

MARCH 2022



SEMINGTON PARISH MAGAZINE

Minister for Semington:
Rev John Rees
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Semington WI

Thursday 10th March 7.30pm

Village Hall

Parish Council Matters

Saturday 5th March 11.00am to 3.00pm:

Neighbourhood Planning Consultation

Village Hall

Wednesday 16th March:

Newland Homes Consultation 7.00pm

Village HaLL

Parish Council Meeting 8.00pm

Village Hall

Crafternoon

Wednesday 23rd March 2.00pm

Contact Siobhan for details

Book Club

Tuesday 8th March 7.30pm

Somerset Arms

Somerset Arms

Monday 7th March 7.00pm

Crib Club

Tuesday 8th March 7.00pm

Jubilee Planning Meeting

Sunday 13th March

Poker Evening

Wednesday 16th March

Quiz Night

Monday 21st March 7.00pm

Crib Club

Saturday 26th March

Live Music

Sunday 27th March

Poker Evening

6 Nations Rugby – all the matches will be shown live

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward

Christians in Semington - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesday 2nd March at 8.00pm**. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the zoom link.

Housegroup - we meet every other Tuesday, at 8.00pm. We're looking at Luke's gospel at the moment, to see how this can help us to live as God wants us to. If you'd like to join us please phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for more details, including the venue.

I'm ordering Easter Eggs from the Real Easter Egg company - the Original eggs (£4.50 each) include a 24 page Easter story-activity book. They are palm oil and plastic free, and include a competition. Sadly no supermarkets are stocking them this year. For more details, and other eggs, see:

<https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg> or phone me, Bev Woodward, 870784. I will be ordering first thing on **Monday 7th March**. So please let me know if you'd like any as soon as possible.

Go On – You Know You Want To!

Gillian Airey

It's that time of year again – there's a cheeky little envelope with your magazine this month. We'd like you to put a little something in said cheeky little envelope to go towards the running of the magazine. The contributors and distributors associated with the magazine all give their time on a voluntary basis. Once the cheeky envelope is ready to go, drop it into the address on the envelope.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

I wish I could say that as I write this I am knee deep in Valentine's cards but as the cat still hasn't yet learnt to write, I'm the proud recipient of just one card although that is the most important one from Gorgeous Hubby!

Two enclosures in the mag for you to make sure you look at, the envelope for donations towards the running of the mag and the other a letter regarding proposed closure of the High Street for the Jubilee celebrations – please do let us know your thoughts. Deadline for next month is **Monday 14th March** email: semparmag@icloud.com

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This Month I've Been Hunting

Gilly Airey

What I hear you cry, no fishin' and shootin' too? Well despite the fact that I have more than a passing resemblance to Yosemite Sam when I wake up first thing in the morning, my hunt is most definitely more Wordsworth.....

You see every autumn Gorgeous Hubby buys literally hundreds of daffodil bulbs and in a team effort we dutifully plant them in lovely clumps and then sit back (yep literally sit back) and wait for them to brighten our spring days. Only this year either I'm more menopausal than ever and can't remember where we planted them, or are our daffodils decreasing in number rather than increasing?

Exactly where do daffodil bulbs go? Clearly they go in the ground (I could almost hear a collective shout from all of you then!) but do any animals eat daffodil bulbs? There was only one place to go and check and that would be the world of Google. As always the interweb can be a joyous place of fascinating if somewhat misleading information. According to the many gardening forums my problem could be caused by possums, skunks or chipmunks..... So suddenly our garden is a little known colony of the good ole USA! That then took me down another Google rabbit hole, how many places in the world are called Semington and do you know what, we're unique – there is only one of us. Well I say that, but in all honesty I didn't check all 165,000 results delivered in 0.63 seconds by Google. There are though many people with the surname Semington in the USA my particular favourites being Ardell and Nelly Mae Semington former residents of Wisconsin and Texas respectively.

Anyhow, as always I digress, this still hasn't solved the great disappearing daffodil mystery. I have carried on researching and it would appear that I have at last found the answer and best of all a compelling argument not to work too hard in the garden. Apparently you should not take the leaves off your daffodils until they are totally and properly yellow - I have always sort of left them till they have wilted, gone limp as opposed to waiting patiently for them to go yellow. Trust me when it comes to gardening I have all the patience in the world to just let the garden do its own thing!

