



# **THE Birches**

## **Community Matters**

**NEWSLETTER FOR KINGSTHORN, MUCH BIRCH  
LITTLE BIRCH, ACONBURY & WORMELOW**

*First published 1977* **November 2020**

### **A note from the Editorial Team.**

We are, once again, most grateful for the contributions which have been sent to the Newsletter from the local Community. And to the people who research for this information. Not to mention those who walk around our villages to distribute it. All of them deserve a medal!

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, anyone who is willing to help us save resources by looking up the newsletter online on either Much Birch or Little Birch Parish websites, and/or would be happy to receive your Newsletter in PDF format please let the editor know;

[editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk).

Also Mike Leigh so you can be removed from the paper distribution list. With your full address, please.

[michael@seychelles91.plus.com](mailto:michael@seychelles91.plus.com)>

Best wishes  
Editor

### **Little Birch Church**

Update on the latest situation of Little Birch Church. We are now holding public worship again with our normal monthly rota



November 1<sup>st</sup> – Holy Communion at St. Mary's at 11.00am.

November 8<sup>th</sup> – Service of Remembrance at St. Mary's starting at 10.50am.

November 16<sup>th</sup> – Holy Communion at St. Mary's at 11.00am

Little Birch Church is fully COVID secure, so you may want to arrive a bit earlier due to the measures we have had to put in place.

Best regards,  
James Gould.



**Flicks in the Sticks Update**  
Unfortunately Flicks will not be returning just yet - we plan to return in the new year - watch this space for updates.  
If you have suggestions of films you would like us to screen in the future you can email them to [muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com](mailto:muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com)  
**Much Birch Flicks Team**

### **Remember**

November is a time of remembrance - we start with All Souls, a chance to remember those whom we have loved and lost, and then move on to Remembrance Sunday and the 11th November, when we have the chance to think about those who gave their lives in conflict over the last one hundred plus years.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of WW2 and the 80th of the Battle of Britain. The problem is that, with COVID-19 in the picture, all the chances that we would publically have to remember these events has been lost.

I think one of the ways we can reclaim this is with a picture in our window or on our gate, just like we did for the NHS at the start of the pandemic, perhaps we can do the same for remembrance. We could colour in pictures of poppies, laminate a picture of a wreath or similar and place them on our gates and hang them in our windows. It would be a good show that would enable everyone to take part, to remember and celebrate the sacrifices of those who gave their today for our tomorrows, as the phrase from the Remembrance Service has it.

And we must not forget. Forget the sacrifice or forget the emotional cost. For we do so at our peril and the risk we end up in another conflict.

Stay safe,

*Revd Mark Johnson  
Rector - Wormelow Hundred Benefice*

*Rural Dean - Ross and Archenfield Deanery  
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*Prebend de Bullinghope*



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## *Pilgrim Hotel*

### Covid Update

We are delighted to be able to host guests again, albeit in a "socially distanced" manner and with enhanced hygiene regulations in place, along with a robust "Track and Trace" capability. Room bookings can be made very quickly and easily by phone or email.

You will always get the best deal by booking direct, as we only offer food packages [B&B, DB&B and All Inclusive] via this website and in person. No agencies are able to offer these packages. Please check on our latest deals, available on our "Special Offers" page, including our newly introduced and very popular "Long Stay Discounts" for guests wishing to stay 4 nights or longer.

The Valley Restaurant is also now fully re-open and we have unveiled our latest addition, the Garden Room, which will provide cover on our decking area for guests whatever the British weather throws at us! All staff are now back from furlough and very keen to offer you our full range of menus, which can be found on our "Restaurant" page of this website.

We look forward to welcoming you to the stunning Wye Valley very soon.  
Steve, Deepak & Stef

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## Much Birch Surgery

During October we held three very successful weekend seasonal flu vaccination clinics and we thank patients for their cooperation when attending these. Our thanks also goes out to our staff who gave up their Saturdays as more staff were needed than previous years, to ensure safe measures were put in place at the clinics. Uptake for flu vaccinations has been much higher than usual and we are doing everything we can to meet demand.

Due to Coronavirus, the way your GP practice operates has changed. This is to help stop the spread of the virus and to keep people safe. If you need an appointment with your GP or other healthcare practitioner, this will take place either by telephone, video or face-to-face consultation. You will be offered a face-to-face appointment if the clinician feels that your care cannot be managed over the phone / via video.

