

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelw February 2023



PUB NIGHT

At Little Birch Village Hall



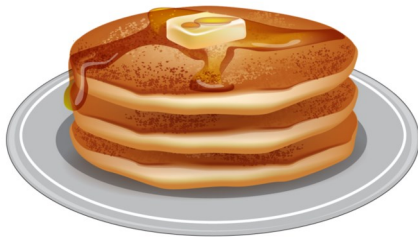
Saturday 25th February
7:30pm



BAR - MUSIC - FOOD

Little Birch Village Hall Pancake Evening

TUESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY
5:30PM - 7:30PM



COME AND ENJOY SOME
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Extras can be purchased at 50p each.
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IN THE
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at Much Birch
Community Hall

Thursday 16 February - MRS HARRIS GOES TO PARIS
PG

In partnership with the House of Dior, MRS HARRIS GOES TO PARIS tells the story of a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, and decides that she must have one of her own. After she works, starves and gambles to raise the funds to pursue her dream, she embarks on an adventure to Paris which will change not only her own outlook, but the very future of the House of Dior. *Starring Lesley Manville*

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Please note new prices from September 2022

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up this season...

Thursday 16 March - Borderlines Film Festival - LIVING
Saturday 18 March - Borderlines Film Festival - THE MENU
Thursday 27 April - FISHERMANS FRIENDS - ONE AND ALL
Thursday 25 May - THE PHANTOM OF THE OPEN

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

Paper Free Newsletter?

You can read The Birches Newsletter online at
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www.muchbirchparish.org.uk

Send an email to editorial@birchesnews.org.uk to
cancel your paper copy and receive an email link .



Footpath News

We have good news that Chris Fowler has come forward to take over the role of Voluntary Footpath Officer for Little Birch.

We welcome Chris and his wife Wendy who have recently moved to Kingsthorpe. Chris has already been out and about walking the footpaths and getting to know the area. Hopefully we will do a joint Parish Walk together in the spring.

If you need to report any footpath issues in Little Birch, please contact Chris at - chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk or 07931 292998

Angela Middleton

Mike Leigh is standing down as Voluntary Footpath Officer for Aconbury. More about this next month.



Coffee Morning with Book Exchange

Thursday 2nd & Saturday 18th February
10.00am - 12.00 noon

Little Birch Village Hall

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits. Make new friends or catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book, or both. Exchange recommendations for a good read. Families & well behaved dogs welcome.

look forward to seeing you



Much Birch Community Hall

Much Birch Community Hall has a new website! Check it out here for information about booking the hall and more -

www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org

Join us at the
Community Café
@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 11 February 2023

10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

11 March

8 April

13 May

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.

2 February – World Wetlands Day

Every year on 2nd February, World Wetlands Day is celebrated internationally. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in Ramsar, Iran. It was first celebrated in 1997.

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Revd Mark writes:

Nostalgia – it’s not what it used to be! A quote pinched from that great social commentator Peter De Vries, although it is often attributed to Yogi Berra. We like to look back, we like to think about how life was so much simpler, more enjoyable, with simple pleasures and sunny summers, cold winters and snow at Christmas.

But our memories trick us into remembering what we think we would like. There are just as many disappointing summers as sunny ones, non-white Christmases as white ones, etc. We like order and we like things to have a familiarity and so we build our memory world as we would like it to be, even if this is at odds with the data recorded on weather charts.

Life is more complicated now, though. I think we can all agree that life has more things to think about, to manage (or perhaps juggle) than in previous generations. We have more sources of entertainment, more distractions, more music, more visual stimulation than those who went before us. But it has brought us great advances – digital cameras, iPods, mobile phones. These, though, are a poor substitute for real relationships. As we found out during lock-down, we crave actual human beings to talk to, to interact with. And although Zoom and such are convenient and practical, they do not make up for the fact that we are not in the same room as someone.

As we move through 2023 maybe we should choose to make more relationships with real people in real places and become a little less dependent on those bits of electronics that are forever reminding us of the need to keep up appearances and to be “enjoying” life. Life is about living and sometimes that means doing the hard things, like relationships, rather than always choosing the easy options.