So this year I am literally going to wander lonely as a cloud and then leave them to do their stuff so that hopefully in 2023 they will reward my proactive negligence with a host of golden daffodils.... (did you see what I did there!)

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Down the Local

John, the Landlord, John

Having just been part of the inaugural Semington Jubilee meeting I feel a great sense of community spirit. I'm already sure that our little piece of England will once again pull off something special. This started me thinking how proud I feel running the pub which is very much the centre of the community sitting alongside the hall, school and Church. Then I started thinking about everything we do that's aside of the traditional pub food and drink. It really is quite a list and even I had forgotten some things!

Take it Away! - We're still offering a take away service and Fishy Friday regulars will confirm it's a bargain at a fiver! Drop in to give us your order or give us a call.

Pensioners' Portions - Wednesdays are bargain days with pensioners specials now available both at lunch and dinner. Drop in and treat yourself and have a natter with other villagers.

Drop Hub - You can still use the pub as a "drop hub" for parcels and judging by those on the social group quite a few get a bit lost. Just have them dropped in your name at the pub. Simple. We will keep it safe till you have a sec to pick it up.

Food bank - Just to back up Julia's updates – every single donation helps someone less fortunate, you can drop off any day of the week at the pub.

Community Club Hub - The pub is home to numerous village groups; Friends of St George's, WI Committee, Angling Club and the Book Club. If your club or community group needs a home, come and see us we'll be sure to be able to help.

Somerset Arms Pool Team We've got two pool teams battling it out in the Melksham Pool league.

Semington Crib Club a new club going from strength to strength see page 22.

And there's still more. I'm looking into some bingo, more events and even a bit of bridge. The pub loos are being freshened up and we're getting the marquee back to being cosy as it warms up and it's winter break comes to an end. I always knew lockdown would not be the problem, it would be coming out of lockdown that would be painful. We are getting back on our feet though. Come and say hello to our new staff including new chefs. Our new menus will be ready soon and can't wait to invite you down for some smashing deals and great food.

As always pop in and say hi, be it for coffee lunch a cheeky pint or dinner. The team would love to see you!

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Parish Council Matters

Peter Smith, Chair of the Parish Council

Community Meeting about Newland Homes proposals for 18 additional homes

- has now been rearranged for **7.00pm** on **Wednesday 16th March** in the **Village Hall**, with the scheduled Parish Council meeting starting afterwards at 8.00pm. Please come along if you want to ask questions of Newland Homes and to comment on its proposals to add a further 18 homes to the remainder of the St. George's Road site. Be aware that a planning application has now been submitted for this site, but your comments will still count in Wiltshire Council's assessment of the plans.

AND yet more housing developer interest – the Parish Council has been notified of an interest, by Hollins Strategic Land, in developing the field west of Turnpike Close and just north of the A361. This developer is suggesting that it work with the village as part of the neighbourhood planning process. All this is on top of the 24 homes being built south of St. George's Road, and the further 26 homes that have planning permission in the field opposite St. George's Place. Plus we are aware of at least one other landowner interested in developing land in the village.

If you're wondering where the council stands on this, it resolved on 16th February that it will not support any further housing development in Semington. That view is, of course, subject to your views on future development in the village which will be framed through the Neighbourhood Planning process. Which brings me to....

....5th March, Neighbourhood Planning Consultation – this event, at the **Village Hall** from **11.00am to 3.00pm**, really matters in gathering your views on how we, in this village, want to shape land use over the coming 15 years. Your involvement is critical because, without it, our Semington neighbourhood plan won't be a proper reflection of our collective wishes. Hopefully, you will have all received a printed flyer about this event and explaining its purpose. So, **please** find a moment to pop in on the **5th March** and let us know your thoughts. There will be refreshments and activities for children, too!

Tennis court – volunteers have been working around the perimeter of the court to cut back growth from the surrounding trees, and to build a weed free barrier around the base to protect the surface. This will be continuing for a few weeks. Any court users wanting to help, please look out for working party dates and times on the village Facebook page.

