan for heat waves and cold snaps. If you can be a 'good neighbour' in either of these cases, also please email me.

Finally just for information, Oxfordshire County Council are responsible for blocked drains and gullies on the roads; however they are not normally responsible for ditches alongside roads which aid in keeping water flowing through the system. In most cases the responsibility is with the adjacent landowner and the Parish Council would kindly remind landowners to please check their ditches and clear them out where required. If residents have any concerns over a variety of highway issues you can report items via Oxfordshire Fix My Street ([www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk))

## Food Bank

Our December Food Bank drive was amazing. There was 154.86 kgs of food donated and bags of toys – many wrapped and labelled by age. The report from the church relays the contribution of toys and money at the Christmas Carol Service. There is no doubt from the Trussell Trust reports that the need for food is greater than ever. We have used the slogan "Eat or heat" and there are others that make us stop and think of others – 'Feed the Need', and the one for February – 'Feed the future'. We collect food on the first Saturday of each month at the Village Pantry, 9am – 12pm. NEXT collection is February 3rd, 2024.



## Volunteers Needed

Over the past few months, we have asked for volunteers for a variety of village jobs. We've had

a few offers, and we need quite a few more. The list is below:

- Helpers to paint the village gates and tend the flowers.
- Neighbourhood Watch volunteers (we'd like one per street or small area)
- Heat wave/Cold snap 'good neighbours'
- Delivery helpers for the Village News
- Playground/playing field development
- Helpers with vans to move materials from playground renovation
- Small gardens, young tree watering helpers
- Visitors for the elderly
- Litter pickers

If you can see yourself joining into village life through some service to the community, please contact either myself or the Clerk.

## New councillors

We gained three new councillors in 2023 but sadly had to say farewell to two due to work and personal reasons. If you are interested in hearing more about serving on the Parish Council please contact either myself or the Clerk. And please ... don't run the other way when you see me walking up your drive.

## Disappearing path

We've been assured that work on the oak tree path should be done shortly. If the path is removed and all the fencing gone by this

edition of the *Village News*, we'll all be glad that we have stayed on course to get the job completed. The team and county/district councillors have spent far too much time trying to get this issue resolved.



## Condolences

The Parish Council adds its condolences at the passing of Norman Machin. He was a supporter of our work, always available to listen and advise, and endlessly knowledgeable about the history of the village. We'll miss Norman.

Diane Bohm  
Chair



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# 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

23/02764/CLUE – Summer Court, North Lane

23/02731/LB - Manor Hotel, Northampton Road

23/02388/F - Stowe Cottage, 4 Oxford Court

23/02337/F - OS Parcel 9366 Adjoining and West of Vermont Northampton Road

23/03296/DISC - Starbucks, A34

23/03126/F – Weston Grounds Farm, Northampton Road

23/03098/TEL – Vodafone Telecommunications Mast, 4962 Manor Farm, Northampton Road

23/03072/CLUP – 20 Milestone Lane

23/02635/CLUP – 3 Shepherds Close

### Applications – Withdrawn

23/02717/F & 23/02717/LB – Cruck Cottage, Northampton Road



### Awaiting Decision

23/00994/F – Family Farm, A34 South  
Installation of a new Outdoor Swimming Pool & Plant Building.

23/01788/F – New Sarum, Northampton Road  
Extension of property.

23/03319/ADV - Starbucks, A34  
Signage for drive thru.

23/03300/F – Fir Tree Farm, Northampton Road  
Erection of new dry wood store.

23/03531/F – The Dower House, Church Road  
Minor revisions to design.

23/03511/DISC – Starbucks, Part of A34  
Discharge of Condition 3 (turning area/parking spaces).

23/03383/F – 2 Church Close  
Extension of property.  
23/03437/F – Williams Cottage, North Lane  
Variation of Condition 2 (plans) of 23/00736/F.

23/03435/DISC - Williams Cottage, North Lane  
Discharge of Condition 3 (doors & windows).

23/03436/DISC - Williams Cottage, North Lane  
Discharge of Condition 3 (doors & windows).

23/03411/LB – Williams Cottage, North Lane  
Internal and external alterations.

23/03263/LB – The Manor, Northampton Road  
Repairs to existing stone tile roof to Rupert's Cottage.

23/03363/DISC – Kelberg, Northampton Road  
Discharge of Conditions 4 (external lighting), 6 (Arboricultural Method Statement) and 8 (biodiversity enhancement scheme) of 23/01641/F.



