



THE **Birches**

Community Matters

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

First published 1977 **December 2020**

A note from the Editorial Team.

The team are still working hard to deliver our new-style Newsletter to you. But without the contributions we receive from local people and businesses there would be nothing much to print! So thanks to everyone who has contacted us.

It was a huge joy to receive from Cathy Sadler a message regarding what we are doing....

"Congratulations for producing such a wonderful newsletter - its looking so professionally -produced recently and I love all the new cheerful colour and the beautiful logos. Just what we all need to cheer us up in these dark locked down days !"

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.

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

michael@seychelles91.plus.com>

Best wishes
Editor

A Special Thank You

You will see elsewhere that we are taking a break from the Much Birch 100 Club this next year, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us over the 15 years we have been running the draw. As you know the proceeds each year has helped to meet the cost of the various projects as well as to contribute to the general running of the hall, and the Management Committee are extremely grateful for your contributions. We intend to recommence the 100 Club in 2022 and we hope we can look forward to you joining us again then.

John Jones
Chairman and Promoter



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
Much Birch Flicks Team

Jobs to do in the garden during December from Derek Scrivens



In mild dry weather, and only if necessary, cut lawn with blades high leaving 35 – 50 mm of grass.
Dahlias and Agapanthus left in the ground to over winter will need a thick mulch of compost and/or chipped bark.

Move Orchids to an East facing window. Other indoor plants may benefit from being put in a lighter position but away from radiators.

Plant Blueberries in large tubs with a mix of ericaceous compost with added coarse horticultural grit and if available some sawdust.

Rhubarb can be split. Leave the crowns on the surface so that they get frosted and then plant in early Spring.

Salad crops can be sown in a greenhouse but will be slow growing due to the low light levels.

Check stored potatoes.

Put out a variety of food for birds – seeds, fat balls, stale cheese and pieces of apple and pear.

**A gardener takes Santa at his word and spends
Christmas Day 'hoeing'**

Little Birch Amateur Dramatics Group



December 2020 Update.

A tongue in cheek, Panto themed look back over 2020 by the Little Birch Amateur Dramatics Group. (This is the Saturday night version – so you may want to have a read before opening it up to the 'Matinee audience!' Oh yes you will!!!)

Hello Everyone, Squire Trelawney here. With the Little Birch Amateur Dramatics Group being unable to offer you all a Pantomime in early 2021, we in Smugglers Cove thought it might be an idea to give you an update on what we have been doing since last gracing you with our company in Treasure Island.

Mrs Hawkings has had a very busy summer. She had just established a new business in Soho, London, when the dreaded 'lockdown' was forced on us all. So despite her new bakery, 'Bun in the Oven', having to close its doors, she has seamlessly switched to provide an on-line service. Uber (other delivery services are available) are now scurrying to deliver tasty baked delicacies, such as 'dead man's fingers' and 'spotted dick' to your door. You can look at her website to see the full range of treats available. She can be found at www.bun-in-the-oven.com. You will note that some of the images are slightly out of focus, it's a technical thing, I am told it has something to do with the auto focus not working on larger assets as well?

After the pantomime, Jim Hawkins finally managed to receive his PTSD treatment. Her new company 'Two Big Balloons – how to burst the anguish' has received Lottery funding to help other individuals scarred by watching a man flounce around a stage in a frock. She offers a one hour Zoom group session for two black spots.

Mrs Henderson finally relinquished the Chair of Smugglers Cove Women's Institute. There was to be a mixed martial arts fight amongst the other members to decide the new leadership. Unfortunately due to social-distancing restrictions this has had to be delayed. With her spare time, Mrs Henderson has become a Weather Girl. She spends a disproportionate amount of time looking out of the window for the next downfall of men.

Miss Normington also stood down from the WI. She finally achieved her life-long ambition and became a scientist. She discovered that mixing her cakes with certain chemicals enhanced the effectiveness of them. Apparently, they are better than bleach! Pfizer have just scooped her up to work on some sort of vaccine?

Long John Silver and Polly were last seen in quarantine on a Greek beach. They were still bickering – it is unclear if the quarantine was because of Avian Flu or a suspicious looking black spot on Long John Silvers neck.

With the Hispaniola being in dry dock all summer, Blood Boiler, Gizzard Slitter, and The Fridge had to find alternative employment. They were last seen plucking chickens at a well known local factory.

Ben Gunn was finally unmasked as 'Banksy'. He received a Knighthood in the Queens Birthday honours recently.

