

Village News

in Swindon Village

*Your local Newsletter sponsored by the
Parish Council and delivered by volunteers*

No. 464 July 2020



*An image from the lockdown - Talking to Mum and Dad by phone
from their own front garden*

Now, where were we before we were so rudely interrupted?

Our last Village News was published in April so the articles were written in mid March. One could argue that either a lot or very little has happened since then. Coronavirus brought the world to its knees and that is a pretty momentous thing. Hopefully none of us will see the like again. On the other hand, with everyone having to endure lockdown, we cannot expect our community groups to report much activity.

In my last article I mentioned that the Parish Council would be doing what it could to support the community through difficult times. We set up a dedicated telephone line (**07395 906 6333**) and email address (**heretohelp@swindonparish.org.uk**). Both those lines of communication remain active today. They are there for people who are vulnerable or in need of assistance, and also for volunteers who are willing to help others. Elsewhere in this issue James will talk about the results of these initiatives.

For the Parish Council to be effective it must communicate with (and listen to) the community. With this in mind we have our website that is regularly updated and (in normal times) the Village News. However, people choose how they wish to receive news; we can't dictate to them. Whether we as individuals like it or not, Facebook has become the "standard" for many people. We now have a Facebook page where the Parish Council can publish its news and announcements, and a Facebook group where people can participate in discussions.

Technology-based solutions are wonderful, but the absence of the printed Village News has been keenly felt, and we hope you welcome its return. It is important to many people. At the heart of the publication effort is Karen, our long serving (and suffering) volunteer editor. Like all volunteers, Karen tends to find herself supporting a range of activities, not just the Village News. Karen has been pulled in different directions long enough and has decided it is time to pass the baton to a new editor. She would welcome the involvement of someone with new ideas who can carry this parish institution forward. Initiatives like a parish magazine don't often stay the course. We can be very proud that our Village News has been published for so many years and has remained relevant and interesting. We are also grateful to Hugh who organises delivery and to Stuart as sub-editor, but if we cannot find a replacement for Karen the Village News will die. It's that simple.

We have welcomed back former councillor Arran who has re-joined the Parish Council to assist during the coronavirus crisis, and we also

appreciate the support that the Council has received from Bernard and Flo, our Borough Councillors.

These difficult times have brought out the best and the worst in people. On the negative side we have seen increases in fly tipping, graffiti and people failing to clear up after their dogs.

On the positive side we have seen members of the community volunteering to support others, so well done to you! We have had people doing litter picks on their own initiative. We have also seen our councillors rolling their sleeves up and getting stuck in. Helen removed graffiti from our new bench. Helen and Arran cleared some rubbish dumped by a selfish, inconsiderate fly tipper in the amenity area. James has led our coronavirus response and, together with Arran, established our Facebook presence.

Please remember that many issues that you might come across in the parish can be reported directly via [FixMyStreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com). This includes issues such as blocked footpaths, fly tipping, blocked drains, etc. None of these matters are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Like many organisations we have been conducting meetings using video conferencing. Until recently all councils had to meet in person. The Government changed the law temporarily as part of its response to the pandemic. It is still a legal requirement that council meetings must be open to the public. You can obtain details of how to access the meetings by contacting me.

Funds have now been committed to make M5 junction 10 four way rather than two way. This will enable traffic from the north of Cheltenham to get on southbound without having to go across town to junction 11 (the Golden Valley). Similarly, traffic coming north on the M5 destined for the north of the town will be able to get off at junction 10 rather than, again, getting off at junction 11 and trolling across town. The limitations of the junction have been a barrier to the Elms Park development, of which more in another article in this issue.

On a lighter note, I heard a story of a husband taking over as a parish clerk from his wife. He described himself on correspondence as the “transitioning clerk”. When people saw that the clerk was transitioning from Jane Smith to David Smith they got entirely the wrong impression.

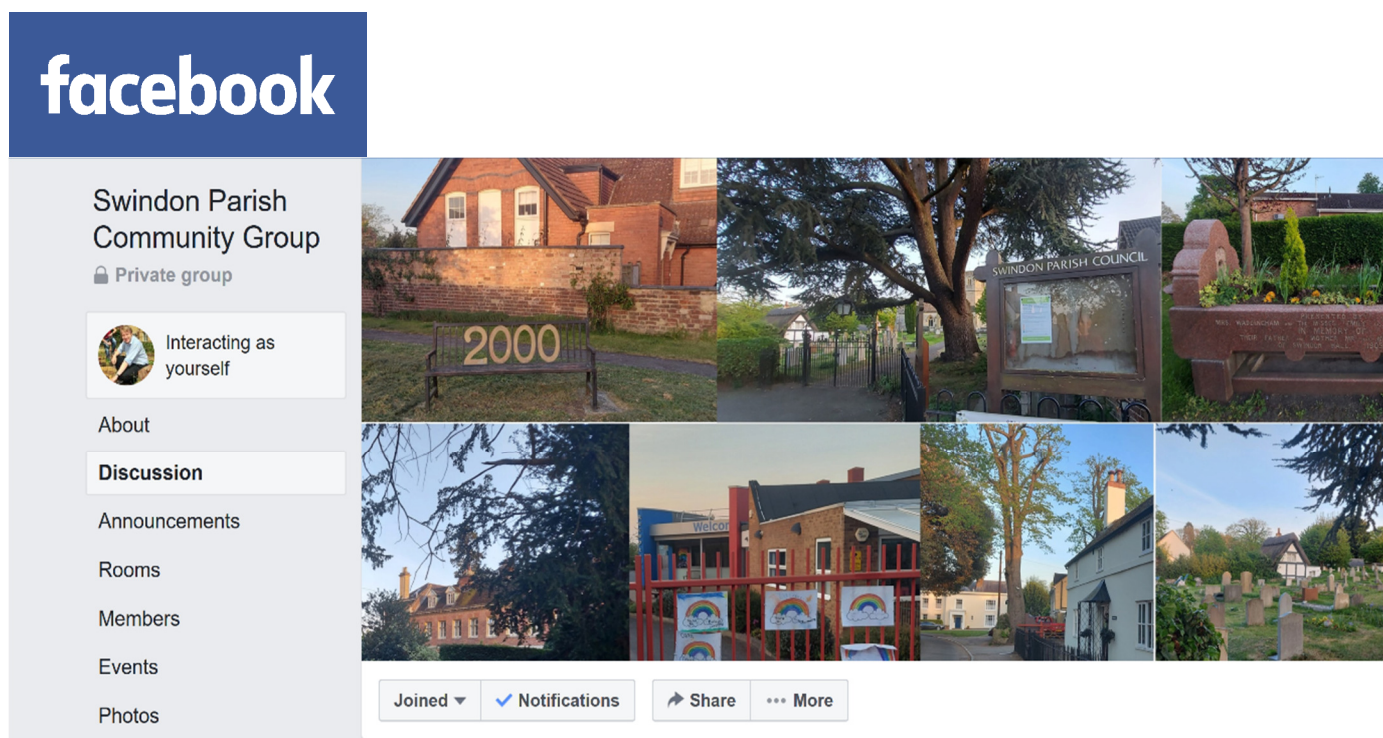
Shaun Cullimore

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

NEW COMMUNITY FACEBOOK PAGE AND GROUP

Join Swindon Parish Council's page and group for information and discussion of key issues in the local community.