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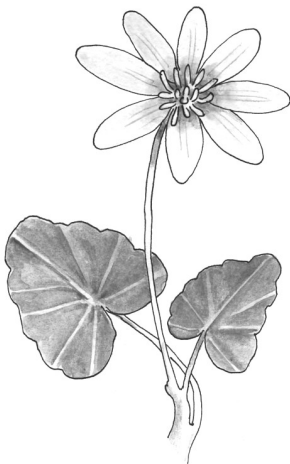
Nature Notes

This year, I saw the first celandine in the village towards the end of January. A single flower shining at the base of a stile. It had somehow managed to escape being grubbed up when the area was cleared of so called weeds. There is certainly nothing weedy about a plant that always defies the new year cold to provide cheerful evidence that Spring will soon be with us. Wordsworth wrote three times about the celandine. These are extracts from his:

To a Small Celandine.

Pansies, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises;
Long as there's a sun that sets,
Primroses will have their glory;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story:
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about her nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.



Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly, unassuming Spirit!
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane; - there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Ill-requited upon earth;
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Serving at my heart's command
Tasks that are no tasks renewing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love!

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WILTSHIRE COUNCILLOR NEWS

Jonathon Seed 07770 774463 jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk

I am penning my news a little later in the month because for the first time in several years my wife and I have taken a break and been abroad for two weeks to stay with relatives. Not only does this come at an appropriate time in my political life but as an added bonus this was a much appreciated and relaxing stay in a very hot country. Perhaps our stay was made even more welcome by the cold and wet weather which we left behind in England (and flew back into!). However modern communications mean that I have long since given up abandoning messages and e-mails for the length of my absence abroad. A daily half hour or so of clearing e mails means that I can help with all sorts of issues from afar, albeit sitting in the sun or shade. Maybe dealing with local planning applications from 5000 miles away is not everyone's idea of a break but I believe it is only reasonable to continue to give the best service possible to residents as best I can.

One day after leaving a temperature of 37°C I set out in very cold and wet rain to attend the budget meeting of Wiltshire Council in Trowbridge. It was therefore doubly interesting to hear the drums and noise of climate change demonstrators outside the Civic Centre as I am acutely aware of what the differences and extremes of climate on our planet really are. There was much in the news as I returned in the middle of February, including Ukraine, Partygate and energy costs. Having seen the struggle for survival and 'prosperity' in another part of the world it brings into sharp focus many of our first world issues. Here we seek to cope with huge rises in energy costs whilst in many parts of the world electricity supply is often broken and not a constant supply. Our vehicle fuel is comparatively expensive compared to other parts of the world and we need to look carefully at why this is. We even pay 10% more for our fuel than our near European neighbours. My council division is one of the most sparsely populated in Wiltshire and the use of a car is an essential part of life and not a luxury. As a rural resident and elected representative I really do think that it is time that instead of just accepting every rise in fuel we start to look at the possibility of some separation and perhaps a fiscal allowance for those who really need to use their cars from those who choose to use their cars.

Finally, as I write this, the budget of Wiltshire Council has been passed and we look forward to a further year of sound financial management albeit with every increasing tightening of our belt. In the meantime should any resident need to contact me I am always willing to help with local government issues.

Parish Council Meeting

Abridged Minutes From Meeting Held Wednesday 16th February 2022

Present: Councillors P Smith (Chairman), V Bodman, S Chown, J Hailey, W Scott, C Wade and the Clerk Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed attended part-time. There were no members of the public present. **Apologies:** Apologies for non-attendance were received and accepted from Cllrs. R Bruges, M Kasasian, S Rimmer.

Declaration of Interests: Cllr. Bodman declared an interest in Agenda item 6g 'Rural Housing Need Survey'. There were no other interests declared.

Wiltshire Council Report: The Semington/Hilperton Cycleway: The route for this cycleway has now been agreed by Wiltshire Council and Cllr. Seed was reassured by the Chairman that the Wiltshire Council Highways Engineer had agreed to consult with the Parish Council in respect of the proposed surface for the cycleway and it was important that such consultation included a site meeting. Travellers Sites: Wiltshire Council (Highways and Public Health) are addressing the problem concerning the discharge of sewage at the Greenacres site and legal action is in hand regarding the breach of planning conditions at the Littleton site.

