

# Community Players member, Tim Masling, helps to launch newly renovated village stocks

Village stocks, which once punished criminals, are now a historical landmark in Cheltenham for years to come thanks to a makeover. Charlton Kings' historic village stocks have been preserved through a £5,000 makeover which included funding from Cheltenham Borough Council.

The council donated half of the money needed through its Community Pride Funding Scheme to preserve the grade II-listed site for future generations. The stocks have been at the heart of the community since 1763 near St Mary's Church but had previously fallen into disrepair. They were later moved to their current location in St Mary's grounds in New Street and a shelter erected.

Mike Palmer, chairman of Charlton Kings Parish Council, said the stocks are an important landmark for the community. He said: *"The stocks are a part of our community and very few of them still survive. We're fortunate to have the stocks in such a good condition. Now we don't have to worry about them for the next 100 years."* The stocks were originally placed next to the church. Crimes such as unpaid bills, poaching and fighting would often lead to stints in the stocks for up to three hours at a time.

Dozens of people lined the streets on Saturday morning to celebrate the refurbishment of the stocks. Martin Surl, Gloucestershire's Police and Crime Commissioner who attended the event, said: *"The stocks are a symbolic reminder of distant, probably darker times. Now they've been renovated as a point of interest and have enhanced this beautiful village."*

Tim Masling, in suitable costume, acted out what would have been the experience of a miscreant. He spoke in his defence, but unfortunately the magistrates required a period of reflection in the stocks!

