

Haresfield Annual Parish Meeting Tuesday 25th March 2025 7.30 pm

Thank you to all those who took the time to either attend or send reports for this meeting. Tea was served, together with cakes kindly baked by Nicky Ford and Sue Thorpe.

Reports:

Bellringing – Dan Nelmes

We are now hearing the bells in the village every week – a marvellous transformation of the Haresfield ringing team. There is a very popular practice every Sunday, 4 – 6. This starts with teaching bell handling for novices from 4, and from 4.30-6, general ringing. Usually there are around 10 people attending. Haresfield tower is a part of Stroud branch of ringers and is well supported by people from the district.

In the last year, Haresfield rang for 2 Funerals, though no weddings. There were two Quarter Peals. On the fourth Sunday of the month, there is a 6pm service at the church, so the ringing practice ties in with that.

Any new members are very warmly encouraged to come forward.

The tower also welcomes visiting ringers and these have included a visiting group from the north of England.

PC Clerk suggested we add Dan's contact details as well as some ringing events and achievements, such as Quarter Peals, to the parish website.

New members are always welcome, if you would like to have a go or start to learn, get in touch. Dan (Haresfield tower captain) 07855 058 130

History Group – Dan Nelmes

A talk and tour of village was held last year, which was well attended. Dan has some manorial documents from C14th relating to Haresfield and is in the process of studying these – a painstaking and time-consuming process! If you are interested in history and want to get involved, please get in touch with Dan 07855 058 130

Biodiversity – Clerk & Rich Gibbs

International Plywood donated some plywood from which Rich has made swift boxes to go up in April. These are available to place on houses suitably located for the Swifts. A donation would be welcomed to use towards further biodiversity projects. Rich is working with the Swift Society including looking at calling sounds –electronic aids which can help to call the swifts to nest in the area.

A grant application to UBB for bird-related equipment will be submitted when the application window opens. UBB have purchased their own swift boxes which are now up – inspired by our approach to them and they are keen to engage with the parish council regarding other projects.

Rich also produced a village calendar and funds from this have paid the cost of a barn owl box, which is on order and due to go up this year, with the help of Steve Coates.

Himalayan Balsam – This invasive species needs eradicating and a village team have been liaising in order to work on removing this.

Some of you may recall that the school previously took classes to The 'Secret Garden' - on the Brookthorpe lane on the way out of the village. This is being reviewed by the PC

who are investigating the ownership of this land and what might be done to bring it back into use to encourage biodiversity.

Chatters – Sarah Gibbons & Sue Thorpe

Chatters offers a pop up café environment where villagers can meet for a chat, fresh coffee or tea, cake and a chance at a small raffle prize for £1. Attendance has been steadily growing and of late we have seen numbers of over 20 enjoying the company of friends and family. We have been putting our new cooker to good use and have started serving soup and cheese scones as an option which has proved very popular. The café is now completely self-financing and all village hall costs are being covered by collected proceeds (tea, coffee, electricity) Anything collected over and above is then donated to hall funds at the choice of the organisers.

Sarah Gibbons and Sue Thorpe are always there to welcome anyone who walks through the door. Café usually opens at 2pm Friday afternoon and closes for the last drink or slice of cake at 4pm. Dates and times do vary but will always be advertised in the Herald.

Cricket Club

Two teams were being run, and this is now reduced to one. Merryfield Trustees are in touch with the club which is in the process of reorganising its administration.

Footpaths – Martin Hartley

This is my first full year as a Cotswolds volunteer warden and a member of the working party. A lot has happened in 24/25.

2 new wardens have joined to cover Standish and Harescombe

The church path has been repaired

Merryfields has the long-awaited sign

Stiles have been cleared repaired or replaced

Dog gates have been added and bridges cleared

This year alone 8 fallen trees have been cleared from the bridal way

A dumped cannabis farm was removed from the Cotswolds way

Merryfield – Paul Barton

The footpath which runs by the school has been replaced after Paul pursued this with the Council.

The Trustees have decided to put up signs to indicate that the Merryfield is private land intended for the use of the school and the village.

Community Payback team have cleared the brambles from the top of the Merryfield.