Planning and Development: The Council noted the Draft/Informal proposals for the development of land at/near Hilperton currently under discussion between Wiltshire Council and Lightwood Strategic Ltd and decided that comments from the Parish Council should await the publication of the Draft Local Plan. Cllr. Bodman proposed that the immediate priority is to concentrate on the proposed developments in Semington namely the Newland Homes and Greystoke developments – both of which have planning permission – and the emerging developments by Hollins Strategic Land LLP (at Turnpike Close) and those by Ashford Homes and the latest one from Newland Homes. The Chairman, supported by the councillors, commented that it was important to keep contact with the Hilperton AAG over the Lightwood Strategic Ltd proposals and he thanked Cllr. Bruges for his involvement to date. The Council **resolved** that Cllr. Bruges had the authority to represent the Parish Council at meetings/discussions relating to this subject.

Cllr. Scott stated that Semington was now the subject of five housing developments – two of which have received planning permission (Newland Homes and Greystoke) – and three further proposals for developments – Hollins Strategic Land Ltd (the Turnpike), Ashford Homes (Church Lane) and Newland Homes (St Georges 'infill'). He argued that this was grossly excessive development for a village the size of Semington and that the proposed number of properties was far too many and were, in most cases, in the wrong location. Also, importantly, the proposed number of properties was in direct conflict with the results of the recently conducted Rural Housing Need Survey.

Following a proposal by Cllr. Scott, the Parish Council **resolved** that it does not support any further housing developments in Semington but that it would re-examine this resolution following village consultations and the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plan (NP): The Chairman reported that the fifth meeting of the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG) was held on 5th February 2022 and that it is progressing well. He added that there is to be a Village Consultation Day on **5th March 2022, 11.00am to 3.00pm**, for parishioners to express their views and for the priorities and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan to be discussed and identified. He added that a 'flyer' had been sent to all households advertising this event. The Clerk commented that a grant of £1580 towards the cost of developing a Neighbourhood Plan had been received.

Finance: Final Balance as at 16th February 2022 is £55,209.58

Recreation and Wellbeing: Cllr. Wade reported that he is continuing to progress the acquisition of allotment plots and that Mike Kurton has been identified as the main point of contact. Cllr. Chown reported that the creation of a Semington Civil Parish Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is progressing well and some volunteers have come forward. She stated that she intended to place an article in the Village Newsletter and on social media to attract more volunteers. She stated that new Neighbourhood Watch signs are around £30 each and the Council **resolved** that a maximum of £300 be allocated to the purchase of the signs. She added that she was intending to hold a Village Meeting in April to advertise the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Community and Communication: Cllr. Bodman reported that arrangements for celebrating H.M. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee were progressing well and that a recent meeting on the subject attracted ten parishioners. She added that there were a number of matters that needed addressing such as insurance cover, a road closure – probably from Pound Lane to the Canal Bridge – details of a Soap Box Derby and many others. Noting her request for possible expenditure, the Council **resolved** to allocate £1000 to this project and councillors commented that this project represented a community project and as such any expenditure should be from the recently received CIL contribution.

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 16th March 2022 8.00pm

Steeple Ashton Films

Thank you to all those who came to see The Courier, it's been a long time since we have seen queues! Thanks also to those who applauded at the end and thanked us in person. It was great to see so many of you and thank you for keeping Steeple Ashton Films alive! Our safety measures remain in place and are appreciated by our audiences. Our next showing is perhaps a glimpse into what happens at the Queen's Christmas Party!

Saturday 2nd April 7.30pm – prompt start.

Village Hall, Steeple Ashton.

Doors open at 7.00pm for refreshments.

SPENCER (12) Written by Steven Knight (who wrote the screenplay for The Hundred Foot Journey which was the first film we showed) and directed by Pablo Larrain well known for the acclaimed recent film Jackie.

