



# Parish news

February 2026

For the Parishes of ASHBRIITLE with GREENHAM, BATHEALTON, STAWLEY and KITTISFORD

**Church Services**

<b>Sun 1<sup>st</sup> Feb                    The Presentation of Christ</b>		
10.00am	Holy Communion Service	St. Michael's, Stawley
10.00am	Holy Communion Service	Holy Cross, Sampford Arundel
10.30am	Sung Eucharist Service	All Saints', Rockwell Green
6.00pm	<b><i>Shanty Singing for all</i></b>	All Saints', Rockwell Green
	A chance to learn how to sing Sea Shanties with a friendly crowd	
<b>Tue 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb                    Monthly Day of Prayer</b>		
8.00am	Online, informal, and relaxing. All details at <a href="http://westtone.org.uk/prayer">westtone.org.uk/prayer</a>	
<b>Sun 8<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>		
10.00am	Benefice All Age Communion	St. Bartholomew's, Bathealton
10.30am	Sung Eucharist Service	All Saints', Rockwell Green
6.00pm	<b><i>The Pub Explorers</i></b>	The Martlett, Langford Budville
	A relaxed conversation over a drink; bring any question and join in	
<b>Sun 15<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>		
10.00am	Holy Communion Service	St. Margaret's, Thorne St. Margaret
10.30am	Sung Eucharist Service	All Saints', Rockwell Green
11.15am	BCP Matins Service	All Saints, Rockwell Green
6.00pm	<b><i>Prayer &amp; Praise</i></b>	St. Michael's, Stawley
	Our new modern worship service with contemporary music and talk	
<b>Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Feb Ash Wednesday</b> Join us as we mark the start of Lent. A short service with ashing for those who would like it. See <a href="http://westtone.org.uk/services">westtone.org.uk/services</a>		
<b>Sun 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb First Sunday of Lent</b>		
10.30am	Sung Eucharist Service	All Saints', Rockwell Green
4.00pm	<b><i>Family@4</i></b>	All Saints', Rockwell Green
	A time for our youngest to play and learn from a helpful Bible story	
6.00pm	Evensong Service	St. Nicholas', Kittisford
6.00pm	Evensong Service	Holy Cross, Sampford Arundel

For more information about all our services and events please visit our website at [westtone.org.uk/services](http://westtone.org.uk/services) or contact Revd Andy at [welcome@westtone.org.uk](mailto:welcome@westtone.org.uk)

**Churchwardens and Clergy Ashbrittle with Greenham**

<b>Ashbrittle</b>	Charles Doble, The Old Rectory, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LQ	01823 672365
	David Hanks, Manley House, Ashbrittle, TA21 0LE	01823 672436
<b>Bathealton</b>	Sarah Eustice, Oakwood, Spring Grove, TA4 1NL	01823 401248
<b>Kittisford</b>	Annie Musgrove, Meadow Farm, Greenham, TA21 0JW	01823 672627
<b>Stawley</b>	Penny Hare, Stawley Mill, Wellington, TA21 0HT	01823 672183
	Colin Haddrell, Tucks Farm, Stawley, TA21 0HS	07974 804990

**Priest-in-Charge**

Reverend Andrew Barton, 2 White Oaks, Langford Budville, TA21 0RB

Contacts: Home/Office - Phone 01823 924007 or 07795 699737

*Email [revdbarton@gmail.com](mailto:revdbarton@gmail.com)*

<p><b>Front cover</b> - 'A Winter Scene' - photograph taken by Judy Webb on the Grand Western Canal, near Burlescombe.</p>
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## Thought for the Month

### Thinking about conflict

*"... our reactions to events are not caused by the events themselves, but by our opinions of them..."*  
Epictetus

We are surrounded by conflict. It is on our screens, in our newspapers, on the radio and television every minute of every day. The ability of the modern communications environment to heighten tension and fear is part of 21<sup>st</sup> century life.

Somebody once wrote "... that six weeks' worth of sensory stimuli six hundred years ago is what we can now get in a day." Thus, we are challenged to find ways to resolve conflicts of whatever type given the ever changing nature of the information we receive.

The trouble is, as human beings, we are hot-wired for conflict. To use a cliché, conflict is part of the human condition. We are prone to forming opinions, and opinions are seldom facts; this leads to deep prejudice and biases being engrained in the way we judge events or other people. Where do we get the information from that enables us to form an opinion?

### The problem with compromise

Conversely, compromise, which we might think is one way to start resolution, is a hard nut to swallow for most. It indicates failure and weakness to those who suggest they are right. Yet we know that there is unlikely to be any resolution without some compromise. Look at the wars going on around us today.

But conflict is not just a notion of war, of armies, or insurgents fighting each other; it exists in the lives of each and every person. It is in the schoolroom, the home, and in the street. It is the school bully at work; it exists between gangs; it is in the workplace. It is in the MIND. This has always been the case. But today our conflicts are facilitated and exacerbated increasingly by barely controlled or uncontrolled phenomena such as the internet and AI. These phenomena create an environment of high-speed change, instant access to information that can be as false as it is true.

The elements of conflict are broadly the same whether it is a conflict between two nations, two people, or within ourselves. A conflict can mean a physical confrontation or an argument.

Resolution might mean compromise or capitulation. Can we do this? Probably, but too often we choose to stick to the line of self-righteousness, not accepting others, and imposing our prejudices and biases on our words and actions. Yes, acceptance of the need for

compromise is a powerful but very difficult concept for us.

Jesus' message of love and forgiveness was probably the best advice that could be given, along with others who taught us how to live, love and resolve.

