

Elkstone Newsletter

32nd Year: No. 6 (341)

March 2016

Editor's Bit

Reg – 22nd February 2016

Features	
Elkstone Church Services Elkstone Services News Supper and Film Evening Churn Valley Benefice Walk Children's Society News Village and Community Agent News	Wine Tasting Evening Gardens Open Day Elkstone Parish Clerk Advert Gigaclear Interview Local Adverts
Diary Dates	
Elkstone Supper and Film Night – Thursday 10 th March – 8.00pm for film – Village Hall Churn Valley Benefice Walk – 19 th March – 1.00pm – Coberley Church Elkstone Parish council meeting 23 rd March 8.00pm Village Hall Wine Tasting – 7 th May – 6.30pm – Village Hall Elkstone Gardens Open Day – 5 th June 2016	
Regular Dates	
Waste and recycling	Food + garden waste – Every Friday
Waste and recycling	All bags, bins + boxes — 11 th and 25 th March
Watercolour Painting	Every Tuesday - Village Hall - 10am – <i>Yvette Levick 870485</i>
Indoor Bowls	Every Tuesday - Village Hall – <i>Trevor - 870246</i>
Deadline for next month's edition: Monday 20th March please	
The Elkstone web-site has current and past copies of the Newsletter – www.elkstonevillage.com	
Reg Eyre – High Beech – 870375 – reg.eyre@tesco.net	

Elkstone Church Services

March 6 th – 10.00am	Mothering Sunday, Morning Prayer – Rev G Cox
March 13 th – 10.00am	Family Service – Rev A Champion
March 20 th – no service	Joint Palm Sunday Service at Colesbourne - 10.00am
March 25 th – 10.00am	Good Friday Mediations – Revs A Champion and C Pooley
March 27 th – 10.00am	Easter Day Family Songs of Praise Service – David Pierce

David Pierce

Mothering Sunday – March 6th 10.00am - Rev Geoffrey Cox is taking our Mothering Day service, during which small bouquets of flowers will be given to all the ladies. Come and join us to say thank you to all our mothers for everything they do for us.

Good Friday – March 25th 10.00am – This will a service of meditation on the events of Good Friday.

Easter Sunday – March 27th 10.00am – Our service on Easter day will be a family orientated Songs of Praise service. This will be a mixture of Bible readings following the events of Easter Day, meditations on those readings and hymns so we can sing in celebration of Christ's resurrection and its good news. The service will be followed by an **Easter Egg hunt** in the churchyard and Church, for the young and not so young. But the children may need to be quick to get there before the Churchwarden, who has a nose for chocolate.!

Toy Service – February 14th – Geoff Gait-Carr once again led our Toy Service. All the toys donated have been given to the Stroud Beresford Group (www.stroudwomensrefuge.org), which runs a women's refuge. Geoff brought something he had made in wood. This year Elsie sat at a table, which she and Geoff had put together (see photographs), to a meal of bread, cheese (with mouse!) and carrot, with a wooden bottle for a drink. We were then asked whether there was

anything more important than the food and drink. Yes there is ...love ...God's love for us; our love for God; and love for each other. We all had a heart carved from wood to take home to remind us of the message.



Elkstone Film and Supper Night - Thursday March 10th

This month we will feature **Bridge of Spies** - Directed by Steven Spielberg, Bridge of Spies is a dramatic thriller which tells the story of James Donovan (played by Tom Hanks), a Brooklyn insurance claims lawyer who finds himself thrust into the centre of the Cold War when the CIA sends him on the near-impossible task to negotiate the release of a captured American U-2 pilot. The evening will start with a salmon supper at 7.00pm followed by the film at 8.00pm.

Supper plus Film: £10.00 each paid via marked up envelope through our letterbox at Manor Farm Cottage Elkstone by 7.00pm Monday 7th March please, Film only - £5.00 at the door
Jeremy and Anne – 870516

Churn Valley Benefice Walk

Saturday 19th March

Last year on Maundy Thursday a few of us took part in a walk from Coberley church to Colesbourne church, stopping at Cowley and Elkstone churches on the way. This was intended to complement the usual Good Friday walk from Rendcomb church to Stratton. For many people Maundy Thursday was not convenient so we have decided to do the walk this year on **Saturday 19th March, the day before Palm Sunday.**

The best way to start the walk is to drive to Colesbourne, park, and catch the 12.36 bus to Coberley. Others will be doing this.

