

The Bridge

Produced by Elmore Parish Council
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From the Editor

When this magazine was first mooted in 2014 there was a strong directive that it must be strictly non-political. We have had articles from our former MPs, Neil Carmichael and David Drew but they were both told that no political tub thumping would be tolerated. Largely they honoured this, though a small amount did succumb to the editorial delete key.

But now your Editor, sickened by wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, is about to break that rule. He is not a member of a political party or a religious group; he is just a member of the human race so he is not taking sides. **All he is saying to the warlords is for goodness sake.....**

Stop and Think.

Think about the loss of life.

Think about the loss of homes and infrastructure.

Think about the damage to the environment.

Think about the waste of finite resources

Think about our tiny speck in the cosmos. It's our only home and needs us not to fight, but to pull together to solve the crises it currently faces.

Finally please read some history books which, sadly, neither Kaiser Bill, Adolf Hitler, Mussolini or Napoleon Bonaparte did.

He will end with a true story. When he was a housemaster at a local boarding school he learnt that one of his predecessors used to greet the boys with the same words every morning,

‘Good morning, boys. It’s a good day for the race.’

To which the boys would always ask,

‘Which race is that, Sir?’

The reply was always.

‘The Human Race of course’

At present your Editor is not sure he shares that optimism. Neither does he think any warlords read **The Bridge**.

Poems to the Editor

Dear Editor-in-Chief,
Whatever you may say,
You need to have belief
The Bridge is read and seen,
More than just by me!
Indeed some are keen
To receive **The Bridge** at their door.

You gather and sort,
You edit and order,
At times it is fraught
You may well wonder
Should you do more
To produce & deliver,
The Bridge to our door....

It's for us all
To read?
Or throw out?
Or keep by the bed?
Or to contribute instead?
To **The Bridge** at our door.

Which causes dilemma and doubt
As we are
Busy and frantic,
No time to consider,
Compose or create,
What? – in our leisure?
Now that's a fine jape!
However it's
Interesting, informative,

Keeps us in touch,
A fine village thread,
A community link to keep by the bed
The Bridge free at our door, just think!

I say let's keep the press rolling,
Retain this quarterly treasure!
And offer our gratitude
For your hard work in your leisure
Thank you - Editor-in-Chief
For **The Bridge** at our door

Anon

The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe

I think this was probably the best panto the Village Players have produced, certainly in my recollection. All the elements of a good panto were there: singing, dancing, some slapstick and a cast of characters, good, hapless and evil. The Old Woman of the title was Dame Dallymore played by Sarah Younger. Her orphanage (rent unpaid) was under threat of eviction by her landlord, the grasping Squire of Tumbledown played by Ashley Rowles. Luckily a passing giant lost his shoe and so Dame Dallymore and her charges went to live in there. Of course the giant wanted his shoe back but I won't go through the whole plot

Sophie Gibson made an evil though glamorous witch and was greeted at every entry and exit by loud booing and jeering. Her nemesis was the equally glamorous, but unfailingly good, Mother Goose (Yes, several different nursery rhymes were involved as you will see) played by Shauna Neumann. Both were completely word perfect and like the whole cast could be heard at the back of the hall. Mother Goose quirkily had a silver wooden spoon instead of a wand.

Sarah Younger made a splendid Dame with the traditional range of ever more fantastic dresses. Sarah is a long standing member of the company and no stranger to comic roles. She was able to milk every joke and double entendre sometimes just with a raised eyebrow.

The 'Buttons' character – in this panto called 'Giggles' and played by Jack Houston, was the favourite of most of my party. He was

splendidly dressed as a harlequin and could make us laugh with his facial expressions and bodily movements as well as verbally, a rare talent.

The money grabbing Squire of Tumbledown, well played by Ashley Rowles ,of course had a pair of henchmen, Wrack and Ruin, who shared one brain cell, and were comically played by Alfie Spinner and Sean Jarret. Their 'busy bee' scene with Giggles was pure traditional pantomime but I hope they had had extra vaccinations.beforehand The three were also the stars of the schoolroom scene which would send OFSTED into meltdown but had the audience in fits.

