

# **The Villager**

**Minsterworth News**



by Simon Ruffley

**February 2021**

**Edition 219**

Dear readers,

If anyone would like to be featured in either Sarah McHale's 'Minsterworth Creatives' or her 'My Minsterworth Life' get in touch with her at:

[sarahliv.mchale@btinternet.com](mailto:sarahliv.mchale@btinternet.com).

All items for consideration to:-

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**E-mail: [thevillagerminsterworth@gmail.com](mailto:thevillagerminsterworth@gmail.com)**

*Responsibility is not accepted for the accuracy of submitted items nor the content of advertisements.*

### KERBSIDE RECYCLING FEBUARY 2021

GREEN & BROWN bin & caddy  
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Tuesday 2

Tuesday 16

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Tuesday 9

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## Gardening by The Severn – Galanthophiles

Snowdrops herald the coming of spring and the end of winter. They symbolise hope and the beginning of something new. When making plans to move back to the countryside, I never imagined I would become a custodian to thousands of snowdrops. Our first February at The Naight was magical, discovering the emerging snowdrops around the garden.

Our predecessors Anthony and Paula Lynch moved to The Naight in the 1970s and planted the first snowdrops in 1978. Then every year after, when the snowdrops were 'in the green', the Lynches spread them by division and seeding, a practice we have continued. In 2002 the old flood banks were dug out and rebuilt, and the Lynches had to start re-planting the snowdrops, with help from family and neighbours.



There are more than 2500 varieties of snowdrops, but we have only discovered five at The Naight. Snowdrops can survive in any type of soil, but they grow well in rich, moist soils. This makes the riverbank of The Naight a perfect location, and they even manage to survive the floods.

The scientific name for Snowdrops is Galanthus, the translation from Greek: Gala –milk and anthos – flower. People devoted to collecting and growing snowdrops are called Galanthophiles. Snowdrops are also known as: Fair maids of February, Mary's tapers and Snow-piercers. In the

Language of Flowers, the snowdrop represents: purity, innocence and sympathy. I've found much written about Snowdrops having the ability to melt snow. Some say that snowdrops are Thermogenic and create their own heat. One explanation is that snowdrops metabolise and photosynthesise. They ingest nutrients which produces heat. I haven't found any scientific proof of this. However, snowdrops have a protective leaf at the top of the stem that lets them push through the snow.

Sadly, with Covid restrictions, we will not be opening the woods to visitors this year, but you can still walk along the footpath and enjoy the drifts of snowdrops. The week running up to Valentine's Day often sees the best display.

Marie-Clare Maule

"English rain feels obligatory, like paperwork."

## UPDATE FROM THE VILLAGE HALL – February 2021

You may have noticed that the builders are back at the Village Hall. Quite a bit has been done over the past few weeks.

### Horizontal timbers on the outer wall

The outer skin of the cavity wall of the original building was built standing on a wooden plinth. Over the years the damp has crept in and the wood has rotted. This allowed the brick wall to drop slightly, and as a consequence the plaster above has cracked. The rotting wood has now been taken out and replaced by bricks. This will be covered by a replacement black oak beam, so the hall will retain its looks but the structure will be improved.



### Flooding in the cellar

The cellar of the hall used to flood badly when it rained heavily, and although the water drained away naturally surprisingly quickly, the damp was not good for the building. We have now had a sump built to collect the water when it rains heavily, and a submersible pump with a float switch will pump the water out to an external drain and soakaway.

Continued from p4



### Car Park sign moved

The car park sign used to be immediately opposite the main door of the hall, so unless you specifically looked for it you could easily miss it. With the new road having been built for Ellis Bank we now have a much more prominent position for the sign.

Continued on p6



### Trimming the hedge

The corner of the road hedge at the entrance to Ellis Bank consisted of two dead elm trees and a few other scraggy bits. The hedge has now been trimmed down so that it is the same level all the way along. It looks much tidier and will be easier to trim in the future.



Roger Blowey

## Christmas at St Peter's

We had an enjoyable time at St Peter's over Christmas. Our Processional Christingle Carol service was a great success. We met near the village hall and walked, by torch light, through the village and along the lower lane to the church. From time to time, we stopped to share part of the Christmas story or to sing a carol. The children sang 'Away in a manger' and later lit their Christingles in the church, socially distanced of course!



We were able to give the Children's Society a cheque for £100:00. This will be used by the charity to help and support some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the UK, with whom they work.