# hga

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# News from Oxfordshire County Council

## Oil Scheme Free membership

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oxfordshire

Cherwell District Council are collaborating with Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) to offer Cherwell residents the chance to become part of CFO's oil scheme for FREE (usual cost: £24 per year).

The Community First Oxfordshire oil scheme is in partnership with AF Affinity who purchase over 100 million litres of oil every year from a variety of oil suppliers and, due to their relationship with the suppliers, can give the best possible price available to them on the day of your oil order. The scheme also offers direct debit and payment plan options, making it very simple and easy for you.

Please note, if you are already a member of the scheme and live in Cherwell but have paid this year, then CFO will reimburse you (they have your details and will be in touch shortly).

For more information or to join the scheme please visit the Community First Oxfordshire, call 01865 883488 or email: [oil@communityfirstoxon.org](mailto:oil@communityfirstoxon.org)



## Garden Waste Subscriptions

Current garden waste subscriptions for 2023/24 end soon, and our residents can renew or sign up from Monday, 4 December, to ensure they are ready for the 2024/25 subscription year.

Our green-fingered residents can apply for an annual subscription licence of £49 per brown bin, covering them for a fixed calendar year from 1 March 2024 to 28 February 2025. People can find out more about our recycling services and purchase a garden waste subscription at [cherwell.gov.uk/Recycling](http://cherwell.gov.uk/Recycling)



## Vape Recycling Service in Oxfordshire

Cherwell District Council has announced a new vape recycling service, in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, and Oxford City Council to provide new recycling services across the county.

The new recycling services aim to prevent the disposal of single-use vapes in litter bins, general waste or mixed recycling where they can contaminate other recycling and, in some instances, cause fires in bin trucks or waste facilities.

The Recycle Your Vapes campaign will:

- Add up to 60 new recycling collection points for vapes at small retailers, shopping areas, bars and cafes across Oxford, Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. Look out for the three-foot high, clear plastic tube vape recycling collection points. The tubes have bright pink recycle your vapes posters and images of vapes on the posters.
- Introduce a new separate kerbside collection for vapes in Cherwell – all residents need to do is place the vapes in a clear plastic bag on top of their blue or green bin on collection day, it's important not to dispose of these items in the green or blue bins as the batteries can, and have, caused serious fires.
- And provide new public recycling bright pink bins at each of the seven household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) in Oxfordshire.



## Podcast pilot

A new podcast has been launched by Oxfordshire County Council, offering residents a chance to hear the latest news from the council and its partners.

The pilot episode of Your Oxfordshire podcast is hosted by Victoria Baran, Oxfordshire County Council's Deputy Director of Adult Social Care, and features guests from Oxfordshire's health and social care teams. It offers a unique, behind the scenes look at how they're preparing to keep residents safe and well this winter.



By the time you read this in the *Village News*, the future of the Shop and Post Office would have been decided by the Committee of Weston SOS and by me.

Whatever that decision is, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Committee of Weston SOS and their incredible Chairman, Sam Sharp, for the amazing work they put into this project to actually obtain the grant from the Government in excess of a quarter of a million pounds, to mobilising our extended community raising nearly £150,000 and to get the press coverage ranging from the Bicester Advertiser to ITV Meridian News.

Such incredible work done for the community in such short space of time - well done Sam, a newcomer



## The Future of our Shop & Post Office

to our village, and Team SOS. I heartily applaud you. Your work and the support you have received is also a credit to the fantastic staff and the faultless service we have

strived to provide in the shop and Post Office.