The marriage of Princess Diana (Kristen Stewart) and Prince Charles (Jack Farthing) has long since become strained. Set in December 1991 for the Christmas Festivities at the Queen's Sandringham Estate, rumours of affairs and a divorce are everywhere in the media, but they agree to a truce for the sake of the family. There is lavish eating and drinking, shooting and hunting as usual, but in the coming year things will be profoundly different. Co-starring Timothy Spall, Sean Harris and Sally Hawkins, Spencer is an imagining of what might have happened during those days. Comments from one of the critics, "Kristen Stewart's performance is nothing short of outstanding. It's the best performance of her career and definitely Oscar-worthy. Watch it with an open mind and you won't be disappointed" and another, "Don't expect it to be 'The Crown' it's just a story about a young woman out of her depth".

We have a brand new design for our tickets! Please make sure you are given the correct number of tickets you wish to purchase and that you write your name and telephone number on the back. We intend on keeping all our safety measures in place and request that you wear a mask and make use of the hand sanitisers provided and one way system.

Tickets £6.00 from Steeple Ashton Village Shop.

For reservations, please ring Alison Wilson on 01380 871345 or for up to date news about Steeple Ashton Films, join our mailing list e-mail safilms268@gmail.com or find us on Facebook.

Thank you so much for all your donations to the Melksham Foodbank, whether you left them in the designated trolleys or boxes in Melksham supermarkets or doctors' surgeries, or in the porch of St George's Church or at the Somerset Arms. The latter are collected at around 6pm every Wednesday. Everything you have given has gone to help the most needy and vulnerable people.

To give you an idea of how much that need has increased, I have some statistics supplied to me by the Foodbank:

- In 2019 they gave out 639 bags of food and other items to single people and 1114 to families, making a total of 1753.
- In 2020 the amount given out to families had doubled from the year before, with 2268 bags going to families and 880 to single people, making 3148, in all. But in both 2019 and 2020 bags of items were given specifically to children, however the number was not recorded.
- In 2021 969 bags went to single people and 2811 to families, making a total of 3780. However, last year the children's bags were counted and there were 2159 of them, which makes a grand total of 5939 in 2021.

This year, with the cost of living increases and the steep rise in energy bills to come, it seems likely that the tragic need for Foodbanks will only increase. Your donations are absolutely vital to keep meeting this need. The Foodbank simply couldn't function with people like you, who are making a real difference.

If you need the up to date list of items that they are particularly short of, then that is put on the village Facebook page each week, or ring me on 01380 870137. Generally, they welcome any tinned or packet item with a long best before date, but no fresh items or fruit or veg, apart from tinned. Toilet rolls are also welcomed. Many thanks, *Julia*

Shout Out To Wessex Water

Leon Karas recently needed to get hold of Wessex Water for an emergency and just wanted to say thanks for their prompt response to their blockage which was sorted out the same afternoon. James from Wessex Water was courteous, knowledgeable, effective and a great credit to them, and working on his own! Magic!

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News From St George's School

Sue Cook

It is a while since we have brought you news from St George's, but we have had a very busy time over Christmas and the New Year, keeping to bubbles and making sure everyone is being kept safe in school. January has been a very exciting time for us as we have welcomed our new Assistant Principal, Russell Goodman to the team.

Here is a lovely welcome from Mr Goodman:

I am so excited to be joining the team at St Georges!

I have been teaching for a very long time and could not love it any more. I first fell in love with teaching whilst living in Vietnam and have since made it my career having previously worked in sales management in London. For the last few years I have been working in a wonderful school in Swindon leading a successful team but I can't wait to make the leap to St George's.

I have heard such lovely things about St George's and Semington and since I started visiting here, I can tell that it is a very special place. The staff are fantastic and the children have been so welcoming.

I feel strongly that the closer the local community and the school are the better it is for the children and I am really looking forward to meeting you all very soon.

Mr Goodman has a very strong passion for reading and we will be using his enthusiasm for this to support World Book Day in March, and we will also be supporting Comic Relief. Everyone at St George's is very much looking forward to another year of fun and learning, welcoming visitors back into our school, and joining in with the community throughout the year.



Easter Trail – Easter Weekend

Friends of St George's Easter Trail is back again this year.
More details available in March – Save the date!