*Christopher Langton*

## Quaker Meeting for Worship

**Spiceland Quaker Meeting Uffculme  
EX15 3AZ**

**We Meet for Worship at Spiceland  
every Sunday at 10.30am till 11.30am  
also available on Zoom -  
Meeting ID:865 5570 2735 Passcode:  
498173**

**All are very welcome.**

**Imagine ~ by John Lennon  
Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkgkThdzX-8>**

**Imagine there's no heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky**

**Imagine all the people living for today  
Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too**

**Imagine all the people living life in peace,  
You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world will be as one**

**Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man**

**Imagine all the people sharing all the world,  
You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some day you'll join us  
And the world will be as one**

**Mobile Library  
at Greenham Bridge  
Next visit: 24th February  
9.50 - 10.10 a.m.**

## They give a Storm a Name

The fashion is, as someone thought,  
When seeing a deepening trough  
that's filled with power of wind and rain,  
clouds raging through skies aloft,  
once seen the lightning flame,  
bestow on it a name!

To hurricanes they've done the same  
for many a year as if  
there comes a force deserving such,  
destruction its awful gift:  
each title rings the same,  
a friendly human name.

Can tempests don such epithets  
which hint at a friendly strike,  
their dark, grey, twisting, raiding clouds  
show character we may like,  
as if each storm's a game  
on which we smile a name?

A pretty name suggests the rain  
falls warmly, no ponds are left,  
the wind is just a pressing breeze,  
its threatening quite inept,  
with no destructive aim  
and matches friendly name.

But storms we've had were not like that,  
great trees are down, up the floods,  
risked injury and death were known,  
resistances proving duds:  
thought things destroyed a shame  
by storm with honoured name.

Those names attached to storm-abuse,  
boy 'Kevin' or 'Cindy' girl,  
imply the thunder's vibrant art  
and clouds are a hiding curl,  
so no one frets, it's tame  
as measured by its name.

Why are not given names like these –  
say, 'Hunger', or 'Greed', or 'Hate',  
'Destruction', 'Cruelty', 'Fear', or 'Death',  
or 'Violence', 'Pillage', 'Fate'?  
Could be that none are maimed  
once storms by truth are named!

*Martin Perry*



## Bathealton Village Hall

### POP UP CAFÉ

A friendly warm space: time to catch up with  
old friends or meet new ones.

**The next 'Pop - Up' will be on:**

**Monday 2nd February**

#### **Savoury:**

Homemade: Ham hock or leek and potato soup  
with home baked bread and butter.

#### **Sweet:**

Homemade: Apple crumble with custard  
or fresh cream.

Unlimited Cafetiere of Coffee or a selection  
of teas - all for £9.00.

*You can reserve a place by calling Del on  
07980 994082 or just pop in.*

## STAWLEY MILL

**JOIN US FOR**

**BOOKS & BISCUITS**

**COFFEE & CAKE**



**1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH**

**4TH & 18TH FEBRUARY**

**10AM—12.30PM**

**IN AID OF CHURCH RESTORATION FUND**



# Ashbrittle, Stawley and Clayhanger Cricket Club

will once again be hosting a



## Quiz Night



Appley Pavilion, on Friday 20th of February, 7.30 for a 8.00 pm start

Teams can be up to six, with each person at £10 each.

Please also make sure to bring your own drinks on the night

There will be food served, plus we will also be running a raffle on the night, with great prizes to be won! We hope to see as many faces as possible, on what is guaranteed to be a great night of quizzing.

*To enter contact:*

*07890 261387 or [williamspfa@outlook.com](mailto:williamspfa@outlook.com)*

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## Easter Bingo

**Friday 13th March  
at Appley Pavilion**

*Doors Open 6.30 pm  
Eyes Down 8.00 pm*

*All proceeds in aid of Club Funds*

## Ashbrittle Parish Council Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January

**Present:** Charles Doble, Paul Leyland, Jeremy Robbins, Geoff Skinner and Philip Wilson.

Everyone welcomed Geoff Skinner as a new councillor. Apologies for absence from Charlotte Westcott.

### Minutes

Minutes from the last meeting on 20/11/25 were all agreed. PL said the next meeting should include Dave Mansell if possible. PL to contact Dave to check availability.

### Village Green and Grogham Woods

Charles explained the issues to GS detailed in last meeting. No new updates.

### Roads

Potholes were discussed with one particular one at the bottom of Ashbrittle Hill just before reaching Tracebridge. PL to report to County Council. It was also discussed that a verge plough would be good to reclaim lost tarmac at the sides of roads. The drain outside the Village Hall remains blocked. It has been reported several times by PL and he has been told it is on their 'to do' list. PL to call again.

### Planning

The development on Stawley Hill. PW has finally had a reply from County Council planning dept. and an officer has been appointed to investigate in the next two weeks. Everyone thought we should raise other planning concerns but agreed it might be easier to talk to the officer in person if possible. JR to write up and pass to PW various outstanding concerns.

### Finance

CD thanked everyone for the recent contribution to churchyard maintenance which was agreed at the last meeting. It was agreed that this would be a one-off payment and would be looked at again once the new precept was agreed and received from the county.

PW updated everyone on the current balance and shared options on potential outgoings for the year ahead.

PL has asked Timsbury Clocks for potential costs of automating the church clock. JR thought this would be a shame as it keeps some sort of community engagement with the church. JR said there was a young woman in the village who might be willing to help with winding and he would make contact with her. PL said he would also write an article for the parish mag asking for volunteers. The possibility of a boule court in

front of the skittle alley was raised again. GS, PL and PW were in favour and CD who owns the land would be happy for it to happen. JR expressed reservations thinking it would not be used and therefore couldn't justify the expected cost for creating which is approx. £2000.

PW had also looked into the possibility of raising the precept and how that would impact on the council tax bills in the village. The precept is currently £2395. It was agreed to raise this to £3000 to cover all planned activities. This would raise the Band D annual payment by £5.

CD shared the annual outgoings of the church.

