

The Birches



Community Matters Newsletter - December 2025

Kingsthorn, Much Birch, Little Birch, Aconbury & Wormelow



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Christmas Bingo	Nov 28
Flicks in the Sticks	Dec 11
Community Café	Dec 13
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Coffee & Books	Thursday/ Saturday
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Parish Walk	Nov 30
Table Tennis	1 st Tuesday
Parish Council	Dec 4
Puss in Boots - Pantomime	January 23,24,31

Bonsai at LBVH! – report on page 4



Coming up in the New Year!

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL

presents

PUSS IN BOOTS

FRIDAY 23RD JAN 7PM

SAT 24TH JAN MATINÉE 2PM

SAT 24TH JAN 7PM SOLD OUT

SAT 31ST JAN MATINÉE 2PM
IN AID OF ST MICHAEL'S HOSPICE

TICKETS AVAILABLE
ADULTS £10
CHILDREN £5

TONYA 01981 540898
MARGARET/DEREK
01981 540374

Parish Walk – report on page 5



The Birches Newsletter is also available online (with additional photo pages)
www.birches.news or www.muchbirchparish.org.uk

Merry Christmas



Happy New Year

Message from Lesley, Chair of Little Birch Village Hall

It has been 6 months since I became the Chair of Little Birch Village Hall Committee. What has struck me most of all about the Committee is the dedication that a small group of people have to ensure that the Village Hall is clean, safe and a pleasant place to hire for any event.

Each Committee member has their own role – and not only that – will carry out any additional task(s) without question. When we are without a cleaner, for example, Tonya and Kate roll up their sleeves and get down and dirty – tackling the many areas that some of us would not wish to go to! Geoff (Nichols) –Hall maintenance with new committee member Sam (Davies) – seem to be able to tackle anything that is required of them. I think Geoff now runs in the opposite direction when he sees me coming – especially when I start by saying “Geoff, I’ve had an idea”! Linda – Hall Management– carries out her role professionally and efficiently. Our new treasurer - and now Editor of the Newsletter – has produced magnificent spreadsheets about our financial position that even I can understand. Cathy – our Secretary – takes wonderful minutes and checks that not only have I got the right date but the right day that matches the date!

We are lucky to have Jane (and Tonya) representing the Drama club on the Committee. The Drama Club is a great asset to the Village Hall, and they raise a lot of money for us. I am looking forward to seeing the panto in January. My previous life was in Music Education and for 20 years staged Musicals every year as the MD – so I know how much work they and their team put into staging shows.

Other members are Iris and Kate – who are so valuable for their local knowledge. It is always good to have local knowledge at our fingertips. Rick puts on musical evenings, which I know go down well.

At this point I would like to thank Elisabeth Taylor for her valuable contribution as Editor of the Newsletter and serving on the Committee for the last 5 years. She has now decided to stand down as Editor, and we thank her for giving up at least a week of her life each month to put the newsletter together ready for the printing deadline.

I would also like to thank all the people who tirelessly deliver the Newsletter around the village each month. Also, to John Caton and Ben Roberts who give up a day every month to print it.

Plans for the refurbishment of the toilet areas (phase 1) and the Bar area (phase 2) are now underway. It is hoped that we will begin the works after the Panto in January. We will keep you posted about the progress in the Newsletter.

If you have any issues you would like to raise about the Village Hall, please do speak to one of the Committee members, or come along to one of our meetings – usually the second Wednesday of the month.

All that remains, on behalf of the Committee is to wish you a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Little Birch Village Hall



Available for hire for private events.
A lovely, well-appointed and heated village hall
with good car parking facilities.

- A modern well-appointed kitchen
- Bar area
- Seating capacity 140
- Crockery and cutlery provided
- A raised stage and lighting
- Toilet facilities (including disabled)

Contact Linda Maden
on 07849 637242
www.birches.news/lvh

Coffee & Books at LB Village Hall First Thursday and Saturday of the month



Book of the month



The book I would like to highlight this month is:
“Escape to Pumpkin Cottage” by Anna and Jacqui Burns.

