

# Village News

in Swindon Village

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

No. 465      August 2020



*The horse trough outside the Village Hall*

*(Full minutes of all Parish Council meetings are available on the Parish website [www.swindonparish.org.uk](http://www.swindonparish.org.uk). They are also available on request from the Chairman.)*

We don't normally have a Village News in August but these are strange times. The vulnerable members of our community continue to endure lockdown. The Parish Council felt it was important to do what it could to keep people informed and entertained, particularly those without access to the internet.

A group of travellers descended on the area at around midnight on the night of Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June. They broke the locks on the gates to the park yet again. A number of vans, cars, caravans and motorhomes moved in. The Borough Council prepared a case to go to the Magistrates' Court and obtained a summons which was then served on the travellers. A hearing in the Magistrates' Court took place on Thursday. The magistrates granted the Borough Council an Order for Removal of Vehicles and Persons under section 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. The travellers clearly had no intention of leaving quietly so the Borough Council engaged a firm of bailiffs to remove them. The bailiffs were in the park most of Friday to move them on. The bailiffs said that the group was particularly aggressive and confrontational, so it was good to have a swift resolution to the problem. Of course, as usual there was a huge amount of detritus left behind for the Borough Council to clear. The cost to the Council in terms of officer time, engaging the bailiffs and clearing and securing the park will run to thousands of pounds. Well done to the Borough Council officers and to Flo, one of our Borough Councillors, for their swift and decisive action.

I have been told that the County Council are going to undertake micro-dressing of the cul-de-sacs off Mandarin Way. On our patch this includes Pendil Close and two other cul-de-sacs. The details are on our website. The County Council's letter (also accessible on the website) describes what micro-dressing means. Nothing to do with squeezing into a bikini after spring over indulgence.

The County Council maintains a map of its planned and ongoing roadworks programmes on its website.

**<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/roadworks/>**

Speaking of road programmes, the County Council had intended to close Brockhampton Lane from 10<sup>th</sup> August to 18<sup>th</sup> September for works

associated with the housing development on the edge of Swindon Village. The works have now been postponed until 5<sup>th</sup> October to 13<sup>th</sup> November.

It is sad to have to report that, during the pandemic, there has generally been an increase in anti-social behaviour.

One of the biggest sources of complaint is the problem of dog mess being left to become someone else's problem. The Parish Council has succeeded in getting dog bins at the end of Stantons Drive and where the Amenity Area joins Manor Road. We are now campaigning to get one at the entrance to Dog Bark Lane. This is a major route for dog walkers and the irresponsible ones are leaving the entrance to the bridleway in a very unpleasant state. Please use Fix My Street ([fixmystreet.com](http://fixmystreet.com)) to report problems such as this. Your report will be forwarded to the Borough Council and will add to the pressure on them to provide a dog bin.

A rather different example of anti-social behaviour is the placing of pallets on the hedge along Swindon Lane. The hedge grew to the point where it was obstructing the residents' views across the fields. Someone, without permission, cut the hedge. Undeniably, they shouldn't have done that. In retaliation the land owner has paid someone to place pallets on the hedge, presumably to make the view unpleasant and/or to make further cutting of the hedge difficult. The advertising material for Hunting Butts holiday cottages waxes lyrical about "the panoramic views of the Malvern Hills, the Black Mountains and beyond". Clearly someone who recognises the value of the landscape then. Why deny it to others?

I have previously spoken of the fine work Neil has done in maintaining a magnificent display of plants in the horse trough outside the Village Hall. Neil does this at no cost to the Parish Council. Recently, he has noticed that someone has been stealing plants for their own, selfish use. Really? If you see anyone doing this please contact the police or Crimestoppers.

Finally, a more light-hearted example of anti-social behaviour. We have been experiencing a bit of cherry-knocking. Following the latest instance I popped out with a camera and quietly walked up the alley opposite the house. I turned the corner and surprised the gang of eight year old criminal masterminds. Surprise is the operative word. The wild bunch panicked and fled, hopefully their criminal careers nipped in the bud.