### Outgoings

Churchyard maintenance	£1125
Insurance	£1989
Parish Share	£1374
Electric	£743
Vicar expenses	£222
Total	<b>£5453</b>

### Income

Collections	£935
Ash PC	£495
Donations	£721
Investment income	£601
Occasional offices	£1172
Burial grant Stawley	£77
Total	<b>£4001</b>

**Deficit** **£1452**

### Village Hall roof.

PL said that Jon Dawes had been in contact with the roofer and was informed would hopefully start work in the coming few months.

### Church Clock

As previously mention PL has asked for costings for automation. This can be discussed once they come in and at the next meeting.

### Parish councillor appointments

PL raised the issue that we should have a Clerk on the PC. He offered to take on the task and sign up to training when it becomes available. There apparently are no real qualification requirements, but SALC offer a variety of courses that clarify some questions that have been raised in the past.

### Date of next meeting

All agreed it would be good to plan around the attendance/availability of Dave Mansell as he might shed light on some of the outstanding questions.

*Paul Leyland*



## Online Guided Meditation Courses

Open to all, perfect for beginners.

Daytime course - Starting 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026

Tuesdays at 11am for 1 hour over 5 weeks

Or

Evening course - Starting 5<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Thursdays at 7.30pm for 1 hour over 5 weeks

Join me from the comfort of your own home via zoom for a guided meditation journey to find stillness and inner calm.

In this 5 week course we will explore how grounding, connecting and being truly present in our hearts can improve our overall wellbeing.

5 week course £99 or pay as you go £22 per week.

Limited spaces available. Please contact Jo Clarke

07929378534 [shumwood.therapy@gmail.com](mailto:shumwood.therapy@gmail.com)

## Gardening group

Unfortunately, our November meeting did not come to fruition. It had been planned to see the Christmas lights at Forde Abbey but they did not have them this year. We looked into going to Knightshayes Court or Killerton. Neither property had the gardens lit but had indoor displays, so we chose to go to Knightshayes Court.

The whole house was decorated as it would have been for a Victorian Christmas with great swags of greenery. There were several Christmas trees with exhibits in each room explaining the origins of various traditions, which we take for granted, many of which originated in the Victorian period. The dining room was set for a dinner party and the husband of our volunteer in the room (himself a chef) had researched and produced an actual menu of the house at the time.

In December, nine of us met for tea at The Old Well garden centre for a festive tea with a good range of choices.

As always intended Freda and I stood down as organisers of the group at the end of the year, since we still hope to move house at some point! We shall remain members of the group until such time.

However, we need someone to take over the position and as yet have no volunteer.

Pauline has kindly offered her house for a future meeting on March...

In order to reinforce our stepping down, Val has kindly offered to take this meeting which will discuss the future of the group and even its continued existence. Numbers attending the various meetings have declined steadily over the past few years.

*Mike and Freda Parkinson*

## Join Your Parish Council Make a Difference in Our Community!

Do you care about where you live? Do you want to help shape the future of our parish? We're looking for enthusiastic, community-minded people to join **Bathealton Parish Council**.

This is your chance to:

- Represent local residents and give them a voice!
- Influence decisions on local services, facilities, and planning!
- Work on projects that make our parish a better place to live!

**No previous council experience is needed** – just a willingness to listen, learn, and get involved, support will be provided.

**For more information contact** Adele Broad or email [broad229@btinternet.com](mailto:broad229@btinternet.com)

## Very popular Curry evening

Bathealton's Curry Night on 6th December was a great success. The Hall, lit by candlelight, was full and we all enjoyed a wonderful evening to the gentle sound of Indian music. There was a huge range of meat curries (chicken tikka, lamb rogan josh and pheasant korma) and three different vegetarian curries (butter bean and aubergine, chick-pea and spinach, cauliflower and cashew nut), as well as vegetable pakoras, along with popadums, chutneys and raita.



*The curry cooks of Bathealton, ready to serve.*

Our thanks to all who came and stayed for seconds (there was plenty of food) and who enabled us to raise money for the Hall. We will be continuing our series of Suppers by Candlelight in the Village Hall in 2026, so please watch out for future dates.

*Simon Monty*

## Appley Pavilion Committee are in search of a Treasurer

Volunteer required from May 26th  
Please get in touch if you think could help out  
and join our team of volunteers.

Contact Suzette on 01823 672266 or email  
[info@appleypavilion.co.uk](mailto:info@appleypavilion.co.uk)

## Village Oil Group

The next oil delivery is due on  
**11th February 2026**

To place an order, please email:-  
[judy.milne@btinternet.com](mailto:judy.milne@btinternet.com) or contact  
Judy or Michael Milne on 01823 672205 by the  
Monday before the Wednesday delivery  
New members always welcome

— THE —  
**GLOBE INN**  
APPLEY

A warm welcome awaits you  
at The Globe Inn this February

Kiss goodbye to the January blues and come in from the cold this February.  
You'll always get a warm welcome from Mandy, Stuart, Luna and the team.

Let us take care of the cooking while you tuck into our delicious menu, which includes home-reared Appley pork and locally-sourced meats from Tim Potter. Make sure you check out our Facebook page for details of our next Sunday roast dates, as well as our upcoming evenings with live music.

*Roses are red, violets are blue,  
we'll do the cooking, so you don't have to!*

SPOIL YOUR LOVED ONE WITH A ROMANTIC VALENTINE'S MEAL AT THE GLOBE  
ON SATURDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY.

TREAT YOURSELF TO WHATEVER YOU FANCY FROM OUR EXTENSIVE MAIN MENU,  
WITH A FEW SPECIAL DISHES AND DESSERTS TO CHOOSE FROM TOO.  
PLUS, WE'LL HAVE COCKTAILS ON OFFER AND SOME TREATS FOR YOU TO ENJOY!

**Open**

Wednesday to Saturday 12 noon - 11pm

Sunday 12 noon - 4pm

**Food**

Served from 12 noon - 2pm & 6pm - 9pm

📍 Appley, Stawley, Wellington, Somerset, TA21 0HJ

☎ 01823 673147

✉ [stuardurston@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stuardurston@hotmail.co.uk)

📌 The Globe INN Appley

VALENTINE'S DAY  
BOOKINGS  
NOW BEING  
TAKEN.

