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DECEMBER**

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**6-9 PM**



**Free Prize Draw  
Win a £50  
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Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Hand into the Parish Stand during the Evening

**Chorleywood Parish Council would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and all the best for 2011.**

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# Chorleywood Matters



Issue No 22 Winter 2010

NEWS & VIEWS FROM CHORLEYWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

## FISHY GOINGS ON - ALIEN INVASION!

By Ranger Andrew Goddard

Early this Autumn, I was asked by several people what the small red fish in Darvell's pond were. I knew there were sticklebacks in the pond but, though male sticklebacks display a red belly in the breeding season, sticklebacks do not breed in the Autumn. Intrigued, I paid a visit to the pond and it didn't take me long to spot a shoal of twenty or so goldfish, including red, orange and many black ones (their natural colour).

Although they looked attractive, they were unfortunately very unwelcome guests – alien invaders, if you like. Goldfish are not a native fish to Britain. They originate in eastern Asia. In our ponds their diet consists of, amongst other things, invertebrates, tadpoles and newt larvae.

The ponds on the Common are managed to promote our native wildlife and are home to the rare and protected Great Crested Newt. Not only do goldfish eat the newt larvae, they also compete for food with the adults. So they had to be caught and removed. The shoal appeared to consist of only twenty or so fish – an easy task. So I headed for the fishing tackle shop.

Armed with a pack of the smallest hooks I could find and some tiny maggots, I set up my rod and began fishing. After 45 minutes, and quite a few strange looks from passing dog walkers, my catch was zero. Time for Plan B: I put out some bread and before I knew it the goldfish were attacking it like a shoal of hungry piranhas. Now all I had to do was get close enough to scoop them up in a net. Easier said than done, but I managed to catch five - a start at least.

On day two I continued with Plan B and forty minutes later I'd caught another sixty five fish. Scratching my head, I decided that, firstly, my initial guess of twenty fish was way out. I'd caught seventy and seen lots more; and secondly, the fish were of differing sizes, some juveniles, others adults. I continued fishing and after a week my total had reached 191. New problem – what was I to do with nearly 200 goldfish? After storing them in tanks in the cemetery as a temporary measure, I managed to find a local aquatic centre, which agreed to take them.

After a month, several waders full of water and more trips to the aquatic centre, the total was up to 437 and the pond still contained more. So where had they all come from? I don't think anyone could have released 500+ fish into the pond. Someone must have irresponsibly released a few there, which had bred profusely since.



Continued inside

## FISHY GOINGS ON - ALIEN INVASION!

Continued

As I mentioned before, goldfish are not native fish and, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is illegal to introduce a non-native species to the wild. The maximum penalty for this crime is two years' imprisonment and a hefty fine.

The environment agencies' view on releasing goldfish into the wild is that *"the goldfish is a dangerous alien that could be more damaging than the grey squirrel or the American signal crayfish"*

Whoever put the fish in the pond may have thought they were doing the best for the fish, but they were doing the opposite for the environment. They have potentially endangered, locally, the survival of a species protected by law, have damaged a valuable wildlife pond in a Local Nature Reserve and wasted hours of my time and the Council's.

So if you have unwanted fish, contact an aquatic centre. There are several in the area.

***Please, please, please do not throw them into a pond or other watercourse, where they will cause untold damage to our native wildlife.***

## GRAZING UPDATE

Sorry, but the weather beat us. What with the late, cold Spring and the hot, dry Summer, not even all the rain in August was sufficient to get the grass to grow enough in the chalk meadow to support cattle for more than a week or so. It was just not cost effective to erect the temporary fences or worth the grazier's while to transport the cattle back and forth for such a short period.

Unfortunately, the weather also made it impossible to do our intended seed harvest on the Common this year. There just wasn't enough seed to make it viable.

But all is not lost, just postponed. We hope, weather permitting, to have cattle back on the Common in the early Spring next year and will hope to be able to collect seed for our seed bank in late Summer.

