

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN

TheVillageNews

JUNE/JULY 2023



Photograph by Jordie Riches

Village Directory

THE VILLAGE NEWS

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WESTON SOCIETY

WESTON WALKERS

FOOTPATH WARDEN

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From the editor

The couple of weeks running up to the *Village News* going into production was a flurry of activities in Weston with the village both commemorating and celebrating in very quick succession.

The commemorating was Weston losing two important members of its community, Graham West and Julia White, both long-standing residents of the village who, in their individual ways, supported so much of what went on in both Weston and the surrounding areas.

This was quickly followed by the celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III. Bunting once again sprung up around the village, the Ukrainian flags were swapped for Union Jacks and the village held a weekend of celebrations – in true Coronation tradition, helped by the rain on the actual day (though thankfully it didn't rain on the Coronation Parade and Picnic).

The church bells rang out just before the actual ceremony started and again in the afternoon for 'Ring for the King' and the Village Hall laid on a special Coronation Tea whilst showing the service on their big screen.

A big thank you to everyone who organised or helped out at the various village events that weekend. As ever, both in the commemorations and celebrations, Weston demonstrated its wonderful community spirit.

Also



Deadline for August/September edition:
6th JULY 2023



A letter from the Rector

Gareth Miller

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

Dear friends,

I have just come back from casting my vote. I was amused to be congratulated for being the first voter. As I said to the Presiding Officer, it's pretty well the first time I've been first for anything!

I was in a meeting the other evening and after the formal business closed the participants continued in conversation. By a slightly circuitous route we got onto politics. I was intrigued that one of those present spoke in such a way as to assume that I shared her political views (I don't!).

We are fortunate to live in a country where we are permitted a range of political opinions and that has at least some claim to call itself democratic (though in my view an overhaul of the voting system is long overdue). Yet in recent times, and in supposedly democratic countries, we have seen examples of those who fear losing power trying to manipulate the electoral

process. In other countries there is blatant, or only slightly concealed, dictatorship.

A worrying development is the potential for 'bad actors', as they have been called, to use Artificial Intelligence to undermine plebiscites and other electoral processes for their own malevolent ends.

Easy access to the internet is also have a worrying effect on our schools. It is difficult for parents to control what their children watch on their screens, and equally difficult for teachers to monitor what is shared in the playground.

On the positive side, our three village schools put a huge amount of effort into reinforcing certain core values, some of them 'Christian' values, some of them 'British' ones, and of course there is a considerable element of overlap. Honesty, integrity, respect, resilience – these are just a few of the virtues espoused, taught and

exemplified on a daily basis. We are very fortunate indeed to have such good local schools, and that these fundamental ingredients of a good life are so deeply embedded.

Sharing and developing these values does not, of course, mean that everyone will share the same political opinions, and I hope that we will continue to enjoy a diversity of outlook. Whatever the threats, as well as the opportunities, posed by the inexorable development of sophisticated technology, I have huge confidence that the younger generation will play a positive role in building a world that is more just and more equitable, challenging prejudice and distortion in all their manifestations. Those of us who are older can share our wisdom, but we should also be open to receive the wisdom of the young, who are generally are far less governed by unconscious biases.



June and July services at St Mary's Church, Weston on the Green

4th June	16:00	Family Service
11th June	11:00	Morning Worship
18th June	11:00	Holy Communion
2nd July	16:00	Patronal Evensong (Visitation BVM)
9th July	11:00	Morning Worship
16th July	11:00	Holy Communion
30th July	10:00	Holy Communion

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

*"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
Matthew 7: verse 12*

As readers in our village are aware, Julia White has passed away. While death is a sad event, because we will miss her from our lives, to the Christian, death is the next step in an incredible journey. We know Julia firmly believed that.

Julia was a stalwart of the church and its mission to humanity. Her devoted service was one feature of her tenure of 25 years as a warden of St. Mary's. She exemplified the core value of Christian faith in her devotion to serving others in our community. In some respects her faith was simple, our role is to love one another by helping and supporting those in time of need. Just being available to listen or assist is the fundamental core value. Julia embodied the creed that we have a responsibility to look after each other.

