



St Briavels, Hewelsfield & Brockweir

ALL CHANGE - THE PRINTED VERSION OF VILLAGE NEWS RETURNS NEXT MONTH!

We are now able to plan for a return to producing Village News as a printed magazine from next month's edition.

Subject to the local situation remaining unchanged and the continued easing of restrictions, we can print, collate and distribute the magazine safely.

Thank you to all our readers who have continued to read online and a very special thank you to all our brilliant contributors who have continued to send such interesting and informative articles.

Please keep sending - and keep reading!

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Dear Friends

Once again, the Village News has come to you online. I wonder which you prefer to read, paper or ebook, physical or virtual? Whilst we're grateful for the technology that allows the Village News to be distributed like this, we feel that, somehow, it's just not the same. We want to fold back the pages and touch the paper.

For the last few weeks we've been meeting in person at the chapel. Although we met online for 15 weeks, and enjoyed that contact with each other, it's just not the same. Zoom is a poor substitute for face-to-face meeting. Even socially distant - sat 2m apart, masked and refraining from singing - we feel encouraged together when we meet in person.

The more tactile of us really feel this physical separation. We miss shaking hands when we meet, hugging a dear friend, even holding the hand of a sick relative.

Central to Christian thought is the incarnation - the belief that God himself, took on flesh at the birth of Jesus Christ. As a physical human being, Jesus lived, died and rose again.

Christians look forward, not to an ethereal, spiritual, afterlife - but rather to the promise of bodily resurrection. A glorious, physical life, with sorrow and suffering behind us forever.

It's why Zoom doesn't quite cut it, and I look forward to being able to shake your hand before very long.

Warmest Regards,

Matt Rees

St Briavels Congregational Church

FROM OUR PARISH CHURCHES

At the time of writing, our churches are now open for public worship on Sundays, subject to Government guidelines on social distancing and with the stipulation that no singing is allowed. You are invited to join us for worship on the dates below. Our worship is welcoming, relaxed and open to all. Join us to find what God's love could mean for you.

Both Churches are open for private prayer or to find a space for quiet and reflection. St Briavels from 10am to 12 noon and Hewelsfield from 9.00am until 4.00pm. More can be found on our website www.stbandhchurches.org.uk which gives up to date information. Circumstances may change as the month progresses. So please check the websites and notice boards outside the churches for any changes.

For a wedding, baptism or blessing, or to request healing or other prayer, please contact me, David (OLM) david.rees17@btinternet.com or 01594 530443, or our Reader, Mandy Vaughan, 01594 530844. I usually work Sunday, Monday afternoon, Tuesday and mornings on Wednesday and Thursday, and am available anytime for urgent requests. The Covid-19 virus has not gone away – please stay safe.

Tidenham church is providing online worship every Sunday on their parish YouTube site 'Tidenham Parish Online Church' with videos and resources to assist you in your devotions.

The link is:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UcKjRjOlvDBT9M9usfhp2722w>

AUGUST SERVICES AT ST BRIAVELS & HEWELSFIELD

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, ST BRIAVELS

SUNDAY 2nd	
9.30am	Morning Prayer
SUNDAY 9th	
9.30 am	Morning Prayer
SUNDAY 16th	
9.30am	Morning Prayer
SUNDAY 23rd	
9.30am	Morning Prayer
SUNDAY 30th	
9.30am	Morning Prayer
SUNDAY 6th September	
9.30am	Morning Prayer

ST MARY MAGDALENE, HEWELSFIELD & BROCKWEIR

SUNDAY 2nd	
11.00am	Morning Worship
SUNDAY 9th	
11.00am	Morning Worship
SUNDAY 16th	
11.00am	Morning Worship
SUNDAY 23rd	
11.00 am	Morning Worship
SUNDAY 30th	
11.00am	Morning Worship
SUNDAY 6th September	
11.00am	Morning Worship

ST BRIAVELS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

We have enjoyed meeting together at the chapel these last few weeks. We observe social distancing and careful hygiene, taking care to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. We have hand sanitisers, our chairs are 2m apart, people are wearing face coverings and we're not able to sing together – but we're very glad to see each other face to face. We'd love to see you there at 10:30am.

Some of you, who might otherwise want to attend, are in poor health or over 70 and will feel that you shouldn't yet gather with us. As a church we'll continue sharing services on YouTube (<http://tiny.cc/sbser>) so that people don't miss out.

We'll circulate details about the services by email and on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/StBriavelsCongregationalChurch/

A number of our members are keeping busy delivering prescriptions, providing meals, etc. If you want help, would like to talk to someone or want us to pray for you, please get in touch. We hope that before too long we get to see you face to face – until then we are praying for all of you in our community.

Warmest regards,

Matt Rees, Pastor, St Briavels Congregational Church.
Phone: 01594 530098 Email: Stbriavelscc@gmail.com
Website: www.stbriavelscongregational.org.uk

MORAVIAN CHURCH

Reopening of The Church and Buildings!

Our church is now open for private prayer at users' own risk. Visitors are asked to use sensible precautions and avoid touching hymn books etc. Use of hand sanitiser and/or sanitising wipes is also recommended.

Work has been taking place inside the Sunday School to repair rotten joists. So it will remain closed to groups for a little while longer.

We are planning on recommencing services in Church on Sunday 6th September, with a special service of Holy Communion. All are welcome to join us, but social distancing must be observed and the wearing of face coverings is recommended. Until then, our services via Zoom will continue.

We hold all our community in our prayers and pray that God will hold us safe through these unusual times

SERVICES IN AUGUST

At 10.30 am each Sunday a recorded service prepared by ministers of the British Province is published via a link on the website www.Moravian.org.uk The services last approx. 30 mins and include, prayers, readings, hymns, and a short sermon. Each week different ministers and members from the British Province and the worldwide Moravian Church take part so it is a real opportunity to experience the Unity that is the Moravian Church.