Swindon Parish Council is pleased to announce that we have set up a Facebook page for official announcements and a Facebook group for community discussions. These are proving popular, with more than 200 members/followers and are an excellent way to share news of what's going on in the Parish and gather views of residents. There have been some lively issues so far!

The community discussion group is for everyone who lives in the parish – and if you are getting this newsletter then you do live in the parish! You can post anything relevant to the community in the group: lost dogs, an event that's going on nearby, a request for help, something you are giving away, recommendations, photos you've taken of the area, etc. If you run a local independent business and offer a service which local residents may find useful then you can let people know about it.

If you don't have Facebook or the internet then you can ask a friend or relative to join on your behalf and keep you updated on what's going on. Please do join – the more people on the group the more people there are to offer help and interesting information.

You can find the information page here:

www.facebook.com/swindonparish

and the community discussion group here:

www.facebook.com/groups/swindonparishcommunitygroup

Successes so far are: gathering comments on a controversial new development of 260 houses on Manor Road; sharing some lovely photographs and experiences of contact with local nature; discussing ways of sharing fruit and vegetables and keeping the village clean; reporting some stolen items; reuniting someone with their lost keys; letting people know about local people who run food and coffee services and can deliver; clearing up some worries about giant hogweed (it was native hogweed in the end!), and lots more...

Parish Council Meetings

By law the public must be able to "attend" parish council meetings, so that includes meetings conducted via Zoom. Meetings are normally as per the old schedule (i.e. second Tuesdays).

Three clear days notice of a meeting must be given. The law has temporarily been relaxed not only to allow virtual meetings but also to allow notice to be given via a website, so paper notices are not going up on the noticeboards at the moment.

Details are on the Parish website **www.swindonparish.org.uk**

Supporting Our Community: COVID-19

Back in mid-March, with the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic becoming clear, the Parish Council launched the Here to Help scheme with a call for volunteers to support those isolating or shielding at home across the Parish. We asked for your help, and we were overwhelmed with the response. Within two days of our request being delivered through your door, thanks to the Village News team, we had over 30 volunteers.

Since the scheme launched, we have seen a steady trickle of requests for help. Each person in need has been assigned a buddy, all of whom have been working hard! Our volunteers have been doing regular food shops, picking up prescriptions, and even the odd bit of gardening. In total our volunteers have delivered over £1,500 worth of shopping to residents across the Parish. A truly remarkable number! It has been really heart-warming to see new friendships blossom over the last few months as volunteers and those needing support have got to know each other. I've had plenty of reports of regular hour-long phone chats!

Our volunteers, in the words of one resident, have been a real lifeline. I'd like to extend a huge thank you on behalf of the Parish to everyone who volunteered, but especially to Cat, Karen, Neil, Trina, Nikki, Jane, Wendy, Dave, Lisa and Rachel for all their hard work. You have made such a difference to residents' lives! You are a credit to our community.

As we have moved through the peak and are now on our way "down the mountain" (at least for the moment) the Parish Council has been working with Cheltenham Borough Council to ensure those who need support continue to receive it. It is likely that we will all be living with COVID-19 for some time, so it's really important that our support offering is viable in the long term. The Here to Help scheme will continue to run as long as there is demand, or until it is replaced with a similar, potentially more comprehensive service.

Alongside local charities, business, community groups and other Parish Councils, we have joined Cheltenham Borough Council's Food Distribution Forum. The aim of the forum is to provide a more coordinated and sustainable approach support to those in need across Cheltenham. The forum has established four working groups, each exploring how we can improve different elements of food provision and other related support services. I hope to be able to report back in the next couple of months with the results!

As a Council we are always looking for new ideas of how we can support the Parish. In May, Cheltenham Borough Council launched the Cheltenham Community Resilience fund. The purpose of the fund is to support local community groups who are supporting vulnerable people during the Covid-19 crisis. If you have an idea for a scheme that could help those within the Parish, but requires some funding to get it off the ground, please do get in touch!

James Cornish

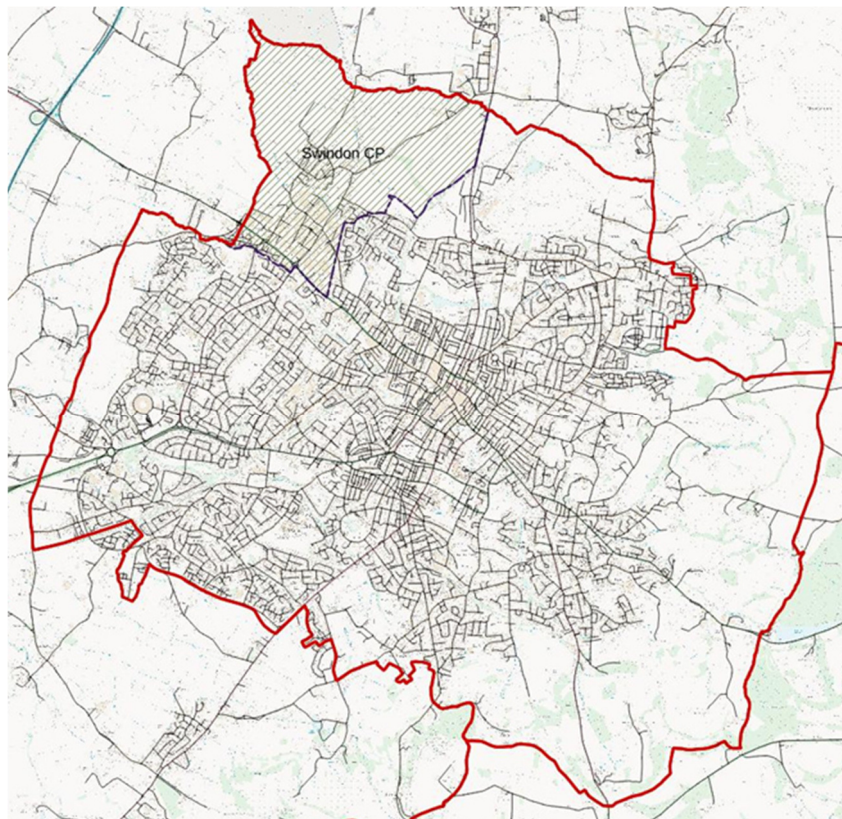
Councillor, Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