Services in February

5 th Feb – 3 rd Sunday before Lent	1.00 a.m. Little Birch Church - Holy Communion
12 th Feb – 2 nd Sunday before Lent	9.15 a.m. Much Birch Church – Holy Communion 1.00 a.m. Little Birch Church – Morning Worship
19 th Feb – Sunday next before Lent	9.15 a.m. Much Birch Church – Morning Worship 11.00 a.m. Little Birch Church – Holy Communion In traditional language
22 nd February – Ash Wednesday	10.30 a.m. Much Birch Church - Holy Communion with the imposition of ashes
26 th February – 1 st Sunday of Lent	9.15 a.m. Llandinabo Church – Holy Communion In traditional language.

February 2nd Candlemas Festival of Lights

This is the mid point between the shortest day and the Spring equinox.

When churches were lit only by candles this was the day on which all the candles that would be needed for the church during the year were brought in to be blessed.



Down with the rosemary and the bays
Down with the mistletoe
Instead of Holly, now we raise
The greener box (for show)

Robert Herrick



Jobs in the Garden for February

Last month at the time of writing my article we had just had an extremely cold period when carrots and parsnips were concreted in the ground and now at the time of writing this piece they are in danger of being washed away. It is certainly very squelchy everywhere. Our small paddock area is looking a lush green in between over 50 mole hills at the last count. I smile as I recall Jasper Carrot's account of "How to get rid of a mole". I am waiting for a few consecutive dry days so that I can give the grass a trim with the blades set high. I will be packing seed trays, sown with veg. and flower seeds into the propagator soon and then try to guess what crazy weather is going to be thrown at us during spring which is not so far away.

What else can we do?

- *Cut back herbaceous to the ground.
- *Good time to prune most roses.
- *Hardy shrubs that flower on new wood in Summer can be pruned now.
- *Keep Amaryllis going – after flowers fade cut stems back to base, keep warm and keep watering and feeding.
- *Refresh winter pot displays. Clear any thatch from faded plants and plant up with primroses, polyanthus and flowering bulbs
- *Sweet peas can be sown in pots, root trainers or the cardboard 'inners' of toilet rolls.
- *Cut back old Autumn Raspberries to ground level. If Summer fruiting Raspberries have grown taller than their support, cut stems back to about 10cm (4") above top wire.

- *Add a general fertilizer (Growmore or Blood, Fish & Bone) to all tree, bush and cane fruit, fork in lightly (roots are just below the surface) and mulch with farm yard manure or compost.
- *Sow Broad Beans in pots or root trainers and leave to germinate in greenhouse, cold frame or sheltered spot outdoor.
- *Sow chillies and peppers in a heated propagator or on a sunny window sill.

- *Complete hedge maintenance this month.
- *If you grow vegetables you can plant shallots.
- *Plant some early potatoes (Rocket or Swift are quick growers) in a tub, empty fertilizer or paint bucket, empty compost bag, all with plenty of drainage holes. Put 10 cm of compost in the bottom, put 2 or 3 potatoes on top of that with their 'eyes' looking upwards, then another 4 inches of compost on top of them. Keep moist, and importantly frost free. As the potatoes grow keep adding compost with a little general fertilizer, still keeping the compost moist.
- *Clean and sharpen garden tools.

- *Put up nesting boxes.
- *Continue to feed birds.
- *The compost heap, bonfire and any piles of wood or rubble should be disturbed cautiously in case there are sleeping creatures within.

Derek Scrivens

10 February - World Pulses Day

To spread awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.



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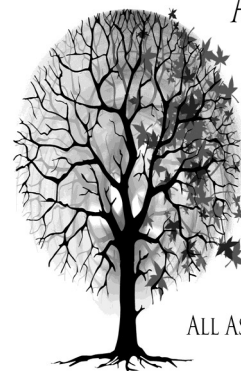
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Weather For the Week

Monday will be wet.
 Tuesday will be wetter.
 Wednesday will be much the same,
 Thursday little better.
 Friday will be wetter still –
 Easy to comprehend
 When this forecast culminates in
 Yet another wet weekend.

Charlotte McBee

11 February - International Day of Women and Girls in Science

To recognize the role of women and girls in science, not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change.

Farewell to Uncle Norman, Little Birch Evacuee

In recent issues we published Uncle Norman's memories of living in Little Birch as an evacuee. Kate Dillon, whose mother Maggie became lifelong friends with Norman, recently attended his funeral.

At his recent funeral, Uncle Norman's eulogy started with how much his childhood memories of his stay in Little Birch had meant to him, his true and lasting love of the countryside had been sparked and his enjoyment of that 'simple' country life had always stayed with him. Indeed, in later life he would still often speak so fondly of the times he stayed here.