## Minutes of the Stawley Parish Council Meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Emergency Planning** Paul Musgrove (PM) and Pat Sweet (PS) attended the Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Day on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025. An article had been published in the Parish News about Household Resilience and a local WhatsApp group to advertise road closures and other matters that might affect the community has been started. However only ten households have joined the group which suggests that there is little local support for any emergency planning to be undertaken at the moment.

### Finance

The current bank balance is £2,991.49 and the Unity Bank balance is £10,319.39.

**Precept.** The probable excess for the year 2025/26 is £1,200. One thing learnt at the Resilience Day is that it can cost about £10,000 should an injunction be required to stop illegal occupation of land. The Council may also have to take action in future should more hedges be dug up because of the failure of the statutory bodies to do so. The Council agreed to increase the precept for 2026/27 by 3%.

### Planning

**Greenham Cottage field.** The planning officer has confirmed that the owner is using the field for a business related use concerning the growing of mushrooms. This commercial aspect requires planning permission and the owner has advised that he intends to rectify this breach by way of a retrospective planning application. I have given a time frame of three months to submit such an application due to the various reports/surveys etc. that are needed.

**Hedge appeal.** This appeal is still outstanding. Somerset Council asked for an update from the Planning Inspectorate on the 2nd December but none has been forthcoming.

### Reports from Members

**Roads** – There is concern about hedges being allowed to grow into the road. The Clerk will investigate the legal responsibility to maintain hedges.

**Footpaths** – The footpath sign by Greenham Cottage has been delivered to the owners but not put up. The Council will arrange for this to be done by a contractor.

The full minutes can be viewed at <https://stash.org.uk/>

*Paul Musgrove, Chairman*

## Lunch Club

We packed an extra table into the village hall to accommodate all our guests for our Christmas lunch. As ever Jackie White excelled herself with a delicious meal, never fazed by our erratic numbers.

The entertainment was provided by Gail Britton and the village choir embellished by a range of other artistes gathered from far and wide. A most enjoyable prelude to our meal. Very many thanks to all concerned.

Our next lunch club is on Thursday 26th February at 12.00 noon. The speaker will be Mike Webster who has visited us before and this time would like to bring us a rather mysterious topic... 'The Village of the Damned'. He says he doesn't want to give too much away in advance, suggesting I provide you with the following sentence. 'Where did the Navy Lark scriptwriters get their ideas from?'

In this true tale from the early 20th century, the Russian Navy mixes ambition, chaos, determination and stupidity (and the inability to navigate) with 'you'd never believe it' results in their attempt to sail around the world to avenge the humiliation of the Tsar.

If you would like to join us on this bizarre sounding trip, please let me know in advance. My contact details - telephone 01823 672203 or email [harlingdelia@gmail.com](mailto:harlingdelia@gmail.com)

*Delia Harling*

### Ashbrittle Art and Craft Group

We hold a monthly get-together as a self-directed group to do whatever 'arty' or 'crafty' project takes your fancy

#### Painting and Drawing - Mosaics - Textiles Crafts - etc.

Come and meet some local art and craft enthusiasts, see what's going on and tell us about your favourite craft

We meet at a member's house. Arrangements will be confirmed in advance, via a monthly reminder email

**Next meetings:  
12th February and 12th March  
2.00 - 4.0 pm**

If you are interested in joining us, contact me by email below to be added to the mailing list:

