

DECEMBER &  
JANUARY 2023



*Roy McPine*

SEMINGTON  
PARISH MAGAZINE

Minister for Semington:  
Rev John Rees  
22 Warren Road  
Staverton, BA14 6UZ  
Tel. 01225 764365



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**Village Christmas Tree**

Carols by the Tree Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm

High Street

**Somerset Arms**

Crib and Chess Club

Wednesdays 7.30pm

## Christians in Semington

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*Bev Woodward*

**Our Christmas Eve Celebration** will be at **2.00pm**. If your child would like to take part in this celebration of the Nativity, please contact me on 870784 and we will let you have more details. Any age welcome - there are a few words to learn. There will be three practises during the week before Christmas, at times to hopefully suit everyone! Bev Woodward

**Christians in Semington** - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesdays 7<sup>th</sup> December and 4<sup>th</sup> January at 8.00pm**. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the zoom link.

**Housegroup** - we meet every other Tuesday, at 8.00pm. We're continuing to look at Luke's gospel, seeing 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 the dates and venue.

## Editor's Note

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*Gillian Airey*

Woo-hoo! We made it through another year! Our beautiful Christmas cover comes courtesy of Roy McDine with our lovely church looking suitably Christmassy. Our colour cover as always is sponsored by Andy and Roxi at A M Print & Copy. My own personal thanks goes out to Andy and Roxi for the support they give me in my role of editor, it really is most appreciated.

I'd also like to give a shout out to the advertisers who support our magazine as well as the distributors who every month deliver the magazine the length and breadth of our village. On top of all that, may I also send big hugs (those who know me know I give BIG hugs) to everyone who contributes to the magazine, without you it would be two pages long and one of those the witterings of a mad woman, I really couldn't do it without you all.

We've got a month off for good behaviour and we'll be back in February, the deadline for submissions is **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January**. So however you are spending Christmas and New Year, I hope it is everything you wish it to be and remember big hugs are always the best. My email as always **semparmag@icloud.com**

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## This Month I'm A Yes Woman

*Gilly Airey*

Gorgeous Hubby and I once more ventured off on a half term holiday with our very own special little people; Princesses Ava and Bella and gorgeous George (takes after his grandad you see!). It's been a while since we had braved a holiday away from home with the three grandchildren and no parents but after putting it to a vote the grandchildren deemed we were 'up for it'. Let's face it no child is going to turn down the opportunity to swim, eat ice cream and test their grandparents' love for them for six days straight are they?

I patted myself on the back that we managed to get through Luton airport and Palma airport with the same number of people (5) as we started with, despite George's best efforts to become the invisible child and indeed Gorgeous Hubby's return to the plane to collect his bag that had everything important in it. That's what happens when you travel with children, you count them and not the number of bags you started with!

I'm not going to lie we were all a bit rusty at being together so it took a couple of days to get into the holiday groove. Then inspired by the lovely Mrs P, Isaac's and Evie's Mum, I declared that Friday would be a 'Yes Day' – whatever they wanted to do or have it would be a yes from Nanny G and Popsie. The 'Yes Day' however had to be earned and suddenly everything was going swimmingly. We got three straight yes days from the kids – nothing was too much trouble for them – as long as they got their 'Yes Day' on Friday. Even George's scraped knees (he jumped in a hole – and yes he re-enacted it for us, so double scraped knees) didn't jeopardise the 'Yes Day'.

So how did 'Yes Day' go? Doughnuts for breakfast – not a problem! Can we go to the beach for the day – absolutely! Golden Arches for lunch – let's do it! How about a night swim – if you're still awake, why not! The beauty of the 'Yes Day' was that it was simple stuff – and it's easy to kid yourself that in this day and age kids want ever more sophisticated entertainment. Seriously the day on the beach swimming, jumping waves and laughing hysterically at Nanny G's swimsuit malfunction (I will never buy a cossie with a zip ever again) was simply a moment of pure heaven for us as grandparents, making memories something we had been so short of over the last couple of years.

And what did we learn? I learnt you can fix a swimsuit calamity with an IKEA food clip and 'Yes Days' make for great days – thank you Mrs P for the inspiration.

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## Down The Local

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*John, the Landlord, John*

Tis the season to be jolly!