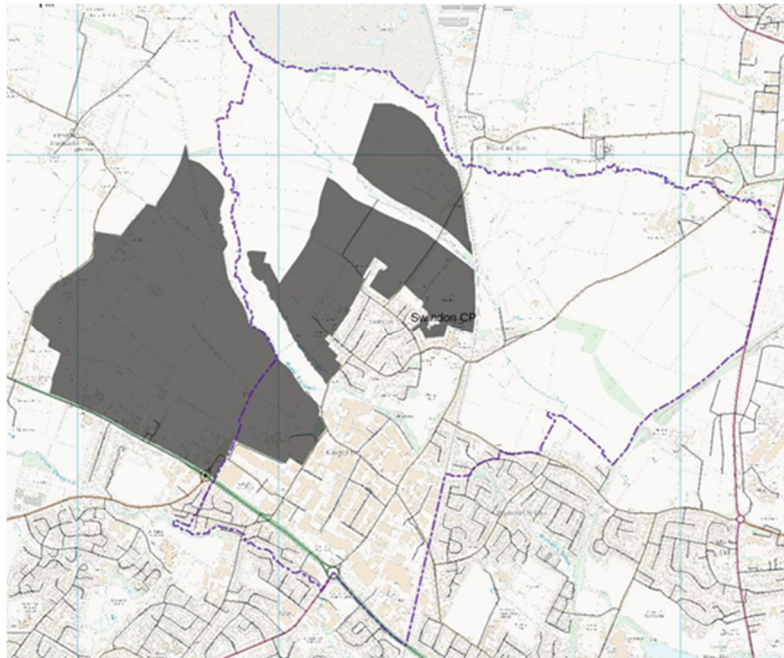
Elms Park in Pictures

A picture is supposed to be worth a thousand words. With this in mind I thought I would show you a series of maps to illustrate the latest position in respect of Elms Park. I know you won't be able to see detail but hopefully they will give you the general, well, picture!

An outline planning application was made in 2016 for the development of the North West Cheltenham Urban Extension (16/02000/OUT on the Borough Council's planning portal), known to the developer as Elms Park. To date a decision has not been made on the outline application, mainly because of concerns about the impact it would have on local traffic. The situation was made more complicated by the Borough Council's ambition to create the Cyber Central Garden Community at West Cheltenham. The recent decision to make M5 Junction 10 four way should improve the traffic situation somewhat, however, the effect of adding 3000 new homes at West Cheltenham to 4000 homes at North West Cheltenham is not yet clear enough for the Elms Park outline planning application to receive approval.

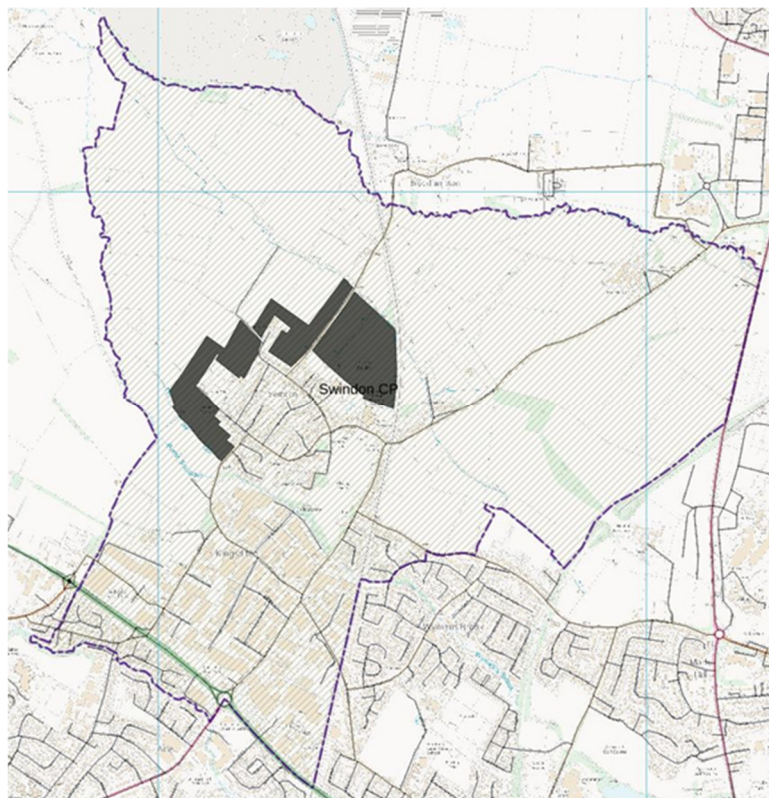


The above picture shows you how Swindon Parish sits at the North West corner of Cheltenham. Now let's consider the area of land that is allocated for housing at North West Cheltenham so that you can see the significance.

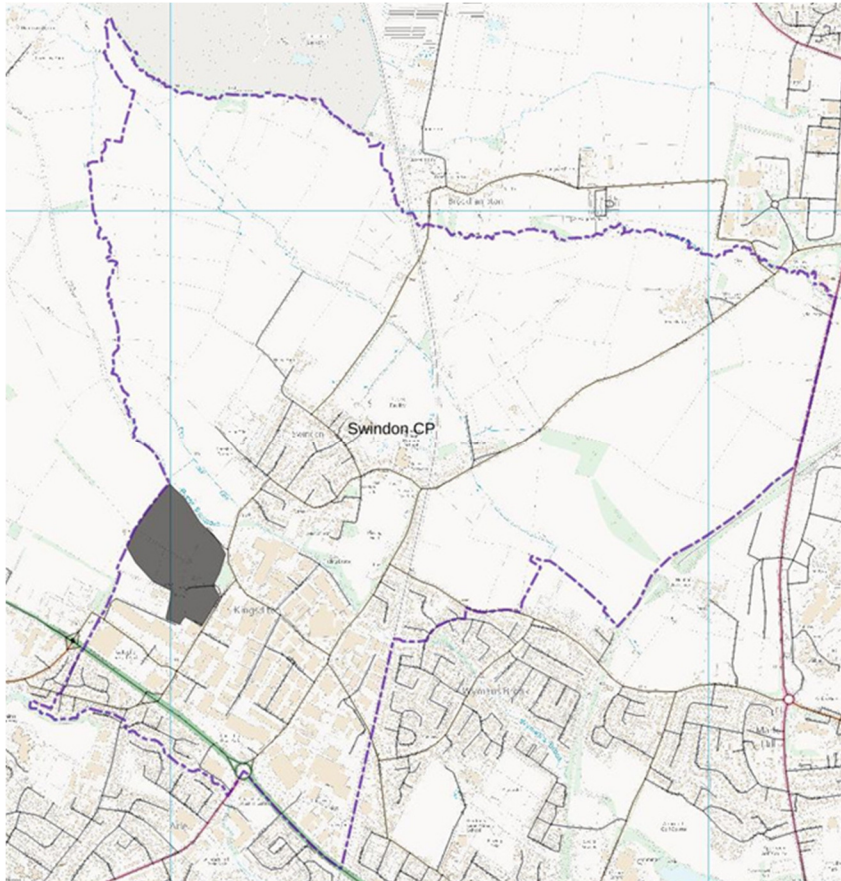


The area to be developed is spread across the parishes of Swindon and Uckington.