This is not great literature, indeed some would dismiss it as “chick lit”, but where’s the harm in that?

I bought it because it was set in the Wye Valley and I thought I might recognise places, which I did.

It’s about two women from different generations who find themselves in conflict and end up behaving rather badly. I found that I wanted to read to the end to find out what happened.

Unusually the book is written by a mother and daughter team who write alternate chapters. They live 200 miles apart and communicate by email.

Anyway, give it a try. You may enjoy it!
Jennifer

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.

Friendly and fun activity for the winter months!
Contact John Caton: 01981 540415



Much Birch Parish Council Details of meeting held on 6/11/25

The parish council held their November ordinary Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 6th November. One planning application was discussed, 252823, for a double garage at 4, Pilgrim Park. The parish council resolved that there were no objections to the new garage proposal.

The next meeting will be on 4th December.

Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives. Details of forthcoming meetings are in the column to the right

Much Birch Parish Council

Councilors

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, email: thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703

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

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT email: chris@pickering-grey.uk Tel. 07712 813218

Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AU email: magyeman92@gmail.com Tel. 01981 540840

Cllr David Irwin email: 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

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Alison Wright email: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com

Much Birch Footpath Officer:

email: MBfootpaths@btinternet.com Tel. 07766 135068

Dates for the forthcoming meetings:

40/12/25, 08/01/26, 05/02/26, 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

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 13 December 2025
10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

10 January
14 February
14 March

QUIZ **NEW COFFEE** **MAKES** **KNIT** **LEARN** **RELAX**

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com

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

Much Birch School News

We are very much looking forward to the build up to Christmas at Much Birch school! We have our lovely community and school: **Christmas Fayre on Saturday 29th November**. Everyone is welcome and if any of the community would like to hire a table/stall, please contact our PTFA on: muchbirchschoolptfa@gmail.com

Our KS1 children are excited to start rehearsing their nativity production of 'Wriggly Nativity', the reception class also get to visit Clearwell caves to see Father Christmas with their Y6 buddies. The choir are visiting the residents at Charnwood residential home in December to sing some Christmas carols, we have an author coming to work with us in school and we have a whole school treat of a cinema visit coming up! What a busy term! / Mrs .Anna Ricketts, Deputy Head



Much Birch Community Hall

Much Birch Community Hall is available for hire to groups meeting regularly and for one-off individual events.

We can offer:

- A well appointed community hall in pleasant surroundings
- Superb kitchen facilities
- New cloakroom facilities Including accessible toilet
- Several smaller meeting rooms
- Disabled access to the front and rear of the building
- Car parking
- Grassed area to the rear of the building
- Fees include heating when required and use of the kitchen



For further information please contact the **Secretary Sylvia Jones** on 01981 540980 or email : mbchsec@gmail.com or visit the website: www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org

Jobs for the garden in December

Another year has flown by and the final jobs in the garden are nearing completion. With the weather unseasonably mild there has been no rush to put tender plants into greenhouse, but this will be done soon, after the bubble wrap has been put in place. Despite the very dry summer we have good crop of carrots, beetroot, savoys, red cabbage and sprouts, the buttons on the latter are not as big as we would have liked. Parsnips, swedes and leeks are mixed size wise. We wish you all the compliments of the season and leave you with a few suggestions for the month ahead:

- Move orchids to an east facing window and other indoor plants to a lighter position but away from radiators.
- Agapanthus and dahlias that you wish to leave in the ground should be cover with a thick mulch of compost and/or chipped bark.
- Move tender plants in pots and tubs into the greenhouse or shed and perhaps have some fleece ready in case we have a really cold period.
- Prune climbing roses.
- If you have some form of heating device in the greenhouse, check that it is in good working order.
- Rhubarb can be split. Leave the crowns on the surface where they will benefit from any frost that we have. The can be planted out in early spring. Do not harvest any sticks from them in the first year.
- Salad crops can be sown in the greenhouse albeit they will grow slowly due to low light levels.
- Prune black currants removing a third of the oldest branches, cutting them off at the base.
- Garlic can still be planted early in December.
- Feed and provide fresh water for birds and if you have nest box(es) clean them out, if not done already, and rehang them.