At 6.00 pm the Brockweir congregation hosts a live service via Zoom, and this is open to anyone who would like to join us. The service will generally follow an evening liturgy with readings from the lectionary, and some thoughts on the readings. This will last approx 30 mins and there will be an opportunity for 'conversation' as the Zoom Room will open approx 15 minutes before the service is due to start. We hope you will join us.

For security reasons we cannot publish the joining details but if you would like to join us please contact Sue Groves (susangroves@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 07803 745913) for instructions. If you don't have access to a computer you can still join in the services via your telephone. Calls will cost between 5p – 10p per minute from a landline and more from a mobile.

Moravian Women's Association - We are starting a District MWA group which will meet via Zoom. This will be open to all ladies in the district; you don't have to be a member of the Moravian Church to join in. Each month we share a devotional paper on a theme set for the year, learn about one of the projects we raise money for or about a current issue, and hear news from around the Province. Please contact our minister, Patsy, if you

would like details on how to join in the meeting.

Offertories/Weekly Envelopes - As the lockdown continues, several people have asked what to do about their weekly offerings to the church. The best method is to set up a Standing Order or send a cheque. Please contact our Treasurer, Philip Ashton, Herries, Underhill, Brockweir, Chepstow, Mon, NP16 7NQ email jaap1@waitrose.com for more details. Cash envelopes can also be delivered to the Treasurer or left at Brockweir Village Shop for collection.

Minister - Rev Patsy Holdsworth, 35 Quarry Way, Emersons Green, Bristol, BS16 7BN. Tel: 0117 907 8994
Email: Patsy.holdsworth@moravian.org.uk

Please note that Patsy's day off is normally on a Tuesday. Please try to only contact her in an emergency on that day.

Church Committee (usually meets on 3rd Monday of each month)

Jean Green	01594 530 955	Judith Ashton	01291 689 572
Carol Ostler	01291 689 675	Sue Groves	01291 689 804
Mary Harris	01291 689668	Philip Ashton	01291 689 572



SAMANTHA LOUISE BROCK

Our family would like to thank the many friends and neighbours who came to pay their respects to Samantha on Saturday 11th July. When the hearse set off from our drive we were totally overwhelmed by the number of familiar faces standing along the cul-de-sac and main road from the village shop to the Triangle and beyond. Truly a gathering we shall never forget.

Since Samantha unexpectedly passed away, we have been blessed with so many cards, flowers and gestures of kindness. Some of you will have known her since she was a baby. We moved here to the Wye Valley 40 years ago and Samantha was born two years later, a younger sister to Emma and Lucy. We spent many happy years living at Grosmont, a house which provided the five of us with a cosy home and land to keep chickens, geese, sheep and horses - not to mention a variety of pigs which kept us all occupied as the family grew up.

Our village community has always been very special and the children had many friends. As the youngest of three, Samantha benefited from our busy household where there was always something going on. Many of you have shared with us some of your happy memories of Samantha during these years.

The years went by, the girls all married and moved to their new homes. After living in Germany for five years as an army wife, Samantha's marriage sadly ended but she returned to live with us in Brockweir and brought with her one very large, much adored black Labrador, who soon became part of the family. During her years with us she found local work and also started her own house cleaning and dog walking business. Known to everyone as Sam, she was always popular with the customers and her workmates at the local Spar store at Chepstow Racecourse.

Samantha was a fun and bubbly person, who made people laugh. She will be missed by many.

Sue and Jim Watson

COVID-19 RELATED SCAMS

I was contacted by a local lady who had received a call claiming that she owed a debt, and if she didn't pay up immediately, she would face court action. Luckily, she was debt-free and could eventually put the phone down on the caller, but this left her upset for the rest of the day.

Scammers have been thriving even more during the Covid emergency. Here are a few tips that apply to the current situation, but more broadly apply at all times.

Scam Messages – you can contact the Suspicious Email Reporting Service report@phishing.gov.uk

Shopping Online – using your credit card provides better protection

Never install any software or grant remote access to your computer as a result of a cold call. Legitimate organisations would never contact you out of the blue to ask for financial details such as your PIN or full banking password

NHS TEST & TRACING SCAMS - an area of current concern re scams.

Contact Tracers will only phone you from 0300 013 5000

NHS Test & Tracing Service will never:

Ask you to dial a premium rate number

Ask for any form of payment or purchase

Ask for any details that relate to your online activities, passwords etc etc.

If you believe you are at risk of fraud, you can contact www.actionfraud.police.uk

Richard Skinner, Community Wellbeing Agent, 07927 051328, 01594 812447, email: Richard.skinner@fdean.gov.uk



ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council continues to meet twice a month using the Zoom platform and we were pleased to welcome our first 'virtual public' to recent meetings.

The vacancy for the post of Clerk has been advertised; the closing date for applications is 29 July and the intention is to shortlist and interview during August, with the appointee starting in September.

The totally **redesigned website** is now live, though there may be a few links which require 'fixing' – if you spot one please email Jess Worgan at jjw.stbriavels@gmail.com We also now have a presence on Facebook.

A working group has been formed to look into the future of The Pantry – 3 Councillors have been appointed, and members of the public with an interest are welcome to become involved – contact Mike Smith or Paul Lounds. The Parish Council has allocated a small initial budget.

Two planning applications have been considered – conversion of a barn to a dwelling at Bulls Court, Coleford Road (no objection) and for an extension of the Bearse Campsite (support to encourage tourism).

The GCC planning committee resolved to permit the application for the extension of Stowe Hill quarry; your Parish Council has supported Newland Parish Council's request to have the application called-in for determination by an independent inspector. Sincere thanks go to those who arranged for well over 350 messages of support to be sent.

Cllr Plummer resigned as Lead Councillor for Staffing & Governance but was re-appointed to the post for 6 months to oversee the creation of a committee; Cllr Worgan was appointed Lead Councillor for amenities, again for a 6 month trial period.

The Council agreed to supply waste bins and COVID signs for the playground.

The road safety scheme planned by GCC is very close to being agreed and it is hoped the work will be undertaken in the next couple of months.

