


# The Birches



**MARCH**  
**2026**

Community Matters Newsletter – March Edition

Kingsthorne, Much Birch, Little Birch, Aconbury & Wormelow

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## DAWN CHORUS WALK

### SUNDAY 5 APRIL

Meet: 5.30am at Merrivale Farm (HR2 8BA)

Walk starts: 5.45am

Distance: Around 3 miles

Dogs: Not permitted

Enjoy an early-morning walk with plenty of pauses to appreciate the birdsong at its very best.

When we return, the Mason family will be serving:

- Bacon butties
- Toast with marmalade
- Tea or coffee

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU'D LIKE TO COME SO WE CAN PLAN NUMBERS:**

**CHRIS FOWLER - 07931 292998**  
(Text preferred)



*Easter Bingo 27/03 7.30pm - See Page 7*



**PUSS IN BOOTS**

*Panto Report on page 12*

## Much Birch Parish Council Details of meeting held on 5/2/26

The parish council held their February ordinary Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 5th February 2026. The parish council discussed two planning consultations at the meeting. The first was application number 260105 for 3 Pilgrim Park, Much Birch HR2 8FR. This was for the construction of a garage and replacement of a window with full height glazing. The parish council were in support of the proposals in 260105 but made a comment to point out that the site boundary line had not been depicted accurately on the site plan. The second application was number 260081 and this was for the Walled Garden Adjacent Stable Cottage, Much Birch, HR2 8HT. This was for a variation of condition 2 of planning application 214165, proposing changes to the permitted layout and the aesthetic of the dwelling proposed. The parish council resolved that they had no objections to the variations in application 260081.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the Much Birch Parish Council will be held on Thursday 5th March 2026 from 7.30pm at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Details of forthcoming meetings are in the column to the right.

## Much Birch Parish Council

### Councillors

**Cllr Alison Cook** (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, email: [thecooks@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecooks@wyenet.co.uk) Tel. 01981 540703  
**Cllr Roisin Burge** The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX email: [roisinburge@hotmail.com](mailto:roisinburge@hotmail.com) Tel. 01981 540724  
**Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey** 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT email: [chris@pickering-grey.uk](mailto:chris@pickering-grey.uk) Tel. 07712 813218  
**Cllr Michael Agyeman** Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AU email: [magyeman92@gmail.com](mailto:magyeman92@gmail.com) Tel. 01981 540840  
**Cllr David Irwin** email: [David.Irwin13@btinternet.com](mailto:David.Irwin13@btinternet.com) Tel. 07766 135068  
**Cllr Steve Turner** The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, Tel. 07768 206296 email: [turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com](mailto:turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com)

**Parish Council Clerk:** Mrs Alison Wright email: [muchbirchclerk@gmail.com](mailto:muchbirchclerk@gmail.com)

### **Much Birch Footpath Officer:**

email: [MBfootpaths@btinternet.com](mailto:MBfootpaths@btinternet.com) Tel. 07766 135068

### Dates for the forthcoming meetings:

05/03/26, 02/04/26, 07/05/26, 04/06/26, 02/07/26, 03/09/26, 01/10/26, 05/11/26, 03/12/26

All are in Much Birch Community Hall from 7.30pm.

Full minutes of the meetings can be found on the Parish Council website: [www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk)  
You can also find us on X (formerly known as Twitter) at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>

*Join us at the*

## Community Café @ Much Birch Community Hall

**Saturday 14 March 2026**

**10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

**11 April**

**9 May**

**13 June**

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or [socialfabric@hotmail.com](mailto:socialfabric@hotmail.com)



*A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.*

## The Birches Community Quiz



Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March  
7.30pm



Much Birch Community Hall

Teams of four are invited to take part, the cost of entry will be £12 per team to include refreshments. If you want to bring your own drinks, glasses will be provided. (Proceeds to local charities).

Please get in touch with Carole if you are interested in taking part either by email at [carole.chichester@btinternet.com](mailto:carole.chichester@btinternet.com) or by telephone 01981 540095 or 07503 581724

## Jobs for the garden in March

The start of this year has been decidedly soggy and dull with very little sunshine. A welcome sight to brighten things up has been the incredible display of snowdrops in the garden and here and there on the roadsides. Their flowers seem bigger than usual this year and they have bloomed earlier as well. In mid February, daffodils are also flowering. With lawns, borders and veg. patches waterlogged it will be a while before work can start so be patient.