Infection prevention and control is an absolute priority for us, so please understand that time taken to see patients face-to-face is longer, due to stringent infection control procedures and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

We at Much Birch Surgery always intend to treat you with dignity and respect. Please treat our staff in the same way. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

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## Much Birch Community Hall 100 Club

The result of the 100 club draw which took place on 11<sup>th</sup> October is as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> prize – No.28	2 <sup>nd</sup> prize – No.8
Miss E. Vaughan-Williams Little Birch	Mrs. C. Chichester Kivernoll

The next draw will take place on 13<sup>th</sup>  
November 2020

John Jones, Promoter



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## Each day is precious

Well, it is now seven months on since my last piece about my life and experience of nursing in a care home during this challenging time.

We are fortunate to have remained covid free. We continue testing everyone's temperature daily; both the residents and all those arriving at the home. All staff wear masks and maintain social distancing when possible. Obviously delivery of care requires closeness.

I like the mantra Hands, Face, Space. All staff are tested weekly and those residents who can tolerate the procedure have been tested.

The morale remains good in the home. Residents are stoical and staff resourceful. The activity team have organised activities to fill the days and bring residents together. The kitchen staff continue to produce wonderful food, a great comfort and pleasure to us all.

The management and owners are constantly online in zoom meetings keeping abreast with ever changing guidelines and the maintenance team are busy building two outdoor rooms for winter visits.

The home feels empty without the comings and goings of visitors. Visitors would not only visit their own loved ones but also bring life and energy to share with others. We miss our visitors.

***One day at a time.***

**Antje Preston**

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## Our Lockdown – The Axe & Cleaver



Similar to most we have faced challenges  
this year as Covid-19 forced us to close  
abruptly just a day before Mothers Day.

For a moment we were shocked into silence. What were we going to do? How were we going to serve our customers? What does the future hold? We however realised our best course of action would be to persevere in these trying times to find a way to give back to the community that has so tremendously supported us throughout these last 15 years. Within a week we had devised up our own takeaway service to help retain some normalcy for all our loyal customers. Needless to say we were astonished at the response and enjoyed welcoming faces (in masks) old and new. Once we knew we could properly reopen, we were so excited to get back to doing what we love, and doing it safely. During lockdown, we finally had enough time to do a little bit of redecorating and we had worked with chef to create some new exciting options for the menu. Beyond our menu, we've updated our Wednesday and Sunday lunch offering to include starters. We recently hosted a very popular Steak Night which is only one of the many ideas we have for our now ongoing event evenings. The most important thing is we are so happy to be back and are infinitely thankful for all the wonderful support, we would be nothing without our lovely customers.

Contact us at 01981 540 203 or on our Facebook page.

### In a shoe repair shop:

"We will heel you, We will save your sole, We will even dye for you."

### On a blinds and curtains van:

"Blind man driving."



### Sign over a Gynecologist's Office:

"Dr. Jones, at your cervix."

### In a Chiropodist's office:

"Time wounds all heels."

### At an opticians:

"If you don't see what you're looking for, You've come to the right place."

### On a Plumber's van:

"We repair what your husband fixed."

### On another Plumber's van:

"Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber."

### At a Tyre repair shop:

"Invite us to your next blow out."

### On an Electrician's van:

"Let us remove your shorts."

### In a Non-smoking Area:

"If we see smoke, we will assume you are on fire and will take appropriate action."

### On a Maternity Room door:

"Push. Push. Push."

### At a Car Dealers:

"The best way to get back on your feet - miss a car payment."

### Outside an exhaust garage:

"No appointment necessary. We hear you coming."

### In a Vet's waiting room:

"Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"

### At the Electricity Company:

"We would be delighted if you would pay your bill.  
You will be delighted if you don't."

### In a Restaurant window:

"Don't stand there and be hungry; come in and get fed up."

### Sign on the back of a Septic Tank Truck:

"Caution - This Truck is full of Political Promises."





## THE MASONS AT MERRIVALE

It's over 6 months since I've written for the newsletter and what a 6 months it has been. While the world outside has been grappling with COVID, work life on the farm has continued more or less as usual.

The cows went out to graze on March 25<sup>th</sup> and a memorable spring followed. It was only when the cows had been out grazing for a few weeks we began to realise that all was not quite as it should be. This spring the grass did not produce the 'spring flush' as normal. This not only meant grazing was tight for the cows but also that our first cut of silage in May produced half of what it should. Never mind – we thought – a good dose of slurry to fertilise it plus rain should produce a better 2<sup>nd</sup> cut. Instead, of course, we had no rain and so the 2<sup>nd</sup> cut again produced half of what it normally would.

