# TheVillage

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Issue #268 November 2026



NEWS & FEATURES from Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Blackwell, Burcot Beoley, Cofton Hackett, Finstall, Hopwood, Bordesley, Rowney Green, Lickey, Lickey End, Marlbrook, The Oakalls & everywhere in between!






TheVillage Issue 268 November 2026

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*Bringing you village life for nearly 30 years*



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**Front cover: Ink cap mushroom, taken by Michael Corfield, of Rowney Green.**




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# Planting a memory for Tim

FAMILY AND FRIENDS of Tim Reading gathered (right) to plant a tree in his memory on World Mental Health Day in October.

The tree, a "Celebration" acer, was planted in the shopping precinct in Alvechurch, next to the Incredible Edibles vegetable garden created many years ago by Tim.

It was chosen by his mum, Sue, and Geoff Hall, a friend of Tim's and a trustee of the precinct, and sourced and planted by another of Tim's friends, Devon Finney, of Hopwood Tree Services.





The tree is facing The Lounge community project, with which Tim (right) had a strong connection and which credits his contribution as helping the project to come through

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# AND SO IT BEGINS . . .

## VILLAGE VOICES CAN BE HEARD, BUT HAVE NO SWAY OVER HOUSING PLANS

NEW PLANNING regulations are already taking decision-making out of village councillors' hands, even before they come into force.

This means decisions on new homes in pristine village fields, which have previously been overseen by democratically elected representatives, acting on behalf of voters, will now be taken by officers working for Bromsgrove District Council.

The changes being enforced by the *National Scheme of Delegation (NSD) for Planning Committees* – which prevent councillors "calling in" applications to be decided by the planning committee rather than officers – are coming into force on October 31.

Yet a current application for "permission in principle" for four houses in a Green Belt paddock in Hopwood will now be decided by officers with no chance of councillors questioning it. This is because there will be no planning committee in October to call it in to. The fear now is that with an estimated 1,200 planning applications in the pipeline, including around 30 major housing developments, there is little chance of officers at Bromsgrove's planning department being able to give the same level of scrutiny as in the past.

Moreover, with the threat of being put into "special measures" by the Government if they allow a backlog, the officers might be more likely to push through applications.

In a statement put out by Bromsgrove District Council deputy leader Sue Baxter, the cabinet member for planning and strategic housing, said: "It is no secret that many members of this council are disappointed by what we see as a dilution of local democratic involvement."

The council had "put processes in place so residents can continue to be able draw on the representation and support of their local ward councillors, even where an application can no longer be considered by the planning committee under the new system".

But there is no explanation of how the council can "ensure residents' voices continue to be heard" if councillors are banned from taking part.

## Parish ratifies its priorities

**AMID THE FORCED abandonment of democracy over planning decisions around our villages, Alvechurch Parish Council is still trying to make the voice of its villagers heard by ratifying a Neighbourhood Priorities Statement formulated by a group of councillors and residents.**

*See Page 20*

# Plug pulled on valley solar farm

RESIDENTS are celebrating after plans for a 75-acre solar farm across a picturesque village valley were abandoned.

Panels would have covered open farm land in either side of Icknield Street Roman road from Weatheroak all the way south to the M42.

Energy company Exagen paused its "Oak Valley" project 18 months ago and has now pulled the plug completely, citing problems getting a connection to the national electricity grid.

Weatheroak Residents Association, which put up stiff opposition to the scheme, believes it played a part in the decision and urged villagers to stand up against projects and developments which they believe to be unsustainable and detrimental to their community.

# Bailes bench plan for parish

AFTER a village bench was removed, residents contacted their county councillor to see if he could help to bring it back.

Now Coun Alan Bailes has secured funds to replace the bench at the top of Snake Lane, Alvechurch – and to inititiate a project to install and maintain more benches across the parish.

The new bench will be installed and maintained by Alvechurch Village Society, which will also be involved in the proposed "Talking Bench Project".

Coun Bailes is now asking villagers where more accessible seating would make a difference to their health and wellbeing.

"The aim is simply to create more opportunities for people to rest, meet friends, strike up conversations and enjoy our local surroundings," said Coun Bailes, who is Worcestershire County Council's cabinet member for health and wellbeing.

Email him with your ideas at: alan4alvechurch@gmail.com



**Roll out the reading carpet:** Village children celebrate completing their 'Summer Reading Challenge' at Alvechurch Library, which aimed to get youngsters reading over the summer, with librarians Caren and Sarah.

# FA Cup joy after Miracle double

ALVECHURCH FC fans are enjoying another exciting FA Cup run similar to the 2022 exploits which saw their side reach the second round with a 2-1 away win at Cheltenham Town.

This time they are to play League One side Plymouth Argyle in the first round after victory over Spalding Town in a replay forced by two late goals for Alvechurch by Miracle Okafor.

The run in 2022 was finally ended by a a questionable defeat at Forest Green. **Report:** ***Page 48***



**ALVECHURCH U10s show off their new kit bearing the name of their sponsors, 3000 Security Services, for the 2026/27 season in the Central Warwickshire and Midland Junior Premier League.**

# 30mph go-slow

BORDESLEY is still waiting for the long-promised 30mph speed limit along the A441 north of Redditch as county highway chiefs drag their feet.

Residents were assured in February 2025 that the lower limit was to go out to public consultation, but still the lorries thunder through.

When asked by Alvechurch Parish Council what was happening, county councillor Alan Bailes confirmed that the scheme had been signed off by the cabinet, but that officers were saying "it is about the money".

Coun Bailes also said officers were looking at a proposal to extend the Alvechurch village centre 20mph limit north to include the road outside the schools.

# A turning wicket

THE OFFICIAL opening of a new cricket wicket at the Meadows, Alvechurch – paid for with proceeds from Picnic in the Park – has been held up while finishing touches are completed, the parish council heard.

Bowlers might have been licking their lips after Coun Steve Hornsby said: "My suspicion is that it will take spin. It is a good track and there is a small crack on a length."

But chairman Marc Worrall said the hairline crack would be addressed when the concrete was "polished".






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# Mind the gap!





**Bridge work: Philip Aubury, Stephanie and Chris Miall (inset) install the posters at Alvechurch railway station.**

VILLAGE volunteer group Friends of Alvechurch Station, who help look after the village railway station, recently completed a project to liven up the rather dull footbridge across the tracks.

Eight large posters have been installed, four on each side, and fill up most of the available space between the lights.

A spokesperson for the group said: "The project was inspired by similar works at Worcester and at Honiton, but the Alvechurch group decided that rather than commission art, it would be more interesting to have local input.

"The posters include photos from the collection of Alvechurch History Society, from *The Village* magazine's own archives, lots of photos by very talented local photographers, and two wonderful cartoons by village cartoonist Bob Lawton.

Despite a strong breeze, Friends of Alvechurch Station group members Philip Aubury, Stephanie and Chris Miall wrangled the huge sheets of sticky plastic into place at the start of October.

They thanked the Community Rail Partnership and West Midlands Trains for allowing this to go ahead and for providing the funding. They also thanked everyone who provided the photos.

# A tree for Tim

*Continues from Page 5*

**tough times a decade ago. "His lasting legacy is that he was a kind, passionate and positive difference-maker," said The Lounge in a moving tribute.**

**It will soon be two years since Tim died by suicide at the age of 48. He had a history of mental illness and in October 2024 returned to the community after 10 months in intensive and acute care within Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT ) facilities.**

**The coroner at Tim's inquest found last year that there had been no plan for Tim's reintegration and no handover between "responsible clinicians".**

**He said: "BSMHFT did not provide a Plan despite requests to do so."**

**The coroner said: "Those who knew him best, namely his family, concluded that he was not coping and they told the trust in November 2024."**



**Growing memory: The *Celebration* acer planted in the precinct, Alvechurch, on World Mental Health Day.**

**Tim died in January 2025 and the coroner was so concerned that he issued a *Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths*.**

**Tim's sister, Sarah Smith, told *The Vlllage*: "The whole experience was an incredibly difficult and, at times, punishing journey for Tim and for all of us as his family, as we tried to get him the help and care he was entitled to."**

**She added: "There is perhaps an important message from everything that happened; if someone's care doesn't feel right, please trust your instincts."**

**Sarah said Tim would not want this to be part of how he was remembered, but instead "as the person he was, his kindness, compassion and quiet goodness, and the positive things he did for other people and for the community.**

**"Tim connected across boundaries – he could form relationships with people from very different walks of life. He had big ideas and could see possibilities or connections that other people might not immediately see.**

**"Tim was also a beautiful presence in our lives and we are still struggling to come to terms with him not being here in physical form."**

**A *Just Giving* page for Tim is still accepting donations to the mental health charity Mind. Go to www.justgiving.com and search "In loving memory of Tim Reading".**

***Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123.***

# Panto's seven ghouls



THIS AUTUMN, Alvechurch Dramatic Society presents: *Snow White and the Seven Ghouls*, a ghostly, gothic pantomime created by Paul Chamberlain and Chris Davies.

Alvechurch Dramatic Society's return to panto for their latest production (oh yes they do!), as the classic story of *Snow White* is given a spooky twist!

In *Snow White and the Seven Ghouls*, the heroine lives up at the spooky castle with her wicked stepmother, the vampire Dracuella.

It's not long until the magic mirror Perplexa is delivering disturbing news about the fairest in the land and, despite the efforts of her aunty Dame Morticia, Snow White is sent for a long walk in the dark woods, accompanied by an unwitting werewolf.



**Will she take a bite?: Find out in this autumn's pantomime.**

Will the exiled seven ghouls come to her rescue?

How do a pair of friendly ghosts fit into the picture?

And who are those skeletons dancing in the graveyard at midnight?

The answers to these questions and more will be revealed in the ghostly gothic pantomime!

The show runs from Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th November 2026. Performances start at 7.30pm, with a Saturday matinee at 2:30pm.

Tickets are £10; £9 concessions available from The Lounge or by texting 07907 543868; or emailing ads.alvechurch@gmail.com.



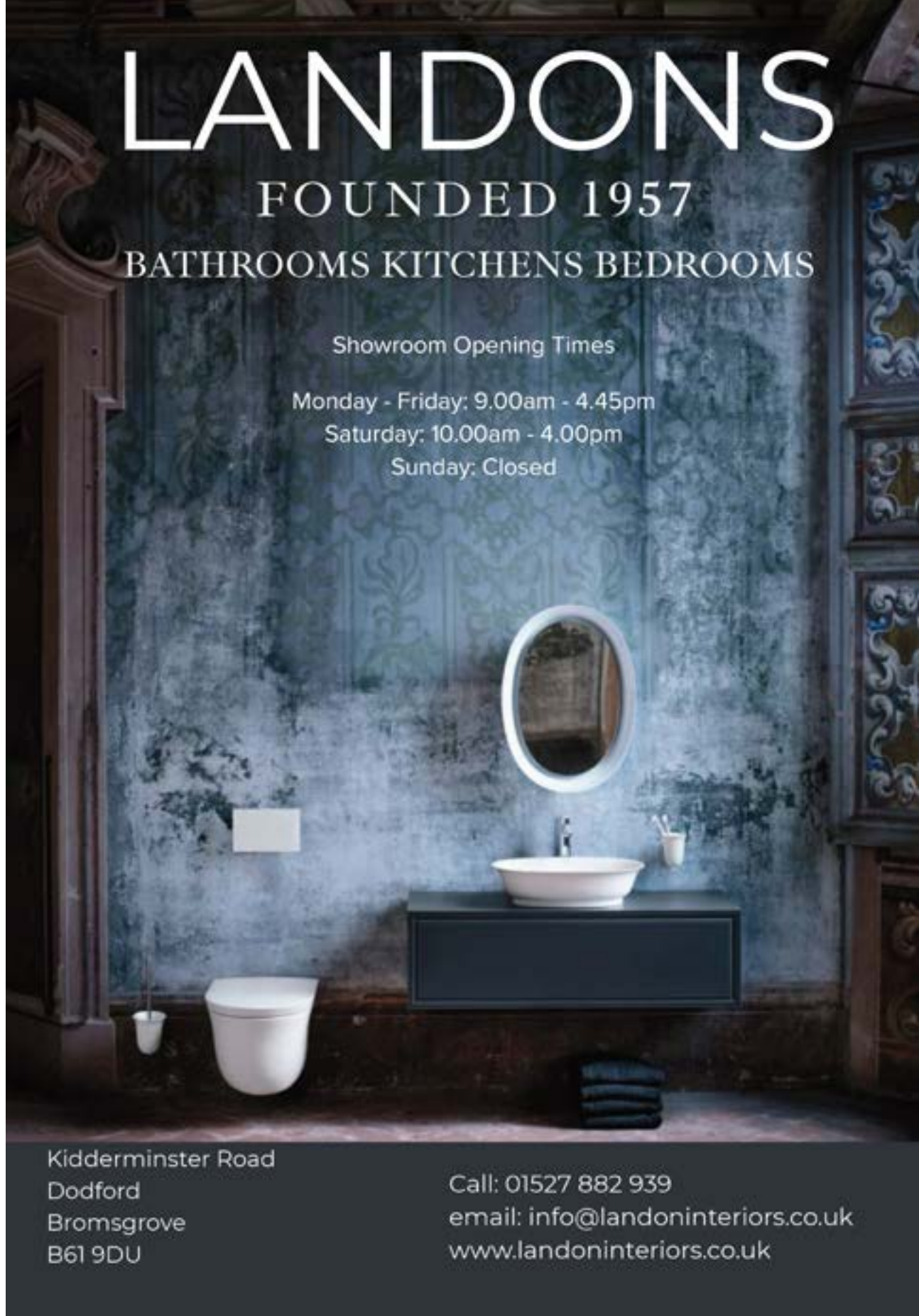
**NEW LICKEY HILLS PARK RANGER, Chloe, pictured left with volunteers Peter and Jill Harvey, expressed her delight at the fantastic turnout and the sheer volume of rubbish removed at the biannual Lickey Litter Pick.**

**The event provides vital support to the rangers of the Lickey Hills Country Park, helping keep the area safe and clean for its half a million annual visitors.**

**Organised by The Lickey Hills Society, the October session saw volunteers scour the park's landscape, collecting dozens of bags of detritus.**

**Reflecting on their two hours of work, Jill noted, "This time there may have been slightly less to contend with. Clearly, the signs asking visitors to use the bins or take their rubbish home are working, and we are really grateful for everyone's cooperation."**





# A PLACE TO EXCEL

## King's Worcester Recognised for Exceptional Sporting Achievement





KING'S WORCESTER has been recognised for its sporting provision, reaching the final stages of the Independent School of the Year Awards in the Sporting Achievement category. It is the only school in the region, and the only day school in the UK, to receive this prestigious accolade.