Seadog Sam and Seaweed Willy used the period of lockdown to continue their education. They managed to book onto a distant learning course – sea knots and sea shanties for beginners. They have just graduated and are now looking for a new berth to sail on.

My daughter Jenny and Mrs Hawkings Maid, Kittie, made an interesting discovery. The bed sheets from the Admiral Benbow manage to kill all known airborne pathogens. The ingenious pair are feverishly working on producing face masks for the local community. They have just made their first million goats – well done girls!

For myself, I have put on two stone – well someone had to eat all those cakes!

From all of us in Panto land to all of you who come to watch us make fools of ourselves, we wish you and your families a fantastic Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2021.

PS – we will be back with a new production in the summer of 2021 and a Pantomime in early 2022

OH YES WE WILL!



Much Birch Surgery

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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Services@St.Mary's in December

December at Little Birch Church.

- Dec 6th – Holy Communion 11am @ LB Church.**
- Dec 13th – Morning Worship 11am @ Church.**
- Dec 18th – Carols On The Pendant 7.30pm @ The Nightmare Bar site opposite Castle Inn.**
- Dec 20th – Carols and Christingle Service 4.00pm @ Church**
- Dec 25th – Christmas Day Service 11.00am @ Church.**



At St. Mary's we welcome everyone, young or old, or local or just visiting. We also welcome family bubbles.

We are informal, so there's no need to dress up unless you wish to. We are fully covid compliant.

Stay Safe, see you soon!

Keep in touch with us on our facebook page. Also on our website www.achurchnearyou.com/stmarylb

We wish the whole community a very happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

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More than lights, tree, food!

What is Christmas? And what does it mean to you? As we come a different type of Christmas celebration, we have the chance to think a little more deeply about Christmas and what it means to us today.

Firstly, and let's get this out of the way, there is no biblical evidence that Jesus was born on 25th December. Yes, we stole an existing pagan/Roman festival and made it our own. That being said, there is no doubt that we need to celebrate light in the darkest of times. For Christians, Jesus is the "Light of the World" and so it seems appropriate that just a couple of days after the winter solstice (in the northern hemisphere) and the hours of daylight are at a minimum, we celebrate that the days are getting longer and the power of the sun is returning.

Secondly, although the TV and radio adverts will try and tell you it is about lights, trees and food, there is more to it than that. Even if you are not a Christian, there is something spiritual going on here. In the coming together of family and friends, the creation of memories and the sharing of gifts, we are doing something for both our own well-being and that of our community/family.

Thirdly, and finally, Christmas is a time to be generous. I know money is tight, especially if you have lost your job, been placed on furlough, etc. But volunteering some of your time can be the best gift. Perhaps you have someone who can't look after their garden – why not offer to do couple of hours just generally tidying up? Or there are people who can't get out, why not get their shopping for them. By "playing it forward" as that rather awful phrase has it, you increase the social capital in the community. For you never know when you might have to draw on that capital yourself.

Have as good a Christmas as you can, and may 2021 be a better year for us all.

Revd Mark

Pengethley Farm Shop

Well what can I say, we are midway through the second national lock down and we all hope it will finish on the 2nd of December as originally stated. It would be good if we could have a level of normality for Christmas but we must wait and see what the reality will hold.

There has been a few changes in how people shop this time round with far less home deliveries but an increase in the number of customers who are feeling happy and safe to shop in person at the shop. This is a compliment that people are feeling reassured their shopping experience is safe and secure as it can be with us. Many of our customers who previously had deliveries from us, are coming in as this is their social interaction and a hint of normality. Several have said this is their only trip out since the original lockdown!

We are, of course, working to the government Covid 19 guidelines with masks worn by everyone, social distancing in place and the high hygiene standards we are always working to.

As a shop we are still offering the home delivery service as well as a click and collect service. We are always pleased to see you in the shop and do our best to ensure the experience is as good as ever.

We are also thinking of our catering customers who have had a big impact on their businesses being closed in the original lock down, to then reopen and returned to trading over the summer and now suddenly have had to stop trading again. The uncertainty about what is to happen at Christmas adds more pressures to them. We are lucky in this area to have such great quality eateries locally and hope they will all come through this difficult situation.

With Christmas not far away, Christmas orders are very different this year with the majority of customers working on the idea that Christmas is going to be a smaller occasion for their households. The Christmas meat orders received currently are for smaller than the usual Christmas joints or birds.

All this uncertainty is not giving the usual Christmas excitement or enthusiasm. But people are resilient and what ever happens to Christmas we must enjoy it with the ones we can be with.

