

# Village News

in Swindon Village

*Your local Newsletter sponsored by the  
Parish Council and delivered by volunteers*

No. 401      February 2014

## **February**

- Monday      3      Marle Hill W.I. - St. Nicolas' Hall 7.30pm  
Terry Shaughnessy - 'Tall Ship Sailing'.
- Wednesday      5      Wednesday Club - Village Hall 8.00pm AGM
- Tuesday      11      Parish Council Meeting - Village Hall 7.30pm  
With Public Session.**
- Monday      17      Church fete planning meeting - Village Hall lounge 7.30pm  
All help welcome.
- Wednesday      19      Swindon Village Society - Village Hall 7.30pm  
Dr. Simon Draper - Anglo-Saxon Gloucestershire
- Wednesday      26      Wine Club - Village Hall 7.30pm AGM  
Doug Wilkins Memorial competition + Pudding night

## **March**

- Monday      3      Marle Hill W.I. - St. Nicolas' Hall 7.30pm
- Wednesday      5      Wednesday Club - Village Hall 8.00pm
- Saturday      8      Scouts collecting jumble around inner village area
- Tuesday      11      Parish Council Meeting - Village Hall 7.30pm  
With Public Session.**
- Wednesday      19      Swindon Village Society - Village Hall 7.30pm  
Jackie Perry - Women in Work, 1850 to 1950
- Saturday      22      Scouts Jumble Sale - Village Hall

*(Full minutes of all meetings are displayed on the Parish Council notice boards and on the Parish website. They are also available on request from the Chairman.)*

On behalf of the Parish Council I hope you had a great Christmas and may we wish you a happy new year.

December remained busy for the Parish Council. We have now submitted comments on the Joint Core Strategy (JCS). The evidence base remains incomplete so there will be more work to do when the results of the traffic surveys are known. Some reports that were written before the recent consultation have only just been made available to the public. Odd. Our friends at Uckington are setting up a meeting between the Parish Councils and planners from the JCS team. This will be a chance to get across the key points of our objections face to face with the architects of the strategy.

We have engaged a contractor to remove some of the branches of two chestnut trees in the Amenity Area by the brook behind Manor Court. Public safety is our first priority. Sadly the trees are diseased and not long for this world. We need to spread the cost across a number of financial years; it is not possible to simply have them felled. We are also felling the ugly tree that casts dark shadows in the allotments. Our allotment holders have been very patient (as you can tell from the height of the tree!) and it is time we sorted this out.

We have seen a number of major works in the area recently. The Swindon Village end of Dog Bark Lane is now looking much tidier. The works are essentially complete and gates have now been installed. We have also had major road resurfacing undertaken. The new surface looked wonderful for a couple of weeks but potholes are already appearing! We were surprised that the loudly trumpeted resurfacing of Hyde Lane has only seen work at the far (GE factory) end. We will be asking the question if there is more to come as parts of the road within the parish are in a poor state. There are also major roadworks going on at the Tewkesbury Road roundabout. This is causing severe traffic problems. We received no notification of this and will be investigating.

At this time of year the Parish Council has to set its precept. We completed this at our January meeting. It is a difficult task but it is now behind us for another year. This is a big topic and a separate article appears elsewhere in this issue with the details.

I was recently contacted by the police (not before time you might think). A Police Community Support Officer told me that she wished to come to Parish Council meetings. I thought this was a very positive move. However, given the pressure on budgets I found it surprising as the officer was based in South Staffordshire. It turns out we have a twin; they also have a Swindon Parish Council. I told the officer we would be delighted to welcome her but sadly she made her excuses.

**Shaun Cullimore**  
**Clerk to Swindon Parish Council**

## The Parish Precept

In this article I am specifically going to talk about Parish Council finances. I will explain how things work and I hope that you will be interested enough to read along, but if it is all too much I will summarise things right now (you'll miss a bad joke or two though).

- Swindon Parish Council has asked the Borough Council for £10,803.75 for 2014-2015.
- Last year the proportion of the Council Tax that came to the Parish Council was less than 1%; next year it will be just over 1%.
- The Parish Council has finished with a deficit (drawing on reserves) in each of the last four years.
- By law the Parish Council must be prepared to meet unexpected or unlikely costs; it does this by holding reserves (money “for a rainy day”).
- Our reserves are only two thirds of what they were at the end of 2008-2009.
- The Parish Council always strives to minimise the amount of money raised via the council tax and maximise income from other sources.
- The Parish Council is having to deal with extra duties as well as the effect of inflation and shrinking reserves.
- The Parish Council cannot raise money for the sake of it; every penny must be justified and the whole process is open to public scrutiny.

The financial environment for councils is becoming more and more complex. Central government is demanding that councils freeze or reduce expenditure. At the same time they are pushing more responsibilities onto councils so that central government can reduce its budgets and trumpet the savings they make. Faced with financial pressures the County Council and the Borough Council have to do the same; ask the Parish Councils to take on more.