On Sunday 27th December, at St Peter's, we had our service of lessons and carols, by candlelight. The church was

beautifully decorated for Christmas. It was great to sit and listen, once again, to the retelling of the story of the very first Christmas.

Due to Covid restrictions we were unable to sing the carols, however Rita and her friends formed an informal choir and we enjoyed their singing of some familiar and other more unusual carols.

Finally we would like to say a BIG 'thank you' to the Parish Council for their gift of £1,000 towards the work of the church.

Anne Cowdrey - Church Warden

### 200 Club

The result of the January draw was as follows:-

£50	No. 136	Harold Symonds
£20	No. 198	Mike Williams
£10	No. 083	Margaret Cotterell

### Flower Rota

7th & 14th February	Cathy Thomas
21st & 28th February	Lent – no flowers

## February Fish and Chips

Back to THURSDAY, that's 11<sup>th</sup> February

Serving from 5pm to 8pm

There was hardly any queueing in January, so just pop up and collect!

[www.madewithoutgluten.co.uk/](http://www.madewithoutgluten.co.uk/)

Fish and chips continue on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday each month until further notice

### **BACK IN LOCKDOWN AGAIN!**

Yes, its disappointing to have our movements restricted, and no more friendly meetings and chats with family and friends for a while, but it probably is necessary, and yes, we CAN do it. What is the alternative? Many Minsterworth residents have already had their first dose of vaccine, so freedom is surely on its way!

Remember that if you are vulnerable, there are people in the Village who will do shopping for you, take things to the post and collect prescriptions etc. If you are on the Minsterworth WhatsApp Group, just put out a message. If you are not on WhatsApp then ask a neighbour, or feel free to phone a parish council member if all else fails. My own number is 750260. I may not be able to help personally, but I may well know someone who can chat to you and help resolve any issues however you may feel about them... perhaps you have a fear of needles and your vaccine appointment is facing you.... or you want to make contact Community Connections for a lift to an appointment ? Others in the Village use them – its only £5 each way for a taxi to the hospital for example. That's about what it costs to park! You pay an annual subscription of around £25. Phone 0845 680 5029, or go to [www.communityconnexions.org.uk](http://www.communityconnexions.org.uk)

Please do not feel alone. Minsterworth is far too friendly a place for that. If you have a neighbour or someone alone nearby remember that they may not feel able to ask for help ... perhaps go to them instead, correctly distanced of course!

Roger Blowey



Did you know that you can walk across fields, following public footpaths to St. Andrews Church, Churcham from Minsterworth? St. Andrews Church dates back to 1050 A.D., Before the Normans. It is an interesting church to visit, set in lovely surroundings.

You can find out more about the church at [St. Andrews Church, Churcham | Gloucestershire, UK](#)

This simple route gives you wonderful views of the countryside with May Hill in the distance. Start the walk on the footpath off Church Lane Minsterworth. Cross over the A48 to a marked



Public Footpath and stile on the other side of the road. It is a little steep and not easy for large dogs to get under or over. Walk straight across the field of crops to the corner of the hedge that is in front of you.

Continue on straight following the line of the hedge. You will need to go through a gate, about half way, which has a narrow opening. Continue on and then cross the footbridge over Long Brook.

Walk very slightly to your right and then walk straight across a field of crops. A pathway to follow has been very clearly marked out by the farmer, so please don't stray or let your dog run into the crops.

You will then be at the railway crossing steps. Take great care as you cross the railway track. Continue straight on until you reach the stone track, towards the end of well planted and cared for coppice of trees. I have marked thinly the stone track in blue, which you pick up and follow all the way to the church.

Retrace your tracks to return to the village. Enjoy your walk!

Sharon Ingham

## **A recent widow's helpful suggestions**

As a recent widow I thought it might be helpful to pass on to those still lucky enough to be in couples some of the immediate lessons I have learned recently. These suggestions might help to lessen some of the stress at a difficult time when the inevitable happens.

It is useful to both know the details of how the house runs, eg central heating adjustments, oil fill ups, spare keys, stopcocks, using the washing machine etc etc.

As most people do a lot of financial matters on line it is essential to both know bank and building society account numbers, passwords etc. Also the whereabouts of share certificates or bonds. It is a good idea to print a paper copy of statements occasionally as these are sometimes required. (Even if one of you has a secret nest egg make sure that someone knows or the money will be lost!).

Tony dealt with various insurances on line so there is no paper trail. Do print a copy of the policies. Luckily we have two IT savvy sons but it has still been difficult and COVID certainly hasn't helped. Some organisations have a 'Bereavement Team' but they are not particularly helpful.

