

# King's Thorn & The Birches Newsletter

A Newsletter for the Villages of King's Thorn, Little Birch & Much Birch – February 2008

## *Little Birch Panto Snow White*

Tickets for Saturday night are now sold out, there are still a few available for the **FRIDAY** evening **1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY** performance and the **SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY** matinee performance.

## *Pancake Night –*

After the success of last year's event, we are holding another Pancake Night starting at 7.00pm. on **TUESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** in Little Birch Village Hall. Sweet and savoury fillings available – Entrance fee £2.00 to include 2 pancakes with a filling of your choice additional pancakes 50p each. Refreshments available and prize draw.

## *Lent Lunches*

These are in aid of Sightsavers and begin early this year. The first will be held in Little Birch Village Hall on **FRIDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** from 12.30pm to 2.00pm. There will be a variety of soups on offer with cheese and rolls to follow. Please support this very worthy cause and have a chat to friends in the area, some of whom you may not have seen for some while.

## *Whist Drive*

The next Whist Drive is on **TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** at Little Birch Village Hall – 7.30pm start entrance fee £1.50 – excellent prizes – refreshments available – new players welcome.

## *Pact Forum*

The Golden Valley and South Herefordshire PACT Forum is being held at M.B. Village Hall on **TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** at 7.00pm.

PACT stands for *Partners and Communities Together*, and the partners, in our case, are West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council.

The Local Policing Teams from Golden Valley and Hereford Rural South, and the Ward Councillors from the same areas will be there, and it is your chance to have your say and ask any questions of the partners. The issues you raise will be taken away by the relevant authority, and an update on progress will be brought to

## DIARY DATES FEBRUARY 2008

- 1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY – Snow White
- 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Pancake Night
- 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – M.B.P.C. Meeting – Schools Reorganisation
- 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Lent Lunches
- 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Little Birch Whist Drive
- 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Pact Forum
- 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Emergency Life Support Training
- 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Flicks in the Sticks
- 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Kilpeck Art Club – 1<sup>st</sup> day of Term
- 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – WI
- 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Memories Evening
- 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY – Community Safety Evening
- 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY – Village Market
- 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY – Easter Bingo

### ADVANCE NOTICES

- 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Evergreen Club AGM
- 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Flicks in the Sticks
- 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – Planning Issues
- 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – Evergreen Club Outing
- 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL – Little Birch Village Hall AGM

the next PACT Forum, which will be in three months time.

There have been a number of these Forums throughout Herefordshire previously, but the venue for this area has been in Peterchurch up until now. Due to pressure from various quarters, the venue has at last been changed to a venue on Hereford Rural South's area, so we hope you will support us and come along

## *Much Birch Community Hall*

We are holding an **EMERGENCY LIFE SUPPORT TRAINING COURSE** on **THURSDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** (St Valentine's Day) at 7.00pm. (for approximately two hours) The course, run by HeartStart, teaches members of the public some life support skills covering life threatening emergencies that can happen in a variety of situations. Members of the public are invited and the course is free. No booking necessary, just turn up on the night. Further details if needed from John Jones Tel: 01981 540980

## *Flicks in the Sticks*

*in association with Arts Alive*

This month's film is one for all the family – **RATATOUILLE "U"** at Much Birch Community Hall, on **SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**.

In this hilarious new animated adventure, a rat named Remy dreams of becoming a great chef despite the obvious problem of being a rat in a decidedly rodent-phobic profession. When fate places Remy in the city of Paris, he finds himself ideally situated beneath a restaurant made famous by his culinary hero, Auguste Gusteau. Remy forms an unlikely partnership with Linguini, the garbage boy, who inadvertently discovers Remy's amazing talents.

Doors open at 7.00pm and the film commences at 7.30pm. Tickets are £3.50 (£2.50 under 16s) and are available in advance or on the door. For further information or to book tickets please call Bryony Connolly on 01981 541274.