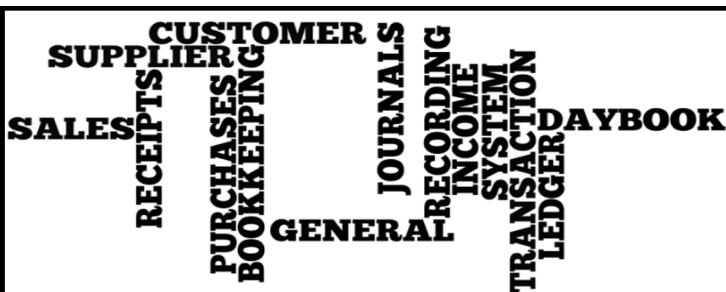
I feel we are incredibly lucky to live in Little Birch, our familiarity often means we often don't always appreciate what we have on our doorsteps, but if we do stop and take a little time to look around us I think we can all understand how this lovely area could, even now spark a true love of our countryside. **Kate Dillon**

The new year is well and truly upon us.

I wanted to briefly reflect on the Much Birch Christmas Village Market (9/12/22) and the Little Birch Mini Christmas Fayre (3/12/22). I enjoyed both events and my children had a great time at the Mini Christmas Fayre. They took part in the lucky dip, tried mulled apple juice for the first time and got to meet Father Christmas.

The Village Market had an eclectic mix of stalls. From high quality pet food to hand crafted greetings cards, there was a little something for everyone! I managed to purchase some lovely hand knitted cardigans and a cat figurine. All in all, it was an enjoyable afternoon on both days. Thank you for organising events that enable the community to get together.

Michael Agyeman (Kingsthorne)



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07739953864

I'm Richard, and I offer IT tech support around rural Hereford. I have 25 years' experience of working within technology, supporting a vast range of people, from technophobes to technogeeks!

I aim to specifically support the more senior users within our community, who often appreciate a completely different approach. I won't burden anyone with jargon and will offer only gentle and compassionate support. This can help the user feel more comfortable with tackling technology and lead to a growing confidence. Sometimes, the tech issue might be the initial reason for contact and all that's really required is someone to sit patiently and share a cuppa. I can do that too, I'm a great listener!

I can support you with many problems (here's a sample):

- General tips and advice
- Fault finding
- Software support
- New PC Installation / Setup
- Virus & Malware Removal
- Email Troubleshooting & Setup
- Broadband Internet & Router Setup
- Wi-Fi Range Issues
- Software Installation
- Windows Reinstall / Refresh
- Slow Computer Clean-up
- Printer Installation / Troubleshooting
- Backup Advice & Solutions
- Solid State Drive (SSD) Upgrades
- Data Recovery
- Laptop Battery Replacement
- PC & Laptop Upgrades & Advice

If you need a friendly chat over a cuppa, while I sort out your IT issues, please get in touch using the info above.

PILETES

with Alison Allan

Mondays 10.00 am - Intermediate level

11.15 am - Senior Citizens

Wednesdays 9.30 am - Beginner level

7.00 pm - Intermediate level

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Holme Lacy - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

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Much Birch Parish Meeting

At the Parish Council Meeting held in Much Birch Community Hall on the 5th January 2023 the Parish Council discussed, and agreed to comments in regard to two local planning applications. The Ward Councillor was present and had been in contact with regulatory bodies about the recent silt contamination in the village. She had obtained sight of the following statement in regard to the problem:

"The Much Birch/Wrigglebrook field:

The tenant farmer has received a formal caution on this one. I have it in writing from him that he will never again plant potatoes or maize on this field. He will revert to min-till combinable crops. He will greatly increase buffer strips. I am confident that this will vastly improve the situation. I have also informed the landowner that should this occur again that they will be 'knowingly permitting' the pollution of controlled waters and may be liable for allowing their tenant to create this situation."

The Parish Council also noted the method for reporting faults on the highways etc. as follows: Report defects and issues on the Highway and Public Realm via the Herefordshire Council website <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road> Customer Services. If urgent then please call 01432 261800

Or use the report it app <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reportingapp/>

Dates of meetings in 2023 are: Feb 2nd, March 2nd, April 6th, May 11th, June 8th, July 6th, No meeting in August, Sept 7th, Oct 5th, Nov 9th and Dec 7th.