Of course you can't have a panto without a Principle Boy and a Princess. The Principle Boy was Corydon, Dame Dallymore's son, played by Molly Voyce. I had look up the name, and Corydon comes from the greek and means 'Battle Ready'. Princess Marigold, played by Ruby Evans was the daughter of Old King Cole (told you there were several nursery rhymes involved) played by Andy Harden. Actually neither Corydon nor Princess Marigold were really central to the action as the Princess was lost in the forest for quite some time and Battle Ready was off looking for her, though they did sing a nice duet together. Old King Cole was deliberately or inadvertently (I couldn't tell which) late making his entries and a little forgetful of his lines but made all this into a joke ably assisted by Dame Dallymore.

There were minor speaking parts for other nursery rhyme characters like Boy Blue (Alfie Evans), Bo Peep (Charlotte Hancock), Mary Mary (Isla Watts) and Tapioca (Paul Gennard) Actually all the children 'The Slippers' or the 'Flip Flops' also had speaking parts and despite being in some cases very young, spoke up well. I think the 'Flip Flops' were performing that afternoon, but we were not told.

The only non-speaking parts were those of the 'Chorus of Villagers and Tourists' which comprised some long standing and older members of the company. Their singing and dancing was very good . The choreographical ingenuity necessary to allow 7 adults to dance convincingly on such a small stage (Blackpool it ain't) was amazing. Leaving many of the major parts to the younger members of the company certainly bodes well for its future.

As always the costumes were superb – easily good enough for a professional production. The music and lighting was also very slick though maybe for the duets the volume of the accompaniment could have been turned down a bit. The need for a very large shoe suddenly to appear and later disappear tested the set builders’ ingenuity but they rose to the challenge.

It has become something of a tradition to award ‘Oscars’ for the panto and this year the acting ‘Oscar’ is shared by Jack Houston and Sarah Younger. A special ‘Oscar’ is shared by Jo Fisher and Shauna Neumann for their work as choreographers. THJ

Local History – The Marcher Castles

Following the Norman invasion in 1066, William the Conqueror, the new King of England, set out to subdue the Welsh, or at least try to keep them at bay, using a fortified barrier. To do this he created three Earldoms along the English border with Wales, these were the Earldoms of Chester, Shrewsbury and Hereford. William installed three of his most trusted Norman confidants, Hugh d’Avranches, Roger de Montgomerie, and William FitzOsbern, as Earls of each respectively. For the next four hundred years the Norman lords and their successors established smaller lordships along the border between the River Dee near Chester in the north and the River Severn near Chepstow. These ‘Earldoms’ gradually stretched further west into what is now Wales and were largely independent of both the English monarchy and the Principality of Wales.

The castles built along the border between England and Wales were known as the Marcher Castles. There were over 25 of these castles and the term ‘marcher’ seems to have emanated from the fact that they were all situated in what is known as the ‘March of Wales’, a term first used in the Domesday Book of 1086. However, another theory that has been mooted was that the castles were built so that they were no more than one day’s march from one to the other so that they could be easily reinforced from each other. This latter theory is quite plausible as the distances between each of the staggered castles was no more than 8.4 miles along the whole of the 150 miles from Chepstow to the Chester.

It was during the 300 years of the post Norman conquest period that many of these castles were built, by both the Welsh and the English. There are more castles in this region than any other region in England or Wales. It is not at all surprising that some of these castles are now little more than ruins, reminders of past attempts to subdue and dominate neighbours. But some of these castles still stand in their strategic positions. Indeed, from Flint Castle in the north to Chepstow Castle in the south the castles of the Welsh Marches are some of the finest examples of medieval architecture that exist today.