This recognition follows an outstanding year for sport at King's. The school was ranked among the top 2% of sporting schools in the country, included among the UK's top 100 cricketing schools and announced as an official partner of Worcestershire County Cricket Club, alongside an impressive series of successes across a wide range of sports. Six students from the Sixth Form were also awarded professional contracts in cricket, rugby and football.

At King's, sport is woven into daily life and reflects the school's values of being caring, confident and curious. The broad and ambitious programme is designed to help every pupil participate and achieve their personal best, regardless of





starting point. All pupils are part of a team and take part in competitive fixtures, ensuring everyone has the chance to develop their skills and build resilience, confidence and a lifelong love of sport.

Head of Foundation, Ben Charles, said: "This accolade reflects the talent and determination of our pupils and the dedication of our staff."

"The sporting provision and achievement at King's are exceptional. To be alongside some of the leading boarding schools in the country is testament to the standard of sport we offer."

Foundation Director of Sport, Jonny Mason, added: "We are proud not only of the results achieved, but of a sporting culture that encourages every pupil to take part, aim high and enjoy the confidence, friendships and life skills that sport can bring."

**Discover more about King's Worcester's sporting provision and sports scholarships at one of its forthcoming open events, or visit the school for a private tour.**
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# Not much peace or quiet

**Dear Editor –** Whilst we might like to believe that we are insulated around Cofton from the plague of e-bike and quad bike riding menacing inner-city Birmingham, I am sure I will not be the only local resident with knowledge that sadly this isn't true.

My Friday evening in the calm autumn sunshine was ruined recently by the sounds and then sights of four masked riders storming along at speed at the start of the Stocken path next to the children's play area where it meets Oakfield Drive. Along the path, across the reservoir and then either into the fields or down to Cofton Church Lane.

These are paths where children walk and play with their families, dog-walkers let their animals roam, people come for some down-time.

Anyone in their path (I am sure they went past individuals who must read these letter pages) has no chance to stay safe. And they do not care.

I am sure others will have encountered similar across the Lickey Hills, and I have gone up and down Rose Hill many times only to pass groups of uninsured, black-clad, lightless, number plate nowhere-to-be-seen e-bikes across both lanes of the road without any care for anyone or any driver. Someone is going to get hurt or worse very soon and I do not mean the bikers.

Perhaps now is the time for the local council and parish council to be proactive? Perhaps metal barriers – wide enough for pushchairs etc. to weave around but not quad bikes – could be placed at the ends of some of these paths? I admit it won't stop the smaller electric bikes. Maybe a tree trunk will do the job for us. Nature comes to our aid once again.

These are our paths. We need to make it more difficult for them.

**Extremely concerned resident**
**Cofton Hackett**




## Alvechurch FC needs you

**Dear Editor –** There is something different in the air at Lye Meadow. You can sense it in the dressing room, see it in the energy on the pitch and hear it in the conversations taking place around the boardroom table.

Alvechurch Football Club has started a new season, but this one could be unlike any other in our recent history. . . Because this could be our last season at Lye Meadow.

For generations, this little corner of Alvechurch has been home. Lye Meadow has witnessed promotions, cup runs, great goals, difficult afternoons, celebrations and thousands of conversations over the barrier.

It is more than a football ground. It is part of the sporting history of our village. But football moves forward, and Alvechurch FC is looking forward too.

There is genuine excitement within the club about what lies ahead.

On the pitch, there is a squad hungry to compete. There is belief, competition for places and a determination to make this season count. Off it, there is an equally strong sense of momentum.

The future at the Hayes and the prospect of a new stadium represents a potentially transformational

***continues overleaf***

## Have your say . . . about anything!

**email: editor@villageonline.co.uk**

**Please include your name and address – even if you request them to be withheld from publication. We reserve the right to edit submissions for reasons of space or legality. The deadline for the next issue is November 15th 2026.**



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# WHERE'S VINNY?





**ALVECHURCH MIDDLE SCHOOL pupil Zach Dearden, aged nine, from Alvechurch, shows off the Mini Vinny he won for finding the little creature in October's hunt the hedgehog.**

**If you want to win one for yourself, you'll need to try to find the little hedgehog hiding somewhere in this magazine (the one shown above is just a guide).**

**Tell us where he's hiding via email – see details on the bottom of the page opposite – and please include your name, age, address and phone number, and we'll draw a winner at random.**

**The closing date for the November competition is midnight on 10 November. We'll let you know if you've won and you can collect your Mini Vinny from our office – and pose for a photo.**

***continues from previous page***

moment for Alvechurch FC. It is an opportunity to create facilities worthy of the club's ambitions and provide a platform for football, community activity and commercial growth for generations to come.

But before we get there, there is unfinished business at Lye Meadow. And that is where we need Alvechurch. . .

If you haven't watched the Church for a few years, come back. If you live in the village and have never been to a match, make this the season you discover your local club. Bring the children.

Bring your friends. Bring a neighbour. Come early, enjoy the atmosphere and experience football where you can still stand close enough to hear every challenge, every shout and every celebration.

Alvechurch FC is also much more than the men's first team. The wider club continues to create opportunities through women's football, youth football and the broader development of the Alvechurch football family.

We also want to reconnect with the people who helped build this club: former players, volunteers, supporters and local businesses.

And for businesses, there is another opportunity. Commercial and sponsorship opportunities remain available throughout the season.

Whether you are a small independent business from the village or a larger company from across Bromsgrove and Worcestershire, supporting Alvechurch FC offers an opportunity to promote your organisation while becoming part of the club's journey.

We would love to start those conversations. Businesses interested in sponsorship, advertising, matchday involvement or future commercial partnerships are encouraged to contact the club for further details.

Because this season could be special. There is excitement in the dressing room. There is energy on the pitch. There is ambition in the boardroom. Now we want that same energy around the ground.

The future at the Hayes is beginning to take shape, but before the next chapter begins, Lye Meadow may have one final great story left to tell. Come and be part of it.

One village. One club. One potentially unforgettable season.

**Stephen Harris**
**Alvechurch**

## Not again . . .

**Dear Editor –** Yet again Cofton Hackett has had a planning application for more housing, with no mention of road infrastructure, schools, doctors. What's even more worrying is the statement from a councillor who we elect to represent us.

To say if passed in would be in the residents best interest to work with them,

As a resident I saw the hoodwinking home builders did the last time, promises of "all is gold".

It's also saddening that the original village hall is seen now as a burden.

I feel this application will get passed, but what residents don't want is a parish council who think the resident's best interest is another load of false promises.

**T Harington**
**Cofton Hackett**







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# Caring choir's Christmas concerts

LOCAL singing group, Bel Canto Singers, is an independent four-part harmony choir based in Redditch. The group gives life to a mixture of music ranging from popular contemporary pieces, choral work, and hits from musicals, folk and jazz. .

Bel Canto singer Kath Goddard said: "We are very lucky to be led by our talented Musical Director, Ollie Neale, who is organist and choir master at All Saints church, Bromsgrove and teaches music at North Bromsgrove High School. He brings his exceptional teaching skills and knowledge to the choir with a contagious vivacity. Wendy Quirk, a professional musician, is our resident pianist, who is often accompanied at our concerts by her talented husband, Jon."

The singers have had very successful year so far with a summer concert at Parkside Hall, a visit to St Nicholas' Church in Alcester in July, and a performance at St Johns church for their cake and coffee concert in October.



Each year Bel Canto Singers choose a charity to support. This year their chosen charity is *Redditch Carers Careline*, who provide support for unpaid carers. Kath said: "We have raised a substantial amount for this charity and hope that our Christmas concerts will add more to the total."

On 12th December they will be holding their Christmas concert at St Stephens Church, Redditch at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £10, bought through a group member or via their website, it includes a glass of wine or soft drink and a mince pie. The evening will be a musical Christmas treat with favourites to sing along to, and new Christmas songs to experience. On 17th December they will be singing at St Nicholas' Church, Alcester.

Bel Canto Singers enjoy welcoming new members into the choir and promise you all of the benefits of being part of a choir.

Rehearsals are full of fun, and new friendships can be formed. An ability to read music is beneficial but by not essential. They rehearse on Mondays at St John's Church, Greenlands, Redditch, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Find out more at: belcantosingers.org.uk.

# A hand in Aston Fields

THE EIGHTH annual Barnt Green Cafe Bridge event had a village switch up, and this year was held in Aston Fields with great success. The event, organised by Bromsgrove Bridge Club with support from Barnt Green and Monday Bridge Clubs raised more than £1,400 for the Primrose Hospice.

Mike Willoughby, who helps to organise and publicise the event, said: "Café Bridge is a simple concept; participants play a few hands in one café and then move on to the next café and play a few more hands. They have lunch in the venue that they are in at that time and so the combination of skill and sociability makes for a very enjoyable day."



**Yvette Waide and Heather Evans with organiser Richard Jephcott.**

The event took place across Banners, Bremi's, Fuso and No.3A, with participants gathering in Banners for the prizegiving, a glass of prosecco and a raffle. Businesses in Barnt Green, as well as Aston Fields, generously contributed prizes for the raffle.

Kelly Wetherall, from the Primrose Hospice, attended the prizegiving and raffle and gave a brief summary of the excellent work that the Hospice undertakes.

Richard Jephcott, one of the organisers, said: "The game of bridge, much like chess, is thriving and growing in popularity because it develops analytical skills. It helps to develop numeracy and, because it is played in pairs and often in teams of four or eight. Consequently, we are seeing a number of schools taking an interest in the game."

The event was won by Yvette Waide and Heather Evans with the runners-up, Mari and Peter Thompson, in close pursuit.





# Orchestra in tune for next decade

Fresh off a successful 30th Anniversary season, The Midland Sinfonia (TMS) are by no means resting on their laurels, *writes George Woolfe*.

Alongside performing exceptional live music, TMS regularly partners with local community groups, schools, and young dancers across a variety of events.

"Our Education and Outreach projects remain an important part of our mission," says Chairman Keith Woolford. "We continue to bring music directly into local dementia cafés, care homes, and schools."

Kicking off the new 2026/27 season with Musical Families in early October, the audience enjoyed a captivating programme exploring the close relationships between composers, featuring works by Gershwin, Suk, Dvořák, and both Clara and Robert Schumann.

Special guest soloist, Georgian pianist Salomé Chitaia, performed two exquisite pieces by the Schumanns. Salomé brought a wealth of international experience to the stage, having



**Guest pianist Salomé Chitaia (left) with Musical Director Shula Oliver-Smith.**

given over 100 recitals and chamber performances in Poland alone.

Keith said: "Although we are village-based at St Laurence Church in Alvechurch, the orchestra's standard of playing rivals that of any major concert hall."

The upcoming season features seven concerts, including family performances, the annual Young Musicians' Showcase celebrating local schoolchildren and this year's popular fundraising Quiz & Supper evening with a movies and tv theme.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have Shulah Oliver-Smith as our Music Director and leader," Keith adds. "Her energy and dedication continue to a positive driving force behind TMS." He noted that the orchestra is currently looking for volunteers to assist throughout the coming season.

For details, concerts, and discounted ticket options, visit their website.

# Walking the park

THE SUMMER GATHERING of the Lickey Hills Country Park Consultative Group gave members a first-hand look at the ongoing developments in the park, *writes Keith Woolford*.

The gathering starting with a progress tour of the new playground near the Visitor Centre led by Ranger Steve Hinton.

Members then walked 300 metres down Drovers Way to visit the Heritage Orchard.

Nestled in a gently sloping grassy area filled with a variety of fruit trees, this quiet haven features a newly updated information board and fresh plantings, which were warmly received by the group.



*Image: Andrea Swain.*

**The group ready to have a tour of the country park.**

# Village knitters champion charity

A VILLAGE KNITTING GROUP presented two charities with cheques this month, through the funds raised via their crafting and sales.

Knit and Natter (the knitting group responsible for knitting *The Village*'s own mini Vinnies!), once again raised a fantastic amount for two charities close to their hearts; The Lounge, Alvechurch and Brain Tumour Research, in honour of schoolboy Finlay Church who lost his life to the disease.

The talented ladies raised £450 for each charity, which they presented to Sarah James, manager at The Lounge and Penny Church, Finlay's mum, who champions fundraising for the charity. Both Sarah and Penny thanked the group, with Penny saying: "you are all absolute legends. Thank you, as always it means so, so much."

If you are interested in joining Knit and Natter, they are currently accepting new members. Their next meeting is on 2 November at The Lounge. Anyone interested can contact Cynthia Lawton for more information on 07909606961.



**Daphne Cross and Cynthia Lawton present the cheques to Sarah James and Penny Church.**

They will also be holding a sale of their wonderful knitted creations on 28 November inside The Lounge.




# The Oaks

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**Stay for a Day - From £85**

Whether you're looking for care for yourself or a loved one, our Stay for a Day Experience gives you the chance to spend a day with us, enjoy our welcoming environment, meet the team, and see what life in our home is like.

