

# The Grapevine

## SPECIAL LOCKDOWN EDITION

### Rev Gary's Pastoral Message June/July 2020



Among the words which we have recently heard and, perhaps, used much more frequently over the last eight weeks is the word ‘**unprecedented**’. How have you uttered or heard that word?

- The times are unprecedented.
- Government measures are unprecedented.
- Anxiety is at unprecedented levels.
- Disruption our communities, our churches and our individual lives are unprecedented.

As I write this in mid-May, the day after the Prime Minister’s announcement that lockdown will, unexpectedly, be relaxed, the full ramification of this and the supplementary 50 page “project plan” are still be inwardly digested by many. Some of the issues I will have to contemplate will be unprecedented tomorrow, as they are today:

The thought of the lack of weddings this year

No sight of a baptism on the radar as yet

A serious increase in the number of funerals (13 at last count since lockdown)

What will worship look like?

Who will return to church?

Will I ever master Zoom or FaceTime? Has anyone used the material I produced?

What is also unprecedented is the determination being demonstrated by our village communities across **Powick, Callow End, Guarlford, Madresfield and Newland** - all the individuals and families working together to engage in acts of goodness, kindness and generosity which, even when at a distance, offer much-needed support to those who are vulnerable, needy and fearful. The number of people who have responded to Cllr Tom Wells’ call for volunteers is remarkable, whilst NHS, Social Care and other frontline professionals face the challenge of COVID19 head-on, day in and out, with our love and gratitude. Apparently, the Government definition of frontline workers includes ‘religious workers’. Not sure I would call myself that.

Loving God’s ways, and demonstrating this by loving one’s neighbour is a fundamental foundation of our faith and its practice, so I thank you for all that you are doing to help in whatever ways you are able. With lockdown supposedly easing, we must be on our guard (or use the new strap line “be alert”) to ensure that all that we are doing to isolate the vulnerable and social distance ourselves doesn’t unravel because we all decide to pile off to a garden centre, barbers or kebab van - as nice as any of those things would be.

**Church buildings** are still closed and likely to remain so for some time to come. The problem with the church is that we look at issues from all sorts of perspectives, but over-look what the individual church or individual wants or needs. Opportunities for private reflection, prayer and contemplation are open to us all anytime. Use our prayer time (you can do it to, dear reader) and focus upon the precious nature of life and just how fragile it can be in the face of illness. Focus, too, upon these beautiful words from Isaiah 43:

*But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:  
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you  
pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
You are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you.  
Do not fear, for I am with you;*

At times of personal anxiety and in the **present unprecedented circumstances**, such words of comfort are vitally important for us to reflect upon and absorb. They provide us with assurance that we matter and that other people matter; and they both can and should encourage us to face challenges with personal courage and a commitment to the good of others.

Any act, however small, of kindness, generosity, compassionate service and love shown to another person in need demonstrates that we have heeded the words of Jesus from the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan, to 'go and do likewise'.

I pray that you will feel encouraged and valued, that you will remember that you matter. I pray that you will recognise that others matter too, and that following the example of Jesus and his faithful disciples down the ages, you will be a supporter, a helper and a comforter now as well as into the villages' future.

Take Care , Keep Well and Stay Safe and Remained Blessed

*Rev Gary*

## Lockdown at the Beauchamp



### NEWLAND NEWS

Things to be **positive** about: the weather, the garden and a good book, and a pleasant walk in the sunshine. The reduction of the traffic on the road outside has been a joy, and hearing the birdsong more clearly.

The **downside**: not being able to see family and friends, not being able to go to a café, to the theatre or on holiday. It comes to something when the highlight of the week is sitting in the Priory churchyard drinking a cup of takeaway coffee.