Of course, because we won our battle for some Local Green Space, some of the area shown will be excluded from development. The area of Local Green Space is shown below.



So, the arguments rumble on about the overall Elms Park outline planning application. However, in the meantime a full planning application has been made by Persimmon Homes for 260 houses, the first tranche of the Elms Park development. This is being referred to as the Swindon Farm development (20/00759/FUL on the Borough Council planning portal). The area the development occupies is shown below.



Some things to think about.

It is proposed that this area will contain 260 new homes.

This is only about 6% of the overall Elms Park development, but it is entirely within Swindon Parish and will increase the population of the parish by approximately a third.

It is proposed that traffic from this new development will emerge onto Manor Road.

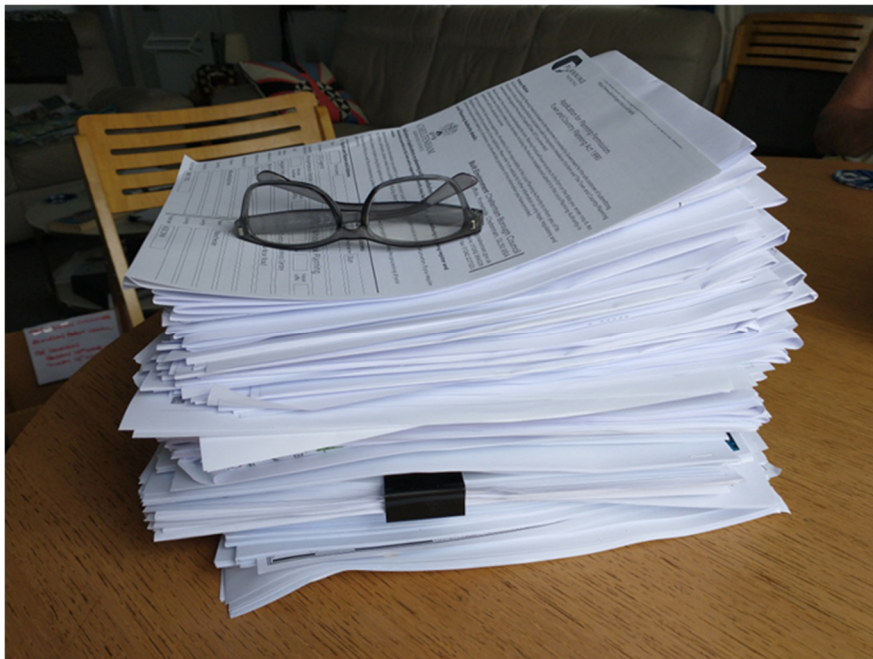
This full planning application has been made, and will probably be determined, even though the outline planning application of which it is a part has not yet been approved.

This first development consists entirely of homes. Elms Park as a whole is supposed to include schools, shops and medical facilities. If Elms Park is built piecemeal, when will these basic infrastructure needs be met?

In the end the Joint Core Strategy and the Cheltenham Local Plan gave the green light to the building of over 4000 houses at North West Cheltenham, so it will happen. We must now work to ensure that the development is of a high standard, good for the people that live there and not to the detriment of people already living in the area.

By the time you read this article the consultation period for this planning application will officially have closed. However, it is likely to be some weeks before the application will be determined. Everyone is entitled to submit their views to Cheltenham Borough Council and I am assured they will be considered right up to the moment when the decision is made.

One last picture for you. This is what a planning application for 260 homes looks like!



Shaun Cullimore

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

The Rural Landscape

Our local paths and parks have always been popular with walkers, especially those with dogs. Due to the coronavirus pandemic sporting activities, gyms and swimming pools have been closed, limiting opportunities people have to exercise. The result has been an increasing number of people walking the fields. Without a doubt this area, with its rural footpaths, is very attractive, and people are drawn here from within the community and from further afield. It is also popular with folk who offer dog minding and exercising services. Their vans are seen regularly at the entrance to Dog Bark Lane and at the Elmstone Hardwicke end of the bridleway.

In recent weeks things have become heated between the farming community and other users of the land. Both sides have cause for complaint, so, as usual, there are no easy answers.

Walkers and horse riders consider that access to footpaths and bridleways is being made difficult by ploughing and the installation of gates.

Farmers complain that people roam where there is no public access. Dog owners do not clear up after their dogs, polluting the land and endangering livestock. This is undoubtably true, though I suspect that many of the perpetrators come from outside our community.

Additionally, farmers, walkers and horse riders alike will all be alarmed at the regular fly tipping that is occurring, particularly while the local recycling facilities have been closed. And I am sure that dog excrement not being dealt with by the dog owner annoys both the farming community and responsible walkers in equal measure. Leaving the mess is not acceptable. Bagging it and flinging the bag in a hedge or ditch is not acceptable. The Borough Council is able to apply a fixed penalty of £80 to people who fail to clear up after their dogs in parks and public spaces. Sadly, I don't believe this has ever happened.

There are misconceptions around these issues, so let's look at the law.

Farmers have an obligation to keep footpaths available to people who want to use them. If the line of a footpath is ploughed or planted it should be restored in a timely fashion. Bridleways must be suitable for the passage of horses and riders.

It is perfectly acceptable for walkers with dogs to use footpaths but their dogs must be under control (particularly in the presence of livestock) and have no right to roam beyond the footpath.

The public has no additional right of access to a field simply because there isn't a crop planted. Whether there is a crop or not walkers should keep to footpaths.

It is not legal to use motorcycles on footpaths or bridleways. It is also unreasonable to expect a path or a bridleway to be made "pushchair friendly". You are in the country. There may be rough surfaces, gates and styles.

We have some beautiful scenery in our area. Without turning this article into a sermon, wouldn't it be great if everyone simply acknowledged and discharged their responsibilities? There is no reason why the land can't be worked by the farming community whilst also being enjoyed by the public without conflict.

Shaun Cullimore

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

<https://swindonparish.org>

"If you have concerns about anti-social behaviour do not hesitate to contact the police.

Ring 101 (you may be charged for this call)
or email 101@gloucestershire.police.uk

Get an incident number and let the parish council know about it.
If the police are not made aware of a problem **THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM**".