Another important matter is the whereabouts of your Wills and the name of your solicitor, not to mention Powers of Attorney. No point making them if you don't tell anybody about them!

These are initial thoughts and I know there will be more hurdles along the way. This is not supposed to be morbid but it is intended to help not depress you all and I hope none of you will need to use this for a very long time.

Anne Pearson

## **Tony Pearson R I P**

My family and I would like to thank everyone for all the very kind messages, tributes and cards we received following Tony's recent passing and funeral. The guard of honour down the road was especially moving and I was in tears by the time we reached the main road.

We will all miss him terribly and it was lovely to know that he will be remembered in the village.

Anne Pearson

## BISCUIT RECIPE FOR MELTING MOMENTS

4oz butter or margarine  
3oz caster sugar  
1 egg yolk  
Few drops of vanilla essence  
5oz self-raising flour  
Crushed cornflakes

Oven temperature 160c Gas mark 3  
Line baking trays with nonstick paper

Cream the butter or margarine with the sugar and beat in the egg yolk. Flavour with vanilla essence, stir in the flour.

Take approximate teaspoon of the mixture, roll into a ball shape, and drop into the crushed cornflakes to cover. Place on baking trays and cook for about 12-15 minutes.

Take out of the oven and cool for 2 minutes then turn over the biscuits and put back in the oven for another 2 minutes. This helps to make a firmer biscuit. Cool on the tray for a few moments before lifting onto a cooling rack.

This has proved to be a popular biscuit and is very useful for using up egg yolks that you may have after making a Pavlova etc. The raw mixture can be frozen (but leave the vanilla essence out until you want to use the mixture). The cooked biscuits can also be frozen in a suitable container.

**HAPPY BAKING!**

Liz Savage



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## Minsterworth & District Royal British Legion

Unfortunately there will be no monthly meetings held until further notice, we are obviously bound by the necessary restrictions. Please rest assured that if we are able to help any of our members with R.B.L. matters please contact your local representative.

All the very best for 2021 and let us all look forward to what we hope will be a very good one.

Terry Bourne – President  
Minsterworth & District R.B.L.

- Feb 10<sup>th</sup> 1906 - Launch of HMS Dreadnought
- Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 1942 - Channel Dash
- Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 1797 - Battle of Cape Vincent

# My Minsterworth Life

Welcome to another new article featuring village residents. Our first villager to take the chair is Paul McHale:



- How long have you lived in the Village? Why did you move here? Where did you live before? Seventeen years (asks wife!). We wanted a house with more space within a village environment. We moved from Cheltenham; a lovely Victorian semi but with no parking or garage which we'd already extended. Originally we're from the North-East having relocated south for my job at the time. Sarah and I can claim to be 'proper Geordies' as we were both born 'on the banks of the Tyne' in Newcastle.
- What's the best thing about living in Minsterworth? And the worst? The surroundings! Being able to walk from our door to the river is fabulous. We can easily access nearby towns and cities to get to gigs and the theatre, our passion. However, the most important thing is the sense of community and friendliness. The worst thing is the A48 traffic, just relieved we no longer have to sit in the queues on daily commutes.
- What's your idea of a perfect day/weekend spent in the village or surrounding area? Watching sport on a weekend afternoon. Walking the dog. Pottering in the garden, then sitting enjoying the sun and sharing a bottle (or two) of wine with good friends in anticipation of a BBQ (me) or dinner (Sarah).
- Where would you recommend to eat out/eat in? In truth we prefer eating in; we enjoy planning a menu to share with friends. We do enjoy a take-away curry from The Railway Tandoori in Newnham, or The White Hart at Maisemore. And the pub grub at The Red Hart in Blaisdon never disappoints.
- What would be a three course 'local' meal? We do try to support local fare and producers. Not strictly answering the question but on Christmas Day we had all local produce for breakfast – eggs from Lucy in the village, Meat from Minsterworth Butchers, sourdough from Longhope Bakehouse and Netherend butter. Oh and Norma's delicious jam!
- What's your favourite local view/walk? I never tire of the river and as a photographer it provides a rich resource. However, the view from the A48 down onto the Severn just before the descent into Westbury is pretty good
- What local attraction would you recommend visiting? Gloucester Guildhall is a gem. In normal times it's great for small gigs and cinema (even though the seats are pretty uncomfortable). And The Tythe Barn in Bishop's Cleeve is a wonderful venue.
- Which 'local' would you most like a local cider or ale (or G & T!) with? My wife has to be the first answer! I'd have to take her along to meet up with one of my all-time musical heroes Steve Wynwood who lives in Northleach. We've seen him live both in the UK and in California. Listen to 'Arc of A Diver'!