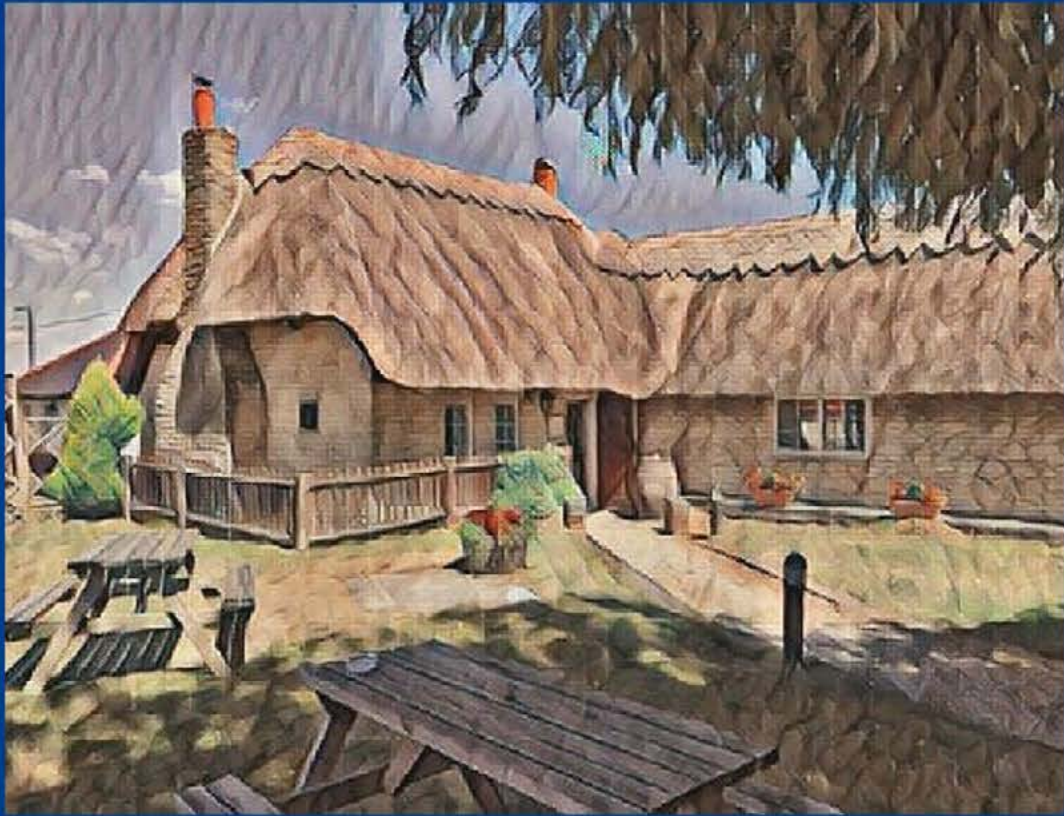
This moment would have been heralded by the late Norman Machin as a 'triumph'. He not only loved the shop, he was also steeped in the history of it. His house was the original PO when it came here in 1851 and his uncle Arnold was the designer of the Elizabeth II stamps we have known all our lives. Norman was a gem that comes rarely. His help and support to me over various village issues, especially the shop, was beyond valuable.

His spirit will live on in this village he loved so much and his presence is more than missed.

Yasemin

### *Some memoirs of the past seven years*





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Chequers Weston On The Green

AS THIS IS the first *Village News* of 2024 it would be remiss of us if we didn't wish everyone a Happy New Year. The Christmas season is already a distant memory but we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Hall's festivities in any way. The fantastic Advent windows that appeared throughout the village were wonderful and really added to the build-up to Christmas. Thank you for your beautiful designs.

We would also like to thank everyone who attended the Christmas tree lights switch-on. Over eighty people attended, including Father Christmas, who handed out gifts to twenty children from the village. We received lots of lovely comments about the tree, which was our tallest yet at fourteen feet, and was bedecked with four thousand lights. Our thanks go to Bunkers Hill Plant Nursery for delivering the tree, and to Robin, Clive, and Andrew who spent a bitterly cold afternoon fixing the tree into the ground and decorating it. It took Andrew five and a half hours to put the lights onto the tree (and probably ignoring every Health & Safety rule about working at height in the process!) and it certainly brightened up some very grey, dank days in December. The fact that the tree remained standing, despite the best efforts of Storms Gerrit and Henk over the Christmas period is due in no small part to the securing skills of Robin.

We have been indebted to Robin who has served as the House Manager for the Hall over



many years. His willingness and cheerfulness in helping out the Hall has been an amazing asset and one that will be very much missed as Robin and Janice move to south Oxfordshire to be nearer to their grandchildren. From big repair jobs to everyday maintenance Robin has been the unsung hero of the Hall, helping to keep the Hall running smoothly for the village. We wish him a happy retirement - you've certainly earned it!

Villagers may see the Committee out and about over the next few weeks for the 250 Club renewal subscription which is due on 1st March. The 250 Club funds help to support the up-keep and refurbishment of the Village Hall and have been pivotal in helping us with some of the projects undertaken in the last year. Each year 250 numbers are sold to residents of Weston on the Green at £6.00 each. Every month there is a draw of three winning numbers. Usually the three winners receive payouts of £18.00, £12.00, and £6.00, but every 6 months (December, and June) there are bumper prizes of £90.00, £45.00 and £15.00. The results are

announced in the *Village News* magazine and the prizes delivered to the lucky winners. We have some spare numbers and if you would like to sign up please email us at [westonvillagehall@live.co.uk](mailto:westonvillagehall@live.co.uk). Thank you to those villagers who have renewed their 250 Club numbers and for helping maintain the Hall. It is greatly appreciated.