The walk will commence at **13.00** from **Coberley church**. It should take about 40 minutes, on footpaths and across fields, to **Cowley church** - arrive **13.40**.

We will then leave **Cowley church** at **13.55** and walk to **Elkstone church**. This takes about 45 minutes, mostly on footpaths including a short uphill section through the woods. This may be muddy so suitable footwear is recommended. We will arrive at **Elkstone church** at **14.40**.

We then leave **Elkstone church** at **14.55** and walk to **Colesbourne church**. This should take 1hr and 5 minutes on tracks along the ridge with wonderful views across the Churn Valley and then down into the valley. We will arrive at **Colesbourne church** at about **16.00**.

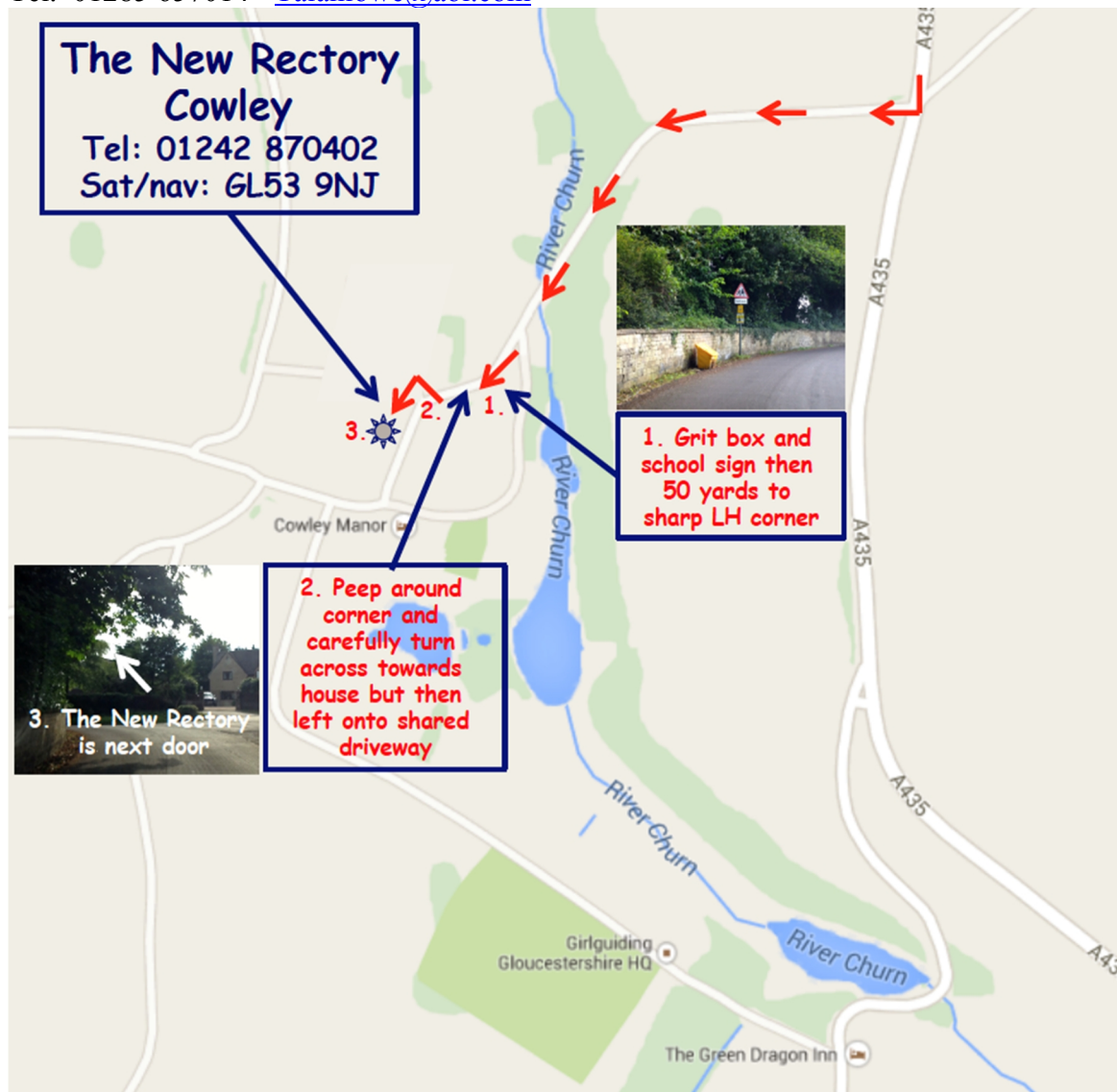
After the walk, Revd.Arthur Champion has invited us all to drive up to the New Rectory at Cowley for a cup of tea or coffee and cakes. A map of the location of the rectory is shown below. I am sure that there will be lifts for anyone without a car.