*Pauline [pjw200355@gmail.com](mailto:pjw200355@gmail.com)*

Bathealton's Brilliant Quiz Night

Quiz Hostess: Akula Agbami

Saturday 7 February 2026

7pm

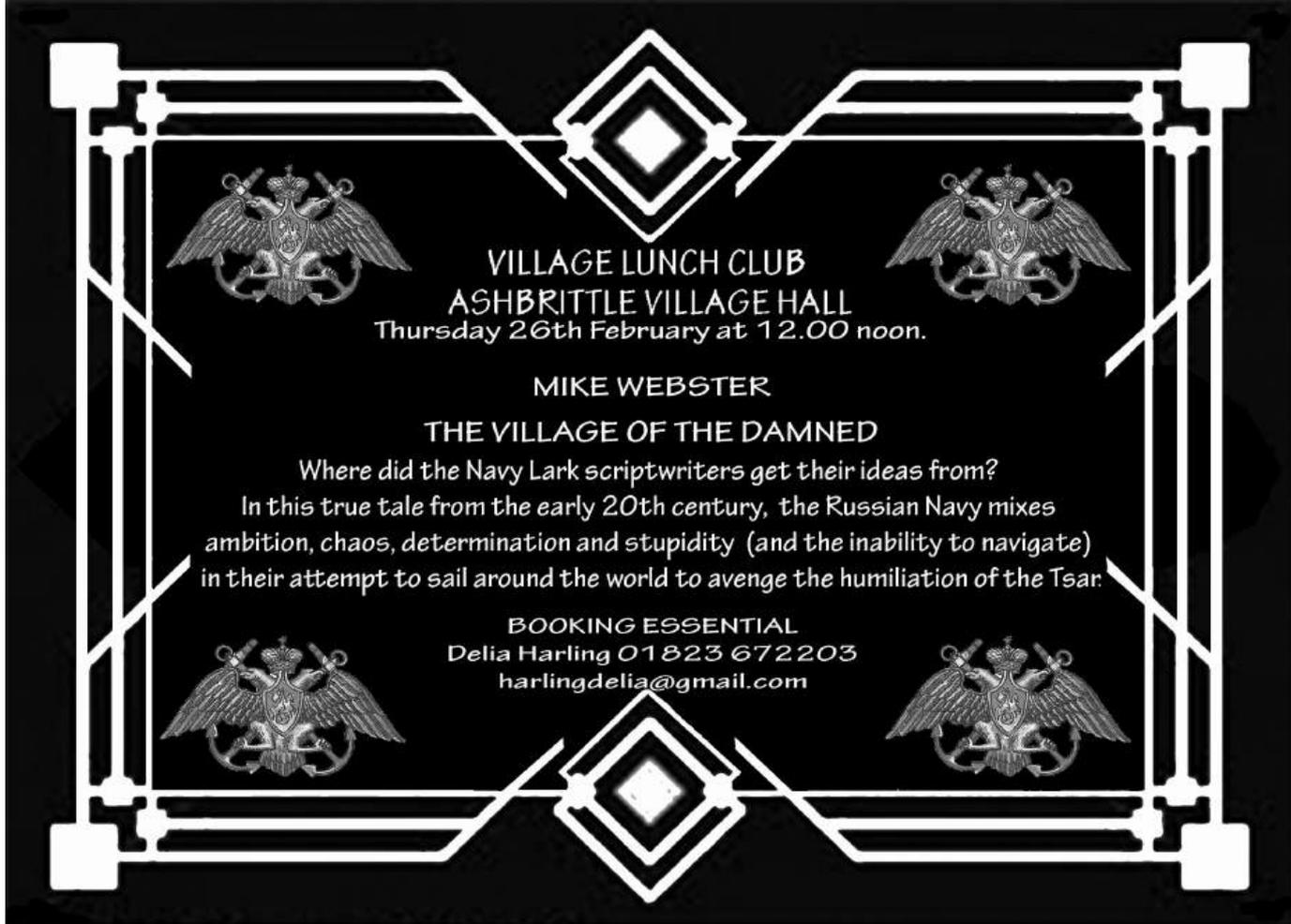
£5 per person

Bathealton Village Hall

TA4 2AN

Nibbles!

Prizes!



VILLAGE LUNCH CLUB  
ASHBRITTLE VILLAGE HALL  
Thursday 26th February at 12.00 noon.

MIKE WEBSTER  
THE VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

Where did the Navy Lark scriptwriters get their ideas from?  
In this true tale from the early 20th century, the Russian Navy mixes ambition, chaos, determination and stupidity (and the inability to navigate) in their attempt to sail around the world to avenge the humiliation of the Tsar.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL  
Delia Harling 01823 672203  
harlingdelia@gmail.com

## West Wood Update

It seems a long time since we completed planting the West Field Wood at the end of January last year.

In April we found lots of weeds growing up inside the tubes of the trees that were planted in February 2024, now in their second spring. In some cases there was grass reaching a metre or so in height, so we had plenty of work to do lifting the tubes and weeding around the saplings.

Rain was forecast in early August and after the parched spring and summer, we really hoped for a good old downpour. We did get some drops of rain but not much. Our main worry was for the 2,850 tender and vulnerable whips we planted earlier in the year, though we were also starting get anxious about last year's trees despite the head start they had had to establish themselves.

The good news was that a sample survey showed only a very low level of loss. Even better, we found an enormous amount of natural regeneration in the form of plentiful self-sown oaks, a few ash in addition to hazel and blackthorn spreading out from the hedgerows. So we protected as many as we could and these, very healthy-looking little trees, more than compensate for the losses we've experienced from those planted.

*Lawrence, Kiran, Adam and the rest of the team.*



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## GARDEN MAINTENANCE

LAWNS · HEDGES · BORDERS

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CONTACT ALEX ON:  
07854680335  
HELLO@AWGARS.CO.UK

AWGARS.CO.UK

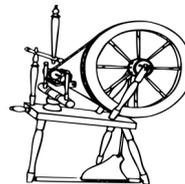
Community Radio for the  
10Parishes and Beyond



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on FM radio and the Internet.  
For the people by the people.**

Contact The Presenter Live :

Email : [studio@10radio.org](mailto:studio@10radio.org) Text : 07786202240  
Message the Presenter via [10radio.org](http://10radio.org)  
or via the 10Radio App



## Spinning and Woolcraft Group

A twice-monthly get-together at a member's house for textile crafting, chat and a cuppa

Perhaps you would like to learn to spin with us?  
Or bring along your knitting, crochet or other needlework project

**All welcome**

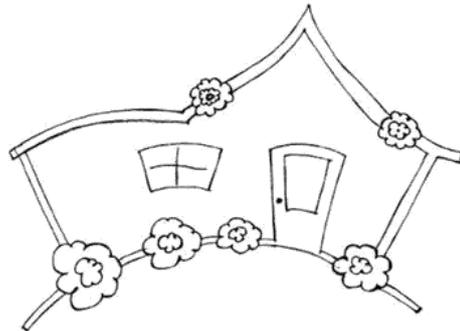
If you would like to join us, please contact me and I will add you to the mailing list.

### Next Sessions

Tuesdays: 3rd and 17th February  
3rd and 17th March  
at 2.30pm

Contact Pauline on 01823 672222 or  
email [pjw200355@gmail.com](mailto:pjw200355@gmail.com)

# Stawley Community Shop & Tea Room



## Opening hours

Week day opening 8.00am to 5.00pm except

**Wednesday 8.00am to 1.00pm**

Saturday 8.00am to 12.00pm

Sunday 9.00am to 11.00am

The Tea Room will close 30 minutes before shop closure

**The Post Office is here every Thursday 11.30am to 1.30pm**

**Contact us on 01823 674361 or [shop@stawleyshop.com](mailto:shop@stawleyshop.com)**

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## Volunteers

If you read the Stawley Community Shop section of the Parish News regularly you may have noticed that we haven't talked about volunteers for a while. We have had two new volunteers join us last Autumn, so the pressure has been reduced slightly.

However, our Sunday stalwarts Judy and Gerry Webb are leaving us. They were part of the small group of people who set up the volunteers some eight and a half years ago to support the shop tenants which also laid the groundwork for the community shop as it is today. **A big thank you** for all their work over the years.

