

**WICKWAR PARISH COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

MINUTES

2022

The Annual Parish Meeting for the above Council was held at the Town Hall on Wednesday 11th
May 2022 commencing at 7.00pm.

Chairman – S Isaac

Clerk – S Quick

1. Minutes of the last meeting.
Minutes of the last meeting held on the 8th May 2019 were approved. There has been a 2-year break due to Covid-19 and face to face meetings not being possible.
2. Annual Report from the Chairman of the Parish Council
Presented by Gareth Fielding Vice-chairman of the Parish Council. Report attached
3. Annual Report from the District Ward Councillor
Report attached
4. Report from Wickwar Wanderers Football Club
Report attached
5. Report from Wickwar Playing Fields Association
Report attached
6. Report from Wickwar 1st Beavers, Cubs and Scouts
No report as not in attendance
7. Report from Lower Woods
Report attached
8. Report from Holy Trinity Church
Report attached
9. Report from Wickwar Youth Club (grant recipient)
Report attached
10. Report from Wickwar Environmental Action Group (grant recipient)
Report attached
11. Report from Wickwar Out of School Club (grant recipient)
Report attached

12. Report from Wickwar Baby and Toddler Group

The toddler group is pleased to be back to meetings in the village hall after a long break due to Covid. Some outdoor meet ups were managed during the pandemic and were understandably very popular but weren't always possible due to restrictions. Some babies and toddlers have missed out greatly on socialisation and it has been a difficult time for new Mums. The group now has a new committee and is moving forward with their fundraising and sessions are popular.

Chair's report

The Local Government Act 1972 requires that there be an assembly to which the parish electorate is openly invited once a year. This is called the Annual Parish Meeting. The Chairman of the Parish Council chairs this meeting and where possible takes the opportunity to give an overview of the Parish Council's activities over the previous 12 months. It is also an ideal opportunity for local Clubs and Organisations to advertise what they're doing, look for new members or funding, or just for Parishioners to discover some of what's going on locally and meet their neighbours

Every year seems busier than the one before, and this last year has certainly been no exception as we again had periods of Covid lockdown necessitating more Parish Council email than ever before, Council meetings on Zoom, and even outdoors, including one particularly memorable socially distanced Parish Council meeting at the King George Playing Fields.

As a brief overview, the pressure of development within the parish continues, although there are some early indications that the level of National push back to overdevelopment, and the increased resistance from our residents focused by WRAG, may lead to more sensible decisions from the County Planning committee going forward. Possibly. Preventing unnecessary mass development within our Parish boundary will no doubt continue to be the main focus of the Parish Council for the year ahead.

The increased number of houses we have now - and those nearby - is beginning to cause concern with the lack of infrastructure and increased traffic. Developers should simply not be allowed to build hundreds and hundreds of new houses in small Villages without providing more facilities such as schools, surgeries, public transport and improved road structure.

The challenge for the Council remains how best we can maintain what we have now, keep it in good condition, update the facilities when required and all at a cost which our Parishioners can afford. It requires a combination of measures including a continuous reviewing of contracts, and seeking grant

funding whenever possible to supplement income from the precept, as well as utilizing unpaid help from our volunteers.

The improvement to our environment spearheaded by WEAG - litter picking, pond cleaning and footpath maintenance in recent months, provides an excellent example of what can be achieved by well organised volunteers and helped with a little grant funding from the Council.

In the last twelve months we have taken on two excellent new Councillors - Jason Jones and Rob Houghton - and managed to tempt long term Village resident Sarah Quick, away from South Gloucestershire Council to join us as our Parish Clerk. They are very welcome.

Achievements in 2021 - 2022.

Your Parish Council made meaningful grants to the Village Youth Club, the Village Hall to help with repairs, the Fireworks display in November, the Wickwar Environmental Action Group, the new Wickwar Entertainment committee which is organising the Jubilee celebrations, the Scouts and lots of others.

We supported our football club with reseeding, pitch maintenance, extra cuts to the grass and funding for Changing Room redecoration.

Published a book on the men from Wickwar who died in the Great War with copies available.

Refurbished our historic clock and clockface. And repaired it after it was damaged by Storm Eunice.

We have planted 13 new trees, in the play area, on King Georges Field and one in the Buthay.