Just prior to her death, Julia made a generous donation to our church by paying for the installation of new carpeting in the nave and greeting areas of the church. She wanted the colour to match that of the altar curtain which was put in place for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee. As you know, Julia had a very artistic eye, especially when it came to floral arrangements, an area where she excelled. She was always available to beautify the church for those special occasions, and I was amazed to find a cache of props under the altar table for Remembrance Sunday and Christmas celebrations. She was



an organiser. We will miss her and are thankful to have been in her presence in our community.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) was held on May 2nd at the Village Hall. The business of the church was discussed with a focus on our service to the community. We do face challenges, both administrative and financial. On the administrative side the Parochial Church Council (PCC) relies heavily on volunteers. The PCC organised a meeting with Bishop Gavin of Dorchester to discuss how the church's central authority could best release funds for investment in rural parishes to overcome the challenge of too few clergy serving too many parishes. The meeting was encouraging, and we view it as a start of a process. I have been attending a series of webinars on "How Rural Churches

Thrive", which focuses on reaching out into our communities rather than waiting for the communities to come to the church. Some of the suggestions have been implemented at St. Mary's by making the front porch more welcoming and inviting people to make coffee in the inside area. It will take some time and money to accomplish the desired outcomes.

Peter Driver and Eric Bohm were re-elected as churchwardens; Theffania Everett as our Deanery Synod Representative; Nicky Donne as the Akeman Benefice Safeguarding Co-ordinator; and Roz Bullen, Nerys Wilkinson, Rebecca Barton, and Barbara Chisholm as members of the PCC. We are truly blessed by their range of talents.

Eric Bohm, Church Warden



 @oldflighthouse

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To Rise and to Shine in Kirtlington!

HAVING BEEN THE CREATOR of Rise and Shine three years ago, Gemma Maybank has moved on from leading it to continue learning in ministry at a church in central Oxford. There was a leaving party to celebrate what has been achieved so far and to give grateful thanks to Gemma for all her vision, hard work and wonderful cakes!

Since then the team has picked up the reins and carried on. The cakes continue, the level of happy chat noise seems ever increasing, and new families have arrived this term.

The idea of Rise and Shine is that it



Goodbye and thank you, Gemma!

is one of those rare places where all ages can gather together and find entertainment and company. Although cake has traditionally paid a central role in the whole occasion there are plenty of other things on offer as well – good coffee for a start, comfortable chairs for another thing, and for the young ones some satisfying craft, some toys, and some wonderfully messy play (“multi-sensory educational experience” if you prefer). The young families gather towards the end of the morning for a story and some singing.

In the first week of the summer term I am told you could hear the lively chatter going on inside as you entered the churchyard. That’s because new arrivals were getting to know people who had lived longer in the area, and old friends were catching up after the holidays. It may also have been because the theme of “New Life” involved a great deal of fun making a garden out of earth, sand, pebbles, leaves, flowers, and baby chicks (not real), and necessitated some fairly radical earth-moving. Amazingly, not a hint of the garden was to be seen

on floor or chairs by the end of the morning – what a superb lot of parental and team helpers! New life seemed to be an appropriate theme for the first session after Easter and the ‘choir’ joined in “If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands” with gusto.



A new Noah's Ark has joined the toys

A new glove puppet called Susie has come to join the story-telling team, although it turns out she is rather shy...

We look forward to doing all sorts of coronation activities and plenty more to follow. More people from Weston and other villages would be most welcome, any Wednesday in term-time.

BENEFICE NEWS

Ordinands

We offer our prayers and send our warm congratulations to three people who are to be ordained at the end of June or beginning of July, all of whom have been worshipping with us and helping in various ways over the past year or two:

Alistair Milne, to serve in Guildford diocese.
Sam Durley, to serve in Oxford diocese.
Fran Smettem, to serve in Bath and Wells diocese.

Akeman Church Community Choir

We will be singing at two services in June and July – do come along!

25th June we will be singing evensong at Wendlebury at 18:00.

23rd July we will be singing at the morning service at Hampton Gay at 11:00.

New members always welcome.

Email akemanbenefice@gmail.com

Deanery Walk

The fourth Deanery Walk will take place on Sunday 16th July in the Weston/Bletchington area. Full details to be confirmed. Please note the date (time: approx. 14:00 – 17:00).