It's Christmas time Semington. Hopefully many of you will have enjoyed our offerings throughout November, culinary, musical or just a few drinks. It was great to see both children and adults in some amazing outfits at Halloween. DJ Rich never disappoints and kept everyone dancing until late. Well done to young George for winning best dressed with his clown outfit.

We've been taking lots of bookings for Christmas meals in December so don't delay if you want to book your meal with friends and family. Keep your eyes peeled on our social media pages for details of Santa's breakfast as well.

Our take away option for Christmas Day is proving really popular, so if you don't want to cook, you can let us do all the work. The meals will be available for collection from 2.00pm on Christmas Eve. All you'll need to do is keep it refrigerated until needed and simply heat up on the day and away you go. What's not to like?

We shall be open for drinks at lunchtime on Christmas Day and having been rained off by Covid for the last 2 years it will hopefully be great to see the pub buzzing with villagers just like the old days.

That just leaves New Year's Eve, there's no better place to see in the New Year than the pub. Join us for drinks and maybe a boogie and see the New Year in, in style.

Of course once the festivities are over, January is hot on its tail – remember a pub is for life not just for Christmas! It's been tough of late and we really need your help to see us through the bleak mid winter.

That's it for now, as always stay safe and enjoy and we'll see you soon.

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# 2022 – That Was The Year That Was!

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The Village Fete  
Photo Credit: Roy McDine



We rejoiced Queen Elizabeth II then all too quickly mourned her passing.



Doris won the Diamond Jubilee Soap Box Derby  
Photo Credit: Sue McDine



Semington hosted its first dog show.  
Photo Credit: Sue McDine

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## Nature Notes

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John Clare wrote this around 1850 in St Andrew's asylum, Northampton. It seems a bit odd to propose this as a suitable poem for the last magazine of the year when day and night temperatures are still around 15 degrees. Maybe by the time you are reading this Winter will have come.

### The Winter's Come

Sweet chestnuts brown like soleing-leather turn,  
The larch trees, like the colour of the sun  
That paled sky in the Autumn seem'd to burn.  
What a strange scene before us now does run  
Red, brown, and yellow, russet, black and dun,  
Whitethorn, wild cherry, and the poplar bare,  
The sycamore all withered in the sun,  
No leaves are now upon the birch-tree there,  
All now is stript to the cold wintry air.

See, not one tree but what has lost its leaves,  
And yet the landscape wears a pleasing hue,  
The winter chill on his cold bed receives  
Foliage which once hung o'er the waters blue,  
Naked, and bare, the leafless trees repose,  
Blue-headed titmouse now seeks maggots rare,  
Sluggish and dull the leaf-strewn river flows,  
That is not green, which was so through the year,  
Dark chill November draweth to a close.

'Tis winter and I love to read in-doors,  
When the moon hangs her crescent up on high  
While on the window-shutters the wind roars  
And storms like furies pass remorseless by.  
How pleasant on a feather bed to lie,  
Or, sitting by the fire, in fancy soar  
With Dante or with Milton to regions high,  
Or read fresh volumes we've not seen before,  
Or oer old Burton's Melancholy pore

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## News From Your Wiltshire Councillor

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*Jonathon Seed*

I write this message as a wet winter sets in, the days are shorter and that long hot summer is becoming a distant memory.

Last month there were many superbly organised events in our villages, ranging from the fun of Bonfire Night celebrations to the solemnity of Remembrance Sunday. I try to attend as many village events as I can and Bonfire Night in Broughton Gifford was a brilliantly organised event which both my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed, with the added advantage of catching up with old friends and local residents.

For many years I have chosen to remember the Fallen with the community that I represent. This year I joined villagers from the smallest two communities in my Council Division, Keevil and Great Hinton, and stood with people remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their loved ones, King and Country. Both events were simple acts of remembrance and well attended as ever - in Great Hinton over one third of the village population were present. This is always particularly poignant for me as a former regular Army officer and I also quietly remember fallen and deceased comrades at this time.

Political news seems somewhat trite in comparison with the above but there has been a significant recent announcement which will affect all of us. The latest Boundary Commission report means new local Parliamentary Constituencies as the number of voters in all constituencies is harmonised. The local headline is the proposal of a new constituency of Devizes and Melksham and this will affect all our villages. The local changes in the report are worth a read.