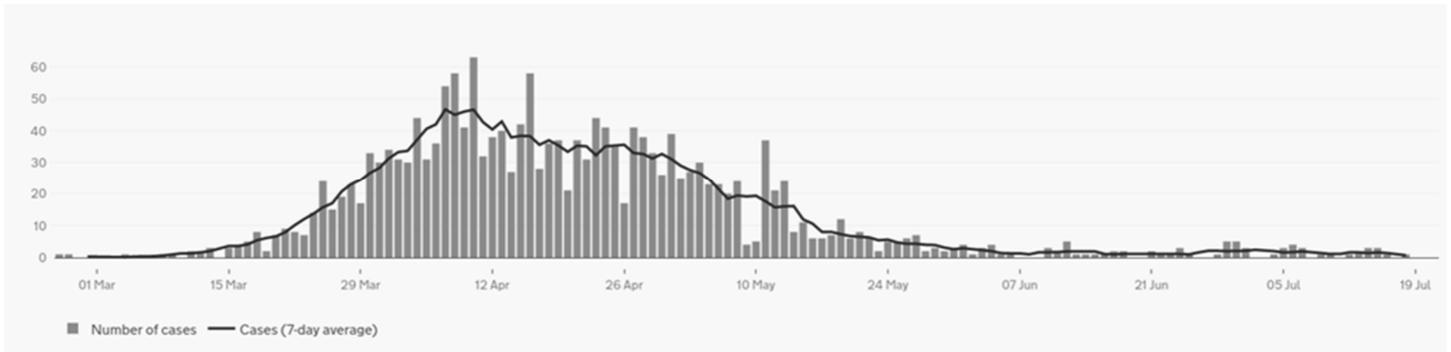
**Shaun Cullimore**

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

## COVID Latest

Coronavirus is still uppermost in our thoughts. At the time of writing there had been 1,847 confirmed cases in Gloucestershire. Below is a graph of the daily reported cases in the County.



Lockdown restrictions have been eased and the graph above shows that the dreaded peak is behind us for now. This is reassuring. However, the nasty renewed outbreaks of the virus in some parts of the country show we are far from out of the woods.

COVID testing is now widely available for anyone who is showing symptoms. You can get a test:

- for yourself, if you have coronavirus symptoms now (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste)
- for someone you live with, if they have coronavirus symptoms
- for yourself, if you have been told to have a test before you go into hospital, for example, for surgery

A mobile testing unit is doing the rounds of the County. You can book a test through the NHS website or by ringing 111.

Several organisations have made good progress in the quest for a vaccine. Hopefully effective medication will soon become widely available.

Understandably, vulnerable folk are reluctant to venture out and put themselves at risk. The Parish Council continues to support people as best it can. Our team of wonderful and selfless volunteers have continued to shop on behalf of others who are not able to get out. To avoid vulnerable folk having to handle cash Councillor James is reimbursing the shoppers, the Parish Council is reimbursing James and, when they are ready and it is safe to do so, the people who are receiving this service reimburse the Parish Council.

We were keen to provide some kind of reward to the people who are making this possible. We have taken legal advice and the Parish Council cannot, in law, provide material or financial rewards to individuals. Be in no doubt we recognise the debt we owe our volunteers and are very proud of the role they are playing in the community.

**Shaun Cullimore**

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

**Thank you**

We have been shielding since March 9<sup>th</sup>. As we have no children in this area we have been so grateful to the Swindon Village and NHS volunteers and all the neighbours and friends who have been a lifeline. They have given up so much of their time supporting us, both practically and emotionally.

A massive thank you to James, Shaun, Leigh, Jackie, Malcolm, Rachel, Cat, 2 Karens, 2 Pats, Aundree and many others.

We appreciate all those who stop with a smile for a quick chat as we take our daily walk, including Judy, our regular postlady.

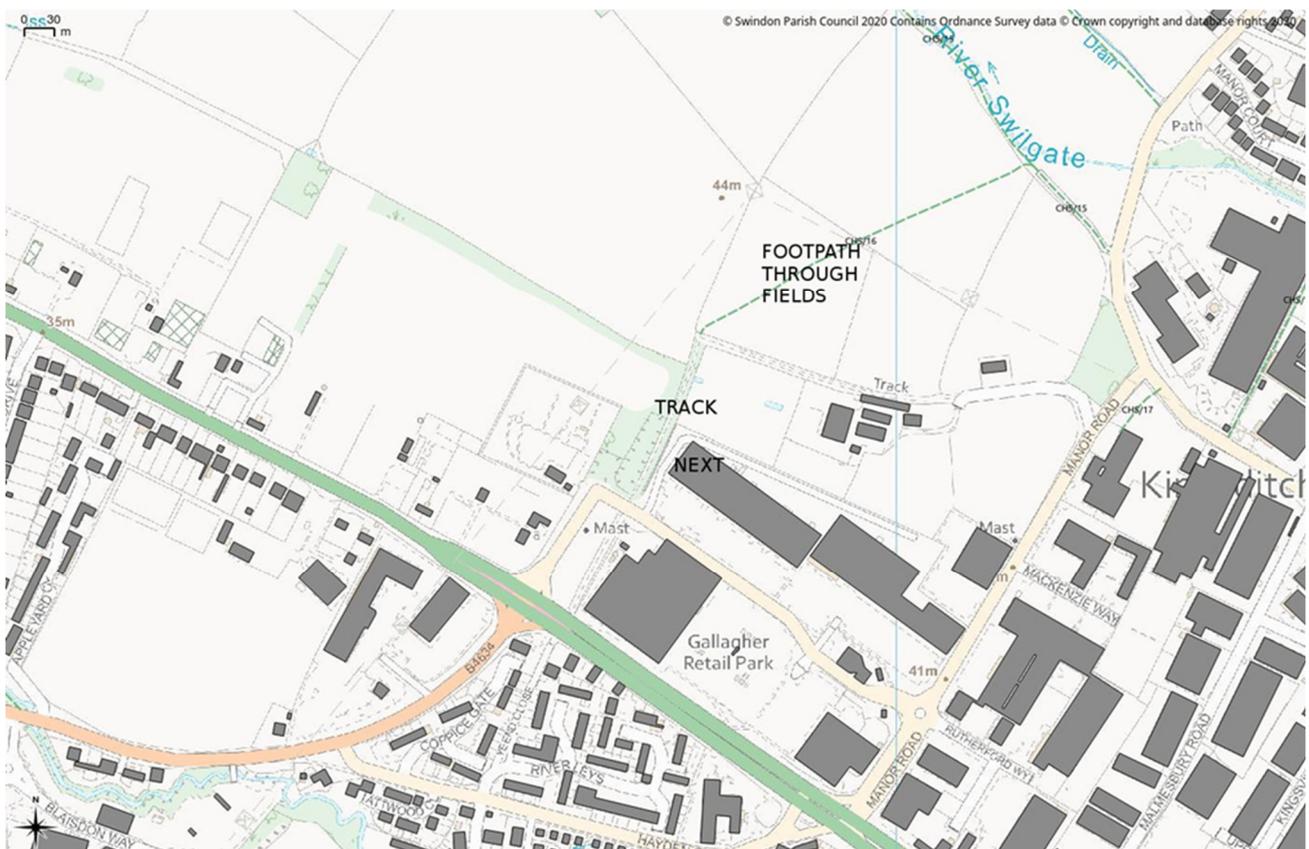
Finally, thank you to everyone for respecting the social distancing rules around the village. You have helped us feel safe and kept us “relatively” sane.