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**Why The Oaks could be the right choice for you and or your loved one**

- The Oaks is built around emotional intelligence, compassion, and support, a place where each person is treated with dignity, kindness, and love.
- We offer a wide range of care types: nursing care, dementia nursing care, residential care, palliative care, and respite stays.
- From the outset we work with you and your family to tailor the care plan: you tell us what makes your loved one happy and we help make it happen.
- Excellent day-to-day living: home-cooked meals, hairdressing including specialist Dementia Barbers and beauty treatments; pet therapy visits including dogs, reptiles, ponies and even alpacas!
- Easy access for visitors: The Oaks is at 150 Rubery Lane, Birmingham, West Midlands, B45 9AY; parking is available and it's close to Longbridge station and bus stops.

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# Alvechurch Parish Council unanimously adopts Neighbourhood Priorities Statement

**Alvechurch Parish Council**
serving Alvechurch, Bordesley, Forhill, Hopwood, Rowney Green and Weatheroak

ALVECHURCH PARISH COUNCIL has unanimously adopted its Neighbourhood Priorities Statement (NPS), following consideration at the Council meeting on 12 October 2026.

The NPS sets out a shared, up-to-date vision for Alvechurch Parish and identifies the community's priorities for future planning, development and investment through to 2044. It explains what residents value, what should be protected and enhanced, and what new development must deliver if growth is to be sustainable and locally supported.

A Neighbourhood Priorities Statement is a concise, evidence-based statement of local priorities. It does not replace the statutory Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan, but complements it by providing a current expression of community views at a time of significant planning change and development pressure. The NPS will help ensure that decisions about housing, infrastructure, transport, design, heritage, green spaces, biodiversity and community facilities are informed by local evidence and the distinctive character of the parish.

The NPS has been directly informed by local residents and is the principal output of the Parish Council's extensive summer 2025 resident survey, which received 615 responses and gathered detailed views on development, infrastructure, transport, design, the environment and community facilities. Those responses have been used directly to shape the Statement's priorities and conclusions, alongside earlier community evidence gathered through the Alvechurch Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council acknowledges the leadership of Cllr Kate Van der Plank, who led the working group responsible for developing the NPS. It also thanks every member of the working group, which brought together representatives from Alvechurch Parish Council, Alvechurch Residents' Association and residents from across Alvechurch. Their time, local knowledge and commitment were central to producing a statement that reflects the parish's priorities.

Now that the NPS has been adopted, the Parish Council hopes Bromsgrove District Council will give it significant weight as it prepares the new Local Plan and considers planning applications affecting Alvechurch Parish. The Council also expects landowners, developers and their professional teams to use the NPS from the earliest stages of site selection, design and engagement, and to be guided by its priorities throughout the development process.

The adopted Statement supports the right development in the right places, at a scale that respects the parish's distinct settlements and landscape, with the necessary infrastructure delivered before or alongside growth. Its priorities include meeting local housing needs, protecting Green Belt openness and village identity, improving road safety and sustainable transport, supporting schools and healthcare, safeguarding heritage and biodiversity, and maintaining a thriving village centre and strong community.

### Find out more

To read the Neighbourhood Priorities Statement (NPS) in full please visit the link via the Parish Council's website: https://alvechurch.gov.uk/community-news/news-flash/

Call us on
**0121 447 8016**
Email
**clerk@alvechurch.gov.uk**
www.alvechurch.gov.uk
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# Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council News



**Looking forward to this year:** **Christmas 2025 Blackwell Concert Band with Santa.** *Image/Simon Woolford*

## Autumn Update 2026

### Chairman's Report - Cllr Neil Schroeder



We have seen a few changes at the Council since our annual report in May. We have a new Chairman as you may have noticed, we have been preparing for the upcoming Local Government reorganisation, which has now been paused, we have had the war memorial in Lickey cleaned and brought in new software to assist in our financial planning. We also said a sad farewell to our local vicar Sheri who has moved to a new role.

Our previous Chairman Cllr Bakul Kumar stepped down as a member of the Council at our September meeting. On behalf of the residents of Lickey and Blackwell, I would like to express our thanks for his eight years of dedicated work for the local community as a parish councillor and as our Chair for many of those years. Bakul will continue his work elsewhere, in particular as our District councillor in the Lickey Hills Ward. Some of the highlights of his work at LBPC include being nominated for the Chairman of the Year award, starting the Blackwell gentle walk group, and becoming Chairman of the Worcestershire Local Council Association. We are grateful for everything he achieved as a Parish Councillor and wish him well in his other endeavours. (pictures)

Cllr David Gilburn who joined us in May has also resigned from the Council, and we would like to thank him for his work on the Finance group.

We now have vacancies to co-opt councillors on the Parish Council. I would like to ask anyone who is interested in joining us to make a difference to our local community, to come along to a meeting and find out more. Councillors are responsible for responding to planning applications, organising events for our residents, monitoring our highways and local environment and attending meetings to discussing decisions on Council spending and the future of the Parish. If you think this is a role for you, please contact our Executive Officer using the details below.

I look forward to helping Santa to switch on our Christmas lights in Blackwell on 12th December, details are below.

**Cllr Neil Schroeder**
**Acting Chairman**

## Highways

Parking and speeding continue to be issues of concern to our residents, this is especially worrying as the Lickey Hills Country Parks intend to start charging for parking, which is likely to lead to more parking on the road near the park. We are working alongside our County Cllr Peter Turner to monitor the situation and to ensure that parking enforcement is in place. Cllr Turner asked at our September meeting for residents to take photographs and provide evidence of any parking problems around the park. Our Lengthsman team has been busy around the parish checking our grit bins for the winter, clearing drain tops, dealing with fallen trees, and cutting back overgrown paths. Please let us know if any of our green grit bins need a refill.



**A proud moment for Cllr Bakul Kumar as Chair of LBPC.**

Highways issues in general, and yellow grit bins, are the responsibility of the County Council and can be reported to Worcestershire County Council's 'report it' page. https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways/report-road-or-path-issue

## Environment

Many thanks to our contractors for keeping our verges tidy and our planters beautiful in difficult conditions throughout the summer. We have had our annual tidy up of the Lickey Cemetery Extension with the help of Church volunteers. We manage the cemetery for wildflowers, with a strim every few weeks to keep graves accessible via paths. The war graves are maintained by volunteers.

Our play area inspection was completed in September and apart from some minor repairs and improvements that will be conducted by our contractors, it had a glowing report. The spring seat has since been broken and we will be replacing that piece of equipment very soon. If you notice any issues in the play area, please do let us know. Thanks, are also due to our footpath warden and volunteers who have made sure that our rights of way are passable and have reported any issues. Our contractors are currently clearing any overgrown paths.

## Communications

We are planning our Christmas event, which will be at the Wheel, St Catherine's Church in Blackwell on Saturday 12th December at 4pm. We have invited the Blackwell Concert Band to entertain us, and Santa will be there to lead the festivities. We hope to welcome many of you to join us and enjoy some mince pies, mulled wine and refreshments. .



**Autumn in the Lickey Cemetery Extension after the regular management of paths.**
*Photo courtesy of council contractor; Maisie's Gardens.*

## Planning

Our Planning Committee has been meeting regularly to respond to applications in the Parish. We are looking for a new committee member to assist us in our role as statutory consultees and to ensure that our residents' views and interests are represented. There have been some changes to the planning process that we are continuing to monitor and adapt to. Our councillors have been attending training to make sure that we are well informed.

## Contact Us

Lisa Winterbourn, our Executive Officer, may be contacted on:
eo@lickeyandblackwell-pc.gov.uk
or: 07930 837770.
For more info visit:
www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org
or
facebook.com/lickeyandblackwellcouncil







# 20 From TheVillage archive Years Ago




THE NOVEMBER 2006 magazine – one of our favourites – revealed the history behind the pictured cannonball, dating from the time when the Lickey Hills was used as an artillery range 150 years previously.

**IN THE NEWS:**
*The Village* was hoping to find the creator of a hand-painted Christmas card discovered during renovations at the former Grammar School (now Post Office) in Alvechurch. Elsewhere, a curry night and a ball held in Barnt Green had raised funds for leukaemia research, and Rednal poet and musician 'Spoz' had been named Birmingham's Poet Laureate.



**A GROUP** of 10 men from St Andrew's Church in Barnt Green had spent two weeks in Tanzania, carrying out construction work at schools and visiting a children's home. They told *The Village* of the amazing hospitality of the people, despite their poverty.



**BARNT GREEN** schoolgirl Georgie Reynolds had won a national writing competition organised by teaching union NASUWT. The 11-year old's story, *What would happen if we were all the same?*, was described by judges as "inspired", and we printed it in full with our own illustration (far left).

# 10 From TheVillage archive Years Ago




THE NOVEMBER 2016 issue of *The Village* featured on its cover a November sun silhouetting a dewy dandelion head, taken by reader Paul Wilde.

**IN THE NEWS:** IN CASE anyone thought roadworks at Bordesley restricting traffic in and out of Redditch along the A441 was a recent phenomenon, back in 2016 it was at its worst.

Villagers were warned to expect "absolute and total mayhem" during the year-long construction of the roundabout at the bottom of Weights Lane.




Already, there had been traffic backing up the Alvechurch bypass towars the M42 and parish councillor Marc Worrall said: "We'll have everyone doing rat runs up our lanes. We have got 12 months of purgatory."



**COFTON HACKETT Paralympian Lauren Rowles, then 18, returned to Alvechurch Middle School to show her gold medal and talk to pupils and staff about her achievements in the double sculls rowing event at the Rio Games.**



**MARTYN Langston (right) and Richard Peach won the Men's Doubles trophy at Barnt Green Tennis Club's final's day. Richard also won the mixed final, partnering Beth Harris.**

**WHERE'S ROGER?**
Alvechurch Parish Council lamented the continued non-appearance at their meetings of a Conservative district councillor elected to represent the ward.

Chairman Andy Humphries remarked: "We'd like to think Roger Smith remembers who elected him. We are very disappointed."

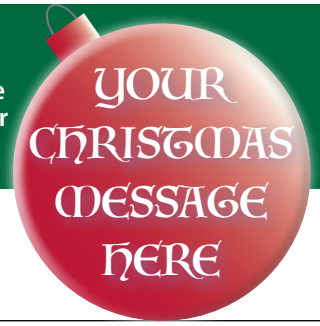
Coun Sue Lambert added: "We've forgotten what he looks like."






## SEASONS GREETINGS

**Our Christmas message baubles will be back in our next issue (like the one on the right). If you'd like to feature a message from you or your business to wish the community Merry Christmas, contact editor@villageonline.co.uk**




# Christmas is coming

Alvechurch Christmas lights switch on will be held on Saturday 28 November in The Square. Choirs will be performing and Father Christmas will also be there to watch the lights come on.

Barnt Green will be hosting its Christmas Lights switch-on event on Saturday 28 November on Hewell Road, check their social media and website for further information.

Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council's Tree lighting with Santa will be held at the Wheel St Catherine's Church on Saturday 12 December.

Holy Trinity Church, Lickey, is holding a Christmas Fair on Saturday 5 December, 11am-2pm. There will be a tombola, gifts, cakes, marmalade, books and more. Refreshments available. £1 admission .

Alvechurch Village Hall is holding a Christmas Craft Fayre on November 8th, 10am-4pm, pick up beautiful Christmas gifts. Entry is £1 and funds will go towards the Village Hall.

Alvechurch Dramatic Society present their upcoming pantomime; *Snow White and the Seven Ghouls*. Running from 26-28 November, see page 26 for details.

St Laurence Church's Advent Star switch-on will take place on 29 November at 5pm with carols and hymns, including Alvechurch Middle School Choir.

St Laurence's Nativity Play will take place at the church on 24 December at 4pm.

Carols and Christingle at St Laurence Church on Sunday 20 December at 6pm.

The Midland Sinfonia will be holding two Christmas concerts in December, including music for all the family. See page 51 for details.

Barnt Green Choral Society hold their Family Christmas Concert on 19 December at 3pm at St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green.

St Leonard's Church, Beoley will be holding a Christmas Market on Sat 5 December in the church and grounds from 11am – 3pm with gifts and stalls, food, music and Father Christmas!

Rowney Green Players present their production of *Agatha Crusty and the village murders* this November (see page 52 for details).

All & Sundry's Christmas production of *Beauty and the Beast* will be held at the Cobham theatre this December. See page 54 for further details.

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Alvechurch Parish Council
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# Parish news

## Have your say

We're keen to receive your comments or queries - call us on **0121 447 8016**

**Jayne Smailes** - Clerk
and Responsible Financial Officer
clerk@alvechurch.gov.uk

**Fay Murphy** - Assistant Clerk
assistantclerk@alvechurch.gov.uk
**www.alvechurch.gov.uk**

**Alvechurch Village**
Nigel Cuttress
Peter Freeman
Cheryl Godfrey
Sue Lambert
Tony Williams
Keith Wiseman
Marc Worrall

**Bordesley and Rowney Green**
Ruth Clarke
Wendy Easter
Stephen Hornsby

**Hopwood**
Paul Edwards
Kate Van der Plank

## Alvechurch Parish at Christmas

### Parish-wide Christmas decoration competition

**Don't forget our annual Christmas decoration competition in which you can win a trophy! Please let us know the address of the premises you're nominating, and attach a picture if possible. You can nominate your own display if you wish, or others you spot while around and about. This competition includes the whole Parish - Alvechurch village, Bordesley, Forhill, Hopwood, Rowney Green and Weatheroak.**

**Send an email with your nomination to assistantclerk@alvechurch.gov.uk between 23 November and 7 December 2026. Winners will be announced shortly afterwards through our Facebook page.**

**Best external house and/or front garden display**

**Best decorated front door or window**

**Best decorated front door or window - Commercial Premises**

For a full list of judging criteria, visit alvechurch.gov.uk

**Alvechurch Village Christmas lights switch on**

**Saturday 28 November from 4pm**

**Keep an eye on social media for more information.**

Alvechurch Parish Council's Christmas Tree this year has been sponsored by Thomas Brothers Funeral Directors.



# A festive re-launch

A BROMSGROVE and Redditch home-based care service, **Bluebird Care**, has taken over the running of much-loved Dementia Cafes, which were at risk of closure.