We put up a new climbing frame, repainted the multi play unit, the igloo roundabout and slide. Had a new surface laid under swings.

We purchased a gas burner and ceramic logs for the beacon ready for Jubilee.

We have recently put a bench outside the Town Hall, 1 on the green opposite the youth club, 1 on Burleigh Green.. With more benches to come this year.

Organised a multi use litter bin as close to Bellway as we could get it for the residents until theirs are sorted out. Other new bins have been installed around the Village - and several dog bins.

Looking forward, we will be working with the Football Club to update the Pavilion and improve the facilities at King George V Playing Field. South Gloucestershire Council have told us they have no resources to help us with this project so if anyone local has any relevant expertise in Pavilion rebuilding or project managing something similar and has some time to help please contact our Clerk.

We have started the lengthy process of expanding the Cemetery into Park Field. So far we have started the survey and had trial holes dug and now awaiting results of the survey from Dept of Environment.

We will be renovating the Ground floor of the Town Hall to make it more accessible. And 21st Century Health and Safety compliant.

And we will now also be looking for funding to enable the Council to purchase a defibrillator for the south side of the Village.

Traffic remains a persistent problem. Both volume and speed. The traffic calming measures organised by South Gloucestershire Council but implemented by the Bellway and Linden Developers have slowed the traffic into the Village from the South, but are not universally popular. The Parish Council along with the Ward Councillor have been working to have the severity of the worst of the humps reduced.

The roads are increasingly potholed and this will also continue to be a main focus for the Council this year.

Our Ward Councillors have been very supportive during our meetings which they regularly attend - especially providing guidance relating to Planning and the development of the Village.

Website: The parish website continues to grow and contains a lot of information that we hope will be useful to residents. Pages includes all Parish Council documents plus a brief Parish History and a wealth of useful numbers and details for local organisations.

To ensure transparency of the work of the Parish Council, all minutes of all meetings are available to view on the Parish Council website as well as all accounts.

Although we have all seen rises in the County Council Tax, I am pleased to report that there is no rise in the Wickwar Precept - it has been maintained at the same level as last year.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2022: I'm sure we will be involved in more discussions with Developers. We will try to stop over development without any corresponding increase in facilities and infrastructure. We are committed to preserving the character of the Village and the quality of life for those who live here.

In conclusion, as a Parish Council we will continue to try to ensure our Parishioners views are taken into account, that we get value for money and our green and open spaces are maintained and protected as best we can.

Finally, I would like to say a very big "thank you" to everyone who has worked for the Council - and, therefore, for our Village community - over the past year or so. Thank you to my fellow Parish Councillors; especially to our Chair Stephen Isaac for providing such calm and thoughtful leadership through such an unprecedented period. Also our Ward Councillors Pat Trull and Adrian Rush for their help and advice over the last 12 months. Thank you to our hard-working and supportive Clerk, and thank you to all of those who have volunteered at different times to help our Community.

Now, as we begin the 2022 - 2023 Council Year, we look forward to the Village Jubilee Festival from June 2 to 5 to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It will be a great opportunity for people to get together some for the first time in a while, and for all the community, and sports clubs and organisations in the village to further showcase what they do and what they offer for people in our community.

Gareth Fielding.Vice Chair.

Ward Councillor's Report

The past year has been busy as per usual. We have all managed to get back to face to face meetings, which I prefer, however, in some cases we are still working with online meetings and some even hybrid. The public meetings occasionally mean travelling across the country. But it's all part of the job, and I do like the challenge.

Police and Crime

The Police and Crime Commissioner Mr Mark Shelford has been in post now just over a year. He is developing the Police and Crime plan for the Avon and Somerset Police, and as soon as it is published, I will make sure the Parish Council has a copy and this can be put on their web site for all to view. Sarah Crew is the new Chief Constable, taking over from Andy Marsh.