The staggered line of castles along this border reinforced two previous attempts by the English to keep the Welsh at bay. In the north there is Wat's Dyke, a 40 mile earthwork barrier from Basingwerk Abbey on the River Dee to Maesbury in Shropshire, thought to have been constructed in the 8th Century by Aethelbald, the King of Mercia from 716 to 757 AD (or CE). However, there is an academic school of thought that dates the construction some 300 years earlier during the sub-Roman period (approx. 410 – 449 AD). Aethelbald's successor Offa, who reigned between 757 and 796 AD, constructed or rather reinforced the better-known, and better preserved Offa's Dyke. This Dyke was a ditch and bank some 8 metres wide and over 2 metres high between natural high features and is about 150 miles long (240kms), forming the border between England and Wales for at least 300 years before the Norman Conquest. The Old English word 'ofer' meant border or edge. One could possibly ask if King Offa was named after his masterpiece of engineering or vice versa? Similar to Wat's Dyke, in some academic circles there is a debate about who actually built Offa's Dyke. There is certainly reference to part of it being constructed by the Romans in the early 5th Century and partly by Offa when he was King of Mercia. It seems that King Offa can be credited with the upgrading of the barrier between Wales and England even if he didn't conceive the idea in the first place. What is evident is that the Romans, the early English Kings and the Normans all felt it necessary to keep the Welsh out of England!

The Normans fortified the defences along the border for the exactly the same reason as had the Romans and Offa and this was because the

warlike peoples who lived in Wales caused countless problems for whoever bordered their land. The Earldoms bestowed by William upon his trusted knights certainly spanned both sides of what is the Welsh border of today. The Earls had a free hand to build as many castles as they liked, without the King's authority, provided they protected England from the Welsh marauding hordes.

Several of the Marcher Castles featured prominently during the English Civil War (1639-1653). Many, if not all, were owned, not surprisingly, by supporters of King Charles I and were therefore occupied by Royalists. However, those that had to be taken by force by the Parliamentarian Army under Cromwell were 'slighted' after they were captured – this means that they were permanently damaged so that could never be used as a fortification again. Berkeley Castle has a classic example of this 'slighting' after it was besieged and captured by the Parliamentarians in 1645 as a large section of the outer defences were destroyed and an Act of Parliament was passed preventing it from being rebuilt and this Act has not yet been repealed. Other castles in England suffered far worse fates and some, like Corfe Castle in Dorset, were almost razed to the ground. Likewise, many of the original Marcher Castles are now just ruins with one or two still occupied by either the British Army (Monmouth Castle) or still in private hands (Clearwell, Croft, Pembridge and Berkeley). Quite a few have been partially restored and are now managed by English Heritage (St Briavels, Goodrich, Clun, Wigmore, Stokesay and Longtown); by The National Trust (Powys, Hopton and Chirk); or by Cadw, the Welsh Government's organisation preserving their national heritage, (Chepstow and Skenfirth). For some of them there is nothing left except the earthworks (Montgomery, Clyro, and Grosmont) as they were probably constructed of timber and easily burnt down during the English Civil War, others have shrunk and are now stately homes open to the public.

Historical Note:

As already mentioned, during the English Civil War castles and fortifications were 'slighted' to prevent further military use. The destruction of fortifications as part of a military campaign and the denial of facilities for enemy armies has been a feature of warfare for

many centuries both during and after conflicts across the world. During the 2nd Punic War (212 – 202 BCE, the Carthaginians vs Romans), Hannibal used the tactic selectively when he attacked the Romans in Italy following his famous crossing of the Alps with his elephants. Some 56 years later, at the end of the 3rd Punic War in 146 BCE, the Roman Senate decreed that the Carthaginian capital city of Carthage (in modern day Tunisia) should be completely destroyed. This was an act of retribution and punishment resulting in the city being razed to the ground, the stones were scattered and the surrounding fields were burnt. There is an apocryphal story that stated that Romans ploughed salt into fields surrounding Carthage but this is unlikely as salt was a precious commodity for the Romans. The expression in use today that ‘someone is worth their salt’ stems from the Roman tradition of using salt as part payment to the Roman Legions. Indeed, the English word ‘salary’ is based on the Latin word ‘salarium’ from the word ‘sal’ for salt.