**Joan and John Rayner**

## Growing Our Communities Fund

Gloucestershire County Council have been providing support to local “not for profit” organisations through an initiative called the Growing Our Communities Fund. With the encouragement and support of Bernard, our County (and Borough) Councillor, I made an application on behalf of the Parish Council. We would like to improve the footpaths in the area, so this was the focus of our bid. The good news is that we have been promised a grant of £2,000. We are now considering how best to use this money. I am consulting with John, our volunteer footpath officer, who knows the paths and their problems better than anyone.

As some of you will be aware there is a track that runs along the side of Next in the Gallagher Retail Park. The track then joins a footpath that crosses the fields to Dog Bark Lane.



This route has the potential to provide pedestrian friendly access between the old village area and the Gallagher Retail Park. Ultimately, the footpath through the fields is likely to become a route through the estate roads of the Elms Park development. As yet we don't know exactly what this will look like, but we are hopeful that pedestrians would welcome the opportunity to give the narrow footway of Manor Road and its heavy traffic a miss!

At the moment the track is in a very poor state and using it is not a pleasant experience.

Interestingly, the border of the Parish runs along the side of the track, with the track being just outside the Parish. I am tempted to make a “wrong side of the tracks” joke but will resist. Anyway, councils cannot spend money outside their area unless the expenditure is “to the benefit of all or a significant proportion of their residents”. We think this project would qualify.

We will need to establish who owns the track and is responsible for its maintenance and work with them.

There are other footpath-related works that we are also considering. The path through the Amenity Area and its associated trees could do with some attention, and you may have other ideas. Please get in touch.

**Shaun Cullimore**

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

"If you have concerns about anti-social behaviour do not hesitate to contact the police.

**Ring 101** (you may be charged for this call)  
**or email [101@gloucestershire.police.uk](mailto:101@gloucestershire.police.uk)**

Get an incident number and let the parish council know about it. If the police are not made aware of a problem **THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM**".

### Services in August

2	Sunday	10.30am 6.30pm	Together @ Ten Thirty Holy Communion
5	Wednesday	10.00am - 12noon	Private prayer
9	Sunday	9.15am 6.30pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Evensong
12	Wednesday	10.00am - 12noon	Private prayer
16	Sunday	10.30am 6.30pm	Together @ The Table Evensong
19	Wednesday	10.00am - 12noon	Private prayer
23	Sunday	9.15am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Evensong
26	Wednesday	10.00am - 12noon	Private prayer
30	Sunday	9.15am 6.30pm	Holy Communion Evening service at St. Mary Magdalene, Elmstone Hardwicke (no service at St. Lawrence)

With the easing of the lockdown restrictions we have been able to resume our pattern of Sunday worship in St. Lawrence's Church. Social distancing is in place with seats being placed two metres apart, singing is not allowed and at Communion services only the bread is administered, not the wine. Everyone will need to wear a face covering and names and contact details will be taken. So it's all a bit strange but at least we're on the right path and glad to be able to welcome everyone back.

Please note that this only applies to Sunday services and not the Tuesday evening Communion nor Chatterbox.

We are aware, however, that some people are still not able, or do not feel ready, to attend church and the North Cheltenham Team Ministry is still streaming services online and via telephone.

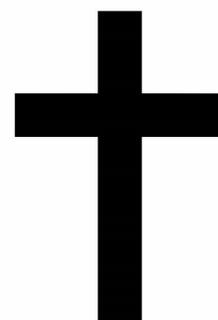
The church is open for private prayer each Wednesday from 10am to 12noon (not Tuesdays as in the original schedule).