A Month In The Life Of A Parish Councillor



Cllr. James Cornish

Chances are if I asked you to think of what it's like to be a Parish Councillor, you'd probably imagine a scene from the Vicar of Dibley. Well, in normal times, we do meet at the local village hall, but that is where the similarities end. To provide you with an insight into what being a Parish Councillor is all about, I've been keeping a record of everything I've been up to this month. Do bear in mind this is only just my month; the rest of the team have their own actions and projects which they have been working on!

Well it's 10pm on a warm Tuesday evening and we've just wrapped up our latest Parish Council meeting. Since moving to online meetings using Zoom, our meetings are taking a little longer, but we've just covered a lot of ground from COVID-19 to the incoming planning application for the first phase of the new Elms Park development. Tonight, I've not picked up any new actions, but our auditor has highlighted our lack of a "risk management" policy. A couple of months ago, I volunteered to write it, so I had better start!

Thursday's agenda is a meeting with Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC). Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, we've been holding regular meetings with representatives from CBC. It's an opportunity for us to share the latest news from the Parish, partially about our Here to Help scheme, and for CBC to share the latest council information and planning on the pandemic. It has proved a useful forum and both councils have committed to continuing it post-pandemic. The meeting's at 3pm, so not everyone can make it as all of us work, but Helen and I have managed to move things around to attend.

It's now the weekend. Time now to fit in a bit of Parish Council business. I've been leading the Parish Council response to COVID-19. My main job is to coordinate our wonderful volunteers and make sure they aren't out of pocket for all the shopping they've been doing. So, it's time to open up my spreadsheet and go through the latest batch of receipts. No time to start work on the risk management policy this weekend; despite lockdown,

we've got a busy social schedule in front of the iPad!

So, a whole week has gone by since I last jotted anything in my notepad down. Work has been busy, and I've started my latest DIY project: some new raised beds for the garden, so no time to do any Parish Council business this weekend, apart from posting a couple of updates on our Parish Council Facebook page.

It's been lovely and hot lately but, with the heat, you may have noticed a really bad stench. A post to our Facebook page has revealed it's not just me who can smell it. A quick email to Shaun for advice and I'm drafting an email to the Environmental Agency and CBC Environmental team. I get an automated response from CBC's team; they have cut back their activities because of COVID-19. I've asked Shaun to add the item to the agenda, and several members of the public have asked to attend our next Parish Council meeting to discuss the subject. This week, the Parish Council met informally as part of our COVID-19 response to discuss the latest situation. The meeting only lasted 30 minutes, but it was a useful check-in to discuss the latest news from CBC and central government.

It's now the end of the month and time for some more admin; I need to create invoices for the Here To Help scheme. Luckily, I've got a free Saturday afternoon. So, once all printed, it's off for a nice walk around the Parish to deliver them along with a copy of everything to Shaun so he can audit it.

It's Tuesday evening and I've just checked my Parish Council email. The planning allocation for Phase 1aa of Elms Park has landed! Emails start flying around between council members over the next couple of days as we get ourselves organised. The application has 69 documents associated with it, many of which are lengthy and written by specialists. Peter has advised us all to read the Design & Access Statement because it provides a good summary of the application. I've volunteered to review the Utility Statement and Sustainability and Climate Emergency Statement. If we were in normal times, we'd likely organise an event for the Parish to come and provide feedback on the application at the village hall. With COVID-19 in full swing, this isn't possible. So, it's time to put our new Facebook page to work! And sure enough, we get quite a response.

It's the weekend again! Next week is our Parish Council meeting, so I've set aside Sunday evening to work up the Parish Council's Risk Management policy. Thankfully Shaun has sent me a bunch of information and examples, so I know roughly what to aim for. I've also written my fair share of processes in my job, so it only takes a couple of hours and I have

a solid draft. My fiancée Zara is on proof reading duty and the draft policy is sent to the rest of the council for comment.

Not quite leaving everything to the last minute, but I need to review the Utility Statement and Sustainability and Climate Emergency Statement before the next meeting. I spend an hour writing detailed comments on the Utility Statement. The comments on our Facebook post are pretty helpful here. Residents have picked up various issues, which I have included in the Parish Council response. I've not had time to write detailed comments on the Climate Emergency Statement, but we've still got two weeks to pull everything together.

Its 7:30 pm, Tuesday 9th June and time for the monthly Parish Council meeting. I won't bore you with the details here, but if you're interested you can read the minutes on our website (<https://www.swindonparish.org.uk>). I've asked that everyone review the risk management policy before our next monthly meeting so I can incorporate their comments. One of the biggest risks we face as a Parish Council is not having enough Parish Councillors. We have room for nine, but there are currently only five of us. We need a minimum of three to function properly. The more people we have, the more issues we can tackle!

This month has been a busy one! It's not always like this. But hopefully it's given you a bit of insight into what we Parish Councillors get up to. Perhaps it has sparked your interest in maybe joining. If you would like to find out more, don't hesitate to get in touch!

James Cornish

Councillor, Swindon Parish Council

<https://www.swindonparish.org.uk>

COMMUNITY '*SERVICE*'



Much has changed since early March when the country suddenly went into lockdown. It has been a testing and fearful time for many of us and for varying reasons. Naturally, the Church lost the ability to communicate with the community through the Village News as everything came to a grinding halt; though of course, the community has remained active, reaching out to one another during this time of uncertainty.

The North Cheltenham Team Ministry, consisting of our five churches, namely St Lawrence, Swindon Village. St Mary Magdalene, Elmstone Hardwicke. St Mary's, Prestbury, St Nicolas, Prestbury and All Saints, Pittville, have been working tirelessly to keep 'Church' going; albeit in a different way from the norm. We have similarly attempted to reach out to our respective communities by streaming and pre-recording services online on our website: northchelt.org.uk. On there you will find the weekly Sunday services alternated between clergy, readers and lay volunteers. Midweek, we have a mixture of Morning and Evening Prayer and other devotionals. We have tried to replicate the fellowship that many of our congregations naturally miss out on. We do this by having 'Zoom' coffee mornings and/or afternoons. We also have something called a 'Video Diary' where volunteers post what they have been doing to keep themselves occupied during lockdown.

While it has all been very successful, and we encourage you to have a look and perhaps even participate, we know that what many people want is a return to our Churches to worship in the way many of us are accustomed, while also, of course, maintaining some of the successes we have had with our online offerings.

With the Government easing of Lockdown measures, we are hopeful that it won't be too long before we can sing God's praises again in Church. We have already made the first step in moving back into our Churches, where St Lawrence in particular will be open for public prayer. It is important to note that NO services will be held during this time and Church buildings will remain closed on Sundays pending further government advice.

