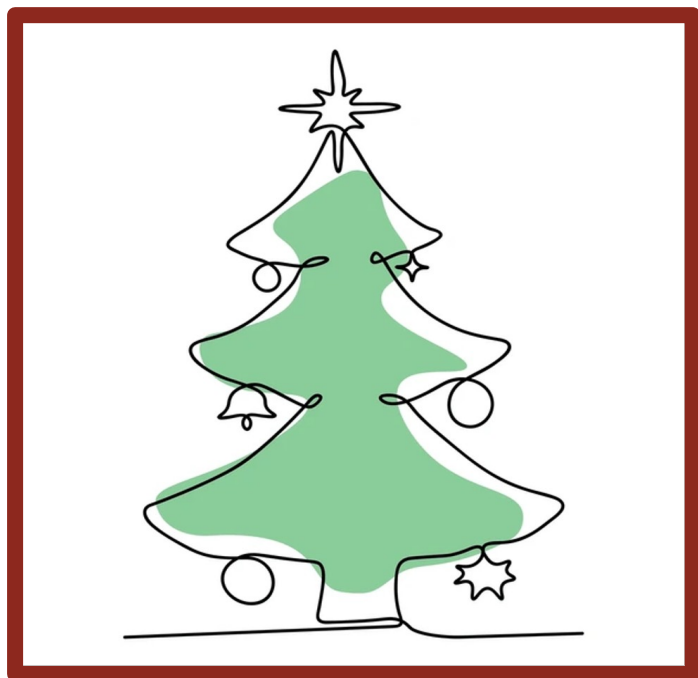


DECEMBER 2023



Semington
Christmas Tree Switch On
Sunday 3rd December 6.00pm

SEMINGTON
PARISH MAGAZINE



Post Office

Currently suspended awaiting further details

Food Bank Collections

Wednesdays 6.00pm deadline

Church Porch

Coffee Mornings

Thursdays 10.00am to 12.00pm

Village Hall

Bingo

Mondays 7.30pm

Village Hall

Semington WI

Thursday 14th December 7.30pm

Village Hall

(Skittles evening members and partners only)

Thursday 11th January 12.30pm

The Bell Lacock

Semingtones Choir

Fridays 6.00pm

Village Hall

Semington Crib Club

Fridays 8.00pm to 10.00pm

Village Hall

Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 13th December 7.30pm

Village Hall

Semington Board Game Nights

Monday 4th December 7.30pm

Village Hall

Monday 8th January 7.30pm

Monday 22nd January 3.0pm

Zumba in Semington

Wednesdays 6.15pm to 7.15pm

St George's School

Semington Christmas Tree Switch On

Sunday 3rd December 6.00pm

High Street

Refreshments available in the Village Hall afterwards

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward – 870784

Our next Breakfast Church is on **December 10th 9.15am**, and the first one of the New Year is on **January 14th**. Each time there will be a breakfast of baked goodies, fruit, juice, tea, coffee and hot chocolate, followed by a short service with songs, story and prayers. Everyone welcome!

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 Bev on 870784 or 07722 105084 and I will let you have more details. Any age welcome - there are a few words for some of the children to learn. There will be three practices during the week before Christmas, at times to hopefully suit everyone!

Christians in Semington - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesdays 6th December and 3rd January at 8.00pm**. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the zoom link.

Housegroup - we meet every other Tuesday, at 8.00pm. We're enjoying the Bible Society's films about the book of Romans, and learning a lot! If you'd like to join us please phone Jack/Bev 870784 or David/Pam 870030 for the dates and venue.



We would like to send you all the very best for a Happy and Healthy Christmas and 2024.

Kay Ferneyhough and Edna Jones

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

Seasons Greetings everyone! I truly hope that 2023 has been kind to you and that you get to have the Christmas and New Year you hope to have. As always I'd like to thank each and everyone of you who take time to read our mag, those of you who deliver our mag and our advertisers who support us every year by choosing our mag to advertise in. Super special thanks to Andy and Roxi at A M Print & Copy who each year sponsor our colour cover page.

I've got a month off for good behaviour (please take note Santa) so our next edition is February 2024, the deadline for that and everything else is **Sunday 21st January**. I'd love to hear from you all my email as always **semparmag@icloud.com** See you on the other side!

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This Month I'm Fighting A Losing Battle

Gilly Airey

After the triumph of the half term with the little people I was truly and utterly UFI for November and was going to accomplish loads.... I mean loads; Christmas t-shirt made, three roman blinds constructed for daughter in law number 1, Christmas cakes for the Foodbank baked, iced and decorated (and hopefully my certificate of thanks received before the gorgeous Mrs W's!), quizzes compiled for the Aquafit babes' and boys' Christmas lunch – I had it all planned. Sadly the stars aligned quite differently and it was game on for Gilly vs the world.

It all started with the dreadful cold Gorgeous Hubby brought home from holiday. Now as much as I would have liked to banish him into the shed in the garden he was proper poorly with it, which inevitably meant I became proper poorly with it and as I think I have told you before when I get a cold, really what I mean is I get a cough, a really annoying persistent, never quite not there cough. A cough that not only keeps me awake it also keeps the gorgeous one in my life awake too. My cough has been my constant companion for two weeks now.....

And then I killed the washing machine, I love my washing machine, I really am quite attached to it. First of all I flooded it (and the utility room) and then in trying to unflood it I appear to have killed it. Nothing Gorgeous Hubby could do could revive it so now I am waiting for a man to come with his CPR kit to bring it back to life. I'll let you know when I'm down to my last pair of knickers!

The icing on the cake though was when one of my toes decided it wanted to audition for its very own slot on the TV show 'Embarrassing Bodies'. Out of nowhere it decided to get infected, although I quite like the idea of it being caused by a spider bite because let's face it that sounds so much more dramatic. Despite the best interventions of saline baths and antibiotics, the toe put in an Oscar-worthy performance for 'Embarrassing Bodies' to the point I actually did that whole Google Lens thing on my own toe..... take it from me this is a very, very bad idea. I knew it was gruesome when Gorgeous Hubby, the most sensible of people, told it was time for a visit to Minor Injuries at Trowbridge which then quickly morphed into a trip to the RUH in Bath.

As always my own personal experience with the NHS was fabulous from the pharmacist I saw on Tuesday morning to the two lovely (impossibly young) doctors yesterday at the RUH and get this, I even got Mac n' Cheese for lunch with garlic bread! Despite its best efforts my toe failed its audition and is hanging its head in shame (well it's got a massive bandage on it).

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Wiltshire

Gutter Cleaning Services

Parish Council - Chair's Report

Peter Smith, Chair of the Parish Council

Planning Appeal: 30 homes on Land South of Pound Lane – we still don't have a date for when this appeal will be heard. As soon as it's known, it will be posted on the Parish Council notice board and website (semington.org.uk) under the "Planning" tab, and also on the village Facebook page.

Wiltshire Council (WC) Local Plan Consultation; in the November magazine, I reported on the Parish Council's response to WC about its draft Local Plan. We have since written to WC to say that we do not think its plan is sound and advised WC that we wish to participate (that is, say why we don't think it's sound) when the Planning Inspector examines the plan.

Pill Box on the eastern side of High Street; led and organised by Steve Turpin (thank you, Steve), on Saturday 18th November 6 volunteers began the job of clearing vegetation, particularly ivy, which had smothered the box. We also cleared the sight lines from High Street so that the box can be seen again. Thanks go to Paul and Kim Daniels for their kind permission for this work to happen on their land, and also to the volunteers who did the work. You may recall that Steve produced a supplement on Semington's WW2 defences for the September parish magazine, including an explanation as to why this anti-tank pill box was built on High Street and its context in anti-invasion plans. The work is far from complete, however, and it is likely that another couple of mornings will be needed. The first of these will be in January. It's really interesting uncovering all that history and it would be brilliant if a few more could join us next time round. Once known, I'll circulate the date to all of you already on the village volunteers list, plus post information on the website, Facebook page and notice board. Here's volunteer Colin in action....



Dog on dog attack; a parishioner has reported that his small dog was recently attacked by a much stronger dog leaving his dog very out of sorts for a couple of days afterwards. I'm not a dog owner but I'd understood that dogs are meant to be under their owner's control at all times. It's not something the Parish Council can deal with, so I'd suggest that if there are any serious incidents they should be reported to Wiltshire Council's Dog Warden, on 03004560107.

Bonfire Night and Winter Fete; those of you who managed to get to this event on 4th November will, like me, have had a terrific time. It was a huge success with over 300 parishioners in attendance. The Parish Council passed a vote of thanks to all on the organising committee, and to the village groups, innumerable helpers and of course Jo and Rob for allowing it all to happen at Outmarsh Farmhouse.

Christmas Lights; the now traditional grand switch on is at **6.00pm on Sunday 3rd December**. Another wonderful village gathering, hot on the heels of the bonfire event. Can't wait. Have a great Christmas and New Year.

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Get Festive in aid of Dorothy House Hospice Care

Dorothy House is hosting a Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning at their inpatient site in Winsley, BA15 2LE on **Saturday 2nd December 10.00am – 3.00pm.**

Coffee, cake and Christmas shopping!

The Christmas Fair and Coffee Morning is the perfect way to get into the seasonal spirit whilst raising vital funds for the community's local hospice charity. Shoppers can enjoy some delicious refreshments whilst picking up gifts and treats for Christmas.

There'll be a great range of retail stalls available on the day including:

- Christmas trees
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- Sweet treats
- Christmas cards and decorations
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Village Poppy Collection

Christine Moore

The Semington door to door poppy collection raised **£450.60**. A great many thanks and well done to all those who gave up their time to do the collection. Also, many thanks to those who supported the appeal so generously. Semington is looking for a new poppy organiser for next year for the door-to-door collections to continue in the village, anyone interested please contact **Christine Moore 870672**.

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Nature Notes

This is Thomas Hardy's **The Oxen**. It was published in The Times on Christmas Eve in 1915 and is often said to be one of Hardy's best-loved poems, appearing in many anthologies. He was 75 when he wrote it. Although he had lost his faith early in his life, he remained in his own words "churchy" with a deep affection for the Anglican liturgy.

The poem can be read as a part survival of childhood faith into adulthood. The conclusion focuses on hope more so than much of his writing, despite the grim realities of the first World War which he alludes to at the start of the third verse.

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.

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Abridged Minutes from Parish Council Meeting

Meeting Held Wednesday 15th November 2023

Present. Councillors P Smith (Chairman), M Carberry, J. Hailey, M. Kasasian, C. McGarvey, W.Scott, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman. There were no members of the public present.

Apologies. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. R Bruges, S. Chown and Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed.

Wiltshire Council Report. In the absence of Cllr. Seed, no report was given. The Chairman commented that Cllr. Seed has now written formally to Wiltshire Cabinet members and officers regarding the current concerns relating to the planning approvals at Greenacres.

Community and Communication. The Chairman reported that there had been no further information relating to the Post Office since the last Parish Council meeting. In Cllr. Bruges absence, the Chairman reported that the recent Bonfire Celebration Event had been a huge success and that it had been enjoyed by very many parishioners of Semington. On behalf of the Parish Council and the many parishioners who attended he expressed thanks to Cllr. Bruges for his initiative regarding the event and to all the members of the organising committee and village organisations who had contributed to its success, with additional thanks to all at Outmarsh Farm and Farmhouse for providing the location. Cllr. Smith added that Cllr. Bruges had provided the Parish Council with a full written report on the event.

Recreation and Wellbeing. The Chairman confirmed that all related legal documentation concerning the transfer of the allotment site from Newland Homes had now been signed by the Parish Council. Cllr. Wade added that there is to be a final site meeting with Newland Homes Ltd to resolve one or two remaining minor issues. Cllr. Hailey and the Chairman each reported that there remained a few minor issues to be resolved with Wiltshire Council before the formal transfer of the Wessex Close Play Area can take place. The Chairman stated that he and Cllr. Hailey would identify and list these issues to enable the Clerk to write formally to Wiltshire Council. Cllr. McGarvey stated that it is necessary to identify the Play Area Community Group members who would need to undergo the training and to confirm that on-line training is adequate and 'recognised by bodies such as RoSPA. Cllrs. McGarvey and Carberry stated that they both wished to partake in the training. Any specific training requirements also needed to be identified. Cllr. Wade reported that the Christmas tree had been ordered and that it was intended to erect it on Saturday 25th November. He added that it would be necessary to invite volunteers to help and for a Working Party to be formed.

Environment and Streetscene. Rights of Way. Cllr. Scott stated that there was nothing further to report on the impending Safety Audit (SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10. Cllr. Carberry reported that he had undertaken a comprehensive survey of existing village litter bins and their respective location within the village although some final work was still required. He commented that in view of the new housing developments within the village there is an argument that suggests that additional bins are required and, possibly, some existing ones to be re-sited. Cllr. Carberry stated that when his survey is fully complete he would propose a possible distribution of bins (location and type) within the village and he would invite the public and councillors to offer their views.

Cllr. Hailey reported the trimming back of long grass and nettles on Path SEMI and cutting back of overhanging branches was necessary and a broken stile had been repaired. She also stated that Path SEMI38 had narrowed because of the overgrown vegetation. She commented that this path was the Canal towpath. She added that Path SEMI9 also needed attention and she was advised to pass this information to the Rights of Way Working Group. Additionally, she commented that Path SEMI6 was flooded.

Other Matters. The Chairman confirmed that arrangements had been made for a Working Party to clear the vegetation in the immediate vicinity of the Pill Box on 18th November. The Chairman commented that the new Parish Steward had recently undertaken a number of tasks in the village and that he was impressed with his standard of workmanship.

Transport and Traffic. The Council noted that the next Melksham Area Board meeting is to be held at Semington Village Hall on **6th December** and following a discussion it was agreed that the Parish Council would raise the following topics at that meeting.

- SEMI9A and HILP22/10 Byway (Cycle path).
- Bus Gate/APNR Cameras
- Proposed A350 Bypass.
- WC Highways views regarding increased housing development within the village.
- Proposed Parking Restrictions at the Canal Bridge.

Cllr. Wade reported that he had attended the recent Local Highways and Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) Meeting and the subject of the Bus Gate/APNR Cameras was raised. He stated that prior to the LHFIG taking any action, the LHFIG required further information regarding the abuse of the prohibition sign and to provide this data a metrocount is to be deployed to assist in identifying the number of vehicles ignoring the prohibition. He added that Wiltshire Police confirmed that they are to take a more active role in issuing penalty notices to errant drivers.

Planning and Development. The Council examined the following planning applications and resolved to send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown (in italics):

- PL/2023/07362 53 Littlemarsh, ground floor extensions to dwelling and erection of garage; *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.*
- PL/2023/09177 1 Pound Close, new extension and entrance porch; *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.*
- PL/2023/09344 (Listed Building Consent) Wharf Cottage, Removal of modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roof on curtilage listed structures; *The Council had no comment on this application and requested that it is forwarded to the Conservation Officer for comment.*
- PL/2023/08970 Wharf Cottage, Removal of modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roof on curtilage listed structures, new fencing and associated external works; *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.*

The Clerk confirmed that he had submitted the comments from the Parish Council in respect of the Local Plan to Wiltshire Council but Wiltshire Council had responded that additional information was required from the Parish Council before the comments could be placed before the Inspector. This information related to the legality and soundness of the Plan. The Parish Council addressed the remaining points identified by Wiltshire Council and requested the Clerk to forward this information to Wiltshire Council.

Parish Council minutes continued

Finance. Total Balance in Hand as at 15th November 2023 £84,581.59

Cllr. Hailey, on behalf of the Community Development Fund Working Group (CDFWG) stated that no other qualifying applications for funding had been received. The Parish Council resolved to adopt the FY2024/25 Budget (Full details are available on PC website semington.org.uk). The Council resolved to make the following additional payments:

Cllr. Smith – ‘Rimmer Ramble’ street sign - £189.60, Bedding Plants - £24.90. L Callaghan – Plants (£21.44, Compost £3.50. Clerk (Office Expenses) – Printer Cartridge - £33.14.

Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr. Scott stated that there had been a Neighbourhood Plan meeting the previous evening and he confirmed that Acorn was currently preparing the Sustainability and Environmental Assessment that would then enable Regulation 14 (Public Consultation) to be implemented.

Date of the next meeting. **Wednesday 13th December 2023 7.30pm**

Full unabridged minutes including the budget presentation are available on the Parish Council Website: semington.org.uk

Semington Magpies Match Report

Neil Taylor

The Magpies secured another stunning win in the cup with a 6-0 win over Dilton, this saw us progress to the last eight of the Knockout Cup. We are currently second in the league with a game in hand and by the time you read this we will have visited the league leaders, Freshford Utd on 25th November. We are also still in all three cup competitions.

We face a tough home game on **2nd December** when we entertain Tisbury Utd. This is a 1:30pm kick-off at Littlemarsh and as always your support will be much appreciated. On the **9th and 16th December** we face two league away games. Then we have a two week break for Christmas.

Thank you for all your support and we wish you a very Merry Christmas from everyone at Semington Magpies FC.

Michelle Donelan – MP for Chippenham Ward

As we approach the festive season and the New Year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on some of the areas I have been working on for our community during what has been a very busy year. I was blessed with the arrival of my beautiful baby boy back in May, and it is fair to say that he has been keeping myself and my husband on our toes since then!

It was also a real privilege to be asked by the Prime Minister back in February to serve as the first ever Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology. Since then I have been determined to drive our mission to make the UK a science and technology superpower going forward; from keeping young people safe with our world-leading Online Safety Bill, to delivering on our superfast broadband rollout right across the country. I am incredibly proud of everything the Department has achieved in the last ten months.

Closer to home, we have made a huge amount of local progress for our community. This year we delivered on our manifesto commitment by recruiting 164 extra police officers in Wiltshire, on top of normal recruitment. We now have a total of 1164 officers in the force in the county, higher than the target set by the government. Meanwhile, myself and the other Wiltshire MP's have secured a total of £4 million from the government's Safer Streets Fund since 2020, which the PCC is using to crack down on drugs and county lines and tackling anti-social behaviour to name just two. I also ran various crime forums this year covering the whole constituency, to hear your views, thoughts and experiences directly. Folks quite rightly want to see their local bobbies on the beat not just in our towns but in villages like Semington, and this is something which myself and the Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Wilkinson are very much agreed on.

Elsewhere this year, we secured over £3.6 million of extra funding for Wiltshire Council to tackle potholes. We have been funding our local bus routes with the £2 bus fare cap and have extended this until the end of 2024, and on top of this, we pushed for an extra £2.1 million for Wiltshire bus services. For schools in our constituency I successfully pushed for a £2.4 million cash boost and we are investing more money than ever before in our NHS. We are also supporting our local farmers and food producers with £2.6 million from the government's Rural Prosperity Fund. I also know that it has been a tough year for many and so we have been determined to support the most vulnerable people in our society. Families on Universal Credit, those on disability benefits and pensioners have received multiple government Cost of Living Payments, with those benefits increasing in line with inflation. I have also been a huge advocate for the Triple Lock, and this year as a result of the government's commitment to this more than 20,000 local pensioners received the largest ever cash increase to their pension of 10.1%.

Each and every year I also have the pleasure of meeting so many folks when out and about, whether that's at one of my residents' surgeries, at one of our local fetes and events or during one of my visits to local schools and businesses. We are truly lucky to have such a strong sense of community spirit, which I see right across my work as your local Member of Parliament. If there is anything I can do to help, or if you would like to speak to me in the New Year, please do not hesitate to let me know - **michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk** or on 01249 704465.

Finally, I wanted 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.

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Semington Board Games Group

Stuart Taylor and Kate Stacey

We have a friendly bunch of players coming regularly to our board game nights in the village hall. Why not join us and try something different on a Monday night. The games are easy to pick up and every one helps each other along.

Dates for December and January:

Monday 4th December

Monday 8th January

Monday 22nd January

We start at 7:30pm till 10:15pm in the village hall for just £3.00 per person. Hope to see you there!

Coffee Mornings

Christine White

Christine has been writing poetry for many years and she has kindly shared a poem which evokes the spirit and friendliness of the Village Hall coffee mornings. The coffee mornings are held every Thursday from 10.00am to 12.00pm – why not pop along?

Coffee Mornings

*All the oldies full of chat
Sitting around and chewing the fat
Old times, new times, family, friends,
Crafts and health and all the trends.
Holidays both old and new
Aches and pains, quite a few.
Thursday mornings in the Hall.
Loud with natter, enjoyed by all.*



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Salisbury Cathedral | Thursday 8 February 2024

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Semington Winter Fete and Bonfire Night

Richard Bruges, on behalf of the SWF&BN organising committee.

The gathering on Saturday 4th November at Outmarsh Farmhouse was a huge success. We were lucky with the weather and over 300 people attended. It was safe, friendly and jolly – very Semington.

Fete games were played, faces were painted, the bonfire blazed, the fireworks were spectacular, food, drinks and music all flowed. There were representatives of all ages and groups in the village and everyone was smiling and chatting. The fireworks were a highlight for about 10 minutes at 6.00pm, and the event thrived from 4.00pm until (sometime after) the official closing time of 10.00pm.

We would like to offer big thanks to the Parish Council for funding the insurance, carbon credits, band, loos and face-painting. Without this we would not have been able to offer free admission and attendance would have been less inclusive.

Huge thanks also to all those who helped make it happen, including: Jo Morrish and Rob Vaughan for providing the lovely setting of Outmarsh Farmhouse; John Stainer for allowing us to set the bonfire and fireworks on his field behind the house; The organising committee (Richard Bruges, John Adams, Lewis Broad, Sally Tyler, Jo Morrish and Rob Vaughan, Mark Carberry, Glen Watson, Ian Williamson, Deb Hurn); Mark Carberry for managing the risk assessment, safety briefing and arranging the insurance; The WI, for amazing teas and cakes, led by Deb Hurn. John Adams for planning and releasing the fireworks display; The Explorer Scouts, for martialling, providing first aid cover and running their tuck shop and water rockets, led by Chris & George Braham; Ian Williamson for bringing his chairs, table and portaloos; The PTA for bringing and running the barbecue, led by Steve; The skittles team for running the skittles, led by Colin Wade & John Hurn; Kate Bruges for the coconut shy and organising the carbon credits; Brian & Sally for running the raffle; Emma Day for the facepainting; Cath, Gouldie and Psy of Redlight, for the musical entertainment; Lewis Broad for managing the bar; Tandoori G for providing delicious locally sourced street food; Sharon Adams and Jacqui Hailey for working the collection buckets and Glen Watson for making the collection boxes; Natasha Jones for leading the dance performance (and bringing 60 dancers and parents); Sheralyn & Pete Milburn for managing the entrance gate, assisted by Ian W & the scouts; Gillian Airey (and Gorgeous Hubby) for lighting the bonfire; Everyone who helped set it all up and take it all down and over 300 people for coming along and making it so much fun.

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Wiltshire Councillor News

Jonathon Seed

The days shorten, Christmas approaches and the year draws to a close. As we move into December the water shortages of early summer are a distant memory for those of us tramping through sodden fields to care for animals. We have all experienced exceptional rainfall during October and November with the fields in my corner of Wiltshire as wet as I can ever remember them in the past quarter of a century and I happen to be lucky enough to live on land with a sandy soil.

There have been too many flooded local roads of late and an unusual number of drainage failures. These have been jumped on by every one of our Parish Councils who do their very best to report issues, monitor progress and push for repairs by Wiltshire Council. In turn I do my bit by taking up and trying to progress these issues with Wiltshire Council. These include Common Hill failing drains at Steeple Ashton, illegal use of the Semington Bus Gate (which is about to experience regular police enforcement), Great Hinton lanes being used as a rat run, and Keevil experiencing footpath railings which are simply not child proof. All of these issues are important to the villages and villagers that I represent and all are part of my recent case work load. All will, I hope, receive prompt and positive action by Wiltshire Council and our local police.

The eleventh month (November) was a time to remember the fallen and the sacrifice that many thousands made for our country and county in wars and conflicts over the past century. They gave their today for our tomorrow and we owe it to them to continue to create a country and county of which the fallen would be proud. I served in the army for almost a quarter of a century and have particularly poignant memories to reflect on having served on operations in Northern Ireland in the early eighties during the height of the Troubles.

I generally try and move around the villages that I represent on Remembrance Sunday and to remember with the community which I represent. However this year it was slightly different and my duty to lay the wreath on behalf of the fallen of the Melksham Community Area for Wiltshire Council as Chairman of the Area Board. I did this with pride amongst annually growing public support and so alongside over a thousand residents crammed around the Melksham War Memorial.

From War to Peace. In spite of the desperate plight of people afflicted and affected by war and conflict around the world I would like to wish all residents of this peaceful area of Wiltshire a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Jonathon.seed@wiltshire.gov.uk

Facebook: JSforWC Tel: 07770774463

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Semington WI

Deb Hurn



We had a superb time at the Semington Winter Fete and Bonfire. The stall was set up by 4.00pm, selling teas, coffee, hot chocolate and cakes. It was a lovely afternoon/evening. Thank you to all who made the cakes, manned the stall, set up and cleared away. Also to those who came to support us. Congratulations to the team that organised the very successful event and thank you to Joy and Rob for their hospitality. The fireworks were amazing.

November's meeting saw us getting an early start on Christmas. We had two ladies, Cheryl and Julie, show us how to decorate a clear bottle using only a paper napkin. The napkins had Christmas themes and when the lights were added to the inside of the bottle the overall effect was lovely. It wasn't however just a case of wrapping the napkin around the bottle as some may have thought. We had to use the art of decoupage to make the pattern stand out. Everyone went home with a very good design.

On Monday 20th November we visited the Wiltshire Air Ambulance site for a tour and finishing with tea and cake. On **Thursday 14th December** we will have a WI Christmas Skittles night, 7.30 pm start. Members and partners etc. only.

Our first meeting of 2024 is on **Thursday January 11th at 12.30pm** and we will be going out for our birthday meal. It was decided that we would go again to The Bell at Lacock. This will be in place of the evening meeting.

Cribbage

Eric Clifford

On Monday 23rd October S.A.S. (Somerset Arms Semington) became the inaugural and proud winners of the Marge Blake Cup after beating Railway Inn B in the final. Derrick and Lewis won their pairs competition, Eric won his singles match, and Mark drew his singles. So, all round a very successful first season and a very big thank you to all team members Dave, Mike, John, Lewis, Eric, Derrick, Ann and Martin who have represented the crib team throughout the season.

We will be pleased to add to our squad with new members for the season starting March 2024 and Eric welcomes enquiries for tuition and 'refreshers'. Call me on 07511 370280 for more details, we meet in the Social Club on Fridays from 8.00pm. Cribbage is a card game with no more than six cards in your hand and the ability to count to 31 is all that is required.

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

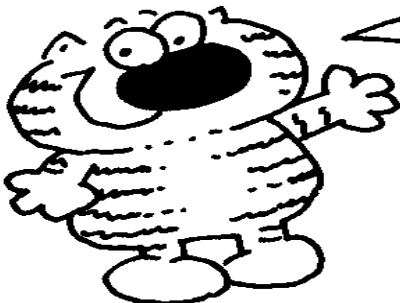
A message from Canon Tom: When I returned to St. John's on Friday evening, I was overwhelmed by the mountain of sympathy cards dropped through the letter box of the Presbytery. Can I express the gratitude of my family and myself for the number of cards, emails and texts that I have received over these last few days and weeks. Once again my huge thanks to you all for all the kind prayers, thoughts, best wishes, sympathy and understanding. I hope to return to normal parish and diocesan duties the week beginning 4th December. God Bless. Canon Tom

First Holy Communion 2024: Application forms for First Holy Communion 2024 are now available to collect from Canon Tom after Mass. If your child is in Yr 3 or above then please collect, complete a form, and return to Canon Tom. The closing date for application is **7th January 2024**. The first session of preparation will take place on the **18th January 2024 at 7.00pm** in St. John's Church. Children and parents will be given full details of the course at this meeting.

A Time of Prayer: On Wednesday mornings at St. John's Church from 9.00am we will be praying the 'Healing Rosary for Families' for all families, but especially those in our parishes and schools. You are invited to place the surnames of your families (or any families you would like us to pray for) in our intentions box to be prayed for each week and in return please take a Unity Prayer card, the box, prayer cards and intention slips will be by Our Lady's altar in each of the churches.

Quiet time for Prayer: Exposition of Blessed Sacrament St. John's every Thursday 9.30-10.30am. A time for quiet prayer and reflection.

Paws for Thought



For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

It's in the Bible; Isaiah 9 verse 6

Thought from Joy, Associate Priest in Canalside Benefice

Joy Albone

“Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat ...”

I am sure you are all familiar with this rhyme, and indeed, if you haven't noticed, Christmas is coming, and everywhere you look we are assailed with adverts for the latest 'must have' products to ensure the 'perfect' Christmas. We all have different thoughts on what makes the 'perfect' Christmas. It might be the beautifully decorated home, with the exquisitely wrapped presents, all chosen to meet the heart's desire of the recipient, and a table groaning under delightfully cooked food, to be relished by loving family and friends. Or maybe you prefer a great party with lots of music, drink and laughter. Alternately you may wish for something much quieter and simpler, humbler. Whatever your idea of a 'perfect' Christmas might be deep down we all know that perfection is impossible to achieve.

But don't worry, that first Christmas wasn't perfect either. An unmarried teenage mother forced to travel on foot some 70 odd miles to an overcrowded town where every available room was already full. A refugee giving birth in a barn with only the animals for company any chance of rest shattered by the noisy arrival of rough men direct from the hills. A young family disturbed by the strange arrival of foreigners, talking of cosmic events, and then forced to flee once more to escape the tyrannical rule of a threatened man. Jesus was not born into a perfect world, and yet he came to offer us perfect love, love that does not distinguish between race, gender, age or wealth. This Christmas season I pray you will know that perfect love, the love that came down to earth that first Christmas.

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Star and angels gave the sign.*

*Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, love divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
But wherewith for sacred sign?*

*Love shall be our token,
Love shall be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and to all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.*

Christina Rossetti

We look forward to sharing this Christmas with you, sharing in this imperfect world, the perfect love of Christ-child.

Until our new Rector is in post the normal service pattern may change. However, a service is held in the Benefice every Sunday, and one is usually recorded and available online. Full details are on our website, address below.



SERVICES COMING SOON

Friday 8th Dec 	CAROL SERVICE 6pm at St Mary's Whaddon
Sunday 10th Dec	BREAKFAST CHURCH 9.15am at St George's Semington
Sunday 17th Dec 	CAROL SERVICE 6pm at St George's Semington
Christmas Eve 	CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION 2pm at St George's Semington
Christmas Day 	ALL AGE CHRISTMAS COMMUNION 9.30am at St George's Semington
Sunday 14th January	BREAKFAST CHURCH 9.15am at St George's Semington
Sunday 21st January	HOLY COMMUNION 9.15am at St George's Semington

Contact Details for The Canalside Parishes:

Administrator - Michael Gamble, please contact Michael for initial enquiries about

baptisms, weddings, funerals and general matters on **07795 400262**

Email: canalsideoffice@gmail.com Benefice website www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk

PCC Secretary/Treasurer - Jack Woodward 01380 870784

Church Warden - David Wildsmith

Associate Priest - Rev Joy Albone 07931 638524 email canalsidecurate@gmail.com

Please contact Joy if you would like a visit from someone from Church.