## Lawn Cemetery Hedge

Visitors to the Lawn Cemetery will have noticed that the hedge surrounding the cemetery has been reduced in height. There are three reasons for this work. Firstly, the fence on the outside of the hedge had developed many holes at the bottom, which were allowing dogs to get in and foul the area. Secondly, the hedge itself had got very thin and open at the bottom and cutting it back will encourage it to grow back more thickly. Lastly, the police have advised us that the cemetery would be a safer place if it could be seen into from outside.

We have had several attempts to break into our equipment sheds from inside the cemetery and one very nasty incident when a very elderly lady had her handbag snatched (The culprit was eventually caught and is now in prison and the lady got her bag back).

We appreciate that the privacy and tranquillity created by the tall hedge are much valued by those who have loved ones buried in the cemetery and we hope that this will be restored as the hedge grows back, though it will not be allowed to grow quite as high as it used to be.



## PLEASE HAVE YOUR SAY!

Three Rivers District Council is about to start consulting on the "Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)", which is one of the main documents of the Local Development Framework, which will replace the existing Local Plan 1996-2011. This preliminary consultation focuses on potential sites for the following:

### Secondary Schools; Employment; Retail; Open Spaces; Cemeteries.

The consultation will run from 12 November 2010 to 14 January 2011 and events have been arranged across the District so that residents can come and discuss potential sites with Council officers.

The proposed events in this area are at present - **24th November**, 10am-2pm at Chorleywood Parish Council Offices, South Lodge Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood; **10th January**, 6.30pm-8.30pm, at Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth; **12th January**, 10am-2pm, Chorleywood Library, Lower Road, Chorleywood, but please check in case of changes.

A complete list of the sites and events, together with details on how you can have your say can be found on the TRDC web site: [www.threerivers.gov.uk](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk).

## COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Common Management Plan is being updated, a process which takes place every five years or so. The draft of the latest update is being worked on by the Open Spaces Committee with the assistance of Mark Carter from the Countryside Management Service and will be available for public consultation on the Council's web site and in the Library from 11th December until 5th January. Your comments will be reviewed by the Committee in the New Year and it is hoped to have the new Plan in print by early summer. We hope you will take this opportunity to let us hear your views on the way the Common is managed.

## Santa Search SUCCESS

We are happy to report that our appeal for a new Santa to occupy Santa's Grotto this year has produced a volunteer. We are very grateful to him for taking over this very important role. Not only was our previous Santa retiring this year but the NSPCC, who have run the Grotto for many years are also unable to continue, but Binks Estate Agents have generously offered to sponsor and run the Grotto this year. Chorleywood Book shop will be sponsoring a colouring competition and children are encouraged to bring their entries when they visit Santa. Our thanks go to Binks, Chorleywood Bookshop, and also to Budgens for once again supplying the food hamper and to Higgins and Parkheath for supplying the power.

## SMARTWATER

**What's that?** SmartWater is a colourless solution that can be dabbed onto your personal possessions and valuables. You can use it on all kinds of household items – jewellery, ornaments, electrical and garden equipment, etc. Once something is marked it can be traced back to its owner if lost or stolen. Each bottle has its own unique chemical code which can be traced back to you. One bottle marks 50 – 60 items. It is almost invisible, virtually impossible to remove and glows under ultra violet light. The police routinely scan criminals and recovered property for SmartWater, so offenders know it can link them with the scene of a crime. SmartWater deterrent signs send a powerful warning to potential burglars.

The company is offering the product to Neighbourhood Watch and Rural Watch members for a one-off payment of £18.80 (inc. VAT and P&P). Purchase can be made through the Three Rivers Neighbourhood Watch Association. **Please contact Crime Prevention Officer Gary Sibson 01923 472624.**

## DIGITAL SWITCH

You may already be aware that the traditional TV signal in this region is being switched off, area by area, from March 2011. The Switchover Help Scheme is being run by the BBC, under agreement with the government, to offer practical help to older and disabled people who may face problems in switching to digital TV. All those eligible for assistance in the area will be receiving written details about the Switchover Help Scheme. **For further information please call 0800 4085 900 or visit [helpscheme.co.uk](http://helpscheme.co.uk).**