I continue to attend as many Parish Council meetings as possible to listen to concerns and report on Wiltshire Council issues. I often take away a list of Parish Council concerns but am very happy to address any residents' concerns raised either in the public forum or privately. I will be doing a joint surgery with Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP in the Semington village hall from **10.00am to noon on Saturday 14th January**. If you would like to come and discuss an issue, please book in either with me or through Michelle's office.

Finally as this is the December issue of the Parish Magazine I wish all residents a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Contact me by email at [Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk) or call **07770 774463**.

## Abridged Minutes from Parish Council Meeting

*Meeting held Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022*

**Present:** Councillors W Scott (Acting Chairman), R Bruges, S Chown, J Hailey, M. Kasasian, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman. In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr. P Smith, Cllr. Scott was elected unanimously as the Chairman for the meeting. Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed attended (Part-time). There was one member of the public present initially.

**Wiltshire Council Report:** Cllr Seed gave the following report: **Greenacres site:** Pressure continues to be exerted on Wiltshire Council to address the planning permission issues relating to the Greenacres travellers' site and the presence of a large number of static vans. He requested that any evidence to support the case presented to Wiltshire Council Development Management should be collated and passed to him whereupon he would continue to press the case with, and confront, the Wiltshire Council Enforcement Team. He added that he would be seeking advice from the Wiltshire Council Legal Team. **Newland Homes Development:** Cllr. Seed acknowledged that Wiltshire Council had failed to ensure that the 'affordable homes' within that development at St Georges Lane would be allocated to 'local' applicants and that the related s106 Agreement was deficient in that regard. He added that it may be possible to secure an agreement that should any of these properties be sold then 'local' purchasers would be given first choice. Cllr. Scott stated that the Parish Council was very disappointed and annoyed that in line with Wiltshire Council policy Rural Housing Needs Survey (RHNS) was undertaken to identify local housing needs and that the results of this survey had been ignored by Wiltshire Council when planning permission was granted. He added that the Parish Council support for this development was predicated on the allocation of 'affordable homes' in accordance with the RHNS. Cllr. Seed asked parish councillors to provide him with any evidence that was available that supported the view that the 'affordable homes' were to be allocated to meet identified local needs. **Boundary Commission:** The recommendations of the recent Boundary Commission consultation proposed a change to the Parliamentary Constituency boundaries and that Semington Civil Parish would be affected by this proposal if implemented. **Bridleways SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10 – Semington to Hilperton Cycleway:** The safety aspects of Bridleways SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10 which have been identified by Wiltshire Council as a 'cycleway' continues to cause considerable concern to the parishioners and the Parish Council with representations being made directly to the Parish Council by the concerned parishioners. He stated that he would make enquiries regarding the 'Safety Audit' that Wiltshire Council had stated would be undertaken and had indicated to the Parish Council would be completed and the related report issued by end-November.

The following matters were raised by councillors which they wished to bring to the notice of Cllr. Seed:

- Cllr. Bruges asked that the process for initiating consultations with Parish Councils be examined and improved citing the recent debacle of the failure of Wiltshire Council to consult with the Parish Council in relation to the 'cycleway'.
- Cllr. Scott enquired what was now happening to The Lamb on the Strand Public House. Cllr. Seed commented that the proposed development had been abandoned.
- Cllr. Wade was assured by Cllr. Seed that Melksham Area Board was still in a position to consider and approve grant applications.

**Planning and Development:** The Council examined the following planning applications and resolved to send comments to Wiltshire Council, as shown. PL/2022/08752, 29 High Street Small single-storey extension to annexe, the council has no objections to this proposed development, PL/2022/08799 (LBC) also 29 High Street, the Council requests Wiltshire Council to pass this application to the Conservation Officer for comment and that particular attention is paid to the proposed roof material. There were no planning applications received after 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**Neighbourhood Plan:** Cllr. Scott gave the following report on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NHPSG):

- The report from AECOM about the sites that have potential for development, which they examined in October, is expected at the end of the month, as is the report from our landscape consultant.
- The surveys of parish businesses and working from home are continuing
- Nine sites have been identified as having the potential to be recorded as special green spaces. Landowners are now being approached for comment.
- We now have a draft parish character statement which is being updated.
- The introduction to the written Neighbourhood Plan document has been updated.
- A list of non-designated heritage assets has been agreed. Landowners will be approached in the new year.
- The next village consultation will be in March 2023.