A full review of grass cutting in the parish will be undertaken shortly to ensure we are only cutting grass for which we are responsible.

As the Council does not meet in August we are hoping that COVID restrictions will have been lifted to enable the September meeting to be held in the Assembly Rooms.

Finally, if you wish to be added to our email distribution list for information, agendas, minutes etc, please send a request to stbriavelsclerk@outlook.com

Enjoy what's left of the summer.

Richard S Crighton, CiLCA, Locum Clerk, St Briavels Parish Council
01594 836454, stbriavelsclerk@outlook.com

HEWELSFIELD & BROCKWEIR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting held via Zoom on 23rd June 2020.

Present: Cllr. Sinfield, Cllr. Fox, Cllr Brundle, Cllr. Groves-Bond, Cllr. Haythornthwaite, Cllr. Harris. No members of the public attended.

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

The following payments, made since the last meeting, were authorised for payment:

Payee	Service	Amount
Lynda Skuse	Clerk salary & expenses – May	£319.08
AEB Price	Strimming/Litter Picking x Twice	£160.00
Pinewood Antiques	Restoration of Commemorative Bench	£350.00
Cllr. Groves-Bond	Refund for Commemorative Plaque	£40.00
Came & Company	Insurance Renewal	£364.96
Henry Bendall	Cutting Verges	£100.00
Forest Equipment Services	Emptying Dog Foul Bins	£67.98
Iain Selkirk	Audit Fees	£80.00

Councillors agreed and adopted the audited accounts for year ending March 2020.

Following adoption of the year-end accounts, councillors agreed that a Declaration of Exemption should be made by the Clerk and all paperwork completed accordingly. (Councils with a turnover under £25,000 pa are exempt).

Councillors agreed to continue the delegated authority, with payments being confirmed at subsequent meetings. This authority would last until normal meetings are resumed.

A parishioner had highlighted Ash Trees in a dangerous condition overhanging a footpath exiting onto Underhill. Councillors agreed that a letter be sent to the owner of the land asking him to investigate and if necessary, take steps to make the environment safe.

P0756/20/TCA – Hewelsfield Court Farm, Hewelsfield Court. Fell x 1 Oak at Hewelsfield Court Farm

Councillors unanimously decided that input was needed from an expert on alternative strategies available, before felling the tree. They agreed that an expert independent assessment should be made. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS ARE UNDER REVIEW.



The bench at the junction with Coldharbour on Mill Hill. It has been refurbished by Roger at Pinewood Studios and a new commemorative plaque commissioned

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MACKENZIE HALL - NEWS OF OPENING



Following online committee meetings, the Hall has decided that we will do everything we can to open the hall safely at the beginning of September, assuming that there are no changes to the rules or local outbreaks. The committee thought that it was important that the Hall should be used by the community if it was safe to do so.

This will be for small-group hirings only to begin with. The situation regarding larger groups such as music entertainment, plays, etc will be decided later in the year when it is clearer what the situation is. There will be only one hiring per day to allow for cleaning after every session.

We will be putting into place safety measures and cleaning the hall thoroughly after every use. The Hall has decided to bear the cost of the extra cleaning and equipment needed.

As the situation remains fluid, please go to the Mackenzie Hall website www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk for up-to-the-minute information.

Barbara French, Chair of Trustees

CLEANER/S WANTED FOR MACKENZIE HALL, BROCKWEIR

The Mackenzie Hall committee are looking to hire a cleaner from the beginning of September to clean the hall after each activity (no more than once per day). Job sharing considered.

Full PPE and cleaning equipment will be provided.

For further details please contact Barbara French 01291 689327



NEWS & ACTIVITIES

THE MOAT SOCIETY

The Moat Society working party meets on the second Saturday of the month. All welcome.

Sue Davis. 01594 531460

RIDE AND STRIDE

What a different year 2020 has been!!

St Briavels Church may have had to close its doors to services for a while but we have managed to complete restoration work to the Chancel. We were fortunate to obtain grants towards some of the cost of the work. We are grateful to the Village News committee for their generosity and also to Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust (GHCT).

GHCT distribute funds to churches like ours for repairs they cannot otherwise afford. To raise these funds they have the annual Ride and Stride event. Last year I walked round 30 churches in Gloucester, for which I was sponsored, as thanks for previous grants we had received.

This year, because of coronavirus, I hope to drive round as many churches in Gloucestershire as I can in one day in September. I shall again be seeking sponsorship to spur me on and I encourage everyone to consider whatever generous support they are able to offer. Half of any money I raise will be returned to St Briavels church to use for future projects.

Our church is over 900 years old and needs continual maintenance. We urgently need to replace funds used for this year's restoration work so please pledge your support by completing the sponsorship forms in the church porch. If you are a taxpayer please complete the Gift Aid section to make your donation even more beneficial.

Many thanks,

Jean Sheraton

YOUR PANTRY NEEDS YOU!

At our July 13th meeting, St Briavels Parish Council agreed to set up a working group to secure the future of the Pantry. This group will consist of three councillors plus anyone else who would like to be involved. At the moment, we have no predefined end-point: all options are on the table. If you have experience in this sector, general business skills, or just a desire to help, please get in touch with me on 01594 530332 or mikepc@blogshank.com.

If you can't afford the time right now, then remember that your pantry still needs you – as a shopper! Let's keep our fine local businesses alive.

Of course, our heartfelt thanks go to John and Diana who have worked so hard to keep this vital service going through the recent months. They have certainly experienced life at the sharp end, and they have agreed to lend their experience to the working group as we work out a way forward.

Mike Smith



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HOW OUR ENTREPRENEURIAL VILLAGE IS COMING OUT OF LOCKDOWN

Over 25 local enterprises came together as one community to launch a #supportlocalstBriavels campaign. With businesses ranging from a thriving flower farm and florist through to an innovative Supper Club, mechanics through to luxury holiday rentals, St Briavels has proved the worth of local providers as the village has come together to support its residents through lockdown.