In the meantime, if you would like to pop along for some undisturbed prayer time, St Lawrence will be open from 10am to 12noon every Tuesday and Saturday.

If you are short on time, we also have a 'pop-a-prayer-in' post box which is located just beside our outside notice board on the railings. This will be checked frequently by myself so I, (we) as a Church, can keep you, a situation or a person in our thoughts for whom you wish to be prayed.

This comes to you with warm wishes from Rev George and the North Cheltenham Team Ministry.
Every Blessing.

George

From the registers



Burial

We gave thanks for the life of

Rosemary Spray

22nd May

Church enquiries

Sadly we are currently unable to conduct baptisms or marriages.

The Team Office is closed but Kate, our Team administrator is working from home. She can be contacted (mornings only) by phone, **244373** or email **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

You can contact the clergy by email:

Revd. George Davis (Team Vicar) fr.georgedavis@hotmail.com

Revd. Nick Bromfield (Team Rector) nick.bromfield@northchelt.org.uk
or via the office.



Cake Sale

**Saturday 4th July
10.30am to 12noon
Outside St. Lawrence's Church**

The team are looking for cake donations and lots of hungry buyers.

Cakes should preferably be fresh, not previously frozen, and must be well-wrapped and sealed.

They can be delivered to

Liz Attwell at Serica, Quat Goose Lane (tel. 692483)

or May Shurmer at 5 Drayton Close (tel.241033)

Please respect social distancing.

Prices will be set in multiples of 50p to ease money handling.

June 2020

Dear Reader,

I trust that this comes to you and your families in good health. The reason I write is because, as you know, the on-going pandemic has had a detrimental effect in all manner of respects. Not only to life and the way in which we have been forced to live, but also the profound economic instability that this has brought about to many.

Churches, of course, are not immune to the same impact this virus has had upon other institutions. For our Village Church in particular, the day-to-day struggles to keep it running, with its core members; relies heavily upon our fundraising and what we call our 'occasional offices' like baptisms, weddings and funerals. All of these, naturally of course, cannot take place in the usual way at the moment in Church and neither can our regular services take place where weekly collections, gratefully received from our congregation, contribute to the fabric of the Church and its upkeep.

We are now sadly at a stage where we are having to make this, a call to action so to speak, a direct appeal to the wider community for help. We are seeking generous contributions and donations to keep this beautiful Church, one of the centres of the community, running. This Church, rich with history, has been singing God's praises for centuries and we know the Church is highly respected and valued in one way or another, by all who live, work and visit here.

If you feel you may be able to help, please make cheques payable to Swindon PCC. In addition, you may wish to make payments directly into our Church account below:

SWINDON PCC
20-20-15
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There are a couple of other alternatives. You may wish to bring your financial contributions to the Church which will now be open for public prayer **every Tuesday and Saturday from 10am to 12pm**. Should you wish, you can also bring donations directly to the Vicarage, The Rectory, Rectory Lane, Swindon Village or to our Church Warden, Mrs May Shurmer, 5 Drayton Close, Cheltenham, GL51 9QB.

Whether you would like to make yourselves known or to remain anonymous, we want you to know that the Church thanks you and continues to value you.

Every Blessing

PS. Don't forget that on **Saturday 4th July from 10:30am to 12 midday**, we shall be having our Cake Sale in front of the church. Arrive early to avoid disappointment! We'd love to see you!

Rev'd George Davis (Team Vicar)
Rev'd Nick Bromfield (Team Rector)



*Rev. Nick was spotted prettying up the churchyard fence with some colourful flowers.
Thank you, Nick*

Hugh Stanford

It is with immense sadness that I share the news of the death of Hugh Stanford.

Husband of Claire and Dad to Adam and Guy, Hugh died unexpectedly on Friday the 8th May after losing his battle with heart and kidney failure caused by an underlying genetic condition, FH (Familial hypercholesterolaemia), aged 55.



Hugh was a pillar of the community and generously gave his time, energy and boundless enthusiasm to Swindon Village through his long-standing contribution as Beaver Scout Leader, as a member of the Village Hall Committee and through his contributions to the 'Friends of Swindon Village Primary School'.

The fondness and respect felt for Hugh was clearly evident on the day of his funeral when over 100 people lined the streets to applaud as the cortege brought him on his final journey through the village.

Hugh was a people-person and will be warmly remembered for sharing his worldly knowledge over a pint on a Friday night, organising a good quiz (including taste-questions on flavours of crisps!) and for "rocking it out" at the annual Christmas dinner-dance.

A true gentleman, friend and inspiration to all, Hugh's passing leaves us with a void that cannot be filled but with memories and a legacy that will always be treasured.

Stephanie Matthews

Hugh Stanford

An appreciation and tribute from 1st Swindon Village Scout Group

It is with great sadness that I write a few words in tribute to Hugh Stanford (Wolf), our Beaver Scout Leader and a good friend to many that knew him. While he had been living with his genetic illness for a number of years, news of his sad and sudden passing came as a huge shock to everyone.

Hugh had given almost 30 years of excellent service to Scouting as an adult leader. He joined our Scout Group in 2008 as a leader with the Scout section, having previously worked with Venture Scouts down in Hampshire during the 90s. At the end of 2015, when our Beaver leaders stood down, Hugh stepped forward to take over the Beaver Colony and has run it successfully ever since.

Hugh was always full of ideas and full of enthusiasm, forever keen to try out new activities - or old activities in new and exciting ways. He was an absolute lover of the great outdoors and took a real pride in being able to introduce youngsters to the joys of being outside and explaining the wonders of mother nature.



We are fortunate to have camped with Hugh on many occasions and he always seemed to have unlimited energy when surrounded by excited youngsters. While most of us were making the best of sleeping in a tent, Hugh would get a piece of tarpaulin or canvas, prop it up with a couple of sticks and sleep under the stars. He loved building bivvies and camp fires with the youngsters and was always looking out for new ideas and opportunities to share with the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. He wasn't even fazed by taking away half a dozen excited young Beavers on a 24-hour sleepover!

Hugh was an inspirational, energetic leader who cared deeply about his flock. Always sharing ideas, and always up for anything. He was great company, had a wonderful sense of humour, a wry smile and a twinkle in his eye - especially when he had come up with another 'mad Hughie idea' as he liked to call them. He was always kind and thoughtful and he never had a bad word to say about anyone.



In the last 12 months, he had joined the Village Hall committee and was really enjoying being involved in the exciting projects that the team were working on. Earlier this year, he organised and ran a successful quiz evening at the hall which was enjoyed by all who were there.

Hugh was a devoted family man and his wife and sons were always the centre of his world.