If you would like to see more details of the North Churn churches then have a look at the "A church near you" website where you can read up about their history

<http://www.achurchnearyou.com/elkstone-st-john-the-evangelist/>



Please feel free to join the walk for any of these sections or for the whole distance (about 6.5 miles). It is an opportunity for everyone to see the four beautiful churches in the north of our Benefice and for members of all congregations to spend some time together before Easter. If you would like any further details please contact Alan and Alison Lowe.
Tel. 01285 657014 - Talanlowe@aol.com



The Children's Society

This week £728.23 was sent to The Children's Society. This magnificent total was made up from house boxes and collections in church on Christmas Eve and at the Christingle Service.

Many, many thanks to loyal supporters in the village and from further afield. The money will go towards making a positive difference to the lives of children who are in need.

Jennie Howlett - 870462

Village and Community Agent

Do you look after someone?

Free local sessions in Cirencester starting 8th April can give you the opportunity to help you to help them.

The weekly sessions give support and gain information and enable you to meet with other unpaid carers.

Friday 8 th April	Being a Carer
Friday 15 th April	Day- to -Day Caring
Friday 22 nd April	Looking After Yourself
Friday 29 th April	Caring in Partnership

Friday 6th May Caring and Resources
Friday 13th May Next Steps
St Lawrence Church Centre, Countess Lillas Road, Cirencester, GL71UD
From 10.30am - 1pm
To find out more or to book a place, please call 01452 500885 or email
positivecaring@carersgloucestershire.org.uk
Free replacement care and transport available on request. Please call to discuss
A Happy Easter to everyone hope the weather is nice for the weekend
Best Wishes
Cynthia Laird - mobile 07776 245 780

Wine Tasting Evening at the Village Hall
Saturday May 7th 2016 at 18.30 in the Village Hall

Balkan and Levant Trilogies

The Committee has been very active in imbibing several excellent wines from our selected regions with many grape varieties new to us. This will culminate in a taste off amongst us to home in on the final selection of the three whites and three reds that we will offer to all takers on the 7th May. Yes, we know it's a tough job, but someone has to do it! At this stage suffice it to say that it seems as though it will be challenging for us to choose from some very drinkable up to very fine wines for your final delectation.

Meanwhile, if you are tired of wet, windy, grey February and March days at the fag end of winter you could do worse than invest £10 in the DVD of Fortunes of War the BBC's dramatisation of Olivia Manning's six novels published under the collective titles of The Balkan Trilogy and The Levant Trilogy. Spanning stunning locations from Rumania and Greece to Egypt, Jerusalem and pre current civil war Syria, it is a brilliantly acted, spoken (no mumbling) and haunting evocation of a vanished way of life. Alternatively to fill the remaining long dark evenings of winter 2016, your favourite on-line bookseller offers the entire collection of Manning's six- book masterpiece for less than £25.

Tickets for the evening of 7th May are selling very fast indeed to past and present Elkstonians. So if you haven't already done so please contact one of us to book your places asap for what promises to be a convivial symposium of friends old and new.

As a reminder, tickets are £10 a head, which will include a typical Elkstone Mediterranean themed supper as well as the tasting wines; and, of course there will be points as well as prizes for the oenophiles and the wine-gums.