Launch of the Commissioner's Crime Prevention Fund

As part of the commissioning review undertaken last year, the OPCC has reviewed and relaunched its small grants scheme and commitment to supporting local communities reduce crime and improve public safety. The new Commissioner's Crime Prevention Fund will seek to deliver the specific aims of the PCC Police and Crime Plan that focus on preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. The scheme will empower local residents and those who know their communities best to respond to, and prevent crime. This new fund is being run as a partnership between The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) and Quartet Community Foundation (QCF), to help create safer communities in our area. Applications will be welcomed from community groups and registered charities based anywhere in Avon and Somerset. Groups can apply for a grant of between £1,000 to £5,000 to deliver a crime prevention project. Any groups based in BANES, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire should apply to QCF

<https://quartetcf.org.uk/grant-programmes/oppc/>

The fund will be open all year round but there are 3 opportunities to apply by. The deadlines are Friday 27 May 2022, Friday 30 September, and Friday 24 February 2023. Applications will be assessed shortly after these deadlines and outcomes communicated.

It really is worth reading. Some years ago, the Parish Council were lucky enough to receive a grant from this funding pot for security gates on the pavilion.

Lower Woods

Lowers Woods nature reserve has been chosen as part of a nationwide network of ancient woodlands or trees to be dedicated to The Queen in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee.

This is such an honour and very local to Wickwar.

Environmental Concerns

There has been a lot of information available to us regarding the lack of buses, and public transport issues or the lack of it. All villages are expected to take on hundred and even thousands of new houses without the infrastructure in place. Wickwar PC was lobbied by a gentleman who put forward a suggestion that Wickwar train station might be reopened. It could be a request station for example. But the Dan Norris (West of England Mayor) WECA, did not think this was a sound idea. I know I did and so did many parishioners.

The Guardian newspaper ran an article about two months ago: 'New greenfield housing developments are locking residents into car dependency, making every day journeys impossible without a vehicle, a new report has found. Meanwhile, pledges for walking, cycling and public transport are often left unfulfilled. The group Transport for New Homes (TfNH) visited 20 new housing developments in England, finding that while those on urban brownfield sites generally lived up to sustainable transport pledges, greenfield sites were often far from shops and amenities, without public transport, cycling links or even pavements, and the homes themselves were seemingly designed around car parking. Surface transport is responsible for 22% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, and the Climate Change Committee says reducing demand for car travel is key to meeting emission reduction targets. Campaigners say housing pledges in the "levelling up" white paper, launched last week, will do little to achieve this and that planning reform is urgently needed. The government aims to build 300,000 new homes a year to meet growing demand.' There is a planning application in for 180 more houses in Wickwar, which will take up a precious green field resource and environment.

A lot of my time is taken up (and quite rightly so) with e mails from parishioners in this parish, I really enjoy hearing the news and views of parishioners. One such hot topic has been the speed humps along the Sodbury Road. I think it is pertinent to mention that everybody in Wickwar and South Gloucestershire had two opportunities to have their say on this matter. The fact remains that most people who replied were in favour of the speed reduction tables. So, if in the future you are given an opportunity to air your views, then please take it. The speed humps are a little bit like marmite, you love them or hate them. South Glos Council has agreed to reduce the gradient of the speed humps nearing Frith Lane and should be underway by the 13th of May. If most of those replying had not been in favour, then the speed tables would not be in situ.

Wickwar Wanderers Football Club

Report from Wickwar Wanderers Football Club (2021/22 Season)

Teams

- Under-11's (Cotswold Youth League)
- Under-15's (Severn Valley League)
- Under-16's (Severn Valley League)
- Under-17's (Severn Valley League)
- Senior Teams (Stroud and District League)

Youth Teams

- All teams competed in strong leagues, with mixed results, but all enjoyed successes at various stages of the season.
- There will only be 3 youth teams next year as there will be no Under-18s. Colin Wheal and Pete Adams have done a magnificent job over the past 7 or 8 years and the club wishes them well.
- We have lost a number of youth teams over the past few years and Matt Quick has restarted the 'Skills Group' (4-8 year olds) to try to kick start the younger teams again. Players numbers are good (20+ on some Sunday mornings) and the Committee will provide the usual support. What we desperately need are managers

– parents to step up and run the teams. It would be a shame to see youth football to die out in the village because we can't get enough parents involved.