On the day of his funeral at the end of May, the streets of Swindon Village were lined with Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and former Scouts, parents, friends, colleagues, leaders and villagers who all applauded as the funeral cortege passed by. It was wonderful to see so many people keen to show their support for the family and pay their respects to Hugh - a fitting tribute to a wonderful man and it was very much appreciated by his family.

He was an amazingly positive person who had become a very dear friend to many and we will all miss him greatly. Rest in peace, Hugh.



Sos

In Memory of Hugh Stanford

Hugh Stanford had an amazing sense of community spirit and gave much of his time and energy to helping others in our parish. A keen supporter of the Scout movement, he could be seen most Mondays in the Village Hall inspiring the young Beavers with his boundless enthusiasm and curious mind and, when the new committee was formed at Swindon Village Hall last year, he got involved and became a passionate Trustee who was proud to see the improvements we were making along the way for the benefit of all in the parish. He was a keen advocate for the bar to open regularly and used his bar knowledge to great effect, increasing the range of drinks on offer and giving me welcome advice about life, work and family.

Hugh hosted the last pub quiz before lockdown and it was typical Hugh - a lovely and very entertaining evening with some well researched local knowledge questions mixed in with wider questions about the world around us. His own work for over 20 years at Travelbag had stemmed from his extensive travels and we would often chat for ages about some of the places he had seen and he was always keen to question me on my own travels. Despite appearances, he was occasionally a keen follower of fashion and once even wrote to the Telegraph praising the virtues of sarongs for gentlemen! In his own words sarongs are, "cooler than underpants and providing more freedom than pyjamas, they are ideal for strolling around the house and allow you the sensation of sleeping naked without having to wrestle with dressing gown sleeves."

Hugh was devoted to his family and the wider community and is survived by Claire and their two boys. His funeral was held on 29th May and dozens of people turned out throughout the village to pay their respects as he made his final journey. He will be sorely missed by everyone that knew him and he leaves a gaping hole in all our hearts at Swindon Village Hall.

Ben

Tony Jefferies

Tony Jefferies died in April, a few weeks after his 88th birthday, after a battle with Covid-19.

Tony and his wife Sara moved to Swindon Village in the snowy winter at the beginning of 1982 when Tony's employers moved their offices from Hertfordshire. Tony was a cartographer; he trained and served in the Royal Engineers Survey Unit for 12 years and later worked for Geographia Atlas Mapping publishers.

Tony started playing the violin when he was 12 years old and his passion for music stayed with him all his life, playing with the Elstree Orchestra in Hertfordshire and then locally with Philharmonic and Newent orchestras. When he moved into a care home a few years ago he made sure his violin went with him.

Tony was a dog lover and owned a total of three dogs over the years. Many people knew Tony and his last dog, Freddie, and he liked to stop for a chat on his walks around the village.

Tony was a great help with the Village News; in addition to his own delivery round, he helped deliver the bundles of magazines to the other distributors.

Sadly, because of the virus lockdown, the family was unable to hold a full funeral for Tony but they plan to hold a memorial service later when we will all have a chance to pay our respects.

Karen Evans



*Tony with his son, Ian,
and Freddie*

I do believe that this report is going to be a bit thin. This was in fact the opening line of my last report and not a lot has changed.

However, the Society has not been completely moribund. Looking for something to catch the attention I did have a minor brainwave. We have in our possession copies of fifty five letters written by my wife, Sarah's, grandfather from the front line of the First World War back to his parents in England. Michael was a very junior officer with the Machine Gun Corps while his father was an Army chaplain supporting the injured troops back in the Salisbury area. These letters are an amazing view of another major world crisis some one hundred years ago. So they were sent out to members at about one per day so they could get a flavour of being 'Dear Dad and Mother' to a young man right in the middle of things. They are an amazing amalgam of the horrifying and the banal. 'We knew that three men had been hit because we found six legs'. 'Could you send a new snaffle and bit because I have quite a decent pony and I hope to do well in the Brigade gymkhana in two weeks' time'. They even managed to end on a topical note when Michael wrote home to say he was suffering from a new bug going round and his batman had been taken to hospital with it. This was the Spanish Flu of 1918 which killed about 20 million people world-wide. The letters also went out to two Local History Societies at Norton and Cranham so about one hundred people were receiving them and many were sending them on to family around the world.

Once that was finished it was followed up by an eight-part series describing a bombing raid on Turin. This time it was an account written later in life by Sarah's adoptive father, Malcolm Mitchem, who was on the raid. It is a truly gripping tale of a mission that went wrong resulting in the pilot, Arthur Aarons, being awarded a posthumous VC and Malcolm getting the DFM.

Both collections being reminders of previous crises which covered the globe, I am now scratching my head trying to think if there is anything else from my wife's dodgy family history with which I can thrill the world.

Barry Simon

It's been quiet at the hall during lockdown. I had planned to do lots of work on the place but found myself without much free time due to family and work commitments. One success we did have was to have the cavity wall insulation installed so hopefully the place will feel cooler in the summer and stay warmer in the winter - all saving energy, reducing our carbon footprint and keeping our bills lower as the years go by. None of the cavities had any insulation in so it should make a big difference to the energy efficiency of our hall.

Speaking of carbon and green things, it's been a year since our solar panels were installed and our 14 panels have generated 4.72MWh and saved 1,207kg of CO₂ emissions which is the equivalent of planting 55 trees. Every little helps and the technologies and costs are improving all the time. Along with replacing our lights with LEDs and installing smart thermostats (so we're not heating an empty building), it's all helped to keep our bills down and maximise what we can reinvest in our village hall. On that front, there are plans aplenty with the front door being replaced in the week that I write this so it should be there by the time this is printed. The new entrance is a commercial quality door that is wider than before, can open inwards and outwards (and stay open) whilst keeping the hinges covered so they're safer for little fingers. Hopefully it's a clear improvement and makes it easier to get in and out.

The question I've had to answer most when out and about is "When is the bar reopening?" Well, we're having online meetings with various organisations to come up with a plan to reopen in a safe manner and I'll report back when we plan to open. Currently, we're not permitted to open the hall for any users other than Early Years but hopefully that will change over the coming weeks and months as the rate of daily infections continues its steady decline (notwithstanding a second wave of course, hopefully we can control the virus infection rate to make normal life a reality again soon).

Sadly, Covid-19 has disrupted all of our lives and sadly there have been too many deaths lately.

Our previous Chairman, Peter Piff, passed away aged 69 years on 7th May and our hearts go out to his friends and family - a steward of Swindon Village Hall for many years, he handed over a healthy bank balance to the new committee last year and it's thanks to his and the previous committee's efforts that we were able to invest quickly in the hall and make many of the improvements that I have spoken about in the year since I

became Chair. Donations can still be made in his name to the Firefighters Charity at <https://peterpiff.muchloved.com>

Our committee too had its own loss in May when Hugh Stanford sadly passed away in Gloucester Hospital where he was receiving treatment for a heart condition. Hugh represented our youth groups on the Hall Committee and gave so much to the community - he will be sorely missed by everyone that knew him.