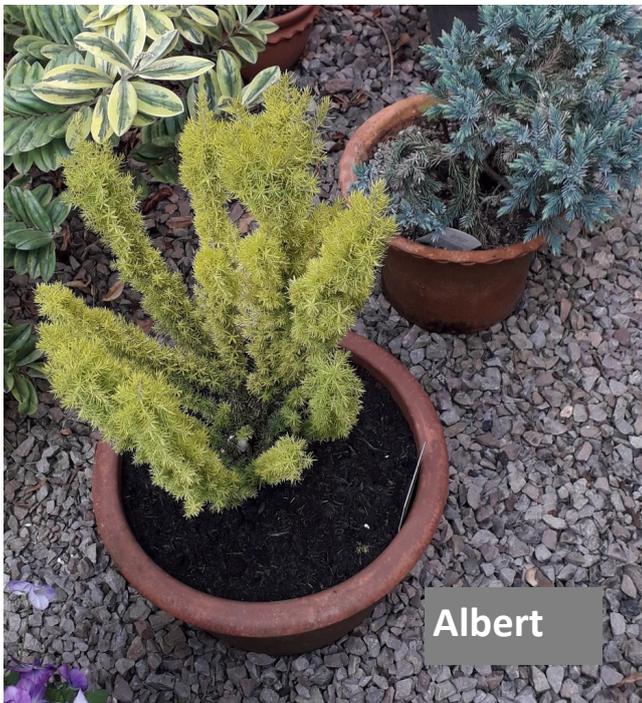
The **finding of plants** for the garden was the biggest challenge with the usual outlets closed. A delivery from the garden centre at Guarlford was organised, and I managed to find plants in some unlikely locations including a convenience store in Barnards Green. The purple pansies look splendid in the garden.

**Our chaplain** has been holding services and uploading them to the website, so that those of us who are able to can watch.

In a **fit of frustration** that the church was locked against private prayer, I wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking for the church to be opened. In the cold light of day I do not expect my letter to change anything or even to receive a reply, but being able to express myself did make me feel better.

The Thursday **clap for the NHS** has become a part of the week; some of us clap from the windows and others venture outside to clap, bang pots and generally make as much noise as possible in appreciation of the front line staff who are taking risks to keep the rest of us safe.

In a **fit of madness** I offered to order fish and chips for those who wanted them. I was fed up with my own cooking and the chip shop on Pickersleigh Road was delivering for orders over £15. I naively thought I would get 1 or 2 takers, enough to meet the minimum. 15 people put their



names down. The sun shone so we sat outside in a wide ellipse to meet the social distancing rules, and tucked into a good meal we had not cooked.

**Our warden** team has organised that the younger members of the community to shop for the older members who are not going out. Some members of the community are having to stick close to home to protect themselves and the NHS.

Last week the garden centres opened and with the easing of the lockdown we were able to drive to the Hop Pocket garden centre. There we bought a rather unusual plant Mum had fallen in love with, it's called Erica 'Albert's Gold', so I am calling it **Albert** and have attached a photograph.

All in all we are lucky our site is large and there is plenty of room to walk about and stay socially distanced from the other residents. The

lockdown has been eased by technology, to keep in touch with family, friends, church and banking. We have had to learn to queue outside supermarkets and the other few shops that remain open (good job the weather has been nice).

So as I watch the trees and tall grasses wave in the wind, seated on my favourite bench, I look forward to when I can hug my family instead of seeing them on a screen, which is hopefully sometime soon.

Jane Tinklin



Below is Jane's view from her favourite bench.

It seems



since the dawn of 2020 we entered into a very strange time in our world's history.

I wonder if in 40-50 years' time, when history books are being compiled, how this period will be portrayed. Will it be the heroic sacrifices made by nurses and doctors and those workers of our vital services, or condemnation placed on those who chose to ignore the government's advice to protect us from this new disease? I don't think many in my age bracket will still be alive then to know what will be written. However, those who are my age would not be happy for scribes to compare this emergency to those of the past century's war years as some in the media have done.

As awful as these last 9-10 weeks have been and the forecast of financial difficulties to come, perhaps we should take stock that this after all is a spontaneous pandemic, which no one could have foreseen or do much about. Whereas only a few weeks ago we were commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of the horrors of the Second World War, which were truly man-made.

During those 5 long years of war, adults and children constantly carried **gas masks**, even babies had one tucked into their prams! So is it too much just now to ask folk to temporarily wear a face mask? Then, there were the sleepless nights in an earth-smelling air raid shelter wondering what kind of landscape one would emerge to when the all clear siren was sounded. Therefore, for today's children, is it too much for them to miss a few weeks schooling? For the adults is the uncertainty of what future they and their children might have or indeed if there was a future. So how can it be so terrible now to isolate one's self and stay at home for the benefit of others?