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Regular or one-off service

Lawn mowing, pruning, wedding, hedge trimming, planting, edging, digging

May also help with interior and some exterior household painting

Bourne Gardening

01225 705782
kowhai45@hotmail.com

email:
semparmag@icloud.com
If you want this space

Michelle Donelan - MP for Chippenham Ward

This year we have the honour of celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee after she became the first British monarch to reach 70 years of service to this country. Her dedication and commitment to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth is an enduring reminder of her unwavering and inspirational leadership, especially in difficult times. I know Semington residents will be looking forward to the village's own Jubilee celebrations which are planned to take place on Sunday 5th June and I am particularly looking forward to seeing what fantastic community activities the local team come up with!

This month we have also relaxed the travel rules, making international journeys cheaper and easier for fully vaccinated residents. This means you will no longer need to take any Covid tests when leaving or returning to the UK. After speaking to constituents about seeing family and loved ones abroad, as well as the impact this has had on the travel sector, I made it my mission to highlight the difficulties of travel restrictions again and again with ministers. The dropping of these restrictions is a vindication of our booster vaccine plan and I am proud of how residents have responded and stepped up to the challenge.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing:

michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk or by calling 01249 704465. If you would like a private surgery appointment, please do email or call.

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Planning for the Jubilee celebrations over the June bank holiday weekend got underway last month at the Somerset Arms when ideas were discussed how best to bring the village together to mark the occasion. In the magazine is a letter detailing the proposal to request closure of part of the High Street on **Sunday 5th June** to allow community activities to take place. We do hope you are able to support this.

There are lots of ideas floating around at the moment including a Soapbox Derby, bring your picnic to the Platinum Picnic as well as lots of games and activities.

The next planning meeting is **Tuesday 8th March at 7.00pm** in the Somerset Arms – and we really need more villagers to get involved in helping this event become a reality!

If you can't get to the meeting – please email:

semingtonvolunteers@gmail.com to let us know how you would like to be involved, it can be anything from cake baking to bunting making to being a road marshal.

Semington WI

Deb Hurn

We celebrated our 25th Anniversary of the restart of Semington WI at our February meeting. We had lovely canapés by Carole and delicious cake by Cassandra. Many thanks to both.

Thanks also go to Shirley for showing us how to make our own Easter cards. They were all lovely and fun to make. Some of us had a go at spirelli to make the cards stand out.

Our next meeting will be **Thursday 10th March 2022 at 7.30pm** in the village hall. This will be our AGM where we hope to plan for the coming year.

Semington Book Club

Angela Grodzicka - 870756

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 8th March at 7.30pm** in the pub when we will be discussing *The Seventh Scroll* by Wilbur Smith and/or *The Hand That First Held Mine* by Maggie O'Farrell. All welcome.

Crib and Chess Club

Eric Clifford

We have been meeting fortnightly on Monday evenings at 7.00pm at the Somerset Arms to play crib or chess. Our next meeting is **Monday 7th March**, see the diary on page 2 for dates and times.

A very friendly group has formed and it is refreshing to see the way cribbers have quickly learned this exciting card game. We welcome all levels especially beginners and that goes for chess too. Come along and enjoy the friendliness whilst we learn together.

Extracts From The Last Methodist Service at St George's

The Compton Census of 1676 showed Semington as having 207 conformists (Church of England) and 2 non-conformists. One hundred and thirty years on in 1797, houses were licensed in Semington for Methodist meetings. Records show that in 1829, Semington Methodists had 27 members and an average congregation of 80, though presumably not in the same house!

The sanctioning of a chapel building was granted in 1884, and a chapel was built with that year's date on. Mr Henry Stockwell, grocer and postmaster, was instrumental in the chapel's construction and known throughout the area for his devotion to the cause. He was clerk to the Parish Council for 39 years and chairman of the village hall construction committee. His involvement with Methodism went far beyond Semington being a Trustee of the Trowbridge & Bradford Methodist Circuit, Chapel Steward, Sunday School Superintendent, and organist. In 1912 the Duke of Somerset gave land for a Sunday School to be built attached to the chapel for its 80 scholars! Outings arranged by the Methodists by horse and trap and later charabanc were always eagerly awaited and much enjoyed by many in Semington.