As was pointed out to me, there are few of the large national chain stores that are affected this time but still a lot of the small independent shops that have had to close during this lockdown. When this lockdown is over please do support the small local independent shops as much as you can, as this is their peak season and they rely heavily on having a good trade to carry them through the year and especially the first months of the new year.

This year's Christmas will be unique. I know it's a bit early but may I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

James - Pengethley Farm Shop - 01989 730430



Summer seems to have come and gone all too quickly in this very strange year and autumn is well and truly upon us. Although we have been lucky and the weather has been deceptively warm, we all know that winter is just around the corner and we will soon have to batten down the hatches.

Fortunately for us we have been able to work through the Covid outbreak as we can self isolate quite easily from our customers. This mainly means having to supply our own tea and coffee despite some customers best efforts!!

This is the time of year to prepare for the bad weather to come in the months ahead and this encompasses all aspects of the garden. If we can find the time to fix, clean, mend and prune our garden areas it makes life a lot easier in the early spring months. Trees are no exception.

A well pruned tree will give years of pleasure as it matures and will be aesthetically pleasing to the eye. This can be achieved by someone who is highly trained in arboriculture and who knows what they are doing. Tree work is not all about felling trees, it should be the last resort, and there is nothing so imposing as a large mature tree that has been nurtured by good pruning techniques. These range from simply thinning to crown reductions which if caught early enough can save a large specimen and promote greater glory for many more years to come.

Autumn is the time of year when most trees have finished their summer cycle of growing and start shutting down for the winter. This is the ideal time to prune or reduce the canopy of the tree to prepare for the new year's growth or benefit from

the maximum time of reduction before the tree starts to re-grow again in the spring.

We have all laughed at the out-takes on TV of DIY tree fellers, but there is a serious side to pruning trees and a lot of people underestimate the knowledge and expertise of a professional tree surgeon. It can be dangerous work especially if you do not know what you are doing. For example most people do not realise how heavy the weight of tree limbs can be and the potential dangers for teetering on top of a ladder are obvious. Tree limbs can die back if pruned in the wrong way and certain species of trees are prone to this, e.g. silver birch and many evergreens.

Tree work if not done properly can lead to:

- ◆ injury to people
- ◆ damage to property
- ◆ serious harm to your trees that have taken many years to grow.

A lot of training, time and experience is involved in arboriculture together with strict safety rules on all the equipment used. This has to be checked by an independent assessor every six months and any equipment not coming up to standard has to be replaced. These checks not only ensure the safety of the specialized equipment but hopefully protect the safety of the tree surgeon, together with the customer's property as well. Arboriculture involves a whole team of workers rather than just an individual, with everybody depending on each other with designated roles and responsibilities. Avalon as a company always works to British Standard recommendations. We are all NPTC trained.

At Avalon not only do we specialize in tree work but we also consider hedging just as important. Like most trees, hedges should now have completed their year's worth of growing, so cutting your hedge at this time of year means you will benefit from the maximum time before it starts re-growing again in the spring. Hedges are just as important to the garden as most trees, as a well maintained hedge can keep your garden looking tidy and add house appeal. Also benefits of cutting hedges at this time of year will mean less disruption to nesting birds and wildlife and provides vital shelter throughout the winter months. Hedge maintenance may look easy but if attempted by a non-professional can lead to permanent damage and scarring.

Before the worst of the weather sets in you need to check the trees around your property i.e. looking for power wires running through branches which winter winds can bring down; the closeness of branches and roots to buildings. Roots especially are intrusive and can lift paving and even work their way under permanent buildings. Leaving a large tree unpruned can lead to waterlogged foliage, the weight of which can tear boughs and limbs. Also remember this includes evergreen trees which hold their needles all year round. This summer I have seen a number of fruit trees that have been left untouched in previous years and the weight of the fruit on the branches has torn through the entire tree damaging some irreparably..

Here at Avalon we always assess a job starting with a home visit albeit trees or hedging. We seek out the customer's objective, assess the tree, evaluating the health and maturity and then advise on the best way going forward. This is then followed up with a written quote.

This is now the ideal time to prune trees as it prepares them for the new year's growth in the spring. Remember though if the worst happens and you suddenly have an urgent tree problem we have an emergency call out and will be pleased to help.

