

FEBRUARY 2024



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January 2024

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PARISH MAGAZINE



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Semington Crib Club

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Village Hall

Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 7th February 7.30pm

Village Hall

Neighbourhood Plan Events

Deadline for comments 15th March

Consultation Event Saturday 24th February 10.00am to 12.00pm

Village Hall

Zumba in Semington

Wednesdays 6.15pm to 7.15pm

St George's School

Christians in Semington

Bev Woodward – 870784

Our next Breakfast Church is on **February 11th 9.15am** with a breakfast of baked goodies, fruit and drink followed by a short service with songs, story and prayers. Everyone welcome!

Christians in Semington - are meeting via zoom, to pray for our community, on **Wednesday 7th February 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.

The advert for a new Rector is now on the Salisbury Diocese website and in the Church Times. Shortlisting will be this month, with interviews in March. Please pray that the right person will apply.

Editor's Note

Gillian Airey

Well if this is February it means we made it out the other side! Woo-hoo! I sincerely hope your trench foot didn't turn into frostbite.

Our cover picture this month comes courtesy of Steve Turpin and shows the fabulous work done in January to uncover the pill box on the High Street. Thank you to the volunteers who undertook the back-breaking work. If you want to get involved pop over to the PC website **semington.org.uk** and pop a note over to the Parish Council.

Talking about getting involved if you read only one thing in the mag this month, please make sure it's page 9 – this is about your village and helping to shape its future – you know it makes sense.

We have a couple of advertising slots available and as the revenue is vitally important to keeping the magazine going if you know anyone who would like to make use of the space give them a nudge please!

Deadline for March's edition is **Friday 16th February**.

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This Month I'm Present and Correct

Gilly Airey

I know talking about Christmas is so last year, because it literally is, but I just had to share with you two rather marvellous presents I was lucky enough to get this Christmas.

First to come up trumps was Gorgeous Hubby who really does have a real knack for not only buying me highly inappropriate but achingly funny Christmas and birthday cards – but also finding books that I did not realise I needed in my life. Now I am a complete nerd when it comes to 'did you know facts'. My dear old Mum once described me as having a dustbin brain, that is I just loved to fill my brain with rubbish stuff and she was right, something I am proud of to this day! Anyhow, as always I digress, I am the proud owner of every QI fact book thanks to Gorgeous Hubby, as well as books by Tim Harford (look him up – his ability to simplify the complicated is unparalleled).

This year though he surpassed himself and I am now the very smug owner of the Dictionary of Collective Nouns. You want to know what a group of kittens are called – well let me tell you it's a kindle, owls you ask, that'll be a parliament honestly one man's useless facts are this girl's life blood!

Second to come up trumps was Rachel, daughter-in-law number one, not in superiority you understand simply that she was the first to become a daughter-in-law! Many years ago the rather marvellous Rachel gifted me a wonderful book in which to keep my favourite family recipes, this year though she really hit a home run. Rachel bought me a scrapbook..... yep, not any old scrap book but a travel/holiday themed scrapbook.

Getting a scrapbook took me right back to childhood years when scrapbooks were a right of passage. I had scrapbooks dedicated to my love for weird and wonderful 'Did you know' facts as well as all things Osmonds and The Bay City Rollers - don't judge me they were the Take That and Boyzone of their day. The same scrapbooks remained at the bottom of my wardrobe for decades gathering dust until my Mum finally did the noble thing and consigned them to scrapbook heaven.

Now though I have the joy and excitement once more of collating my memories, because that's what a scrapbook does, it's a physical reminder of stuff you got up to and somehow the feel of a book will always beat the scroll of a finger on a phone.

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Wiltshire

Gutter Cleaning Services

Parish Council - Chair's Report

Peter Smith, Chair of the Parish Council

Semington Neighbourhood Plan. For the past 30 months, and on behalf of the Parish Council, a steering group of volunteers from the village has been working on a Neighbourhood Plan for Semington, Little Marsh and Littleton. This has involved very many hours of research, consultation, evidence gathering, reading, discussion, and report/publicity writing, and I'd like to say a HUGE "thank you" all the volunteers for the time given and effort expended. You've been brilliant. The plan really matters because, once approved, it will give us an important say in how the parish develops over the next 15 years.