For years, Age UK Wyvern ran the monthly Dementia Cafes in Bromsgrove and Redditch, giving people living with dementia, and the families and carers who support them, a warm and welcoming place to spend a morning.

When Age UK Wyvern was no longer able to carry on with the cafés, Bluebird Care Bromsgrove & Redditch stepped forward to take them over, so that the friendships and routines built up over time are not lost.

Kelly Reeves, Dementia Service Manager at Age UK Wyvern said: "These cafés are so much more than just a place to meet. They are a lifeline for people living with dementia and their families, providing friendship, understanding, support and a real sense of belonging. Knowing that these much-loved groups will continue to bring people together is incredibly important to me, and I'm so grateful to Ranj and her team for recognising their value and committing to their future."

From December, Bluebird Care will be running both cafés. The welcome stays the same: a relaxed morning of good company, gentle activities, music and a cup of tea. Everyone is welcome, whether you come on your own or with someone you love, and you can join in for as much of the morning as you like.

Many of the volunteers visitors already know are staying on, so there will be plenty of familiar faces. To start this new chapter on a festive note, local singer Helen Pearson will lead a sing-a-long at both December relaunch cafés.

"After volunteering at the dementia cafés for over a year, I've seen just how important they are to the people who attend." Ranj Khatra, Director, Bluebird Care Bromsgrove & Redditch commented, "When their future was uncertain, I wanted to do whatever I could to keep them going. Seeing how grateful everyone was when they heard the cafés would continue was truly heart-warming, and I'm incredibly proud to help them carry on."



**Taking the cafes forward:** Ranj Khatra, of Bluebird Care Bromsgrove & Redditch, with Kelly Reeves and Tanya Davies of Age UK Wyvern, and Amy Butalia Harris, of Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club.



Bluebird Care Bromsgrove & Redditch is a local home care provider, supporting people to stay in their own homes. Running the Dementia Cafés is part of their commitment to the community they serve.

The cafés are free and there is no need to book. If you would like to know more, or you know someone who might like to come along, please call 01527 916 442 or email: bromsgrove.dementia@bluebirdcare.co.uk.

**Redditch: Wednesday 2 December, 10:30am to 12:30pm, Redditch Borough Football Club, Cherry Tree Walk, then every 1st Wednesday of the month.**

**Bromsgrove: Wednesday 9 December, 10:30am to 12:30pm, Bromsgrove Rugby Football Club, then every 2nd Wednesday of the month.**





# What goes bump in the night in Tardebigge?

TARDEBIGGE is known locally for its lovely canal-side walks, rolling fields, pubs and perhaps the prison too.

Local historian and author Anne Bradford – whose investigations into mysteries, scandals and paranormal encounters *The Village* has covered before – reveals some of the mysterious happenings that have occurred around the small village (the following can be found in her book *Ghosts, Murders and Scandals of Worcestershire*). She writes:

Saint Bartholomew's church on top of Tardebigge Hill is a landmark for miles around, especially at night. The ground drops away from the church to a canal, a tunnel and 58 locks, one of them the deepest lock perhaps in England.

Although the public house only goes back to 1911 it has an unusual history as it was built by the Early of Plymouth for the residents as a village hall, but when two Earls of Plymouth died in rapid succession, the death duties meant that a lot of their property had to be sold. The deeds to the village hall had been lost so the residents could not prove that the building belonged to them, consequently, it was taken from them.

Nearby is Hewell Grange, for nearly 500 years occupied by Lord Windsor and his descendents, the Earls of Plymouth. Two prisons have been built in the gardens.

Hewell Grange has a traditional White Lady and perhaps the best account of a sighting came from Arthur Bunegar who used to play in the ruins in the 1940s.

*One November evening, when we were about 10 or 11 years old we went chesnutting there. The evening was cold but a bright moon made everything clear as day. Suddenly only a few yards away we saw this lady rise slowly from the lake. She was wearing a huge voluminous dress like a ballroom gown and was all white from head to toe.*

*I had the impression that she was covered by a cloak, the hood of which hid her hair and most of her face but I caught a glimpse of her profile and would guess that she was in her early twenties. She was walking towards the derelict ballroom and her dress flowed and fluttered as she moved.*

*She looked quite solid – as real as you or me. We were terrified. She disappeared and we did too, we just ran for home.*




**The ruins of the original Hewell Grange:** Where the White Lady wanders the grounds.

Almost every book of local ghost stories contains a sighting of some apparition or other at Tardebigge. David Shephard lives on the edge of Hewell Grange and in 2002 remarked: "The whole area is brimming with ghosts". On 13 June 2005 a young lady was so intrigued by the sight of an unusual figure that her sister made an appeal as follows:

*I am writing on my sister's behalf. Having spoken to her today she claims to have seen a ghost of a young dark-haired girl last night (13 June 2005) at the side of the road near the Tardebigge Pub, by the Tardebigge Court Barns and the Tower.*

*Apparently the young girl (aged early to mid 20s) was standing at the side of the road in a long white "nighty" type robe to the ground, the collar having three buttons right up to her neck with long sleeves gathered at the cuffs. My sister said that the young woman held both her hands clenched up to her chest, looking extremely startled and almost petrified. She actually looked at my sisters.*

*My sister was in a taxi with her friends. None of her friends or the taxi river saw anything yet my sister worried the driver when she said "Did you see that woman? What is she doing out at this time of night?". She was so convinced that she saw the woman just standing there by the gates that the taxi driver actually turned around to go and see if she was still there. She had gone when they returned a few seconds later.*

*Does anyone know who she was, why she was standing there and why indeed she looked so frightened?*

*Words and pictures by Keith Woolford*

Village Scarecrows

# One for the books

IT seemed as though the whole village turned out to support this year's Scarecrow Festival in Blackwell, raising funds for Blackwell First School's new vegetable garden, *writes Keith Woolford*.

Another bumper crop of imagination was on display throughout the mid-October afternoon, with enthusiastic visitors enjoying the autumn sunshine as they explored the streets, looking for their favourite straw creation.

Starting at the school – with the opportunity to enjoy face painting, delicious pizzas, hot dogs, visitors set off with maps in hand. Though plenty were distracted by the familiar faces of the two headteachers at the refreshment hatch.

This year's theme was "Bookwell", with each of the 24 scarecrows revealing a letter to complete a six-word phrase. Five correct entries were drawn at random, each winning a well-deserved prize.

Wandering around Blackwell, it was impossible not to get caught up in the excitement with every new discovery.

A personal favourite was a flying Mary Poppins, complete with a zip wire stretched across their drive – made all the more special by Julie singing a few classic songs from the film!

Organised by the tireless Parents, Friends and Teachers Association, this wonderful afternoon was just one of many vibrant fundraising events held in the village throughout the year.




**Literary scarecrows: Children and adults came to explore the fantastic book-themed creations of Blackwell, including the 'Funny Bones' skeletons (above), 'Mary Poppins' and the 'Gingerbread man' (both pictured below), to name just a few!**


































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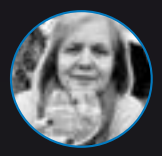



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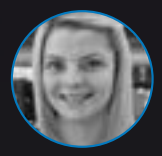
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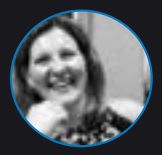
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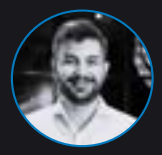
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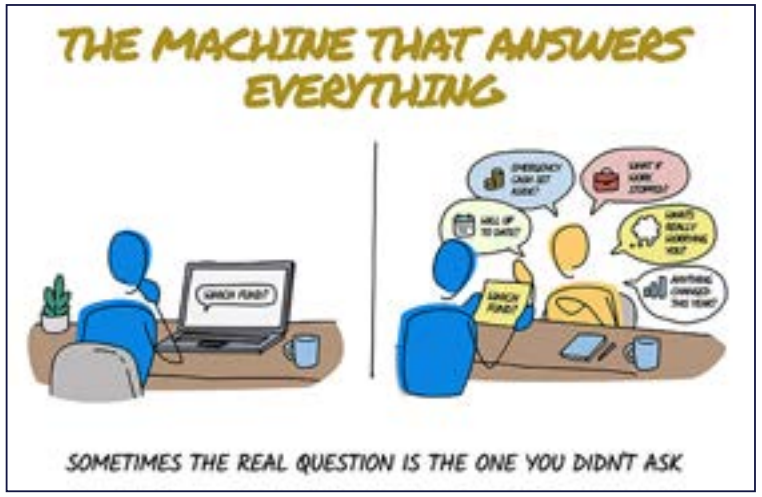




# Why AI can't plan your future



Martin Pryor discusses the limitations of using AI for financial advice, and why a human perspective matters.




MORE AND MORE people now take their money questions to an AI tool before they ask anyone else. This is understandable, considering that it is patient and available at any hour. It has also read more about personal finance than anyone ever will.

They can explain a term you came across in a statement and help you to understand the important factors when you need to make a big decision. This can save you time and help us to spend more of a meeting on your unique circumstances. Many of our clients use these tools well and often arrive at meetings better prepared than before.

But good information was available long before these tools were developed. Books, articles, and rules of thumb have been available to investors for decades, but we still see many people make financial mistakes that can cost them in the long run.

In our experience, it is investor behaviour, not knowledge, that determines the financial outcomes of families.

**Understanding the Limitations**

An AI tool answers the question you ask, using what you tell it. We naturally ask about whatever is on our mind at the time, which is not always what needs to be addressed first.

For example, we regularly meet with prospects who want to know which fund to choose, when there are more urgent matters to address, like setting aside cash for emergencies, protecting the breadwinner's income, or drafting new Wills. In these situations, we act as a thinking partner, helping to frame the questions better. Sometimes, rather than an answer, we need someone to say, "I don't think that is what's really worrying you".

The bridge from facts to a decision involves many steps, and most financial decisions involve weighing up trade-offs. For example, helping your children now against protecting your own independence later. And sometimes the right answer is to do nothing.

A tool can lay out the trade-offs clearly, but we believe the judgment to weigh them is still best made with someone who has sat with many families who have made similar decisions.

Some of the biggest financial mistakes are made when markets have fallen. At those times, a friendly face who can honestly say, "It's not different this time", may be what stands between many investors and a life-defining decision. An AI tool reasoning about facts and market valuations may not have the same influence.

**Where We Come In**

These tools aren't going away, and they will probably keep getting better. For people who have always preferred to do it themselves, these tools are a big step forward.

But knowing what to do was never the hard part, so better answers alone won't fix it. What helps is someone in your corner who helps you to stick to the plan. If you have always wanted help, they can support the work we do together, but they won't replace it.

Part of our job is to pick up the phone when something changes in your plan, or when a decision we made together at your last review is getting harder to stick to. And we're accountable to you for the advice we give.

The next time you ask an AI tool a money question, keep both the question and the answer, and bring them to your next review. It is a good place to start a conversation, and one we would be glad to have with you.

**Martin Pryor**
***Founder, Director & Financial Planner***
*For more information, please contact us*
***Tel: 07961 162818***
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*The value of investments and any income from them can fall as well as rise. You may not get back the full amount invested. Past performance should be used as a guide only and is not a guarantee of future performance. Different investors will view these trade-offs differently depending on their objectives, time horizon, and attitude to risk. If you would like to discuss how this relates to your own circumstances, please speak to us*

# THE PATH OF SATURN



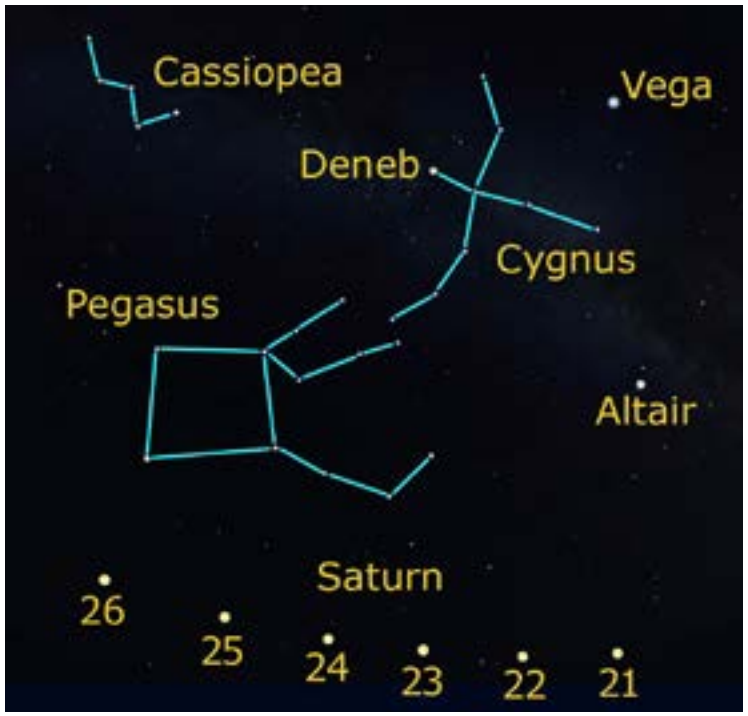
Amateur astronomer **Brian Watkiss** peers into the *Village* night sky.

SUNSET in November is just after 4pm so we get nice dark skies by tea time and we can start viewing very early. Looking to the south at about 6.30pm, we can see that triangle of stars with the brightest of stars, Vega almost overhead.

To the left is the square of stars that form Pegasus, the flying horse. Just below is the only other planet we can see at this time (the main one being just below your feet). This is beautiful Saturn, that giant ball of hydrogen and helium and a few other ingredients that combine to form one of the most amazing sights you can see through a telescope. Its density is such that if you could fill a giant bath tub of water and place Saturn in it, it would float and it rotates so rapidly that it bulges out in the middle. Of course, it's the mysterious rings that make it such a must view object and even these are relatively thin and insubstantial. It is so far away from the Sun that it orbits very slowly, in fact it takes nearly 30 years to make one complete journey round our star.

So every year for the past few years, Saturn has been visible in November. I thought it would be interesting to see how far it has travelled since the dark days of the Covid lockdowns (when it had Jupiter for company).