Our first event of 2024 takes place on Saturday 23rd March and is a 'Bingo and Curry Night'. We have some great prizes for the games of bingo and will be serving a home-cooked, two-course meal (including a vegetarian option) and there will also be a bar running. We're really grateful to Rekha for providing the food for this event (and having already sampled the menu we know villagers are in for a treat - the samosas are incredible, and as for the ice-cream - it's a totally different level!). Tickets are £10pp and please could you book your place by March 1st. If you're not a curry lover please let us know when you book your space and an alternative meal will be provided. Doors open on the night at 6.30pm and we hope to see you there for a fun-filled evening.



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# PHONE BOX LIBRARY

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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*



## 250 CLUB RESULTS

### DECEMBER

1st prize: £90 No 233 Claire Steele

2nd prize: £45 No 114  
Malcolm Brain

3rd prize: £15 No 50 John Roper

### JANUARY

1st prize: £18 No 46 Nicola Spence

2nd prize: £12 No 10 Aidan Williams

3rd prize: £6 No 211  
Tony & Jane Henman

The Village Hall Committee would like to thank everyone who participated and made such beautiful windows for the Living Advent Calendar Windows Event, 1<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> December 2023.



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# A time an

**F**OR A SHORT PERIOD of time, during the middle of the 19th century, lace making was a common occupation for women and girls in Weston.

Writing in the first half of the 20th century about life in the village over the previous 100 years, Haman Porter recalled asking his mother "I wish you would put that 'bobbing' away" when he wanted her attention, little realising just how important the lace making was to the family finances. He recalled her lace pillow with the bobbins held in place by hoops of coloured beads threaded on the ends.

Lace making requires nimble fingers to pass bobbins one over the other forming woven patterns around pins held in the parchment patterns or prickings. The threads – fine cotton or linen – were white and had to be kept clean so that the length of lace, when finished was pristine and ready for the 'Lace Man' when he called. The money earned by making lengths of lace was the woman's 'pin money' but was in no way insignificant. Although earning just a few pence for yards of lace these pennies made a difference. Haman estimated that his mother earned about one penny an hour, often working by lamp light into

the night to finish a piece which had been specially ordered.

Every ten years the national census gives a glimpse of the lives of those living in the village. Often the women gave no occupation, at others they gave details of jobs outside the home, like charwoman or laundry woman and on rare occasions they listed agricultural labour as their source of income. Of course a woman could be earning 'pin money' from making lace but not list it as an occupation because she felt she earned so little it didn't constitute an occupation. But for just three census returns – in 1851, 1861 and 1871 lace making features as an occupation for the women of the village.

Young girls also made lace – the youngest to give her occupation as lace making was 8 years old. She must have begun learning to make lace some time before that age to have become proficient enough to earn money. The oldest lacemaker was 66 with one lady of 63 saying she was a former lacemaker. Good eyesight for close work was needed and so probably all lacemakers had to retire as their eyesight failed.



Dinah Tuffrey



# nd Lace...



Tryphena Clarke

Considering only those women and girls aged 8 to 69, 17% gave lace making as their occupation in 1851. This figure falls to 12.5% in 1861 and 5.5% in 1871. Neither the 1841 census, nor those taken after 1871 give details of any woman or girl making lace for a living. Of course, many continued the craft, having learnt to make lace they would have continued, especially making special pieces to order but the introduction of lace making machines which provided cheap lace much more quickly than that made on a pillow with bobbins had 'killed' the occupation as a method of earning money from home.

Of the two women we know something about who were lace makers, one doesn't give this as her occupation at all (Haman Porter's mother) and the other only gives details on one census although she is known to have earned money from her lace over a much longer period. So the figures are probably an underestimate.



Sarah Porter

Beginning sometime between 1841 and 1851 a total of 49 women and girls in the village earned money from lace making at some point until between 1871 and 1881 when lace making as an occupation in the village ceased. Many of these women were related – 9 members of the Tuffrey family and 6 members of the Brain family all made lace. Often mothers, sisters and daughters were involved and this probably lends credence to the belief that women would gather in one home to make lace together, in some cases this would mean young children in a creche, probably minded by one girl while the older girls and mothers made lace. This would also save on oil for lamps and fuel for heating.