We have taken four cuts of grass silage and one of wholecrop this year, which has produced only half of the forage needed for the winter. We bought hay through the summer to feed the cattle who had nothing to graze. We are still buying hay, silage and we hope fodder beet to fill the big gap in stocks.

We did sell 20 in-calf heifers in May, reducing the number of mouths to feed. We could do this as we were free of TB. We were hoping to sell more later in the year but failed our TB test in July so that was that.

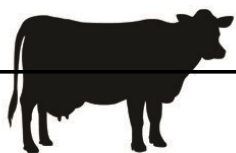
Arable farmers are also struggling as a result of the weather. The constant rain from Sept '19 to March '20 had leached all of the nutrients out of the soil, thus producing far less of a crop. Most arable farmers failed to drill the majority of their winter crops and the subsequent spring crops struggled due to the summer drought. This has led to a shortage of straw for bedding with some crops producing 2/3 less than normal. All such cheery stuff!

The cows are still out grazing during the day and in at night as there is now plenty of grass for them to eat. Ground conditions will dictate how long they stay out for. This weekend we hope to cut some grass for silage bales. Very abnormal for the time of year but with forage so short we have to give it a try.

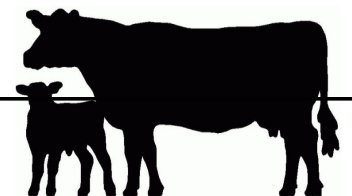
There is progress with the milk vending machine which we hope to have up and running by February. Red tape & paperwork has put back the start date as we are trying to secure grant funding towards it, but we are all looking forward to this new project. Bob & I have been growing vegetables again this year and it has gone pretty well. They will be on offer alongside the milk next year.

This whole article seems one long tale of woe but I know we are so fortunate compared to other people. We are so grateful to live in such a wonderful county. Bad years are just part of the history of farming so we hope next year will be better. If we can pass our next 2 TB tests then we will be able to sell some more heifers which will lighten the burden. My thoughts are with everyone out there not so lucky as ourselves. I hope we have an easy winter though normal is not going to return for some time.

*Best wishes. Sue Mason*



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## Mind your Language!

The author is not a grumpy old man having a rant. He is a mild mannered people watcher/listener. Over a number of years I have noted phrases and words being introduced to our everyday language, some of which have left me scratching my balding head, wondering what they mean, some are classed as 'business speak' or gobbledegook, whilst other utterances are overused, or somewhat irritating, or have a totally different meaning in the dictionary (a book - not the Americanized spell check). I thought it might be amusing to bring a number of these together. I am sure it is not a complete list as often, when talking to people (not texting or using other social media), they too have heard obscure terms that could be included here.

First we will have a look at 'business-speak' and gobbledegook. The first phrase I noticed, some 20 odd years ago was "run that one by me again" when you did not understand what you had just been told. When you did finally understand you confirm by saying "I know where you are coming from". "In the loop", "brain storming", "singing from the same hymn sheet", "game plan", "tool box" and "in the mix" have all put in regular appearances over the years. "Game over" presumably means the job is completed, whilst the Hereford FC Head Coach coined the phrase "the players are 'buying into' what we want them to do". On the football theme, a once regularly used term was that a team "set their stall out". Recently in a television programme there was a topic about apprenticeships, and retraining – this was referred to as "up-skilling". All sorts of things can now be "toxic" and many things are heard to be "going viral" on social media. Whatever is "innovative capacity", "stove piping", and "connectorised"? "Community engagement" just means getting people involved and what kind of dialogue is there other than "meaningful dialogue".

Ten years ago I removed an article from a daily paper, the headline of which read 'A plain man's guide to the worst council gobbledegook'. Now that I am writing this, I am glad I kept it. The essence of this article reported that the Local Government Association had - quote 'produced a list of 200 council-speak phrases it wants members to ban so that folk can understand what councillors and officers are gibbering on about'. Below I have reproduced a section of the article which highlights almost sixty of the 200.



The ban was welcomed by Plain English Campaign and the Campaign Against Political Correctness. I now move on to the overused words and phrases.