The Parish Council gets the majority of its annual income as a lump sum from the Borough Council. This lump sum comprises the precept and a Council Tax Support Grant. Currently the Borough Council must pay whatever precept the Parish Council sets. The Council Tax Support Grant comes from the government to Cheltenham Borough Council. Presently the Borough Council is being fair and giving the Parish Councils their share.

The government wants more services devolved to a local level. However, they are thinking of introducing a requirement for Parish Councils to hold a referendum if they wish to raise their precept by more than a small amount. The Parish Council would have to pay for any referendum. If parishioners want the Parish Council to undertake a major project they would have to seek the approval of central government and effectively pay to do so. We cannot afford to be trapped with a low precept as the screw is turned.

Each year all councils have to go through a budgeting process to justify the money they want to raise and the purposes to which it will be put. This process must be open to public scrutiny. We prepare a robust budget so that everyone can see what

we plan to do with the money we request; we cannot raise money for the sake of it. Every penny must be justified, either to meet an anticipated cost or to replenish reserves. I am more than happy to show you what we do. The council tax goes to support the County Council, the Borough Council, the Police and the Parish Council. The Parish Council's share of the council tax is quite small; in 2013-2014 less than 1%.

The Parish Council owns the Amenity Area behind Manor Court. In the past the Borough Council has managed the trees it contains on our behalf. Because of their budget pressures they have relinquished any responsibility for the trees. The Parish Council has had to pay for expert advice on how to manage the trees. Some of them are diseased (the trees, not the experts) and, in the long term, will have to go. Felling the trees would cost thousands of pounds, which is unaffordable. The Parish Council is having to take a progressive approach, contracting a tree surgeon to remove limbs from the trees if they could become dangerous. Even this is expensive and is something we simply didn't have to consider (or budget for) in the past.

In addition to these extra responsibilities, the Parish Council (like everyone else) suffers the effect of inflation. We have seen some costs (e.g. printing) almost double. On the other hand some costs (like the Clerk's salary!) have hardly increased at all over a number of years. I know, unfair isn't it?

The Parish Council tries to minimise the financial impact it has on parishioners. When we have less income than expenditure it means we have to dip into our reserves. We had a deficit of £2143 in 2012-2013 and this year (2013-2014) we are likely to have another deficit, albeit a smaller one. This is not something we can continue to do. For example, there are elections in 2014. If there are more candidates for the Parish Council than seats we will have to use our reserves to contribute to the costs of running an election. We can't say we don't have the money; we are expected to be prudent and plan (through our reserves) for all eventualities. Central government accuses local councils of squirreling away money. For us the reality is that our reserves are only two thirds of what they were at the end of 2008-2009.

If you have read this and still have questions please get in touch. If you have strong opinions about how the Parish Council should be approaching these difficult times why not join us. We have a vacancy on the Parish Council and would welcome another member with a concern for the parish and a willingness to contribute.

**Shaun Cullimore**  
**Clerk to Swindon Parish Council**

## Swindon Parish Allotments

I would like to give a big 'thank you' to all the allotment holders who gave of their spare time to help with some long overdue repairs and maintenance on two weekends during October and November. Now we can look forward to Spring.

Both Rose Morris and Mr & Mrs Twinning have been awarded Certificates of Merit by the Cheltenham and District Allotment Association Judging Panel for the upkeep and presentation of their plots through 2013. Congratulations to both parties.

We will have plots available for rent this Spring, so anyone interested should please contact me.

**Ian Brown**  
**Swindon Parish Allotments Manager**

Tel. 528683

### Village Hall

To all village organisations, villagers and trustees alike, the village hall AGM will be held on **2nd April 2014** at 7:15pm in the lounge bar of the village hall.

This is your opportunity to have a say on the future of the hall so please come along and have your say.

Don't just sit back and leave it to someone else as you may find that someone else will do just the same as you and make no effort to secure its future and a negative response could result in a bleak future for this community asset.

The future is in your hands, not just the current committee, so make the effort, show an interest.

Positions that will up for re-election at the AGM are:

1. Chairman
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer

Committee representatives and co-opted members will be appointed at the committee meeting which will follow the AGM.