During the Boer War in South Africa, Field Marshal Kitchener used the tactic extensively by destroying Boer owned houses, farmsteads and livestock as well as putting the civilian population into ‘concentration camps’ or deporting them to prevent them from assisting the Boer fighters. More recently we saw the use of denial tactics by the use of huge quantities (17 million gallons) of ‘agent orange’ by the United States Air Force to defoliate large areas of the Vietnam to deny the Vietcong the camouflage of the jungle for movement on what was the Ho Chi Minh trail from north to south. Such tactics were outlawed in the amendments to the Geneva Convention in 1977. Despite that amendment, in 1991 during the Iraqi retreat from Kuwait, Saddam Hussein’s forces set fire to many oil wells as part of their scorched earth policy. JSF

Elmore WI

In December members enjoyed a hot meal with lots of puddings provided by the committee.

We have a varied programme arranged for 2024:

February: Strange tales from local history illustrated with magic.

March: Work of the Gloucestershire Young Carers.

April: Life in Ireland during the Troubles

May: Talk and samples of Godsell's cheeses.

Anyone is welcome at our meetings which are held on 2nd Tuesday of the month in the Village Hall at 7.30.

Village Players

The 2023 pantomime of The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe was a great success. The princess was rescued, the witch was defeated and the Squire of Tumbledown was bested. We'd like to thank everyone who came along to watch the show, and thank you to everyone who contributed on and off stage to the production.

Our next show will be our annual spring production, this year falling on 25th to 27th April 2024. If your new year's resolution is to get involved in local amdram (on or off stage) we're always looking for new members so please don't hesitate to get in touch via villageplayers@outlook.com. If you prefer being on the audience side of the curtain, then make sure you've Liked our facebook page (facebook.com/villageplayerselmore) to keep up to date with all of the information on the spring production.

The Island Book Club Review

The Whale at the End of the World by John Ironmonger

A fictional village on the Cornish coast is the setting for this sweet little story, when a handsome young man is found in strange circumstances, washed up on the shore, and is taken into the hearts of the villagers. The story of how he arrives gradually becomes apparent and his special talents bring life, certainty and care to a community that learns how to pull together to survive in difficult times. The many different characters (and not forgetting the whale!) are drawn together in ways that are not immediately obvious and this amusing, heart-warming novel gives us an insight into how hope can always be found, even at the end of the world, even when communities are forced to shut down. In light of the recent pandemic, the book, whilst a little over-indulgent, certainly forces us to reflect on the fragility of life.

John Ironmonger is British and his debut novel was shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award in 2012. He was born in Kenya in 1954, went to boarding schools in Nairobi and Ramsgate, Kent, before studying at Nottingham and Liverpool universities where he got his PhD in Zoology - his thesis was on the ecology of freshwater leeches. He then took up a career in healthcare and computing.

His first book, published in 1994, was *The Good Zoo Guide*, a critical review of more than 130 zoos, safari parks, aquaria and bird gardens. Other than that, he has written 5 novels, the latest one published in 2021 being a novella entitled *The Year of the Dugong* which addresses issues of climate change. Our novel was his 3rd novel, originally called 'Sans Oublier la Baleine' when published in France, and 'Der Wal und das Ende Der Welt' in Germany, and then it went on to be republished in the UK as 'The Whale at the End of the World'.

