


# The Birches



## Community Matters Newsletter – February Edition

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch, Aconbury & Wormelov



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

## Much Birch Parish Council

### Details of meeting held on 8/01/26

The parish council held their January ordinary Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 8th January 2026. The parish council discussed a planning consultation application number 253502 for The Wriggle, Ladywell Lane, Kingsthorpe. This was for the demolition of an existing garage and the building of an extension to the side of the bungalow. The parish council resolved that there were no objections to the proposals, but a comment would be made concerning a recent permission for a building plot, next to the site, that did not appear to be included in the submitted drawing.

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

### 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:

05/02/26, 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](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 February 2026  
10:00 - 12:30**

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

**14 March**

**11 April**

**9 May**

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 February

The first few days of January certainly gave us a taste of winter particularly the numerous days of bitter easterly winds that seem to go through you and not round. It was not difficult to stay indoors and thumb through the seed and plant catalogues that have arrived in the post and dream of luscious vegetables and arrays of beautiful flowers.

February is a good time to prune most roses.

Trim winter flowering heathers lightly after flowering.

Keep amaryllis growing - after flowers fade, cut the stem back to the base. Keep warm and watered adding some fertiliser every couple of weeks to feed the bulb.

Cut back herbaceous perennials to the ground.

Cut back autumn raspberry canes to the ground.

Add a general fertiliser to fruit trees, bushes and canes. Fork in lightly and mulch with manure or compost.

If you can keep them frost free, try planting some early potatoes (Rocket or Swift) in tubs or old buckets ( with drain holes). They need to be at least 15 inches deep and at least 1 foot in diameter. Plant 3 tubers per container.

Chit seed potatoes ready for planting outside.

Sow broad beans in pots or root trainers and keep in a sheltered place or cold frame or greenhouse.

Plant shallots when the soil is suitable to work.

Complete hedge maintenance this month.

Delay disturbing bonfires and compost heaps until hibernating animals have left ( hedgehogs, grass snakes etc)

Continue feeding birds. If you haven't eaten all your stored fruit, any decayed fruit can be chopped up and put out for them.



**Derek Scrivens**

## Gardening Club News



### Forthcoming Events

#### Quiz Night at LBVH on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January

To enter contact us on the email address below.

#### February 25<sup>th</sup> 2026:

##### Growing vegetables and getting the most from your efforts : A talk by Marion Stainton

Marion will be giving us tips ready to start planning for the Annual Show in September! Members free: visitors £5

#### Advance Notice: AGM – March 25<sup>th</sup> 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)



Club Members at the Christmas Social in December

A rectangular advertisement for 'The Jolly Gardener' is framed by a decorative border of pink flowers and green leaves. In the center is a circular logo featuring a cartoon illustration of a jolly gardener with a long white beard, wearing a brown hat and a green scarf. The text 'THE JOLLY GARDENER' is arched over the top of the logo, and 'EST. 2021' is written below it. Below the logo, the following services are listed in bold: 'Garden Maintenance &amp; pruning', 'Planting Schemes', 'Weed/Moss Control', and 'Garden Waste Removal\*\*'. At the bottom, the contact information is provided: 'Kyle - 07850921889' and 'thejollygardener2502@gmail.com'.

arts  
alive

FLICKS  
IN THE  
STICKS

at Much Birch  
Community Hall

Thursday 12 February - THE ROSES 15

All's fair when love is war in THE ROSES, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Olivia Colman. Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Ivy and Theo: successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. But beneath the façade of their supposed ideal life, a storm is brewing – as Theo's career nosedives while Ivy's own ambitions take off, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentment ignites. The Roses is a reimagining of the 1989 classic film The War of the Roses, based on the novel by Warren Adler.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream  
available from 7pm

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](mailto:muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com) or call 01981 540097

For further information about films and screenings visit  
[www.artsalive.co.uk](http://www.artsalive.co.uk)

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL

PUSS IN  
BOOTS

Pantomime

23, 24 & 31 Jan  
Tickets sold out!