It's been a rough time for everybody lately but the community spirit felt each Thursday for our ten rounds of clapping for key workers and care workers has been lovely to see, hear and feel - we have a great community here and it is something to be cherished and valued.

Ben Williams

Chair, Village Hall Committee

Peter Piff

Peter Piff, former chairman of the Village Hall Committee, died suddenly in May. We send our condolences to his wife, Sally, and their family.

Incredible is just one of the words I could use to describe Pete. He worked tirelessly to run the Village Hall with his wife Sally and friends Sandy and Den. He put in endless hours of hard work and effort to keep the Village Hall well-maintained and running smoothly, all hours of the day and night.

He will be sadly missed by all and remembered for his contribution to our village and the Village Hall.

Rose D'Gama

Swindon Village Early Years

What a strange time we have all found ourselves in recently. We hope that everyone has managed to stay safe, well and happy. We have tried hard to stay in touch with our families throughout lockdown. We wrote a personalised playgroup postcard to each family and the response was amazing. We took pictures of all the responses and got creative in placing them on a large rainbow. This is displayed in the village hall window.

Playgroup returned on the 1st June and currently we have only been able to invite the pre-school children back. The group has been small with no more than 15 in each session. Currently we are just operating Monday to Thursday mornings. It has been fabulous to be back and the children appear happy to have some normality back. We have safe distancing at drop off and collection and parents are not permitted in the hall. The start and finish times have been staggered and this has made for smooth transition. The children have been very communicative and their knowledge of the coronavirus has been very impressive.

The first week planning was to encourage the children to talk about feelings. We have done lots of maths activities both in large and small group games. The children have had lots of 1-1 attention as the group is small. We have enjoyed water play outside and had a few walks around the village using and talking about our senses. This week we have looked at the story of 'Handas surprise'. The story is set in Africa so we have had the opportunity to look at countries; we looked at and tasted some exotic fruits which we then placed on a graph to see the most and least popular. We have looked at hot and cold - playing with ice and talking about skin care in the sun. We have talked to the children about people's feelings, what makes us happy and what makes us sad. We have talked about diversity, what makes you you!! Maybe in the next Village News we will all be a little more relaxed with the new normal.

Very best wishes.

Sally & Debbie

Mary Godwin Under 5s

Mary Godwin Under Fives have been open to key worker children during lockdown. We have been able to assist and support these families during this challenging time. We have been able to promote educational activities and provide resources to our little ones through lockdown.

We are now back up and running again, offering care to many more of our children. We have found new ways for safe play and our children seem pleased to be back.

Please see our Facebook page, Mary Godwin Under Fives, to see what we've been doing.

Jenny Adamson

Art & Crafts Club

Hello from Swindon Art & Crafts Club.

I hope all the members have been painting lots (no excuses we've all had plenty of time!!!).

We are going to have the biggest party as soon as we can get together again safely.

Take care everyone.

Helen

Save the Countryside Distanced Walk

Well, we did what we could on a beautiful Sunday afternoon on 17th May. Although we were in distanced family groups throughout the day, and we missed our social gathering afterwards, it was lovely to see the community out walking the walk after so many years.

I'm delighted to see how many of us have been walking in our wonderful green spaces during our allotted escapes from lockdown. We are certainly lucky in this area to have so much green open space and wildlife to enjoy while still maintaining our social distance.

The team are now working on the first planning application for part of the Elms Park development which has just been released for public consultation. Plans for 260 houses on land at Swindon farm (between Sainsburys area and Dog Bark Lane) with the entrance at Manor Road have just been released. This is despite highways requesting that plans for any development related to Elms Park should be delayed for a 3rd 6 months as the infrastructure requirements continue to cause Gloucestershire Highways and planners significant concerns. But we will give the plans and all the associated documentation a detailed analysis to ensure that the plans are accurately reviewed, any concerns are effectively raised and that the plans reflect appropriate development in line with the Cheltenham plan and Joint Core Strategy that was agreed.

Despite this and the larger Elms Park development that we expect to come in time, we are so pleased that we will be able to enjoy the local green space that we have retained in future. Our next step is to work with the planning team to ensure the best use and maintenance of that land so that it can be effectively used and enjoyed for years to come.

Helen Wells

Helen and Rich



Request for old newspapers

I am always in need of newspapers for my pets (any title – we are not fussy, my Rabbits can't read!)

If you have any old newspapers that usually go out for recycling on a Monday morning I can put them to good use.

Please let me know and I would be happy to collect on a Sunday evening from your recycling box / kerbside before the bin men get them.

Many thanks.

Helen and her Rabbits. 07770 986078 / 01272 220875



"Walking the Walk"
Mike and Anne
Helen's dogs



I so appreciate all the smiles that I give and receive when walking around Swindon Village. It makes me think of this poem that we've had on our wall at home since it was written in 1990.

Helen Wells

A Smile by Jez Alborough

Smiling is infectious,
you catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me today
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realized
I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about that smile,
then I realized its worth.
A single smile, just like mine,
could travel round the earth.

So, if you feel a smile begin,
don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic quick,
and get the world infected!



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900 homes in Swindon Village**

VILLAGE ORGANISATIONS

Footpaths	John Heathcott	527753
Scouts (all sections)	Stephen Smith (Sos) & Rachel Smith	693107
Rainbow Guider	Jackie Bailey	07871 169308
Village Hall Chair	Ben Williams	07971 608177 swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village Hall Booking Secretary	Jana Bridger	www.svhall.co.uk 07514 594351
Wednesday Club	Pauline Wright	693112
Swindon Village Early Years (Playgroup hours)		690479
Winemakers' Secretary	Roy Harper	662861
School Headteacher	Geraint Mills	690016
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Art & Crafts Club	Lynne	07515 461876
Swindon Village Society	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	Jenny Adamson	07477 894639 mgu5@hotmail.co.uk
Marle Hill W.I.	Sara Jefferies	692500
Save The Countryside	Helen Wells	07770 986078

Please inform the editors of any changes to the contact details for village organisations.

Village News in August

We don't usually publish the Village News in August but, with the rapidly-changing circumstances at the moment, this year will be an exception.

The deadline for the August issue will be the 22nd of July (a few days later than usual but don't be late!).

Please send contributions to the editors via
Karen Evans at 5 Manor Road, Swindon Village GL51 9RQ
or e-mail village-news@swindonparish.org.uk

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Swindon Parish and Community Website: <https://swindonparish.org.uk>

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The office is open on Monday to Friday 9am to 12 noon. Outside these hours please leave a message on the answer phone.

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