Coming up... 15<sup>th</sup> March – **BECOMING JANE**

## ***Kilpeck Art Club***

The Club members thank everyone who have supported and encouraged them during the past year and wish all readers a really happy 2008.

With the exception of Easter Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> March, the Club's Spring Term will be each **MONDAY** in Kilpeck Village Hall, starting **MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** until **MONDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL** inclusive from 2.00pm. – 4.00pm.

New members will be warmly welcomed and anyone who may be interested in joining the Club and would like more information - Please telephone: (01981) Michael 541055 or Sylvia 540123

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## ***WI***

Members of Much Birch WI who were able to turn out on 15<sup>th</sup> January, despite the atrocious weather, enjoyed an excellent evening travelling to Iceland, via Orkney and Shetland, with slides and commentary by John Pearl.

**TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** will be a Picture Quiz by Phyl King at Much Birch Community Hall from 7.30pm,

**New members are always welcome.**

Please contact Barbara Wilson on 01432 840559 or Kath Watts on 01981 540382 for further details.

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## ***Memories Evening***

Many of you will remember a couple of fascinating evenings a few years ago when a group of long-standing residents of the area got together under the able guidance of John Bryant, and talked about their memories of many aspects of village life.

We have now arranged what should be another most interesting evening hosted by John Bryant with another group of residents whom many of you will know. Do come along and hear about life in the Little Birch and beyond over the last 50 years. The evening will be on **WEDNESDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** at 7.30pm. in Little Birch Village Hall. Cost will be £200 to include tea/coffee and cakes and biscuits.

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## ***Community Safety Evening***

The rain must have been keeping the criminals inside for the past few days, as we have had hardly any crime reported to us, so there is something to be said for this inclement weather!

There was a good turnout at the Community Safety Evening at Little Birch village hall in January, and those that attended felt it had been a worthwhile event.

We will be holding another one on **THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY** at

Kilpeck Village Hall, but I'll remind you nearer the time.

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## ***Much Birch Village Market***

The February Village Market will be held in Much Birch Community Hall between 2.30pm and 4.30pm on **FRIDAY, 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY** and we look forward to all the usual food producers, along with some of the Crafts people, being in attendance, along with a Fair Trade stand. As soon as weather permits good sea fishing, there will be a Fishmonger coming along and I am in the process of finding a producer of Free Range Chicken and Game. This latter, as you may imagine after the Huw and Jamie programmes on the television, must be done with care.

As usual, Chris and Peter Dowsett together with Pauline Rogers, will be providing refreshments, and other homemade goodies. These are sold in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support.

**Please do support the Market. Producers will no longer come if it is not worth their while and it would be a great pity if the Market had to close.**

If you need further information about any of the producers or Crafts people, or if you have a suggestion regarding Producers, please contact Kath Watts on 01981 540382

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## ***Easter bingo***

Will be at Little Birch Village Hall on **THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY** eyes down at 8.00pm – excellent Easter prizes, refreshments available.

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## ***Evergreen Club***

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at Much Birch Community Hall on **TUESDAY, 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**, at 2.30pm. If anyone would like to come and join on the day, they will be most welcome. The annual membership fee is £5.

The first trip will be to the Cotswolds on **TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL**. We will pick up our Blue Badge guide, Mary Badger, for the afternoon tour, with tea at Burford. The fare will be £13, including tea (+ £2 for non-Members). More information at the AGM.

Your Committee is grateful for your continued support as we look forward to another year – see you at the AGM.

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## ***Planning Issues***

Are you thinking of applying for planning permission? Have you had problems previously understanding planning red tape? Peter Yates, Development Control Manager at Herefordshire Council is performing a talk on planning issues with a question and answer session.

Please come along on **WEDNESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH** at 7:30pm at Little Birch Village Hall and get your planning queries explained.