- Start mowing lawns with the blades high.
- Sow hardy annuals outdoors.
- Gladiolus can be planted in the border - plant bulbs deep.
- Begonias can be started in trays of compost.
- Pot up dahlia tubers and canna rhizomes - protect from cold and water sparingly.
- Lift and divide large clumps of snowdrops when foliage starts to turn yellow.
- Plant out potted up strawberry runners from previous year.
- Plant shallots mid March and onion sets late March.
- Plant early potatoes at the end of March.
- Remove bubble wrap from greenhouse ( if fitted) and clean glass.
- Sow tomatoes in a propagator or on windowsill.
- Sow parsnips outside if the soil is dry enough and warm enough.
- Sow onions, leeks, cabbage, cauliflower, calabrese, radish and beetroot in seed trays or cell trays in the greenhouse.
- This month is the start of the breeding for birds particularly blackbirds and robins. Leave hedges alone for a few months and don't clear up thatch or other materials that can be used for nest building.
- Remove winter debris from ponds.
- Mulch bare soil.
- If frog or toad spawn appears in the pond, leave rocks, logs to form hiding places for mating adults.

## Derek Scrivens



## Gardening Club News



The gardening club hosted a fantastic quiz night on 28<sup>th</sup> January, bringing together 10 teams for some friendly competition. The questions covered a wide array of topics, ensuring a fun-filled evening that was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance. Thanks to all involved in organising the event, the catering and to the participants!

### Coming up: AGM – March 25th 2026

Gardening club is usually held on the last Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm at Little Birch Village Hall, with a few date changes for special events and trips. New members and visitors are always welcome.

Contact email: [ktlbgardeningclub@gmail.com](mailto:ktlbgardeningclub@gmail.com)



### FREE DEFIBRILLATOR TRAINING SESSION

Training session on the use of the defibrillator and its maintenance and resuscitation and care of the patient, given by trainers from Herefordshire Heartstart.



**Saturday 18 April 2026**

**MUCH BIRCH COMMUNITY HALL**

**10:30 am - 12.30 pm**

Free session – open to all of the community  
Please register with Sylvia Jones 01981 540980  
email [mbchsec@gmail.com](mailto:mbchsec@gmail.com) by 17<sup>th</sup> March

**THE JOLLY GARDENER**  
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**Kyle - 07850921889  
[thejollygardener2502@gmail.com](mailto:thejollygardener2502@gmail.com)**



**Borderlines Film Festival**



**Thursday 12 March - THE CHORAL 12A**

1916. As war rages on the Western Front, the Ramsden Choral Society has lost most of its men to the army. Their ambitious committee decides on a recruitment drive. They need a new chorus master, and the prime candidate is driven, uncompromising Dr. Henry Guthrie – recently returned from a career in Germany. As conscription papers start to arrive, the whole community discovers that the best response to the chaos that is laying waste to their lives is to make music together.

**Saturday 14 March - THE GOLDEN SPURTLE PG**

Each year the sleepy highland village of Carrbridge awakens with excitement as competitors vie for the honour of winning The Golden Spurtle in the World Porridge Making Championships. Against the backdrop of the breathtaking Scottish Highlands, this captivating documentary captures the humanity of village life with irrepressible humour.

**Borderlines Tickets £5.50 (£4.50 under 18s)**

*Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm*

Tickets available in advance from **The Courtyard Box Office** and all Borderlines info can be found at [borderlinesfilmfestival.co.uk](http://borderlinesfilmfestival.co.uk)

*Remaining tickets available on the door (cash or card payments accepted)*

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

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## Short Mat Bowls at Little Dewchurch Village Hall

7pm to 9pm Every Tuesday except week 3 when on a Thursday. First 3 weeks free trial, then £5 a session, includes tea and biscuits.