It took another 7 years before one could throw away the **ration books** and indulge oneself with 3 ample meals a day. Whereas today, with the generosity of the supermarkets, **free food boxes** have been distributed to the very vulnerable, so no one goes hungry such as one did if supply ships were sunk all those years ago.

I'm so thankful of today's **high-tech communications**. I have been in constant contact with our scattered family and friends. I can remember my kin folk of all those years ago desperate for news from their brothers, husbands, sons, away fighting in far off lands. Perhaps not every one wishes to embrace the latest technology, but I don't suppose there are many without a TV or at least a radio to keep them up to date on world happenings and the company of a human voice. I'm very impatient with those who compare the two happenings except, perhaps, how the world has been united in its response to keep their citizens free of contamination, and then all those years ago how the free world was also united to rid itself from tyranny and evil.

One cannot help but be a little like **Habakkuk** (Old Testament). There were things he could not understand and everything appeared to be out of control "Where is God now"? Was God not actually as Habakkuk thought Him to be? And God spoke, "Watch and be utterly amazed". (Habakkuk 1:5) I'm also mindful of the words of **Timothy Chmykhalo**, many centuries later. Tim was one of a group of Siberian Christians held in a Soviet prison for their faith. He said, "Many of us believe that God can change our lives, and we await something new, a miracle to happen, but sometimes the greater miracle is when our situation doesn't change, but we do!"

From the horrors of 75 years ago NATO was formed, a defensive co-operation between peaceful nations, and was not the **United Nations** a humanitarian force also formed?

The corona virus has shown we do have compassion for our fellow men and it has changed our attitude to others. Today the world is combining its skills and resources to develop a vaccine for the benefit of all mankind. Is this not something we can be thankful for?



## Life in Lock Down at Madresfield CoE Primary School

A Message from Mrs Greenwood, Headteacher

At the time I write, the 7th week of the school being shut, we have all settled into very different routines. Many of us are working hard whilst others are bored, frustrated and longing to get back to working with the children. The constant legal changes to policy have required a huge increase in office-based administration for Heads. Selecting the pertinent details from a daily deluge and disseminating to staff is a real challenge. Worcestershire County Council alone produces a daily briefing, which is published every night. Like so many other documents, it covers a wide range of sectors; the skill is finding important bits of information that require action to be taken.

School remains 'open' though all our eligible vulnerable pupils have elected to remain safe at home. Twice a week contact is made with these families; we want to keep in touch and reassure them that there is support if it is required. Madresfield has two families where both parents are classed as critical care workers. As a school we have opened for these families as and when required. We considered joining with other schools to make a hub, but all staff felt that they wanted to remain together at our school and that going to a familiar place with people they know was better for the children and staff. Rightly or wrongly, we felt it was important to keep the possible transmission of the virus to as small a community as possible.

The past weeks have seen all staff make progress up a huge IT learning curve. The deputy, **Mr Speakman**, supported by our IT company, have dragged all in to the 21st century. We now **Zoom**, **WhatsApp**, and **Microsoft Teams** with ease. Staff meetings are now a regular feature for both teaching staff and TAs. Teaching staff, supported by their TAs, have provided a wide range of activities and learning opportunities for the children. New class emails have enabled teachers and pupils to communicate safely and provided a conduit through which work can be shared.



School is undergoing many changes in September. Just before Lock Down, **Mrs Waits** was appointed the new Head of School starting in September and in the last two weeks, **Mrs Sue Parker** has been appointed the new Executive Head. This time of year is always busy, securing staff to teach and support in all areas of the school, setting the school budgets and re-negotiating contracts. If there is a silver lining to this terrible virus, it has been the opportunity for both Mrs Waits and Mr Speakman, as they are not teaching in the classroom, to be fully involved in all strategic decisions to secure a smooth transition in September.