We've now produced a draft plan with policies for housing, business, landscape, community facilities, wildlife and other issues. We have included, from previous consultations, many of your suggestions. But before we send it to Wiltshire Council, we have to hold a pre submission consultation across a period of 6 weeks. It's called "Regulation 14" consultation and will run from **February 1st to 15th March.**

There are lots of ways for you to read the draft report, look at the policies and then let us know what you think. More information on this is set out in a letter in this magazine to everyone who lives or has a business in the village. **Please** – read the report, which is an interesting read with loads of facts, information and proposals and then fill in the survey to let us know what you think. Thank you.

Wessex Close Play Area. The Parish Council will take over responsibility for the play area from **1st April 2024.** Whilst this will allow it to keep the play area open and invest in improving the equipment, we do need and want lots of help and support to make this happen. The council has set aside money for this, and now is a great time to get involved and influence the improvements.

So, as the springtime transfer date is just a couple of months away, we want to hear from anyone (but especially those with children and grandchildren who might want to use the facilities) willing to join the Friends of Wessex Close Play Area. If you've already volunteered for this, you will be contacted shortly. Otherwise, simply leave a message on our website semington.org.uk, or phone me on 870888.

Allotments. These will transfer from Newland Homes to the parish council from **1st February 2024,** just about the right time for new plot-holders to begin preparing for some spring planting. Colin Wade is in the process of making contact with those who've expressed an interest in having a plot, and in offering them a tenancy agreement. As more have expressed an interest than there are available plots, some will be disappointed but can opt to go onto the waiting list.

Land north of St. George's Road. The developers for this land, Green Square Accord, updated the parish council on their tweaked proposals for 26 homes on this site prior to submission to Wiltshire Council. These included some welcome changes: an orchard, a wetland area, and additional hedges, trees and shrubs, all of which will increase biodiversity. But a significant area of land within the site remains outside this latest planning submission, and the council made it clear that it continues to oppose this, not least because it is likely to be put forward as a planning application for a further 6 to 8 homes at some future date. If you'd like to read the parish council's full response, visit our website and, under the "Planning" tab, read the 22/01/24 update.

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Semington Parish Council

Notice of the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft Semington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan



To all Semington parishioners and businesses

Semington Parish Council has prepared a Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Semington Neighbourhood Area. The Plan proposes a number of planning policies which, once adopted, must be used in the determination of planning applications within Semington parish.

In accordance with The Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012, Semington Parish Council is required to publicise the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and invite comments. Copies of the Plan will be available for public inspection for a period of 6 weeks commencing on **February 1st 2024** and ending at midnight on **March 15th 2024**.

The Draft Plan will be available for inspection and comment at the Semington village hall from 10.00am to 12.00pm at the village coffee mornings. It will also be available for inspection on the parish council website at **www.semington.org.uk/np**

Representations may be made in the following ways:

- Completing the on-line comments form at www.semington.org.uk/np
- Downloading and completing the on-line comments form and emailing to: reg14@semington.org.uk
- Downloading and completing the comments form from the website and delivering it in hard copy to: 18 St George's Court, Semington or 24 Pound Lane, Semington.
- Completing the comments form at the village hall and posting the form in the box provided
- Completing the comments form at the consultation event on: **Saturday February 24th between 11.00am and 2.00pm** at Semington village hall.

Any person or organisation can comment on the Plan.

All representations must be received by Semington Parish Council no later than midnight on March 15th. All representations will be publicly available (with personal information redacted) and will be considered by the Parish Council in producing the final plan which will then be submitted to Wiltshire Council for independent examination.

Yours sincerely,

**Semington Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group
on behalf of the Qualifying Body: Semington Parish Council**

Please address all correspondence to reg14@semington.org.uk

GDPR

Semington Parish Council has a duty to protect and process personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2019 and the Data Protection Act 2018 and any future amendments to these Acts. A GDPR statement is available on the parish council website: www.semington.org.uk/contact

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Nature Notes

Thomas Hardy saw out the old year and now sees in the new. This is not a poem about the natural world, or obviously about January for that matter. Rather it's about two of Hardy's most common themes: hesitation and regret.

Dear Lizbie Browne, Where are you now?
In sun, in rain? - Or is your brow
Past joy, past pain, Dear Lizbie Browne?

Sweet Lizbie Browne How you could smile,
How you could sing! - How archly wile
In glance-giving, Sweet Lizbie Browne!

And, Lizbie Browne, Who else had hair
Bay-red as yours, Or flesh so fair
Bred out of doors, Sweet Lizbie Browne?