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

Call our Support Line:  
**0808 802 0070**  
Or text:  
**07786 203 130**

## Local Information

### Little Birch Parish Councilors

- Cllr Steve Coles
- Cllr Tom Palfrey
- Cllr Chris Atkinson
- Cllr Nick Deacon
- Cllr Kate Dillon

Polly Smith (Parish Council Clerk)

✉ [lbpcclerk@gmail.com](mailto:lbpcclerk@gmail.com)

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

### Footpath Officers



For any queries about footpaths contact:

### Little Birch & Aconbury

Chris Fowler

☎ 07931 292998

Email ✉ [chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk)

### Much Birch and Kingsthorpe:

David Irwin

☎ 07766 135068

Email ✉ [david.irwin13@btinternet.com](mailto:david.irwin13@btinternet.com)

### Photography Group



We're a friendly local group with a common interest in photography.

Come and join us. Next meeting on Feb 28  
10am-12pm at Fayreview Kingsthorpe

Contact Sally Nichol

07803 032928 or 01981 540001

[sally.nichol@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.nichol@btinternet.com)

### Table Tennis



Come and join us to play  
on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month!  
Little Birch Village Hall 7pm to 9pm  
Only £3 which includes refreshments!

Contact Sally Nichol  
07803 032928 or 01981 540001  
[sally.nichol@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.nichol@btinternet.com)

### Little Birch Village Hall Committee

- Lesley Chapman (Chair)
- John Ellis-Braithwaite (Treasurer)
- Cathy Ellis-Braithwaite (Secretary)
- Linda Maden (Hall bookings)
- Kate Dillon (Parish Council Rep)
- Geoff Nichol (Maintenance)
- Iris Lloyd (Gardening Club)
- Jane Bolam (Drama group)
- Sam Davies (Committee member)
- Tonya Barnett (Drama Group)

The Birches Newsletter Editor:

John Ellis-Braithwaite

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

### Local Social Media Groups

Find out more in these groups:



Facebook

Much Birch Parish Group

Little Birch Parish Group

King's Thorn & Little Birch Gardening Club



Instagram

King's Thorn Little Birch Gardening Club

### Art and Craft Space



Have an art and craft afternoon away from the hustle  
and bustle of life every Thursday  
at Little Birch Village Hall!

2pm to 4pm

Bring your WIP or PhD in whatever art and craft you  
are working on – or start something new!

Only £3 which includes refreshments!

Contact Sally Nichol

07803 032928 or 01981 540001

[sally.nichol@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.nichol@btinternet.com)

## Church Services in March



### **Sunday 1st March** – 2nd Sunday of Lent

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion

### **Sunday 8th March** – 3rd Sunday of Lent

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Morning Worship

### **Sunday 15th March** – Mothering Sunday/4th

Sunday of Lent

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Morning Worship

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion in

Traditional Language

### **Sunday 22nd March** – 5th Sunday of Lent

9.15 a.m. at Llandinabo – Holy Communion in

Traditional Language

### **Sunday 29th March** – Palm Sunday

10.00 a.m. at Pencoyd Church – Blessing of Palm  
and walk to Llanwarne

11.00 a.m. at Llanwarne Church – Holy Communion

for Palm Sunday with blessing of Palms

### **Monday 30th** – Monday in Holy Week

7.00 p.m. at Llandinabo – Compline

### **Tuesday 31st** – Tuesday in Holy Week

7.00 p.m. at Dewsall – Compline

### **Wednesday 1st April** – Wednesday in Holy Week

7.00 p.m. at Little Birch – Compline

### **Thursday 2nd April** – Maundy Thursday

7.30 p.m. at Much Dewchurch – Maundy Thursday

Communion and Tenebrae

### **Friday 3rd** – Good Friday

10.30 a.m. at Much Birch Community Hall –

Readings and Music for Good Friday

### **Sunday 5th April** – Easter Day

9.15 a.m. at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion  
and Renewal of Baptismal Promises

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion and  
Renewal of Baptismal Promises

## A global network, a message from Revd. Mark

Hi Everyone,

Well, February seemed to live up to its name of “February Fill Dykes” with lots of rain that continued on from the end of January. This was all driven by something that happened thousands of miles away! This year, the polar vortex over the U.S.A. drove the jet stream south over the Atlantic Ocean and meant that a long series of low pressure systems trailed across the UK, bringing a lot of wet, cloudy and not very pleasant weather.