Andy - andy@pobox.com

Arnold - arnolddeering@gofast.co.uk

Brian - brian.howlett@virgin.net

David - drpierce@msn.com

Elkstone Gardens Open Day 2016 Update

We now have an excellent quotient of village gardeners who have committed to opening their gardens on 5th June, including those who have never opened previously or who have taken a break for several years. Thank you to all of you for making this valuable and fundamental contribution to the Elkstone Village Open Day. If there are others in the village that would like to open a garden it is of course not too late. Whatever your style, guests like to view what you have made of your plot. Though we now need ideally to finalise the list by the end of March to enable sufficient time especially to plan, design and print the literature associated with the occasion.

If you would like to help in other ways then volunteers are most welcomed for car parking duty at the Rectory field. We aim to limit each stint to a maximum of 1 hour. Ronnie Bury has kindly agreed to organise the roster so please contact him or the Committee if you would like to take part in marshalling the cars and taking payment from our visitors.

Additionally Jennie Howlett and Margaret Holder always need help at the Village Hall teas. While Rachael Richardson and Catherine Birch will also need lots of supporters for the popular cream teas, which this year will be at Granary Barn.

Finally the Plant Stall is always a must go-to for our guests; and, we still are looking for someone to take charge of that with a central location not too far from the car park. Please contact one of us if this is something you would like to support. A further reminder too that we would be grateful for horticulturally inclined villagers to pot up a few extra cuttings or seedlings for sale on the day.

As many of you are aware the Church is planning to establish a wild flower meadow in its grounds. So we would like to feature information about restoring wild flower meadows and their beneficial environmental impacts, particularly on restoring and reviving bee populations in the UK. In support of this initiative we would like to invite any other villagers with wild life interests to contribute.

Finally we are pleased that Tess and Allan Dick have agreed to host the barbecue on the Village Green after the visitors have left. Especially, this is a chance for R&R and celebration after what we hope will be another successful, community venture for the village.

Brian – brian.howlett@virgin.net

Anne – seabran@btinternet.com

Eric – e.magnuson@me.com

Maggie – maggie.marriott@btinternet.com

Brian Howlett - brian.howlett@virgin.net

Could you be Elkstone Parish Council's next Clerk?

The present incumbent will retire in September, and the Parish Councillors would really like to find their next Clerk from within the local community.

The role of Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business properly, and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support.

The Parish Council is part of local government, together with the County Council and the six District/ Borough Councils. The County Council is responsible for strategic services such as highways, education, libraries, social services, and strategic planning. District Councils are responsible for local services including housing, local planning and refuse collection.

Parish (and Town) Councils are the part of government closest to the people, being the only local government tier that represents residents at parish level.

Parish Councils are invited to comment on planning applications and can be represented at public inquiries.

Similarly they can advise the County and District authorities on the views of residents, and especially priorities for local investment.

Importantly, Parish Councils can "precept" - raising a council tax each year to provide or improve facilities and services for local people.

Their powers and duties cover things that we tend to take for granted, including in Elkstone the provision of litter and salt-and-grit bins, bus shelters, and having regard for the maintenance of public rights of way, roadside verges, and the Pound.

All Parish Council meetings are open to the public. They are led by the Council's Chairman and advised by the Clerk who is there to see that business is conducted within the law.

A job description will always list the duties in detail but here's a useful summary:

The Clerk –

- ensures that the Parish Council conducts its business lawfully
- administers all the Council's paperwork
- is the Responsible Financial Officer, responsible for all financial records of the Council, including those needed for audit and VAT purposes, simple payroll, and the careful administration of the Council's finances.
- ensures that meeting papers are properly prepared and that the public is aware of meeting times
- implements the Council's decisions

- oversees the implementation of any projects
- supervises staff (if any)
- keeps property registers and other legal documents
- keeps up to date by training /qualification

Skills, attributes and facilities needed

Clerks usually pride themselves on having initiative and a good deal of common sense, the confidence to handle the administrative work, on being a good organiser, IT and Excel literate, and able to get on with most people. Underwriting these qualities is a sense of public duty - of wanting to help others in the community.