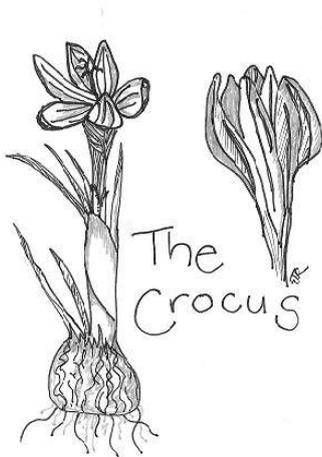
We are always in need of volunteers though, and if you have a few hours to give you will be made very welcome.

## In the Shop

We have some wonderful organic oranges in the shop at the moment, Blood oranges, very juicy and full of flavour and Seville oranges for making your own Marmalade.

**Look forward to seeing you soon at  
Stawley Community Shop and Tea Room**

## Tiny gems that appear as the snow retreats.



As the snow melts away from the alpine meadows of Switzerland, the purple, white and occasionally striped blooms of the Spring Crocus (*Crocus vernus*) push up through the melt-water running through stubbly, yellowed turf or rocky scree, often mixed with pale yellow dwarf *Narcissus* species and cobalt-blue Spring Gentians. This scene is replicated across many uplands of Europe, the Middle East and central Asia into western China, not only in upland tundra but also less elevated meadows, woodland edges and valleys.

The Genus *Crocus* has around one hundred species and is in the Iridaceae (Iris) family, growing from Corms producing upright, linear grass-like leaves. Few sights can match the drifts of tiny purple-blue flowers of naturalised *Crocus tommasinianus*, originally from Hungary and Bulgaria, popping up through the winter-blasted sward and the remnants of autumn leaves under deciduous trees. Also the shiny-satin butter yellow of *Crocus angustifolium* 'Cloth of Gold' from Ukraine and Armenia with its characteristic chocolate-maroon striping on the outside of the petals, open flat and glowing in the early spring sunshine.

The giant 'Dutch hybrids' Crocus, derived from the species *C. vernus* and *C. flavus* which start to flower about two weeks after most of the smaller species. These are much larger, more robust flowering plants coming in shades of purple, blue, white, yellow and striped and are well suited to pot-work and mass planting.

The vast number of garden hybrids available, a good number which have been in commerce for many years, were bred from these numerous species, collected by specialist plant collectors and nurseries. Many of the original species require very precise cultivation, often in alpine frames or glasshouses, needing protection from winter wet and requiring sharp drainage. The 'Garden' cultivars produced by selective breeding are much more robust, establishing and successfully naturalising in grassland and pictorial meadows.

Often, gardeners are put off from large scale, mass planting as so many corms are seemingly eaten by squirrels and mice and the flowers

annoyingly pecked by inquisitive birds! By following certain practices, losses can be reduced and once established, most species will come back, often seed themselves and multiply year after year. By lifting larger sections or squares of turf and placing the corms in random groups, as well as singly, before relaying the turf helps deter pests. If you use bulb planters, the corms are more likely to be found by curious beasts looking for previously buried nuts and acorns. Small 'lids' or 'chocks' of turf can be pulled off to reveal the prize below.

Also, planting under small mesh-chicken netting will certainly deter squirrels though laying the wire mesh in the ground won't appeal to all.

### Personal choices

Five of my favourite and most useful, robust Crocus for general garden use:

***Crocus tommasinianus***: a fantastic little early flowering species that multiplies by numerous corm-lets and by seed; tough and reliable, great for naturalising in grass and under trees. There are many selected forms of which 'Barr's purple', 'Ruby Giant' and 'Whitewell purple' are but a few.

***Crocus chrysantha* 'Cream Beauty'** : a lovely little crocus, early flowering and bulks up well. Starting pure white with a yellow centre and orange stigma, it matures to a rich cream and opens out, almost flat, in the early sunshine. All the '*chrysantha*' species are delightful including 'Blue Pearl' and 'Var. *fuscotinctus*'.

***Crocus vernus***: the Spring Crocus or in their hybrid forms, the 'Dutch giant' crocus. These are tough, reliable and versatile; maybe without the dainty charm of some of the smaller species but they really pack a punch when seen in large drifts, particularly when used in single colours or two shades mixed together. Recommended cultivars include 'Jeane d'Arc' (pure white) 'Remembrance' (violet-purple) and 'Vanguard' (silvery blue and the earliest to flower)

***Crocus sieberi* 'Bowles white'** : the Cretan or Snow Crocus from Greece and the Balkans. 'Bowles White' is pure white with an Orange centre which naturalizes well and likes sunny, well drained but protected site and bulks up happily.

***Crocus oliveri* ssp. *balansae* 'Orange Monarch'** : a relatively new hybrid and the only really Orange crocus! Incredibly striking orange flowers with dark vein-like striping on the outside of the petals... looks sensational in massed groups, lighting up the ground under trees like Birches, amongst Hellebores and blue *Scillas*.

John and Julie Ridgley



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## December Packed a Punch at Kittisford

Despite being a tiny hamlet, down some muddy and potholed lanes, the Kittisford community made itself known both locally and nationally in December. During the weekend of 6/7<sup>th</sup> St Nicholas church in Kittisford held its patronal festival and as a result of funding from the Choral Evensong Trust, we were able to host a young choir, Bute Voices, all music students at Cardiff University. The church was packed to capacity and they gave an outstanding performance of a cappella music which was recorded and broadcast by 10 Radio. The collection after the concert raised £261 for the charity Music in Schools.



*The delightful 'Bute Voices' in full song.*

The following day the choir joined members of the community for a choral workshop to learn some new music which had been written specially for the choral evensong later in the day. It was a lot to learn and two hours flew by, leaving us a little more confident about singing during the service. Although, I think we all agreed to keep quiet when we were unsure of the notes and just mime! The service was taken by Revd. Andy Barton and the church was filled to capacity. The children from Rockwell Green Primary School choir and their parents joined us and we had an amazing celebration for St Nicholas Day.