Suddenly, we remember that we are part of a global network, because there were other parts of Europe and further afield that were affected by this – from storms in the Iberian Peninsula to deep cold over Ukraine. We are reminded that the weather is a global phenomenon and not simply something that happens in the UK, so we have something to talk about with our neighbours or colleagues at work.

We read in Genesis about God creating the world and how it is “good”. Indeed, when God finishes creation, it is described as “very good”. Not perfect, not unchangeable and not immune from what we are doing to the planet. Sea rise and heavy rains are having a great effect upon our coastlands – from flooding in Devon and Cornwall to the erosion of the cliffs in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Our actions and our inaction to take these things seriously are affecting people in all sorts of ways, from flooded roads to not being able to get insurance or a mortgage. These are direct impacts of our lack of care for our planet, and it is a wake-up call to us to get our act together to look after what we have been given, not just for this generation, but for generations to come.

Revd Mark



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## Much Birch Old Charities

This charity was created over 100 years ago to be of benefit to those living in the parish of Much Birch. The objectives of the charity are to help children, young adults or the elderly with a one-off grant.

In order to request an application form please contact Rev Mark Johnson - email: [revmark100@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:revmark100@yahoo.co.uk)

**BINGO**

**EASTER PRIZE  
BINGO**

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL  
**FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup> MARCH**  
EYES DOWN AT 7:30PM

*'Cracking' fun for the whole family  
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Contact Linda Maden  
on 07849 637242  
[www.birches.news/lbvh](http://www.birches.news/lbvh)

## Parish Walk Report – 1 February 2026

Despite a very wet start to the day, we were delighted to see sixteen hardy walkers turn out for the first Parish Walk of the New Year. The morning's downpour had certainly discouraged a few, but those who came were well-equipped in waterproofs and mostly sturdy footwear, ready to face the elements.

Our route took us up through the wood, down to Aconbury Court, and then back up the hill via Merrivale Farm, making good use of the new gates recently installed by Bob Mason. As we made our way back towards Little Birch, the rain finally eased and we were even treated to a brief glimpse of sunshine.

We rounded off the walk in the village hall with tea and cake—a welcome reward after such a damp outing. Although the weather was far from ideal, spirits remained high throughout. The group enjoyed good conversation, the occasional view between showers, and the shared sense of satisfaction that comes from braving the weather together. Everyone agreed they were glad they had made the effort to come out.

Chris Fowler



## Coffee & Books at LB Village Hall Held in the morning of the first Thursday and third Saturday of the month



### Book of the month for March

Book of the month this month is "Dissolution" by C.J.Sansom. This is a murder mystery tale set in the time of Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. Our hero, Matthew Shardlake, is sent to the monastery of Scarnsea to discover who has murdered the King's Commissioner. The sights and sounds of the period are eloquently described and the reader is immediately pitched into the politics and religious conflicts of the time.

If you like your crime novels set in the past then this is the book for you. The book was adapted for television fairly recently and the adaptation was very faithful to the original, but even if you saw it, reading the book would only add to your enjoyment. There are five other novels in the Shardlake series, so plenty to go at!

By the way, how many readers noticed the spelling mistake in last month's recommendation? I can't claim it was deliberate because I only noticed it when it was in print. It should, of course, have been "hordes" of visitors, not "hoards".

Jennifer

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For further information please contact the **Secretary Sylvia Jones** on **01981 540980** or email : [mbchsec@gmail.com](mailto:mbchsec@gmail.com) or visit the website: [www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org](http://www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org)

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### Seniors Pilates is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall Mondays 11.15am to 12.15pm

Join Alison Allan for Pilates – sessions are taught as small group classes and as individual 1:1 sessions.

Pilates is a great way to keep your body feeling agile and energised. The movements focus on posture, alignment, core strength balance and flexibility.



### Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing

### tmw is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall Thursdays 10.45am to 11.45pm

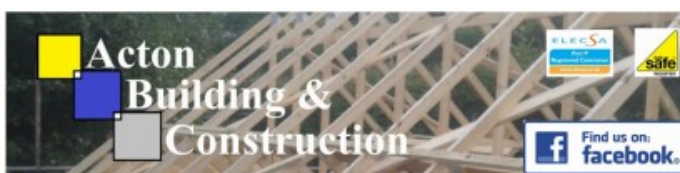
Join Alison Allan for Tai Chi movements for well being. A beautifully flowing and carefully selected sequence of movements designed to enhance and promote our physical and emotional wellbeing. The movements, which have origins in Tai Chi, Chi Kung and meditation are simplified and can be performed standing or seated making it accessible to everyone.

### Book Now for Pilates or tmw:

Phone icon 07947 011707

Globe icon [www.perfectbalance.life](http://www.perfectbalance.life)

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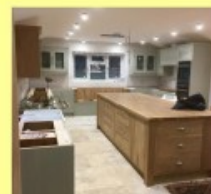


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## Puss in Boots – Oh yes we did!

As January has ended, so too has Pantomime season. What a great season 2026 was. Five packed out audiences came to see Puss in Boots at Little Birch Village Hall.

This year's Pantomime saw our biggest cast ever, ranging in age from 5 to 80 (something!). Puss in Boots had it all, a beautiful Princess, a handsome Prince, dashing cat (or two), a Pantomime Dame or two, not one, but two village halfwits, and of course an evil ogre. But the show was stolen by all of the children, who were absolute stars. From the singing rabbits, to the menacing guards, from the cheeky urchins to the graceful student fairies, they were all fantastic!

This brilliant community event is only possible because of the huge amount of support it gets from parents of the children, the set designers and painters, the stage management team, the sound and lighting and prompt team, as well as the incredible make up and costumes teams. All supported by the front of house team. Of course, none of it would be possible without the vision of the director, Jane Bolam, and her production team. Work to deliver our Pantomime starts in July with set design and painting. Auditions follow in early September, and costume design and making runs alongside rehearsals until the shows in January.

Thankyou to everyone who supported us in Puss in Boots. This amazing multi generational community event raised a whopping £850 for St Michael's Hospice, and a considerable amount towards the upkeep of Little Birch Village Hall.

We will be back in September with Auditions for our 2027 pantomime. More details to follow, but in the meantime, to keep you all entertained, we will be performing an evening of entertainment, with food in early July.

Auditions for the adult only cast, are taking place on 26th March 2026, 7pm at Little Birch Village Hall. If you're interested in being involved on or off the stage, then we'd love to see you, oh yes we would!

**Tonya Barnett**

## Defibrillator Locations

### IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs are available to use locally in case of sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

- **Allensmore** Locks Garage
- **Backney** on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage
- **Bridstow** on the outside of the village hall
- **Garway** on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub Harewood End at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.
- **Little Birch** on the outside of the village hall
- **Llanwarne** on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall
- **Much Birch** on the outside of the church hall
- **Much Birch Axe & Cleaver** on the side of the pub
- **Much Dewchurch** outside Steiner School, first building after the church
- **Peterstow** at the Yew Tree pub
- **Sellack** on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)
- **St Weonards** old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage
- **Wormelow** at the Cricket Club & Carrot & Wine shop Wilton on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

### Do you have something of interest to the community which you would like to appear in the next edition of The Birches?

The deadline for the March edition is  
**Friday 20th March 2026**

You can contact the Editor at the following email address:

**editorial@birchesnews.org.uk**

### Would you like to advertise with us?

11 editions per year (No August newsletter)

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1/8 page £4.80 per issue or £48 per year

1/4 page £5.40 per issue or £54 per year

Email : editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

### Marathon man running for a good cause!

I just finished 4 marathons around a lake in Milton Keynes in 4 days —the "warm-up" for my main event in May: 10 marathons in 10 days around Lake Windermere. Only 180 people have ever completed this grueling 20-year-old challenge!

I'm raising funds for the **Brathay Trust**, which gives underprivileged youth the chance to experience the outdoors and the countryside many of us take for granted.

Please consider donating to this incredible cause on: **justgiving.com** then type 'David Irwin Brathay' in the search box.

For more info on the trust, visit: [brathay.org.uk](http://brathay.org.uk)

Give me a shout if you see me training on the lanes!

**David Irwin**