Senior Teams

- The Seniors section have had a topsy-turvy season with the start of the season seeing us struggle with availability and results and then losing our manager Graham. However, from there the players managed to club together and get some really good results for both sides.
- The first team managed to move themselves up from 10th to finish in 4th place. This is the club's highest final position in recent memory. The squad now look for promotion next season under manager Ellis Cox.
- The reserves are excited to see what division in which they will be placed following the restructuring of the Stroud League after their 4th place finish this season. Under new manager Jonny Gilder they will be looking to gain promotion next season.

Annual Events

- After missing two years, the end of season Awards Ceremony took place at Wickwar Playing fields last Saturday (7th May). The excellent weather made it a memorable evening and many people said it was one of the best they can remember. Bar/BBQ takings were also considerably up!
- Our annual football tournament, 'Football Frolics', was again cancelled due to Covid. We are hoping to run it this year, subject (once again) to volunteers and parental help.
- After previous cancellations during Covid lockdowns, the annual WWFC Comedy Night was held in November at the Wickwar Community Rooms and tickets sold out many weeks in advance. This helped to contribute much-needed funds to the club.

Committee

- The last AGM saw a large number a number of changes to the committee, with the Chairman, Welfare Officer, Treasurer, and Senior and Junior Secretary roles all being handed on.

Parish Council

- An excellent working relationship has been maintained with both the Parish Council and the WPFA.
- These have been difficult times for the football club financially. It has missed large amounts of much-needed revenue with the cancellation of its major fundraising events in 2020 and 2021. This year both the Parish Council and the WPFA have helped enormously, either by waiving fees or reducing rents. This has made a massive difference. It is heartening to know that when the club really needed help, the PC and WPFA stepped up and did all they could.
- Proposals for the revamped and extended pavilion continue, with good communication between the club and PC.
- I (Steve Billings) am now moving on from the Youth Secretary role and would like to thank the Parish Council personally for all their help and support to the club over the past years. I also hope Gareth continues to conduct his football-related business with my replacement in the usual manner, i.e. over a pint!

Wickwar Playing Fields Association

Wickwar Annual Parish Meeting 2022

Good evening,

On behalf of the Trustees of Wickwar Playing Fields Association I would like to provide you with an update of the trust's activities over the last couple of years.

As an overview the fields remain in excellent condition and we are delighted how many people have 'discovered' them during lockdown and what a difference they have made to their lives. We are very fortunate in the village to have such lovely areas to enjoy and take our exercise in.

Of the many visiting groups AHS year 1 class enjoyed their orchard and allotment field trip and Wickwar scouts, beavers and cubs had a great day apple pressing. Another highlight was the Thornbury Taekwon-Do group going through their 'socially-distanced' training routines when they were not allowed to meet indoors.

The physical and living structures on the field have been greatly enhanced by the excellent work conducted by the Wickwar Environmental Action Group (WEAG) on the pond area; installing the "Three Bears" benches and the new sensory herb garden. We must thank Alan Humphries and the Wickwar Helping Out Group (HOG's) for constructing the new gateposts and installing the new fence and gates.

Wickwar Allotments Association are maintaining the allotments in great condition and the plots remain fully subscribed during lockdown the waiting list has increased from two to five years. The Apiary currently contains eight hives which are producing good quantities of honey whilst pollinating the orchard and allotments. The orchard has produced good crops of apples, pears, nuts, plums and quince. For the first time a group of villagers have produced cider and by all accounts the 400+ bottles tasted very good.

Wickwar Wanderers FC continue to use both pitches for junior fixtures and regular training sessions. The feedback on the quality of the playing surfaces is very positive from players, coaches and visiting teams. There is a really positive relationship with the football club committee and we would like to thank them for their support.

The postponed annual Wickwar Games and 5K Fun Run was finally held in September and was the best ever. On behalf of the Games Organising Committee I would like to thank Wickwar Wunners, Friends of Alexander Hosea School, Friends of Wickwar Church, Wickwar Toddlers, KLB staff, Impact Gym and many individuals for their support and assistance in pulling it all together. **A date for your diary:** This year's Games will be held on Saturday 16th July 2022.

The Trustees would like to thank the very many organisations and individuals whose funding, support and expertise have allowed the fields to prosper. There is a great deal of good will in this village and we think this should be accentuated and celebrated.

If there are any questions please feel free to ask?