**Peter Piff**

## Services and events in February

Sunday	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Candlemas</i>	
		10.30am	Together@TenThirty - "Candles everywhere!"
		6.30pm	Sung Holy Communion
Tuesday	4 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Tuesday Group
Sunday	9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Fourth Sunday before Lent</i>	
		9.15am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	11 <sup>th</sup>	7.00pm	Holy Communion followed by Tuesday Group
Sunday	16 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Third Sunday before Lent</i>	
		9.15am	Holy Communion
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	18 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Tuesday Group
Sunday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Second Sunday before Lent</i>	
		9.15am	Holy Communion
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	25 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Tuesday Group
Wednesday	26 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Confirmation Group (TBC)

### From the registers

#### Baptism (Christening)



*We have recently welcomed into the church family  
Edward Cresswell 12<sup>th</sup> January*

## **Enquiries about baptisms or weddings**

If you would like to enquire about baptism (also called christening) or would like to book a wedding in St Lawrence church, please contact the Team Office, which is open on Mondays and Tuesdays from 8am to 11am and on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am until 12 noon. The Office is based in St Nicolas' Church in Swindon Lane. Contact the Office on **244373** or **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

I shall be on placement at Holy Apostles Church in Charlton Kings until the end of the month, so please contact **Revd Canon Michael Cozens (Team Rector) on 523177 or michael.cozens@northchelt.org.uk** .

**Revd. Liz Palin**

### **Thank You**

Thank you to all those who hosted Mary and Joseph as they travelled round the village during Advent. Their travel journal shows they had a wonderful time, and made Advent a very special time of preparation for Christmas. If you would like to read what they got up to, their journal is at the back of the church.

February is an odd month. Shorter than others, it feels like we are on the verge of spring, but it can plunge us into the depths of snow. We celebrate a saint by sending cards anonymously to those we care about, and we start to think that maybe we should do some spring cleaning – or not!

In St Lawrence we will be having a bit of a spring clean in readiness for some work to be done in the church. New facilities will include a toilet, and facilities for offering refreshments. It is all part of a desire to make the church a building that can serve the community in ways that are welcoming to as many people as possible.

This time of year is also a good time to think about what really matters to us. In the same way that de-cluttering the house, or shed, or loft can feel liberating, so can de-cluttering our lives, and affirming our priorities.

In February we will be starting to explore questions of faith with those who are considering Confirmation. Confirmation is the opportunity to 'confirm' the promises made on our behalf at our baptism as infants, now that we are old enough to decide for ourselves. If this is something that interests you, please contact a member of the clergy.

**Revd. Liz Palin**

## Christmas Tree Festival

This is the first opportunity I've had to say a public thank you to everybody who supported the Christmas Tree Festival either by entering a tree, coming to see the trees or helping in the church over the weekend, and to Father Christmas who bravely judged the trees.

Once again we were impressed by the originality and ingenuity of the decorations and the amount of work put in by the members of the groups who decorated the trees. We are so grateful - without you there would be no Christmas Tree Festival.

The Festival was never intended to be a competition but it always generates a bit of rivalry between groups so this year, in addition to the "people's vote", we invited Father Christmas to judge them, before their name labels were put out.

Father Christmas' favourites were the trees decorated by Swindon Village Early Years playgroup, the Wednesday Club and the Rainbow Guides whilst the people's vote was topped by Swindon Village Early Years, Marle Hill W.I. and the Scouts.

The raffle prizes were won by Helen Smith, Charlie Bagnall, Amy Jones and Brenda Stanford. The reindeers' carrots weighed 1.63kg; there was a tie with two people just 0.03kg out and it was decided to give the cuddly carrot to the first person who had made that guess, a member of the Elsworthy family.

The weekend raised £530 for St. Lawrence's church building and restoration funds which was fantastic but, just as importantly, it was lovely to see so many people mixing with each other. Again, thank you for your support.

Check next month's Village News to see what we are planning for this coming year. If you would like to help with any of our events or have ideas for us or, even better, if you fancy joining our little organising group please contact me.

**Karen Evans** (tel. 241678)

On behalf of the St. Lawrence Fundraising Group

## **A view from the pew**

In one of his recent pronouncements called “Evangelii Gaudium” (The Joy of the Gospel) the new Pope Francis says he has high praise for the “humble parish, with its church building, its vicar and its committed lay people working locally”. So he has pointed up one of our great strengths at St Lawrence as part of the Church of England as ‘committed lay people’.

As part of our great task of communicating the ‘Joy of the Gospel’ we parishioners each have our part to play (be it ever so humble) in the great Church of Christ. St. Paul wrote to the fractious Corinthian Church in the early days of Christianity (1 Cor.12) that it helps to think of the church as a body. At the Communion service we affirm: “We are the body of Christ”. As we do we may remember that a saintly nun reminded us that now Christ has ‘gone to his Father’ we and the whole church are now Christ’s body on earth. In other words, Jesus Christ works through us.

St. Paul reminds us that just as a human body has many parts, each with different functions, so the church has many members, each with their different roles to play. We’re all needed. We’re all inter-dependent. We have to work together in the great work of the church.

St. Paul makes the point that we’re all important. He gives several illustrations of what he means in his first letter to the newly established Corinthian church. He points out that the foot can’t sensibly say “because I’m not an eye I do not belong to the body. No, if the whole body were an eye where would the sense of hearing be?” He then presses on to conclude “there are many parts, but one body”. No one part is more important than any other. No one parishioner is more important than any other. I, as Reader, must see myself as no more important than the church member who quietly tidies up after the service or washes the tea cups or who makes a point of welcoming new people who come to morning or evening service.