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## **HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS RE-ORGANISATION**

### ***M.B. CE Primary School***

You will have heard on the local news or, if you are a parent whose child attends Much Birch CE School, have received a letter from Mr Colin Howard, Headteacher, advising of the **proposals** involving the county's schools in September. Over 50 Primary Schools will be disrupted - indeed 11 of the 13 schools in the Golden Valley are affected. A large number of schools will be amalgamated and in consequence some will be closed. Full proposals can be seen on Herefordshire Council's website [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk) under 'School Review'.

As far as **Much Birch CE School** is concerned, it currently has 183 pupils on roll with a capacity of 196. The Council's proposals are that the capacity will be reduced to 140 over the next few years, this being achieved by limiting the intake into Reception each year to 20 instead of the current 28. The School will also no longer be designated to feed Kingstone High School and in 2009 will be required to feed Wyebridge Sports College. Parents will still have the right to choose which school their child will attend. The reduction of pupil numbers will mean that, at some time in the future, Much Birch will no longer have single age range classes and mixed age range classes will be re-established. Council officers will, in the next few weeks, visit schools to discuss the proposals. The consultation period will be complete by the end of March, after which a revised set of proposals will be taken to the Council's Cabinet in April for approval in July.

The current **Much Birch CE School** site has been part of our village since 1961 and indeed it is an important centre. It has seen many changes over time, but its educational record and achievements in every way have been excellent. Last year, they were **2nd in the county's STATS league tables** for academic success! It is well established in its current form, staff are very dedicated and indeed the school is highly regarded for its educational standards and sporting activities.

To disturb this excellent establishment at this stage is surely a retrograde step. These proposed changes will cause much disruption to pupils and staff, involving uncertainty over some years to come. The change in pupil numbers will mean finance reductions, staff restrictions and,

inevitably, reduction in the excellent educational standards for the children in our Parish. Much Birch Parish Council members wholeheartedly support the school and consider that it should not be disrupted in this way. To all residents, particularly those parents who have children at school, and indeed those who will have others starting in the future, please ensure your views are heard.

**The Parish Council will be discussing this at their meeting on THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY at 7.30pm. Please attend if you can.** If you wish further information, contact:

**Menna Swift**, Jabiru, Kings Thorn, HR2 8AL - 01981 541157 - [menna@swift.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:menna@swift.fsworld.co.uk)

You may prefer to contact one or more of the following directly to make your comments known:

**Paul Keetch** MP, Liberal Democrats, Widemarsh St., Hereford - 01432 341483 [info@paulkeetch.org.uk](mailto:info@paulkeetch.org.uk)

**Sarah Carr**, Prospective Candidate, Liberal Democrats, (address & tel. no. as above)

[info@sarahcarr.org.uk](mailto:info@sarahcarr.org.uk)

**Jesse Norman**, Prospective Candidate, Conservative Party - 01981 541085 - HCA, Grove Mill, Wormelow, HR2 8EG -

[jesse4hereford@gmail.com](mailto:jesse4hereford@gmail.com)

**Mr A Ross**, Chairman of Much Birch School Governors and/or

**Mr C Howard**, Headteacher at 01981 540254

**Councillor Richard Smith** (Ponttrilas ward) - Prospect Cottage, Gorsley, Ross-on-Wye HR9 7SH

01989 720669

[rsmith@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rsmith@herefordshire.gov.uk)

**Mr G Salmon**, c/o Herefordshire Council, Blackfriars, P O Box 185, Hereford HR4 9ZR

[schoolreviews@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreviews@herefordshire.gov.uk)

This is an extremely important issue affecting the whole area and the educational needs of our children. The Parish Council will do all in its power to support the school in its endeavours.

**PLEASE ADD YOUR WEIGHT TO ENSURE THAT OUR VIEWS ARE REGISTERED WITH THE COUNCIL.**

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### **Local News**

An early Christmas precious gift weighing 7lb. 1oz. arrived 2 days early on December 23rd, in the shape of baby ISABEL at Merrivale Farm. Congratulations are extended to proud parents, EMILY and BEN MASON and we send our good wishes for Isabel's future.