With village communities all over the country being put to the test in ways not seen for decades, our small parish of just 1000 residents has been able to provide food and essential supplies through The Pantry, as well as an array of locally produced crafts through small businesses like Wye Made, Made by Mo and Wye Valley Flowers.

We're so proud to have launched our campaign celebrating the wealth of local talent available on our doorsteps, but also reminding folks as we emerge out of lockdown that spending their money with us will help our community continue to thrive. Georgina McCleod from George's Secret Supper Club agrees: "To see the array of creative talent, drive and community commitment our village residents have to offer has been truly heartwarming".

Also on offer in the village is David Broadbent Photography, family businesses such as Cowshill Farm and Cinderhill Farm, firms that have provided services to the village for decades such as Parry and Sons (haulage, animal feed), one of the village's newest enterprises, Thai-Zaab by Ging offering amazing, authentic Thai food, fencing supplier Pete Barnby, interiors blog Frank and Minnie, White Feather Holiday Let Management and, of course, village landmarks St Briavels Castle YHA, the George pub and two thriving churches. And when restrictions ease, Wye Valley Zumba will be ready to get the village fighting fit again!

Jo Thompson



NEWS FROM 1st ST BRIAVELS BEAVERS, CUBS AND SCOUTS

SCOUTING UPDATE: THE GREAT INDOORS

We're still waiting to hear when Beavers, Cubs and Scouts can return to weekly meetings at St Briavels Pavilion. Hopefully it won't be too much longer!

In the meantime, The Scout Association has launched a fantastic new staged badge especially for these restricted times. It's called The Great Indoors, and activities can be tailored for the different sections' age groups. Better still, this badge is open to all young people – you don't have to be a member to take part.

The aim is to keep children and teens entertained, learning new skills and having fun, despite the challenges we're all facing at the moment.

All about #TheGreatIndoors

Each stage of the badge covers nine different areas. These include everything from practical skills to physical activity to community engagement and creativity. You can find activity ideas for different age groups on the Scouts website.

For instance, practical skills for a Beaver (6-8 years old) might include tying knots, whereas a Scout (10½ to 14 years old) could have a go at growing crystals. A creative activity idea for Cubs (8 to 10½ years old) is creating a 'star map' using glow-in-the-dark paints. Explorers (14 to 18 years old) could design and fill a wellbeing box.

When one activity has been completed for each of the nine areas, the young person is eligible for their stage one badge. Then they can progress to stage two, building on their skills or learning completely new ones.

Have a go!

Whether you're part of the St Briavels Scout Group or not, I hope you'll encourage any young people you know to check out #TheGreatIndoors.

You can find out more online at www.scouts.org.uk/the-great-indoors

If you do have a go, I'd love to hear about it! You can contact me on stbriavelsscoutgroup@outlook.com

Take care and stay safe,

Emma-Jayne Williams, 1st St Briavels Group Scout Leader
stbriavelsscoutgroup@outlook.com 07807 068 296





NEWS FROM THE VILLAGE SHOP

We continue to cautiously remove the lockdown restrictions...

The shop is now open throughout the day, with a maximum of 3 customers allowed in the shop, and outdoor seating and tables available for the **takeaway café menu**. From 24th July, face coverings must be worn. We are rapidly adjusting to a 'new normal', in line with government relaxation of lockdown

restrictions. We continue to offer both the **phone and collect service**, as well as the **email and collect service**, and intend to do so for as long as it is needed. This gives a lot of choice for safe shopping.

Some of the volunteers who were self-isolating have returned. It is really good to see them after so many weeks. Several volunteers have returned to their paid employment. We are grateful for their contribution in the last few weeks and hope they will continue as volunteers when they have time.

The **kitchen refurbishment** project is not quite finished. A few details remain to be completed, but it is now operational. Thank you to all who made it happen. The limitations of social distancing and availability of volunteers restrict the range of the menu, so it continues as 'coffee and cake' but some of the popular items are available from time to time

There is a steady increase in the number of customers and sales. We are once again a destination for visitors, as well as a regular stop for cyclists. Fortunately, it is mid summer so an outdoor café is attractive - it is not yet possible to have a socially distanced café service.

And at the last count there were **15 different varieties of flour available**, which I'm told is more than is on offer at Tesco.

We look forward to seeing you but if you are still self-isolating, phone 01291 689995 or email orders@bandhvillageshop.co.uk and we will do our best to keep you supplied.

Peter Stickland

ART IN THE CAFÉ.

We plan the return of exhibitions on the café walls once we know when we can restart the programme.

Jacqui Trefgarne

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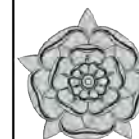
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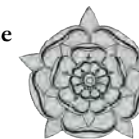
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PARISH GRASSLANDS CLIMATE ACTION

Faced with Coronavirus, we have tried to move our activities online. It is not nearly as satisfactory as being able to operate face-to-face, but it's better than nothing!

Despite lockdown, the Wildlife Corridor Initiative was able to record a Wildlife Walk led by Gemma Bode and Ali Crawshaw, with a look at some of the flowers and plants one might see while on local footpaths. Catch it at <https://youtu.be/4gfmR51MBOs>. We are also about to send out a video of George Peterken talking about tree diseases such as chelara, or ash dieback, and the implications that may have for our local tree cover. Keep an eye out for the email with the link for that in the coming weeks!

The Energy Hub continues to gather case studies of local homes that have installed sustainable heating systems, renewable energy or retrofit insulation for our online Green Open Homes event. If you have undertaken work on your home and are willing to share your experience please contact the Energy Hub by emailing parishgrasslands@gmail.com. In addition, we have not abandoned our plans to hold a retrofit workshop later in the year, which will provide in-depth advice on how to insulate older properties.