1st Elmore Brownies and 1st Elmore Guides

For this half term 1st Elmore Brownies and 1st Elmore Guides have had some joint meetings together. We held our annual Christmas Party where we enjoyed a silent disco, the girls got to choose different music channels using special headphones and enjoyed dancing to a few classics. We also enjoyed an exclusive event hosted by the BA Events Management Students at the University of Gloucestershire. The students hosted an event where we got to try an escape room, coconut shy, Christmas craft, meditation and dance fitness. We had a fantastic time collaborating with the students. To finish off our term we enjoyed a special Christmas Carol Service hosted by Rev Richard Martin at Elmore Church, a big thank you to Richard for organising. At the service we had girls who took their promise and awarded the badges achieved during the term. We also presented two Ranger Gold Awards, this is the highest award the girls can achieve.

In addition the Brownies had enjoyed hot dogs and sparklers during bonfire week, they also worked on their Express Myself theme, completing the Sensory Story and Catch a Story Unit Meeting Activities (UMA). The Guides also worked on a remembrance craft where we made a poppy wreath. We took the wreath to the

remembrance service at Longney Church. The Guides also completed the Aspirations badge where we had guest speakers from industries such as animal care, sports, arts and dental nursing, this helped the Guides to think about their future careers.

If your daughter is interested in joining Brownies (7-10 years), Guides (10-14 years) or if you would like to volunteer at Young Leader/ DofE Helper (14-18 years) or Adult Leader (18+) please contact Catherine or Jenny on 1stelmore@gmail.com.

News from St John the Baptist Elmore

Regular services at Elmore Church are, 9.30am Holy Communion 1st and 3rd Sundays each month (with choir), 4pm Evensong 2nd and 4th Sundays. There is no service at Elmore on a 5th Sunday.

Easter Day 2024 is on 31 March. Please watch the village Facebook page for details of Holy Week and Easter services.

Do be in touch if I can help you in any way. God bless you

Rev Richard Martin 01452 720015 vicar@hardwicke-elmore-longney.church

For the latest news please see our weekly newsletter posted on our website Elmore: St John the Baptist - A Church Near You

Book review: “Love Without end” by Melvyn Bragg, Sceptre, 2019 I happened upon this in Quedgeley library. It’s a novel but tells the true story of the love between Abelard and Heloise, in France in the C12th. Abelard was a Philosopher, dedicated to critiquing the Bible by using logic. He made many powerful enemies in the Church. Heloise was, she believed, the niece of Fulbert, a Canon at Notre Dame (in fact she was his illegitimate daughter). She was very bright and Fulbert invited Abelard to live in their house and give her private tuition.

Very quickly they fell in love and embarked on a passionate, full-blooded affair. Eventually Fulbert found out, along with the rest of Paris. The couple went into hiding, before secretly marrying to try to minimise the scandal. However, Abelard’s enemies saw their chance to silence him and had him castrated. After that, Abelard became a

monk and resumed his academic career. Heloise, against her wishes (partly because she had borne their son, Astralabe) took lifelong vows and entered a convent.

For 15 years there was no contact between the 2 lovers. Abelard accepted that their relationship could never be re-kindled, but Heloise wanted to try again. So they began a correspondence, which Bragg summarises with great sympathy. The upshot was that Abelard persuaded Heloise to remain friends in this life, and to believe that their love could find full expression again, forever, in heaven. (Hence the book's title).

I found the book very moving to read, having experienced unwanted separation and divorce myself. I admired Abelard's ability to keep his faith, fairly quickly move on and find new meaning for his life in his work. But I felt closer to Heloise, who lost her faith and only rebuilt it after a very long and extremely painful process.

ChristmasLunch

Many thanks to everyone who attended the church Christmas Lunch. We raised about £1706 for church funds which will be a great help as we having repairs done to the church roof and also need to replace our organ. Many people helped with this event especially those who cooked food and donated raffle prizes. It was a lovely community event hopefully enjoyed by all. The PCC appreciate and give thanks for all the support we receive

Jill Hurran PCC Secretary

Longfield's Annual Ale Amble Fundraiser

24th February, 11am – 3pm

Here's a lovely opportunity to take a bracing walk with friends, family and four-legged buddies, whilst raising funds for your local hospice. It's a gentle four mile circular walk, starting and finishing at Stroud Brewery, with optional refreshment breaks at the Bowbridge Arms and Crown & Sceptre along the route. Taking in the hilly Heavens around the Golden Valley, at the end of the walk, you'll be greeted with a free

pint or soft drink and the chance to watch a Six Nations rugby match on the big screen. £15 for adults, £10 for children, which includes a free Longfield T shirt.