Congratulations and best wishes to MARTHA ELIZABETH, baby daughter of OWAIN and LIZ BEMAN of The Westlands, Much Birch who was christened on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> January at Much Birch Church supported by a large number of relatives and friends.

Our best wishes also go to LYDIA GARLICK and JOHN HUGHES following their wedding at Much Birch on 29<sup>th</sup> December and after all the inclement weather, the sun managed to shine on the happy couple and may it long continue to do so.

Later this month, DENNIS and JEAN MASON will celebrate their Diamond Wedding anniversary (They don't look old enough) and we hope they have many more years of happiness together.

Last month, MR. JACK LANGFORD of Church Farm celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. He remains very active and is still driving his car. Many Congratulations.

Following the departure of BRENDA and JOHN STARTIN, it is good to welcome back MARILYN (nee Kaye) with her husband, GLYN and daughter, AMBER, to Conifers, Little Birch. Marilyn was born and grew up just 80 yards or so down the lane from Conifers and we hope all the family will enjoy their new home for many, many years. A little bird tells me that there will be a new addition to the family in May!

It is also a pleasure to welcome to Hollybush Lane, COLINE and CHRISTOPHER GROVER who have come to live at 'Wendover' and we hope they will soon settle and make many new friends in the community.

A warm welcome too to SHAUN and JOANNE BENNETT and their sons JAKE (13) and ZACK (2). They moved into Hallow End House, the new house opposite Much Birch Church, at the end of October, but only got rid of the builders just before Christmas. The house has taken a year to build and is a unique and interesting design which will be featured on "Grand Designs", Channel 4 on Wednesday evening the 4th February. For this programme it will be located in Monmouthshire!

STEVE and LYNN TURNER of Underhill Farm, Hollybush Lane are now enjoying living in their new house having been in a static caravan on the site for many months, we wish them a happy future in their new home. Two weeks before Christmas DAVE and JULIE GOLDSMITH moved into Quantock House, Hollybush Lane. We welcome them and hope that they will be happy living in the village. They have moved from Ross Road, Hereford and have sons JOSEPH, a barrister living in

London and EDWARD, who trained at Sandhurst and is shortly being posted to Afghanistan.

Last month, in thanking many of the helpers who print, collate and distribute this Newsletter, Roger has pointed out that I omitted to mention MIKE LEE, who has given his services for the past year. Now that we are printing some 11 or 12 pages each month, his help has been invaluable.

Quite a few friends in the community have suffered with the Norovirus over the last few weeks and we hope all have now recovered. A really nasty bug !!

And several have been in hospital or received hospital treatment, including MRS. McCLOUD of Tump Lane (since before Christmas), JOHN (Carpetman) ROBERTS, FRANK SHORT and BRIAN KAYE. We wish them all well and hope for a speedy recovery for them all. GEOFF. JONES was admitted to the County Hospital at 3.00am. on New Year's Day, not suffering from excessive celebrations, as some might think, but happily is now back at Hampton Grange Nursing Home and it is good to report that he is able to sit out for a couple of hours each day. Unfortunately, IVOR CRUM was taken into the 'County' on Decembert 29<sup>th</sup> and, at the time of writing, is still there and remains very poorly. We send our best wishes to all who are suffering at this time and to their families and hope that they will soon be restored to full health.

Sadly, a number in or erstwhile from, this community have died recently. MRS. ETHEL BRICKNELL (nee Bowen) was brought up at Church Farm, Little Birch, together with her sisters, Lena and Peggy and brothers, Hugh, Ron and Clifford. She sang in the church choir with her brothers and sisters for many years and attended school at Much Birch and Ross High School. Her parents moved to Whitchurch when Ron and Hugh took over Church Farm and Ethel went with them. She then trained at Leicester in Child Nursing and stayed on to complete her training when war broke out in 1939. After the war and back at home, she had a milk delivery round with her brother, Clifford, and met up with Tom Bricknell who was working at Lowthers in Whitchurch. Their romance blossomed and they married and almost immediately emigrated to South Africa where they stayed for some 13 years during which time they had 3 sons, Geoff, Norman and Mark. They returned to England at the end of 1961, briefly staying with her sister Peggy and the Helme family at Wormelow, before buying a grocery and provisions store in Holme Lacy Road, Hereford. Although working long hours, Ethel made sure that her