Elkstone's Clerk works from home. Access to a filing cabinet or similar, telephone, computer, printer and scanner is necessary. The Parish Council will provide equipment for a new Clerk who is not able to make available their own.

Being a Clerk to a Parish Council is a job, not a spare-time activity.

The average amount of time needed will be 4 to 5 hours a week, but these hours will be unevenly distributed from week to week. The Clerk has to be present at all Parish Council meetings, these are currently held 7 times a year, on Wednesday evenings, but occasionally, an additional meeting has to be convened. Weeks in which a meeting falls will require an above-average input of hours – preparing all the necessary paperwork, posting the agenda on the Village Hall noticeboard, and sending it as a pdf to the Elkstone Webmaster, attending and minuting the meeting, and dealing with any business thrown up as a result of the meeting, for example, sending out any necessary e-mails or letters after the meeting.

Elections, whether at parish or higher level, also produce additional work, with a number of notices, which must be posted by specific deadlines, and forms to give out.

The Clerk needs to check e-mails daily, and from time to time make, or be available to receive, phone calls during normal office hours, for example to/from officers of the District or County Council. Very occasionally, such officers will wish to meet with a representative of the Parish, which could be the Clerk.

What about training?

There would be within-parish induction, and soon after taking up post you could expect to attend a county induction course where you can meet other new clerks. You could go on to complete the nationally recognised Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). Further opportunities include structured training and study, leading, if you choose, to degree level qualification. You might, in due course, take on a second or even a third part-time Clerkship.

Pay and Conditions

Councillors would be pleased to discuss rates of pay with you. There are nationally-agreed pay scales for Clerks, both full-time and part-time. You should also expect a clear job description, and a contract of employment.

Are you interested?

Please discuss with a Parish Councillor, or contact the current Clerk

Lois – 870375

Interview with Bryan French from Gigaclear, Friday 12th February

Some of you had questions and I hope the answers below are of some use - Ed.

Q. When will Gigaclear have finished their work in Elkstone?

A. Elkstone will be completed within a month.

Q. How soon before Elkstone villagers can 'go live'?

A. The majority of customers, who have had their pots installed, can already go live. Indeed, some customers have already gone live. Some people have already contacted Gigaclear and asked to be connected, but if you are waiting then you can contact me (Bryan French) or the Gigaclear office to get connected.

Q. What speed should I choose?

A. 50Mbps is the entry-level speed, which about 40% of Gigaclear's customers choose. 50Mbps is ideal for smaller households. 100Mbps is ideal for slightly larger households. 200Mbps is ideal for people who work from home, enjoy gaming, etc. The 1G service is the all-singing, all-dancing service, currently the fastest in the UK.

Although you may not need 50Mbps today, our infrastructure future-proofs you and your property. Ultra 4K TVs typically need around 25/30Mbps to run high definition. Now although these TVs may not be common today, they will certainly be in the future. We won't know what the future brings; however, we will know that the fibre infrastructure will be able to handle it.

This appears to answer the question from a villager with regards to the 10Mbps service.

"Some people find their service unaffordable and I wonder why they don't do a lower budget speed e.g. 10Mbps?"

My impression from Bryan was that although some of us are quite happy with the slower service provided through the copper wire service, it is reasonable to conjecture that many devices are being manufactured so that they can connect and interact with the Internet. The usual laws of increasing memory/connectivity/cost lowering that have been seen from about 1980 concerning computers make this a plausible statement.

Q. I currently use BT, and they are suggesting that when they upgrade the green cabinet at High Cross, I will have faster Internet access. Please comment?

A. Had BT upgraded the Elkstone local cabinet, it still wouldn't have guaranteed fast speeds. The reason for this is because BT typically only upgrades fibre to the cabinet and leaves the existing copper from the cabinet to the property. Gigaclear upgrade infrastructure with a pure fibre network to the property. This in turn means that your property isn't limited to 76Mbps per second like it would be with BT as at present, Gigaclear offers speeds of up to 1,000Mbps. Gigaclear will even be trialling a 5,000Mbps service to domestic customers this year.

Q. Currently I have BT and they are pretty reliable, apart from the failure last week, but I do not like speaking to India partly because it is not easy to understand "English Indian" at long distance. If I had a problem with the Gigaclear broadband/service do they have resources to handle the query and resolve it in a decent time frame, and is the call centre in the UK?