Speaking of Jupiter, if you are a bit of a night owl and are likely to still be up and about at 1am, you will be able to spot a couple more planets. By this time, Orion will be high in the south and over in the east, just above the horizon below the head of Leo, will be the bright planet







**Above: Saturn over the years. Right: Looking East on the morning of 16 November.**

*Images/NASA*

Jupiter. It's roughly half the distance of Saturn so whizzes round the Sun nearly three times faster. That's why it has separated from Saturn.

Just above is the red planet, Mars, positively a high speed planet orbiting the Sun in just under two years. This is why it seems to disappear from our skies for so long.

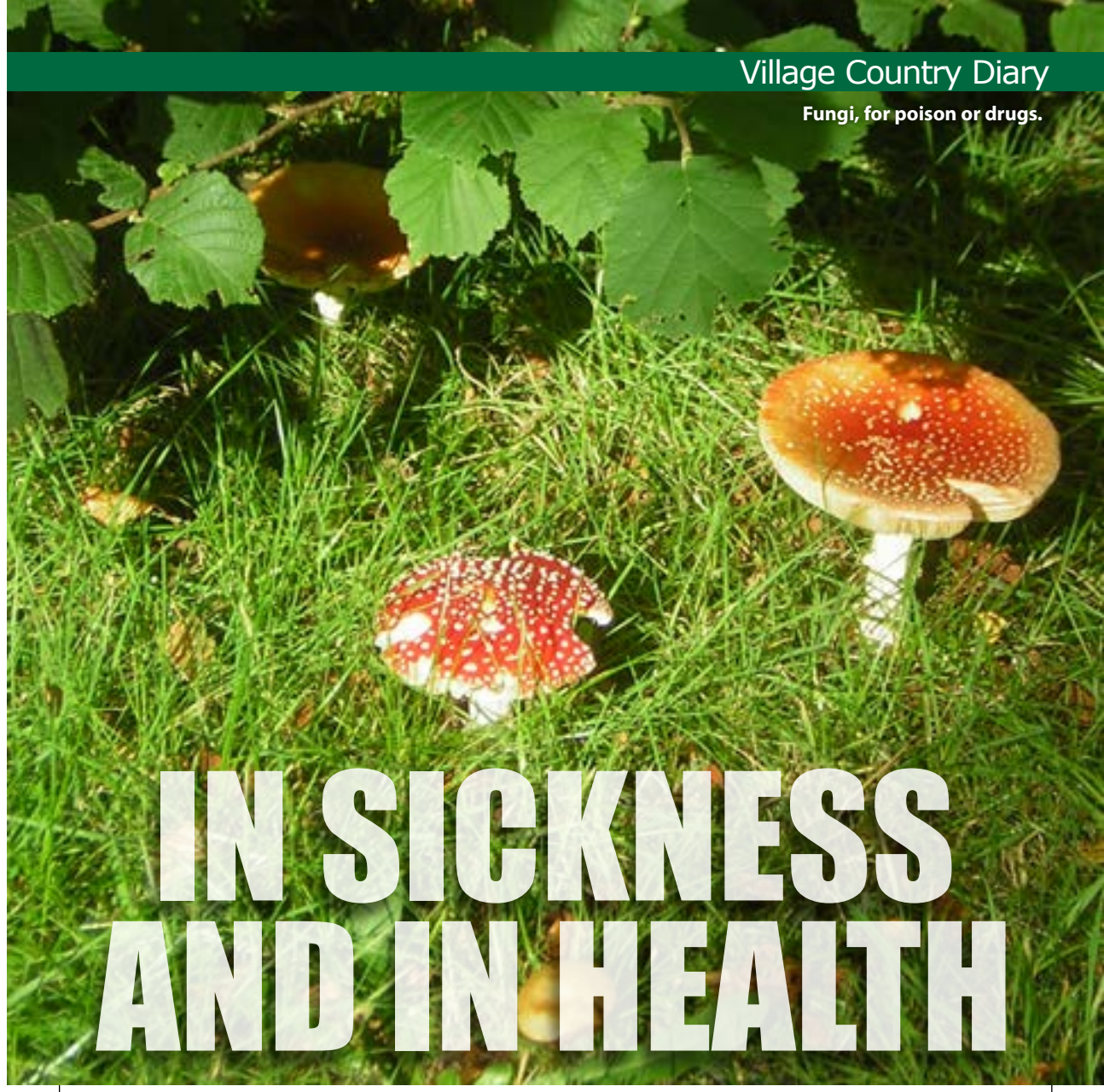
Anyway, the Moon passes by on the 3rd of the month and then Mars moves leftward each day until the 15th when they will be really close in what astronomers call a conjunction. Worth staying up for especially as Mars carries on its daily march towards the bright star Regulus at the base of Leo.

Also worth looking out for is the meteor shower called the Leonids. These peak around the 17th but, again, it is worth observing a day or two around this date but the Moon will be getting quite bright as it becomes full just a few days later on the 24th.

Possibly the greatest spectacle this month though, is not in the sky but in Alvechurch Village Hall on the 26th, 27th and 28th when I believe there will be some dark goings on as Alvechurch Dramatic Society presents their autumnal offering. See you there.







**Fungi, for poison or drugs.**

# IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH

SEPTEMBER was a strange month this year. Instead of seeing the leaves gradually turning yellow and the fields becoming ochre, everything was green and growing.

Any piece of earth that had lost its vegetation during the drought was covered with new seedlings. Grass grew so fast you could almost see it, and herbal pants produced new leaves and even flowers. Most trees kept their green leaves far later than usual. The ash and damson trees outside my window are still green in October, instead of the usual golden. This was a surprise, because last year's dry hot summer led to many trees losing their leaves early and turning colour quickly. This year, nature recovered and healed itself, and people generally felt better for it.



**Mary Green** looks at how natural remedies for illnesses can be found in the nature around us.

Our health is affected by the natural world in all sorts of ways. We depend on it for food to provide our life and keep us in good health. Before the days of

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farming, we collected our food from the diverse plants and animals around us, taking in beneficial chemicals too which kept us in good health. Later we learnt to isolate the plants which were especially good for promoting health, just as we learnt which foods would fill our bellies and we could start to farm. Over the years, these two knowledges became separated.

Farming techniques produced heavier crops and fatter animals, enough food to stop hunger and give a good basic level of health. But it didn't necessarily focus on whether these would have more subtle health benefits like preventing or treating specific diseases or providing the right micronutrients for a healthy biome.

This knowledge was developed by medical specialists but also remained in folklore, the common knowledge of ordinary people.

The plants around us provide all kinds of medical benefits. Human beings are designed to be omnivores, eating both plants and animals. For most of Earth's population, plants form the main staples of diet with animal matter being more occasional, a healthy diet.

In the modern wealthier countries, like ours, many eat too much meat. In some poorer areas the diet is bad because knowledge of the huge variety of edible plants has been lost or destroyed and replaced by processed foods.

People always used plants too for medicine. Anthropologists think early humans did so, and zoologists say even some other animals do. Plants are little chemical factories, producing substances to ward off predators or attract pollinators, and many other chemicals. Many of these are drugs for us – or poisons if over-used.

Just a walk down the canal from my house shows me a variety of plants which have health benefits. I can see some late meadowsweet flowers.

Meadowsweet leaves have a bitter taste but the frothy cream flowers are sweet. The flowers were used to sweeten food and drink. The leaves



**Hedge woundwart:** has been used on cuts, identifiable by its soft nettle-like leaves and dull red spikes of flowers.

were a known treatment for pain, inflammation and fevers. In Irish legend, the hero *Bran* wore a girdle of meadowsweet which kept him free of fever. It's not surprising then that scientists have found the leaves to contain salicylic acid, otherwise known as aspirin (the old Latin name for meadowsweet was *Spiraea*, which gave us the name aspirin). The substance is also found in willow bark. The Latin name for willow is *Salix*, hence *salicylic acid*.

These plants illustrate how closely medicine is linked with nature. Many of our current drugs originated in plant remedies, though they are often now produced artificially.

Another plant I see daily is coltsfoot. This is the little yellow dandelion-like flower in early spring. The big roundish leaves come later. Coltsfoot was used as a cough cure. Its Latin name is *Tussago*, which relates to coughing. The leaves were used to cool and soothe – and also in herbal tobacco. Ground elder was called goutweed, and has properties that can ease gout and similar conditions.

When our plants were classified and named three centuries ago, old herbal uses were built into their names. Any plant which has "officianalis" as part of its name – such as balm or betony – was a known medicinal herb. Some plants' English names indicate this too, like *herb Robert* and *herb Bennet*.

One of the most common plants in old turf, whether meadow or pasture, is the plantain. There are two main







**Hawthorn:** Bright red berries, thought to be good for the heart.



**Marsh woundwart:** Similar to hedge woundwart but arguably prettier.

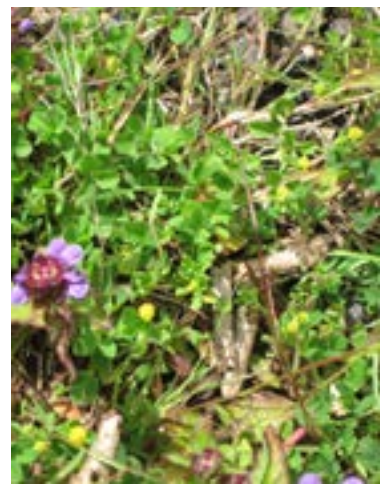


**Meadowsweet:** A plant that naturally contains aspirin.

types, ribwort plantain with long narrow leaves and greater plantain with coarser rounded leaves. They were one of the plants that hung on in this summer's drought when the grass died down, and they often grow by pathsides as they don't mind being trodden on.

Plantain leaves contain natural antihistamine. They treat insect bites and stings and other allergies. You can crush them and rub them on bites for relief. Farmers tell me that cattle make a beeline for them when turned in to a field – they know they are good for them. Animals fed on biodiverse pasture with varied wildflowers have much better disease resistance than those on just grass.

I've used plantains many times,



**Self-heal:** A revealing name for a plant that can aid in healing.

and I also use woundwort on cuts. Hedge woundwort as its name suggests is an edge-of-woodland or hedge side plant. It has soft nettlelike leaves and a tall dull red spike of small flowers. Marsh woundwort is similar but prettier with larger pink flowers. It grows profusely along the canalside here. Both have recognisable square stems and a distinctive antiseptic smell. They have natural styptic properties and can stop bleeding and minimise infection.

Self-heal, the pretty blue flower



**St Johns Wort:** Often used in medicines today.



**Coltsfoot:** Thought to be a cure for a cough.

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in meadows and pastures, has similar properties – and a similarly revealing name.

Most of us have heard stories that dandelions make you wet the bed, and indeed the French call it *le pissenlit*, or piss-in-bed. The plant is a good source of vitamins as food but it does have diuretic properties if a lot is used.

Some plants, like wood sorrel, are natural laxatives. Other plants like creeping Jenny were thought to produce miscarriages.

There's a common plant which I find very beautiful but which has the rather unpleasant name of mugwort. It is an Artemisia and is closely related to a herb which is of vital importance in ancient Indian and Chinese medicine. In fact, almost everything you pass by on a walk was once used to treat or prevent illness.

Some ancient beliefs about plant medicine haven't been found true by modern science though. One strange belief was the "doctrine of signatures" which suggested that plants looked like the things they would treat. For example there is a lovely little plant called lungwort (*Pulmonaria*) which has spotty leaves which were thought to look like diseased lungs, so the plant was thought to cure them. Lesser celandine was called "pilewort" and thought to cure piles, because the knobbly knotted root looked like them.

At this time of year most of these plants are disappearing underground, but there are still berries on the trees and fungi underneath them.

Hawthorn berries were thought good for the heart. They are pleasantly edible and have plenty of vitamin C, as do rosehips.

Mushrooms and toadstools, the fruiting bodies of fungi, have always been used for both food and medicine. Several of them are hallucinogenic and have been used to induce visions but also to treat mental disorders. Containing drugs, some are very poisonous.

Other fungi and micro-organisms we don't even see have a part in our health. For example, modern nutritionists promote the healthy properties of fermented foods, which are foods acted on by fungi, yeasts and beneficial bacteria – like bread and yogurt. And alcohol has been used, for both good and bad health for centuries – produced by fermentation of plant materials.

Some herbs have traditionally been used to improve mental health, the best known being St John's wort which is still used in complementary medicine.

Today there is great emphasis on "nature" being good for mental health. I don't think it's as simple as just going out and "being in nature". But I think being out and engaging with nature in some way can have positive effects. It also depends on what you are in.

If I walk through a weed-killed and pesticided field with flailed hedges, it makes me feel bad! But if I am in an area with complex diversity of plants, where there is habitat for insects, birds and mammals, then I do feel good.

The harmony and complexity of the natural world promote this. Just noticing what's around you using all your senses can be of benefit. Smell the flowers, listen to the birds, touch the trees, look at the changing colours. Slow down and walk at nature's pace.

We are part of the natural world, and it helps if we can feel that.



**Though to ease symptoms of gout:** Ground Elder, or 'Goutweed'.

*[Editors note:* **The Village** *does not recommend picking and taking your own herbal remedies unless you are experienced and knowledgeable about it.]*

■ **Here's a poem I wrote ten years ago about observation of ordinary nature.**

## *Mindful*

I don't need mindfulness. I have the canal.
I walk it daily but each day different.
Water will calm the troubled heart or wake
The tired head. Today wind shakes the treetops
And the sun just about summery still
Shines on that oak tree bole, which looks
Like one of those little earth goddesses
Dug up from a neolithic tomb
Green hair sprouting above her breasts.
The boat names are traditionally eccentric
Persephone and Dreckly. Sublime
And ridiculous, like love, like life.
Two cock pigeons fight until
A dog disturbs them and they fly together
To the safety of a tree. Conkers
Are hardening and thistledown blows
Ivy flowers open their musk scent to insects.
I walk towards autumn, holding on to summer.