These need to be removed since bonfires are no longer considered suitable.

There is a plan to restore the hedges on the back fence of the Merryfield. Source for trees and planning for this is being investigated along with support from the parish council and Rich Gibbs.

The bench in memory of Caroline Segelov has now been installed on the concrete plinth, a plaque has been provided by the pc and a blessing ceremony is planned.

St Peter's Church – Alec Jeakins

We have continued our pattern of four services a month – two communions with a priest and two lay led. We have a small but supportive congregation.

Haresfield School have taken to holding a service once a month in the church during term time. This has been a successful venture enjoyed by all taking part. The school is very fortunate in having a member of staff who plays the organ. A number of parents also attend.

No weddings last year. But a well-supported Christmas Day service. The most significant funeral was that of Maureen Stone, long-time resident and former PCC secretary.

One of the burdens on the churchwarden in recent years has been the management of grass cutting in the churchyard. Fortunately, the Community Payback Team have now taken on this task.

We remain ever grateful to those in our community who support the church either in a practical way such as organising and paying for the re-plastering of the north porch or financially. It would be remiss of me not to mention that more people paying a small monthly contribution via the Parish Giving Scheme would not go amiss in ensuring the future of St Peter's.

Haresfield School – Rachel Bacon

On behalf of everyone at Haresfield Primary School, we would like to extend our sincere thanks for your continued support throughout the year. Our children have flourished, not only in their academic learning but also in their personal growth, demonstrating exemplary behaviour and enthusiasm for new experiences.

We have embraced exciting opportunities such as our Woodland Classroom, where we have woven key curriculum objectives from a wide variety of subjects into outdoor learning, and memorable events like the music festival, the human timeline on the field, and Young Voices. Special events this year have included world book day, trips to the zoo, Cirencester Museum and Cheltenham Literacy Festival.

Celebration Fridays, often held at St Peter's Church, bring our school community together, with many families joining us in recognising the children's achievements. This year, we have also continued to honour the cherished memory of Mrs Segelov and her lasting impact on our school through a special Values Trophy.

School council are very keen to take part in a litter pick in our community, many children have noticed the ghastly mess along the main road and often ask about going litter picking. I would very much like to include our children in taking a positive role in caring for our environment but as you can imagine – the health and safety implications are massive. I have bought a set of litter pickers and school council have set times when they go around the edges of The Merryfields to pick up plastic and paper litter but this is

becoming increasingly more difficult due to the amount of dog mess left behind by disrespectful dog owners. We would like to thank the Parish Council for taking a robust approach to this with the new notices. In the summer term we are planning to step up the litter picking events and include the hedge along the road towards the Beacon Hotel with adults supporting the children for safety.

Your support has been contributory in making these enriching experiences possible, and we are truly grateful.

With warm regards,
Rachel Bacon, Head Teacher

LitWits

The LitWits book group meets in the village hall on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm and through 2024 we started using Quedgeley Library Services to obtain free reading sets which proved a considerable saving. Our reading material covers all genres and although we don't take discussion too seriously, we still manage to give 45 minutes of time to that element of the meeting with the rest devoted to chat, laughter, wine and cake. We are currently 15 strong but new comers are always welcome as it's rare to find all 15 members in attendance.

Village Hall – Borange on behalf of Village Hall Committee

Finances are good as the hall has regular bookings, including the Geology Society and Pilates group. Village LitWits book club also use the hall regularly. There are also two bands who have regular practice sessions in the hall – lovely to hear when the windows are open in the warmer months.

A successful grant application to UBB was made for work to close up the unused door which makes the hall very drafty and this work is in progress.

A heat detector and smoke alarm are to be installed to meet Health and Safety regulations.

The new noticeboard has been installed and is looking first rate!

The village mosaic now complete and it is planned to install this on side of toilet block.

The Coronation bench has been treated, and will be installed when weather permits.

Community Payback have done a range of jobs throughout the year and are undertaking supporting the grass mowing this year.

A representative of the committee attends the Parish Council meeting on a quarterly basis.

A heartfelt thanks is extended to all of those who work to enrich our small village. Please do get in touch with me if you have ideas and enthusiasm to bring.

Madeleine King
March 2025