

# Westbury's Annual Parish Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

## Village reports:

### Westbury Village Hall Association (WVHA)

The hall continues to perform above and beyond expectations even during the very challenging last 12 months. It now seems to be firmly on the map as a destination venue for locals and further afield which is testament to the amazing dedication and hard work from Jo and her shop team. Clearly, with the lockdown restrictions there has been very little use of the main hall so it was an ideal time to re-decorate the main hall and streamline the AV and alarm systems.

We have an exciting new outdoor space which will cover most of the patio at the far end which is being installed in April/May. This can hopefully be used all year round and gives the venue much greater entertainment options for our hirers and regular users.

We have had some personnel changes on the WVHA committee and thank you to Ken & Ian for their hard work and passion for the hall over many years. We look forward to re-opening the hall in the coming months and enjoying this wonderful facility to the full.

Robin Bone  
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### Westbury Community Shop and Café (WCSC)

In March 2020, as COVID closed down non-essential shops and the cafes, Jo Lee stepped in to take over as existing staff were furloughed, and adapted the shop to provide a safe place for local people, and to respond to the new needs of the community. This meant finding suppliers for meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, and increasing the existing range of local products such as beers, wines, dairy products, artisan bread and home baked cakes. As Covid restrictions changed, socially distanced seating was provided, developing the shop's role as a community hub and providing a safe meeting place for Westbury and surrounding villages. During lockdown periods the shop provided a welcome human contact, especially for those living alone, and also delivered to those who had to isolate at home.

The takeaway service expanded to include breakfasts, lunches and evening meals, serving up to 160 customers daily. Fresh food is cooked to order, and unused produce is used creatively for soups and cakes. Homemade cakes are baked on the premises and at home by volunteers. The Friday night take away serves up to 120 meals and is popular both in the village and in the surrounding area.

The increased custom continued during the summer when the restrictions were eased, and the shop then adapted again to later lockdowns.

Daily updates through the social media platforms have ensured that everyone is well informed of fresh supplies and new products as well as takeaway services which vary daily to provide a wide range of choice. Social media following has increased from under 300 to 1100+ with some posts reaching over 3,000. Increased numbers of cyclists and walkers come for refreshments and local businesses order takeaway staff lunches.

Adaptations were made so that the shop could serve customers from a hatch, and sheltered seating - when this was allowed - was developed. A new EPOS system was installed to increase efficiency,

**New staff** were recruited, and during the lockdown the village responded with increased volunteers, especially young people. Volunteers provided essential support and youngsters have benefitted from work experience and training, and several are now employed in weekend rotas.

The shop has concentrated on fresh food and local **suppliers**, and as a result it is now the main outlet for both the artisan baker in the village and our local vineyard. Fresh fruit and vegetables come from a local supplier as does dairy produce and chocolate. The shop also stocks local craft products.

To maintain this transformed service, adaptations will need to be made so that the shop can open safely in the future. New shelving is being installed, in the hope that customers will soon be able to enter the shop to choose what they want. In consultation with the Village Hall, new storage areas are to be constructed so that the shop can continue to serve the larger number of customers as restrictions ease over the summer, and other adaptations may be planned for the future. A new staff team are being recruited to ensure the shop can maintain the level of service achieved so far when Jo Lee returns to her career although she will continue to support the shop and café in between her professional commitments and will always be available for advice to the team.

**Financially**, 2020/21 will be the first year that WCSC has not made a loss, in spite of increased costs and increased contributions to expenses which are shared with the Village Hall. Much of this will have to be invested in improvements to maintain the level of service the shop has achieved. As a Community Benefit Society, any profit left after this will be used for the benefit of the Westbury community.

Sue Lucas

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### **Westbury Parish Hall Charity (WPHC)**

Westbury Parish Hall Charity was set up when the new Village Hall was built. Its role is to oversee the running of the Hall as landlord and as the legal entity of Westbury Parish Hall. It receives regular reports from both WCSC and WVHA and supports both entities in their respective roles. It receives rent from both WCSC and WVHA and as a charity supports different projects that benefit Westbury Village Hall, users of Village Amenities or residents of the Parish.

Joint meetings with WCSC and WVHA are held in April and October to ensure that they are supported by the charity where needed. WPHC also ensures all appropriate insurances and safety certificates are in place.

### **2020/21**

The committee consists of Cathy Knott, James Stone, Ian Wakeford, Ellen Watson and Sue Barrett. All are residents within Westbury Village.

### **2020/21 Grant awards:**

- Funding Christmas trail prizes
- Christmas decorations
- Pair of Goals for the playing field
- Youth summer Climbing wall activity
- Community Impact Buck's subscription
- Easter Village trail prizes
- Dedicated TV for a patient's room in the new Brackley Community Hospital
- Picnic tables (Roz Christian charity)
- Recycling bins for Westbury shop (Roz Christian charity)

The only outstanding issue is supporting a Youth Club venture - currently the Charity is liaising with the School to hold a join event in May (postponed in the current environment).