Cllr. Bruges enquired how the Neighbourhood Plan process is going to progress. Cllr. Scott provided the following statement for the minutes (shown in italics): *The NHPSG estimate that Reg 14 consultation will be in April / May 2023 and following time to make amendments based on feedback (2-3 months approx) the NHPSG will probably submit the Draft Neighbourhood Plan to Wiltshire Council in August/September 2023 ahead of the Reg 16 consultation. This probably means that the Neighbourhood Plan will be ready for Examination in December 2023 - Jan 2024.*

**Finance: Total balance in hand as at 16<sup>th</sup> November, £77,279.89.**

Cllr. Scott gave the following report on behalf of the Community Fund Working Group (CFWG):

- Mr Stephen Turpin has joined the group.
- Details of the Community Fund and the Working Group will now be shown on the website and a dedicated email address has been established.
- A request for expressions of interest from local community groups for possible projects/funding opportunities will go in the December Parish Magazine and onto Facebook and on the website. Local Community Groups will also be contacted by email.
- The next steps are to develop documentation to allow bids to be made and evaluated.

**Environment and Streetscene: Rights of Way.** Councillors noted the continuing safety concerns regarding Paths SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10 resulting from its designation as a 'cycleway' and commented that they would await the outcome of the safety audit before taking any further action. Cllr. Scott reported that two new kissing gates and steps had been installed on a local footpath. Cllr. Scott stated that he had spoken to the landowner in relation to the gates on Path SEMI8/10 that were regularly closed when there should be unfettered access along that bridleway and had been assured that the gates would now remain open. However, it had been observed that the gates remained closed. Cllr. Scott agreed to contact the landowner again. The Council expressed its thanks to Mr Williamson for his donation of 2500 crocus bulbs which had now been planted in the village. The Council also expressed its thanks to all those involved in the planting.

**Other Matters:** Cllr. Wade stated that he was still seeking advice and agreement on the design/type of the new Parish Council Noticeboard/s and invited councillors to assist him in this task. Cllr. Chown stated that her husband, Paul Chown, who had previously been involved in seeking noticeboard quotations, would assist Cllr. Wade.

Cllr. Hailey stated that the number and species of trees had been identified and a possible cost confirmed but this matter could not be progressed until permission had been obtained for the proposed planting locations. Cllr. Hailey requested that in future this subject is entitled 'Queen's Canopy' and all matters related to it are discussed under this single heading. Cllr. Hailey reported that the decision on the number and species of trees to be purchased for the Queen's Canopy project had been supported by the Wiltshire Council Trees and Woodland Team but permission to plant these trees on all the proposed spaces was still outstanding. She agreed to progress this matter with Wiltshire Council – especially with the 'Estates Team' - and added that Wiltshire Highways had raised no objections.

**Transport and Traffic:** Cllr. Wade confirmed that the 'SLOW' traffic sign and hatched lines had now been installed at Littlemarsh.

**Recreation and Wellbeing:** Cllr. Wade stated that he had attempted, without success, to contact Newland Homes to discuss, and agree, the handover of the allotment plots to the Parish Council. The Clerk stated that he would write formally to Newland Homes as a matter of urgency bearing in mind that houses on the site were soon to be occupied and that there would be the need to engage in legal processes related to the transfer. Cllr. Wade stated that he would send the Clerk the contact details for Newland Homes.

The Council noted the letter from Wiltshire Council regarding a possible management arrangement for the Wessex Close Play Area that highlighted the legal difficulties that would be associated with any Asset Transfer. The Chairman reported that the Parish Council had written again replying to Wiltshire Council proposing an arrangement for the Parish Council to be involved in the management of the Wessex Close Play Area and that a reply to that letter was awaited. The Clerk was asked to progress this with Wiltshire Council.

Cllr. Chown confirmed that the Christmas tree is to be erected on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at 10.00am. She added that Carol Singing and the 'Switch-on' of the lights would take place at **6.00pm on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December.**

**Community and Communication:** Cllr. Chown agreed to enquire whether there had been any progress in achieving faster broadband within in the village following the recent campaign by Steeple Ashton. Councillors noted that following Cllr. Bodman's resignation it was intended that her responsibilities would be allocated as follows: Recreation – Cllr. Hailey Communication – Cllr. Chown.