When, Lizbie Browne, You had just begun
To be endeared By stealth to one,
You disappeared My Lizbie Browne!

Ay, Lizbie Browne, So swift your life,
And mine so slow, You were a wife
Ere I could show Love, Lizbie Browne.

Still, Lizbie Browne, You won, they said,
The best of men When you were wed . . .
Where went you then, O Lizbie Browne?

Dear Lizbie Browne, I should have thought,
"Girls ripen fast," And coaxed and caught
You ere you passed, Dear Lizbie Browne!

But, Lizbie Browne, I let you slip;
Shaped not a sign; Touched never your lip
With lip of mine, Lost Lizbie Browne!

So, Lizbie Browne, When on a day
Men speak of me As not, you'll say,
"And who was he?" - Yes, Lizbie Browne!

It's unsurprising that this has been set to music many times. If you go to tinyurl.com/7buyw8bd you will hear Roderick Williams and Iain Burnside performing Gerald Finzi's version. Near definitive some think.

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Julia Wade

Many congratulations to Kay and Maurice and their whole team of volunteers, including Semington's very own Sally Rigg, who volunteers there, as the Melksham Foodbank has won the Melksham News Group of the Year award. This was much deserved as they work really hard and do a fantastic job, with demand having increased every year, but never more so than in the last year, as can be borne out by the following figures.

In 2023 they gave out 1763 parcels to single people, this was up 484 on the year before! However, the number of family parcels had increased by a whopping 917, to 3929 in 2023. The number of children's parcels in 2023 was 3344, this was an increase of 894 above the number in 2022 and the Christmas bags had increased by 61 up to 247 in 2023. So the total number of parcels given out in 2023 was 9283! An absolutely huge total. Up to the end of November they had received 193 referrals - this included 254 adults and 220 children. Those children were broken down into the following age groups: up to 5 year - 47; 6-10 years - 118 and over 11 years – 55. The Foodbank would love it if there was no need for their service, but there is and so they do their best to meet the need.

This is difficult because donations have decreased since its peak in 2020, just as demand has skyrocketed. They are incredibly grateful for those who give money, enabling them to make up the shortfall in donations. So, as always, I want to thank you, on their behalf, and on behalf of all the clients in need, for your steadfast stream of donations.

They currently need everything and anything, but have particularly requested those microwaveable rice pouches. Only non-fresh items please, with a long best before date. Please bring them to the Church porch by 6.00pm on Wednesday, or put items in the collection points at the supermarkets in Melksham (or in Trowbridge, for their Storehouse Foodbank).

Many thanks, Julia

Abridged Minutes from Parish Council Meeting

Meeting Held Wednesday 17th January 2024

Present. Councillors P Smith (Chairman), R Bruges, J. Hailey, C. McGarvey, W.Scott, C. Wade and the Clerk, Roger Coleman. Wiltshire Council Cllr. J Seed attended (Part-time). There were six members of the public present initially.

Apologies. Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs. M Carberry and S. Chown.

Wiltshire Council Report. Cllr. Seed gave a brief report on the following topics: Wiltshire Council Budget FY2024/25 – A budget has been agreed and it is a balanced budget which includes a Council Tax increase of 5% compared to FY2023/24. This increase which will be reflected in the Council Tax charge is attributed to the allowed social levy and an increase in the cost of providing essential services. He added that notwithstanding the financial pressures on the budget Wiltshire Council was committed to continuing the work on the highways to clear gulleys and drains – a policy to alleviate and/or avoid flooding issues. In reply to a question from Cllr. Scott in relation to the failure of Wiltshire Council Highways Team to provide a written response to the Parish Council relating to issues raised by the Parish Council at the recent maligned attendance and presentation by the Highways Team at a recent Area Board meeting, Cllr. Seed stated that he would make the necessary enquiries of Wiltshire Council.

War Memorial. The Parish Council **resolved** that the two names (William Hancock and Frank Farmer) are to be added to the War Memorial. The Parish Council **resolved** to approve the process and cost (£645.12) for the names to be added. The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council, thanked Mr Turpin for his work in authenticating the proposed additions and for now seeking approval for the additions to be made from Salisbury Diocese.

Community and Communication. The Chairman reported that there had been no further information relating to the Post Office since the last Parish Council meeting, although he commented that the Post Office is currently open on Mondays from 11.00am to 12 noon but remained at risk of permanent closure.