Hymns and Pimms at Chesterton

Come and join us for Hymns and Pimms at Chesterton on 30th July at 18:00. Some favourite hymns and a chance to thank everyone who supports our church community in so many different ways.

From the Registers:

Funerals

25th April: Graham John West at North Oxfordshire Crematorium.

2nd May: David Stockford, interment of ashes.

3rd May: Julia Dorothy Mary White, St Mary's Church

Chair's comments

THE CORONATION WEEKEND had several wonderful events. The Parish Council had a team preparing for a parade and picnic. We had no idea if it would rain or be sunny or how many people would come – but the event was amazing! Our vision was to get children onto the playing field, adults meeting new folk and just having fun. We wanted lots of food, good entertainment, and ice cream! We were generously supported by Axicon, The Manor Hotel, the Milk Shed and a range of generous villagers. Thank you to all the volunteers!

The latter part of April and early May were extremely busy. We hosted the Annual Village Meeting which is an important opportunity for questions on any topic regarding the village. We do spend some time trying to imagine what the questions will be so we can ask the appropriate people to be there. Our speaker for the evening was Dr. Susan Daenke who spoke on "Development in our area and the impact on our village". It was a rather sobering presentation as she mapped out Cherwell and one by one inserted major developments that are being built now or will be in the next few years. The scale of these developments is enormous,

and one can only surmise that the effect of the traffic will have an incremental effect on our traffic issues.

Following the speaker were two reports: one by Sam Sharpe of the SOS Committee. The second was by Ian Jones discussing matters around the Ben Jonson. Both topics are important to us and problematic. By now you will have received and hopefully filled out the survey regarding our post office and shop. Also, the Ben Jonson was sold at auction by the developer who bought it claiming he wanted to live there because he loves the village. The Parish Council will challenge change of use vigorously. We have also applied to have it made an Asset of Community Value pulling together very strong arguments which Cherwell is considering.

Key point in the year

May 3rd was the Annual Parish Council Meeting. It is a key point in the year when the councillors reflect on our governance documents. We were reminded of the tremendous work that went into preparing them and the resultant clarity of the nature of doing parish business (huge thanks to Ruth Whitfield). We want to

start our new financial year with updated documentation and set the tone once again for how we work together.

Elections were held at the Annual Parish Council Meeting with Chair: Diane Bohm, Vice-Chair: Dr. Susan Daenke and Responsible Financial Officer: Jane Mullane (Clerk). We will be running an in-depth induction for our new councillors in late May or June. After that, the Parish Council will announce the leaders of our advisory groups.

Sadly, we received Robin Stafford-Allen's resignation from the Parish Council as he and Janice will be leaving the village to be closer to their family. Their departure will leave a terrible gap in the village. Robin has done so much over the years but specifically he has been i/c Works for the Parish Council and, joined by John Miller last year, has accomplished several major works. His eye has been on the ball in checking the children's playground and making necessary repairs. He does seem to love a go on the ride-on mower and can regularly be seen checking the spinney and the hedges. He contributed greatly to the purchase

continued on p8



Juliette and Steve welcome all to

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of the playing field. Beware, we are now looking for about five people to fill the gap!!

Important years ahead

We foresee a busy and important couple of years ahead. Depending on the outcome of the pondering of the Cherwell Local Plan, we may become aware of further changes in the area. I know

through my work with other parish council chairs that there is grave concern that the rural villages and countryside keep their character and beautiful landscapes.

Somehow we must figure out how to dwell alongside modernisation. The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework alongside the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine, if

rigorously progressed, could have a radical impact on our area. Now, as never before, it is important to see what is going on outside our border and assess the impact of any proposal. The Parish Council is dedicated to doing just that.

Diane Bohm, Chair

Community Transport

Our generously donated Community Transport vehicle is proving an excellent addition to Weston and is being used for helping villagers get to doctor and hospital appointments as well as visits to barbers, dentists and hairdressers.

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

Please in the first instance contact Sarah Smith on 07557 557304, giving as much notice as possible, or Graham Barnett on 01869 350707.



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Community Speedwatch

Weston on the Green Parish Council is now part of a nationwide Community Speedwatch programme, in conjunction with Thames Valley Police, with the remit of monitoring the speed of traffic through towns and villages with speed restrictions using approved detection devices.