The good news is that the Church of England with its strong and ancient parish set-up, with its great church buildings with all their aids to worship and its dedicated clergy, giving a lead, together with committed lay people working together has a strong base from which to face the task of evangelism - spreading the good news.

So, working with our friends and doing a range of tasks, we all strive to do our bit. Some of the tasks we do are more noticeable than other work. Think of those who quietly go about helping the church’s day-to-day and week-to-week work of spreading the good news about God’s love for us. Think of those who make lovely flower arrangements or sweep up or tidy up or make tea or coffee or make everything ready for visiting preachers.

Our churches cannot run without a common purpose. We all have to work together and so do our part. So our churches do the work of Christ.

**Ralph Griffin**

## *St. Lawrence Church*

### Dates for your diary

The **Annual Cake & Coffee Morning** will be held on **Saturday 12th April** in the Village Hall. Donations of cakes to sell and prizes for the raffle would be gratefully received as always. Please contact **Mary Halliwell**

The annual church fête will take place on **Saturday 5th July**. That seems a long way off but planning for the event has already started! If you would like to help organise the fête or you have ideas for it please come along to the first meeting of the year on **Monday 17th February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall lounge**. Everyone is welcome - the more, the merrier!

Tony Jilbert  
Tel. 693639

## **The latest news on our fight to Save The Countryside**

The three Councils, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester City, working together on a Joint Core Strategy for housing development for 20 years (JCS) finally issued their consultation on their preferred option.



Despite enormous opposition and lengthy arguments within the Council, they decided to continue to investigate a plan for 33,000 new houses including 4,850 on our Greenbelt land. This is an increase of 24.3% in housing stock when in the ten years up to the 2011 census the population of this area only increased by 5.7%.

After many weeks of work, we completed our formal response to the JCS (Joint Core Strategy) preferred option in December. Thank you to so many local supporters who responded directly to the Consultation. Without so much support our voice would certainly not be so strong.

Our key arguments were that the volume of housing was over-estimated by 10,000 and their proposal for Greenbelt Urban Extensions, including one at Swindon Village,

was not a necessity but a commercial choice influenced by developers. We gave the JCS team clear evidence to support our arguments and came up with practical alternatives for housing.

### **So - what's the good news?**

We have had huge amounts of publicity in local press, radio and TV and also the issue has been discussed nationwide and in Parliament. We are delighted that after much pressure, an all-party Parliamentary Group has been set up to discuss the issue of greenbelt protection. We have been invited to give evidence at that group. Our MP Laurence Robertson and also Cheltenham MP Martin Horwood are both part of that group and we continue to liaise closely with them.

There is much noise nationwide that the current legislation under the National Planning Policy Framework needs to be changed as it is biased towards development. With the continued pressure we are giving and the volume of noise on this issue it does seem that the JCS team, our Politicians and decision makers may actually be starting to absorb our reasoned arguments.

### **What's next?**

The JCS team are analyzing all the responses; they expect to issue a pre-submission of their final document in Spring 2014 and the final version to the Secretary of State in Winter 2014. We will continue to work with our politicians to take this issue right to Westminster decision makers AGAIN!

### **Why do we even need a Joint Core Strategy?**

We do need a plan. Current legislation would allow a developer to apply for planning permission anywhere and in the absence of a local plan, a planning application on greenbelt might very well be allowed by appeal. However, our argument is that it must be a reasonable flexible plan that can be adjusted as the population changes and housing needs change and above all benefit the existing population in the area as well as any new-comers.

As soon as we hear anything from the JCS team we will be sure to react and launch into action again. In the meantime we continue to collect additional evidence.

### **What can you do?**

Please sign and publicise our online petition Google Search Cheltenham Greenbelt Petition <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/52608>

Please "like" our Facebook page.

Join us on our annual countryside walk on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May.

We will be in touch directly and in the Village News with next action steps soon.

**Thanks again for your continued support.**

**Helen Wells**

A belated Happy New Year from everyone at Swindon Village Primary School.

Since my last piece, we have had an eventful end to 2013 – not only did we have all our usual Christmas activities but we also had a visit from OFSTED!

At Swindon Village Primary School we work very hard to ensure that every child receives a broad, balanced and stimulating education which is matched to their personal needs and leads to accelerated progress and so we are delighted that OFSTED has graded us as a GOOD school. The full report can be found on our school website [www.swindonvillage.co.uk](http://www.swindonvillage.co.uk) but here is a summary of why they have given us this grade.