## Drink up! By Simon Ruffley - Lolo Alcohol wines



Well this may be the last time I'm encouraged to continue with a wine column considering this month's subject! That said it satisfies my continuing curiosity for trying different wines and there is clearly an increasing demand for low or zero alcohol wines and this time of year may be just the time to see what else we can enjoy after our seasonal celebrations.

Not sure where to start I just went out to the local supermarkets, grabbed a few bottles and tried some. There is actually quite a choice out there. Being low (less than 0.5%) or no alcohol then there is zero or minimum duty applied so they tend to be reasonably priced. Another plus is there are a lot less calories in these drinks – so let's see...

Nosecco Rosé Spumante Da Angelo Taurini 75cl                      Sainsburys                      £4.00  
Perfumed. Lemon and nettle. A nice fizz.

Sainsbury's Alcohol Free Rosé 75cl                      Sainsbury                      £2.75  
Red berry, currant fruity flavour. Medium-dry. A refreshing drink.

Eisberg Sauvignon                      Tesco                      £3.00  
Aromatic. Gooseberry flavours. Nice, light, floral drink with medium-dry finish.

M&S Sauvignon Blanc                      M&S                      £3.50  
Turkish delight, peach and pear flavours. Quite dry. A likeable drink.

Rawson Retreat Cabernet Sauvignon                      Tesco                      £5.00  
Well respected winning many plaudits with good                      Sainsburys  
flavour and a deep colour (not tasted) – give it a go...                      Asda

Tesco Cabernet Tempranillo                      Tesco                      £2.75  
Raspberry and blackberry giving a forest fruit flavour also medium-dry finish.

In summary – the whites certainly worked for me, the fizz was an enjoyable drink, along with the rosé. I'm sensing the reds are more of a challenge to replicate if you're wanting something of a fuller wine experience with low alcohol.



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We recently completed updating the kitchen at Minsterworth Village Hall

BEFORE



AFTER



## COVID VACCINATION SCAMS

I suppose it was bound to happen - there is now a scam call whereby the caller claims to be from the NHS vaccination team and asks for a range of personal details.

Please note that the NHS will NEVER ask for your bank account, card details, passport or driving licence, and will never arrive at your house unannounced to administer vaccine.

If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk). Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number 7726 which is free of charge.

If you believe you are the victim of a fraud, please report this to Action Fraud as soon as possible.

RB



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## UPDATE ON THE CHURCHAM HOUSES - 2021

The Parish Council have joined an 'inter parish group' of 5+ parishes and the group has employed an independent consultant to write a report to be submitted to FoD. We have also had at least two Zoom meetings with FoD planners. At one stage Minsterworth Parish Council wondered if there could be some hidden benefits in having a single large housing development (new roads, mains sewage etc), but have now realised that this will definitely not be the case, and certainly not PRIOR to the housing being built.

On balance we are therefore against the project for a range of reasons, for example increased traffic on already overcrowded roads, with no new infrastructure planned. The increased risk of flooding from the extra houses, with recent events showing us that disruption from flooding is a very real risk. The development is on the very edge of the FoD (in fact a significant part is in Tewkesbury Borough!) and hence would contribute relatively little to the FoD economy, whereas we believe that any investment should be within the FoD, and there should be improvements in transport infrastructure to go with it. A more recent Government algorithm has favoured brown field sites over the use of prime agricultural land, even though the development of brown field is more expensive, and we agree that this must be the right approach. Overall, it was felt that a better solution to the increased housing, if needed, would be to disperse the additional houses across existing settlements.