# Prickly presents

A RETIRED ASTON FIELDS teacher has recently published a children's book about one of *The Village*'s favourite garden critters – the hedgehog!

Jane Jeyaratnam, who taught at Finstall First School between 1976 and 2006 (in between raising her two sons), first had the idea for her children's book in 2014.

Having read many books to her pupils, and children over the years, she felt she knew what grabbed young mind's attentions.

*Hedgehog's First Christmas* is a tale about a hedgehog who finds himself awake during his usual hibernation period and wants to learn what Christmas is all about.

Jane explained: "I wrote it more than ten years ago. At the time there was a lot of talk about hedgehogs not hibernating, or hibernating very late because of milder winters and warmer climates which gave me the idea."

She went on to thank her son Jeevan who found and connected with the illustrator, Zac Beard, who agreed to illustrate the book. Jane commented that she was very touched that Jeevan had remembered the book ten years after writing it, and had put so much effort in to finding someone to help finish the book.

Jeevan said: "The story sat on my laptop for over a decade as life took over but I vowed to find an illustrator to bring the story to life."

In keeping with her career as a teacher, Jane has also included some activities for children to do, with their parents at the back of the book including revisiting the classic nursery rhyme *Sing a song of Sixpence*.

She explained "the idea was to bring in nursery rhymes that we seem to losing, and give parents something to do with their children after they have finished the book."




**Hedgehog's First Christmas: Author Jane Jeyaratnam, with her childrens book.**

*Hedgehog's First Christmas* is dedicated to the children of Finstall First School during the tenure of the headteacher of many years, Mr Richards, of whom Jane commented: "He was just fantastic. I was his first appointment when he became headmaster in 1976."

**Jane has donated four signed copies of Hedgehog's First Christmas to *Village* readers. As it's a Christmas story, two copies will be available to win in the November issue and two copies in the the December issue of *The Village*.**

**All you need to do is tell us where Vinny is hiding. See our letters page for details on how to enter. First prize for each issue will win a copy of *Hedgehog's First Christmas* and their own mini Vinny, and second prize will also win a signed copy of the book.**

**If you would like to buy your own copy of *Hedgehog's First Christmas*, you can find it on Amazon: https://amzn.eu/d/09eU8wcH**

## Book Review

Jane gave *The Village* a copy of the book to review for young readers and their families.

One of the junior members of team, Isy, aged five, was more than happy to step in to give her honest review. Reading it with her little sister, she said: "I liked it because it was all about Christmas and hedgehogs, and hedgehogs are my fifth favourite animal.

"I liked how the different animals helped Hedgehog learn about Christmas when he asked them how Christmas worked, and some of them worked together with him to help him find the little boy."

Isy also enjoyed learning the facts about hedgehogs which appeared in the back of the book, and the conversation prompts.

In response to one of the prompts, Isy was sure that she didn't know the song *Sing a song of sixpence*, however after a quick rendition, it all came flooding back – and she realised why Blackbird was so panicked by the idea of Christmas pies.

A big thumbs up from *The Village*'s junior book reviewer.




**If you are interested in *The Village* reviewing your book, email: fran@villageonline.co.uk**

# Hunkering down

As the leaves turn golden, mornings grow misty and the evenings draw in, our gardens begin to settle into their winter slumber. But before we hang up our gardening gloves and retreat indoors, there are a few important jobs to tackle.

**A Gentle Autumn Tidy**

While it is tempting to clear every fallen leaf and cut back every fading flower, autumn is a time to embrace a little natural messiness, leaving valuable habitats for insects and other small creatures.

Rake leaves from lawns to prevent them smothering the grass, but you can collect them to make leaf mould. Pile damp leaves in a wire cage or perforated bags and leave them to break down over a year or two. The resulting material makes a wonderful soil conditioner for flowerbeds and borders.

Rather than cutting back every perennial, leave some seedheads and hollow stems standing through winter. They provide architectural interest on frosty mornings, food for birds and shelter for overwintering insects. Clear away diseased foliage and persistent weeds, but allow nature to have its own little corners, too.

**Wrap Up Tender Plants**

Winter frosts, cold winds and occasional snow can take their toll on vulnerable plants. Now is the time to give less hardy specimens a little extra attention.

Move tender potted plants, including some succulents and citrus trees, into a greenhouse or other frost-free shelter. For containers that must remain outdoors, wrap the pots in hessian or bubble wrap to protect their roots, and raise them on pot feet or bricks to improve drainage and prevent waterlogging.

Tender plants in borders may benefit from a generous layer of compost, leaf mould or well-rotted manure around their bases. Keep mulch clear of stems to prevent rotting, and use horticultural fleece where necessary to protect particularly vulnerable plants.

Remember, too, that damp soil can be just as damaging as frost. Check pots regularly to ensure water drains freely, especially during periods of persistent rain.

**Give Lawns and Borders Some Love**

Autumn is an excellent opportunity to improve your garden's foundations before spring growth begins. Remove fallen leaves from lawns regularly, and give the grass a final cut when conditions allow, keeping the blades slightly longer than during summer.

If your lawn feels compacted underfoot, gently aerate it with a garden fork to improve drainage. Avoid walking on waterlogged or frosty grass, as this can damage the surface.

Autumn is also the ideal time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. Daffodils, crocuses and alliums can be planted now. Tulips are generally best planted from November onwards. Tucked into pots, lawns or beneath deciduous trees, they will provide a welcome burst of colour when winter finally loosens its grip.

**Batten Down the Hatches**

Before the worst of the winter weather arrives, take a stroll around the garden to check for loose plant supports, damaged branches and anything that might be vulnerable to strong winds.

Remove small dead or damaged branches with clean, sharp tools, but leave major tree work to a qualified professional.

Give garden tools a clean before storing them away, drain hoses and protect vulnerable outdoor taps from freezing.

**Make Room for Winter Wildlife**

Create a safe haven for the creatures that share your garden.



**Create spaces for hibernating creatures in your garden.**

*Image/British Hedgehog Preservation Society*

Wildlife needs food, water and shelter to survive the colder months.

Hedgehogs typically hibernate from autumn into spring, choosing sheltered spots beneath hedges, sheds, log piles and thick layers of leaves. You can help by leaving a quiet, undisturbed corner of the garden wild, or by installing a purpose-built hedgehog house in a sheltered position. A loose pile of logs, twigs and leaves can also provide valuable shelter for hedgehogs, frogs, toads and insects.

If possible, create a small opening at the bottom of garden fences to allow hedgehogs to travel safely between neighbouring gardens in search of food and nesting sites.

Meanwhile, hollow stems, undisturbed leaf piles and log heaps offer essential hiding places for overwintering insects and other small creatures.

Take care when clearing compost heaps, moving logs or turning over leaf piles, as wildlife may already be tucked away inside. If you are planning a bonfire for Bonfire Night, build it immediately before lighting and check it thoroughly for animals first.

**Look Ahead to Spring**

Preparing the garden for winter need not mean stripping it back or making everything immaculate. Instead, think of autumn as a chance to protect what you have, nurture the soil and give nature a helping hand.





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*Report by Elliot Macvie*

# History at Lye Meadow



**Danny Newton opens the scoring**

*Image/Ian Macvie*



**Alvechurch fans celebrate FA Cup victory.**

*Image/Elliot Macvie*

## Church see off Spalding to earn trip to League One giants in FA Cup 1st Round

ALVECHURCH have progressed to the First Round Proper of the Emirates FA Cup, where they will travel to face Plymouth Argyle of League One.

Progress was confirmed with an incredible 4-0 victory over higher-league side Spalding United in a Fourth Qualifying Round Replay. It was striker Danny Newton, on a month-long loan from Harborough Town, who opened the scoring for Church on 26 minutes, before Jamey Osborne curled in a beautiful free kick to make it 2-0 as half time approached. Four minutes into the second period Newton was on hand again with a fantastic strike to get Church's third, and shortly after Miracle Okafor cooly slotted home a fourth.

With half an hour left to play Spalding looked like they would grab a goal back when the referee awarded them a penalty, but Church goalkeeper Redman Evans came up with a magnificent save to keep the score at 4-0. And that's how it stayed as the full time whistle was blown! Alvechurch had defied all the odds by thrashing their higher-ranked opponents.

Even more remarkable was that in the initial match between the two sides, played at Spalding three days earlier, Alvechurch had trailed 2-0 with less than ten minutes of regulation time remaining – but a late brace from Miracle Okafor completed a dramatic comeback for Kyle Storer's team, securing the replay that Church would go on to win!

The First Round tie at Plymouth will take place on the weekend of 7th November, though an exact date and time have not been confirmed at the time of writing. Argyle currently sit 5th in the EFL League One table, with crowds for their home games averaging between 15/16 thousand so far this season.

Away from the FA Cup Alvechurch's league form has been mixed in recent weeks, with points being dropped in several matches since mid-September. They also made an early exit from the FA Trophy, losing out 2-1 at home to Bourne Town.

### UPCOMING FIXTURES

**November**

TBC Plymouth Argyle (A) – FA Cup
10th Stourbridge (A)
14th Hitchin Town (H)
21st Banbury United (A)
28th Leamington (A)

**Keep an eye on the club's website and social media pages for further fixture updates.**

### RECENT RESULTS

**October**

3rd Cambridge City 1-2 Alvechurch - FA Cup
10th Alvechurch 0-1 Bury Town
13th Halesowen Town 1-1 Alvechurch
17th Spalding United 2-2 Alvechurch - FA Cup
20th Alvechurch 4-0 Spalding United - FA Cup
12th Alvechurch 4 – 0 Stamford AFC





### MUSIC

ALVECHURCH COMMUNITY CHOIR usually meets in Alvechurch Village Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm with occasional pub and outdoor sessions. The choir is inclusive and open to everyone, whether you think you can sing or not. New members are always welcome at any time, and your first session is free. For more information or to join or book them to sing at an event, see their website www.alvechurchcommunitychoir.org.uk. They will be in the Village Hall on 2, 16 23 and 30 November and in the Crown Inn on 9 November. They perform at the Baptist Church concert on 14 November and the switch-on of lights in Alvechurch on 28 November.

BEOLEY VILLAGE HALL host an exiting mix of live events including live music (all genres and ages), pantomimes, comedy and film nights. Look out for their Facebook page and website to view all forthcoming events and timings. Their fully stocked bar opens at 7/ 7:15pm with live entertainment from 7:30/8pm. For details and bookings, contact Richard on 01527 66646 before 9pm.

BEL CANTO SINGERS, the well-known 4-part Worcestershire choir, rehearse at St. John's Church, Redditch B98 7PZ on Monday evenings. They are always happy to welcome new singers. Just turn up at rehearsal on Mondays at 7.30pm where there will be a wide range of singing activities, refreshments and chat. More information contact Secretary Veronica Porter 07885 507899 or visit www.belcantosingers.org.uk

ALVECHURCH BELL RINGERS – Bell ringing is a gentle exercise for muscles and brain. The muscles are controlling a bell that weighs perhaps half a ton, the brain is working out what to do in a performance with no written score. Learning is not as difficult as it might sound; you'll start with short sessions on a lighter bell and build up from there. The bells at St Laurence have been ringing for more than 300 years, help us continue the tradition. Email alvechurchbells@yahoo.co.uk or visit the tower on Tuesdays at 8pm.

BARNT GREEN CHORAL meets in the Parish Centre behind St Andrew's Church, Sandhills Road, Barnt Green, on Mondays from 7.45 - 9.45pm. The choir sings a range of music throughout the year, performing at least three concerts. New singers are always welcome and there is no need to audition. For information, see barntgreenchoral.org or facebook.com/barntgreenchoral.

IGNITED VOICES CHOIR at Blackwell Community Hall Thursdays 7.30 - 9pm. A unique singing experience blending powerful positive mindset techniques with uplifting harmonies to energise & empower you! Contact Alicia on 07876688497.

HEAVENLY HARMONIES CHOIR based at Cofton Park Manor Care Home, Rednal. Rehearsals 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month 11am - 12.30pm. Entry by audition but no necessity to read music. For more information contact Ruth on 07549 698009.

THE CHOIR - as seen at GlastonBeoley Music Festival - songs you love, fresh arrangements, big harmonies, energetic performances. Rehearsals Wednesday evenings in The Bridge Church Hall, Headless Cross, Redditch. Term starts 2 September. Listen to us, sing with us, book us at www.thechoiruk.com.

THE ASKLEPIOS ORCHESTRA ask you to save the date of their Autumn Concert will be on 22 November 2026, 'on tour' at St Hilda's Church, Warley Woods, and the orchestra will be back in Barnt Green next spring.

Enjoy an evening of RELAXATION WITH LIVE HARP MUSIC with Vy Tran, on Friday 20 November between 8-9pm at The Wheel in Blackwell. Tickets are £7.50. Email vytran.harpist@gmail.com to book.

### DANCING

TANGO ARGENTINO at Barnt Green Quakers/ Friends Meeting House on Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings. For further information: www.facebook.com/groups/tango42/announcements. (No Facebook account needed to view). Email: Tango42.UK@outlook.com

AELFGYTHE Border Morris is seeking new dancers (female) and musicians (male or female) to join them for fun, exercise and dancing. They meet at 7.45pm every Weds in Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall. Everyone welcome. Come and play traditional folk music, or try Morris dancing. For more details call Pam on 07961 830 831.

ALVECHURCH Morris Men are on the lookout for new dancers and musicians. They practise on Mondays at Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall, 8.30–10pm, followed by a "debrief" at a local hostelry. They dance in local towns and at various local and national events, and perform a world-famous (sort of) mummers play in the village every New Year's Day. No ability, fitness or co-ordination required – if you are male, 18+ and prepared to spend more time than is probably good for you in public houses, pop along to meet the group! Drop in to any practice, contact Steve on 07375 592928 or email: alvechurchbagman@gmail.com

NANCY Butterfly Morris Dancers dance in the North-West Morris style (clogs!) and practise at Catshill Methodist Church Hall on Monday evenings ready to meet up with other Morris sides for social events and festivals. They are very happy to welcome new adult dancers and musicians. See: www.nancybutterfly.co.uk or Facebook for what they get up to. You can contact them via the website or Jane on 07726 915289.