- Overall effectiveness: **Good**
- Achievement of pupil: **Good**
- Quality of teaching: **Good**
- Behaviour and safety of pupils: **Good**
- Leadership and management: **Good**

This is a good school because:

- Pupils' achievement in all areas of the school has accelerated since the last inspection and is now good.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress whatever their starting points. They achieve well in each key stage. More pupils now reach the level expected for their age at the end of Year 6, where standards are now broadly average.
- Teaching has improved to typically good levels. Teachers have high expectations and provide work that is well matched to pupils' varying abilities and activities that are motivating and challenging.
- Pupils behave well, have very positive attitudes and attend school regularly.
- The curriculum provides a particularly strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. This, along with pupils' good behaviour, attitudes to learning and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensures that they are well prepared for their future.
- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher provide strong leadership. The drive, ambition and clear direction from all leaders have been key factors in the rapid improvements made.
- Teaching is improving rapidly through well planned training and because teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils.
- Governors provide good support, are well informed about the school's performance and hold leaders and managers rigorously to account.

We are really pleased to have received this recognition for our work and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the support that we continue to receive. We are very proud to be a part of the Swindon Village community and I would be keen to hear of other ways in which we can get involved. Similarly, we have a number of resources – not least our premises - which are available for community use. If you are interested in making use of our facilities, please get in touch. I look forward to hearing from you.

If you would like to find out more about what we are getting up to, please visit our website [www.swindonvillage.co.uk](http://www.swindonvillage.co.uk). We can also be found on Twitter where we are @swindonvillage.

Best wishes,

**Jonathan Dyer**  
Head Teacher

## The Swindon Village Society

Shortly after Christmas I normally undertake a plod around the village putting leaflets through letter boxes with an indication of what the Village Society has to offer and also giving details of our AGM. However, having put a LEGLAG leaflet through nearly every box I do not feel under plodded and it has dawned on me that the Village News could relieve me of the annual task. Hence the short advert below. Oh, and if you wonder why a member of the Village Society and of Save The Countryside was putting LEGLAG leaflets through your letter box it is because they were free. LEGLAG is rather better funded than STC and they offered us a box of their leaflets gratis. It seemed churlish to turn them down because any offer of help in turning the Joint Core Strategy around has to be welcome. Then some other good folk put our own leaflet through your door.

After the AGM we had an update on the JCS which, in short, said that the fight goes on. We have many allies in the form of other groups defending threatened land. Both Martin Horwood and Laurence Robertson have spoken out strongly in our favour and indeed the whole matter of building on the greenbelt nationally is an active cause for debate in Parliament. STC wrote to every councillor on each of the three councils covered by JCS and several have come back to give their support. Our main requirement is a reanalysis of the figures used to calculate the housing need over the next twenty years. If this is done we are convinced that it will reduce the JCS total by 10,000 so removing the need to build in the greenbelt at all.

However, it is time to return to marginally more parochial matters. This is our usual advert for the society:

The Society acts as a Civic Society for Swindon Village to try and ensure that it remains a civilised and pleasant place to live. We try not to concern ourselves with those matters best dealt with by the Parish Council. However, we are interested in planning matters, particularly, but not exclusively, within the Conservation area. It was the work of this Society which did much to establish the area and we have done much to maintain it in recent years.

We also act as the village's local history society and many of our talks are around this topic. Finally we keep an eye on conservation matters.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining us. Even if you have no interest in attending the functions your support is needed to ensure that we have a strong voice and can continue to support the village against the effects of unwanted development. It is much better to join now than wait until a development threatens your patch and then join in a hurry.

Annual family membership is £10 while individual membership is £5. Payment can be made at any meeting or by post or hand to 3, Swindon Hall, Swindon Village, Cheltenham, GL51 9QR. For more information call Barry Simon on 01242 521723.

As to our actual programme for this year, we start in February with a talk on Anglo-Saxon Gloucestershire by an Oxford University historian and in March the talk will be on Women at Work, 1850 - 1950. In July we have a talk on Guernsey under the Nazi Occupation and we finish the year with another talk on Pub Signs. In May I will be giving a talk on The History of Church Architecture in St Lawrence's. Throw in more talks, a garden visit, a garden party and a nature walk and we have a good programme for 2014.

**Barry Simon**

**Advertise your business in the Village News**

**Monthly rates**

Whole page £30    Half page £15    Quarter page £7.50  
One sixth of a page (square) £5

**Contact the Editors**

## Swindon Village Winemakers

Happy New Year to you all; here's looking forward to 2014!

Our last club meeting of the year on Wednesday 27th November was a Wine Tasting evening, organised by Tony and Ray. They provided bottles of wine from around the world and members had to guess where they came from, the price and what they were. A most enjoyable evening was had by all, finished off with a very good raffle organised as always by Claire Smith.