Kind regards,

John

John Broad
Chairman
Wickwar Playing Fields Association

Lower Woods

Lower Woods Report Annual Parish Meeting 2022

People

Neil Lodge remains as Wood Warden, employed by the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, continuing and building on the excellent work he has been undertaking for many years now.

Volunteer groups now meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays, carrying out a range of practical work in the woods to assist Neil. Many of the volunteers have also been present for many years too and together they have built up a formidable range of knowledge and ability to enhance the conservation of the woods.

Ash Dieback

Now very noticeable to all who visit the woods. A major programme of felling diseased Ash near roadsides and paths has been undertaken and will continue indefinitely as Ash constitutes some 50% of Lower Wood's trees. This work is necessary for safety reasons as the wood deteriorates quite quickly causing loss of major branches and possible tree collapse. In some places the felling has extended further away from roadsides to improve biodiversity where Ash has been a near monoculture.

Brash arising from the felling has been chipped onto the paths to improve the surface and help prevent increasing visitor numbers from making them ever wider.

The ongoing clear up of diseased Ash will continue to take up a great deal of our time for the foreseeable future.

Conifer Thinning and Felling

The thinning and felling of conifers in the southern woods has been ongoing for several years to increase the quantity and quality of native/broadleaved woodland. In particular the many ancient oak and Ash in this area are being 'haloed', ie, removing conifers around and close to them which are severely restricting and harming their growth. This work was badly affected by storm Eunice earlier this year as large areas of conifers were windblown. It could be argued this assisted their removal but the trees were blown down like a pack of cards and extensive clearance and rut repair will be necessary during the Summer and Autumn.

Coppicing

This has been concentrated in Crews and West Stanley but the quantity is much less than previously. This is due to the large amount of staff and volunteer time devoted to the priority work associated with Ash Dieback.

Tree planting

Planting has taken place on the large area in the southern woods where Western Red Cedar was felled previously. Species used have been Oak, Hawthorn, Hornbeam, Walnut and Poplar. This planting is to supplement natural regeneration of a range of broadleaved species and to ensure that regrowth includes a good proportion of Oak.

Most of these trees come from our own tree nursery next to the woodyard, which has been stocked by growing on collected seeds from the wood (eg, acorns), or by carefully digging up naturally regenerated seedlings, mainly Oak, in unwanted places such as on rides and transplanting in the nursery.

Hedge laying

Hedge laying along the drive has taken place and will be continued.

Drive Repairs

From time to time where potholes in the surface are seen to be re-forming, time has been spent in filling them in and re-compacting, so that the dreadful drive surface of several years ago is never allowed to re-occur.

Queen's Green Canopy

We are delighted that Lower Woods has been chosen as one of the 70 ancient woodlands and trees from a nationwide network to be dedicated to Her Majesty as part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Bill Heslegrave

On behalf of Neil Lodge and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

May 2022

Holy Trinity Church

Report to Wickwar Parish Council Annual Meeting

Wed 11th May 2022

Like everyone else the Church in Wickwar has had to live differently over the last 18 months or so and we have come out of that period changed and with different perspectives and different gifts. Having the worship space closed and being unable to gather in each other's presence was strange, especially for those significant life moments.

I recall my first funeral during that period where there were me and four members of the family stood outside around the grave, with someone live streaming the occasion on a phone, to America.

And a wedding where we were limited to me as officiant, the couple and two witnesses.

Meanwhile our regular Sunday services were occurring on Zoom which gave everyone, at least the feeling they were live and together, joining in prayer and reflection with you tube versions of hymns.

The first time we met in open church for a limited service in which we couldn't yet sing, we had the hymn played and the words to read. It was a very emotive moment, as the meaning of the words and the occasion leapt out in a very different way.

We are now evolving back into services each Sunday with open singing, but there are still a contingent who want to meet for services on zoom which, for the moment we are continuing. And for those who were shielding but didn't have computers or internet access we started a phone church using a conference call system, and that continues with a regular group on a Monday morning alongside all the more regular activities that are gradually coming back.

And the dabbling with IT and tech has had its effect. Holy Trinity Church now is equipped with WiFi and contactless payment for collections. We are hoping to develop a simple way to stream services from the church once we have worked out the best way to organise and resource this. So we have and are coming out of the pandemic period having changed and with new insights.

Last year all five churches in our benefice signed up to a National initiative called inclusive church. Their statement goes ...