Roger Blowey – Chair Minsterworth Parish Council



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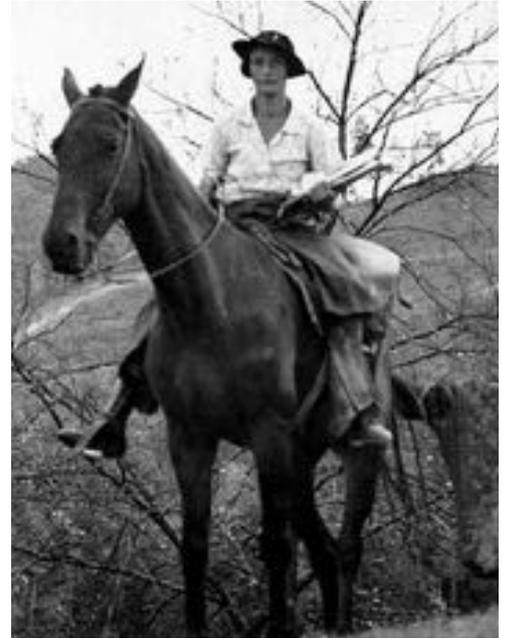


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## Book Club Review December 2020 by Dawn Ricketts

The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes

Inspired by an incredible true story, the book depicts five women, who against all odds supply reading materials and literature to the poorest of the poor in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky. It is a story of friendship, loyalty and determination set in the 1930's depression. Descriptions of the landscape take you into a new world of discovery.



The Zoom review on the 2nd December gave comments of "Fascinating", "Brilliant", "Realistic Characters", "Gripping" "an absolute page turner, just wanted to keep reading".

This link will take you to the historical background to the book

[www.smithsonianmag.com/history/horse-riding-librarians-were-great-depression-bookmobiles-180963786/](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/horse-riding-librarians-were-great-depression-bookmobiles-180963786/)

1. If you don't know what introspection is, you need to take a long, hard look at yourself" ~ Ian Smith
2. I was watching the London Marathon & saw one runner dressed as a chicken and another as an egg. I thought, "this could be interesting" ~ Ian Smith
3. Whenever I see a man with a beard, moustache and glasses, I think, 'There's a man who has taken every precaution to avoid people doodling on photographs of him' ~ Carey Marx



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## **Minsterworth Neighbourhood Watch**

In the December update I announced that I was standing down and Key Coordinator for MNHW. As I am no longer moving house I will be retaining the role and all contact details remain the same.

Minsterworth is a lovely place to live but unfortunately there has been an increase in antisocial behaviour over the last few months.

It is really important to notify the police of any antisocial behaviour.

The police are taking these incidents seriously so should you have cause to do this please call 101 and state incident reference number 127 and this will link to other events.

Obviously if it is a serious incident call 999

Incidents can also be reported anonymously to Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111

We currently have 73 households registered with the scheme but if you would like to join and receive alerts and updates, please email [64Lettie@gmail.com](mailto:64Lettie@gmail.com)

Thank you for your supporting Minsterworth Neighbourhood Watch  
Arlette Lane

# Reflections on the Gloucestershire landscape

Part two (part one was in January 2021 issue)

Julian Oxley

On the eastern side of the county the dividing line is the Cotswold escarpment, from Chipping Campden all the way down to Bath. Whereas the Forest is defined by many centuries of forestry and iron and coal mining, the Cotswolds have a very different scenic pattern and where contours permit are mainly agricultural in nature. If you need simple images to describe the two, the Forest is saucer-shaped, with a high rim much of the way round, and the Cotswolds are like a slab of cheese, with the escarpment at the “rind” end, sloping away to Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. And although both are very hilly, they contain their own lesser hills and valleys as added features. The Cotswolds also have many unmistakable “outliers”, separate hills on their fringes; examples are Churchdown Hill, Robinswood Hill, Dumbleton Hill, Oxenton Hill, and the highest of them all, Bredon Hill (just into Worcestershire). And there are other notable features on the “Edge” itself; Cleeve Hill (highest point in the county), Leckhampton Hill, Crickley/Birdlip Hill, and Painswick Beacon to name a few.



The Vale is dominated by the Severn, and while the surrounding landscape can be described as “normal English countryside”, the river has its own special points of interest. Apart from the Bore (which normally finishes at Maisemore Weir) there are Garden Cliff at Westbury, Hock Cliff at Fretherne, Wainlode Cliff, and Aust Cliffs near the old Severn Bridge, all of

geological interest. Some of the villages above and below Gloucester are set on “Severn Terraces”, laid down millions of years ago when the river was much wider than it is now; Apperley and Hasfield are good examples. And a largely unspoilt but relatively little visited area is around Newent – Upleadon, Pauntley, Dymock, and round to Newent Woods at the foot of May Hill. The Vale of the Leadon, flowing down from Ledbury to join the Severn at Over, is one of my favourites.

The materials available are naturally the prime influence on the appearance of the buildings. Red sandstone is seen in The Forest, with one form of limestone in the Cotswolds and another in Cheltenham, while in the Vale the shortage of stone gives rise to brick and some half-timbering, including here in Minsterworth.