In our village archive we have three pictures of known lace makers – Tryphena Clarke and Dinah Tuffery both give lace making as their occupation but the third picture is more interesting. Sarah Porter, although sister-in-law to a lace maker, never gave it as her occupation but was photographed in later life with her lace pillow.

Paula Hessian



## Weston-on-the-Green WI

For our November meeting, we had a very interesting talk from Maurice East who stood in at the last minute for Liz Woolley, who due to family illness couldn't come. He told us about William Morris from leaving school at 15 with no qualifications, through getting his first job as a cycle repair apprentice in St. Giles, to building a factory in Longwall Street where he made the early Bullnose cars, through to building the huge factory at Cowley employing thousands of workers at its height. Maurice had many 'before and after' slides of places where William worked and how the factory was built on the site of old barracks and expanded towards Littlemore before the present bypass was built, changing the face and nature of Oxford from a small university town to the beginning of the industrial town we now know. Morris was a humble man as anyone who has visited Nuffield Place will know and he gave much of his fortune to charitable causes in Oxford and beyond.

We celebrated Christmas with a delicious Italian-themed buffet meal for members and guests, prepared by Mariella Bliss. Graham prepared three quizzes and Paula told us about Christmas's past in Weston.

On January 17th, Paul Baker is coming to tell us about RSPB Otmoor. Paul has been involved in the project since its beginning and has many slides of how the reserve began as well as changes during the years. For our February meeting on the 21st John Coffin is going to tell us about his life in New Guinea.

Our WI meets at Weston village hall every month, 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 2.00pm and walks on the 2nd Monday at 1.30pm, 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 - 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

Weston Society met on Monday 13th November to hear the fascinating history of The Stonesfield Embroidery, being an embroidered copy of a marble floor from a Roman Villa discovered on agricultural land near to Stonesfield. The embroidery is now on display in the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock, the staff there having investigated its origins and authenticity.

We will then have met again in January with Bob

Hessian telling us about the Barn Owls nesting in the roof of their cottage.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 11th March when we are expecting a talk on Combe Mill.

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



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## Weston Walkers

Our November walk would have been the last of the year, to be a morning walk followed by lunch, the weather however again put paid to the walk so we just met for lunch.

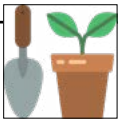
We do not meet up in December or January so our next walks will be on Monday 12th February and Monday 11th March, meeting at Weston Village Hall at 1.30pm.

All are welcome to join in as and when, there is no commitment to every month, so if you wish to enjoy sociable 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 Barnett**  
01869 350707



## Weston-on-the-Green Garden Club

At the AGM on 14th November, Emma Bernard and Carolyn Bushby stood down from the committee. These stalwarts both have given wonderful service to the Club and community for the last 10 years; the membership is very grateful for all their hard work and organisational skills in running the Garden Shows and Open Gardens. The AGM was not well attended (and not quorate), but the Open Gardens had been well attended throughout the year. Ann Holt and I are keen to continue with the club, and two potential new committee members were unable to attend the AGM. However, those present had a lively discussion aided by the wine and mince pies (kindly organised by Carolyn). We felt that there were perhaps fewer expert gardeners in the village but many (like me) who might be keen to develop their skills. We

had all enjoyed the Open Gardens, and are grateful to those who allowed us to drink wine in their gardens last year. I agreed to convene a meeting in January with those interested in taking the club forward, and an update will be sent to all those on last year's membership list.

Anyone who would like to be added to the membership list, who would like to join the committee, who would be willing to open their garden in 2024, or who has ideas of what they would like the garden club to do, please send me an email: [f.spensley@btinternet.com](mailto:f.spensley@btinternet.com)

**Fiona Spensley,**  
Treasurer and Acting Chair



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FROM THE WOOD FAIRY

## Kindling crisis!

It has been a particularly busy time of late as the Wood Fairy tries to get ahead of the kindling rush before he has his hip-op (not a music genre), this was due on the 21st Dec but was postponed due to the junior doctors electing to go Christmas shopping instead. Now awaiting a new date. Now past 14 months on the waiting list. Hopefully by the time you read this I will be partly bionic.



Those of you with a wood burner will be used to the term 'kiln dried'. Recent kindling has been 'Rayburn dried' in the warming oven due to the dampness of the pallets delivered in late September. No deliveries were forthcoming in the summer months from May to end of August. This also means that by the end of January the kindling will be all gone (including the nobby ends). I can get pallets, but they are soaking wet and therefore no good this winter. Also I will hopefully have had my long awaited op so not available for at least 6 weeks.