Recreation and Wellbeing. The Chairman confirmed that all necessary legal matters had now been settled in relation to the transfer of the allotment site to the Parish Council and a vesting date of **1st February 2024** had been agreed. Cllr. Wade confirmed that he had spoken to the proposed allotment holders and was progressing the Tenancy Agreements with them. The Chairman commented that it would be appropriate to have a modest ‘Opening Ceremony’ for the allotment site to signify its formal transfer and thanked Cllr. Wade for his work in the transfer and setting up of the allotments.

The Chairman confirmed that it had been agreed with Wiltshire Council that the formal transfer of the Wessex Close Play Area to the Parish Council would take place on **1st April 2024** and it is at that point that the payment of £1000 will be received by the Parish Council from Wiltshire Council. He commented that it would be helpful to have a final meeting with Wiltshire Council (Craig Campbell) to agree any final matters, for example; remaining tree husbandry, provision and location of litter bins, current status of the remaining play equipment.

Cllrs. Smith, Scott and Hailey confirmed that they had each successfully undertaken the on-line training relating to the necessary regular safety inspection regime and the Chairman commented that it would be helpful if they could accompany the Wiltshire Council appointed inspector who regularly undertakes the weekly inspection to ensure that the full extent of the inspections is known and recorded. He added that it was now necessary to develop a weekly safety inspection rota. The Chairman stated that it was necessary to increase the membership of the group entitled 'Friends of Wessex Close Play Area' which will be responsible for the upkeep of the area and for participating in the regular safety inspections.

Environment and Streetscene. Rights of Way; Cllr. Scott and the Clerk each stated that, despite specific requests, the police report on the serious accident that occurred on the 'Cycleway' (SEMI9A/10 and HILP22/10) in August had not been received by the Parish Council. The Clerk added that he had written to the Chief Constable and copied that letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the MP but no report or reply to his letter had been forthcoming. The Chairman asked the Clerk to write again and to invite the MP to take action to secure a copy of that report. Councillors reported that vehicular traffic continues to drive without due care and consideration along that 'Cycleway', including, recently, Range Rovers, cars and an articulated lorry also attempted to use it (the lorry became very stuck). A recent potentially violent incident was also reported involving a dog walker and black range rover and a speeding vehicle and when reported to Wiltshire Police, the police felt they had, as yet, insufficient evidence to take any action arguing that this 'Cycleway' was a 60mph highway. Councillors commented that walkers, horse riders and cyclists are now not using this track because of the fear of speeding vehicles and potentially violent confrontations. The Chairman confirmed that Wiltshire Council is investigating whether the 'Cycleway' could be reclassified as a 'Restricted Byway'. Cllr. Hailey reported a stile that needed attention at the junction of Paths GHIN3/20 and SEMI39. She also reported a loose road surface – exacerbated by the recent adverse weather – at the junction of Paths SEM7/10 and SEM8/10. It was agreed to alert the Rights of Way Working Group. Other Matters; The Chairman confirmed that further work to clear vegetation from the area of the Pill Box has been scheduled for 20th January. He added that volunteers to assist in this work should meet at 10am at the Ragged Smock green.

Planning and Development.The Council examined the following planning applications and following the reconvening of the formal Parish Council meeting resolved to take the following actions/send comments to Wiltshire Council as shown:

PL/2023/10561 – approval of reserved matters, land north of St George's Road. Approval of reserved matters (access, appearance, layout, scale and landscaping) following outline consent 19/02147/OUT for the residential development comprising 26no. units with associated car parking, access, internal roads, public open space (including retention of the existing WWII Pill Box), landscaping. *The Chairman thanked Black Box Planning and GreenSquareAccord for their presentation and commented that the Parish Council appreciated and valued their engagement with the Parish Council. He added that changes to the development proposals since their last attendance and presentation at a Parish Council meeting were, in general, welcome but the Parish Council and parishioners still had objections to some of the proposals. Cllr. Scott agreed to articulate and to document these objections and to pass these to the Clerk for him to forward to Wiltshire Council as the formal Parish Council response to the consultation.*

Parish Council Minutes cont'd from page 15

PL/2023/08970 Wharf Cottage 553 Canal Bridge. Removal of modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roofing on curtilage listed structures, new fencing and associated external works. *The Council has no objections to this proposed development.*

PL/2023/09344 Listed building consent Wharf Cottage 553 Canal Bridge. Removal of modern porch structure, new door joinery, removal of asbestos roofing on curtilage listed structures. *The Council recommends that this application is referred to the Conservation Officer for comment. has no objections to this proposed development.*

Councillors noted that there had very recently been advertised changes to the National Policy Planning Framework and that these changes, with the revised Wiltshire Housing Supply Targets, could have the effect of deterring further housing developments in Semington – especially in relation to Planning Appeal APP/Y3940/W/23/3329064, Land South of Pound Lane. Cllr. Scott offered to detail these observations and to pass these to the Clerk for him to forward to the Appeal Inspectorate, which was agreed.