The Transport Hub is grappling with the problems of launching its Greener Miles Project, given the present limitations. A car-sharing scheme was going to be an important element, but of course that is something we will now have to incorporate later. Currently, our thoughts are centred on enabling car owners to collect other people's click-and-collect shopping, probably through a dedicated Facebook page. Walking and cycling are the other key elements of the Greener Miles project. We were disappointed to have to postpone our electric bike demonstration day arranged for March. In the meantime, we have become very enthusiastic about the possibilities of converting an existing bike with an electric conversion kit. This is a much cheaper option than buying a new electric bike – provided you have a bike that is suitable for conversion. Given the challenging topography locally, electric power really does transform the cycling experience. Look out for more news next month.

The Climate Action Forum was launched a couple of months ago. You can find it here: <https://parishgrasslands.forumotion.com/> and there is a video explaining how it works here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWAwSfuMFeg&feature=youtu.be>.

Once you join the forum you can use it to raise topics or add comments and contributions to existing threads. Such forums need a bit of traffic to get them going, and so far there has not been a great deal of interest in ours. Do have a look at it, and help to get the ball rolling. It will be a useful resource for anyone in the community wanting to do their bit to support positive action on climate change. And a big thank you to the stalwarts who have already contributed!

The Climate Action Team



PARISH GRASSLANDS PROJECT

www.parishgrasslandsproject.org.uk

It has been a very frustrating year so far for many of us, and at the Parish Grasslands Project that frustration is felt as keenly as elsewhere. No sooner had we launched our Climate Action initiative in February, and the various hubs were holding their first meetings and beginning to lay out all manner of plans, but the Coronavirus reared its ugly head and brought things to a virtual standstill. And, of course, plans for our normal PGP activities had to be put on hold.

We are particularly disappointed that we have not been able to hold the Flower Hunt for the pre-school and reception class children from St Briavels School. It is the first time in many years that this popular midsummer event, which gives the younger generation an introduction to wild flowers, bugs, beetles and butterflies, has not happened. This year, we were particularly looking forward to welcoming for the first time children from the Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre in Coleford. We very much hope the Flower Hunt will resume next year.

We have also had to abandon plans for a summer visit to the major meadow restoration project at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, near Carmarthen. This was at the invitation of Bruce Langridge, one of the instigators of the restoration scheme, who was one of the speakers at our meeting last October. Once again, we hope to revive this event next year.



The meadow restoration project at the National Botanic Garden of Wales

In the meantime, while the Mackenzie Hall and the Assembly Rooms remain closed for meetings, it is difficult to know when we will next be able to hold our annual general meeting, postponed from March. With winter approaching (sorry to mention it!) it seems that in the short term indoor meetings are even less likely to be possible. It may well be that we hold a two-year event next year.

On a more positive note, we have been able to continue looking after two ongoing projects. The "Garden of Remembrance" in the moat at St Briavels Castle, contains examples of some of the wild plants that have become extinct in the two parishes in the last century. The flora survey that identified the extinctions is reported in an article by George Peterken and Elsa Wood in the current issue of the specialist magazine British Wildlife. We have a small number of copies of this excellent magazine. If you would like to borrow one, please get in touch via the website.

And work has continued to maintain the community orchard at St Briavels Playing Field. The apple blossom season came and went while the playing field was out of bounds, but the trees are currently bearing the beginnings of a modest crop of small apples. It's heartening that some things simply carry on, pandemic or no pandemic. Of course, these will not be ready for picking for some time. When they are we will arrange a community event to share them. Watch this space!

Mike Topp



George Peterken helping to prepare the community orchard last year



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TIME TO CHANGE

How often have we heard the need for a full and frank debate on a problem? We then find that discussions get lost trying to address the symptoms of the issue, (usually arguing about funding and ideology), whilst leaving the underlying causes untouched.

Designed in the 20th Century to address 19th century problems, the systems within which we operate today are simply failing our 21st century needs, destroying our ecosystems and heating our planet.

A rising host of creative lateral thinkers, social designers, economic innovators and environmental entrepreneurs* are coming up with ideas and opportunities to build a society that flourishes and prospers today, whilst helping our children and grandchildren meet the challenges of tomorrow.

However, never in humanity's long existence, have so many given control to so few to save so much in so short a time.

As we face unemployment, disease, poverty, waste, economic bust, social care, health and welfare system collapse, biodiversity and climate emergencies, we must embrace change and give those ideas a fair chance to succeed before it's too late.

* eg. Kate Raworth, Hilary Cottam, Rob Hopkins, Sir Ken Robinson to name just four....

Chris McFarling chrismcfarling@phonecoop.coop

BADGER CULLING UPDATE

As anticipated, I have no verifiable news on the future of actual badger culling.

Whatever may be being planned or discussed is not made available to the general public but some legal opposition to the government's announced policy is interesting. The government faces two new legal challenges to its controversial badger cull policy.

Permission for two Judicial Review legal cases is being sought, one by 'Wild Justice' to challenge the way in which badgers are liable to suffer when culling takes the form of controlled shooting of free running badgers; and one by conservation ecologist Tom Langton, to challenge the government's failure to apply the recommendations of the Godfray Report (the government's own bTb Policy Review of 2018).

Much more information can be found at www.badgertrust.org.uk under Badger Cull News.

Keith Childs, 01291 689 319, madgettsbadgers@gmail.com



UPDATE FOR JULY 2020

We have now missed 5 monthly meetings due to the crisis. We are considering carefully the changes which come into place from the 1st August regarding meetings being held. However, due to the number of Government requirements to ensure a meeting is Covid -19 safe, it is unlikely that we will be able to hold meetings until the autumn.

Members continue to keep in contact with each other by various means. The daily quiz has continued and remains popular. The member who compiles it has to be congratulated on her commitment and ingenuity in producing a varied quiz on a daily basis. The monthly virtual book club has continued, with every member reviewing a book they have read. The Libraries are gradually restarting their service, although they are still not lending out books. We are looking forward to the time when everyone will be able to read and review the same book.

We have continued to provide a monthly contribution to the Forest Food bank, which is gratefully received. In these uncertain economic times, there has been an increased demand for food parcels.