**Date of the next meeting:**

The Council resolved to cancel the meeting previously arranged for 21st December and resolved that the next Ordinary Parish Council meeting would be held on **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023** – subject to confirmation.



## Semington Camera Club

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*Sue McDine*

Ten members met on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November at the Somerset Arms. Once again, the pub landlord John had kindly set up a large screen TV for us to show photos taken during October.

Four of the members shared photos of their travels to North Devon, Snowdonia, Wales and France of which three of them had made a slide show set to music. Another member had shown photos of The Dark Gathering event at Boscastle, which was held again this year after an absence of three years.

Other members showed photos of fungi in Clanger Wood, a selection of Autumn leaves and I produced a slide show set to music of flowers still blooming in National Trust gardens in Wiltshire and North Devon. Our December meet will be a Christmas meal, with partners, at the Somerset Arms.

## Melksham Food Bank

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*Julia Wade - 01380 870137*



On behalf of all the clients and volunteers at the Melksham Foodbank, I would like to thank you, most sincerely, for all the food and goods you have donated to people in need in the Melksham area over this year. You have made a real difference to people whose lives are so affected by the increased cost of living, specifically energy costs. Of course those things affect us all, so your generosity, in continuing to give yourselves, is all the more admirable.

As Christmas approaches, anything you can give will be most welcome, including Christmas cake, Christmas puddings, mince pies, nice biscuits, chocolates, treats, as well as all the basic things. Please make sure that any homemade food has a full ingredients list and a best before date. Everything well within any use by or best before date, and no fresh items please.

As always, items can be left in the porch of St George's Church or at the Somerset Arms pub, by 6.00pm on Wednesdays. My thanks to John at the Church and John at the pub for enabling this.

Thank you, Julia Wade.

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## Community Development Funding

*Siobhan Chown - Semington Parish Council*

### **Does your village group or organisation need a grant?**

The Parish Council has funding available to enable development that will benefit our community. To help it decide how to allocate this money, the Council has set up a working group to communicate with parishioners and advise it on how to proceed with what we're calling **Community Development Funding**.

If your village group or organisation has a need for a grant that would help enhance what it does or allow it to do other things for the benefit of the community, please write to [cdf@semington.org.uk](mailto:cdf@semington.org.uk) giving us a brief account of what you'd use the money for. We'll then get back to you with further details on how to apply. There is no deadline for making a bid which should normally be for less than £1000.

## Poppy Appeal 2022

*Sean Moore*

The village poppy collection raised £462.00. With many thanks to everyone for their generosity and time given to collect.

To all my friends in Semington,  
I would like to wish you all a very  
Merry Christmas and a happy,  
peaceful and healthy New Year for 2023.  
I often think of you all.

Love from Edna Jones

Seasons  
Greetings



Wishing all my friends in  
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Christmas and a Happy  
and peaceful New Year.

Love from Kay Ferneyhough



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## Wiltshire Air Ambulance News

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Wiltshire Air Ambulance will be there for you this Christmas.

While many people will be enjoying some much-needed time off over the Christmas and New Year period, Wiltshire Air Ambulance will be operational and ready to respond to emergencies. The lifesaving service runs up to 19 hours a day, all year round from their airbase in Semington thanks to the generous donations they receive from the general public.

Richard Miller, clinical services and ground base manager at the charity, said: 'Our service operates every day so our pilots, specialist paramedics and doctors are ready to respond to emergency incidents, such as road traffic collisions, cardiac arrests and strokes, even over the Christmas and New Year period. We hope you and your families don't need us and have a safe and enjoyable festive period, but we will be there if called upon for the people of Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas. We are only able to provide our essential Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) thanks to the people, businesses and grant-making trusts who donate and fundraise for us. As we always say, we are funded by you, flying for you – so thank you for your support.'

The charity receives no regular direct funding from the Government or National Lottery grants. It needs to raise £4 million each year to keep flying and saving lives.

Please consider donating to Wiltshire Air Ambulance this Christmas. Visit [wiltshireairambulance.co.uk](http://wiltshireairambulance.co.uk) to find out more.