Mick East

## Glynis Johns



I heard on the news that the actress Glynis Johns had died at the age of 100. Many of you will remember her as Mrs Banks, the mother of the children in the film *Mary Poppins* (1964) and also for her singing 'Send in the Clowns' from Stephen Sondheim's musical 'A Little Night Music' (1973) – but did you know of her connection with Weston?

She was the daughter of the British actor, Mervyn Johns, a well-known film actor in the 1940-50s. Mervyn had a brother, Howard Samuel Johns, who was vicar of Weston church from 1936–1960. He was a larger-than-life character with a unique way of presenting sermons. When he and his wife came to live in the vicarage they were confronted with the house and two acres of land, including an "eye-talian garden", as he called it. As for the house itself, Mr Johns commented that "a bathroom two hours' walk away, and the necessity of taking a taxi to fetch the bread from the kitchen" didn't make for an easy domestic life. So, vicar of Weston and uncle to Glynis Johns, who was known to have stayed with the Rev. Johns on occasions.

Bob Hessian

Everyone is welcome to ...

# Neighbours' Natter 2024

Bring your Magazines to Swap

**Weston-on-the-Green Village Hall**  
**Thursday Feb 8<sup>th</sup> and Mar 14<sup>th</sup> 10am - Noon**  
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Weston Manor Hotel has installed a new defibrillator for general use in the village.

It is located at Weston Manor Hotel, Northampton Road, OX25 3QL between main Hotel Manor House and Coach House. What 3 Words ///minds. flipper.rebel

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# Flood Meadows

Weston on the Green is surrounded by flood meadows. These meadows provide many benefits including storing floodwaters, protecting water quality and supporting pollinating insects. Species-rich floodplain meadows have evolved with winter flooding and seasonal grazing.

Roger Evans



## Walking in Oxfordshire

If you're feeling ready to brave the wintery weather, why not enjoy the beautiful English countryside.

'Walking in Oxfordshire' has loads of interesting walks, both local and slightly further afield, all to download and print for 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.



Photo above by  
Jordie Riches



Photo right by  
Sally Cole

## Weston on the Green Memorial Village Hall

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Norman Machin 1943- 2023



**Norman Machin**, who died in December 2023, was a hugely talented architect and artist having first qualified at Sheffield University (his city of birth) and then, when living in Weston, completed a planning degree at Oxford Brookes and subsequently set up in private practice working from his home office. Indeed, Norman designed our sun room at Monks Walk and worked for many other people in the village. He also did work for Oxford University which, again, indicates his excellent professional reputation.

Norman was a 'people's person'. He was a one-off and enriched our lives in the village with his humour, his intelligence and 'can do' personality. He was a good man, in fact a very good man and friend to everyone.



Jane and I moved to Weston in December 1967 and we were so fortunate that Norman and Liz moved into the village in 1972. We probably came across Norman and Liz at the village school gates in North Lane where our three boys and the two Machin daughters were being educated under the strict discipline of Miss Weir, the Head Mistress. Both Norman and I became Governors of the village school and Norman then became Chairman of the Governors. No Ofsted reports in those days; simply the fearsome Miss Weir, laying down the rules! Sadly, the school was closed by

the Council when there were too few children.

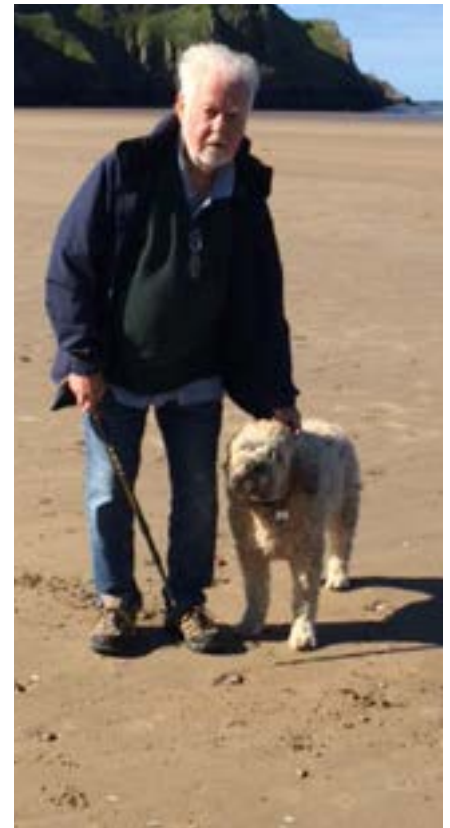
In 2007-8, Norman's planning expertise really came into play when the village was threatened with a so-called "Eco Town" to be called Weston Otmoor. This was a proposed development of between 15,000 and 20,000 houses in the land opposite Weston Manor Hotel and adjoining land both sides of the A34. Caroline Flint, the then Housing Minister, selected 15 sites from 57 potential sites and Norman and I found out that we were one of those nominated sites. Horrified, we formed the Weston Front to fight the proposal. The headline in The Times of April 4th 2008 read 'Protestors Fury at Eco Town Shortlist'.