Community Speedwatch's aim is to educate drivers about the dangers of speeding and the nuisance it causes in the community where they offend but that does not exclude the possibility of direct Police intervention if the message is not fully understood. The programme

is not just about reporting as many drivers as we can but our regular visible presence on the roadside will hopefully act as a deterrent to regular offenders.

As we share the speed camera with Islip we cannot use it every week but since joining the scheme in May 2022 and up to the end of March 2023, our volunteers have held 63 roadside sessions at differing times of day, 28 in Church Lane amounting to 46.5 hours and 35 on the B430 amounting to 52.5 hours.

736 vehicles have been reported to the Police for exceeding 24 mph in Church Lane and 330

vehicles reported for exceeding 46 mph on the B430, some of which are repeat offenders - one vehicle being reported on five separate occasions, including once in Chesterton, two vehicles reported on three separate occasions and eighteen reported twice.

The fastest vehicle reported in Church Lane was travelling at 42mph, the fastest on the B430 at 67 mph.

If you have any questions, would like further information or would like to volunteer, please contact our Group Coordinator: Graham Barnett on 01869 350707 / gblmb@btinternet.com



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VOUCHER

Planning Update

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

BUILDING APPLICATIONS:

Decisions Received – Permitted

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

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

23/00345/F - Erlinstoun, Shepherds Close
Removal of front and rear single storey extensions and erection of new front and rear single storey extensions

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

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

23/00148/LB – Manor Hotel, B430. Part retrospective repairs to dry stone walls, stone piers, steps around the Sunken Garden. Some repair to the stone piers near the wrought iron gate entrance has already started (i.e. retrospective for this). Remaining repairs to replace concrete capping with lime cement, rebuild stone walls, re-lay York stone paving etc.

23/00154/F – Dower House, Church Road. Single storey extension to rear.
Proposed extension to rear for use as a garden room adjoining the kitchen. Includes 8 conservation rooflights and bi-fold doors to terrace.
Resubmission of similar permitted extension in 2013 and 2018, but smaller in scale.



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

Awaiting Decision

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.

23/00270/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.

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

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.

23/01120/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. The proposed revision to the condition will enable the former office space to be occupied as a part of the existing dwelling house.

23/01107/DISC – Westfield Farm Cottage, North Lane
Discharge of Condition 2 (flooring sample) of 22/03133/LB

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

Tree Works

22/02993/TCA – Barnacre, Northampton Road

22/03631/TCA – Manor Cottage

23/00609/TCA – Old Byre, Fir Tree Farm



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Crowning glory

At the end of April we had a very pleasant morning in the Village Hall when we hosted a coffee morning and table top sale. We were joined by a number of local businesses including BeccaLou Designs, whose Gold Coronation Coach cakes flew off the shelves, Peck & Feather, Flamingo Paperie and Dough & Dine as well as a number of villagers running their own stalls. It was a very sociable event and thank you to everyone who came along.

We hope everyone enjoyed the Coronation celebrations in the village the first weekend in May. It was lovely to see such varied activities going on in our community. On Coronation Day itself, seventy-five villagers joined us in the Hall to watch the Coronation followed by Afternoon Tea and lots of celebratory fizz. The Hall was bedecked in bunting, balloons and flowers and our thanks go to Nicola Harper of Harper's Farm Flowers in Aynho for the gorgeous table displays and to Sally Brown for the fantastic pedestal display.

We would like to thank all the local businesses who supported this event (Dalcour Maclaren, H2H Storage Solutions, Smith & Sons Ltd in Bletchington, The Manor and Tesco) as well as the Parish Council. Our thanks also go to Emma Bernard, Mandy Jones and Toddy



Hamilton-Gould for helping us decorate and set up the Hall the day before, and to Emma, Toddy and Helen Nicholson for helping serve the Afternoon Teas on the day. As a thank you, the flowers were gifted to all of these wonderful helpers who made the day run so smoothly. Thank you also to Clive for the classic cars which were on display and, despite the rain, proved to be a popular addition.

Villagers who attended the event were able to follow proceedings via the order of service provided

and they also received a couple of keepsakes to commemorate the event. We would also like to thank everyone who attended – it's the support of villagers that makes these events so special and we really do appreciate it.