At a National level, the Women's Institute has been very creative in developing on-line/virtual sessions to ensure members could still participate in a wide range of activities. There have been on line Pilates classes and virtual Walking Netball sessions. One of the Walking Netball sessions involved practising your target skills with a pair of socks, a tea towel and a saucepan, which was much harder than it sounded! The WI has a national two year campaign to develop Walking Netball groups. It forms part of the WI's campaign to encourage members to stay active, have fun, be social and reduce loneliness and isolation.

In non-corona virus times, St Briavels WI meets on the 3rd Wednesday in the month at 7.30pm in the Pavilion. New members are always welcome

We wish all the community well. Stay safe and healthy.

Sue Smith



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WYE VALLEY MUSIC SOCIETY

Concert programme update

As you will be aware, we have already postponed the concerts we'd planned for April, May and June until 2021. We were working on a leaflet to publicise the four concerts we had planned for September to January, as we were hopeful these might still take place. Now, three months on, a full return to normality by the end of September seems increasingly unlikely, with the risk that any concert we plan may be subject to exceptional arrangements that may limit its appeal, or even have to be cancelled.

Accordingly we've abandoned the idea of a season leaflet and decided instead to publicise any concerts we think we can stage just 2-3 weeks ahead, including details of any arrangements we will be putting in place to comply with social distancing restrictions then in force.

Because artists involved in music and the arts have been particularly badly hit by the recession brought on by the lockdown, we are planning to offer the musicians who are going to be giving concerts for us in the next 12 months a proportion of their fee in advance. If we can raise £2000 we will be able to offer them each a quarter of their fee, which I'm sure they will be pleased to accept. Any donations towards this will be gratefully received.

New website

Wye Valley Music has a new website. It's very different from the previous one but is now in a form that we hope can be used comfortably from a mobile phone, tablet or iPad. We hope you will find it easy to use. Please visit our new website www.wyevalleymusic.org.uk to join or to renew your subscription, or just to find out more about what we do. If you have any difficulty using it, then do please let us know.

A Little History (part 2)

In the 1970s, as membership of the St Briavels Music Society rose to over 100, it was no longer feasible to meet in members' homes. Concerts were held in a range of new venues, including the parish churches at Hewelsfield and Llandogo, both of which had serviceable pianos, the Assembly Rooms, Lindors, Pilstone House and later in St Briavels Church itself. In the early days, members formed their own choir and at a meeting in 1969 they gave a creditable rendition of "Awake Sweet Love" by John Dowland.

In the 1980s, the society experienced a bit of a wobble, but things were put on a more formal footing with the election of a committee, which held

regular meetings. The arrival of desktop publishing facilitated the production of forward programme leaflets and advance publicity for concerts.

At some point also, the society acquired a famous 'patron', in the form of the distinguished British conductor Vernon George "Tod" Handley (1930 – 2008) who had a home in Monmouthshire. He acquired the nickname "Tod" because his feet were turned in at his birth, which his father simply summarised: "They toddle".

Mike Haines

NEWS FROM THE PANTRY

It's been a time of change...again! Now that we've re-opened to walk-in customers (one at a time), it's been delightful to see how much customers have enjoyed being able to browse at will once again. Thankfully, the weather has been kind so the queue outside the shop has been able to enjoy a bit of sun, a socially distanced chat or two, and time to just let the world go by!

A measure of the success of any shop is how fast it has to be re-stocked, and we are proud to declare that our wholesalers have been kept very busy by Diana, who has also been extending the organic and gluten-free ranges, as well as finding a new supplier of hot-smoked salmon, some of which has been cured with gin – not sure how that works, but why not give it a try? We're always on the lookout for new, locally produced goodies, and now have three different brands of honey for sale, each with their own style and nuances, which represents in so many ways what we have always aspired to do for The Pantry – for it to be a place where you can always find something a little unique.

Of course, following our announcement last month that we will not be able to continue with running the shop after Christmas, it may sound slightly odd for us to be still pushing forward with developing the business, but we really want it to thrive, despite the difficulties that Covid-19 has brought. It is absolutely the case that we're determined to stick to our original intentions to create a vibrant, joyful place for the community and all our visitors to use and enjoy, and we hope to be able to hand it on in as good a state as it can be.

To conclude, here are a couple of statistics from last month:

Number of glass bottle pints of milk sold: 1152

Number of Longhope Bakehouse Sourdough loaves sold: 140

We must be getting something right! Cheers,

John and Di

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BADGER LORE 3

'A Tale of Two Setts' - a true story of local badgers

BY THE TIME BADGER WATCHING for the year began in early spring 2019 the resident population at East Sett seemed to have reduced to three and they were busy digging out huge amounts of soil. Hopes were high that they were preparing new chambers to make room for a growing family. An interesting aside here is that the soil dug out is often so wet and sticky that it makes perfectly shaped balls about the size of tennis balls, formed as the badgers drag it backwards from the sett and it rolls along the tunnel floor. We could go into a bit of geology here, and the sites of setts, but that had better wait for another day. However, back to the story of the badgers abandoning their sett and the last twist in the tale.

IT WAS TUESDAY 1ST. OCTOBER when another spate of digging left mounds of soil and old bedding outside the one entrance (here it is usually moss and pine needles or even small fir branches). 'Probably preparing for the coming winter' was our first thought and then we saw on closer inspection that it was full of bones. It is not unusual to find bones of long gone badgers outside setts like this and skulls especially are often found in this way - I have a treasured collection. But the bones of a whole skeleton was a first for me and they helped to explain that the badgers had abandoned their sett because one of their number had died underground and they had been driven out by the smell. Years later, they scuffed him out and life returned to East Sett.

YOU CAN LEARN A LOT about a badger from its skull. This one was almost certainly a male because of the broad, domed shape of his head, and he had lived to a good old age as confirmed by the height of the crest of bone which runs along the top of his head (9mm) and the amount that it hangs over the back of his skull. Also, the bone there is smooth and hard - all indicators of considerable age. But his teeth show little signs of wear, and they are all there! So, all in all, he had a good life in the fields and woods of rural Gloucestershire - and you can't hope for more than that.