There are several concerns amongst parents and staff about returning to school. Another worry for many parents is around their children transitioning from one educational establishment to another, and from one class to another, particularly when the new class teachers are unknown. We will continue to review and consider what the evolving government and WCC guidance means for us and take appropriate action, with the need to keep children and staff safe at the heart of our thinking and decision making.

## **Guarlford Parish Council, CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/2020 (1/4/2019 – 31/3/2020)**

The parish council met on four occasions during the year. In the parish council elections held in May, **Dr Peter Mayner** did not offer himself for re-election on the grounds of ill-health. All other councillors offered themselves for re-election and were elected and were pleased to welcome Reverend Peter Hughes as a colleague on his election as a councillor.

The council is so grateful to Dr Mayner for all his 25 years or so as a councillor (often as chairman). He was widely respected and during his time in office he worked tirelessly and with great good humour for the parish and the council. We wish him and his wife, Liz, all the very best for the future.

At our meetings we have received reports as necessary and appropriate either in person or in writing from:-

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Our Public Path Warden</b>  | Councillor David Fellows            |
| <b>Our Tree Warden</b>   | Mrs Jenny Cameron                   |
| <b>Our Local Police Community Support Officer</b>  | PCSO Martin Butcher                 |
| <b>The Chairman of the Village Hall Committee</b>  | Mr Donald Hill                      |
| <b>Our County and District Councillor</b>  | Mr Tom Wells                        |
| <b>Our District Councillor</b>   | Mrs Kathy Wells                     |
| <b>Guarlford History Group</b>   | Councillor Dr P Mayner (until May)  |
| <b>Our elected Trustee on the Board of Malvern Hills Trust<br/>(formerly Conservators)</b> | Councillor David Fellows (from Nov) |

Our thanks go to all the above for their contributions to our proceedings.

**MALVERN HILLS TRUST (MHT) - Councillor Fellows** was elected a board trustee by the parish of Guarlford at the election held at the end of October in succession to **Mr David Street** who had not offered himself for re-election. Proposals were put forward by MHT during the year for substantial changes to its governance and operation and the council responded fully to the consultation on the proposals.

**FRIENDS OF THE COMMONS OF MALVERN (FOCOM) - FOCOM** was originally established in 2018 to voice the many and varied concerns of local persons relating to the proposed large scale development of Rose Farm land off Chance Lane, which would have been facilitated if MHT had been able to grant the necessary rights of way over adjoining common and which would have substantially affected the natural aspect of the Malvern Hills and the approach to Malvern from the east. In the event, MHT resolved not to grant the necessary rights of way. I referred to this in my report of last year. During the year the council actively engaged as necessary with FOCOM and its representatives. FOCOM changed its name to Malvern Environment Protection Group with a wider brief to preserve so far as possible the natural aspect of the Malvern Hills which would be impaired by inappropriate development on open and green space in and around Malvern.

**AUDITING - Mr Peter Hughes** (formerly the Land Agent on the Madresfield Estate) kindly agreed to be our internal auditor for the year. **Councillor Andrew Medcalf** has supplied regular reports as our internal financial monitor. We are extremely grateful to both of them for their work and diligence.

**PRECEPT -** The precept for the year was £5,000, an increase of £550 over the 2018/19 precept occasioned by the need for a reserve to cover the anticipated May 2019 election expenses.

**PLANNING -** During the year five planning applications for development within the parish were considered by the planning committee and where appropriate comments passed to Malvern Hills District Council Planning Department

The council responded fully to consultation on the emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan. I would like to thank the members of the planning committee for the way in which they have gone about their business during the year.

**PARISH ENVIRONMENT** - Road safety at the **Rhydd junctions** where there was a history of accidents over many years (including one fatality and other very serious accidents) was of great concern to the council as was dangerous speeding along Clevelode Lane. With the assistance of our district councillors, a committee of the council formed for the purpose raised these issues with the county council as responsible authority but by the end of the year no satisfactory measures had been put in place

The state of some of the public highways in the parish continued to be of concern, particularly Blakes Lane (following the opening of the Plough and Harrow public house), Rectory Lane and Penny Close. Again with the assistance of our district councillors, these matters were raised by the committee with the county council but so far with little success

No firm decision was made during the year on the future use of the **telephone kiosk** in the village (purchased from British Telecom in March 2018) but it continues to be debated