There was just a hint of sadness on the day as we knew how much Julia White loved these occasions. Julia was a keen supporter of the Hall and our tribute to her can be found in this edition of the Village News.

Weston on the Groove

We hope that the weather may be kinder to us on July 1st when we celebrate fifty years of the Hall (the current Hall opened in May 1973 having replaced the original wooden building of 1921). Saturday 1st July sees the annual North v South of the Village Aunt Sally match, a pop-up pub, BBQ, a 1970s inspired raffle and to round the evening off, a 70s disco. We hope you can join us for the evening and we're looking forward to the Aunt Sally match after last year's tense match when the last throw of the game resulted in a draw. Everyone is welcome to join us for the evening, young and old alike.



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THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

A tribute to Julia White



The Village Hall Committee was deeply saddened by the passing of Julia White. Julia was a great supporter of village life, including events at the Village Hall, which she regularly attended, and she was always keen to invite new villagers along so that they could make new friends. Indeed, it was Julia who introduced the current Chairman and Secretary to the Village Hall when she brought them in as "ringers" for a quiz night!

It was another quiz night, a 1970s themed one, that Julia impressed everyone by wearing (and looking stunning in) a green jumpsuit that she'd owned for more than forty years! Her encouragement and kindness towards the Village Hall Committee was very much valued and appreciated. Her joyful demeanour and friendship will be greatly missed.



PHONE BOX LIBRARY

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Weston Society

On Monday March 13th, 18 members of the Weston Society were addressed by Dave Gilbert who, as a volunteer, gave us a talk on behalf of Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

The first recorded use of an air ambulance was in 1870 in Paris. A hot air balloon was used to transport a casualty. There is no record of where it landed, but, safe to say, downwind from the take-off site.

In 1979 Cornwall was the first county in England to use a helicopter as an ambulance. The narrow Cornish roads meant that a normal ambulance could be held up for several hours.

TVAA was formed in 2007 using an old Augusta 139. This could only be half filled with fuel as it was too heavy to take off otherwise. They are now on their fourth version of a Eurocopter 135 which is loaded with similar equipment to a hospital, thereby taking the hospital to the patient. The pilot, doctor and paramedic are all employed directly by TVAA. On average they answer 7 calls per day, of which, 3 require the helicopter. The remainder are dealt with by a fleet of 5 critical care vehicles.

Funding is all voluntary as the National lottery deem them to be an emergency service whilst the government say they are not an



emergency service so no funding is forthcoming.

On Monday May 8th John May, a resident of Weston on the Green, gave an extremely interesting and informative talk on the role of Deputy Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, John being one of 38 Deputies supporting the Lord Lieutenant.

John described the history of the Crown representation in the country, starting with the High Sheriff role dating back to the Magna Carta, now a symbolic role and the introduction of the Lord Lieutenant role by Henry VIII, primarily to raise militia on behalf of the Monarch.

The Lord Lieutenant and the 38 Deputies now represent the Monarch in Oxfordshire, attending Royal visits and supporting and encouraging the voluntary and community sector. Their main roles being attending and presiding over county events, awarding medals, certificates and citizenship,

supporting and encouraging volunteer groups and individuals, convening local interest groups and, for John perhaps the most rewarding, recommending individuals to attend Royal Garden parties, awards for voluntary service and recommendation for the King's honours list.

It proved to be a great way of ending the Coronation weekend celebrations, particularly with the Hall still festooned with flags and balloons.

Our next meeting is on Monday 10th July when Liz Woolley, a favourite of the Society, will be talking on "Axtell to Zacharias. The men who built 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-on-the-Green WI

Our AGM was held on 15th March, with wine, nibbles and refreshments. It was followed by a further talk from Clare Phillips, one of our members, about her fascinating and varied career as a physiotherapist which took her to several countries, including China, Bahrain and Canada each with their own methods of physiotherapy.

On the 19th April we had another visit from Pam Newall who took us on a journey to Austria for an alpine ramble and a meeting with Mozart in Salzburg. She had many beautiful and fascinating slides.

The talk at our May meeting on the 17th will be given by Jill Saint, a member from Bletchington, on her experiences as a dresser and wardrobe assistant at the Oxford Playhouse. Our meeting on the 21st June is to be a social evening with a meal and on the 19th July Sheila Churchhill's talk is entitled 'TB or Not to Be'.