## **COMMUNITY '*SERVICE*' FOLLOW-UP**

In last month's edition of the Village News, an appeal had been written and letters hand delivered to residents in the parish outlining the financial predicament of our beloved Church. It is with humble gratitude that the Church wishes to thank you all for the immense contributions and your response for donations to YOUR Church, which actually continue to come in. It has been nothing short of fabulous!

In addition, the Cake Sale at the beginning of July was very well attended and it made a huge amount - £900 in the space of two hours. It was the most successful Cake Sale I've personally ever encountered. In order to reach this fantastic amount, folk paid above and beyond our humble asking prices, as a way of showing their appreciation for the Church.

While Priests and congregations come and go, the Church itself is to serve each generation in this age and in the age to come; and this will go a long way in helping us to continue to do just that. As we ease our way out of lockdown, the national hope is that we will not have to return to the restrictive measures that were brought into force in the Spring. However,



while the pandemic became the catalyst for this appeal, the Church has been working tirelessly to keep its head above water for a little while now. Rising costs, fixtures and changes in the way we live and understand Church, has somewhat meant that being reliant upon our usual way of receiving income, as in days gone by, is changing.

The current landscape suggests that, possibly, further change may be ushered in but what I am hopeful of in this community, based upon public response, is that the Church in this place remains treasured in all its variants; from those who use it constantly or sporadically, to those who simply admire and appreciate it from a distance. I have been further encouraged by the generous community help to look after the churchyard while we have had to 'cut back' on the yearly amount we spend on its upkeep.

This fantastic financial and community response has raised questions in my mind. It's made us, as a Church, want to reach out to you all and ask, how might the Church serve you further? How might we engage you and your families in worship and fellowship so that we can grow together, not as a divided entity of 'outsiders looking in', but become a community of 'insiders looking out'? While the Church values your contributions and commitment to it in no uncertain terms, we are maybe reminded at this time that it exists to serve its people in its varying ways, as Christ, the founder of the modern Church if you like, has done himself. We want to be more to you!....if you'll let us! And perhaps the time is now ripe to find out what that might look like, so that we can further grow to be the 'Body of Christ in this place now, and in generations to come'.

Answers on a postcard please!.....simply drop your ideas to Rev'd George through the letter box at Swindon Rectory, Rectory Lane. It would be good to hear from you, to learn about you and your ideas and your needs.

Moreover, once more.... A huge thank you for all you have done thus far, and all that you are.

With every blessing in Christ,

**Rev George**

*My grace is sufficient for thee:  
for my strength is made  
perfect in weakness.*  
2 Corinthians 12:9

On my desk at home sits a series of small biblical motivational cards that help keep me buoyant when the going gets rough. They don't always speak to me at all times but often they do. I glanced at one while typing one day recently and it simply said, '**Be Strong**'. The words spoke to me and held me as if in that moment I realised how weak I was actually feeling.

It occurred to me then that I had felt very vulnerable and also disillusioned with recent happenings in the world - the pandemic and the huge impact it continues to have on our world; and the killing of George Floyd and the major protests that swept across this country and several others as a result. I find myself scrambling for my own sense of who I am in light of all that surrounds me in a way that I have never had to do in my lifetime. I hazard a guess and say that others may be feeling this way. There is evidently a lot of uncertainty and anger and a lot of bloodshed and deep-seated feelings of injustice on multiple levels.

If it was ever in doubt that we need God in our lives it most certainly is apparent now; and yet there are of course some who would say that our differing understandings about God and religion are at the heart of some of the problems that face the world at this time. I think there is something to be said about God's power being made perfect in weakness. It is clear that, while we need to be strong, it's both about recognising where the source of that strength comes from and our reliance upon it.

There is nothing at all wrong with feelings of anger, weakness or vulnerability, as I believe it is natural to feel. It is how we make those emotions count, in a positive way, which can make all the difference in our world.

The words on the card on my desk headed, '**Be Strong**', read like this:

*"We may feel like we can face attacks on our faith all alone. After all, the world admires the self-made man and the independent woman. Then, a temptation hits. We suddenly discover that we don't have the resources to face it alone. But, God never intended us to go it alone. He wants to pour His power into us so we can be strong enough to withstand anything life throws at us. That's the point: His power makes us strong."*

Remain kind to one another....and have a peaceful Summer.

**Rev George**

## **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's church, please contact the Team Office, which is open Monday to Friday from 9am until 12 noon. The office is based at St Nicolas' Church in Swindon Lane. Contact the Office on **244373** or **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

**You can contact the clergy by email:**

**Revd. George Davis (Team Vicar) [fr.georgedavis@hotmail.com](mailto:fr.georgedavis@hotmail.com)**

**Revd. Nick Bromfield (Team Rector)**

**[nick.bromfield@northchelt.org.uk](mailto:nick.bromfield@northchelt.org.uk) or via the office.**

## **Grass mowing in the churchyard**

As part of our efforts to reduce our financial outgoings we are seeking volunteers to mow the grass in the churchyard. Two people are already doing it but it would be great to expand the team and be able to allocate each volunteer a small area of the churchyard to mow.

Also, we'd be grateful for help with tidying up areas that the mowers can't reach.