During the 1960's Anglican and Methodist co-operation was being discussed and shared services in both Church and Chapel cemented excellent ecumenical relations. Some 20 years later the Wesleyan Chapel was sold and in 1981 St. George's Anglican PCC combined with Semington Methodist Church Council to allow for joint use of St. George's Church for both Anglican and Methodist services.

Joyous 10th and 20th Church Sharing Anniversary Services were held in 1991 and 2001. The Bristol Methodist District Chairs, Rev Ian White and Rev Ward Jones, preached at these packed Church services. The congregations rejoiced in God's love in enabling Free Church witness and service. The work of God, undergirded by prayer, has achieved much mission and outreach as we proclaim His Glory in a non-labelling denominational environment.

So after 225 years of licensed Methodism in Semington, with the last 40 being enriching, enthusiastic Church sharing, the time now seems right to draw to a close Methodist Services in Semington. Therefore, it is with mixed emotions that we come to the end of an era, but as Christians in Semington, we believe as in the words of an Anglican Minister, Rev. John Wesley, nearing his death on the 2 March 1791 'The best of all is, God is with us'.

We are grateful for the Area's Ministers and local preachers who have led worship in Semington over 2 and a quarter centuries, and as Rev Ward Jones preached in our final service, we rejoice in this change of direction. The Anglican Rector, Rev. John Rees, continues to be thanked for his invitation to allow for non-conformist Free Church service style to be enabled quarterly. So let us praise the Lord for all that has been, and all that is to come.

Sincerely, Eric

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Catholic News

St. John The Baptist Trowbridge & St Bernadette's Westbury (inc villages)

St John the Baptist – Trowbridge Sunday & Weekday Masses:

Saturdays 6.00pm (Vigil Mass), Sundays 10.30am and 12.00pm

Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9.00am and Tuesday 6.00pm

St Bernadette's – Westbury Mass times are:

Sunday 9.00am

COVID Restrictions: As you are aware, on January 27th, the government announced that most of the plan B COVID restrictions were removed. The Bishops of England and Wales have responded to this by also removing many of the restrictions we have had in place in our places of worship. Holy Water is now allowed in the water stoops enabling us to bless ourselves as we enter and leave the Church. Face coverings and masks are no longer mandatory (but allowed if you still wish to wear them).

Resumption of Coffee after Mass: Due to the easing of COVID restrictions we can resume the tradition of serving coffee and light refreshments after our Sunday Masses. At St. John's this will happen on **Sunday 6th of March**. We are gathering information as to who is prepared to join/remain on the rota. This will determine if we can have this event each week or just once a month. If you wish to go on the rota, please contact Becky at the Parish Centre Tel 01225 767215. St. Bernadette's Coffee after Mass will resume soon as well.

A Date for the Diary: Bishop Declan will be leading a service of Reconciliation at St. John The Baptist Church Trowbridge on the **31st March at 7.00pm**. All Welcome. You may remember that Bishop Declan was due to join us for a similar event in March 2020, unfortunately, the Covid outbreak made us cancel this event.

5th Trowbridge (St John's RC) Brownie Unit: As mentioned recently in the newsletter, the present Brown Owl Frances Westlake and Snowy Owl Louise Barret are standing down. Thankfully, Catherine Harbud has offered to take over as Brown Owl. She does need other helpers though to enable the 5th Trowbridge (St. John's RC) Brown unit to continue. If you wish to help, please contact Catherine by emailing her at

Ecumenical Curry Evening: MenUnited/CATA interdenominational, ecumenical curry evening on **4th March at 7.00pm**. This is at Trowbridge Rugby Club (BA14 6JB). Our speaker is George Rabczak, a retired Wilts Police Officer. Please contact John Grant for more information on 07775 528548.

Thought from the Rectory

Rev. John Rees

For Christians Lent is a time of reflection as we prepare for Easter, the great festival of the Church when the death and resurrection of Jesus is remembered. We begin this time of reflection on Ash Wednesday (2nd March) and it continues until Easter Day. Our Churches are going to offer a number of options for reflection and discussion, some in person and others via Zoom. You would be welcome to join us – details can be found on our website (see back page for details), though do contact me to find out more. One theme which I am looking forward to, though I think it will be challenging, involves an exploration of justice.