Norman was quite brilliant at 'fury'. He harangued Caroline Flint at a meeting we had at Westminster and she was, as a result, sacked by Gordon Brown; Margaret Beckett was appointed to follow Caroline Flint as Housing Minister and after a meeting at Chesterton where, again, Norman did his stuff, she resigned; John Denham was the third in line and he refused to meet us! Following that, Norman and I Judicial Reviewed the Government and after a five-day hearing in the High Court, the Eco Town plan for the village was dropped. Norman was tenacious in his approach.

The defeat of the proposed Eco Town was a classic David v Goliath confrontation and Norman was the key architect in keeping the village as we now know it. Norman was also very much involved in the committee to save the School Field from development by Lagan Homes and, once again, his planning expertise and contacts with the Council were instrumental in keeping the field free from housing - long may that continue.

Norman would have been equally thrilled to hear that the village Post Office and Shop, which he used on so many occasions, will stay within the village community. We need more people in the village like him to protect the village from any further outlandish schemes

that may well evolve in the future. Indeed, from my prospective it is very good to see more young people in the village and I know that Norman would be thrilled to see the younger generation stepping forward in the future to protect the village that he loved so much as and when the occasion arises.



Alongside his architectural work and his campaigning for the village, Norman was a family man through and through and took great delight in his two daughters and three granddaughters. His family, his friends and this village have been enriched in so many ways by this man my family affectionately knew as 'The Big N'.

Tony Henman



## John Howell MP writes...



**E**VEN BEFORE the Christmas decorations were down, or perhaps before they went up, speculation on the date of the General Election has been hotting up. It could actually be as late as January 2025, but that would not be a preferred option for many people, not least as political campaigning over the festive period would not go down well. Now the Prime Minister has given a strong hint that it is more likely to be later in the year than sooner.

Whatever the date, the campaigning is already underway. Not just in the battle for media attention and getting messages out, but also in more subtle ways. In Parliament the increase in emails on specific issues referring to the next Party Manifesto was noticeable even in November and December. In parliament the use of mechanisms to promote specific issues, such as Early Day Motions and Westminster Hall debates appears to be increasing, so it might be helpful to explain what these are.

Early Day Motions (EDMs) are motions that formally call for debate in the House of Commons but there is no timeline, simply at an 'early day' and few ever get debated. They are often used on behalf of campaign groups and, although it may seem that they are being proactive, the reality known by all involved, is that they rarely achieve anything. In any one Parliamentary session there will be well over a thousand EDMs tabled, and at an average cost of a several hundred pounds each, this is a substantial cost to the taxpayer. Given that they are ineffective, along with many colleagues on

both sides of the House,

I decided some time ago that I would not sign EDMs. Instead, there are many other more effective ways for an MP to raise an issue or lobby government. These include writing to Ministers, meeting with Ministers, asking Parliamentary Questions (which can be written for oral) and holding Westminster Hall debates.

Over the years I have frequently raised numerous concerns in these alternative ways. Whilst EDMs can only be signed by MPs we now have e-petitions which can be signed by anyone. These have much more success in raising awareness of different issues and some do get debated.

There is also a note of caution on Westminster Hall debates. I said above that I have often held a Westminster Hall debate. An MP uses a Westminster Hall debate to raise issues of concern to them. They are formal debates recorded in Hansard, but there are not votes. However, they do get a response from a Minister. So, whilst the debate is important to the MP holding it, the attendance of other MPs is neither critical nor representative of the wider support for the issue. Sometimes it is just not possible to attend, but this does not mean that I am not interested in the issue.

I have always been very conscious that most local magazines do not want to carry Party political

material. As such, over the years I have always been careful to ensure that my newsletters share my thoughts rather than make sweeping Party-political statements. I am grateful to those Editors who have faithfully carried my copy and encouraged exchanges with constituents. I know that some Editors choose not to carry copy but include my contact details to ensure that constituents have them should they wish to make contact and I am grateful for that too (john.howell.mp@parliament.uk).