Finance. Total balance in hand as at 17th January 2024 £81,094.43

Neighbourhood Plan. The Chairman confirmed that AECOM had delivered the Sustainability and Environmental Assessment Report and that the proposed development site was agreed. The Council **resolved** to agree and to adopt the draft Neighbourhood Plan. The Council further **resolved** that it would now go out for public consultation from **1st February 2024 to 15th March 2024** under Regulation 14. The Chairman gave details of the intended public advertising of this consultation and added that there was to be a Public Consultation meeting at the Village Hall on **24th February.**

The Chairman, on behalf of the Parish Council, thanked all those involved in the preparation of this Draft Plan.

Date of the next meeting. Wednesday 7th February 7.30pm

Semington Weather Report 2023

Jack Woodward

You will have heard media reports that globally average temperatures were the highest since records began. Semington average temperatures were also the highest since my records began (over 40 years). Usually July or August are the hottest months, but this year it was June. The highest recorded temperature was on 25th June, but there was an unusually hot spell of over 30°C on four consecutive days in early September. There was no exceptionally cold weather in 2023.

Unlike other parts of the UK, Semington rainfall was a little more than usual at 36.4 inches (924mm) but not unusually high. The last three months of the year were particularly wet, but February was very dry with only 0.21 inches (5mm). June was dry, as well as being hot, so we needed plenty of watering in our gardens!

Michelle Donelan – MP for Chippenham Ward

I want to start my regular column by extending my warmest wishes to you all for a very Happy New Year. It has been a busy couple of weeks for me. Locally, I have held a surgery near Melksham and I also held a democracy workshop in Melksham Oak Community School for the sixth-form students.

On Monday 8th January I kicked off the first day of Parliament's return in 2024 with one of my regular coach tours for local constituents. I organised a coach which picked up local residents from Melksham bright and early and the excellent tour guides in Parliament gave residents a guided tour of both Houses of Parliament. I then met the group in the Grand Committee Room in Westminster Hall where we discussed the life of an MP and the function of Parliament, before a Q and A and a quiz – with some great Parliament-themed prizes. I hope that the villagers from Semington who joined me enjoyed the tour and watch this space for further announcements on the next trip.

I also recently brought Wiltshire's largest careers fair to Melksham. The Fair was a fantastic opportunity for local people to find a quality career path. Whether you are out of work, looking for an apprenticeship, to reskill or upskill, or fancy a new challenge, the event had something for everyone. I would like to say a huge thank you to the event's sponsors: Wiltshire College & University Centre, Vysiion, and KBR Aspire defence for generously supporting the event.

I want to end this article by giving you an update on the recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, aiming to curb speculative development and align with local plans. With residents feeling overwhelmed by unplanned housing, I have advocated for greater control for local people. Wiltshire exceeded its housebuilding target, and I have been working with Michael Gove to address this issue. The revised framework, coupled with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, empowers local communities, prioritising beauty, infrastructure, and the interests of residents in housebuilding. It will also empower Semington's upcoming Neighbourhood Plan, which will give the village further protections against overbearing developers, and these protections will now last for longer.

If you would like to arrange a surgery appointment with me or need my help, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me by email, michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk, or by calling 01249 704465

Melksham and District Link

The group that takes people to their medical appointments and home again needs more drivers and people to answer the telephone and organise trips.

Some drivers only do local trips whilst others are happy to go further afield. Drivers get paid expenses for their trips. Co-ordinators work two to three days every five weeks.

If you are interested in volunteering, have a look at our website Melkshamlink.com or ring 07979 129052 to find out more details.

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Semington Magpies News

Neil Taylor

The weather has played havoc with our fixtures. We returned to action on the 6th of January. With Little Marsh waterlogged we played at Beversbrook, Calne on a 3G pitch. We put on a brave performance and for 65 minutes we were in the game. But Bratton who are two leagues above us punished our mistakes and we suffered a 4-1 defeat.