"We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will continue to challenge discrimination against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality. We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people and which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation."

This was after my travelling on a Sabbatical to Iona and Lindesfarne where there have been Christian communities for hundreds of years and where people still gather because they are welcomed from whichever direction they come and whatever shape their life is in. Our parish churches need to learn from those ancient but innovative examples and we hope that we are. Particularly as people from the Ukraine begin to move into our villages.

We are also exploring an initiative known as Eco Church, looking at energy issues, and how we steward our land and buildings, and more importantly how we bring out the biblical and faith message that encourages us to be responsible stewards of God's creation.

And like many we have seen the effect economic down turn and increased prices are having on people in our community. We are supporting and promoting the work of The Keepers in Wotton and during the lockdown Christmas we organised free Christmas meals through the charity Long Table, and latterly we have had our grocery cupboards in the porch with provisions available to any and all in need, for the taking. Tremendous thanks to those who support us in these ways.

But like many churches we experience problems of resource and support when it comes to building back where we once were as church. We have a very faithful PCC for which I am indebted in managing the affairs of the church, and a wonderful, if small Friends of the church who raise and look after funds for major heritage work on fabric and buildings.

But even so we would welcome some support to help us bring back activities such as children and youth work, family services and other open activities, and reform our assembly team, Open the Book, much loved by our school, and revive our Toddlers praise, a weekday story time and activities for pre school children and their parent or carer. Like many churches our active numbers at regular services haven't yet picked up after the COVID break and we are running a predictable annual deficit which is the case for many churches of our size.

And yet I am optimistic. The issue isn't just a financial one. Holy Trinity Church contains many stories and histories about our community. It has seen countless occasions of celebrating new life, new relationships and giving thanks for lives gone by. Only last week we helped the Arnold family, once resident here celebrate the life of a recently departed member, and only this last Sunday we had a hundred people in church celebrating the confirmation of 7 people from our congregation, two of which I baptised as babies.

So as we welcome newcomers into our community, *and wasn't that a helpful Facebook post recently that attempted to separate the issue of being critical about developments from the desire to welcome those new to us*, I hope newcomers and those established in the village are reminded what value the church and its message has for all of us,

We can all see that grand building up on the hill as a focus for our goodness, our values, and our cultural roots, alongside that faith that takes us beyond ourselves.

We have our Annual meeting next Sunday after the 10.30 service in church where we elect and re-elect our posts and committee and also review our activities and look forward.

All welcome.

Wickwar Youth Club

Some highlights from the last couple of years:

Our response to the Covid restrictions

All the time that WYC was closed by the Government from April 2020, to provide a service for our members, the staff ran 2 sessions a week on Zoom to replace the actual sessions. In addition, we delivered hundreds of Activity packs, usually on a Saturday, for our members to have something to do during lockdown and for us to be able to speak to them and their parents/carers to see how they were all getting on. We had many appreciative comments for this service. We recruited a very creative Youth Worker in Charge in November 2020 and she provided support on our Facebook page for how to do the different activities, and members on the Zoom sessions could make the more challenging items with her during that time. Examples of the packs were ingredients to make cookies, scratch Art cards, painting rocks, making a Mother's Day present, making an Easter wreath, making a fabric Christmas Tree and many more ideas. When we were able to open again after Easter 2021, we were only allowed small groups, so we worked a system so that everyone who wished was able to attend once a fortnight. Everyone was really pleased when we were able to open as normal in September 2021, although there was some initial nervousness, and everyone had on their mask.

Membership and programme of activities

Membership has steadily increased, and we are now reaching maximum capacity. Each term the Youth Worker in Charge creates the programme of activities which is delivered to members in advance. They have enjoyed an Easter Egg hunt, Christmas disco, summer barbecue as well as sports, art, crafts, and cooking activities. One specific project was run by Wickwar Environmental Action Group (WEAG) with our members, to improve the wild part of the grounds for the benefit of wildlife.