After the service we all enjoyed a community meal at Kittisford House barn. More details can be found on <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11395/> It was an incredible community event which was recognised by the Choral Evensong Trust who awarded Kittisford the accolade of **“Best Patronal Festival of the Year”** out of over eighty contenders.

### An amazing week of festivities

A few days later, the Kittisford community came together again to put on a fantastic Christmas meal in the barn at Kittisford House. It was a very special evening and we are grateful to the support

of Kittisford House and their team who worked so hard to support this event. Of course, it wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for all the hard work and cooking by everyone who contributed.

As a result of the evening, we raised £1000 to help support the work of Kittisford church and £326 from the big raffle which went to Medicins Sans Frontières.



*Barnaby Bruce wins the brace of pheasants donated by the Appley Shoot.*

Finally, to complete the year we had a very lively carol service on Christmas Eve. It was great to see so many visitors and locals from all over our area join us for this informal service of readings and carols; and of course, for the mulled cider and a good catch up before trying to get the children to bed before St Nicholas came down the chimney.

*Annie Musgrove, Churchwarden,  
St Nicholas, Kittisford*

### Rainfall Statistics (inches) for 2025

#### November

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1.54	8.15	6.97	4.80	6.34

#### December

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
5.04	5.71	7.20	2.40	7.24

Well, November and December truly spoiled it and we therefore cannot award 2025 the title of being the driest year since 2010. In the end-of-year rankings it only made fourth place since 2010. Still, by some margin it was the driest for the past five years.

#### Year on Year

2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
43.33	40.67	55.24	48.11	38.15

*Val Coots*



# Waterrow Village Hall

## Quiz Night



**Friday February the 6th 2026 6.30 pm**

**Waterrow Village Hall, Waterrow - TA4 2AX**

**Quiz Teams - maximum of 6**

The meal is Chilli, jacket potato and salad with vegetarian option available. Followed as always by the excellent homemade dessert selections. Meal will be served at 6.30 pm. Please bring your own drinks.



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**We look forward to seeing you there!**

## **Full Fibre broadband installation - an update.**

It was just twelve months ago to the day I met with Paul and Maurice as representatives of the parish to discuss our plans to bring Full Fibre broadband to the area following the Airband Fibre contract being cancelled across much of West Somerset. Since then, there have been plenty of ups and downs (across the undulating terrain) and it's been a personal pleasure to meet so many local residents and characters, as well as trying unsuccessfully to find the fastest route between Stawley and Bathealton when travelling by road.

It has been wonderful to welcome so many of you as customers on our Full Fibre network, and especially to connect the first properties in Appley prior to Christmas. The east side of the Kittisford road in Appley is now live with over 70% take-up!

The next month will see us revisiting Kittisford then Bathealton to connect another couple of properties each as we overcome individual hurdles and navigate parts of the jigsaw of land ownership and complex terrain challenges.

Our immediate focus then moves to Clayhanger in Devon, as we progress another part of the wider build, but which then allows us time to plan the next stages around Appley and Tracebridge as well as our routes towards Ashbrittle.

We can't always reach everyone as quickly as we would like, and we know some people signed up early but have yet to be connected. At this time of year in particular, we have to be respectful of landowners and avoid churning up fields too much. Some areas are simply too wet to progress at the moment, but you are not forgotten and we will be back! Sometimes we do get the sequencing wrong and apply for a voucher too soon; in those cases we can either extend the voucher or reapply to gain an additional twelve month period.

### **Looking further ahead**

While BDUK are still maintaining the end of the current Voucher Scheme will be April 2027, they have now found a few more beans down the back of their sofa and have asked suppliers, including ourselves, if there are areas we think we could build to (with vouchers) in the period Apr 2027 - Mar 2028. We are obviously keen to continue to expand outwards, particularly to areas around Greenham. Our intention is to submit these plans prior to the August 2026 deadline, so while no guarantees - watch this space!

We are planning to site a new Cabinet at Stawley Primary School, Appley and now have agreement with Somerset Council regarding this. All being well this will be in place ready for the

new school building opening in the coming months. A number of people have mentioned they thought the school already had fibre, which is sort of true but effectively false!

Way back in 2007 there was a Council/Police outsourcing deal called SouthWestONE, part of that contract was a programme called SOMERNET - a Wide Area Network connecting all Somerset schools via various technologies. The school at Appley was connected to the network via a private fibre circuit (if I recall correctly operating at 10Mbps). This circuit is still visible on the Openreach pole by the shop. While the contract was set to run for ten years the various parties terminated the contract early - around 2016. At that time it was judged that most schools in Somerset could connect using commercially available Superfast services such as FTTC. Other schools such as Stawley were given a choice, switch to an ADSL service (the only option) or take over the private fibre circuit at around £780 per month (forever). The fibre cable still remains in the school, but with nothing at either end! Yes, the school HAS fibre, but no, the school ISN'T connected to fibre. The final postscript to that story is the Openreach FTTP service built to the two properties in Tracebridge around four years ago, Openreach simply extended their existing fibre cable from outside the Shop to Tracebridge, but in true Openreach logic, ignored all the other properties in the hamlet!?!

We now have live service in Stawley, Bathealton, Kittisford, Appley and the focus across the next twelve months will be Appley Cross, Tracebridge, Ashbrittle and the intermediate areas between Stawley Ashbrittle and Clayhanger. For those who have registered in Ashbrittle and Tracebridge we'll be starting your voucher applications during February and you should look out for our emails.

Hopefully the rain moves on and the cold stays away, but regardless, you'll see us soon!