Sadly, as many of you will already know, Julia White passed away recently. Julia had been a WI member for many years and had represented Weston WI at County



events. She was always happy to help with any catering, her shortbread was legendary, and she also did wonderful flower arrangements and demonstrations for our meetings. We will really miss her.

We would like to invite all ladies and already have ladies from Bletchington and other villages. If you are new to either village, or a long-time resident, it's a great way to make 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 7.30 pm. In addition, we have theatre and other visits, plus occasional coffee mornings and lunches. We also have a craft afternoon on the fourth Monday at 2.00 pm and walks on the second Monday at 1.30 pm (both of which were WI initiatives although you don't need to be a member to take part in these).

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

Lyn Barnett



Weston Walkers

Unfortunately, due to the wind and rain, our March walk had to be cancelled but we did walk in April, albeit on the third Monday to avoid Easter, 4.2 miles on the southern side of the A34 across some paths that do not appear to be walked very regularly.

It was good to see however that some broken-down stiles had been replaced with brand new kissing gates and damaged footbridges replaced.

Our May walk is planned for Monday 15th, again being the third Monday to avoid the Bank Holiday.

We will be back to the second Mondays in June and July, being the 12th of June and 10th of July, meeting at Weston Village Hall at 1.30 pm.

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

Ring for the King

What a joyful, memorable occasion the Coronation weekend for King Charles III has been for Weston on the Green!

The bell ringing team were especially proud to be a part of the celebrations; our own band of 7 ringers were joined by Judith and Steve Vickars from Kirtlington to enable our newest recruits to ring with us before the Coronation Ceremony.

*Fab experience.
I could get hooked!*

We rang rounds, courses of 'Kings' and the 48 Coronation Call Changes. This was followed in the afternoon by two hours of over 80 people from the village



community, including friends and visitors, braving the rain to have a go at chiming the bells and 'Ring for the King'. It was heart warming to see the looks of joy and amazement on the faces of all those who came, aged 3-93!

Great fun, hope there are more opportunities to ring it.

So, who knows – we might be joined on a Thursday evening by some more new recruits!

*Always wanted to do that!
Hard work too!*

Please contact Gerald Bushby, any of the bell ringing team or just turn up at the tower 7.30 - 9.00 pm.



Re-wilding Weston

The footpath heading north from the duck pond was planted last autumn with fritillary meleagris, commonly known as 'snake's head fritillary', following work to clear the path of fallen debris.

This wildflower was once common to the area but has declined with the loss of meadows. It is classified as 'vulnerable' on the Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain and now only found in a few locations in Southern England and the Midlands. Bumblebees are the flower's main pollinator.

Planting was undertaken after taking advice from our local Wildlife Trust who note:

"It was not so long ago that the spring markets of Covent Garden were overflowing with the nodding, pink-and white-chequered blooms of snake's-head fritillaries. Handfuls picked from meadows beside the River Thames were taken to London by local children to be sold for a pretty penny or two. But, today, the carpets of this flower that once straddled our rivers and adorned our wet meadows have become a rare sight."

The name comes from their nodding, bell-shaped heads and does not indicate reptiles!



The plant is fussy about where it chooses to grow and bulbs can take some years to naturalise – or not!

In late spring we were rewarded with the sight of fritillaries

appearing along parts of the path as can be seen in the photo above, and hopefully more will appear next year – look out during the second week of April!

Roger Evans



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The birds and the bees

A new bird on the block!

At the moment I don't have a camera in the barn owl nest box in our loft. I know that a pair of barn owls have been roosting up there over the winter period but when I looked in the box in early April there were no eggs - nor any sign of them getting ready to have a family.

They don't make a nest like a blackbird, etc. but make a slight hollow in the base of the nest box which has bark chippings in it. Over the past 10 years that they've been nesting up there, we have always had the first egg laid around the end of March and the first week of April.

I was starting to get worried and the lack of the camera up there didn't help. However, on 30th April when I checked the box, there was a single egg. This is the latest that they've ever started to lay but I've since been told that the end of April is the normal time for them so I will leave them to finish laying before I look again and take that opportunity of putting in the camera.

I've included a photograph of one of last year's youngsters just before it was ringed.