If you'd like to help please contact Rev. George **[fr.georgedavis@hotmail.com](mailto:fr.georgedavis@hotmail.com)** or our Churchwarden, May Shurmer on **01242 241033**.

Thank you.



## Cake Sale

Groaning tables at the start of St Lawrence's Cake Sale on Saturday 4th July - every single cake was sold in under an hour!

Thank you to our bakers and cake lovers and all who set up and tidied afterwards!

**Fr George & Fr Nick**



Liz, Helen and May would like to thank everyone who supported the church's Homemade Cake Sale last month.

Despite the windy weather, so many came along and gave so generously with their purchases. We also thank all who baked a wonderful assortment of cakes (five tables were laden).

Without them it would not have been such a success and we are pleased to say £901.35 was raised.



*Socially distanced customers*

# Bell Ringing

Like all other activities, bell ringing was brought to an abrupt halt in March. All church services were suspended, and entry to the buildings was strictly prohibited. It was not even possible to enter a church tower to turn the clock forward one hour.

The governing body of change ringing, The Central Council of Church Bell Ringers, was waiting in the wings and sprang into action, realising that this could be a blow from which ringing might never recover.

There was detailed consultation with the medical profession, the Church of England, Ecclesiastical Insurance, and Public Health England. The result was a series of documents on-line with a plan for recovery.

Here at Swindon Village the bells had lain idle as they had in all other churches and, when I was allowed to enter, I worked through a comprehensive checklist to ensure that the bells could be rung again. We came off very well. Rats, birds and squirrels had not entered the tower, though there were plenty of dead flies and spiders' webs were everywhere. I spent a morning checking that the bells and their fittings were in good order, and the rest of the day cleaning the ringing room and stairs. No water had entered the tower in the massive rainstorms of the last few months. I tested each bell and there were no problems.

Having cleaned up the tower, the next job was to prepare to return to ringing in line with social distancing guidelines. Again, the Central Council had provided a detailed document for this purpose. I measured the distance between each of the ropes; I don't suppose that anyone had ever done this before. I concluded that, with the two metres rule in place, only bells 1, 3 and 5 could be rung simultaneously. These sound F, Db, Bb, a minor key.

On Sunday July 12<sup>th</sup>, the bells were rung for the permitted maximum time of fifteen minutes. It looks like it might be some time before we ring the six bells again.

Meanwhile I would like to express my thanks to all those who worked so hard behind the scenes to make this return possible.

**Hugh Evans**  
Tower Captain

## Art & Crafts Club

Some art work done during lockdown. We are hoping to start during September all being well, it will be good to get together again. Keep safe and well everyone.

### Helen



*This is the bridge at Mostar in Bosnia, from a photo taken on last year's holiday to Croatia. We went on a day trip to Bosnia.*

*Pastels – preferred medium.*

*Gill Groves*



To see these pictures in colour look at the Village News on the parish website:  
[www.swindonparish.org.uk](http://www.swindonparish.org.uk)



# The Countryside Code

## **Respect** other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways is clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow

## **Protect** the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo - bag it and bin it

## **Enjoy** the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures

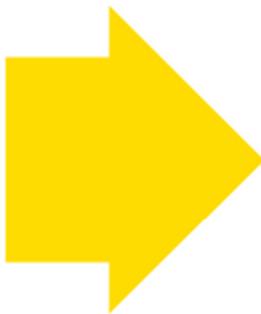




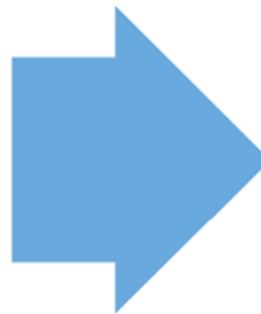
# The Countryside Code

Follow advice and local signs

## Footpath



## Bridleway



## Restricted Byway



## Byway Open to All Traffic – BOAT



### National Trail

National Trails are all open for walking and some trails are also suitable for other users

[www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)



### Open Access

Areas of mountain, moorland, heathland, downland and registered common land are available to people to walk, run, explore, climb and watch wildlife, without having to stay on paths

## Recycle your gardening plastic pots and trays

I have set up a recycling point at the allotments site in Stantons Drive for plastic garden pots and trays and I would like to open it up to all local gardeners.

Please make sure your pots are clean, but it doesn't matter if they are damaged, and leave them tidily by the second gate into the allotments.

I will take them to The Butterfly Garden run by Chris Evans OBE at Dundry Nurseries where they will be sorted by the students for recycling.

Thank you.

**Chaz Pearce**



## A big pile of poo – a big waste of money!

There seems to be a trend for people adding to a large pile of doggy poo bags at the end of Dog Bark Lane.

Please don't! This will not be automatically collected. There is a bin just the other side of the road by the bench which is regularly emptied.

Please tell all other dog walkers you see, as many come to walk in our lovely green space from outside the parish.

We have asked the council for another bin, but until we are lucky enough to get another bin, please use the ones we have already or take the doggy bag home with you.

We can all report this mess online at the Cheltenham Borough Council Website "Report it online" but it costs our Borough Council money and ultimately us in the end, to collect this mess each time.