*Jim Weir, Technological*



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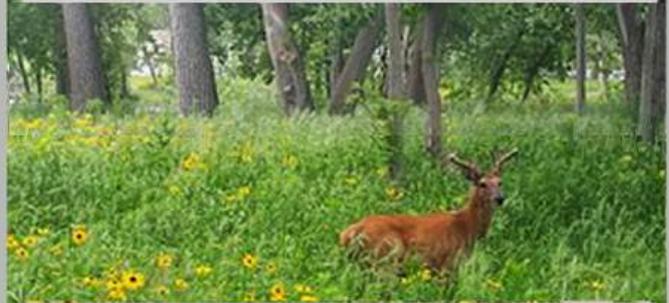
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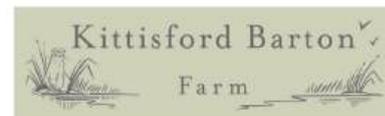
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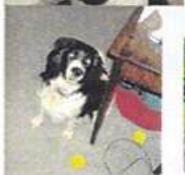


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## Defibrillators in our Community

### Would you know what to do if someone in your household had a Heart Attack/Cardiac Arrest?

Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of premature death. In cardiac arrest the heart's steady rhythm is often replaced by disorganised electrical activity called ventricular fibrillation (VF). The sooner VF is treated by an electrical shock (defibrillation), the greater the chance of the person's life being saved. Immediate action by members of the public can save many lives.

#### DIAL 999 FIRST

**But, there are four defibrillators within our community which are easy to use with verbal and visual instructions and available to anyone. They are permanently located at these places and can be found using the // What3words codes below.**

**Ashbrittle Village Hall**, on the outside wall.  
*blurts/flats/crouching*

**Bathealton Village Hall**, on the outside wall.  
*relatives.widgets.rolled*

**Kittisford, New House Farm**, on the wall opposite the church.  
*bonkers.regime.lyricist*

**Stawley Village Shop**, on the outside wall  
*messaging.servers.quaking*

Each one can be removed and taken to where it is needed. **These are all accessible 24 hours a day and no access codes are required.**

## Editorial Policy

Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are the responsibility of the individual author(s) and are not necessarily the views held by the editors of the Parish News.

## Local information

**Police Beat Team** PCSO Brianna Whelan  
Tel: 07761 405460 or email:  
*brianna.whelan@avonandsomerset.police.uk*

### Parish Councils

**Ashbrittle - Chairman** Charles Doble 01823 672365 or 672618  
email: *charles@greenandcarter.com*

**Bathealton - Chairman** Philip Broad 07584 657106  
email: *philip.broad1@outlook.com*

**Stawley - Chairman** Paul Musgrove 01823 672627  
email: *stawleypc@stash.org.uk*

### Somerset Councillors

Cllr Dave Mansell – 01984 623823 or email:  
*dave.mansell@somerset.gov.uk*

Cllr Gwil Wren – 01823 400657 or email:  
*gwil.wren@somerset.gov.uk*

### Community Halls

#### Appley Pavilion and Recreation Field

– to book, call 01823 672266 or email:-  
Lucy Williams *info@appleypavilion.co.uk* or book  
online at *https://appleypavilion.co.uk*

#### Ashbrittle Village Hall

– to book, ring Pat Gainey on 01823 672760  
or 07713 276656

#### Bathealton Village Hall

– to book, ring Tilly Willis on 07961 970743

### Local Groups

#### Stawley under Fives at the Appley Pavilion.

Becky Alder Pre-schools Manager - Swallows,  
Sampford Arundel 01823 672342 Mon/Tuesday.  
Stawley Under Fives 07707 416871 Weds/Thurs/Fri

## Parish News information

**The Editors and the next issue deadline date are on the back cover.** Please send items for publication to the Editors in good time to ensure publication. There is only a short time between the deadline and the printing of the Parish News and late items may not be included. Please send items for publication by email *ashparishnews@gmail.com* preferably as attachments in Microsoft 'Word' format.

**Advertising** Our rates are £2.00 per month for a small box, £4.00 for a quarter page, £8.00 for a half page and £16.00 for a whole page. Advertising for community events, charity and church fundraising events in our area are normally carried free of charge. Occasional one-off adverts from residents in our area seeking to sell or buy an article or seeking to acquire or offer a service are also carried free of charge. In all cases the style, layout and size allocated to an advert is at the discretion of the Editors.

**Editors:** Maurice Stanbury 01823 672216 and Avril Silk 01823 672131; e-mail address:  
*ashparishnews@gmail.com*

**Treasurer:** Andrew Millard, Barton Barn, Kittisford, Wellington TA21 0RZ

**Bank details:** Account Name: The Parish News, Sort Code: 30-98-45. Acc. no. 01828373

**Distribution:** Pat Sweet 01823 672380

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### **February**

2nd	12 noon - 2.00 pm	Pop-Up Café in Bathealton Village Hall
4th and 18th	10.00 - 12.30 pm	Books, Biscuits, Coffee and Cakes at Stawley Mill
7th	7.00 pm	Quiz night in Bathealton Village Hall
20th	7.30 pm	Quiz night in Appley Pavilion
21st	10.00 - 12 noon	Coffee, Cake and Chat in Ashbrittle Village Hall
26th	12 noon	Lunch Club in Ashbrittle Village Hall

### **March**

13th		Easter Bingo in the Pavilion
28th	7.30 pm	Film night in Waterrow Village Hall

### **April**

19th		St George's Day Breakfast
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### **June**

6th		Stawley Church Garden Party and Fete
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**Artists always Wanted!** Do you have a painting or photograph which could be used as a cover design for the Parish News? Seasonal and local images are particularly welcome. Please send hi-res images (300dpi) to Avril at [AvrilSilk@aol.com](mailto:AvrilSilk@aol.com) Portrait format is ideal if possible.



*It all seems a long time ago when carols were sung and the Christmas Tree lights were switched on at Ashbrittle - even though the ceremony had to be postponed for a week because of the atrocious weather.*

**Next Deadline Date: Friday 20th February 2026**

**Editors: Maurice and Avril**