

Minal News 48

February 2024

Communication Building Community



The Flood of January 2024

Friday 5th January 2024 witnessed the greatest flooding of the upper Kennet river in living memory. Minal Riverkeeper - John Hounslow worked tirelessly to lessen the impact on houses in the Minal/Stitchcombe stretch. The pictures on the left show him cutting the fencing below Werg Bridge which was impeding water flow into the flood meadow.

Disaster averted!

From: Gordon and Gillie Pepper of Durnsford Mill

A few days before the big flood the remains of a freshly cut tree came floating down the river to Durnsford Mill. It came to rest alongside the sluice straddling all four of the gates which were as wide open as possible. It restricted the flow of water through the gates and started to gather more vegetation and debris causing the water to back up to Werg Bridge in Minal. Along came John Hounslow to save the day! The current was too strong to attempt to move the whole tree. The solution was to cut the tree into smaller bits in situ using a log pole saw, such that they would pass through the gates to be stopped and removed on the other side. It was dangerous. If John had slipped and fallen into the river he could have been a goner. After a tremendous effort he succeeded in clearing the "log jam".

Our thanks are to John.

THE MORAL OF THIS STORY IS NEVER EVER USE THE RIVER TO GET RID OF GARBAGE OF ANY KIND.

John Hounslow Riverkeeper

The flood has highlighted how fortunate Minal is to have a riverkeeper. John has been seen working on the river for over 45 years! He works for the Savernake Fly Fishers syndicate who in turn lease from Ramsbury Estates a stretch of the river from the old railway line to 400m beyond the Stitchcombe Bridge. John manages the trout ponds which up until the flood held about 16,000 young trout. These trout are "sexless" and therefore when introduced into the river cannot breed with the wild trout. The ponds have to be protected from predators such as otters, herons and cormorants. As part of his job John maintains the riverbanks and vegetation to ensure the river is healthy and flows well for the benefit of the whole food chain and to comply with the requirements of being an SSSI area (Site of Special Scientific Interest). He also monitors and maintains the 4 sets of sluice gates situated on his stretch. He works closely with the Environment Agency, Natural England, ARK and other relevant organisations. The ponds were damaged in the flooding and John is not yet sure how many fish were lost. However, he advises that trout like to swim upstream as far as possible so there could be new fish in the area from downstream. Always the optimist! John is passionate about his work and, as has recently been seen, goes beyond the call of duty. Lucky us!

Development at Werg Gardens.

Please may we introduce ourselves to all readers as Michael & Marie Lawson, often referred to as M&M. We are soon to become the new residents at Werg Gardens. Yes, the derelict bungalow, the corner plot, along Werg Lane. We purchased the plot in October 2022 and we have now successfully gained approval to build our new home on the site. Work is planned to commence in the spring. Werg Lane has notably changed in recent years with three beautiful contemporary developments. In line with these designs our own property will be built in a modern style with energy efficient materials used to create a low energy home. As part of the commencement of works we would like to announce that a road closure in Werg Lane will take place during the dates of the 4th -8th March. This to enable electricity and water to be brought onto the plot at the same time to minimize disruption. We are looking forward to joining your community and meeting with you all. At first, we will be residing in a Static Mobile home on the site, this will help us move the build along with enhanced speed. And I'm sure we will be found in the village, at local events and in the 'Horseshoe' as we progress with creating a new building that we do hope will please the Village.

Minal Nativity Play

Well done everyone!

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Minal Nativity on Christmas Eve. It was a bit of a drizzly night but our lovely Christmas tableau warmed everyone's hearts. Whether you were one of the cast or made refreshments, were in the background crew of setting up the stable or lighting or playing carols - many thanks. Lots of people attended and said how it had made Christmas special.

See you next year. Gilly Price



UPCOMING IN THE VILLAGE



St John the Baptist Church Minal

Services are held every Sunday morning at 9.00 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

Lent Groups: This year Marlborough Churches Together are offering a Lent course called 'Lent with Lewis'. C.S. Lewis was probably the 20th Century's greatest apologist and one of its clearest Christian communicators. Contact Sarah Musgrave at sarahmusgrave99@hotmail.com.

Minal book Club

We are a small, informal group, and always welcome new members. Our next meeting is in the Horseshoe on Thursday 29 February, when we will be talking about The Girl with the Louding Voice by Abi Dare.

For more information contact Deirdre Watson on:

dwatsonweavers@gmail.com, or 512729

February at the Horseshoe

Wednesday 14th, 8pm - Quiz Night
£2 per person, max team 6



Thursday 15th 8pm - Open Mic Night Free Entry

Sunday 25th, 7pm - Jazz @ The Horseshoe
- Dom Franks Trio Free Entry
(thehorseshoemildenhall.com)

Minal Gardening Club

Thursday 22 February 2024 - 7.30pm Winter Social - Bring & Share Supper in the Village Hall. Theme: Please bring a photo of a plant that is special to you from a holiday or visit to a garden. All welcome – contact Valerie Hammerton at 288741

We have a date for “Beating the Bounds” Saturday 27th April

We will walk along the Minal Parish boundary of approximately 13 miles. This is a fun family event, and you don't have to complete the whole way - there are plenty of stop off places along the route which takes in Savernake Forest and Stitchcombe. Watch this space for more details or contact Lesley Green at lesley.rowe@mildenhallwiltshire.org.

Pizza Lola

are selling delicious take-away pizza again. Look out for their van on the village hall carpark on **Friday 9th February 5pm - 8pm.**

Please preorder, a menu post will usually go on their social media page (Facebook - Pizzalola) about a week ahead. The phone number to order is 07901 965324. The website is www.pizzalola.co.uk