Thank you for your help.

**Helen Wells**



No official news from the Scout Group this month but here's a flavour of what they've been doing during the lockdown.

Helen Wells says...

Our inventive Scouts had a fun evening session where parents were challenged to perform a piece for the troop on Zoom. It was great fun.

Here's a 5 minute silly song from Rich and Helen in the tune of Cliff Richard.

We're not going on a Summer Holiday,  
Stuck at home for a month or two.  
No fun and laughter on a Summer Holiday,  
This stupid virus really stinks like poo,  
Don't you think so too.

We're not going where the sun shines brightly,  
Or going where the sea is blue.  
We've watched every Netflix movie,  
But as Scouts we say to you....

We'll make our own Summer Holiday,  
We'll find fun things to do.  
We'll make fun in Swindon Village,  
We hope you all do too,  
We hope you all do too!

## **Vacancy for Village News editor(s)**

You may just have spotted in one of the Parish Clerk's articles last month that I have "handed in my notice" from the post of Village News editor/compiler. It's true!

After 17 years in the hot seat I've decided it's time for a change, for me and for the magazine. I've enjoyed doing it and I thank those people who have expressed their appreciation – yes, in this electronic era people still like the paper copy dropping through their letterboxes. (The magazine is available, in full colour on the parish website.)

So the search is on for a new editor or, better still, a small team to take on the production.

If you'd like to know more about what's involved please phone or email me or Shaun Cullimore, the Parish Clerk.

I really do hope someone will want to take it on. I'd like to see the magazine flourish.

**Karen Evans**

tel. **01242 241678**

Email **village-news@swindonparish.org.uk**

Shaun Cullimore email **parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk**

I can't say that there's been much Village Society activity of late so I will try a Nature Notes story.

About three months ago my wife, Sarah, and I became aware of an owl in the grounds of Swindon Hall. Initially, from its call, we thought it was a little owl. However, when returning late one evening we saw it was rather large. So Sarah checked the bird call app on her phone and found that, while the call of a male Tawny Owl is the rather more classical twit- two, the female has a harsher cry of the sort we were hearing. Sarah, never before a keen ornithologist, quite took to this owl and would wander out just before bedtime to track it. Indeed, on one occasion she got fairly close and realised that there was a smaller owl with it, presumably a fledgling.

Sadly two days later we were informed by our neighbours that there was a dead owl in their garden. We went to look and there was a fairly large owl, quite moribund, lying on the ground. It appeared undamaged, certainly untouched by any animal, so it was not possible to determine why it had died. Sarah was really upset. She had quite taken to the owl.

However, on waking in the middle of the night two days later she heard through the window the sound of an owl. Five minutes later she was roaming the grounds in pyjamas, albeit with a coat over. So if anyone hears tales of a strange woman roaming the grounds of the Hall in the dead of night, no it was not a ghostly apparition to add to those associated with The Hall. I can give you her name. The dead owl was back. She even saw it flying. Then as she set off back to bed she saw a hedgehog ambling out of the gates of No1.

The best guess we can make is that the dead owl was actually a male Tawny Owl. Why had he died? Well John Heathcott thinks the most likely explanation is that it had eaten a poisoned mouse or rat. Anyway, the female stayed around for a while but has now departed.

What can we get from this tale? Well my wife is now pro-owl. But most of all do think before using poison to get rid of rodents – it can have very bad results further down the food chain.

We do get mice in our house and I invariably catch them with a humane trap and then take them at least a mile away and introduce them to some nice countryside. They probably become breakfast for a passing owl but that is nature for you.

When we will all meet again I do not know but all the best to you all. I have a feeling that all those with membership for this year will get a free ride next year.

**Barry Simon**

## Swindon Village Winemakers

Well, what a strange and sometimes frightening time we've had over the past few months. I hope you are all managing to keep safe and well. We are all looking forward to getting back to some form of normality soon, I know.

As with everyone else, we in the wine club have been doing as we were asked, and staying at home and behaving ourselves. We have missed meeting up for our monthly meetings in the Village Hall, and have sadly had to cancel one of our most popular events, the May BBQ, where we invite other wine clubs from around the area to join us for the evening.

We were also very disappointed to have our long weekend in Eastbourne at the beginning of June cancelled, and even more disappointed when the company we were going with went into Administration, taking our deposits with it!!!

As with all the other clubs, we have no idea when we will be able to resume our monthly meetings, and the world will no doubt be a very different place, to the one we knew before.

Take care of yourselves, stay safe, and stay well.

**Mandy Jilbert**

## **Carnage on the roads**

Last year we took part in a hedgehog survey and were delighted to find that we had two regular visitors to our garden. Imagine our dismay then when, in the space of nine days in July, three hedgehogs were killed on the road within a hundred metres of our house.

Unfortunately there's probably nothing we can do to prevent these deaths but that makes it more important to look after the hedgehogs we do have.

Plans for more surveys have been delayed because staff at the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust have been furloughed but hopefully these will go ahead soon.