Introducing the Opportunity for Certification

In 2020 we introduced the members to the South Gloucestershire Youth Awards opportunity. This is a voluntary scheme, and 11 young people completed their evidence collection paperwork and gained a certificate, 3 for Making a Difference and 8 for their Activities Log. The Youth Worker in

Charge was asked by the organisers to decorate the hall for the Award's Evening and our members helped to make the items needed. 10 were able to attend the event on 21 February plus 3 staff. Photos of the event were on our Facebook page and some on the Wickwar Forum. The 3 seniors who helped decorate the hall during the day were treated to a bowling evening on 25 March.

Wickwar Environmental Action Group



It was over 2 years ago that WEAG was created, and we feel we have remained fairly true to our original goal which was to help 'Celebrate, Protect and Improve our local environment'. Which we summed up in the phrase – *'Wickwar – Love our Place'*.

In that time, we have been very lucky to have had so much support from many organisations in the village, especially Wickwar Parish Council, who have helped fund and support many of our ideas, Wickwar Playing Fields Association for trusting us and giving us access to spaces to start new projects and Wickwar Youth Club for opening our eyes to the potential and brilliant ideas of the young people living in our community. We have also had the support of many, many individuals too...you know who you are...a huge 'Thank you' to every one of you!

We've had fun making things happen and it maybe easiest to simply list some of the things we have been able to complete working with our many supporters and volunteers in and around Wickwar –

- Paths – Keeping 47 local styles and 14 miles of footpaths clear of undergrowth. Repairing 4-5 heavily trafficked areas using bricks donated by Linden Homes, aggregate from Wickwar quarry and the people power from Wickwar Scouts (plus Mums & Dads) and Wickwar's *'Help Out Guy's'*.
- Nature – Planting over 450 trees at WPFA fields; Restoring the WPFA Nature Area culminating in the successful return of newts; Worked with the young people at Wickwar youth club to deliver their vision to create their own quiet, nature area; Created a new nature area at the southern end of the Buthay; Planted 2000 daffodils throughout the village.

- Amenities – Created the VE Bench installed up at the WPFA fields; installed the ‘3 bears benches and the sensory garden – all with the amazing support of the WPFA team (thanks!!); Restored the old ROC hut and documenting on signs (created by Jim MacAleece) the local ‘living history’ and photographs relating to this rediscovered historic village site; Created the ‘Remembrance & Nature Trail’ maps which captured some of our village history; Supported 9 hard working DofE volunteers from KLB who helped keep Wickwar a tidier and greener place.

We hope many of these things will continue to be used and enjoyed by the community over the coming years and would welcome more support for our future plans and activities!

Our forthcoming activity is the ‘Wickwar Good Front Garden’ awards scheme, which we hope brings even more colour to the streets of Wickwar and plants for our bees and other pollinators to thrive on!

As ever, we would love to hear from anyone. If you have any ideas that need supporting or would simply like to get in touch, then just drop us a line at WEAGWickwar1@gmail.com.



‘Wickwar - Love our Place’

Wickwar Out of School Club

Wickwar Out of School Club is based in the Community Centre on the grounds of Alexander Hosea Primary School. During the term time we offer wrap around care before and after school for the children of Alexander Hosea, as well as School Holiday Club which is open to all children of primary school age from the surrounding areas.

Over the last couple of years, like many businesses, we have had to restructure the way we run multiple times due to Covid restrictions. This has led us to review the way we operate and the activities we offer.

The Covid restrictions in place when we reopened after the first national lockdown meant we needed to provide more outdoor time for the children, as the guidance stated outside is best to help reduce the spread. Since then, we have decided to put a lot of focus on the ‘Understanding the World’ element of

the Early Years Statutory Framework by providing more open-ended play opportunities and updating our outdoor area.

Although we still have a way to go with this, we are already seeing the benefits for the children, as it has allowed them to express their feelings and become more aware of other people's feelings through play, as well as burn off that excess energy at the end of the school day!!

We have been working alongside the Community Centre Committee, from who we hire the space, and have been very lucky to have been awarded funding, some of which by Wickwar Parish Council, in order to begin the process. So far, we have had a concrete base laid for our large shed, a new smaller shed, an area of artificial grass installed which houses our new mud kitchen and planter and had outdoor lights put up to allow outdoor play year-round. Our next project is to have a shelter installed so we can get the children outside in all weathers.

Overall, although it has been a challenging couple of years, it has allowed to think about things from a new perspective and we are excited for the new opportunities we can bring to our club in the future.