The wine club was once again represented at this year's Christmas Tree Festival at St. Lawrence Church, with John and Sue Beardsley very kindly offering to organise it for us. They went to an awful lot of work, and the tree looked great, thank you so much for all your hard work. This year, we have decided to involve ALL the wine club members, and will be asking each person to contribute towards the tree, watch this space!

The week before Christmas was a busy time socially for some of us in the wine club:

Our Christmas meal this year was at The-House-in-the-Tree on Saturday 14th December. Twent-eight of us attended and had a great evening, with lovely food and great company. We will be asking for ideas from our members as to what they would like or where they would like to go this year.

Charlton Kings Wine Club held their usual Christmas Party on Wednesday 18th December and, as always, a great night was had by those of us who attended. The entertainment for this event has been provided by Geoff George for as long as we've been going to them but sadly this was to be his last one as he is retiring from the entertainment business. The dances and social events will not be the same without Geoff's familiar face (as well as his very old jokes!) and he will be greatly missed, but we hope he has a long, healthy and happy retirement.

Then, on Thursday 19th December, several of us attended the annual Carol Concert, organised by Gloucester Wine Circle, and held at Churchdown School. As always a great evening, with music provided by Frampton-on-Severn Silver Band, despite the conductor leaving the sheet music at home, and someone having to drive back to Frampton to pick it up! This social event really puts you in the Christmas mood and is helped along by a really good raffle at the end. All proceeds go to the chosen charity of Gloucester wine club.

Our first club meeting of this year, in February, after our AGM will be the Doug Wilkins Memorial Trophy for Kit Wine. This year it is for Sweet Red Wine, and will be followed by a Pudding Night, where members bring along puddings and we all have the onerous task of tasting them and voting for our favourite one. It's a tough job but someone's got to do it.

**Mandy Jilbert**

*Stop press: The Winemakers have a new secretary - Roy Harper, tel. 662861.*

Unfortunately, our speaker for December was unable to come due to illness so we enjoyed the evening with a game of Bingo, a quiz, a social chat over a cup of tea and mince pies before the business part of the meeting. We heard that Marilyn had been suffering with a bout of shingles and wished her a speedy recovery; a Christmas card had been received from Joan (a loyal member who has moved to Wiltshire). The new committee was introduced with their various duties. Everyone agreed that the Birthday Party at the Muffin Man was once again a great success, as was the meal at Dine India. Members had been busy making decorations ('Five Gold Rings') for our entry in the Christmas Tree Festival in St Lawrence Church.

Our January meeting started with wishing everyone a Happy New Year and paying subscriptions for 2014. Sam Cairney paid us a return visit, this time bringing her friend Ruth with her. Hair and Beauty was the theme for the evening with Sam giving hints on hair care and a demonstration on Annette of styling. Meanwhile Ruth had brought with her a range of makeup and skincare products, which she used on Wendy. What an enjoyable evening to start the year on a dark and stormy night. The two girls certainly brought some cheer and lots of useful hints with them.

The Carol Concert in the Town Hall was much enjoyed with the WI Choir and guest artists including David and Carrie Grant, who even got the audience taking part! The Christmas meal at the Apple Tree was attended by monthly Supper Group. The Solo Club festive event at Wendy's was much enjoyed, I understand. Two members joined Woodmancote WI for their party, though we were unable to attend that of Bishops Cleeve WI. The news is that Woodmancote won the County Quiz and Frampton, who narrowly beat us in the semi-finals, won the Skittles Tournament.

Looking to the future we have a Fish and Chip Lunch at the prize winning Simpsons, Ladies' Day at the Races, four members have booked to go on the County Holiday to Derbyshire, there is stewarding at the National meeting at Leeds and catering at The 3 Counties Show. The list for Coffee Mornings and Tea Afternoons is filling up. Outing possibilities are being looked into for the coming year with several destinations suggested. Watch this space!

At our meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> February Terry Shaughnessy is coming to speak on 'Tall Ship Sailing'. Let us hope the storms have abated by then, or bring your seasickness remedies with you! If any of the above activities prove a temptation to join us we always give visitors a warm welcome. We meet at St Nicolas' Church Hall, Swindon Lane at 7.30pm on the first (unless it is a Bank Holiday) Monday in the month.

**Sara Jefferies**

Looking back to the end of 2013 briefly...

## **Beaver Sleepover**

Over the first weekend in December, our Beaver Leaders Mandy and Charlotte took a number of our Beavers (just 6 and 7 years of age) up to the Scout Centre at Cranham to take part in the County Beaver Sleepover. There was lots of fun and games, food and laughter – but not a lot of sleep! However, Mandy and Charlotte were complimented on the behaviour of our Beavers so well done to all of you that took part!