Keith Childs



NEWS FROM THE CASTLE

I am writing this in-between vacuuming up the cobwebs, as I prepare to be ready for our first guests to arrive (the Castle spiders have been very busy in my absence!). I hope that everyone is well and I look forward to being able to see familiar faces around the village once again.

Changes in Opening - as part of the YHA Covid-19 Operations Plan, we are regrettably now unable to welcome any visitors to the Castle until further notice. Access to the Castle will be for residents and deliveries/contractors only. This is a huge and sad change, as we love to be able to share the Castle with everyone. Once the situation changes, we will look forward to resuming our Open Gates policy. However, this is currently not likely to be before March 2021, but we will keep you updated.

Heritage Open Weekend and other events - Sadly, for the first time since I became Manager here (8 years now), we will not be able to participate in the Heritage Open Weekend scheme. We absolutely are hoping to join in once again in September 2021, and plan to resume the July Shakespeare weekend as well. We will let you know dates and other details as this is confirmed.

Hire out the Whole Castle! - We are one of a number of YHA premises that have re-opened as YHA Exclusive Hire for private hire by small family/friend groups. If you visit www.yha.org.uk there are some amazing locations (from our Castle to seaside Lighthouses to huts on hilltops).

Please do email me on stbriavelsmanager@yha.org.uk if you have any questions or would like any information and I will be happy to help.

Linda Harrison, Manager



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STILL WAITING

The Garden Society Committee is meeting in August and we hope to make decisions about when and how meetings will restart. The next meeting on our programme is on 18 September. If it goes ahead, this will be confirmed to members by email and in the September edition of Village News.

IN MY GARDEN

Confused?

I've been thinking a lot about wild flowers over the past year or so, volunteering with a pollinator project. I've been putting information together by looking at research into which native and ornamental garden plants are particularly valuable to pollinating insects. The RHS lists ornamental and native plants available to any gardener trying to plant and manage their garden in a way that benefits wildlife. The list that names which native perennials to plant for pollinators includes meadow species like birds foot trefoil, bugle, self heal, daisy, buttercup and dandelion. However, all of these plants and more also feature in their list of lawn weeds, together with available herbicides to dispatch them!



Late summer flowers and plenty of habitats for wildlife at Wildside Garden, Devon

No wonder people get confused. Garden centres and even supermarkets still display herbicides and pesticides as necessities for the good gardener, despite the overwhelming evidence that insect populations are declining at speed; 70% gone in the last 20 years. To garden in an environmentally sensitive way, we need clear information and advice, not sales talk and mixed messages.

Here's my advice based on 40 years of gardening successfully for wildlife and a year's worth of information gathered from research by scientists and entomologists. 'Weeds' are successful native plants, adapted to our conditions. They have evolved with species of native wildlife for their mutual benefit. Herbicides and pesticides kill plants and animals, disrupt and damage the food web and cause harm to our gardens' ecosystems.

No confusion there then!

Cheryl Cummings

WHAT TO DO THIS MONTH

After a lot of Spring sunshine, we've had a lot of cloudy days, although growing conditions have been generally good. The harvest has begun. August is when the pleasure and pride of growing your own can begin to fade, as a glut needing immediate attention greets you after a long day's weeding!

Things are quieter in the ornamental garden. There will already be seeds to gather, deadheading and tidying to do; but most perennial weeds are losing vigour. Now, ornamental plants provide food for bees and other insects well into the autumn. A carefully managed garden provides food and habitats for a huge range of wildlife. Get the balance right and no pesticides are needed!

- Continue to keep recently planted trees and shrubs well watered, even if it rains
- Feed, water and deadhead tender plants regularly, especially in pots, to keep them flowering
- Cut down fruited raspberry canes and prune blackcurrant bushes after harvesting
- Pot up strawberry runners – grow them on to replace old plants or for a bigger crop next year
- You can give your Wisteria its first prune – next one in February
- Tidy up climbing and rambling roses that flower only once – resist doing too much pruning. Some have very ornamental hips that will light up your autumn garden

Find detailed guidance notes for August on our website: www.wyegarden.com

Christine Haines

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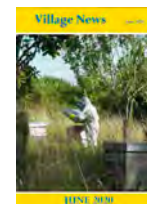
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For more detailed information, go to our website <https://villagemag.co.uk/covers.html>



VILLAGE NEWS MAGAZINE

www.villagemag.co.uk

The September issue deadline is midday on **Tuesday 18th August**

(Adverts and boxed events to be submitted the Friday before)

Editorial: all contributions should be sent to: editors@villagemag.co.uk, or contact any of the Committee Members:

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Layout/typing/adverts: Christine Haines & John French; Collation: Sally Secrett; Treasurer: Joyce McKay

Views expressed within 'Village News' are those of individual contributors, and are not necessarily those of the magazine or its committee members. We reserve the right to amend, edit or refuse any articles.

Advertising: all requests should be sent to: advertising@villagemag.co.uk

Classified: 3-line adverts £3 per month – Display: 1/4 page adverts (A7) £5 monthly, minimum of 3 months. Advertising subject to availability and adverts must be paid for before printing. All cheques payable to: Village News.