I have already made public that it is not my intention to put myself forward as a candidate for the next General Election. I have served the Constituency since initially being elected in 2008 and have been returned to Parliament in four subsequent elections. I continue to take an interest in the views of constituents and, with the support of my team, assist those constituents wanting help.

However, I am in the happy position of being able to sit light when an email tells me that the senders vote at the next General Election depends on my reply to their email. Such emails often spring from campaign groups and, whilst I will continue to reply with my view, it is really the views of the various Parliamentary Candidates for the Constituency that should be of greater interest.

I will have moved on to pastures new.

# From your local councillors



## Launton & Otmoor District Update

### New Chief Executive

Gordon Stewart has now been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council after being unanimously approved at Full Council on the 18th December and will be starting on the 8th January and will be fully inducted by Yvonne Rees. He has previous experience in senior leadership roles across the public sector, higher education and the charity sector.

We look forward to welcoming Gordon to Cherwell and we will keep you updated once he has started.

## Full Council 18th December 2023

Full Council took place on the 18th December at Bodicote House with a number of motions and questions being raised. All motions were passed unanimously and they were:

- Asking Cherwell to look into a solar strategy across the district to ensure a more cohesive plan moving forward.
- Asking Cherwell to look into accessible locations to provide sanitary items to those in need, to help tackle period poverty.
- Condemning the decision to delay the ban on Section 21 notices and calling on the Leader of the Council to communicate

this to our Members of Parliament and the government in the strongest possible terms.

- Asking Cherwell to investigate the feasibility of creating service hubs within our localities and what they can usefully provide and then develop a strategy that facilitates the use of service hubs to better provide access and support to our communities.

### 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 01869 717712.

All the best,  
Gemma & Julian

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For anyone who would prefer, we can instead provide transport to Exeter Hall, Kidlington on Thursdays, or Methodist Church, Bicester, on Fridays where there are older adult lunch clubs that are low cost (pay what you can) with more substantial meals.

If you want to sign up for our Winter Warmers program please call Cherwell District Council on 01295 221980.



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## Dates for the Diary

3rd February	9.00 am – 12.00 pm	Food Bank collection outside Weston Pantry
6th February	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves Lunch
7th February	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
8th February	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
12th February	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
19th February		Week 1 of Lent course, 'From Now On'
21st February	7.30 pm	WI Meeting; in the Village Hall
5th March	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves Lunch
6th March	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
11th March	1.30 pm	Weston Walkers; meet at the Village Hall
11th March	7.30 pm	Weston Society
14th March	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
20th March	7.30 pm	WI Meeting; in the Village Hall
23rd March	6.30 pm	Bingo and Curry Night in the Village Hall



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



### FRIENDS PRODUCE

FRIENDS PRODUCE: Winter is always a bumper time for Friends Produce, as ever huge thanks go to Mick, Toddy & Corinne for raising funds towards St Mary's Church and the Village Hall. The amount raised since the last edition of the news is £449.36.

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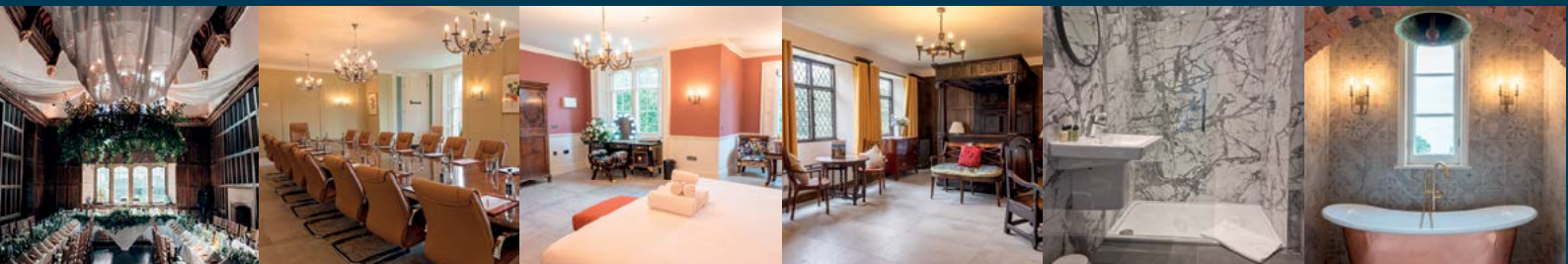


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