The appointment of a parish lengthsman has been put on hold for the moment pending further consideration and discussions with the county council

After major renovation and improvement the only public house in the village, the **Plough and Harrow**, finally opened on 18 September and seems to have been well patronised since then until sadly the Covid -19 pandemic forced its temporary closure in March

In April, **Airband Community Internet Ltd** put on a presentation at the village hall regarding the possibility of introducing super-fast broadband in the village which was well attended. Following the presentation sufficient interest was shown by a number of residents to merit Airband introducing the service and all necessary works to accomplish this were carried out and completed during the year for the benefit of those residents, the costs of the works involved being met through the government's voucher scheme

A **Community Litter Pick** was arranged during the year which was well attended and resulted in substantial quantities of rubbish deposited in parts of the parish being collected and disposed of appropriately; it is hoped to repeat similar events in the future

The possibility of a defibrillator being introduced in the village continues to be debated

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major effect on a number of events to be held in the parish, notably the VE 75 celebrations planned for May 2020. Since March those celebrations and other events which were to be held or attended by councillors or their clerk (eg a Climate Emergency Action Day) have been cancelled or postponed.

**ADMINISTRATION** - **Mrs Gill Hollick** has been our clerk and responsible financial officer for the year and we are most grateful to her for all the time she has devoted to the job and for her boundless energy and enthusiasm. She has been ably assisted in financial matters by her husband, Roy to whom we extend our thanks also.

The council was saddened to learn that **Mr Michael Skinner**, its former clerk, had died in October. He had been our clerk for over 30 years (from December 1980 to June 2011). He had been a great asset to the council whose sympathy is extended to his widow, Sonia.

**GUARLFORD PARISH WEBSITE** - The website is a great asset, regularly kept up to date by **Mr Angus McCulloch** to whom we extend our thanks. We are grateful to **Guarlford History Group** who through Mr and Mrs Angus McCulloch have confirmed the group's continuing financial support for a further year at least in relation to the hosting and maintenance of the website

Finally, may I thank councillors for their attendance, varied contributions and support throughout the year.

M G Huskinson, Chairman, Guarlford Parish Council 20 May 2020

# GUARLFORD WI by Sue Orgill

Along with so many other organisations Guarlford WI has regretfully had to cease all activities. Meetings, talks and planned summer visits have gone on hold, many postponed until next year.

While in lockdown, members have been busy with various projects such as knitting pairs of hearts for local hospices, making headbands for the NHS as well as craft items for, hopefully, the Craft and Produce Show scheduled for September, or failing that, the Christmas fair in December. Others have been tending gardens and vegetable patches ready for the September show. It's a pity the Malvern Show was cancelled this year as there seem to be so many gold standard gardens around!



We have also been getting to grips with the intricacies of Zoom as well as keeping in touch with members by phone to check that all is well with them and helped out with shopping and collecting medicines where necessary. Not to mention organising afternoon tea from front gardens and lively VE day celebrations – socially distanced of course!

A monthly WI Newsletter, Guarlford Gossip, has been set up to help keep members in touch and give them a platform for airing views, passing on information or just sharing a joke.

All the wonders of modern technology are a great help in keeping us connected, when you can get the dratted system to work properly and you can get pictures and sound under control

But there is nothing on earth that can replace the sight of loved ones and the enthusiastic hugs of grandchildren. Roll on the day - until then – STAY SAFE!



In this Grapevine are pictures of flags and rainbows seen around the three parishes.  
But do you know where they are?

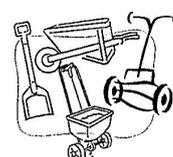


## The Grapevine Timetable 2020

| Edition  | Deadline date | Collation date (Tuesday) |
|----------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Aug/Sept | 8th July      | 1st July                 |
| Oct/Nov  | 8th Sept      | 22nd Sept                |
| Dec/Jan  | 8th Nov       | 24th Nov                 |



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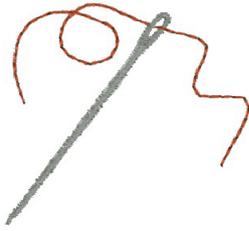
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