Bad News!



TGIF has been cancelled for the rest of August.

There has not been a great number of attendees for the last few times. Possibly because of Summer Holidays, COVID, work, or whatever. So unfortunately TGIF has been cancelled for the rest of August.

Tour of Britain 2022

The Tour of Britain goes right through Stinchcombe on 9th September. The Stage starts at Tewkesbury and comes from North Nibley, through Stinchcombe along The Street and out to Dursley along The Avenue.

The cyclists will be travelling through Stinchcombe at around 50kph so I hope the speedwatch team will be having a day off!

If you want to watch in Stinchcombe, and maybe cheer and clap the riders, the Village hall car park would be a good place at about 2.30pm

The Tour goes through Dursley at the 140km of the race and this expected to be around 2.34pm. There is a Sprint section finish at Sainsbury's so that would be a good place to watch as well.

For aficionados, Crawley Hill above Uley will be the place to be at 2.43pm as they struggle up the steep hill.

To see the full timetable click ***here***

DRFC Quiz Night

I wanted to share some news you may be interested in. Dursley Rugby Club are hosting their second Quiz Night on ***Thursday 25th Augus***t. A cash prize is on offer for the winners. Teams of up to 6 people can enter and it is £1 entry per head (cash only). There are a variety of questions for all ages/ interests.

We had great success with our first Quiz Night on 28th July and hope to continue to grow the quiz so that it becomes a permanent monthly fixture.

We would welcome anyone who would like to take part. The club's bar is open during the quiz and we hope to open the kitchen this time as well if numbers are promising.

Teams can register in advance by texting 07999826086 with their last name and the number of members in their team. This allows us to set up tables for them and plan beverages and food accordingly.



Tanis

Before you light that garden bonfire

… think about your neighbours

The Parish Council has received complaints about smoky, smelly and ill-timed bonfires in the village. These spoil neighbours' enjoyment of their own gardens and force them to close windows and bring in washing.

… think about the fire risk

In this unusually dry year there is a real risk of the fire spreading. There has been ***a record number of wildfires*** causing serious environmental damage and sometimes destroying homes. With a further heatwave forecast and everywhere already tinder dry, this is not the time for bonfires.

… consider the alternatives

Stroud District Council recommends that we don't have garden bonfires at all. They ***suggest various alternatives*** for getting rid of garden waste.

If you are experiencing nuisance from a garden bonfire

You can report it to SDC using ***this link***. Even a single highly polluting bonfire can qualify as statutory nuisance.

SDC can serve a legal notice on the person responsible, requiring them to stop causing the nuisance. If necessary, this can be followed up with a prosecution, potentially leading to a fine.

Anyone affected by a bonfire also has the option of lodging a complaint at the Magistrates Court. If the Court agrees that nuisance occurred, it can issue a fine.

The maximum fine is £5,000 – an expensive bonfire!

If you still want a bonfire

There's no doubt about it, us country dwellers are pretty attached to our garden bonfires. If you decide to have one **after this exceptionally dry period has ended**, please follow SDC's guidelines:

- Only ever burn dry material.
- **Never** burn household rubbish or anything with plastic, foam, paint, or rubber in it.
- **Never** use old engine oil, methylated spirits, diesel or petrol, which cause smoke and are very dangerous.
- Avoid lighting fires in unsuitable weather conditions such as damp, still days.
- Avoid times when the wind will blow smoke over roads or into neighbour's gardens.
- Avoid burning when people want to enjoy their gardens such as at weekends or Bank Holidays.
- Avoid burning when the local air pollution index is anything other than LOW https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/ .
- Never leave a fire unattended or leave it to smoulder.

Consultation on GCC's Draft Road Safety Policy

Gloucestershire County Council Road Safety Policy – CONSULTATION

I promised to let residents know when this consultation started. You can have your say by following this link:

CONSULTATION

The consultation is open until 11th September. The Parish Council and Stinchcombe Speed Watch will participate but members of the public are encouraged to join in too.

If you feel strongly, either way, about more 20 mph limits

this is your chance to tell the County Council. Safer walking and cycling are other key themes on which you can comment. Horse riders don’t get the same attention in the policy as predestrians and cyclists. Bearing in mind the recent incident on Wick Lane, some of our many equestrians might want to raise that point.

Kath

Audio Tour of St Cyr’s Churchyard

New Audio Guide by local resident

Download the New self-guided audio tour of St Cyr’s Churchyard at your convenience, using your mobile phone

The audio guide uses Guide.AI, which is an app developed by a young man called Ben Floyd. He is supported by the Prince’s Trust and mentored by Stinchcombe Hill resident, Paul Creamer.

The App

The app itself is free but you pay for each audio guide you download. Once purchased you can save the audio guide to re-use or download it again without further payment. As well as supporting a fledgling business you would be donating to St Cyr’s and the Stinchcombe History Society, which each get 20% of the purchase price.

Amongst other attractions, the existing range of guides

includes some Cotswold walks. More guides are being added all the time. Paul is currently working on a guide to Stinchcombe Hill on behalf of the Stinchcombe Hill Trust.

Alien Invasion in Stinchcombe

It's happening right now – not people but non-native invasive plants. Human visitors are, of course, very welcome to our village.