All of us, from an early age, can think of times when we have cried out “its not fair!” I have vivid memories of being sent to my bedroom as a punishment for something I hadn’t done. I can’t remember my supposed misdemeanour of over 50 years ago; but I can remember being both furiously angry and deeply hurt! More recently, I remember being cross at receiving a parking ticket for parking on a double yellow line which was obscured by snow.

These of course are minor injustices. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his forward to “Embracing Justice”, the book by Isabelle Hamley we will use to explore the theme of justice, points out that in recent years cries for justice in much more important areas such as the Black Lives Matter campaign have attracted media attention. Coronavirus has made some of the injustices in society more evident. In this country death rates have been higher in areas of deprivation, but I am so aware that (having just had the virus), my symptoms, having had three vaccinations, were moderate, and yet there are many parts of the world where most people are still waiting for protection.

In many of these areas it is easier to recognise the problems than to identify, let alone implement, solutions. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God, creator of the world and everyone and everything in it calls us to live justly. For example, the prophet Isaiah called his hearers to “Maintain justice and do what is right” (Isaiah 56:1). Most tellingly, it is through the death of Jesus on the cross after a sham trial, that God fully reveals his love for every one of us. Through Jesus God forgives our errors, sets us free to start again, and loves us as his adopted children.

We are called to show love to all. I think that in our village our care and passion for justice is expressed most fully in the wonderful contributions to Melksham foodbank, week by week, through the year.

Lent gives us an opportunity to reflect on whether there is more we can do.

With my best wishes, John

From The Church Register



The Holy Baptism of Riley Craig Brakes, age 10 and Jessica Lily Brakes age 5 of Littlemarsh took place on Sunday 13th February 2022 were welcomed into the church family at their baptism.

We pray God will bless them and their family and as they grow they will experience God's love for themselves.

Your Magazine Needs You!

Julia Wade – 01380 870137

Sue Taylor has been delivering the Parish Magazine to The Hunt Close since moving to Semington. She, and husband Bob, will be leaving the village and so we need a volunteer to take over her patch. If you can help please let me know. Thank you to Sue for steadfastly delivering the Magazine and all the extra Support Group newsletters. It is much appreciated.

Thanks also to Sue Wilthew, who has also stood down from delivering to St. George's Court after several years. Thanks to Pam Vaines for covering that area, and to Jenny Turnbull for taking it on now.

Paws for Thought



Jesus Christ is the same
yesterday, today, and forever

It's in the Bible; Hebrews 13 verse 8



CHURCH SERVICES in SEMINGTON

In addition to the 'LIVE' services detailed below ONLINE services will also be available each weekend. See our WEBSITE for full details

CANALSIDEBENEFICE.ORG.UK

Booking is **NO LONGER** required to attend services

Date	Time	Service
Wednesday 2nd March ASH WEDNESDAY	7.30pm	HOLY COMMUNION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY at St Michael's, Hilperton
Sunday 13th March	9.15am	ALL AGE WORSHIP at St George's
Sunday 20th March	9.15am	HOLY COMMUNION at St George's
Sunday 27th March MOTHERING SUNDAY	4pm	TEA@the TIN at St Mary Magdalen's (Tin Church) in Hilperton

Contact Details for The Canalside Parishes:

Administrator – Michael Gamble, please contact Michael for initial enquiries about baptisms, weddings and general matters on **07795 400262**

E-mail: canalsideoffice@gmail.com

PCC Secretary/Treasurer - Jack Woodward **01380 870784**

Church Warden – Mr David Wildsmith

Lay Pastoral Assistants are co-ordinated by Marilyn Stubbs. Please contact Marilyn on **01225 753118** or John if you would like a visit.

Curate: Revd. Joy Albone **07931 638524** email canalsidecurate@gmail.com

Rev John Rees, Rector, Canalside Benefice **01225 764365**

Email: canalsidirector@gmail.com www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk