

FEBRUARY 2023



SEMINGTON  
PARISH MAGAZINE

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

# February

## **Post Office**

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## **Food Bank Collections**

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Church Porch and Pub

## **Coffee Mornings**

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Village Hall

## **Bingo**

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## **Semington WI**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

Village Hall

## **Semingtons Choir**

Fridays 6.00pm

Village Hall

## **Parish Council Meeting**

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 7.30pm

Village Hall

## **Semington Board Gamers**

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 7.00pm

Village Hall

## **Semington Book Club**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 8.00pm

Somerset Arms

## **Somerset Arms**

Crib and Chess Club

Wednesdays 7.30pm

Valentine's Dinner

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February

Meat Raffle

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 7.00pm

Tapas Evening

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February

## Christians in Semington

*Bev Woodward*

Thank you to everyone who decorated the Church so beautifully for Christmas - it's lovely to worship in such beautiful surroundings.

**Breakfast Church** - join us on **12<sup>th</sup> February, 9.15am – 10.00am** for a buffet breakfast and a service for all ages.

**Christians in Semington** - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February at 8.00pm**. Please contact Jack Woodward, 870784, for the zoom link.

**Housegroup** - we meet every other Tuesday, at 7.45pm. 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.

**Semington Weather 2022.....** ...was very dry - then very wet. An interesting fact about last year's weather is that we had more rain in the final 3 months than we had in the first 9! There were many periods with little rain until the end of September, with January, April and July being particularly dry. Then the October - December deluge meant that the annual rainfall was 26.2" (666mm), about 13% below average.

You will have heard reports of 2022 average temperatures being the hottest ever recorded. Well, I have been recording weather for over 40 years in Semington, and yes, 2022 was the highest. The maximum was 36°C on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July. There was also a week in August when it reached over 30°C on 7 consecutive days. The coldest part of the year was in December where I recorded -9°C on the 16<sup>th</sup> before... the rain returned.

## Editor's Note

*Gillian Airey*

I do hope that 2023 is shaping up nicely for you all. We're all back in the saddle and raring to go, there's a new Club in the village – check out page 22 for more details. The deadline for submissions for our March edition is **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February**. My email as always **semparmag@icloud.com** I look forward to hearing from you.

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## This Month I've Had A Bit of A Clear Out

*Gilly Airey*

I don't know if I told you but once the new community campus opened in Melksham I joined the library. Not only did it bring back great memories of walking across Chaddesden park with my Mum, Sisters and Patch the dog every Monday evening to exchange our library books for new ones, it has also challenged me to try new authors.

I recently read a wonderful book called 'The Museum of Ordinary People' by Mike Gayle and the central premise was where does everything that has huge sentimental value, but no purpose, go when you can no longer house it at home yet it breaks your heart to take it to the tip? It made me reflect that whilst my sisters and I did a great job of clearing Mum and Dad's home of 57 years I still had things that I simply could not part with and how good would a museum for ordinary people with ordinary things be?

So galvanised after reading the book I revisited all the things I hadn't been able to get rid off originally. As I went through everything that had literally been plonked in the corner I realised I was on another voyage of discovery, I had things that I didn't even know I had! I discovered my Nan Roe's original birth certificate from 1912, along with my Dad's birth certificate from 1937, I have both of my grandparents' and my parents' marriage certificates. I also discovered my Mum did her grade exams in piano – I never knew, ever, like ever, that my Mum could play the piano. I mean how can it be that you get to 55 and three quarters without knowing this?

There were beautiful and emotional surprises too. My Grandad, stationed in Burma during the war, sent my Mum her first Christmas card in 1944 (army issue airmail) and here it is now with me 78 years later. If it hadn't been for the concept of 'The Museum Of Ordinary People' I would never have gone looking again at the stuff in the corner, but oh my goodness what a lovely book of memories I have been able to put together for me and my sisters.

Did everything make the cut? No sadly my moth-eaten red and white beanie hat (knitted by my dear old Mum because at the time I was a Liverpool supporter – don't ask I have no idea why either) went the distance, but the bashed-up lidless biscuit tin my Mum used to keep all of her paperwork in, that's still here – well where else could this ordinary person put the Christening robe that she and her sisters wore? Ordinary things with extraordinary memories.



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## Down The Local

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*John, the Landlord, John*

Hello Semington! We are back from the Christmas break – I hope Santa was good to you all.

So February already and we have lots to share. First and foremost Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January saw the launch of our Sunday carvery which is already proving popular so book now if you fancy treating yourself in February.

We also have a little rugby to look forward to with all the Six Nations clashes all being shown on the big screen.

Make sure you head into the pub or look online for our Valentines menu being served on **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February**. Not only is it Crib and Chess night every Wednesday its also Curry night. Enjoy Rich's delicious curry selection for just £8.50 or two for £15.00. During February half term we're offering kids eat free with paying adults Tuesday through to Saturday, check out the T & Cs with us.

At time of going to press we had just done our inaugural meat draw with some very happy customers leaving with some choice cuts of meat. Thanks to Beavans of Melksham for providing the meat and also to Ian and Liz from Semington Dock for their generous pork donation. Our next draw is **February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7.00pm**. Tickets available now - the more tickets we sell, the more prizes we will have.

Finally we are closing off February with a Tapas night on **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> February**.

Bear in mind through the winter nights we are closing on Mondays except for functions.

Come on down - The team are always pleased to see you. As always stay safe and much love from your village pub.

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## **Parish Council Matters**

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Peter Smith, Chair of the Parish Council

**Here's wishing** .....all in the village a very happy new year. As the summary below shows, there's lots happening in the Parish which currently includes: developers wanting to build where they shouldn't, a play area in decline, and a byway/cycleway which needs some attention to make it safer for all. We need as a community to be very active to get the outcomes we want. Your help, whether writing a letter to Wiltshire Council or volunteering to join a community group, really does make a difference. Some of what follows really could do with your help and input.

**Land North of St. George's Road** – the Parish Council, at its January meeting, resolved to object to this development. It's reasons for so doing are reproduced in the Parish Council minutes elsewhere in this magazine. Please read these reasons and, if you haven't written to Wiltshire Council with your views yet, please do so as soon as possible. Every comment received by Wiltshire Council counts and will be taken into account even beyond the published deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January....so keep sending up until the end of February.

**The Byway** – the Parish Council hasn't yet had sight of the safety audit (of the newly surfaced byway) which was commissioned by Wiltshire Council. We are told that it is due "shortly". We hope to have news for the March magazine.

**Wessex Close Play Area** – we really, really need some help, perhaps from parents or grandparents with children who use the play area, to join with the two parishioners already doing their best to maintain and improve the play area facilities. There is a separate item in this magazine from Cllr. Siobhan Chown (see page 16) about where we are and what needs to happen. It explains that we can save the play area from terminal decline, and that there is money available to improve it...BUT we do need volunteers for a "Friends of Wessex Close Play Area" group to make great possibilities become reality. Please read Siobhan's message and, hopefully, feel enthused to join the team.

**New Councillor** – the Parish Council has co-opted Cllr. Catherine McGarvey onto the team, which is great. There are now 8 councillors but we remain one vacancy shy of the 9 we need. We are a very friendly and welcoming bunch and, though the work is important in benefitting this village, we as a group try to make it fun and enjoyable. If you'd like to be considered for co-option to the last vacancy, please either phone me for a chat (on 01380 870888) or email our clerk on:  
**clerksemingtonparishcouncil@gmail.com**

**Neighbourhood Plan** – the next village consultation, with the latest on the emerging plan, will be at the Village Hall on **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April between 11.00am and 2.00pm.**

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### Happy Revolutionary New Year

In October 1793, the French Revolution replaced the old Gregorian calendar with a new secular, republican one. The republican new year started with the autumnal equinox, with months getting new names based on the seasons. Autumn month names were derived from wine, mist and frost; winter from snow, rain and wind; spring from germination, flowers and meadows; and summer from harvest, summer heat and fruit. And each day was named after a seed, tree, flower, fruit, animal, or tool. The names were (starting from January):

Pluviôse [month of rain] – Ventôse [month of wind] – Germinal [month of sprouting buds]

Floréal [month of flowering] – Prairial [month of meadows] – Messidor [month of harvest]

Thermidor [month of warmth] – Fructidor [month of fruits] – Vendémiaire [month of vintage]

Brumaire [month of fog] – Frimaire [month of wintry weather] – Nivôse [month of snow]

A contemporary English wit, unimpressed with these names, suggested that they should really have been:

Slippy, Drippy, Nippy – Showery, Flowery, Bowery – Hoppy, Croppy, Poppy and – Wheezy, Sneezzy, Freezy.

But the French idea persists in the Czech Republic where the names of the months roughly translate as:

Frozen month – Ice melting month – Animal pregnant month

Oak acorn month – Flowering month – Red month

Even redder month – Sickle month – Blazing colours month

Deer rutting month – Leaf fall month – Pig fattening month.

You have to wonder about the effect of all of this. For example, is biodiversity more alive and well in the Czech Republic than it is here? Given how poor it is here, that's a pretty low hurdle.

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## News From Your Wiltshire Councillor

*Jonathon Seed*

Early 2023 has seen plenty of issues and community concerns arise in Melksham Without West and Rural and all are relevant to the village.

There are ongoing planning concerns and particularly with Wiltshire Council being currently unable to defend speculative local planning applications because the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply to the Planning Inspectorate. There is also continuing local concern at the reallocation, without any meaningful consultation, of our area into the Trowbridge Housing Market Area with the accompanying threat of Trowbridge housing developments expanding across Hagg Hill. I have raised this issue with the Leader of Wiltshire Council and continue to raise it with the relevant Cabinet Member.

I recently held a joint surgery in Semington with Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP and most of the issues raised were about planning and particularly unwanted housing development in Semington. Michelle was really helpful and it was useful to have residents raising these concerns direct to her. Michelle is writing to her Cabinet colleague, Michael Gove, asking for action to deal with this issue and we are hopeful of effective legislation this year. If you have concerns about this or any other national policy issue it really helps to write to your MP and either ask for support or thank them for continued and committed support.

Winter months are a time of inclement weather together with resulting effects of flooding and icy roads often leading to carriageway damage. I try to be active in support of villages which suffer from these issues as soon as I know about them. Last month I was able to help with flood water washing away a significant part of the carriageway on Common Hill, Steeple Ashton. As the local Wiltshire Councillor I visited and assessed the problem and in the first 24 hours liaised with the Senior Drainage Engineer, the Area Highways Manager, the Parish Council Chair, out of hours Highways contacts and the poor motorist involved in an accident on the icy road. I also posted updates on village social media. All the Wiltshire Council officers were really helpful and quickly swung into action. Whilst the final repair may take time this important road was made as safe as it could be and remains safe to use.

Tackling the issues above are a part of my role as your Wiltshire Councillor and I am always happy to be contacted to help resolve these or any Council issues. 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 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023*

**Present.** Councillors P Smith (Chairman), R Bruges, S Chown, J Hailey, M. Kasasian, W Scott, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed attended and gave his report prior to the meeting. There were three members of the public present initially.

**Co-option of a New Member.** The Council **resolved** to co-opt Catherine McGarvey.

**Community and Communication.** The Chairman invited Paul Chown to present a report on the current management and status of the Parish Council website and to identify existing problems with it. Mr Chown gave a detailed and comprehensive report of the current website and, its existing problems and he identified a number of key issues that needed to be addressed to ensure that it operated in the manner required by the Parish Council. The Parish Council endorsed his report and accepted his offer to develop and to propose acceptable solutions to enable the website, and associated email, to operate satisfactorily. Cllr. Chown stated that the initiative by Steeple Ashton Parish Council to improve the BT Open Reach internet connection speeds was in progress but a formal response was awaited from BT Open Reach.

**Recreation and Wellbeing.** Cllr. Wade explained that the work is continuing to identify a possible 'allotment management structure'. He added that there were elements of the s106 Agreement between Wiltshire Council and Newland Homes that needed careful examination, including the legal status of the transferred land and proposed maintenance of the parking spaces, and that he would support legal advice being sought. The Parish Council **resolved** to seek legal advice and the Clerk was asked to make the necessary approaches to Forrester, Sylvester & Mackett (Solicitors).

**Environment and Streetscene.** The Parish Council wished its thanks to be recorded that the gates on Bridleway SEM18/10 are being kept open by the landowner. Cllr Wade reported that two designs of Noticeboards have been identified as possible candidates for replacing the existing obsolescent Village Hall noticeboards one type costing £356; the other £425 – the latter also including the header and lettering. On a related matter, the Council **resolved** not to accept the offer of sponsorship for the Noticeboards from a local firm.

**Planning and Development** The Council examined the following new planning application: PL/2022/09397 Outline permission Land south of Pound Lane, Semington, BA14 6JP. Residential development of up to 30 dwellings (of which 30% will be affordable) with associated car parking, access, internal roads, public open space, landscaping, drainage and other associated infrastructure. The Parish Council **resolved** to send the following comments (shown in italics) to Wiltshire Council in respect of Planning application PL/2022/09397:

***The Parish Council (PC) opposes this application for the following the following reasons:***

***1. Core Policy 1 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the Settlement Strategy for the County, and in doing so identifies four tiers of settlement– Principal Settlement, Market Town, Local Service Centre, and Large and Small Village. Within the Settlement Strategy Semington is defined as a Large Village. As such it has a defined boundary beyond which is countryside. Thus, the application site lies beyond the limits of development of Semington in the countryside.***

2. *Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the Delivery Strategy. It identifies the scale of growth appropriate within each settlement tier. The policy states that within the limits of development of those settlements with defined limits there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; but, outside the defined limits – that is, in the countryside – other than in circumstances permitted by other policies of the Plan, development will not be allowed. The policy further states that the limits of development may only be altered through identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and Neighbourhood Plans. The application site is not identified for development in a Development Plan Document. Neither has it been put forward for development through Semington’s emerging Neighbourhood Plan as the landowner / developer ignored the ‘call for sites’ invitation to do so.*
3. *Core Policy 12 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy sets out the Spatial Strategy for the Melksham Community Area in which Semington lies. It states that development in the Melksham Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in Core Policy 1.*
4. *Semington does not need any more market houses or affordable ones at this time, as evidenced by the 2022 Housing Needs Survey. Currently, planning permission already exists for 51 new properties (19 affordable / 32 market) in the village. Any additional development proposed should be taking place in market towns where there are appropriate facilities, and sustainable development is possible.*
5. *The Parish Council (PC) has not been consulted by the developer prior to the application thereby denying the community any opportunity for comment. This was the case with the previous applications to build 20 and 26 houses in the southern part of the field. The developer has declined to respond to overtures from the PC about development in this field and has simply no idea about any preferences the local community might have about any aspect of the development.*
6. *We also note the comments from Urban Design on this application, namely that the applicant did not positively engage early on with Wiltshire Council “in regard to the design quality of their Outline scheme, as expected by NPPF 132”. The Urban Design comment concludes: “I cannot support this application and there is grounds within NPPF 134 to refuse it”. We agree.*
7. *No attempt has been made to apply for full planning permission for either of the two outline permissions (20 houses / 26 houses) that already exist for this field.*
8. *Bats and owls feed along the hedgerows that border this quiet piece of land but they will not be doing this if the building takes place. Given these losses, it is hard to see how the necessary 10% biodiversity gain that will be needed from November 2023 under the Environment Act 2021 will be possible.*
9. *The development of this land will further compromise the setting of the culturally significant St George’s Court and Kennet and Avon canal.*
10. *Pound Lane cannot safely take any more traffic because of existing traffic use, congestion and routine parking.*
11. *The density of housing proposed is greater than in the permission granted in the southern part of the field and also in the adjacent housing on Pound Lane. This flies in the face of the need to create a soft settlement edge which naturally feathers into surrounding rural landscape to the west (a point echoed in the Urban Design comment), and towards the nationally important Kennet and Avon canal. What is proposed will be very visible from a distance.*

**Finance. Total Balance as at 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023 £72,141.98**

**Date of the next meeting. Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2023 7.30pm**

## Community Development Funding

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, then please write to us giving 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.

You can do this by visiting the Semington Website and selecting the "I have a Community Development Funding request" option on the contact page:

**[www.semington.org.uk/contact/](http://www.semington.org.uk/contact/)** There is no deadline for making a bid which should normally be for less than £1000.

## Wessex Close Play Area Update

As many of you will be aware, the children's play area in Wessex Close has been in need of some TLC for a few years now. It is currently managed by Wiltshire Council but sadly they will not invest or install any new equipment so when things break they are simply removed. It will therefore not be very long before all the equipment has been removed and the play area is devoid of anything for the children play on and enjoy.

The Parish Council values this asset for our young people and we have recently been investigating the possibility of taking over responsibility of the play area from Wiltshire Council. In principle this is possible, BUT we cannot do it alone! We will need a team of willing volunteers from the village who can help us to inspect, maintain the equipment and it's surrounds, and develop the area to ensure it remains a village asset for many years to come. All activities will be overseen by a member of the Parish Council, training given (where necessary) and any expenses will be reimbursed.

The bottom line is that sadly, unless we have some volunteers come forward to help us, then the play area will very soon disappear. I have faith though that the wonderful residents of Semington will come forward to help us and whilst we have had great support from a couple of residents in the past, it is a job for a team not just a couple of people. If you are interested, then please email, call or message any of the Parish Councillors.



## Semington Camera Club

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*Sue McDine*

Seven members met early in January for an evening. Three had made presentations set to music, the subjects were Girona, riding a penny-farthing bike and Somerset visits during 2022. A new member brought along a selection of landscape and wildlife photos taken last year for us to comment and advise. Another member put together a slide show of their favourite photos for each month of 2022. We also were shown a set of wildlife photos all taken in the member's garden during last year. I made a slide show of our visit to Cornwall in December which featured St. Michael's Mount, Wheal Coates and sunsets over The Helford River.

The main aim of the club is to get out with our cameras with other people who enjoy photography. We got 2023 off to flying a start with a trip out to the Dundas Aqueduct in January.

## Semington Book Club

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*Angela Grodzicka- 870756*

The Bookclub has met twice since the last publication. We met on 29<sup>th</sup> November to discuss *Waiting for Sunrise* by William Boyd. The group felt the book was disjointed and tedious and didn't warm to the main character or the women. It was also felt that the ending was weird and that his earlier work was more enjoyable.

We met again on 17<sup>th</sup> January for our annual dinner in the pub, a most enjoyable occasion. While dining we discussed *The Push* by Ashley Audrain which was described as a psychological thriller. The group found the book disturbing with its themes of nature over nurture and whether evil is inborn. The ending is very unsatisfactory and altogether another book we would not recommend.

The next meeting has been fixed for **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 8.00pm** in the pub to discuss *The Woman in the White Kimono* by Ana Johns with a second choice of *Still Life* by Sarah Winman for those who would like to read two. All welcome.

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## Wiltshire Air Ambulance 2022 – Review

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The year 2022 proved to be another busy one for Wiltshire Air Ambulance’s aircrew, who undertook 1,061 missions across Wiltshire, Bath and surrounding areas. The charity’s helicopter was used for 670 (63%) of the missions, with the remaining 391 incidents attended by critical care cars. A total of 263 patients were transferred to local hospitals (up from 237 in 2021), the majority of which to Royal United Hospital, Bath (84), Southmead Hospital, Bristol (63) and Great Western Hospital, Swindon (44).

Wiltshire Air Ambulance’s director of income generation and communications Barbara Gray said: “We have a very dedicated aircrew – consisting of pilots, critical care paramedics and doctors – who respond to emergencies, on average, three times a day, 365 days a year. “We know it is a really difficult time for the country right now, with fuel and energy bills rising, along with inflation, contributing to this current cost of living crisis. However, we remain ever grateful to our amazing donors and local businesses who continue to support us and help raise the £4 million it costs each year to keep our air ambulance flying and saving lives.”

The largest number of call outs were to cardiac emergencies – 351, which equates to a third of all missions and a rise from 306 in 2021. There were 174 road traffic collisions attended, plus 74 medical collapses, 51 sporting incidents and 44 assaults. A total of 139 incidents involved children, while 31% of all missions (329) took place at night. The largest number of incidents Wiltshire Air Ambulance responded to were in the Swindon area – 173. The charity attended 83 missions in Bath and 69 in the city of Salisbury.

The aircrew were also tasked to incidents outside of its operational patch, including in counties such as Berkshire, Bristol, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Somerset. In total, 22% of incidents were outside of Wiltshire and Bath (down from 23.5% in 2021).

Wiltshire Air Ambulance is a charity and receives no regular direct funding from the Government or National Lottery grants. Each year the charity needs to raise £4 million to continue flying and saving lives. For more information about Wiltshire Air Ambulance, go to **[www.wiltshireairambulance.co.uk](http://www.wiltshireairambulance.co.uk)**

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Based in Semington

## Wednesday Warm Space

*Eric Clifford*

Wesley Road Methodist Church is still offering its Wednesday Warm Space, but during its refurbishment it will be temporarily relocating to Bethesda Church on Gloucester Road in Trowbridge.

Come along for a couple of hours for a free hot meal, a chance to charge your mobile phone and activities for the children. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Warm Wednesdays run every week from 4.00pm to 6.00pm.

## Semingtones Choir

*Lorraine Mahoney*

Looking for a fun, friendly choir to join ladies? The Semingtones Choir was set up in April 2013 so we will be celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year! It's all very exciting.

A Community Choir, we meet on Fridays at Semington Village Hall 6.00pm-7.30pm and cover a variety of genres including musical theatre, pop and folk. Sometimes some classical if we fancy it!

If you're up for joining us, please get in touch - we are welcoming new singers this term. No auditions necessary, but we do ask that you can sing in tune please. Sopranos (higher voices) are particularly welcome to join us. If you're not sure what voice type you are, that's fine too - we can figure that out for you. No need to read music.

Finish in time for you to have the rest of the evening to do other things and it's a great way to start your weekend. Have a free trial session to see if it's for you (or not). We are not too serious, and have a good laugh each week while learning and practising songs for any performances that we get booked for. You are not obligated to sing in the performances, but it is always a nice thing to be part of.

Get in touch via <https://www.facebook.com/SemingtonLadiesChoir> if you fancy joining us and please spread the word. We would love to boost numbers a little this year. Any questions, please just ask.

Looking forward to seeing you soon!

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## Semington Board Gamers

*Kate Stacey & Stuart Taylor*

Pre lockdown 'alternative' board game evenings with friends used to be a favourite past-time. Now, with restrictions having disappeared, and life moving on in a more 'normal' direction we were keen to start up a group in our village for local people to come together and try out some new favourites. We undertook a trial session in January, which went down very well, with a good attendance so we are now looking to make this a more regular event, hopefully once a month at the village hall.

Games enjoyed at our first session included Carcassonne, Azul, Ticket to Ride and Patchwork. All off the mainstream, but easy to grasp and pick up the rules. We welcome those who have played board games for years, or those who are new to the 'alternative' board game scene. We will always have time to chat, and discuss the rules of play beforehand. We are an opening and welcoming group, and look forward to you joining us for our next sessions on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February** and **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March**, from 7.00pm till 10.00pm and the bar is open so you can grab a drink. There is a small fee of £3.00 per session towards new games/hall hire

If you're on Facebook please follow our group for the latest updates 'The Semington Board Gamers', or if you would like any more information please email [stuart@semingtonvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:stuart@semingtonvillagehall.co.uk)

It was lovely to see so many of you from the village at my recent residents' advice surgery at Semington Village Hall with Cllr Seed earlier this month. It was an absolutely packed morning and we discussed a whole range of topics, from planning, to traffic, to securing investment for the area and our services. I picked up a range of casework to help local residents and I will be taking the issues raised up with the Ministers responsible. I know that planning in particular is something which the village is concerned about, especially speculative development and the speed at which Semington has grown. I have certainly raised these concerns with Housing Secretaries over the years, including a successful campaign to lower the number of new builds allocated to Wiltshire.

The Government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill which I have supported through Parliament will ensure that where homes are being built, they are in the right places, and with the right infrastructure to support the areas nearby. Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove has also changed the rules on the five-year land supply, meaning that Councils with up-to-date local plans will no longer need to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing sites. This will make a real difference for reducing the number of speculative planning applications submitted by developers, which are not included in local plans yet are approved.

The Bill will also give local people a much greater voice throughout the process, something which I am very supportive of. I know that Cllr Seed is on the case too and I will be working with him and Nick Bottrell at Wiltshire Council to ensure that local people have access to affordable housing, and that our communities do not get overwhelmed with new housing. I understand you may still have some concerns or thoughts so please do contact me and with your comments and ideas, and I will meet with Michael Gove to share them with him. If you weren't able to make the surgery but would like to speak to me or if I can help in any other way, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Elsewhere, on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February** I am running a Cost of Living and Eligibility Check Drop In Session at my office in Chippenham from 10.00am. From Pension Credit to Winter Fuel Allowance, there are a number of schemes which can help provide support during what I know are difficult times, but I realise it can be difficult to understand what you may be eligible for and how to apply. The drop in session is a useful opportunity to speak to myself and an advisor from the Department for Work and Pensions to find out what support may be in place, ask any questions about how to apply and check that you are receiving all of the benefits you are entitled to. Please do feel free to share with anybody in the constituency who you think might benefit from coming along. As ever, if there is anything I can do to help, you can contact my office via email: [michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk), or call on **01249 704465**.

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## Semington WI

*Deb Hurn*



December 2022 saw us finishing the year with our annual Christmas Skittles evening. As usual it was good fun. The Angels and the Reindeers made it into the playoff, with the Reindeers becoming the overall winners. There was a Christmas quiz set just for fun and I don't think that anyone achieved 100% (apologies if someone did). Thanks go to Marilyn and Gerald for providing the Ploughman's, to John and Steve for scores on the board and sticking up also to Steve for providing the quiz. Last but not least thank you to all who attended for making it a lovely evening.

January is the month of our birthday party. This year we had a lunch at the Bell at Lacock. It was quite a trip to get there. The pub phoned to advise that a lot of the routes were flooded. This didn't put us off. It took us slightly longer to get there but everyone made it there and back without getting waterlogged. The food and portion sizes were excellent and the staff were really helpful. We all thoroughly enjoyed it.

Our next meeting is **Thursday February 9<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 7.30pm** in Semington village hall when we have a talk on herbal teas and medicine.

Happy Healthy Peaceful New Year To All.

## Action For Children

*Eric Clifford*

The marvellous sum of £550 has been forwarded to Action for Children after the recent opening of home collection boxes.

Thank you to all who support this charity prayerfully and financially helping to alleviate suffering of some of the UK's most vulnerable children and young people. Should you wish to help in this way, myself or Helen would be happy to pass on a box accordingly. Thank you.

## 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

**Ukrainian Child Seeking a home:** As we know many families came over from Ukraine after being invaded by Russia in February 2022. Many came to Trowbridge and were welcomed by host families for a 6 month period. This time has run out and many refugees face an uncertain future. One family known to the parish have made the decision to return home, but one of the children in this family has requested to remain in Trowbridge to continue their education at St. Augustine's. This child is therefore seeking a family home to help them with this. If you or anyone can help with this, please let Canon Tom know as soon as possible. All Diocesan and St. Augustine's College safeguarding policies will be put in place to enable this to proceed.

**Children's Liturgy:** Children's Liturgy takes place once a month at the Sunday 10.30am Mass. All children are welcome to take part in this and will be made very welcome. The next Children's Liturgy will take place on **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

**St. Bernadette's Drop in:** St Bernadette's Drop in will be on **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February.** Everyone is welcome to join us for tea, coffee, cake and chat, in the warm Annex.

**Answering God's Call:** A vocations discernment weekend for women and men aged 18-35 at Our Lady and St. Bernard's Brownhill GL6 8AL. An opportunity to gather and share with others the call that we all receive to be a disciple of the Lord. Particularly those who feel a particular call to priesthood or religious life. **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March.** Full board £90. Please email [rina@youngcatholicadultnetwork.uk](mailto:rina@youngcatholicadultnetwork.uk) for more information

## Paws for Thought



Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless.

It's in the Bible; Proverbs 31 verse 8

## Thought From The Rectory

*Anne Rees – Lay Pastoral Assistant Canalside Benefice*

February - the shortest month of the year. As we begin the second month of 2023, we are probably getting used to being in a new year. It's not a leap year, so only 28 days this year, but it is a month where quite a lot happens. For the romantics, it's Valentine's Day on 14th. For the rugby fans, the six nations matches begin on 4th February. The Wales v England game on 25th is always a tense moment in The Rectory - Rev John is proud of his Welsh heritage! Tuesday 21st February is Shrove Tuesday, pancake day, the day before Ash Wednesday which is the first day of Lent.

The 40-day period is called Lent after an old English word meaning 'lengthen'. This is because it occurs at a time of year when the dark days of winter start to get longer. Lent is a time of reflection for Christians, a time to prepare to celebrate Jesus's death and resurrection at Easter.

As the days lengthen and Spring flowers start to appear through the earth, perhaps this is a good time for all of us to reflect on our lives and think about any changes we might want to make. Seeing the white snowdrops flowering in January and February always brings a smile to my face. After lying dormant in the ground for many months, their appearance brings the hope of brighter days ahead.

My personal prayer this Lent is that I might reflect on the way I live my life, seek ways to make it more pleasing to God and look forward to future hope, so that I am ready to celebrate Jesus' Resurrection when Easter comes in April.

Wishing you all a hopeful Spring. Anne Rees

## From the Church Register

### **Barbara May Evans**

A service to celebrate the life of Barbara Evans was held at St George's Church on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023. We pray that Barbara's son Nigel, her daughter Chris, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, family and friends will know the love and peace of God at this sad time.



# CHURCH SERVICES in SEMINGTON and WHADDON

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**

Date	Time	Service
Sunday 5th February	3pm	<b>HOLY COMMUNION from the BOOK of COMMON PRAYER</b> at St Mary the Virgin, Whaddon
Sunday 12th February	9.15am	<b>BREAKFAST CHURCH</b> at St George's, Semington
Sunday 19th February	9.15am	<b>HOLY COMMUNION</b> at St George's, Semington

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:canalsidecurate@gmail.com)

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

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