Derek Scrivens



Gardening Club News

Recent Gardening Club Events



'The World of Bonsai' was the subject of our September talk. Some of us were a little sceptical about how interesting we might find the subject matter but we had no need to worry. What an entertaining night it turned out to be. I even heard it said that it was our 'best evening ever'. Vanessa Watson, our speaker was able to convey her huge wealth of knowledge with practical demonstrations and stories that amused us all. Our visitors from outside the club turned up with a van load of scruffy and weedy bushes that Vanessa transformed in front of us. We were all fascinated and a little spellbound by the ease with which she did her work. It was clear that we all find the art of bonsai quite compelling and quite a few of us brought in our own efforts for advice on how to maintain them. I think that there will now be quite a few of us trying our hands at this ancient and mysterious art. We might even enter them as pot plants in the Horticultural Show next September.

Our October meeting took the form of a guided tour of Hergest Croft Gardens at Kington. I have been to Hergest quite a few times and always been interested in the collections held here and the incredible history of the generations of the Banks family who have collected plants for five generations. Now, I'm not too bad at plant identification but I still walk around a garden simply enjoying what I see. Our tour guide Rowan Griffiths made this so much more than that. His incredible knowledge of taxonomy, family history and plant hunting around the world really opened our eyes and gave us an insight into the incredible tree collections held here and their importance nationally and internationally. His detailed knowledge and passion was truly inspirational. I will definitely be returning to see more and with any luck might even have another tour.

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



Gardening Club Quiz Night

On **Wednesday 28th January** we will be running a quiz night – an evening of fun to brighten the winter blues!

Little Birch Village Hall 7.00 – 9.00pm.

Charge for a team of 4, £10 to incl. light refreshments. If you don't have a full team, let us know and we will sort one for you. Bring your own wine & drinks. Tea and coffee on arrival.

Open to all the community

so book your table now on
ktlbgardeningclub@gmail.com

Thursday 11 December - MR BURTON 12A

The story of the wild school boy Rich Jenkins, son of a boozy miner and an English teacher who recognised his talent, Philip Burton. A moving, untold story of how Rich Jenkins became Richard Burton, the biggest star Wales has ever produced.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming soon:

Thursday 22 January - A REAL PAIN 15

Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted)- for further info or to book tickets please email muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097

For further information about films and screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

Parish Walk, tracing the footsteps of history



On a grey and overcast afternoon in October, around 20 parishioners gathered at the Village Hall for a gentle walk and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours. The theme of this outing was to explore some of the ancient footpaths of Aconbury and Little Birch—routes that appear on an 1830s map and have stood the test of time.

Remarkably, most of the public rights of way we use today are clearly marked on this nearly 200-year-old map, a reminder of the rich heritage we've inherited. Our circular route took us around Aconbury Hill and through parts of Little Birch, highlighting not only the beauty of the landscape but also some curious discrepancies between the Ordnance Survey and Herefordshire Council's Definitive Map. Several well-used paths, familiar to many of us, are not officially recorded as Public Rights of Way.

The walk concluded back at the Village Hall, where we were warmly welcomed with tea and delicious cakes, kindly prepared by Wendy Fowler and Cathy Ellis-Braithwaite. Their hospitality was much appreciated after a rewarding afternoon of exploration and conversation.

Next parish walk:

We'd love for you to join us on our next walk, taking place on **30th November at 2:00 pm, starting from the Axe and Cleaver car park**. This time, we'll be heading down towards Llanwarne—another chance to enjoy our local paths and shared history. There will be refreshments available at the end of the walk.