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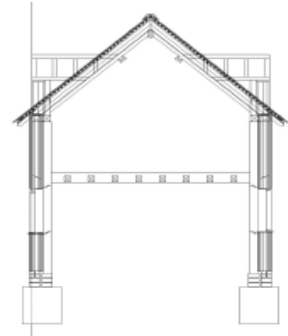
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Little Birch Parish Council

Your Little Birch Parish Councillors are:

Cllr Peter Rees Chair

Cllr Janet Gwinnett Vice Chair

Cllr Kate Dillon

Cllr Michael Davies

Cllr Kate Robbins

Angela Middleton Volunteer Footpath Officer

Sophie Glover Clerk 01432 617306 lbpcclerk@gmail.com

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

www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org.

Please send copy for the January 2021 Newsletter to editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or written contributions to Liz Hall at Walmere, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AW.
—by 18th December 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 local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area.

Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

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Much Birch Community Hall 100 Club

The result of the 100 club draw which took place on 15th November is as follows:

1st prize – No.42

Miss E. Vaughan-Williams
Little Birch

2nd prize – No 47

Mrs. C. Beevers
Guildford, Surrey

The next draw will take place on 13th December 2020.

After 15 years of running the 100 club draw, we have taken the decision not to run the club during 2021 in the main due to the present pandemic situation at this time.. We hope that we can restart the club again in January 2022.

John Jones, Promoter

Much Birch Christmas Market

It is with great regret that we will be unable to hold the Christmas Village Market in Much Birch Community Hall scheduled for 11th December 2020. We are hoping that the circumstances will allow us to organise an Easter Market so that once again we can meet up with our friendly stallholders and the community who have supported us in recent years.



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Mark Giles



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Update from Herefordshire Advanced Drivers

Following the relaxation of the first lockdown due to Covid19 we undertook peer observed drives for those of our Observers who were comfortable being in a vehicle with another person. This refresher training, which was completed in early August, was essential to ensure consistently high standards as many of our Observers had driven relatively little since mid-March. It has been necessary to postpone Driver Refresher Days due to the restrictions but mentoring of those taking the Advanced Driver Course continued until the second lockdown for those who were prepared to be in a car with an Observer. Due to the success of Driver Refresher Days at the end of 2019 and the first two months of this year our Observer capacity is being fully utilised and currently we have 24 drivers who are undertaking the Advanced Course.

As we head towards winter additional hazards for drivers arise with reduced hours of daylight, dark days and low sun. Frost and ice are likely with wet roads and leaves causing further hazards. Anticipation, concentration and constantly checking the road ahead and behind are vital. Vehicle lights should be switched on when visibility is low and drivers should look out for walkers, cyclists and other road users as well as animals, whilst being aware that many new road layouts and speed limits have been introduced this year. Equally important is to ensure cars are serviced in accordance with manufacturer's schedules together with regular checks of tyres and their pressures, lights, battery charge, engine oil and other liquids, as well as keeping windows and windscreens clean.

We are always keen to hear from anyone who is interested in taking the Advanced Driver Course.

Please contact Stella at: group-contact@advanced-drivers.org.uk or tel: 01432 840835.

In the meantime, safe driving.

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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.

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17th November 2020

PARISH MEETING - at the Parish Council Meeting held on the Zoom Platform, during the Covid 19 Virus pandemic, on the 5th November 2020 from 7.30 pm.

The Parish Council discussed a planning application for a detached dwelling in the neighbouring parish of Little Birch. They also heard a further update from the Ward Councillor regarding matters at Herefordshire Council and also local topics.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 3rd December 2020 from 7.30pm** - on the Zoom Platform. All are welcome to attend.

Dates for 2021 Parish Council Meetings will be advised in the next edition.

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 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 Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Steve Turner (Vice Chair) The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, e mail turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com and Tel. 01981 540090

Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX, e mail a.crum@btinternet.com
Tel. 01981 540002

Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8AX roisinburge@hotmail.com Tel. 01981 540724

Cllr David Baldwin The Granary, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HS 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.

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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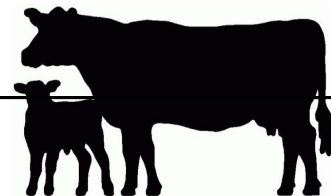


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"Search me" says the rabbit. "I am only here
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It is organic grass fed Wagyu Cross beef which has been born and raised at **Merrivale Farm**.

The Wagyu breed is known for its beautiful marbling which gives a delicious flavour and texture to the meat.

The beef is available in mixed boxes which start at £65. Individual cuts and packs are also available.

Contact Lucy for more information on 07974 053804 or lucymason@hotmail.com