## Keeping It Local – Tangles Dog Grooming, Keevil

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*Jess Richens*

Hi my name is Jess and I am the owner **Tangles Dog Grooming in Keevil**. Tangles is an established dog grooming business based in the rural location of Keevil. I work from a cabin in my back garden and offer a number of services which include, full grooms, baths, hand stripping, nail clipping and puppy grooms.

My contact details are:

Phone **07719 020460**

Email; [tanglesgrooming@outlook.com](mailto:tanglesgrooming@outlook.com)

## Elves with Wheels Needed!

*Laura Shack – Communications Officer*



Julia's House is seeking a team of "elves with wheels" to help with the local charity's big Christmas tree collection in January. The Wiltshire children's hospice will be collecting and recycling real Christmas trees from homes across the county in the New Year. And the charity needs lots of vans and helping hands to make the tree-mendous mission possible.

Claudia Hickin, Julia's House Fundraiser, said, "Last year we collected around 650 Christmas trees and raised an incredible £9,250 in total across both Wiltshire and Dorset to support our care for seriously ill children and their families. This January we hope to collect even more, and we'd love to hear from any local businesses and individuals with vans who might be able to help us and help their local community at the same time."

She added, "We're essentially seeking a team of elves with wheels, who are happy to be helpers and volunteer a few hours of their time for us after the Christmas season."

The charity is looking for vans of all sizes to help for a minimum of three hours in Wiltshire across their three collection days, between **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January**. Volunteers are also needed to lift and load Christmas trees onto the vans. Once collected from local homes, the trees will be taken to the Old Potato Yard in Devizes and recycled as chippings for use on local farms and community spaces.

This year's Julia's House Christmas tree collection in Wiltshire will take place in Devizes, Pewsey, Marlborough and other surrounding locations, with bookings opening on the charity's website from **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December**.

All funds raised from the Christmas tree collection will help the Wiltshire children's hospice provide its lifeline of care for the most seriously ill children and their families in the local community.

The promotion of this year's Julia's House Christmas tree collection is kindly sponsored by Rubicon People Partnership. Established in 1982 with a recruitment approach of a consultancy rather than an agency, Rubicon provides permanent recruitment and temporary staffing solutions local to Dorset, Wiltshire and the surrounding areas.

If you would like to donate a van or volunteer your time, please get in touch with the Julia's House team at [treepickup@juliashouse.org](mailto:treepickup@juliashouse.org) or call **01380 562525**.

The end of the year is often a time for reflecting on what I know has been a busy and varied year for us all. It's also a brilliant opportunity to thank those in the community for all of their hard work this year, including in Semington.

Right across the area we have a small army of volunteers who do such brilliant work on everything from supporting our local charities, to running events. This community spirit was clear to see over the Platinum Jubilee weekend, marking the late Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years on the throne. From lighting the village beacon, to the flower festival in St. George's Church, to the village street party, it was a lovely weekend and would not have been possible without the hard work of all of the local volunteers.

Looking back over the year, one of the highlights for me was the lovely summer morning I spent at St George's Primary School for the school's sports day. It was fantastic to be able to announce the winning House team, well done again Oceana! It was a pleasure to meet the Head Girl and Boy, and the many other students who were enjoying taking part in St. George's first sports day since the pandemic. This summer was filled with so many events right across the community, and it was lovely to see so many of you.

As we look ahead to Christmas, we have much to look forward to locally with many fantastic events, from switch-ons, to Christmas markets, to the big man himself making his way round our community! The Christmas Market and Lights Switch On nearby at Melksham Town Hall is always a real highlight, taking place on the **3<sup>rd</sup> December at 6.30pm.**

I very much hope to meet and speak with many of you out in the community over the festive period, whether it is at a local event, or doing some Christmas shopping at one of our brilliant local businesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I hope you get to spend some much-deserved time with your friends and family over this festive period.

If you have something which you would like to speak to me about, or if you have a problem I might be able to help with, I am holding a resident's surgery at Semington Village Hall with Cllr Seed on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January, from 10.00am to 12.00pm.** No appointment is needed so please do drop by. If there is anything I can do in the meantime, please don't hesitate to email me:

**[michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk)**, or call on **01249 704465.**

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This months WI saw us doing festive paperback folding! Sounds tricky? It was. However, it was really good fun. Under the tutelage of Cheryl and Val we all ended up with a candle holder much to our delight. I'm sure many of the candle holders will grace our tables on Christmas Day. We also enjoyed birthday cake as two of our ladies celebrated their 80th birthdays.