AVONCROFT Folk Dance Group enjoys anything

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## WHAT'S ON GUIDE



## LOCAL HISTORY AT ALVECHURCH LIBRARY

**THIS MONTH THERE WILL BE an opportunity for villagers to view some of the albums of photographs and newspaper cuttings previously housed in the Alvechurch Historical Society Museum. There will also be a display on some of the Alvechurch soldiers who died in World War I.**

**It will also be an opportunity to look at the collection of Alvechurch related items now permanently housed in a showcase in the library along with the 1851 census plan of the village.**

**The event will take place at Alvechurch Library on Friday 13 November 10-1pm. Tea and coffee will be available. Copies of the red book "*Alvechurch 1920-1960*" will be for sale at £5 each.**

**The library will be sharing the Memory and Me bags. There are 64 Memories and Me Bags available to borrow from libraries across Worcestershire. It's just like borrowing a book except you are borrowing a bag!**

**A bag filled to the brim with items such as sensory objects, puzzles, and picture books related to themes like gardening and caravan holidays. The bags have been created to engage the senses and encourage conversation for those living with dementia and their carers.**

**Tea and coffee will be available. A free event, no need to book.**

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from barn dances to ones seen in *Pride & Prejudice* or *Poldark*. All welcome. The group meets every Thurs from 8–10pm at Avoncroft Arts Centre, B60 4JR. £2.50 incl refreshments. Info from Liz Stanton on 01905 353995 or liz@the-stantons.uk or visit www.avoncroftfdg.weebly.com

BJ's BUSY Boots Line Dancing Classes: 7–9.30pm Stoke Prior Sports/Country Club. Thurs 12.15–2.30pm Bromsgrove Methodist Church Centre. All are welcome to join the monthly social dance held on the first Saturday of the month at All Saints Church hall, Burcot. A fun way to exercise, it keeps the memory sharp and you'll make likeminded friends. All ages welcome. For information contact Brenda Whipp on 07828488382 or pop into one of the classes.

AMY GREAVES SCHOOL OF DANCE & FITNESS offers a variety of classes for toddler up to adults. Based in Alvechurch and West Heath. Contact 07979408997 or email: amygreavesschooldance@gmail.com. Visit www.amygreavesschoolofdance.com for the timetable.

## CLUBS, GROUPS & SOCIETIES

ALVECHURCH DRAMATIC SOCIETY meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (during rehearsal periods) at 8pm at Alvechurch Village Hall. They generally put on two shows a year and aim to perform a wide variety of genres including comedies, thrillers, farce, classics and pantomime. They are a friendly group, and whether you want to tread the boards, get involved backstage or front of house, or work on the technical side of a production, you will be very welcome. More information can be found at www.dynami.org.uk/alvechurchdramatic-society/ or email ads.alvechurch@gmail.com

PLACES OF WELCOME is a growing network of local community groups who provide neighbourhoods with places where all people can feel safe and connect, belong and contribute. The network is open in St Laurence Church and The Ark on Wednesdays 10am-11.30am, all are open to everyone and offer friendship and hospitality, free refreshments and local knowledge about the neighbourhood. Visit www.placesofwelcome.org.uk or email info@placesofwelcome.org.uk

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY talks and social events are held in the Village Hall. Unless otherwise noted, entry is free for members and for non-members, including a drink and biscuits. Other social events are by ticket and details of venue, start time and price will be published by the organisers nearer the time. Upcoming events:
Wed. Nov 18th 7:30 pm An Introduction to Winterbourne Gardens by Henrietta Lockhart.
Sat. Dec 6th 7.00 pm The AVS Christmas Party – a Night of Soul & Motown. This tickets event is sold out.

BROMSGROVE & Redditch Welcomes Refugees is a group of volunteers providing a range of support - from friendship and practical help - for all refugees and asylum seekers moving into the district. BRWR is open to all, irrespective of political or religious beliefs, and new volunteers are always needed. More info at brwr.uk

THE WORCESTER-BIRMINGHAM & DROITWICH CANALS SOCIETY holds regular monthly meetings in the meeting room behind The Weighbridge Pub, Scarfield Hill, Alvechurch on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.45pm. There is usually a guest speaker. They promote the upkeep of the canals to ensure that the heritage is looked after for all to enjoy and are a registered charity. Find out more: www.wbdcs.org.uk or Facebook @wbdcs.org.uk. or email contact@wbdcs.org.uk. Non-members are welcome. Free entry.

SILVER THREADS social group for seniors meets on 1st Wednesday of the month in Alvechurch Village Hall for bingo and refreshments with additional day trips. Doors open at 1:30pm. For more information and to join the group contact Pat on 0121 447 8630 or Rita on 0121 445 6745

MONDAY BARNT GREEN BRIDGE CLUB are a friendly club who meet at the Quaker meeting house on Mondays at 6.30pm. Play bridge and meet new people. For details call Olivia Goodborn 07583 484065.

REDDITCH CHESS CLUB meets at Alvechurch & Hopwood Cricket Club, Alvechurch B48 7TA, every Wednesday at 7.15pm September - May. The club has teams playing in both Birmingham and Worcester leagues. New players are welcome - just turn up or contact Giles Stanton on 07932 053621 or David Smith on 07540 304620.

FRIDAY BRIDGE CLUB play friendly, competitive, duplicate bridge every Friday at Burcot Village Hall. Visitors are always welcome. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided during a short break. Please arrive by 6.35pm to enable play to start promptly at 6.45pm. For details contact Secretary Ed Payne 07950951122.

FAMILY BOARD GAMES CLUB at Alvechurch Library. Join in the fun and bring your friends to spend an afternoon playing family board games on the first Saturday of the month from 2pm until 4pm. They will have lots of tables with different games, free, suitable for all children. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. No need to book, just turn up. Refreshments available for £1.

ADULT BOARD GAMES CLUB at Alvechurch Library. Join in the fun and meet new friends by spending a few hours playing your favourite board games in the library. They will have lots of games from Rummikub, Catan, Queendomino. They meet on the first Thursday of the month from 3pm until 5pm. No need to book, just turn up

CHESS CLUB AT ALVECHURCH LIBRARY. There is a weekly Chess Club rom 11am on Saturdays, for all ages and abilities, just let them know if you'd like to join on 01905 822722 and ask for Alvechurch Library.

KINGFISHER PROBUS CLUB for retired and semi-retired Men meet in the Function Room at The Court Leet, 174 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, B61 7AY on the second Thursday of the month at 11.30am. A short meeting at 12 followed by lunch then a talk given by a visiting speaker. For info contact Chris Bailey 01527835802/ 07941387071 or www.kingfisherprobusredditch.co.uk.

BROMSGROVE U3A is for anyone no longer in full time work. Monthly meetings with a talk at Bromsgrove Methodist Centre; many other activities. Discover new ideas, learn something new and meet new friends. Find out more: https://bromsgrove.u3asite.uk.

BARNT GREEN FRIENDSHIP GROUP is held on the second Tuesday each month at Burcot Grange 2–4pm. £4 for visitors or yearly membership. They have a varied programme. Ladies and gentlemen are welcome. Contact Rosalind on 0121 445 0598 for more details.

BROMSGROVE MEN IN SHEDS is a group for anyone aged 50+ who wants to spend time with likeminded people. Located within a unit at Finstall (B60 3BP) please contact Age UK North Worcestershire on 01527 570490/ enquiries@ageuknorthworcs.org.uk for more information.

MONDAY FELLOWSHIP meets at the Parish Centre Barnt Green at 2.30pm on the second Monday of the month. An interesting talk by an invited speaker is followed by a cup of tea and a chat. Come and make new friends. All are welcome to attend. Admission is £3 but first visit is free. For a programme of talks and events for the next 12 months and more info contact Judith Stephenson 07708799853 or email office@chandbgparish.org.uk.

KINGFISHER PROBUS CLUB for retired and semi-retired Men meet on the second Thursday of the month at 11.30am. A short meeting at 12 followed by lunch then a talk given by a visiting speaker. Also have quarterly lunches, Walking group and Golf. For information contact Chris Bailey 01527835802/ 07941387071 or www.kingfisherprobusredditch.co.uk.

## SPORT, FITNESS & HEALTH

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE SOCIETY'S WALKS are on Sundays at 2pm unless noted otherwise. For walks starting outside the village, please contact the walk leader if you need a lift. Occasionally weather conditions mean that a walk must be cancelled at late notice. Check with the walk leaders or the AVS website if unsure. Always wear appropriate footwear. Upcoming walks:
Nov 1st Tony Brannon 07763 468893 Arrow Valley Park and Lake. Meet at Washford Lane, Redditch B98 0HY.
Dec 6th Ray Yarnell & Norma Divine 07508 699672 A Winter stroll from and around Hopwood. Meet at Hopwood House Pub car park B48 7AB.
Sat. Dec 26th (10.00 am) Led by Martin & Mariea Clarke 07742 100007 "Annual Boxing Day walk at The Lickeys". Meet at Visitor Centre, Warren Lane B45 8ER.

BARNT GREEN FISHING CLUB controls the fishing (both game and coarse) on the Bittell Reservoirs. Contact: barntgreenfishingclub@gmail.com or Facebook @Barnt Green Fishing Club.

PILATES PILATES with Steff Affleck (Rowney Green) Mat classes, apparatus (reformer/tower/barrels etc.) 1:1 and duets. Irrespective of age, gender, health or fitness we could all benefit from understanding more about how to keep moving well. Joseph Pilates' system of exercise, using apparatus he invented, enables you to challenge what is strong, build what is weaker, exploring how you can balance the body to move away from pain and discomfort towards greater resilience and independence. Graduate of Pilates Professional Advanced Teacher Training; teaching for 20 years. Call 07759590830 or see www.steffaffleck.co.uk

BARNT Green Sports Club (Margesson Drive, Barnt Green, B45 8LR) offers racquet sports in a friendly environment, plus running and cycling groups. Clubhouse with licensed bar. More info from Nick Butcher on 0121 445 1978 or visit www.barntgreensportsclub.co.uk

PILATES with Lottie Newberry: Physiotherapy-led Pilates classes every Monday in Alvechurch in the day and Barnt Green in the evening. Contact Lottie on lottienewberrypilates@hotmail.com. All abilities welcome.

Bromsgrove HOCKEY CLUB ladies 5th team are looking for new players. If you're over 13 and play or have played hockey, please come along on Wednesday evenings 7.30 -8.45pm at BHC, B60 3BW. No upper age limit. Email: membership.sec@bromsgrovehockey.org.uk or message: Mary 07771 531397

KINGS Norton Rhinos offers contact and non-contact rugby for children from Reception to Year 12. A safe and friendly introduction to rugby – and plenty of outdoor fun and exercise! Training takes place at KNRFC Ash Lane, Hopwood, on Sundays from 9.30–11.30am. Contact Simon Thompson on 07968 424585 or visit www.knrfc.co.uk

JUNIOR RUGBY - friendly fun & inclusive Mini & Junior rugby coaching from 10am Sundays. Ages 4 to 17. Trial sessions available. Men/Women's teams also recruiting! Five Ways Old Edwardians Sports Club, Ash Lane Hopwood

BARNT GREEN CHUGGERS & CHAINGANG provide run & cycling sessions for mixed abilities, those wanting to stay in shape plus those wishing to improve their running, cycling & fitness all in a social & recreational environment. Club Sessions - Chuggers (run) Monday & Wednesday 7pm and Chaingang (cycling) Wednesday 7pm and Saturday 9am all from Barnt Green Sports Club. For more info or to arrange a trial session please contact kategallimore@googlemail.com

PHYSIO LED PILATES - Small and welcoming classes in Barnt Green, Blackwell and Cofton Hackett run by a highly experienced Physiotherapist. Mother and baby classes also run in Bromsgrove and 1:1 or 1:2 Reformer sessions in the Lickey hills.

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## ALVECHURCH CRICKET CLUB QUIZ

**Alvechurch cricket club will be holding a general knowledge quiz on Friday 13 November. Held at Alvechurch cricket club pavilion – to the rear of 6 Birmingham Road, B48 7TA. Organisers recommend arriving for 6.45pm for 7.30pm start. There will be a full bar open, and nibbles provided. You can enter as a team of 4-6 people or enter as an individual/couple and be added to a team on the evening. The quiz is aimed at adults/ teenagers. £2 entry pp towards cricket club funds**




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Find out more: elizabethalexanderphysiotherapy.com or 07850 604425.

WOMEN'S STRENGTH TRAINING at the Parish Centre on Sandhills Rd, 10am every Monday. This is for women who know they need to build strength as they age and want some guidance and a community based, supportive environment to do it. It isn't a pumping high intensity cardio session. It is a considered, functional class designed to build muscle and protect bone health. All exercises can be scaled up or down, so no one will be left out. Contact Rachel at rachel@fortabella.org for details.

MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS CLASSES, for a calmer, more balanced way of living. Step away from the pressures of daily life and discover the restorative benefits of meditation. Join a friendly and welcoming group at The Ark, Alvechurch (& online) and learn practical techniques to reduce stress, feel calmer, sleep better and live more mindfully. Guided by Sally, who brings decades of personal practice and teaching experience and a Master's degree in Mindfulness Studies. Beginners and experienced meditators welcome. For a trial, contact Sally: www.MyYogaMind.co.uk, classes@MyYogaMind.co.uk, 07903 663085.




COFTON MOVE MORE – Age UK North Worcestershire Exercise Class for the over 50s. Mondays, 1.45-2.45pm at Cofton Village Hall. No need to Book. Contact AgeUK North Worcs on 01527 570490/ enquiries@ageuknorthworcs.org.uk for more information.

ALVECHURCH MOVE MORE – Age UK North Worcestershire Exercise Class for the over 50s. Wednesdays 1-2pm Alvechurch Baptist Church Hall. No need to Book. Contact Age UK North Worcs on 01527 570490/ enquiries@ageuknorthworcs.org.uk for more information.