growing boys were well looked after in a loving environment. Tom and Ethel retired from the shop in 1984 and they moved to live in Ross-on-Wye. Tom died some 11 years ago and, after about a year, Ethel moved into a flat in Guardian Court, Hereford. She was very happy there and was able to take up painting classes which were held in Much Birch Hall. She kept up with her car driving and was able to visit all of her sons and their families and returned to worship at Little Birch Church. She was able to continue in this way until a year or so ago when she gave up driving. Her illness started about 3 months ago and she spent one day in St. Michaels Hospice before she died. A service of Thanksgiving for her life was held at St. Swithins, Ganarew and her ashes were interred in the grave of her husband, Tom. She will be remembered as a hardworking, kind and loving parent and grandparent who delighted in her 3 sons and their families, to whom we send our sincere sympathies.

MR. GORDON THOMAS lived in Orcop for many years and spent his last few years in a bungalow in Tump Lane. He passed away suddenly on 28<sup>th</sup> December and his funeral took place at Orcop Baptist Chapel on the 18<sup>th</sup> January.

MR. WILLIAM (Paddy) ARMSTRONG lived with some of his family in Tump Lane for many years and then moved, with his wife, Flossie, to Belfast to be near his daughter. He died suddenly on 6<sup>th</sup> January at the age of 91 years. His daughter, Jennifer, now Nash, still lives locally and we send to all the family our sincere condolences.

The whole community, and in particular the village of Much Dewchurch, is very sad to hear of the death of PHILIP TURPIN at the age of 66 on 15<sup>th</sup> January. His service to the parish was legendary as a parish councillor, churchwarden and chairman of the sports and social club. He was a leader who always led from the front and organised many fundraising events for local clubs and the church. He also served as a district Councillor and recently on Ross Town Council.

Philip was brought up in Allensmore and moved to Much Dewchurch after his marriage to Jenny. They had 2 daughters, Joanne and Alison. Alison has Downs Syndrome but the family encouraged her to take part in all village activities and to enjoy a normal life as far as possible. Alison attended Barrs Court School and Widemarsh Workshop and Philip was actively engaged as chairman of the committee which ran these two organisations. He was also a governor of Kingstone High School.

In his 'spare time', he worked for Wiggins Special Metals for 27 years and then moved to be chief treasurer at Hereford Town Hall. In his younger days, he was a very keen sportsman and in his few years of retirement liked nothing more than walking in the Black Mountains. It was a severe blow to the whole family when he was diagnosed with a brain tumour some 15 months ago and it is merciful that he is now free from the pain and stress of his illness. He will be very sadly missed by his family and a very great number of friends from many walks of life and we send our very deepest sympathies to Jenny, Joanne and her family and to Alison.

At time of going to press, the death of STEVE HOUNSELL of Hollybush Lane has been announced after a long illness bravely borne. A tribute will be given next month. Meanwhile we send our sincere sympathies to wife Jenny and the family.

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### ***Our Woodlands***

Those of you who walk in either Athelstan's or Aconbury Woods cannot fail to have noticed much activity recently in both of them. For those of you who may wonder what's going on or those who haven't even realised there is a lot going on - a short summary.

There has been a lot of clear-felling of conifers in Athelstan's Wood over the earlier months of 2007, particularly alongside the stream and on the bank on the far side from Little Birch. Considering the Wood's history dating back to Saxon times, there was much concern that an ancient woodland should not be planted again with conifers after the decimation of the 1960s/70s. Thankfully, there has been some concession to modern thinking and about 40% of the felled area has been replanted with broadleaves - in groups on the bank and alongside the stream. The remainder will be Douglas Fir. However, the rides will be kept much more open so much pleasanter for walking and not nearly so depressing.