Pot duck

At about 8.30pm one evening as I arrived back in Weston and was walking to the house, I noticed a large bird perched on the top of a chimney pot of a house in Knowle Lane. The light was fading but although it looked like a large crow, the shape wasn't quite right.

Looking through binoculars I then discovered it was a duck - a chimney pot not being the usual place for a duck sit/stand. I got my camera, attached my telephoto lens and took a picture knowing that nobody would believe me if I told them I'd seen a duck on a chimney pot.

However, not just any old duck but a Mandarin duck! Not exactly a bird you would expect to see in the UK - they were introduced from China in the 19th century and usually frequent the lakes and ponds of stately homes. They're looked upon as being "ornamental ducks" and their shape and colouring is quite spectacular - certainly an unusual visitor to Weston on the Green and especially Knowle Lane. But it wasn't there the following morning!

Bee tree retrieve

Kate and I collected our first swarm of bees on 1st May. It was one of the largest swarms I've seen and in a tree near Kirtlington Village Hall. It did mean climbing up a ladder to retrieve them but there were no problems involved and they're now back in our apiary in Weston.

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay, a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon but a swarm in July isn't worth a fly. I'll explain why another time.

Bob Hessian



From the Wood Fairy...

What a relief! It looks like the need for kindling has ceased. A grand total of 468 bags have been sent off to the shop. Will be looking to build up the stock for mid-September.

However, the Wood Fairy is not able to rest on his

laurels. Along with carving the special Coronation woodcuts, there's been boxes and a sign to make for Dough and Dine as well as some display shelving for handmade glass items.

It's a busy life in the Wood Fairy's grotto ...

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Graham West, Newbridge House

Please may I offer our heartfelt thanks to so many people in Weston on the Green who demonstrated so much kindness towards Graham including attending his funeral.

Becca and I have received much comfort from such generosity of thought and actions.

Thank you so much.
 Sylvia and Rebecca West

John Dovey

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John Howell MP writes...

THIS MONTH with the local elections we have seen people come and people go as councillors. Firstly my thanks to all those who have worked as local councillors, at parish and district in the last four years or more. Having been a councillor myself I know very well the work that is involved and that sometimes it can be a thankless task. You can never please everyone and there are always more people ready to complain than to compliment. Welcome too to new councillors. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Turnout figures for local elections are generally low. I think this may be that they do not appreciate the work that is done at a local level. Issues are often raised with me that I have to defer to local councils as the councils are fully autonomous and responsible for their own decisions.

The most local level of democracy is the parish council. This the elected body closest to the community. Probably the most common topics that parish councils get involved with are planning matters and working for better services and facilities for the community. As a formal body parish councils have the ability to influence other organisations that make decisions affecting the community such as the district



and county councils, health authorities, police. As such parish councils have an important role in local democracy and can be a great resource to support a thriving community.

The next tier of local government in this area is the district council. The constituency is served by two district councils, Cherwell District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. They are responsible for local services, including planning, housing and associated benefits, rubbish collection, environmental services, leisure services, some car parks and council tax collection.

Finally we have the County Council. This is a much larger council which is responsible for services across the whole of a county including education, social

services, transport, roads (except trunk roads and motorways), public rights of way, libraries, the fire service, culture, trading standards, bus subsidies, minerals, waste and recycling (disposal) and the environment.

Each of these council has elected representatives who take decisions on the relevant issues and are there to help residents in the areas of their responsibility. These people should be the first port of call to raise concerns with as they have direct access to information and, in the case of the larger councils, the officers employed to assist. From my own experience as a local councillor, and working alongside many other councillors, I know that most people who put themselves forward for these roles do it because they want to help and support their community. I would therefore encourage residents to take an interest in what they do and seek their support if necessary. Just as I can sometimes help with issues relating to central government departments, so local councillors can help with issues relating to their councils' areas of responsibility.

If there is a particular issue that concerns you, please do share your thoughts. My contact details are on my website - www.johnhowell.org.uk.