The next ordinary Much Birch Parish Council Meeting will be on **Thursday 2nd February 2023 at 7.30pm** in Much Birch Community Hall. Please see notice boards and website for agenda. Public and press are more than welcome to attend the meeting and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

Much Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, HR2 8AW, thecooks@wyenet.co.uk

01981 540703; **Cllr Andrew Crum** Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AX,

Cllr Andrew Crum Tan-y-coed, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX,

a.crum@btinternet.com Tel. 01981 540002

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

Cllr David Baldwin Perry House, Much Birch, HR2 8HS baldwin79@btinternet.com 01981 541198;

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR28HT chris@pickering-grey.uk 07712 813218;

Cllr Joseph Goldsmith Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX

josephagoldsmith@hotmail.com 07967 728590

Much Birch Footpath Officer David Irwin david.irwin13@btinternet.com

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE

muchbirchclerk@gmail.com 01981 250860 Minutes

of the meetings are on the Parish Council website www.muchbirchparish.org.uk. You can also find us on

Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and

Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/>

Little Birch Parish Council Meeting

The following matters were discussed at Little Birch Parish Council's meeting on the 4th January 2023.

Mr Chris Fowler has agreed to take on the role of Parish Footpath Officer. The PC thanked him for undertaking this important work. He is presently being mentored by Angela Middleton.

Progress was reported in the PC's move to open a free bank account which will save approximately £100/year.

Any parishioners wishing to report any defects in the public realm such as potholes etc can do so via the Herefordshire Council portal

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road>

We intend to produce a brief summary of Parish Council proceedings following future meetings.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 8th February at 7pm in Little Birch Village Hall.

Little Birch Parish Councillors

Cllr Kate Dillon

Cllr Michael Davies

Cllr Kate Robbins

Cllr Chris Atkinson

Neil Barrington, clerk lbpcclerk@gmail.com

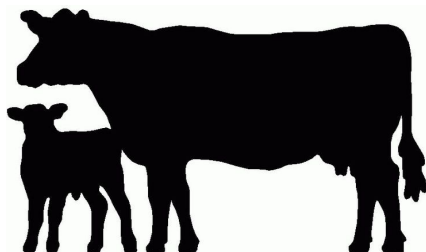
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Items for March newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or paper
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by
14th February

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Betty Bryant



25th April 1926, to 29th November 2022.

For those of you who don't know me, I am Betty's nephew Haydn and I am here to pay tribute to her on behalf of John's side of the family. She was born on the 25.4.26 and was christened Hilda Elizabeth Dancey, but as you all know was always known as Betty. Betty grew up in St Albans, Hertfordshire and remained very close to her parents and older sister Margaret all of their lives. She was very proud of her father, an RAF aircraft engineer, who was involved with the development of the Spitfire. During the Second World War he was shot during action, but fortunately survived and for many years she kept his flight jacket with the bullet hole.

As a girl she would often accompany her father to aircraft trials and races and once met Amy Johnson and Edward, The Prince of Wales. It was therefore natural, as a young woman, that along with her sister Margaret she would join the Women's Royal Airforce Service herself.

Betty always had a strong sense of duty and when her mother became unwell for a period of time, left school early to help nurse her back to health. She always professed to have never passed an exam in her life, but you would never have known, as she was very organised and dealt with her affairs independently, right up to the last few weeks of her life.

Betty worked for Murphy's Chemical Company in Wheathampstead, St Albans, as a secretary and it was here that she met her future husband, John Bryant, a horticulturalist. She was a keen theatre goer and John would often drive her to the station to catch the train to London. It was during these trips that their love blossomed and on the 7th of June 1967 they were married at Edburton Church, Sussex and my sister Nicola was a bridesmaid. I was only aged 3 but remember the day clearly and this was probably one of my earliest memories.

John was then working in Bedfordshire and the newly married couple set up home in Dunstable. It was here that we started the family tradition of spending a week or two of the school summer holidays with our aunt and uncle. Eventually, they made Herefordshire their permanent home and, as they moved several times, we looked forward to making friends with the local children and exploring the new areas. We especially looked forward to

helping on their strawberry field, but I think we ate more than we picked. Betty was an excellent cook and as a young boy with what was then termed a 'healthy appetite' - probably the reverse now - I looked forward to tucking in to a full English breakfast each morning, as well as lovely dinners with home made pies, tarts, cakes and puddings to follow.