What did the Victorians do for us?

Lots of things, however, introducing Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam was not their finest contribution. No doubt at the time they seemed like fascinating additions to the garden, real talking points. We can't blame them for another non-native invasive species, Cotoneaster, which arrived over a decade before young Victoria came to the throne.

Legislation

I have singled out these three because they are causing problems locally. There are many others covered by the legislation on invasive non-native plants. The ***Royal Horticultural Society*** gives an ***excellent introduction from a gardener's perspective***.

In brief, the RHS say:
• the listed species are banned from sale (this doesn't appear to be the case with the listed species of Cotoneaster!);
• they should not be planted or caused to grow in the wild; and
• we should take measures to control any already present in

our garden.

Let’s have a closer look at our three invaders.

Japanese knotweed

Japanese knotweed was imported from eastern Asia in 1886 as an ornamental garden plant. It can grow quickly and vigorously just about anywhere, even breaking through concrete and tarmac. This has obvious threats for buildings and infrastructure.

How it spreads

The plant spreads by the growth of rhizomes, which are underground stems that send out roots. Even a tiny piece of rhizome inadvertently moved with soil or equipment can generate a new plant. Look how the knotweed, with its copious small creamy flowers, has taken over on the public land in the photo! This site is in North America but the same can happen in the UK.



Legal position

Whilst it isn't illegal to have Japanese knotweed on your land, you can be prosecuted if it spreads into the wild. A civil case could be brought against you if it colonises neighbouring properties. It is not a notifiable weed; however, you must declare its presence if selling your property. A least five pieces of legislation are relevant.

A growth industry

Unsurprisingly, a whole industry has sprung up around Japanese knotweed control. The control methods available are:

- repeated spraying with professional grade glyphosate-based herbicides for at least 3 years
- physical removal and disposal as a controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990

A combination of these methods is often used. Most people are likely to need specialist help to ensure that control is successful and stays within the law.

Where is it locally?

Japanese knotweed is present in at least one place in Stinchcombe. At the request of a resident, I recently reported a patch on the verge alongside Standle Lane, using the Gloucestershire Highways ***online reporting system***.



It looks innocuous in the photo, but without appropriate action that could soon change. Highways have added the area to their contractor’s list and the Parish Council will be monitoring progress.

Himalyan balsam

This rather attractive plant was introduced to the UK in 1839, from the Himalayas as the name suggests. It thrives on riverbanks and in damp woodlands.



What is the problem?

Why worry when the prolific pink flowers are so pretty and the bees love them? The problem is that Himalayan balsam grows fast, reaching a height of up to 3 metres. Exploding seed pods can project as many as 800 seeds per plant up to 7 metres, enabling it to spread rapidly. It quickly crowds out our native woodland species, reducing biodiversity. A further problem is that when large areas of balsam monoculture die back in the winter, the bare soil becomes vulnerable to erosion.

Where is it locally?

On the Dursley side of Stinchcombe Hill, Himalayan balsam has become well-established only a few years after it was first spotted. The ***Cam, Dursley and Uley Joint Woodland Management***

Committee is running conservationist work parties (see photo) to pull out as much as possible before it sets seed. Unlike Japanese knotweed, the pulled plants can be broken, trampled and left on site.



Cotoneaster

It was a surprise to see five species of Cotoneaster on the list of invasive alien species. They are widely available to purchase, often with no warning about their status. (There are also many other Cotoneaster species that aren't on the list.) The first plants arrived in the UK from East Asia as long ago as 1824. They are useful ground cover and provides berries for the birds. Unfortunately, the birds spread the seeds to sensitive habitats. Limestone scree, such as on parts of Stinchcombe Hill, is especially vulnerable. Cotoneaster can eventually crowd out native flora and develop extensive root systems. Ecologist Elizabeth Kimber has written ***an informative***

article.

We're part of the problem

Our own back garden contained two types of Cotoneaster when we moved in 26 years ago. As far as I can tell they are horizontalis and microphyllus, both on the list. They have certainly been spreading, in spite of half-hearted attempts to control them (see area in front of the bird bath).



Impact on Stinchcombe Hill

As a conservation volunteer for over a decade, I have observed an increase in the amount of Cotoneaster appearing on the upper slopes of Stinchcombe Hill. We try to root out any plants we see, but it is a huge area to monitor. Even the small plants can have long roots that it is difficult to remove completely. My garden, and possibly yours, is

contributing to this problem so I need to get serious about tackling it.

Legal Position

As with Japanese knotweed, listed species of Cotoneaster are controlled waste. Strictly speaking, pruning's and uprooted plants should not be disposed of to SDC's garden waste scheme or taken to any of its household recycling centres. In our garden I am going to physically remove as much as possible, before the berries ripen, and burn it (considerately) on site. Chemical treatment is an option I will avoid unless it proves absolutely necessary.

How you can help

If you spot any of these three invaders on public land or in the wild around Stinchcombe, **please let the Parish Council know.** You can report infestations on roadside verges directly to Highways, as already stated in the Japanese knotweed section. It would still be useful if you informed the Parish Council so that we can follow up.

Kath Hudson