HOPWOOD LADIES CYCLING CLUB offers rides of 20m on a Tuesday and 35-55m on a Wednesday with start points around the local area. For more info, email fairf8@yahoo.co.uk

## GARDENS & FLOWERS

BLACKWELL COMMUNITY GARDEN at St Catherine, Blackwell. Pop along to help water, plant and harvest. Info on 0121 445 1425.

ROWNEY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY meets at the Village Hall on the second Thursday each month at 7.15pm. The meeting on 12th Novmeber wil be the Annual General Meeting followed by Cheese and Wine. All members are welcome on the evening re the election of tfhe Committee. The Society is always looking for "new blood" to join the Committee so if you feel you woud like to give it a try or perhaps recommend a friend, please speak to a Committee Member on the evening. For more information pease do not hesitate to contact Lindsay Smith on 01527 592874.

BROMSGROVE FLOWER CLUB meets on Thursday 19 November at 1.30pm at All Saints Church Hall, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove. Enjoy a talk and demonstration by Tammy Kefford, "A winters Tale". For information, contact Penny on 07843 758489 or visit www.bromsgroveflowerclub.co.uk.

## ART, CRAFT, HISTORY & LITERATURE

THE WITHYBED POETS are local people who write poetry and share and discuss it with each other. You don't have to live in Withybed Green, though most of our meetings are there. They meet regularly every month or so. They like to read to local audiences and some of them write "poetry on request."
They are currently reading a series of our poems on Birmingham Hospitals Radio. They will be reading at the Baptist Church concert on 14 November. For details of the next meeting on 18 November and more information contact mary.green5005@gmail.com.

THE LICKEY HILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY meet on Tuesdays at the Trinity Centre, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES. Doors open from 7pm for refreshments and socialising. Talks start at 7.30pm Annual subscription: £20. Non members: £4 per meeting.
November 17: 'The Jewellery Quarter… Still Birmingham's Gem?' by Andy Munro All about Its history and transition to the present day.
December 15: 'Breaking the Brass Ceiling by Professor Jonathan Reinarz The Life and Legacy of Professor Dame Hilda Lloyd, pioneer in obstetrical care and donator to Lickey Church.

THE "CRAFTY LADIES" craft group meets every Monday morning in Alvechurch Library from 10am–1pm, with knitting, crocheting, sewing, quilting etc. More info on 01905 822722.

BURCOT WOODTURNING CLUB offers a friendly meeting place for woodturners of all abilities and experience. A varied programme includes demos, talks, hands-on practical evenings and visits to exhibitions. The group meets on the first Thurs each month, 7.15–9.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Visit www.burcotwoodturners.org.uk

AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY at Avoncroft Arts Centre (Redditch Road, Bromsgrove B60 4JR), runs tutored/ non-tutored classes in Art, Textiles, Ceramics, Embroidery and Dance. Contact AAS on 01527 833829 or avoncroftarts@btconnect.com

AVONCROFT ARTS SOCIETY, Bromsgrove Various painting/drawing courses available from Mon-Friday. Including a History of Art class. Contact admin@avoncroftarts.org.uk or phone 01527 833829 for more information.

BARNT GREEN & REDDTICH QUAKERS invite you to a series of films. Admission free/donations welcome/refreshments. Full details at the Meeting-House, 6 Sandhills Rd.
July 18th 7pm: A highly-rated British comedy, involving two couples in the annual London to Brighton Veteran Car Run.
Sunday July 19th N.B.2pm 'Crossing the Line' (copyright agreed). A controversial documentary about the right to protest.

ART IN ALVECHURCH , welcomes artists and creative people of all abilities to develop their paintings, drawings, collages ( and confidence) etc in our supportive and lively group. Every Tuesday from 1pm till 3.30pm. Monthly fun challenges. £5 a session. Alvechurch Baptist Church hall. Contact Lesley: lesleyart14@gmail.com 0775 474 7520

LEARN FRENCH FOR BEGINNERS or little knowledge. Starting September with native French teacher, Françoise. 2-hour class for £14, pay per session. At Cofton Village Hall. Please see advert in the Village Directory or CVH website.

## SILVER THREADS



**Silver Threads recently celebrated their 20th year anniversary. Original founders Pat Riley and Irene Timms cut the cake made by most recent committee member Cheryl Kiely (above). Silver Threads meets on the first Wednesday in the month at Alvechurch Village Hall from 1:30pm. New members welcome, please call Pat on 447 8630 or Rita on 07743 547532 to let them know you're coming.**

FORGE MILL CREATIVE TEXTILE GROUP is a friendly group of local stitchers, experienced and beginners. They meet on Friday mornings at Beoley Village Hall. A leisure, learning and development group, exploring techniques and media to create textile artwork. Contact Lynda on 0121 445 3212 or Janet on 0121 445 4335 for further information.

THE BROMSGROVE SOCIETY is the local history and civic society for the town and district. They meet third Tuesday of the month, except December and April, at Methodist Centre, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove at 7.45pm. Members £3, Non-members £4. For programme and other activities see: www.bsoc.co.uk or email: events@bsoc.co.uk

BARNT GREEN ART CLUB meets weekly in term-time. Morning and afternoon sessions at The Scout and Guide HQ in Barnt Green Road. Interested people of all abilities welcome. Contact Jackie on 07778 393137 for details

Barnt Green Quakers will be screening the PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING featuring Chris Packham in our meeting house at Barnt Green on Sunday, 18 October at 2pm - certificate 16+ - followed by discussion and refreshments.

## CHILDREN & FAMILIES

BABY Bounce & Rhyme is at Alvechurch Library Mondays 10–10.30am. Sing-a-long to traditional nursery rhymes and action songs.

STORYTIME at Alvechurch Library is on Tuesdays 11–11.30. Silly stories and tall tales for pre-school children to enjoy with parents and carers.

ACRO TOTS & STAY AND PLAY with Amy Greaves School of Dance. Wednesday's at The Ark 11:30-12:30pm. Please get in touch and email amygreavesschooldance@gmail.com for details.

DRAMA TOTS: Award-winning imaginary play classes for children 18 months to 5 years. Classes run term-time on Monday mornings in Alvechurch, Thursdays in Redditch and Fridays in Studley. Contact Jo 07738 969460 for details.

TINY CHURCH (stay and play for under-5s and carers) meets in Holy Trinity Church, Lickey, each Weds from 11.15am–12.30pm during term times. Games, toys, snacks and stories, and a time to meet together with God. Just pop along, or contact 0121 445 1425 clive.rushton@btinternet.com

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST (NCT) runs popular antenatal and postnatal courses to grow your knowledge and network, feel prepared and confident moving into the next chapter of your life. Held at St Andrew's Church, Barnt Green. www.nct.org.uk/courses-workshops or call 0300 330 0700.

PRE-SCHOOL BALLET - Pre-school (2 ½ - 4 yrs) ballet held at Barnt Green Baptist Church on Monday mornings from 10am. Contact dancingpointe@outlook.com for further details.

BLACKWELL STAY & PLAY on Mondays during term time at Blackwell Community Hall. Under 5s and their carers are welcome from 9.30am – 11am

LITTLE KITCHEN CLUB a toddler and preschool age cooking and play classes running on Wednesdays and Fridays in Redditch. Visit www.littlekitchen-club.co.uk for more details.

CO-COUNSELLING - Gain confidence, solve difficulties, develop emotional competence and become better at anything you do, taking turns to be counsellor and client. Affordable initial training, after that sessions are FREE. Contact: coco@dpets.uk 01214454607 http://donington.training

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTES

FINSTALL CROSS WI meets at Finstall Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For more info see www.finstallcrosswi.org or email finstallcrosswi@gmail.com

BEOLEY WI meets on the first Tuesday of each month in Beoley Village Hall at 7pm. More info from Joan Lovett on 01527 584047 or email beoleysec@wfedwi.org.uk

BENTLEY PAUNCEFOOT WI meets at 7pm on the second Tuesday every month between April and November, and at 12pm December to March, at Bentley Village Hall (B97 5TB). More information from Helen Spence (01527 822622)or email bentleypauncefootsec@wfedwi.org.uk

BARNT GREEN WI meets at the Baptist Church at 7.30pm on the 3rd Thursday of the month. For information: Sheila Nunnerley 07465 439646.

ALVECHURCH WI meets on the second Monday each month in Alvechurch Village Hall, at 7.30pm. For more information email Lin Neal lin.neal@hotmail.com or alvechurchpres@wfedwi.org.uk

LICKEY WI usually meets on the first Tues every month at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall (Trinity Centre), Old Birmingham Road, Lickey. More info from Jenny Ryder on 0121 445 1872, Lickeywi@gmail.com or www.lickeywi.wordpress.com

HILLSIDE AT ALVECHURCH WI meets at 1.30 on the first Thursday of each month at The Ark, Alvechurch. For more information contact Marian Clemons on 07586354826 or follow them on Facebook: Hillside WI at Alvechurch

BLACKWELL & BURCOT WI meets at Burcot Village Hall on the second Weds each month, at 2pm. For info call President Mrs Barbara Knight on 0121 445 3456.

HOPWOOD WI meets at Hopwood Village Hall on the first Thurs of the month at 7.30pm. For more information call Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668.

ST CATHERINE'S BLACKWELL WI meets on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Burcot Village Hall. Contact Sue Barrett for more information on 01527 596092 or susanbarratt222@gmail.com

RUBERY WI meets on the 2nd Weds of the month at 7.30pm at Beacon Church Centre, when there are speakers, activities and competitions. The 4th Weds of each month is the craft evening. Non-members are welcome. Contact Judie1055@yahoo.co.uk 07810765314.

FAIRFIELD WI meet at Fairfield village hall on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm. For further details contact Carol Hine at fairfieldwi1932@gmail.com

## VILLAGE VENUES FOR HIRE

HOPWOOD VILLAGE HALL is available for hire for parties, groups and gatherings. Please contact Booking Secretary Ann Thurrell on 0121 447 7668 or visit www.hopwoodvillagehall.co.uk

TARDEBIGGE COMMUNITY HALL for hire: large, bright facility for functions, clubs, societies and all activities. To book call 07763 446902 or email tchbookings@gmail.com

THE WHEEL COMMUNITY ROOM IN BLACKWELL has daytime, evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire. Call 0121 445 1425.

THE TRINITY CENTRE IN LICKEY has evening and weekend availability for one-off and regular hire – more info on 0121 445 1425.

BARNT GREEN PARISH CENTRE has large and medium sized lounges available for regular hire for some morning and early afternoon sessions each week. Please contact the Parish Administrator on 0121 447 7097.

***continues overleaf***

# ALVECHURCH PARISH REMEMBERS



St Laurence Church and Alvechurch Parish Council are coming together again for Remembrance Sunday. Representatives from our community have been invited to take part as Alvechurch Parish Remembers together.

*Please note that Bear Hill will be closed to traffic up to Snake Lane between 10.30am - 12pm*

On 11th November there will be no formal Act of Remembrance at Memorial Green, although you may wish to gather for a time of quiet reflection.

**Sunday 8th November**

**St Laurence Church at 10.15am and at the Memorial Green from 10.50am.**




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THE ARK AT ST LAURENCE has a large hall and kitchen, and smaller upper room for hire, for one-off and regular hires. More information and bookings please call 0121 447 7955 or email admin@thearkalvechurch.co.uk

ALVECHURCH VILLAGE HALL is available for hire to groups, clubs, societies, and private parties. The hall has a stage, PA system, kitchen and bar area. There is also a smaller conference room available for hire. Enquiries to the Hall Manager Andrea Ottley on 07455892909 or hallmanager.avh@gmail.com

ALVECHURCH CRICKET CLUB PAVILION is available for hire: weekdays for community groups/clubs/societies, evening functions/private parties. Licensed bar, dance floor, kitchen area and great outdoor space. Enquiries to Stuart Brereton via 07775 714165 or ahcc.bar@gmail.com

FAIRFIELD VILLAGE HALL is available to hire for functions, groups and parties. It has a large hall with kitchen facilities. Contact the booking secretary Andrew on 07762749943 or bookings@fvh.org.uk. See website for details www.fvh.org.uk

ROWNEY GREEN VILLAGE HALL has a large hall, with stage and sprung floor (ideal for dance and exercise) and two smaller rooms. Available for one off or regular hire, ample parking. Email: admin@rowneygreenvillagehall.org

BLACKWELL COMMUNITY HALL is available for groups, functions and parties. The large hall is complemented by a new kitchen and a grassed area. Details at blackwellcommunityhall.co.uk.

BEOLEY VILLAGE HALL has a wide range of facilities, including a modern kitchen, bar, PA system, projector and screen, skittles alley and a large car park with disabled access to the hall. To book your event, meeting, party or celebration for up to 100 people, please contact Richard on 01527 66646.

THE BOATHOUSE VENUE is set in the unique location of Upper Bittell and is available to hire for Weddings, Private Parties, Wakes, Meetings, Workshops and Group Gatherings. It offers a fully equipped kitchen and licensed bar. For enquiries, email boathouse.bgw@gmail.com.

COFTON VILLAGE HALL in Cofton Hackett is available for event hire, with a large hall and smaller meeting rooms. It also hosts a variety of activities and classes to explore. Visit coftonvillagehall.org for more info.

OUR LADY'S PARISH CENTRE in Rednal is available for hire for clubs, groups, private parties etc Large hall with kitchen and car park. Enquiries to olhallbooking@gmail.com or 0121 453 3452.

NEED A SPACE TO MEET OR WORK? Hire our bright, accessible office in Barnt Green for just £5/hour (minimum £15). Seats 15, includes Wi-Fi, kitchen (on request), and step-free access. Book now: exec@barntgreenparishcouncil.gov.uk

## FEATURE IN THE WHAT'S ON

**Please email your submission (around 35 words) to: info@villageonline.co.uk**
**Please note we may not be able to reply to everyone.**
**The deadline for the next issue is 14 November.**





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