Chris Fowler

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Call our Support Line:

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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

Neil Barrington (Parish Council Clerk)

✉ lpcclerk@gmail.com

🌐 www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org

Footpath Officers



For any queries about footpaths contact:

Little Birch & Aconbury

Chris Fowler

📞 07931 292998

Email 📩: chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk

Much Birch and Kingsthorpe:

David Irwin

📞 07766 135068

Email 📩: 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

Table Tennis



Come and join us to play
on the 1st 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

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)
- Rick Hampton (Committee member)
- Jane Bolam (Drama group)
- Sam Davies (Committee member)
- Tonya Barnett (Drama Group)

The Birches Newsletter Editor:

John Ellis-Braithwaite

Email 📩: 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

Did you know?

What's on in Hereford Cathedral and local
photographs are at the back of the on line edition

Revd. Mark's update

Hi Everyone,



As you read this, we will be in the season of Advent – not that you would notice unless you were a follower of the Church calendar rather than the one dictated by TV and social media adverts.

Advent has long been seen as the time of waiting and preparation. It is one of the two penitential seasons, which you will see if you go into church, as the colour on the altar is purple. So what is behind the season of Advent? It seems from the earliest times, around the 5th Century, the idea of fasting from St. Martin's Day (11th November) to Christmas Eve was practised by some French monks following St. Martin of Tours. But it didn't spread to the wider church until around the time of Gregory the Great (late 6th Century).

This fasting was different from that observed during Lent as it was looking forward to the arrival of Jesus, rather than the story of Holy Week, crucifixion, death and resurrection.

There is, as usual, a bit of wisdom in some of these ancient traditions. Advent fasting allows you to enjoy to the full the richness of a Christmas meal. It has somewhat fallen out of fashion these days (unless you are doing intermittent fasting for weight loss) because we can have what we want, when we want it.

But as we move to a more planet-friendly diet of eating seasonally, perhaps it might not be a bad thing to rediscover this self-discipline so we can enjoy our feasts with family and friends all the more.

Revd Mark



Cristingle and Carol Service at St Mary's Church, Little Birch

Our beautiful candlelit Christingle and Carol service will take place on Sunday 21st December at 4pm. Children attending the service will receive a Christingle orange signifying the true meaning of Christmas. This is a service that is full of joy and one not to miss.

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mark@herefordcomputerhelp.co.uk
herefordcomputerhelp.co.uk

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Church Services in December



Sunday 7th December 2nd Sunday of Advent
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion

Sunday 14th December – 3rd Sunday of Advent
9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Holy Communion
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Morning Worship
3.00 p.m. at Little Dewchurch – Christingle

Tuesday 16th December

6.30 p.m. at Much Birch – Carols for Christmas with Much Birch Primary School Choir

Wednesday 17th December

6.30 p.m. at Dewsall Church – Carols for Christmas

Thursday 18th December

5.30 p.m. at Llanwarne Old Church – Carols in the Churchyard

Saturday 20th December

4.00 p.m. at Much Dewchurch – Christingle Service

Sunday 21st – 4th Sunday of Advent

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Morning Worship
4.00 p.m. at Little Birch – Carols and Christingle
6.00 p.m. at Llandinab – Carols for Christmas

Monday 22nd December

6.30 p.m. at Dinedor Church – Carols for Christmas

Wednesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

3.00 p.m. at Much Birch – Carols and Crib Service
5.00 p.m. at Llanwarne – Christingle
11.30 p.m. at Much Dewchurch – Midnight Mass

Thursday 25th December – Christmas Day

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Holy Communion
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion

Sunday 28th December – Holy Innocents

10.30 a.m. at Llandinab – Benefices joint Communion

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



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Mel's Musings

Not a thing of beauty, but the humble telegraph pole and its attached wires, certainly in my garden, are the equivalent of our beloved Little Birch Village Hall. It is a meeting place, a learning place, a dining area, a communications hub, even a spa (of sorts) and sometimes even a combat arena. I have spent many hours watching the comings and goings of this pole; Courtship between pigeons and the wonderful clockwork noddings of Goldfinches most of the Spring. Mid Summer presents the young Greater Spotted Woodpeckers playing peekaboo around the post waiting, sometimes very impatiently, for their parents to bring beakfuls of suet from the blocks provided on the feeding station below. A squabble often ensues when more than one family arrives at the same time, flurries of wings and squeaking until a truce is made and the feeding continues at a respectful distance apart. When the rain arrives after a long dry spell the pigeons will sit on the wires and spread their wings, enjoying a shower and then the big preening and tidying up of feathers afterwards. The Autumn arrives and many birds gather together and become large flocks, especially the Goldfinches, 34 counted on our wires at the beginning of November (often joining up with siskins, Red Polls and Linnets but none of whom have been seen this Autumn at all, very sadly). Then the unmistakable sound of the Fieldfares and Redwings as they come from Russia, Scandinavia and Iceland to spend the winter with us. They particularly enjoy feasting on the cider apples hanging in large clumps in the orchard opposite and sometimes their calling is overwhelming as hundreds gather for the glut. This year they will certainly do well. However it is now November and I still haven't heard a single call or seen any flocks in the area. The warm weather has given us the most glorious spectacle in the form of autumn colour on the trees with the best yellows, oranges, reds and rusts I think I have ever seen, even the strong winds at the beginning of the month did not denude the trees completely, leaving plenty of colour for another week or so and the berries on every tree and shrub have been extravagant in their numbers. Life is good.

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to Get Help Fast!



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:

07947 011707 www.perfectbalance.life
Email alison@perfectbalance.life

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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

Traditional NORWAY SPRUCE & NORMAND FIR
Assorted sizes freshly cut

Follow signs from Little Dewchurch from 1st December

Or phone 07826156225 to come earlier, select and book your tree for cutting closer to Christmas

Guide to Feeding Wild Hedgehogs



Yes please

- Water
Please leave multiple dishes of water – they are very thirsty!
- Cat Food
Kibble is good for teeth
Biscuits should be a complete food, not treats
- Wet food can also be fed – ensure it is free from flies
- They generally prefer meat/poultry flavours, but fish is okay too
- Wet food can be either jelly or gravy – they don't mind
- Dog food can also be used – please ensure kibble is of a small size
- Hedgehog-Specific Food
If using hedgehog food, make sure there are no "extras" included (see NO list)

Dishes with food and water need to be cleaned regularly to avoid contamination.

Did you know? If hedgehogs are hibernating at this time of year they will often wake every three or four days to feed and drink water.

If you find a hedgehog out during the day, you should safely contain it in a high sided box with a towel under it and contact a rescue urgently. Our nearest rescue is Helen Tyler in Holme Lacey. Telephone 07901772680

No thank you

- No Treats, As wild animals, they don't need any treats. They just need your support with feeding.
- For Health Reasons, Please do not feed them: Milk, Bread, Mealworms, Peanuts (whole or crushed), Sunflower seeds, Oats, Raisins (or other dried fruit), Fresh fruit or veg, Offal, Raw meat, Cakes, Human foods, Eggs
- Insects, slugs, worms, or anything found in your garden
- Store-bought live or dried insects
- Anything not listed in the YES section!

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 January edition is
Friday 12th December 2025

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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Payments to be made to:
Account: Little Birch Village Hall
Sort Code: 23-05-80
Account Number: 56643095

Email : editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

Additional content is available here in the on-line addition:

Pages 14 – 16 What's on in Hereford Cathedral

Pages 17 – 18 Photographs from the local area

DAILY EVENTS

Everyone is welcome to join any of the acts of worship that take place at the cathedral. Services are normally held at the following times:

Monday – Saturday

8 am – Morning Prayer
10.30 am – Eucharist (8.30 am on a Saturday)
5.30 pm – Evening Prayer or Evensong

Sunday

8 am – Holy Communion
10 am – Cathedral Eucharist (this service is also live streamed)
11.30 am – Matins or Morning Prayer
3.30 pm – Evening Prayer or Evensong

EXHIBITIONS

Sacred Creatures

Monday 6 October 2025 until Saturday 21 March 2026*

The latest exhibition in the Mappa Mundi and Chained Library at Hereford Cathedral is a site specific exhibition by Jeanette McCulloch MA(RCA), that explores the relationship between humans and animals with a focus on British wildlife.