Magazine subscriptions: take out an annual subscription for £3.60 by calling Sally Secrett on 01594 530539, email: subscriptions@villagemag.co.uk

OUR PARISH CHURCHES

St Mary the Virgin, St Briavels and St Mary Magdalene, Hewelsfield

Priest in Charge:	David Treharne	01291 760034
Ordained Local Minister:	David Rees	01594 530443
Licensed Lay Reader:	Mandy Vaughan	01594 530844
Churchwardens: St Briavels	Jerry Maltman	01594 530799
	Martin Pagnamenta	01594 531151
Churchwardens: Hewelsfield	Gary Lewis	01594 833020
	Pauline Siddons	01594 530524
Hon. Secretary: St Briavels	Jean Sheraton	01594 531096
Hon. Secretary: Hewelsfield	Pearl Bradney	01594 531075
Hon. Treasurer: St Briavels	Roger Clewett	01291 680436
Hon. Treasurer: Hewelsfield	David Wedel	01594 530633
Organists:	Martin Pagnamenta	01594 531151
	Louise Greening	01594 530421
	Jane Benson	01291 689703
Electoral Roll Officer: St Briavels	David Rees	01594 530443
Electoral Roll Officer: Hewelsfield	Marion Harrison	01594 530264
St Briavels Congregational Church	Pastor: Matt Rees,	01594 530098
Brockweir Moravian Church	Rev Patsy Holdsworth	0117 9078994

TO BOOK OUR VILLAGE ROOMS

Assembly Rooms, St Briavels	Karen Cockfield	01594 530950
Mackenzie Hall, Brockweir	Laura Beddis	01291 689604
Pavilion/Playing Field, St Briavels	Jill Skidmore	01594 530035
School Hall, St Briavels	School Office	01594 530428
The Loft, Village Shop, Brockweir		01291 689995

DOCTORS' SURGERIES

WYE VALLEY PRACTICE

St Briavels Surgery (including out of hours)	01594 530334
Trellech Surgery (including out of hours)	01600 860302

WYEDEAN PRACTICE

Tintern Surgery (including out of hours)	01291 689355
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USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES

Brockweir & Hewelsfield Parish Council	www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org
Brockweir, Hewelsfield & St Briavels Garden Society	www.wyegarden.com
Brockweir Village Shop	www.bandhvillageshop.co.uk
Brockweir Youth Club	www.brockweiryouthclub.co.uk
Mackenzie Hall, Brockweir	www.brockweirvillagehall.co.uk
Parish Grasslands Project	www.parishgrasslandsproject.org.uk
St Briavels Assembly Rooms	www.st-briavels.com
St Briavels on Facebook	www.facebook.com/StBriavelsWatch
St Briavels Parish Council	www.stbriavels-pc.gov.uk
St Briavels School	www.stbriavelsprimaryschool.co.uk
Wye Valley Music	www.wyevalleymusic.org.uk

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS and EMAIL ADDRESSES

POLICE (non emergency calls)	(UK dialling only)	101
POLICE (Coleford)		01452 753797
NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH Field Officer (Chrissie Parkes)		01452 753784
ELECTRICITY	(Power cuts)	08006 783 105
GCC HIGHWAYS	(for potholes etc.)	08000 514 514
GRASS ROUTES BUS SERVICE		08000 858 015
MP (Forest of Dean):	Mark Harper	01594 823482
COUNTY COUNCILLOR (Sedbury)	Patrick Molyneux	01594 529174
DISTRICT COUNCILLOR	Chris McFarling	01594 531225
(St Briavels, Hewelsfield & Brockweir, Alvington) chris.mcfarling@fdean.gov.uk		
PARISH COUNCILS:		
St Briavels		
Chair: Piers Chivers		01594 530552
Clerk:		TBA
Snow Warden: Mike Smith		01594 530332
Footpaths: John Hurley		01594 530890
Hewelsfield & Brockweir		
Chair: Adam Sinfield handbpcadam@outlook.com		01291 689213
Clerk: Lyn Skuse www.hewelsfieldandbrockweirpc.org		01291 680053
Footpaths: Mary Harris		01291 689668
ACTION4OURCARE	Pam Plummer	01594 530008
BADGER CULLING CONCERNS	Keith Childs	01291 689319
	madgettsbadgers@gmail.com	
B.A.D.S	Immy Lee	01291 689512
BROCKWEIR BOWLS CLUB	Bob Broughton	01594 530003
BROCKWEIR EVENTS	Adrian Birch	01291 689812
BROCKWEIR EVENTS SOCIAL TEAM	Cath Baker	01291 689331
BROCKWEIR TABLE TENNIS	Jean Green	01594 530955
BROCKWEIR VILLAGE SHOP	Peter Stickland	01594 530882
BROCKWEIR YOUTH CLUB	Barbara French	01291 689327
CHURCH BELL RINGING	Paul Bergdahl	01594 530623

COMMUNITY WELLBEING AGENT	Richard Skinner	01594 812447
(Village Agent)		07927 051328
GARDEN SOCIETY	John Gooder	01291 689979
HEWELSFIELD against Quarrying	Bob Brown	01594 530147
HISTORY GROUP	John Norman	01291 689418
HOBOS HEDGEHOG RESCUE	Rosie Bishop	01594 531439
MACKENZIE HALL TENNIS CLUB	Ayse Rugg	07766 719950
	Rosalind Eaves	07854 676526
NOSH & NATTER	Pauline Siddons	01594 530524
PARISH GRASSLANDS PROJECT	Sally Secrett	01594 530539
PLAY AREA COMMITTEE	Sarah McLellan	01291 680092
ST BRIAVELS ASSEMBLY ROOMS	Karen Cockfield	01594 530950
ST BRIAVELS LITTER PICKERS	Paul Lounds	01594 530573
ST BRIAVELS MOAT SOCIETY	Sue Davis	01594 531460
ST BRIAVELS PANTRY	Diana and John	01594 530740
	stbriavelspantry@hotmail.com	
ST BRIAVELS PEOPLE'S CHOIR	Louise Greening	01594 530421
ST BRIAVELS EARLY YEARS	School Office	01594 530428
ST BRIAVELS SCHOOL headteacher	Sarah Helm	01594 530428
School bell ringing out of hours contacts:	David Rees	01594 530443
	Chris McFarling	01594 531225
ST BRIAVELS SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB	Sheila Brown	01594 530676
ST BRIAVELS W.I.	Betty Bennett	01291 680018
WATER EMERGENCY		0800 7834444
WILD BOAR / DEER problems:	Tim Hill	01452 830389
WILD BOAR / DEER problems	Barry Hutchinson	07773 332467
WYE VALLEY MUSIC	Mike Haines	01594 531050
WALKING FOR HEALTH	John Hurley	01594 530890
YHA	Linda Harrison	01594 530272
Emergency out of hours number 03006 660132		