We returned to league action on the 13th January when we entertained Holt at Little Marsh in front of a large crowd. We were 2-0 with 20 minutes to go, but goals from Oliver Seviour and Tyler Dagger rescued a point for the Magpies.

Our February fixtures look like this:

3rd February - Magpies vs South Newton (Home)

10th February - Trowbridge vs Magpies (Away)

17th February - Warminster vs Magpies (Away)

24th February - Bishops Cannings vs Magpies (Away)

All 1:30pm kick offs.

Massive thank you to Kings Auto Services for their sponsorship of our warm up tops. Brilliant to have this kind of support from the village.

If there are any other companies wishing to sponsor the team in anyway please contact me on **07860 276141**.



Thank you all for your continued support.

Real Easter Eggs

Bev Woodward

I am ordering Real Easter Eggs from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. As Easter is early this year, I will be ordering on Monday 26th February, so need orders by **Sunday 25th February** please. Details can be found on: <https://meaningfulchocolate.co.uk/collections/real-easter-egg>

The milk chocolate eggs cost £4.50 each.



Wiltshire
Air Ambulance
funded by you, flying for you

Statistics taken from 1 January - 31 December

MISSION MAP 2023

Mission total:
1,167



Helicopter
646



Critical care cars
521



Note - 44 incidents were jointly attended by the helicopter and critical care car, but for illustrative purposes this counts as one incident in that location.

SEMINGTON SLOG

10k ST GEORGE'S SCHOOL, SEMINGTON

MAY 11 2024

10AM

£16



- Fun for the whole family
- 1k and 2k fun run
- BBQ, Bouncy castle, ice creams and more

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Based in Semington

Wiltshire Councillor News

Jonathon Seed

Weather has dominated the start of 2024 and its effects have caused serious local difficulty. Almost continuous rain since October resulted in sodden ground and drainage struggling to cope. The addition of Storm Henk finally overwhelmed struggling drainage. Most local drainage is working and most surface water on roads was taken away within a day or two. However, for whatever reason, our climate is changing and we need to both understand and accept this.

The result may be a day so so where roads become treacherous or even impassible due to excessive rain. Many of us are old enough to remember similar inconvenience caused by heavy snow and being snowed in for days. Maybe we will have to get used to similar with modern rain patterns. Wiltshire Council is doing its best with limited resources but is investing an extra £1million in flood alleviation. We are lucky to have a Council that has managed its budget well enough to be able to do this. Highways issues always rise to the surface during adverse weather conditions and residents are rightly concerned at very local highway difficulties. The long running Common Hill drainage saga seems to be improving but water running down the road followed by a sudden cold snap has resulted in dangerous driving conditions and even the road bank collapsing.

One bit of good news for Semington is progress on the Gypsy Lane by-way saga. Wiltshire Council insisted on resurfacing the Semington - Hilperton by-way against local advice and in the face of strenuous lobbying by myself and the Parish Council. The resurfacing produces a by-way Open to All Traffic that resembled a road and was used as such by a very wide variety of motor vehicles. The result was that the previous regular users of the by-Way (walkers, cyclists and horse riders) did not feel that the route was safe to use. In a coordinated campaign I worked with Semington Parish Council for over two years to insist that the by-way surface and use was reviewed. Together we kept the pressure up and achieved a third safety audit of the route. I also lobbied hard at the highest levels in County Hall to try and get the Highways Department to see the folly (and danger) of letting the unwanted status quo stand.

Finally, although the Safety Audit found the route to be “safe” it was agreed that an Experimental Traffic Order be imposed to limit motorised traffic to those who required access along the route. This is a triumph for local democracy (and for common sense) but more importantly it is a good result for the residents of Semington.

This is how things get done in our villages and we should be very proud that we can still discuss real concerns in a measured way and try to resolve them in the Wiltshire way.

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In December we had our annual skittles night with food provided by the village hall. Many thanks to Marilyn and Sarah. Thanks also go to John & Steve for managing the scoreboard and doing all the sticking up. Also thanks to Angie for selling the raffle tickets and to all those that brought raffle prizes. January saw us celebrating with Semington WI's birthday with a meal out at the Bell in Lacock. This year the floods cleared for us, so no detours. The meal was enjoyed by all and judging by the nonstop chatter the company was too.