Apart from the Wye Woods Project, which has moved recently, there are two other major activities in Aconbury Wood. There has been some selective felling of oaks, forming 'glades' where, it is hoped, regeneration of oak seedlings will take place. It will be interesting to see what happens to the ground flora and insects in the meantime. Wintertime being the only feasible time to do the felling, there has been the inevitable churning up of the paths but, to the delight of those walking there, haulage of the timber has been carried out by horses, English cobs and Percherons, complete with bells - very

photogenic! Work has almost finished there for this year.

Also in progress is an archaeological survey of the area to be disturbed by Welsh Water laying a new water main. This will run just outside the south edge of the wood from the reservoir to Greenwood Cottage where it enters the wood and will travel down the old sunken lane to the far side of the wood from where it will travel over the fields to Ridge Hill. Archaeological study of the sunken lane so far seems to confirm that it is old but may replace one which ran just to the uphill side of it. The study will finish at the end of January and, hopefully, Border Archaeology will give a presentation to us along with Welsh Water in the not-too-distant future. You may have seen notices about the temporary closure of footpaths for the construction works. The sunken lane will be closed for about 3 months when they start work there.

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### ***Lottery Grant***

Unfortunately, Little Birch Village Hall were unsuccessful with their application to gain funding from the Big Lottery Grant towards the extensive hall refurbishment. Some local organisations were successful due to possibly having more imaginative schemes. Among these were Peterstow and Bridge Sollars who are proposing to create a village hall in their local Churches. The management committee will be seeking ideas and suggestions for ways forward following this disappointing news at the AGM in April.

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### ***Much Birch 100 Club Draw***

The December draw took place on Tuesday, 15th January in Much Birch Community Hall at 7.00pm.

The winners were:

1. No. 98 - Mr. Derek Wiseman, King's Thorn
2. No. 1 - Mr. & Mrs. D. Hall, Yoxall, Staffordshire

The next draw will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> February at 7.00pm in Much Birch Community Hall.

Our grateful thanks to all those people who are participating for 2008. There is still an opportunity for anyone who wishes to join us. Please contact me on tel: 01981 540980 or any Committee member.

John Jones, *Chairman/Promoter*

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### ***Admag Deliveries***

Earn some money and keep deliveries of the Hereford Journal going. Are you interested in helping deliver the Hereford Journal and Admag to houses in our area on Wednesday afternoon or early evening? Would you like to coordinate the delivery

and receive the papers on Wednesday early afternoon, with other people doing the deliveries? Payment is £5 per hour and similar for coordination. Deliveries may

have to stop unless we can find help now. Current coordinator is unable to continue. Call 01981 540335

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### **Neighbourhood Watch**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December number plates were stolen from a car parked at a garage at Allensmore.

Overnight 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> December persons attempted to take diesel from a lorry parked at St Weonards.

Overnight 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> December a Ford Transit van and a towing dolly were taken from a garage at Orcop.

A Green Range Rover **Y868AEB** was stolen between 6th and 7th January from outside an address in Much Birch - please keep a look out for this vehicle, it may have been abandoned locally.

A van was broken into at Llanwarne from a business premises, and a quantity of builders tools were taken. This happened overnight on 5th/6th January.

A caravan on a site in Holme Lacy was broken into between New Year's Eve and 5th January, but nothing appears to have been taken.

### **Livestock Security**

We have received several reports recently of sheep and cattle being deliberately let out of their fields in the Dinedor and Lower Bullingham areas.

The people responsible for this need to be caught, as obviously the consequences of their actions could be very serious – on one occasion several of the cattle were found, in very foggy conditions, grazing on the side of the A49. Please contact us if you have any information about this.

### **Results**

21yr old male issued with fixed penalty notice for driving whilst using hand held mobile phone. £60 and 3 points.

54yr old male from Little Birch issued with fixed penalty notice for driving whilst using hand held mobile phone. £60 and 3 points on licence.