Please take a look at the literature produced by the Wildlife Trust and the British Hedgehog Preservation Society for ways of helping hedgehogs, in particular the hedgehog highway scheme, connecting gardens so that hedgehogs can roam freely in search of food.

**<https://www.gloucestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk/urban-wildlife/hedgehog-way>**

**<https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>**

On behalf of local hedgehogs, thank you.

**Karen and Hugh Evans**

## Double wedding at St Lawrence's church, Swindon

*Thank you to Sally Clarke who drew our attention to a double wedding in Swindon Village when two brothers with the surname Cook married two sisters with the surname Cooke. Eileen Allen has researched it and has written the following article.*

CHELTEMHAM CHRONICLE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE GRAPHIC, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1941



### TWO SISTERS MARRY TWO BROTHERS

An unusual double wedding took place on Saturday at St. Lawrence's Church, Swindon Village, when two sisters named Cooke married two brothers whose name is Cook. They are seen outside the church. They are the Misses Molly F. Cooke and Lilian Letitia (Peggy) Cooke, the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney F. Cooke, of South Bank, Alstone, who married respectively Mr. Alfred Herbert Cook and Mr. Reginald Albert Cook, the two sons of the late Mr. and Mrs. Albert Herbert Cook, of Swindon Gardens. In the centre of the group are the Rev. W. H. Hanna, who conducted the service, and Mr. S. F. Cooke, who gave his daughters away.

*"Cheltenham Chronicle" Photograph. Copies 6½ ins. x 4½ ins. 1/3, 8½ ins. x 6½ ins. 2/- Postage 3d.*

*Photograph reprinted from the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic.*

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1941 (during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) a special double wedding was conducted by the Rector of Swindon, Rev William Henry Hanna, at Swindon Village church. The brides were sisters, Molly Fitzroy Cooke and Lilian Letitia Cooke, who were the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> daughters of Sidney Fitzroy Cooke and his wife Mary Amy, of South Bank, Lower Alstone, Cheltenham. The grooms were brothers, Alfred Herbert Cook and Reginald Albert Edward Cook, the only children of the late Alfred Herbert Cook and his wife, Elizabeth, of Swindon Gardens, Tewkesbury Road, Swindon. All four participants were from market gardening families.

An article in the Gloucestershire Echo on the evening of the wedding describes the outfits that the brides wore. Neither was wearing white,

probably due to the rationing during the war, but they both carried sprays of carnations and lilies of the valley. Molly, who married Alfred, wore a fuchsia dress and bolero with navy accessories. Lilian (known as Peggy), who married Reginald, wore a blue dress and bolero, with mulberry accessories. Their younger sister, Lulu Irene, who would have been aged about 26 at the time (her date of birth shows as 9<sup>th</sup> February 1915 on the 1939 register) wore a dress of clover pink with navy accessories. Frederick Bellamy was best man. It does not say what he and the grooms wore! There was a photograph printed in the Gloucestershire Chronicle.

The brides had two older sisters, Muriel Mary (born 19<sup>th</sup> January 1899 and baptised 2<sup>nd</sup> April that year at St Mary's church, Cheltenham) and Frances Emily (born 29<sup>th</sup> September 1900, although it shows as 27<sup>th</sup> September at her death and baptised 2<sup>nd</sup> December that year at St Mark's church, Cheltenham) who were already married by 1941. Muriel had married William White, a tailor from Taunton, at St Mark's church, Cheltenham on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1928 and Frances had married Albert Frederick John Major, a civil servant from Prestbury, at St Lawrence's church, Swindon Village on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1931. It is possible that their youngest sister, Lulu, was bridesmaid at these weddings too as she was a witness at both weddings.

Muriel and William White appear on the 1939 register living at 24 Quarry Road, Swindon, Wiltshire. William's date of birth shows as 14<sup>th</sup> November 1895 and he was working as a journeyman tailor. I don't think that they had any children and Muriel died in Malvern in 1984.

Frances and Albert Major appear on the 1939 register living at 152 Alstone Lane, although they had been living with the Cooke family at South Bank in 1931. Albert's date of birth shows as 6<sup>th</sup> November 1896 and he was working in the tax office. He had served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Gloucestershire regiment in WW1, ending as a Lance Corporal and was wounded in the field by shellfire in 1916. He played golf at the Cotswold Hills Golf Club (as per articles in the Gloucester Citizen and the Gloucestershire Echo in the 1930s). He was Hon. Treasurer in 1933. They did not have any children. Frances and Albert were living in Melville Road, Churchdown when Albert died in Gloucester Hospital in 1962, and Frances died in 1985.