"Clearly" "y'know", "at this moment in time" I want to tell you "basically" about "stuff" "like", "going forward" so that we "literally" "learn lessons" "at the end of the day" and, "to be honest" do all of you ladies out there like being called "guys" when you are in shops, restaurants etc. – "know what I mean"? "absolutely".

No one seems to have a problem, difficulty or query anymore as they have all become "issues". We cannot sit down and have a friendly discussion now we seem to have to "engage" with one another and have a "debate". Many activities have now become "journeys". We now have to be "mindful". Why do so many things have to be "cool"? – if it's cool you close the door or window or put a woolly on, for goodness sake.

Why oh why, when asked a question, does a plethora of people from all walks of life have to prefix their answer with the word "SO".

Is it me, or is the "le'er" (letter) "T" disappearing from the English language? I hear "hospi'al", "of'en", "comple'ed", "wha'ever", "wri'in" (the 'g' has gone as well), "complica'ed", "alterna'ive" – I won't bore you with any more "know wha' I mean". The letter 'G' is "gettin" – a bit lost as well, either "disappearin'" or "bein'" replaced by 'K'. Anything can become "anythin'" or "anythink", and there are many more as I am sure you are aware.

Thank goodness we are beginning to lose the American "Have a nice day" at many outlets, as it seems this is being replaced by "Enjoy the rest of your day"!



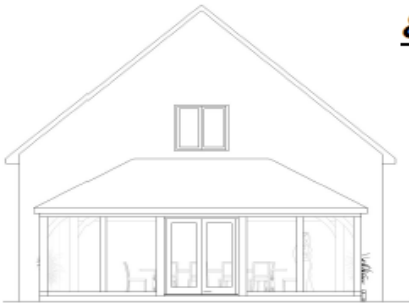


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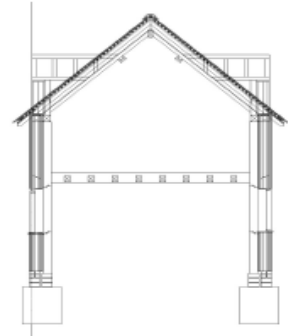
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### **Community Café @ Much Birch Community Hall**

What a relief it is that the lock-down is easing, people are able to come out of shielding, and we can gradually move into a "new normal". Our volunteers, who have been helping people with shopping and collecting medicines, are all returning to work, and so from September we will not be offering the same service. But be assured, that if the worst happens, and we have to go into lock-down again, we will immediately be up and running!

We must thank all those volunteers who have been so willing to help over the last six months, and we know there have been new friendships made through the experience.

We have been discussing whether the time is right to think about starting up the Community Café again – we have so missed seeing you all for bacon rolls, board games and Linda's famous waffles - but we have decided that it is too early yet. We would have to restrict the numbers so much, and the thought of sending people away is too painful to contemplate. So we are pinning our hopes on the new year as the time when we might be able to gather again, young and old, to enjoy each other's company – there will be a lot of news to catch up on!



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# Little Birch Parish Council

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**Cllr Janet Gwinnett** Vice Chair

**Cllr Kate Dillon**

**Cllr Michael Davies**

**Cllr Kate Robbins**

**Angela Middleton** Volunteer Footpath Officer

**Sophie Glover** Clerk 01432 617306

*For updates and notifications of future meetings  
please check out the website –*

[www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org).

lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Please send copy for the December Newsletter to  
[editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk) or written  
contributions to Liz Hall at Walmere, Wrigglebrook,  
Kingsthorpe HR2 8AW.  
—by 18th November please.

## Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



Find the latest news, events and business listings all in one  
place.

You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a  
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### **Rural Concierge - English Riviera Coach Holiday**

Our first holiday of 2020 took place on Sunday 4th October for 5 days.

We stayed right on the seafront at the Redcliffe Hotel in Paignton. On our first night a local historian came to talk to us about the history of the Bay as well as the hotel with its Indian influence.

We visited Agatha Christie's house by Steam Train and Ferry, had a guided Coach tour around Dartmoor National Park, a visit to Torre Abbey with a talk on Agatha Christie's poisonous plants and everyone survived, thankfully!

On our last day we visited Francis Fulford at the Great Fulford Estate. His family have owned the estate for over 800 years and he was such a character – Just what we needed before heading home.

Even though we had to wear face masks and be hand sanitised to an inch of our lives, all of us were just so relieved to get away and feel some sort of normality again.