Book here: [Ale Amble - Longfield Community Hospice](#)



We had great fun this term renewing old and learning new Christmas carols and songs, mostly in three parts. The Rev Liz gave us a new updated version of "the First Noel" by Bob Chilcott to learn and sing in the Stroudwater churches. Headed "for Church of England premier choirs only." We were up for the challenge.

Always looking for new venues we were pleased to be asked by Highfield Garden Centre to perform at their Christmas open evening at the end of November. David our Musical Director added a few well-known Christmas songs to the programme making it into a sing along. A very enjoyable evening and a good start to the festive season. We also joined the congregations at Fretherne's Christingle, Arlingham and Frampton's carol services. Sociable occasions always put us in the Christmas mood especially our visit to the Three Horseshoes. The icing on the cake as ever is our concert at Wisma Mulia in the New Year.

We are a friendly local community choir meeting in term time, 7.30pm Thursday evenings in Frampton Village Hall. No auditions required. Subs £120 per year. New singers always welcome, especially men! Either turn up or contact Pam Greenfield on 01452 740126.

Rotary in the Severn Vale

The poor winter weather has not prevented our regular breakfasts, ongoing community activities and social events.

Early November our speaker at breakfast was Alan Jones - 'Learning the Piano'. He gave a potted history of his life and love of music, starting with the almost obligatory six years of weekly piano lessons and apparently not

getting very far. His downfall was Hank Marvin, Chuck Berry and Burt Weedon's 'Play in a Day' teaching guide. A succession of electric guitars followed, culminating in the ultimate, a red Fender Stratocaster. With the passing of time, the fingers and thumbs becoming less articulated, Alan returned to the piano, progressing to an electric organ. Lockdown allowed him the time to practice for hours on end, picking out chords and playing confidently with both hands - those six years of lessons in earlier life were not in vain

Our next speaker was Mike Naylor on the north Oxfordshire village of Wroxton, where he spent his formative years living in a cottage on a country estate owned mostly by Trinity College Oxford. Thatched cottages with no indoor facilities and a schoolroom for 30 children gave an almost 'Lark Rise' image. Its claim to fame is as the home and burial place of Lord Frederick North. Having lost the American colonies he was reputed to be 'Britain's worst ever Prime Minister' . . . until recent times perhaps. As he grew up Mike became interested in the work of the land charity agent, who happened to be driving a rather nice sports car and decided this was the career for him. He found work as an articled clerk in Banbury, and in due course with further study gained his qualifications for RICS. And the rest is history...

The following meeting saw three guests, one of whom was former Severn Vale member Graham Littleton. The speaker was Sarah Dunning, CEO of the Westmorland Group. A family business started in 1972 from a farm in Cumbria which runs the unique motorway service areas at Cairn Lodge, Tebay and Gloucester. Opened in 2015, the Gloucester operation has 130 producers within 30 miles of the site, and employs around 500 people. Around 50 are from the Bridging the Gap Programme which supports the long term unemployed back into work. 3p in every £1 of non fuel sales - over £600,000 pa - is donated to Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, which funds sustainable community projects through local partnerships. A particularly interesting presentation.