Lulu Irene disproved the saying of always a bridesmaid and never a bride by marrying Frederick James Bellamy (the Gloucestershire Echo article on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1942 calls him Frank James) at St Peter's church the year after her two older sisters. Was the groom the Frederick Bellamy who was the best man at her older sister's wedding by any chance? This was a much more up-market affair according to the newspaper report. The bride wore an ivory satin gown, with an embroidered veil caught in place at a wreath of

white camellias and orange blossom and she carried a bouquet of pink carnations; also she had 2 bridesmaids (Hazel Yeates, niece of the bridegroom and Janet Cobb, friend of the bride). Both bridesmaids wore dresses of old rose, with flowered head-dresses and carried bouquets of African lilies. Even if the honeymoon was only at her sister's house in Wiltshire, the bride also had a going-away outfit; a lavender blue frock with finger-length beige teddy bear coat, and wine accessories. Does anyone know what a finger-length teddy bear coat is as I have never heard of that before? Sadly the bride's father had died on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1941 and Lulu was given away by her brother-in-law, William White. I don't think that they had any children and I am not sure what happened to Frederick Bellamy, presumably he died because Lulu re-married in Malvern in the first 3 months of 1960 to Geoffrey James Smith. He had been born on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1913 in Upton-on-Severn, was a steel fixer in 1939 and died in 1998. Lulu died in Cheltenham on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2004 (although her date of birth shows as 7<sup>th</sup> March at her death).

Molly Cooke had been born on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1906 and was baptised at Mark's church Cheltenham on 23<sup>rd</sup> June that year. I can't find a baptism for Lilian Cooke but her date of birth shows as 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1909 on the 1939 register and her birth was registered in Cheltenham in the last 3 months of 1909.

The Cook brothers were both baptised at St Peter's church in the Tewkesbury Road; Alfred Herbert on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1901 and Reginald Edward (no Albert on his baptism record) on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1904. Reginald's date of birth shows as 16<sup>th</sup> September 1904 at his death and on his gravestone.

Reginald and Lilian had no children but Molly and Alfred had a daughter, called Molly Fitzroy after her mother, born on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1941 at South Bank, Alstone (the home of the Cooke family). Her birth announcement appeared in the Gloucestershire Echo on 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1941.

Reginald and Alfred's parents had both died before the 1941 double wedding (Elizabeth in 1932 and Alfred in 1940, only 3 months before the big wedding) and they are buried in Swindon churchyard.

Reginald died on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1977 and was buried in Swindon on 20<sup>th</sup> June (no Edward on his gravestone). Lilian (known as Peg according to her gravestone) died on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1996 and was buried with her husband on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Her date of birth shows as 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1910 but she was actually born in 1909 (as per the 1939 register and her birth registration). Alfred Herbert Cook (known as Bob according to his gravestone) died on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1970 and was buried in Swindon on 19<sup>th</sup>

March. His wife, Molly, died on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1995 and was buried with her husband on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. The brothers were both buried by Rev. Michael Bennett and the sisters by Rev. Betty Humphrey.

It would appear that the only offspring of the Cooke and Cook families was Alfred and Molly's daughter Molly junior. In 1965 (the latest Swindon Village electoral register available on-line) the widowed Molly Fitzroy Cook and her daughter, Molly Fitzroy Cook junior, were living with Lilian and Reginald Cook at Swindon Gardens in Tewkesbury Road. In 1947 the two couples had put in for planning permission to make alterations to the house to divide it into two homes for the two couples.

Molly Fitzroy Cook junior married at St Lawrence's church, Swindon Village (the same church where her parents had married) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (April to June) of 1983 to David Albert George Newman (who had been born in 1937 in Cheltenham). I don't think that they had any children but from 2003 to 2014 Molly and David Newman were living at 99 New Barn Lane having previously lived at 16 New Barn Lane (in 2002). Sadly, I believe that David may have died in November last year (according to a family tree on ancestry, which may or may not be correct) but Molly may still be alive. Does anyone know her?

The house called Swindon Gardens that was the home of the Cook family and its brick built coach house in Tewkesbury Road still exist, thanks to the efforts of the Parish Council and the Swindon Village Society (photos of the house taken in 2003). However, the market garden land around it is now the Glynbridge Gardens housing estate. South Bank, the home of the Cooke family in Alstone has been completely developed, although there is a road named after it near Rowanfield School, which was built on part of the market garden land. The house itself stood where the junction of Bedford Avenue and Alstone Lane is now.

## **Eileen Allen**



*Swindon  
Gardens and  
Coach House  
on Tewkesbury  
Road.*



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Cub Scout Leader	Rachel Smith (Chil)	693107
Beaver Leader		
Rainbow Guider	Jackie Bailey	07871 169308
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Village Hall Booking Secretary	Jana Bridger	www.svhall.co.uk 07514 594351
Wednesday Club	Pauline Wright	693112
Play Group	(Playgroup hours)	690479
Winemakers' Secretary	Roy Harper	662861
School Headteacher	Geraint Mills	690016
Friends of the School	Caroline Williams Sarah Martin	chairfosvps@gmail.com
Art & Crafts Club	Lynne	07515 461876
Swindon Village Society	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	(Playgroup hours)	263746
Marle Hill W.I.	Sara Jefferies	692500
Save The Countryside	Helen Wells	07770 986078

Please inform the editors of any changes to the contact details for village organisations.

Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th of this month.  
Please send contributions to the editors via  
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or e-mail [village-news@swindonparish.org.uk](mailto:village-news@swindonparish.org.uk)

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Swindon Parish and Community Website: <https://swindonparish.org.uk>

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The office is open on Monday to Friday 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 views of the Editors or the Parish Council