This exhibition has been kindly supported by The Ulrike Michal Foundation for the Arts

*Please note the museum will be closed throughout January

Normal admission charges apply and tickets can be booked in advance via the cathedral website.

TOURS - Cathedral Tours

Monday to Saturday, 11.05 am & 2.15 pm.

Explore the rich history and treasures of the cathedral from its Saxon origins to the present day with our knowledgeable guides. Tickets cost £7.50 (Adult), £6 (Student) and £2 (Child aged 8 - 16) and can be booked in advance via the cathedral or by calling the ticket desk (01432 374 202)

EVENTS

Cathedral Seedlings – Toddlers Group

Thursdays in term time, 10 – 11.30 am

Calling all toddlers and their grown-ups to play and pray in the College Hall. Listen to a Bible story, take part in a craft activity and have fun in our weekly drop-in. To add to the experience, refreshments, delicious cakes and healthy snacks for children will be provided. Cathedral Seedlings is a group for children from birth upwards, with a range of craft activities aimed at ages 2 plus. Toddler Group is free to attend, and no booking is required.

Escape Room

On selected dates.

Solve our brand-new Escape Room: an immersive clue-cracking and decoding game, hosted in the Old Chapel in the Cloisters. It is Medieval Hereford, and pilgrims have been travelling from all over the country to visit the shrine of St Thomas Cantilupe. Earlier today, a precious golden ring was left at the shrine as an offering. But- when the Shrine Keeper returned from Morning Prayer, they noticed that the ring has been stolen...Can you find the ring, but more importantly, identify the thief before the time runs out?

Tickets cost £70 and can be booked in advance via the cathedral website or by calling the ticket desk (01432 374 202)

A Service for Advent in London

Tuesday 2 December, 6.30 pm

Hereford Cathedral Choir will perform in London at The Guard's Chapel, Wellington Barracks in support of Hereford Cathedral Perpetual Trust. The service is open to all but tickets are essential. Tickets can be booked in advance via the cathedral website or by calling the ticket desk (01432 374 202).

Cathedral Treasures: Seasonal selections

Friday 5 December, 4.30 pm

The Library team have selected a range of items from the 12th century up to the 20th that tell the story of the Advent season. This is a rare opportunity to see historic items from the Chained Library, archives and All Saints library up close in the Reading Room.

Tickets cost £15 and can be booked in advance via the cathedral website or by calling the ticket desk (01432 374 202)

Messiah | Hereford Choral Society

Saturday 6 December, 7.30 pm

“Christmas doesn’t start until Hereford Choral Society has sung Messiah”, or words to that effect, are frequent comments following this atmospheric, candlelight concert. Add in the evocative sound of the period instruments, played by Marches Baroque, and you have an unforgettable experience that regularly fills the seats in Hereford Cathedral. Tickets from only £10 (unreserved).

Tickets are available from <https://3choirs.org/events/hcs-handel-messiah/>

Ex Cathedra: Christmas Music by Candlelight

Wednesday 10 December, 7.30 pm

In the deep still darkness, comes the luminous sound of a choir in harmony. Expect some of your favourite carols, and discover a treasure trove of gorgeous new -and old - music and readings that explore the magic, humour and peace of Christmas. A concert with both familiar melodies and wondrous discoveries to make you smile as well as reflect.

Tickets are available from Ex Cathedra website.

<https://excathedra.co.uk/event/2526-christmas-music-hereford>

Nativity Family Trail

Thursday 11 December – Saturday 10 January

Discover the story of the Nativity this Christmas with our family trail! Collect your free trail from the Welcome Desk as you arrive, explore the building and collect a sticker once you’ve completed the worksheet.

Hereford Cathedral Christmas Fair

Saturday 13 December, 9.30 am - 4 pm

Join us for our annual Christmas Fair with over forty stalls selling a range of festive gifts. Admission free, with a collection to support the work of Hereford Cathedral. Please join us in the Cathedral Close at 12 noon for carol singing.