The last meeting of 2023 was for our Christmas breakfast - Bucks Fizz on arrival, the usual full English breakfast plus smoked salmon, Christmas cake, mince pies and pastries. No-one left wanting more. A fair sprinkling of Christmas jumpers and chicken headwear added to the occasion. Entertainment was in house: Rob Toseland read two amusing festive poems. This was followed by Helen Wuscher who read a very moving self penned piece about her father as a 9 year old boy in Germany on Christmas Eve in 1944. His wish was for nothing more than peace . . . just as relevant in our

world today. The session ended with Geoff Smith reading a piece based on the Twelve Days of Christmas. A young lady was the recipient of the ever growing list of presents from her lover. The changing tone in her daily 'thank you' letters from deep affection to despair and mental breakdown was very funny, with the final letter being sent by her solicitor.

Our traditional Christmas Float played Christmas music and raised funds for local causes while entertaining children in the local villages. Our next social gatherings with family and friends continue, the next being – **Race Night at The Anchor at Epney - our popular Quiz and Curry evening, Friday 1st March. Why not come and join us ?**

If you'd like to come along to one of our breakfast meetings on first and third Tuesday of the month, The Whitminster Inn 07.15am please contact keith.rog@hotmail.co

Citizens' Advice

I've built up a bit of debt and I am panicking. Even though I cut back, my spending has gone up and what I have coming in just doesn't stretch as far as it used to. What can I do?

The first step is to **collect all the information you have about your debts**, this might include contracts, bills and statements.

Next, make a list of your debts and write down the details of each.

This could include who you owe money to, when you first missed a payment, and how much you now owe. You'll also need to make a note of your account or reference number and what steps the person or company has taken to get the money back, eg. sending you letters.

If you are behind on household bills, prioritise paying your rent or mortgage, plus energy bills and Council Tax first. Not paying these bills has the most serious consequences. You should speak to the person or company you owe money to, to see if there are any manageable steps you can take to start reducing your debt.

Once you've got these debts under control, you should look at any other debts like credit card or store card debts, payday loans or missed Buy Now Pay Later payments.

You can find further advice on dealing with debts, as well as support for energy and living costs, and possible benefit entitlement, on the Citizens Advice website – www.citizensadvice.org.uk

There is also emergency support that you may be able to access, such as a food bank or fuel vouchers.

If you cannot access the website or need further help you can contact Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswold Districts on 0808 800 0510 or 0808 800 0511 Monday to Thursday, or Email us using the form on our website (www.citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk).

From the Parish Council

Happy New Year to all our readers.

Due to the ongoing problem we have within the village of people chucking litter out of their cars, especially at the two lay-bys, we plan to have a litter bin installed in the main lay-by at the west end of the village (between the Old Shop and Brook Street Cottage). We are in conversation with both Glos Highways and SDC to ensure that it is installed correctly and will be emptied regularly. If that bin is used as intended and helps alleviate the problem, we will look into installing another bin in the Kenton Green lay-by.

Some of you will have been given 40 mph stickers to put onto your wheelie bins. These were to visually prompt drivers, on a regular basis, to check their speed while passing through the village. It is good to see that they are being used. If anyone else would like some then please get in touch with one of us.

I wanted to let some of you know that last year a very useful WhatsApp group was formed for Elmore Villagers. It was set up by residents (not the Parish Council), just for people living in Elmore. It provides a very quick and easy way to ask questions (e.g. can someone recommend a plumber; is Stonebench passable) and share information and knowledge. For those of you who aren't familiar with WhatsApp - it is a free messaging service (it's not social media) which lets users of smartphones call and exchange text, photo, audio and video messages with others across the globe for free, regardless of the recipient's device. If you are interested in joining the Elmore WhatsApp group, then ask a neighbour or one of us.

You may be aware that the next scheduled elections will be the full district and parish elections on Thursday 2 May 2024. This will mean that all 5 current members of Elmore Parish Council are required to

seek re-election, provided they wish to continue serving as Councillors. Two of us, including myself, feel it is high time to stand down and let others take over. Therefore, we would very much like to encourage people to apply to be a Parish Councillor, as we need **at least** two more Councillors. So, if you would like to know more about what being a Councillor involves, please get in touch with either myself, or The Clerk. Details and nomination papers can also be found on the SDC website.