Some of our ladies went to Marlborough College a couple of weeks ago. It was a Wiltshire Federation meeting and the guest speaker was the Reverend Kate Bottley. Kate was a fabulous speaker, very friendly and extremely funny. Well worth listening to.

I honestly can't believe that Christmas is only just over a month away. The year has flown by. We will be having our Christmas skittles evening on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm** in the Village Hall.

In place of our normal meeting we will be going to the Bell Inn Lacock on **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 12.30pm** so no meeting in the Village Hall.

Semington WI would like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

## Village Christmas Tree Switch On

Join us for carols round the tree as well as, of course, the big switch on!

Refreshments available in the Village Hall afterwards.

Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm  
High Street.



## Catholic News

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*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

**First Holy Communion 2023:** Application forms for First Holy Communion 2023 are now available to collect from Fr. Tom. If your child is in Yr 3 or above then please collect, complete a form, and return to Fr. Tom. The closing date for application is **10<sup>th</sup> December**. The preparation sessions will begin in January. Full details will be given to parents after the deadline for applications happens in December.

**Jumble Sale:** The Friends of St Johns School are holding a Jumble Sale on **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December from 11.00am-1.00pm**. Come along to the St Johns School Hall and bag yourself a few bargains! 50p Entry - we'd love to see you there.

**St. Bernadette's Drop-in:** St Bernadette's Drop-in takes place in the Annex from 2.00pm to 4.00pm and the first Wednesday of the month thereafter. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Wanted:** Help to sell our Christmas Draw tickets. Last year we managed to donate around £1400.00 to local charities. In the light of the current economic hardships, it is even more important now that we strive to better last year and the target is to raise £2000.00, with your help. Tickets will be available in the usual envelopes of £25.00's worth. Please do take some and sell to friends, family, neighbours, and I am sure we can get close to our new target. Contact Mike Heather for further supplies on; 01225 762966, or [mike284305@btinternet.com](mailto:mike284305@btinternet.com). Thank you.

Paws for Thought



Thank God for his  
gift that words can't  
describe!

It's in the Bible; 2 Corinthians 9 verse 15

## Thought From The Rectory

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Anne Rees – Lay Worship Leader

'Permacrisis', a term that describes 'an extended period of instability and insecurity', has been named Collins Word of the Year 2022. In 2022 we have faced, and continue to face, political instability, war in Ukraine, the effects of climate change, the cost-of-living crisis and the death of the only monarch most of us have ever known. Many of us have no doubt faced personal challenges and sadness too. Such instability and insecurity can make us feel anxious and afraid. I often decide that I ought to watch the news to discover what is happening in the world that day and to inform my prayers, knowing as I switch the television on that I will probably find most of the items disturbing and upsetting. However, as I approach Christmas and the end of the year, the Christmas story brings me hope once again. The birth of Jesus reminds me that he came to bring light into the darkness of our messed-up world.

The heart of the Christmas message is that Jesus was born as a human and lived in a human family experiencing the ups and downs we are all familiar with. God loves people so much that he sent his only son to earth to walk alongside us and invite us into a relationship with him. He wants to journey with us through life's difficulties and joys and give us a reason to hope.

So this Christmas, if you want to look for light in the darkness of the permacrisis, come to a service in St George's Church - there are details in this magazine - where we will once again celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world. You will be very welcome.

Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2023 to you all, Anne Rees

### **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: **canalsiderector@gmail.com** **www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk**



## **Celebrate Christmas at St George's Church**

Everyone will be warmly welcomed to our Christmas services

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 9.15am Breakfast Church

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 9.15am School Christmas Service

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December 6.00pm Carol Service

Christmas Eve 2.00pm Christmas Celebration

Christmas Day 9:30am Christmas Morning Communion

If you find Christmas difficult, you might find at our quiet, reflective Blue Christmas service helpful. It is on Thursday 22nd December at St Mary Magdalen's Church, Horse Road, Hilperton Marsh BA14 7PD (The Tin Church) starting at 6:00pm.

## **Services at St George's Church in January**

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January 9.15am Breakfast Church

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 9.15am Celtic Holy Communion