St Michael’s Hospice ‘Light up a Life’ Service.

Sunday 14 December, 6 pm

Light up a Life offers a chance to come together with others who understand the experience of grieving the loss of a loved one.

At the service, candles are lit, each representing the life and memories of someone special.

Please visit st-michaels-hospice.org.uk for more information.

Lego Club

Tuesday 16 December, 3.40 – 5 pm

Test your skills at creating crazy constructions and superstructures with Lego in the inspiring surroundings of Hereford Cathedral. Enjoy this freestyle Lego session in The Rear Nave with thousands of bricks and hundreds of mini-figures. The session will remain a free-play session until 4.45 pm, at which point we’ll come together to explore a Bible story from the Brick Bible and use our bricks to help tell the story.

This after-school session is free to attend, and booking is not required for this event.

Bereavement Café

Wednesday 17 December, 2.30 pm – 4 pm

Everyone is welcome to join us for an informal and friendly gathering for those who have been bereaved, recently or long ago.

Run by volunteers, this is a welcoming environment to share experiences and support.

ABF Christmas Family Concert

Wednesday 17 December, 7 pm

Among those performing at this year’s concert will be the Herefordshire Veterans Choir, the Herefordshire Youth Concert Band, Vocalise Choir, Marches Military Wives Choir, the Hereford Fanfare Trumpets, and STARS Military Youth Choir. Tickets can be purchased from The Courtyard Theatre box office 01432 340 555 or online at www.courtyard.org.uk/abf

Toddler Carol Service

Thursday 18 December, 10 am – 11 am

Bring your little ones to a special carol service just for toddlers in the Lady Chapel. Enjoy a delightful Nativity with storytelling, drama and beautiful Christmas songs. Dress up as your favourite Nativity character – a sheep, a star, Joseph, Mary or even a donkey!

Festival of Lessons and Carols

Monday 22 & Tuesday 23 December – 7 pm

Everyone is welcome to join us for our festival of Lessons & Carols. Admission by ticket only. Tickets are free and can be booked via the cathedral website, the Ticket Desk or by calling 01432 374 202

Wednesday 24 December - Christmas Eve Services

Morning Prayer – 8 am

Holy Communion – 10.30 am

Family Crib Service – 2 pm

A celebration of the Christmas story for children and families. Come dressed as a shepherd, angel or wise man!

Choral Evensong - 5.30 pm

With Blessing of the Crib. Everyone welcome.

Midnight Mass -11 pm

Wednesday 25 December - Christmas Day

Holy Communion with hymns - 8 am

Cathedral Eucharist – 10 am (Preacher: The Dean)

Choral Matins – 11.30 am (Preacher: The Bishop)

Holy Innocents' Day

Sunday 28 December, 3.30 pm

A quiet service of remembrance for parents and families who have suffered the loss of a child, whether recently or long ago. All welcome.

On-line edition extra photo page – pictures from the area

View towards The Sugar Loaf 19/11/25

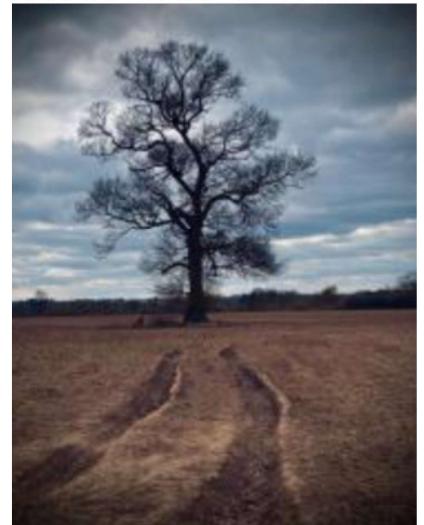


Golden Valley towards the snow capped Black Mountains 19/11/25



Winter in Kingsthorpe

Ross Tree & Tracks



Kingsthorne & Little Birch Gardening Club - Hergest Croft 24th October