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### ***My visit to Bath***

*Over the past six years, I have enjoyed many an outing organised by Rural Concierge. A great attraction is that I can leave my car at home and walk down Warren Lane to join the coach at the Kingsthorpe bus stop, most recently on October 1st (the coach also picks up at the Much Birch church bus stop). Donning masks and safe distancing we were away to Bath for the day. Five hours to wander around as we please (group guided tours being a No-No due to Covid). Autumn sunshine, pavement cafes (enjoyed a coffee overlooking the weir on the River Avon), map in hand following the NT 'Walk to the View'. I stopped at the Holburne Museum to take a quick look at Grayson Perry's 'Pre-Therapy Years' exhibition. Was particularly good, as it was two hours later before continuing through Sydney Gardens, along the tow path of the Kennet and Avon canal on my return to the city centre. Back in Kingsthorpe for 6.15pm, so no need for the torch I had been carrying around all day!*

*David Fowler*

*The Stable Cottage*

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## PILATES

with Alison Allan

Alison Allan is back!

I have been Zooming away in the summer but am now back at Little Dewchurch

Social distancing is a must and we can do this with 10 people per class – which means I can keep my eye on everyone!

Rollers, soft balls and circles makes for a varied and fun workout whatever our ability.

After our Lockdown Blues we all need to get moving with Pilates for our physical well-being and our mental health - and while we do this, we will improve our posture, balance, strength and general fitness.

My clients are aged between 18 and 95 so there is no excuse! Just give me a call!

Tel: 01432 840491 Mob: 07947 011707

Email: [Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com](mailto:Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com)

Or on Facebook



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13<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**PARISH MEETING** - at the Parish Council Meeting held on the Zoom Platform, during the Covid 19 Virus pandemic, on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from 7.30 pm.

The Parish Council discussed a reserved matters application for Tump Lane. They also heard from the Ward Councillor regarding matters at Herefordshire Council and in particular repairs to the collapsed road at Fownhope.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 from 7.30pm** - on the Zoom Platform. All are welcome to attend.

Dates for further 2020 Parish Council Meetings are: 3 December 2020.

Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend on Zoom and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

A seasonal reminder about bonfire party/firework safety, ten tips to help you enjoy your celebrations (source: RoSPA, safer fireworks)

Plan your firework display to make it safe and enjoyable.  
Keep fireworks in a closed box and use them one at a time.  
Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch if necessary.  
Light the firework at arm's length with a taper and stand back.  
Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks.  
Never return to a firework once it has been lit.  
Don't put fireworks in pockets and never throw them.  
Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators.  
Never use paraffin or petrol on a bonfire.  
Make sure that the fire is out and surroundings are made safe before leaving.

A reminder that:-

**Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-**

- Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, e mail [thecooks@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecooks@wyenet.co.uk) Tel. 01981 540703
- Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair) The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, e mail [turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com](mailto:turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com) and Tel. 01981 540090
- Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX, e mail [a.crum@btinternet.com](mailto:a.crum@btinternet.com) Tel. 01981 540002
- Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8AX [roisinburge@hotmail.com](mailto:roisinburge@hotmail.com) Tel. 01981 540724
- Cllr David Baldwin The Granary, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HS [baldwin79@btinternet.com](mailto:baldwin79@btinternet.com) Tel. 01981 541198
- Cllr Veronica Thomas 4, Queens Close, Wormelow, Hereford, HR2 8FD Tel. 01981 540646 (no e mail)

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. [www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk).

You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>

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## Jobs to do in the garden during November

Plant Tulips. Rake up leaves off the lawn or pick them up with the mower. Compost small quantities but if you have a large volume, put them in an empty compost bag, seal it, pierce a few holes in it and set aside for 18 months when you should have some good leaf mould.

Bring pots containing Agapanthus, Camellia, Begonias, Cannas, Dahlias into a shed or greenhouse for the winter.

Prune grapevines after leaf fall but in any case before the end of December.

Earth up Carrots and Beetroot, similar to Potatoes, ridges only need to be high enough to ensure roots are well covered.

Prune Apple and Pear trees between now and March.

Broad Beans can still be sown (Aquadulce variety). Be prepared to protect the young plants with cloches if there is a period of frost or snow.

Check stored fruit have no blemishes that might cause rotting. Remove the affected ones and throw out for the birds.

Take care not to over water plants in pots/tubs that you are overwintering.

**Derek Scrivens**