Next meeting in the village hall will be on **Thursday 8th February 7.30pm**. We will be listening to Stephanie Pawling as she gives a talk on the Magdalene babies.

Semington Book Club

Angela Grodzicka – 870756

The Bookclub met on 5th December for Christmas drinks and to discuss *The First Time Lauren Pailing Died* by Alison Rudd. It was well written and raised the interesting concept of rips in time leading to lives in a parallel universe. Most members enjoyed it but found the ending slightly disappointing. The group met again on 16th January to discuss *The Four Winds* by Kristen Hannah. This was thought to be a well researched, well written but depressing book about the grim reality of life in the 1930s Dust Bowl and Depression in America. Not a book to 'enjoy' as a light read but one not to put down and a learning experience as the author skilfully evoked the daily grind and sickness of the population and the appalling treatment of those who sought a better life. An author to be recommended.

The next meeting of the group will be on **Tuesday 20th February at 7.45pm** in The New Inn to discuss *The Perfect Child* by Lucinda Berry. All welcome.

From the Church Register

Victoria Shackleton

The Marriage of Thomas Luke Collins and Amy Patricia Parker Drabble

The marriage of Thomas Collins and Amy Drabble was held at St George's Church on Wednesday 6th December 2023. We pray that God will bless this marriage and wish Thomas and Amy great happiness.

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

Calling Musicians. If you can play a musical instrument and would like to be part of the Music group within the Parish, then PLEASE make yourself known. Come along and say Hello after the 10.30am Sunday Mass at St. John's. Music worship within the Parish has always been a central part of the services, we do not ask for lots of commitment just that you would like to thank and praise God through the talents that you have and come along and join in and play when you are available. You may be new to the parish and have musical ideas to share which would be very welcome. We look forward to meeting you whoever you are.

2024 A Year of Prayer: Pope Francis has invited the Universal Church to enter into a special Year of Prayer in 2024, this is to prepare us for the Jubilee Year of 2025. There are of course many opportunities to gather in Prayer in Trowbridge, Bradford on Avon and Westbury. But there is also an invitation to attend a series of talks throughout 2024 at St. John The Evangelist in Bath. Please see the poster in our Church Porches. For subscribers to this newsletter, it has been added to the email attachment.

A message of thanks: The Garbutt family would like to thank the parishioners from St John's and St Bernadette's who attended Frank's funeral mass Also we would like to express our sincere appreciation for the many sympathy cards and messages of support we have received. They have been a great help at this difficult time.

Paws for Thought



For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.

It's in the Bible; Psalm 48 verse 14

Thoughts From St George's Church

As I look out into the garden after the frost of minus 5 last night, everything looks bleak. But I know that things aren't as they seem at first glance. The drooping leaves will perk up when the frost thaws, and if I look carefully, where there only seems to be green and brown there are small primroses that have been flowering for months, a tiny red polyanthus and white tips on the snowdrop shoots with a promise of flowers soon.

From previous experience I know that the seemingly dead brown twigs will soon show green shoots and blossom, and then fruit will appear on the gooseberry bush and apple tree. The tree at Church is covered with pink blossom - it flowers faithfully every January.

'As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat; winter and summer, day and night.' This is what God told Noah after the flood - we read it in Genesis 8 verse 22 - and we see it to be true year after year. It's one of God's promises in the Bible. Apparently there are 8,810 promises recorded - I haven't counted them! But what I do know is that I can rely on God. He is faithful, and always keeps his promises.

Near the beginning of each year I find it helpful to look back on the past, remembering prayers God has answered, and trusting him for whatever the future brings. As we sang at Breakfast Church last Sunday:

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.*

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided:
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Thomas O. Chisholm



SERVICES COMING SOON

**Sunday
4th
February**

HOLY COMMUNION
from the Book of Common Prayer
3pm at St Mary's Whaddon

**Sunday
11th
February**

BREAKFAST CHURCH
9.15am at St George's Semington

**Wednesday
14th
February**

HOLY COMMUNION
for Ash Wednesday
10am at St Michael's Hilperton

**Sunday
18th
February**

HOLY COMMUNION
9.15am at St George's Semington

**Sunday
3rd
March**

HOLY COMMUNION
from the Book of Common Prayer
3pm at St Mary's Whaddon

**Sunday
10th
March**

BREAKFAST CHURCH
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.