A. Our customer service department is based in Abingdon, Oxford. Should you ever need to speak to us, you will speak to an actual human being without having to go through automated robots to do so. We respond to both incoming phone calls and emails immediately. Gigaclear are not a huge conglomerate like BT and we provide a more personal touch.

Q. BT have a technical programme, desktop help, that you can access to sort out some minor problems that occur so does Gigaclear have a similar programme to access and avoid the unnecessary hassle that seems to occur on hanging on telephone calls?

A. We don't have a technical programme such as desktop, likely because our infrastructure is far more reliable. However, should you encounter problems, calling our customer service department becomes a pleasure as we can diagnose issues over the phone with customers. Should the problems persist, our engineers are always on hand.

Q. Our Broadband service in Elkstone is quite good, not as fast as Gigaclear I accept, but if quite a few of the villagers go for Gigaclear would this mean that there is more capacity available for existing BT customers?

A. There is a possibility that speeds might marginally increase as customers come over to Gigaclear, however, the single and most important factor to customers getting poor speeds is simply the distance you are away from the local cabinet through the existing copper infrastructure, which will not change.

Q. Is there any real advantage, technically or financially, in switching to Gigaclear from BT?

A. As mentioned before, Gigaclear should be faster with more capacity for virtually the same price as BT. There are a multitude of benefits to switching over from BT and these will be dependent on your own personal circumstances. Quite often we save customers money whilst providing a far superior and more reliable service. Often the prices are similar. Gigaclear don't charge line rental whatsoever which is usually £17.99 per month with BT. I would recommend a personal visit from our staff, to discuss your specific circumstances.

Q. Is there any likelihood that BT will up their broadband capacity to Elkstone in the near

future?

A. No. Gigaclear are working in conjunction with Fastershire (Gloucestershire and Herefordshire county councils), therefore as we are partly subsidised in providing our services to you, BT will not. The Government has invested incredible amounts of money, in the region of £1.5bn, to improve broadband services across the UK. Typically, we won't build where BT have improved broadband services and vice versa.

Q. Is there any advantage in waiting to see how Gigaclear perform in the village before making a decision to perhaps change the provider to Gigaclear?

A. Gigaclear customer get the speeds and service they pay for. As the infrastructure is a pure fibre to the property network, it doesn't suffer the same issues as the existing copper infrastructure does with speed and reliability. It is important to remember that our network doesn't replace the existing copper infrastructure, it simply complements it.

Q. Where the verges have been dug up, they look pretty ropery now and certainly not helped by the weather and the rat runners. Is Gigaclear going to smooth and reseed or re-turf where necessary?

A. Gigaclear will always look to repair any damage we have caused. With regards to verges, we do our best to put things back to the best of our ability, however sometimes this is out of our hands, especially with regards to the time of year. Should anyone be unhappy with any work we have done, please contact the office.

Bryan French | Cotswolds Field Sales Executive Gigaclear plc

T: 07976 231206 E: Bryan.french@gigaclear.com

Coberley School is collecting Sainsbury's Vouchers – can you help?

Please can you collect vouchers for us again this year so that we can buy more equipment for the children? Vouchers can be posted through the door of The Old School House, next to the Village Hall.

Many thanks

Julia Davey

Cowley Village Fete

“A Grand Day Out!”

Saturday, May 14th, 2016 2.00pm-5.00pm

Our traditional village fete activities, stalls and games including

Fun Dog Show, Terrier Racing, ALPACA corner, fleece spinning, Tug-of War, Tombola, Coconut Shy, Face-Painting, Splat-the-Rat, and other entertainment for children.

Stalls: Cakes, Plants, Genuine Home Produce, Books, DVDs, Computer Games, Pre-loved clothes, Bric-a-Brac

Refreshment: BBQ, Licensed Bar, Cream Teas, Ice-Cream.

Live Music – Ukesanon Ukelele Band

Venue: Manor Farm Field

All proceeds for the maintenance of St. Mary the Virgin Church, Cowley

Lyn Joy - lynnjoy3@hotmail.com