They eventually settled down in King's Thorn, taking over the running of the local post office and general stores, which they did for several years, building a bungalow in the grounds, which would be their final home. They fully immersed themselves in village life, getting involved in the various charitable and social events, mainly around the village hall, but they were also members of Little Birch Church.

John was eventually nominated for a British Empire Medal by his neighbours and friends for his good works in the area and was accepted. Being a modest man, he was originally reluctant to accept it. However, Betty being level headed as always, pointed out to him that it would be an insult to those who had nominated him if he didn't and he was soon persuaded. She was very proud of this and all his achievements and was honoured to be twice invited to the Queen's garden party.

In later life, following her husband's death, Betty's sister came to live in Ross On Wye and would holiday and spend days out with John and Betty. Later she developed Parkinson's disease and Betty cared for her until she had to go into a nursing home.

My aunt and uncle liked to travel when possible and twice went to America, to Florida and New England, where one of their god children, also called Haydn, lives. In addition, Betty and John sponsored the education of two Indian brothers in their native country and they still write every year, even though they have been adults for some time.

Before his death, John had vascular dementia for a number of years, but Betty kept him at home for as long as she could, with the help of good friends and neighbours, but eventually he became a danger to himself and he willingly went into The Holmer Manor nursing home. Betty had mobility problems, but again with the help of friends to give her a lift, visited twice a week until Covid struck. She continued to phone him a couple of times a week until his death, just so he could hear her voice, even if he didn't fully understand what she was saying.

She carried on living in her own home, even after she became immobile for the last year, with the help of good friends and neighbours and the Alina Care Agency, with whom she struck up a good relationship.

I would like to particularly thank John and Jennie Caton on behalf of our family, who visited and helped Betty every day for a few years and even stayed overnight when she was close to death.

Others who also helped and we would like to thank, are their friends, Mike Morley, Lin Mason and her late husband Steven and neighbours Ping, Annie and Craig, to name but a few and apologies to anyone I have missed.

Betty was a person who was always willing to listen to advice, but knew her own mind and once it was made up, stuck resolutely to her decision. I recall a conversation I had with her a while back, with regards to a certain aspect of her proposed wet floor shower room, where we had opposing opinions. Betty ended the conversation by saying " I don't care what you call me, I'm not changing my mind". To which I replied " what am I going to call you" and we both roared with laughter.

She was a loyal and caring person, who took a keen interest in family, friends and neighbours and was pleased to recently become a great, great aunt to my sister's grand daughters. She loved animals and nature, but most of all she had a deep affection for dogs and had fond memories of the pets she had throughout her life.

I was pleased I was able to visit one last time to say goodbye, but she will be missed by us all.

Diary Dates February

Coffee & Books Meeting Thurs 5th 10-12 LBVH p2

LBPC Meeting Wed 8th February 7pm LBVH p7

MBPC Meeting Thurs 2nd February 7.30 MBCH p7

Community Café Sat 11th Feb 10-12.30 MBCH p2

Flicks in the Sticks Thurs 16th Feb MBCH 7pm p1

Coffee & Books Sat 18th February 10-12 LBVH p2

Pancakes 21st February LBVH p1

Pub Night 25th February LBVH p1

Tiddlers and Toddlers Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH

Table Tennis 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH

Venues MBCH Much Birch Community Hall

LBVH Little Birch Village Hall

Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

1/16 page £3.50 per issue or £35 per year

1/8th page £4.00 per issue or £40 per year

¼ page £4.50 per issue or £45 per year

½ page £8 per issue or £80 per year

Payment by BACS through Santander

Account Name **Little Birch Village Hall**

Sort Code **09-01-54** A/C No. **65493289**

February 14th Valentine's Day

Roman Emperor Claudius II banned marriage because he thought married men were bad soldiers. Valentine felt this was unfair, so he arranged marriages in secret. When Claudius found out, Valentine was thrown in jail & sentenced to death. He fell in love with the jailer's daughter. When he was taken to be killed on 14 February he sent her a love letter signed "from your Valentine".

Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact

Little Birch: Chris Fowler

chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk or 07931 292998

Aconbury: to be appointed

MuchBirch including **Kingsthorn:**

David Irwin 07766 135068

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

Defibrillator Locations

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs available to use locally for those experiencing 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 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