## **iceSCOUT 2013 at Blackwell Adventure**

While the Beavers were up at Cranham, the Scouts were camping in tents at Blackwell Adventure near Bromsgrove on the iceSCOUT camp. This is a winter activity camping weekend organised by Birmingham Scouts. The weather was very kind - dry with no wind and no frost and the camp was very well organised with plenty of activities and no queues for anything other than food! Our Scouts got to try their hands at all sorts from Crate Stacking and “High All Aboard” to craft activities and cooking as well as grass sledging and Go Karts! All in all, an excellent weekend.

## **Christmas Carols and Sketches**

On our final Monday meeting of 2013 we held our group Christmas show in a packed out village hall. The evening started with the Beavers and was followed by sketches, jokes and musical items from the Cubs and Scouts intermingled with Christmas carols which everyone joined in with. I think all the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts did tremendously well standing up in front of a large audience to perform on the night and we have had several very complementary emails and comments from people who were in the audience. There was no admission charge, but we were collecting for “The Children’s Society” and managed to raise £68.97 on the night. So very well done to all that took part – and if you missed it – we will hope to see you at this year’s show!

## **2014...**

As I write, we are half way through January with lots to look forward to in the coming weeks...

We have been invited by Shurdington Scouts to join them at their “Polar Camp” and will soon be heading off to Youlbury Scout Activity Centre, which is set in 42 acres of woodland just outside Oxford. While the accommodation will be indoors, we will be outside for most of the weekend and have both Ice Skating and a meal out in Oxford to look forward to.

Also on the agenda over the next few weeks are: an evening at Gloucester Ski Centre, the Cotswold Marathon night hike & camping weekend, the District Scout Cooking competition at Shurdington and the County Air Rifle Shooting Competition. I hope to be able to report on these events in next month’s Village News.

**Sos**

# VILLAGE & COMMUNITY

## Agents

### **Providing older people in Gloucestershire with easier access to information and services**

Please be cautious when dealing with cold-callers at your door. They may well be from legitimate companies selling legitimate products but don't allow yourself to be sucked in to deals which you might later regret. For instance, we are aware of companies who offer security alarms at very low prices but whose maintenance and after-sales services are expensive and poor. Whatever the product on sale, these "cold-callers" have been trained to sell and their methods can be quite persuasive, even aggressive. If you consider buying anything always get quotes from other companies for comparison **before signing anything**.

There are also a number of people knocking on doors of the more senior members of our villages offering to remove moss from their roofs at an extremely high cost. ***Please be aware that these people are working in our area and if in doubt say no and again, get more than one quote.***

**Trading Standards have a new telephone number: 08454 04 05 06**

The **Non-Emergency Hospital Patients Transport Service** has recently been taken over by Arriva and the eligibility criteria for this service is:

**Patients are eligible for transport when:**

- The medical condition of the patient is such that they require the skills or support of NEPTS staff during the journey and where it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery if they were to travel by other means; and/or
- The patient's medical condition impacts on their mobility to such an extent that they would be unable to access healthcare or it would be detrimental to the patient's condition or recovery to travel by other means.

If you feel you might require this service I would suggest you speak to your GP.

**Lesley Wall**

*Village Agent for Swindon Village*

**07810 630 064**

**LesleyW@villageagent.grcc.org.uk**

# ***Happy 40th Birthday to Us!***

You may have noticed that the December Village News was issue number 400. This year we are celebrating our 40th birthday, the first issue having been published in October 1974. We have found a copy of Issue no.1 and, in this anniversary year, we would like to bring you a few snippets of what was happening in the parish at the time.

In a foreword to the first issue the Chairman of Swindon Parish Council, Mr. John Finney, outlined the reason for publishing a parish newsletter. He wrote:

“Over the past ten years substantial development has taken place in Swindon Parish, particularly in the area of the Village. Where before, communication between the Parish Council and the residents was a fairly simple matter, it is today difficult for the Parish Council to be at all sure that the views and wishes of those who live in the Parish are known. It is hoped, through the introduction of this newsletter, to give residents information about local activities of all kinds and to promote interest in Village affairs.

“The reorganisation of local government puts additional responsibilities on Parish Councils. It is proper that local people should take part, make their views felt, and try to achieve the kind of environment and living conditions they want. To enable the Parish Council to take advantage of the procedures available for representation to District Authorities, it is up to all the residents to see that they play as full a part as possible by communicating their views to the Parish Councillors or by writing to the Council.”

The aims of the magazine, to keep residents informed of and to encourage their participation in parish affairs have not changed. Protocol however, has changed - in 1974 the only contact details for the Parish Council were the names and addresses of the Chairman and the Clerk; by contrast, on the back page of this magazine you will find the names and contact details of ALL of the local councillors.

The editorial team has always consisted of three people with at least one representative from the Parish Council and one from St. Lawrence's Church. The first editors were Revd. Michael Bennett, Alan Studd and David Iliffe.