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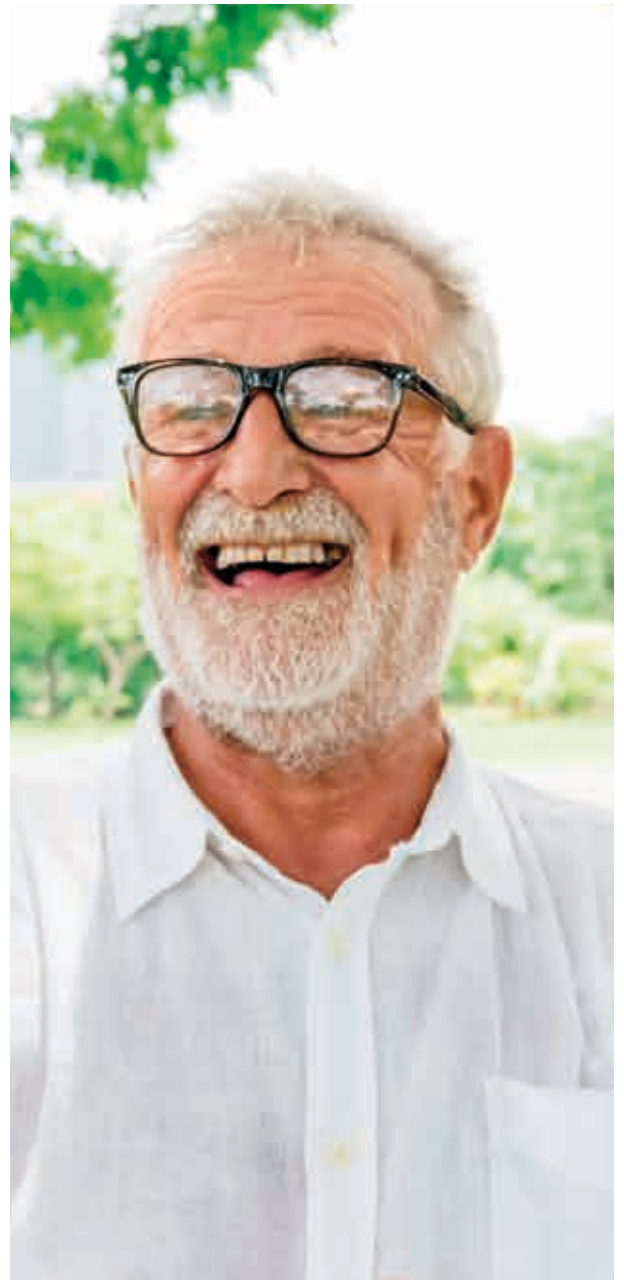
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Dates for the Diary

6th June	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves lunch
7th June	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
8th June	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
21st June	7.30 pm	WI Social Evening with Meal
1st July	6.30 pm	Village Hall 50th Anniversary celebrations
4th July	12.30 pm	Golden Leaves lunch
5th July	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting
10th July	7.30 pm	Weston Society
13th July	10.00 am – 12.00 pm	Neighbours' Natter
19th July	7.30 pm	WI Meeting
2nd August	7.30 pm	Parish Council meeting



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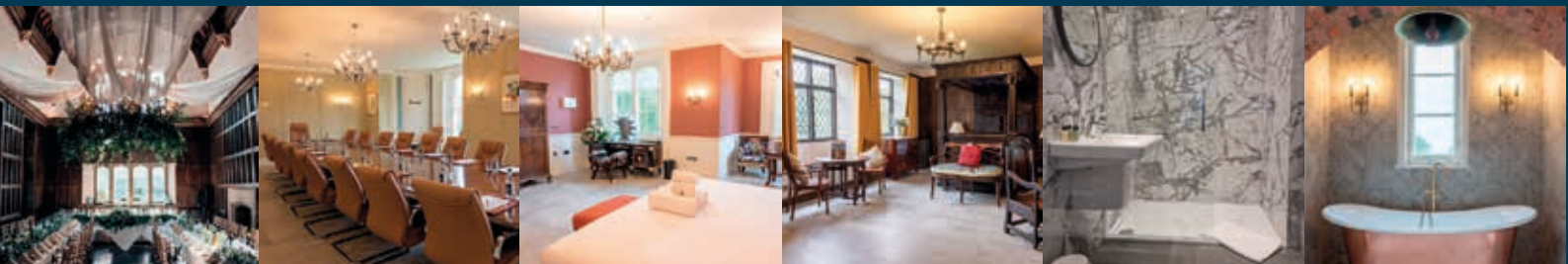


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