20yr old male from Tump Lane arrested for drink drive. Released on police bail for further enquiries.

### **Older Drivers**

Older motorists bring a wealth of experience, confidence and tolerance to their driving, all of which contributes to making them safer on the road than other age groups. However, as you grow older, your ability to react to some situations gradually changes. Sight, hearing and judgement of speed may not be quite as sharp as they were when you were younger. Stiffening joints may make it difficult to turn your head to check blind spots or keep a check on vehicles either side of you. These changes occur so gradually that you may not realise they're

happening. Experienced drivers can easily slip into bad habits, and it is worth investing in the latest edition of the Highway Code, where you will find everything you need to know, including recent changes in the law.

**The law and the older driver** – the law requires a driver to renew his or her licence on reaching the age of 70 and every three years thereafter. All drivers, whatever their age, are required by law to notify the DVLA of the onset or worsening of a medical condition which may affect their ability to drive safely. These conditions include any heart condition, epilepsy, diabetes, glaucoma or other eye disease and difficulty in the use of limbs affecting a driver's ability to control a vehicle. If you have a medical condition, contact the Drivers Medical Group, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU (tel 0870 6000301). You will normally be sent a confidential medical form for describing your condition in greater detail and a medical report may be required from your consultant or GP. You should ask your doctor about the possible effects that any medication you are taking may have on your driving. Some over-the-counter medications, such as cough and cold medicines can also make you feel drowsy and you should avoid driving while taking them.

It is an offence to drive any vehicle if you cannot read a standard number plate in good daylight from 67 feet away (the length of a cricket pitch).

**Stopping Driving** - this is not an easy decision to make, particularly if you have relied on your vehicle most of your life. Currently there is no legal cut-off age, so it is your responsibility to decide when is the right time to stop driving. Don't wait for an accident to convince you it's time to stop. You may feel the time has come if your reactions are becoming noticeably slower, or you are finding traffic conditions increasingly stressful. If you are concerned, consult your GP or an approved driving instructor for advice. Friends and relatives can also give you their honest opinion. Giving up driving doesn't mean the end of your independence. The amount you spend on insurance, tax and maintaining and fuelling your car could pay for lots of taxi journeys. Don't forget your free bus pass too!

### **And on a lighter note....**

Two police officers were called to attend an elderly gentleman's address in a town centre to do observations on a street where there had been a spate of milk bottle snatches.

The officers arrived promptly at 7-30am. and after greeting the gentleman and checking that it was still in order for them to carry out their

observations from his home, they sat down by the kitchen window and waited.

After an hour and becoming anxious that there had been no movement in the street, the officers asked the gent what time the offences had taken place. With a deadpan expression the old chap replied, "Oh the milkman doesn't deliver today"!!

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### **Your Officers based @ Peterchurch**

#### **Local Police Officer**

**PC Andrew Bundy**

**Mobile No: 07855 385 844**

**Email: [andrew.bundy@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:andrew.bundy@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)**

#### **Community Support Officers**

**CSO 6173 Fiona Witcher**

**Mobile No: 07779 141232**

**Email: [fiona.witcher@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:fiona.witcher@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)**

**CSO 6993 Kevin Powell**

**Mobile No: 07779 141 232**

**Email:**

**[kevin.powell@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:kevin.powell@westmercia.pnn.police.uk)**

**Hereford Rural South Answer phone**

**01432 346756**

**Non-Emergency phone**

**08457 444 888**

**Emergency phone 999**

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### ***Your Local Representatives***

#### **East**

**JOHN BULBECK - 540178**

#### **Central**

**BOB PETERS - 540670**

#### **West**

**BETTY PHILPOTT - 540614**

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### ***Items/Copy***

Please may I have items for the **MARCH** issue via post to:

Mrs. S.E. Mathews, Folly Cottage, Little Birch, HR2 8BD; or left in the post box at 'Bramleys' or by email attachment in Word format to:

**[sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:sarah.mathews@tiscali.co.uk)** by

\* \* \* \* \*  
**15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**

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