"Winsley in the Digital Age"

This year we can report on 3 aspects of the digital age and how it affects Winsley.

E-mail alerts.
Just over a year ago the Parish Council began using the contact details accumulated in response to some Parish Council consultations to create an address book, which enables them to e-mail, alert residents to matters considered to be of local interest or importance. The alerts so far have included:
Wiltshire Council Waste Survey, Bus Pass, Post Office and Broadband Consultations, Parking Restrictions in the "Old Village" and the closure of the A36 / effects on the 265 bus service. Presentations from the 2014 Annual Meeting and details of this meeting have also been similarly communicated.
250 addresses are held. These are not and never will be shared with any third party, e-mails are sent "blind" meaning recipients details are not shared and there is an option to unsubscribe each time an e-mail is sent.
Anyone present this evening who is not included and wishes to be added is invited to leave their contact details with us or subscribe direct via e mail – details of how to are on your seat!

Whilst we hope that it will never be necessary, this facility provides an opportunity to quickly alert residents to any emergency situation which might arise.

The parish Council believes that this route is the quickest, most reliable and cost-effective way to communicate. This now leads on to:

The Community Website.
This is now well established with about 25 visits on an average day. However, when e-mail alerts linked to a subject described earlier are sent then the visits escalate to nearly 300 per day. This demonstrates that it is effective and with virtually no requests to unsubscribe reassures us that the system is robust.

The Community Website covers all aspects of Winsley Village. From local Accommodation to Church Services, Charitable Organisations to Clubs and Societies, Council Agendas to Meeting Minutes, news items are regularly posted; which include the Village Hall 100 Club Winners, Neighbourhood Watch etc. Plus, of course, full details of any issues about which we issue the e-mail alerts. There is also a Trading Post to display items for sale or wanted.

The aim of the Community Website is to make it a "One Stop Shop" for accessing local information and a critical aspect of this is the Village Diary. Keeping this up to date helps to eliminate organisations arranging events that might clash and prove detrimental to the success of their event. Unfortunately, from time to time, despite being in the diary already something else is arranged.

Both of the subjects already covered rely on one crucial service and this leads to the final topic:

Broadband.

Winsley is served by 2 different telephone exchanges. Bradford on Avon which are the 01225 86 numbers and Limpley Stoke which are the
01225 72 numbers.
Historically, Winsley has not benefitted from a robust broadband and this has caused frustration particularly to those residents and businesses which rely on broadband. The Parish Council joined the Wiltshire - wide "campaign" for an improved, high speed broadband service and over the last 12 months there has been a breakthrough with those residents in Winsley served with an 86 number now being able to subscribe to High Speed broadband using the fibre optic cabling from the Bradford on Avon exchange.

The Parish Council responded to the Wiltshire Council Consultation on Broadband, full details of the response are published on the Community Website, and we now know that work is in hand to install fibre optic from the Limpley Stoke exchange to Winsley. At the moment we do not have a date when this will become available, but the work carried out so far and a new Green Cabinet installed by Burghope indicates that it should happen within the next six months. . This work is being undertaken with funding from the Wiltshire Council Broadband Intervention Initiative.

If all this is not complicated enough, we also have a third tier of addresses in Winsley, served by the Limpley Stoke exchange, but are not currently being dealt with by the Wiltshire Council Intervention initiative. This small number of addresses remain the direct responsibility of BT. These should have access to high speed Broadband during the Autumn.

I hope that this presentation demonstrates that whilst Winsley may not be fully served by the infrastructure, we do have the resources available to at least exploit what is available and that as the infrastructure develops so will we.

John Barnes
28th April 2015.