## **The Editors**

*Congratulations to David on 40 years' continuous service to Village News. - Frances & Karen.*

## Wednesday Club

We all enjoyed a lovely evening on the 4<sup>th</sup> December for our Christmas Party. Shane Driscoll came along to entertain us and I think we all were singing and smiling for the whole evening. I still don't know whether to be pleased or sorry that I knew the words to every single song he sang! Shane sang a mixture of songs, literally Christmas songs to Elvis Presley. The ones I enjoyed most were when he sang them with his own guitar. When not entertaining the likes of us, Shane plays guitar for some of the sixties groups, naming Mike Sarne, Mike Berry and Joe Brown amongst others. It was a great evening, although I think we owe an apology to the Village Hall Committee trying to have a meeting in the Bar. Our apologies.

Rose Morris decorated a Christmas Tree on behalf of Wednesday Club for the Christmas Tree Festival being held at the Church and we were all thrilled when she received a rosette for 2<sup>nd</sup> prize. Well done, Rose.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 39 of us trooped down to the Civil Service Club on the Tewkesbury Road for our Christmas meal. It was very nice and the staff were very friendly and helpful. Many thanks to Hugh, the manager, for all his help in organising this event.

On a personal note, I would just like to thank those of you that sent me get well cards and messages following my recent hospital stay. They were all very gratefully received and my thanks again.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of February and will be our AGM. I have just had a quick peep at our programme for this year and it looks like another good year for speakers. Please do come along and join us, you will be made very welcome.

Looking forward to seeing you all in February.

**Pauline Wright**



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## VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Village & Community Agent	Lesley Wall	07810 630 064 lesleyw@villageagent.grcc.org.uk
Footpaths	John Heathcott	527753
Acting Scout Leader & GSL	Stephen Smith (Sos)	693107
Cub Scout Leader	Rachel Smith (Chil)	693107
Beaver Leader	Charlotte Mitchell (Mole)	701854
Hanging Tree Explorer Scouts	Dave Herbert / Rob Ellis	514825/244708
Guide Guider	Jayne Ellis	244708
Rainbow Guider	Jackie Bailey	07871 169308
Guide District Commissioner	Pauline Szarko	570469
Village Hall Booking Secretary	Sandy Thornton	232045
Village Hall Secretary	Rose D’Gama	574964
Wednesday Club	Pauline Wright	693112
Play Group	(Playgroup hours)	690479
Winemakers Secretary	Roy Harper	662861
School Headteacher	Jonathan Dyer	690016
Friends of the School	Charlotte Mitchell Mandy Harris	701854 chairfosvps@gmail.com
Art Club	Norman Scott	692394
Swindon Village Society Secretary	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	(Playgroup hours)	263746
Marle Hill W.I.	Sara Jefferies	692500
St. Stephen’s Cricket Club	Tony Jilbert	693639
Echo Correspondent	Elizabeth Heathcott	527753
Save The Countryside	Helen Wells	07770 986078

Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th of this month.  
 Please send contributions to the editors:  
 David Iliffe at 16 Stantons Drive or Karen Evans at 5 Manor Road  
 or e-mail [village-news@swindonparish.org.uk](mailto:village-news@swindonparish.org.uk)

## SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman	Cllr. Peter Allen	692933
Vice Chairman	Cllr. Glenn Simpson	692845
	Cllr. John Conmee	572060
	Cllr. Frances Hunter	692845
	Cllr. David Iliffe JP	526323
	Cllr. Shannon Kerr	07954 128151
	Cllr. Arran Stibbe	07796 248658
	Cllr. Mrs. Helen Wells	220875 / 07770 986078
Clerk to the Council	Mr Shaun Cullimore	07833 089435
Cheltenham Borough Councillors	Cllr. Bernard Fisher	07890 205767
	Cllr. Paul Massey	07967 123221
County Councillor	Cllr. Bernard Fisher	07890 205767
Allotments Manager	Ian Brown	528683

Swindon Parish and Community Website: [www.swindonparish.org.uk](http://www.swindonparish.org.uk)

## ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH

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Rector	Revd. Canon Michael Cozens	523177
	The Rectory, 66 All Saints' Road	<a href="mailto:michael.cozens@northchelt.org.uk">michael.cozens@northchelt.org.uk</a>
Assistant Curate	Revd. Liz Palin	575547
		<a href="mailto:liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk">liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk</a>
Reader	Ralph Griffin	510533
Churchwardens	Tony Jilbert	693639
	Val Smith	522245
Tower Captain	Hugh Evans	241678
Organist	John Collins	511950
North Cheltenham Team Ministry Office		244373
St. Nicolas' Church, Swindon Lane, Cheltenham GL50 4PA		<a href="mailto:admin@northchelt.org.uk">admin@northchelt.org.uk</a>

The office is open on Mondays and Tuesdays 8am to 11am and Wednesdays to Fridays 9am to 12 noon. Outside these hours please leave a message on the answer phone.

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editors or the Parish Council