What happens if only 5 nominations are received by Stroud District Council?

If no more than 5 nominations are received by Stroud District Council by the deadline date then all those who submit their registration in time will be 'deemed elected' and a formal election will not be necessary.

But what happens if we don't get enough nominations?

If there are not enough people who either seek re-election, or seek election for the first time, then there is the strong possibility that Elmore will no longer have a Parish Council and all administration may be taken over by Stroud District Council or we may be forcibly amalgamated with a neighbouring parish. **PLEASE SEE BELOW**
Ed I don't believe this is something we want to happen, so I would ask you all to please think hard about your role in the community.

Lastly, if you think the Parish Council can assist you in any village related issue, then get in touch via the details on the back page, or come along to one of the meetings. The dates are published in the Bridge, on the Elmore Parish Council website and posted on the village noticeboards.

Nick Meek (Chair)

EDITORIAL NOTE (Please read this) In both the cases Nick outlines we would lose control of our own administration and finances. As Elmore Parish Council (through part of your council tax) finances the ongoing maintenance of the defibrillators (batteries, and pads etc) and the publication of The Bridge **we would lose both of these in due course**. The other things the Parish Council does (eg funding the Jubilee Tree, helping to fund the Jubilee celebrations, providing salt bins and litter bins etc) would become much more 'clunky' if not

impossible, being dependent on distant administrators and bureaucrats.

WE NEED TO KEEP OUR PARISH COUNCIL SO PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING AS A PARISH COUNCILLOR.

Any of the current councillors or the Parish Clerk would be pleased to give more you detail about what being a councillors involves. THJ

More Litter Picking

November 11th saw another great turnout of just under 20 people for the second village litter picking event. We collected about 30 bags of rubbish, mainly along the Haywicks Lane/Elmore Road stretch. As this is on top of the litter many Elmore residents regularly collect on their daily or weekly walks, it is just so disappointing: all the more so because that very same night more empty fast food cartons were thrown onto the verge between Kenton Green and Farleys End, and it was only a couple of weeks' after this that the area around the layby near the Stonebench turn looked like we had never even been there to clear it up. The layby bins cannot come quickly enough. Huge thanks to everyone who took part in the village event, and those that continue to collect rubbish as part of their daily or weekly routine.

Hamish Pitt

Another Local Limerick

The nice folks at Wholly Gelato
Produced a new flavour, Tomato
A big hit in the UK
It flopped in the USA
Where tomayto doesn't rhyme with gelato

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

Pleased to announce that our planned refurbishments and upgrades to the Hall are now complete. The safety and comfort of our users are now further improved. Two new users have booked ongoing sessions

in the Hall. One is a dance school for younger children and the other a yoga group.

Dance - Chloe floiditydanceschool@gmail.com (07538 931117)

Yoga – Blanka bluemoonyoga@hotmail.com (07450 270974)

Best wishes to them both

Having taken a break from fundraising last year, we will be organizing the Christmas lunch on Sunday 15th December 2024 (in aid of Hall funds). We are also considering a function (also in aid of Hall funds) this year. Details to be announced.

The Hall is the Polling Station for local elections on Thursday 2nd May this year

Demand for space in our Hall is steadily increasing, early bookings (or enquiries) are advisable. I look forward to hearing from you.

Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall.

John (Hardisty) Chair

01452 721798 or pikelett@hotmail.com

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Parish Council Meeting Dates 2024

Monday 18th March

Monday 20th May (Annual Meetings)

Monday 16th September

Monday 2nd December

All the above are held in the Village Hall, 7pm

Copy Dates for The Bridge 2024

Friday May 10th

Friday August 2nd

& Friday October 11th

Please send any copy to the editor on or before the above dates. Regular contributors will be warned of each of the dates 2 to 3 weeks in advance. Hardcopy should be sent to Rose Cottage, Elmore, GL2 3NS and electronic copy to rosecottage1818@gmail.com