This is just a brief illustration of how underlying geology affects the landscape, not just in this corner of England, but anywhere on Earth. But the wide variety of rocks in Gloucestershire makes its landscape special indeed. We can only hope that the rapid pace of “development” will leave at least some of it for future generations to admire.

## Minsterworth Water Ski Club

Minsterworth Water Ski Club (MWSC) is located at The Flat, Main Road, Minsterworth and goes back to a small beginning 60 years ago.

The slipway was first built as a private enterprise by Jayne Bros who operated their business at The White House, Minsterworth and carried out agricultural repairs and contracting. In 1953 The White House Garage was built on land at the end of the garden and in 1958 the piece of land south of the garage was purchased for parking of business and sales vehicles.

In 1959 after obtaining permission from the Severn River Authority a slipway was constructed on the site by the Jaynes and finalised by Fred Larkham. Water skiing took place for the first time from the slipway. In the late 1960s Jayne Bros formed The White House Water Ski Club.

In 1976 the business of Jayne Bros was sold and one of the Club members bought the site and the Club was renamed Minsterworth Water Ski Club. In 1994 the Club itself purchased the site to secure its future.

In 2000 planning permission was granted for the Clubhouse and this was constructed the following year. The Clubhouse provides a social area, kitchen, changing facilities and shower room.



In the subsequent years, repairs to the slipway have been undertaken, the boundary fence installed, a patio constructed and car parking improved.

MWSC is a club where like-minded enthusiasts come together to enjoy their love of water sports on the River Severn where we have access to approximately six miles of water. Members own their boats and there are requirements for insurance and boat driving qualifications to ensure safety at all times.

Further details of the Club are available from [minsterworthwaterskiclub.co.uk](http://minsterworthwaterskiclub.co.uk)

Thanks to Roger and Betty Jayne for their assistance with this article.



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Dyslexic man walks into a bra

A woman gets on a bus with her baby. The driver says: 'Ugh, that's the ugliest baby I've ever seen!'

The woman walks to the rear of the bus and sits down, fuming. She says to the man next to her: "The driver just insulted me!" The man says: "You go up there and tell him off. Go on, I'll hold your monkey for you."

#### HELPFUL COMMUNITY LINKS

The Parish Council website - agenda, minutes, councillors etc

<https://minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk/>

The Village Hall website - [www.minsterworthvillagehall.org](http://www.minsterworthvillagehall.org) bookings, recent events

Minsterworthmatters Face Book website – news, local produce etc

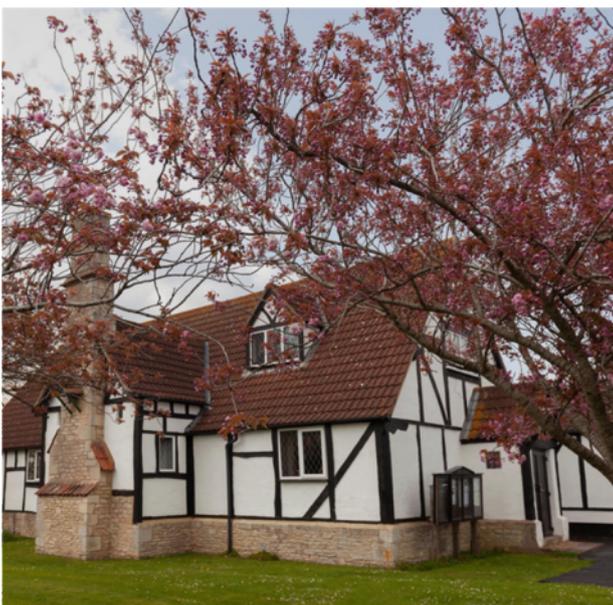
<https://www.facebook.com/MinsterworthGlos/>

St Peter's Church - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14101/> services, events

Minsterworth Matters App - join by texting Roger Ingham, 07525330364 immediate village interests

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## Welcome to Minsterworth Village Hall

Why not plan your next event with us?

The village of Minsterworth can be found on the A48 to the west of the City of Gloucester, on the north bank of the river Severn, nestled between the Cotswold Hills and the Forest of Dean.

### At the heart of the village is Minsterworth Village Hall.

This website is for Minsterworth Village Hall activities, clubs and events.  
<https://www.minsterworthvillagehall.org>  
e-mail [minsterworthvh@gmail.com](mailto:minsterworthvh@gmail.com)  
Tel: 01452 750492