Sue Barrett

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### **St. Augustine's Church**

From the start of lockdown in March, the PCC put together a Newsletter to try to keep everyone in touch with what was happening in Westbury, with contributions from village organisations. Church services were suspended, but the PCC decided to open the Church on Easter Day for one day only, for private prayer and contemplation.

From June, Government regulations allowed the opening of churches and St. Augustine's was open every fourth day for private prayer and contemplation, in line with Covid regulations

Fund raising was suspended during the pandemic and the plants grown and intended for the Plant Sale were taken to the Village Hall and Shop where Jo and her team of volunteers sold them in return for a donation to the Church and this raised £325.50. A big thank you to Jo and her team for all their support.

Rev. Paula Smith was appointed Rector to the West Buckingham Benefice and licensed in Shalstone on 13<sup>th</sup> October. She conducted her first service, a Harvest Festival Celebration, on 25<sup>th</sup> October, which was well attended in line with Covid regulations.

Arthur Lewis conducted a shortened Remembrance service in the churchyard under Covid regulations.

There was a small plaster fall in November, fortunately not in an area in occasional use. Warning signs were in place and an inspection and quote was provided by C.J. Charles and the work completed in time for opening at Easter (2021).

We were very pleased that Beachborough School was able to use the Church to film and record the school choir before they broke up for their Christmas holidays. Beachborough is a great supporter of St. Augustine's and made a generous donation to the church maintenance fund.

During December we held various Christmas events. The yew tree was netted and villagers were invited to bring and attach angels made from any material. We were delighted that the younger Beachborough children brought bird feeders in the shape of angels to join the giant Angel Gabriel in the churchyard. On Christmas Eve we were disappointed not to be able to hold our traditional Crib Service, but the Church was open with the crib in place and beautifully decorated with flowers, candles and the lit Christmas tree.

As lockdown and restrictions are eased, we look forward to resuming normal services and welcoming parishioners, when St. Augustine's will once again be available for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We thank our Parish Council, villagers and friends for all their support over this strange year.

Pat English

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### **Westbury Wilds report**

For newcomers to the village, Westbury Wilds is an old woodland covering about 20 acres, held in trust for the residents of Westbury.

This wood lies about half a mile north of the Village towards Biddlesden, on the left-hand side.

The origins stem back to before the Enclosure Act of 1764, an extract of which is painted on a board which resides in the belfry of our Church St. Augustine's.

There are five trustees (however at the moment we don't have a chairman).

The trust has two functions:

- to keep the woodland in a semi wild environment, offering lovely walks
- and the collection of fallen wood to which every villager is entitled.

This wood can only be accessed on foot or horseback.

Hopefully when life returns to some form of normality the Trustees will take Revd. Paula on a guided tour around the Wilds.

Jacky Owen

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## **Beachborough School**

It has been a unique year for Beachborough School. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and country wide lockdown, the school supported our pupils at home with online learning for parts of the academic year. The school itself remained open during this time and supported key workers and vulnerable children in school.

After the first lockdown, the school sought feedback from our parents as to the effectiveness of our online learning provision. We were delighted to receive a highly positive response stating that 96% of our parents thought the school's online provision was either excellent or very good. The school reviewed and refined its online systems further and the second online experience, we felt was even more successful than the first, with our children receiving live 1:1 online learning and a full curriculum programme and timetable to support this. In addition to that, our Nursery and Kindergarten sections remained open for our youngest learners, providing them with face to face lessons throughout.

During lockdown, although we were able to meet the ongoing academic needs of our pupils, the social and emotional aspects of our pupils were the hardest to replicate, from a distance. The school ran a series of 'virtual' sports events and activities, in liaison with other schools, and music and drama continued in a 'virtual format'. The Government's update stating that the school would be allowed to return to face to face teaching for all children before Easter was a tremendous step forward. It was welcomed as movement towards 'normal' that our pupils, staff, and parents had been looking forward to.

During the pandemic we have learnt a lot about our pupils and their ability to manage socially, emotionally, and academically during this challenging period. Our school counselling and medical team, alongside our teachers and tutors, have been supporting our children as they reconnect with their peers and rekindle friendships. The school's focus has been centred around our children's wellbeing and mental health as the school returns to normal.

With a varied year in school, we were still thrilled and delighted that The Good Schools Guide and the Schools Edition of Tatler Magazine wrote two excellent reviews of the school. The Good Schools Guide review is now available online, and our Tatler Review will be published in September. In addition to this, the Independent Schools Guide rated Beachborough School as the 'Best Prep School in the Country' for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

Our plans and interactions with the village have been limited due to the COVID pandemic, but we have still managed to support the village and our local community in a number of ways. Our youngest children in the Nursery made Christmas Angels for the church grounds and we have supported the church with various activities during the past twelve months. In addition to this, Beachborough has been helping to print and distribute the village newsletter which many residents have found useful during this challenging year. The school has also granted permissive access for residents to walk across the lower school playing fields to complete the circular walk. Our only ask has been that residents complete the route before or after school hours and that dog owners pick up after their dog and ensure they remain on a lead, for safeguarding reasons. I am very pleased that the village have supported the school with this request, whilst enjoying the fresh air.

We very much hope that the easing of lockdown provides us with renewed opportunities to help and support the village once again in the year ahead. In the meantime, we are very proud to have been part of this wonderful parish for over 75 years and we wish the Parish Council every success in the year ahead.

Best wishes  
Christian Pritchard  
Headmaster

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## **SugaRich**

As with all areas of society this year has been one of unprecedented challenge for the SugaRich business. We qualify as a key industry on two different grounds as we are a vital part of the human food and animal food manufacturing processes. We therefore needed to keep our business running at all times whilst adjusting to the issues caused as a

result of Covid. We are extremely proud of the way that all of our staff rose to the challenge and adapted to new ways of working and this has allowed us to continue working throughout the pandemic.

Chris Houghton

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### **Westbury Cricket Club**

#### **Team Reports for 2020 Season**

##### **First Team Report:**

**Captain:** Tom Gurney

Following a solid start to life in Division 1 of the Cherwell Cricket League in 2019 the 1st team were looking forward to pushing on and challenging near the top in 2020.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic they had to be patient, but with restrictions lifted in mid-July the league structure was shifted to a 40 over round robin tournament with the first team being represented in the top Tier 1 Competition.

A side full of youth, with the majority having come up through the clubs junior set up, played at attractive brand of cricket and ended the regular season at the top of their Tier, winning four games and only losing the one.

A play off for the right to be crowned Cherwell League Champions, was then scheduled in early September against an unbeaten Cumnor side. Batting first Westbury posted an impressive 190 from their 40 overs. In reply, Westbury bowled with discipline and took regular wickets to leave Cumnor well short of the total. The result crowning Westbury as the Champions of the Cherwell Cricket League for 2020 and the team to beat as we head into the 2021 season.

##### **Second Team Report:**

**Captain:** Tom Boardman

Westbury 2nd XI had a very successful season finishing 3rd in our division. We finished just 9 points from the top having been rained off against the 2 bottom clubs.

It provides a great platform for us to build on this year with the restructured league system welcoming the Oxford (OCA) League into the Cherwell Cricket League.

We are looking forward to a great season with a fantastic group of players both young and experienced!

##### **Third Team Report:**

**Captain:** Chalky White

Westbury 3`s grew and excelled in a mixed division season. A season where, due to Covid virus, a reworking by the Cherwell League placed the 3`s in a group that included teams from higher divisions, pitting us against the likes of Bletchley Town 2`s & local rivals Buckingham Town 4`s.

Concluding in a proud, short season for the team - winning 5 with 2 rained out & just 1 loss at Thame. We had record numbers of players available; previous village residents returning to the club where most cut their skills, combined with more village players than over the past few seasons. Our future looks bright.

I would like to mention how much we appreciate our continuing relationship with Beachborough school. Some of you may be surprised to know it has been ongoing for the best part of 50 years, Headmasters, teaching staff, ground staff & pupils have all played a part in the whole club`s success. Long may it continue, as I am sure it will.

Cath Young

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### **Westbury Village Football Club**

Good Evening to all the Members of the Village.

Like most things during the past fifteen months the Coronavirus Pandemic has played its part in affecting the Football Club as it did with sport in general.

Last March the Club were top of their respective division of the league and were in a good position to finish at the top of the league competition. However due to the pandemic the North Bucks and District Football League, following advice from the football authorities declared the 2019-2020 football season null and void, with all records for the season being expunged.

Onto the new season of 2020-2021 the league decided to recommence their football activities for the new season later than normal with matches starting towards the end of September 2020. Due to the position of the Club at the curtailment of football in March the league in their wisdom and restructure promoted the Club to higher division of the League. The Club started life very well in Division One and managed to play five matches before football was again suspended at the beginning of November for a month. Following the resumption in December two more matches were played before a further suspension which took us to April 2021 without any further activity. The Club playing their last match at home on October 31<sup>st</sup>. At this point the Club had played seven matches, winning Four, drawing Two and being beaten in the other match, leaving the Club in fourth place in the division.

With football once again being allowed to restart in Mid-April the Club will re- commence their league commitments playing a further five matches by the end of May to complete their league schedule of each Club playing everybody once to obtain a conclusion to the season. As things stand at present and with the right results involving some other Clubs the Club has every chance of finishing in either second or third place in the league table.

Like life and all sporting activities It has been a difficult and frustrating last fifteen months for the Club and hopefully come September we can look forward to a full season of football.

We thank the Parish Council for giving us the opportunity to submit this report for the Annual Parish Meeting and hopefully we can all look forward to healthier, better and normal times in the future.

David Grainge

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