\*\*\* New date added \*\*\*

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January

Last few tickets available

Adults £10, Children £5

contact

Tonya on

01981 540898

Margaret or Derek on on

01981 540374

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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Contact John Caton: 01981 540415



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Or email [lucymason@hotmail.com](mailto:lucymason@hotmail.com)

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Email:

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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 Kingsthorne:

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 Kingsthorne

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)
- 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](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!

1.30pm to 3.30pm January only

Otherwise 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 February



### Sunday 1st – Presentation of Christ in the Temple (Candlemas)

9.15 a.m. at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion  
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion with guest preacher – Archdeacon Derek CHedzny

### Sunday 8th – 2nd Sunday before Lent

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch Community Hall – Holy Communion  
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Morning Worship

### Sunday 15th – Sunday next before Lent

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch Community Hall – Morning Worship  
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

### Wednesday 18th – Ash Wednesday

10.30 a.m. at Much Birch Church – Holy Communion and imposition of ashes

### Sunday 22nd – First Sunday of Lent

9.15 a.m. at Llandinabo – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

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## The Robots are coming!

Hi Everyone,

As if we didn't have enough to worry about, what with AI threatening to take over the world, there has been a lot of development of robots in the last few years, and they are starting to emerge onto the public stage with some impressive characteristics.

In recent months, you may have seen or heard about Optimus from Tesla (probably another over-hyped Musk project), Boston Dynamics showing off robots with great flexibility and, on the war front between Ukraine and Russia, robots acting both as guards and as transport for supplies into dangerous areas and wounded soldiers out.

Suddenly, what seemed like Sci-Fi to those of us who grew up in the 60s is coming into reality. And it is time to think about a couple of the questions that this throws up.

I remember reading Isaac Asimov's novels about robots and the three laws. Robots essentially as helpers to humankind and slaves that would put human life above their own and the challenges that this presented. But if we have robots on the front line – see above – who controls who they fire at and who they might kill? There is a UN Conference working on these things, but, as often is the case, ethics are trying to catch up with reality.

And a second thought – if we have robots in the home to do all the boring things like loading the dishwasher, folding and ironing clothes, dusting (and you may have a robot vacuum cleaner at home already), what does this do for our leisure time? Make us just doom-scroll more or get out and meet people more?

Robots will, I suspect, be both a blessing and a curse, it is up to us to work out how we use them for the benefit of all humanity and not create a two-tier society of those who have them and have so much leisure time and those who don't who are scrabbling to make ends meet because a lot of the menial jobs have now gone.

Rev'd 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)

## Winter Parish Walk

Sunday 1st February



**2pm at Little Birch Village Hall**

Approximately 4 mile walk  
You are welcome to bring well behaved dogs  
Refreshments in the hall on our return

Further details from Chris Fowler  
[chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk) 07931292998

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Contact Linda Maden  
on 07849 637242  
[www.birches.news/lbvh](http://www.birches.news/lbvh)

## Parish Stiles

The Much Birch Parish Council have contracted Enviroability in 2025/26 to replace many stiles in the Parish. I'm pleased to say all the stiles between the Axe and Cleaver pub down to Llanwarne have been repaired and replaced. These have been neglected for many years. Enviroability are a charity who employ people who might have difficulty getting employment elsewhere. There are currently grants available from the Public Rights of Way team at Hereford Council that might not be available next year so it's good to get the improvements in now. I'm still hoping that we can continue to improve our local footpaths for all to enjoy.



David Irwin

Much Birch PFO

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



(Except on New Years Day)



### ~~~~~ Book of the month

The book I'd like to feature this month is :  
"Reminders of the Day" by Shaun Bythell.  
This is the 4th in a series of best-selling books about a young man who started running a bookshop in Wigtown, Dumfries and Galloway in 2001.  
Shaun was a law graduate but decided he didn't want to practise and spent a few years doing dead-end jobs before taking a leap of faith and throwing himself into the business of selling second-hand books.  
The story takes the form of diary entries in which he describes his customers and daily happenings and how many books he sold. He admits that he doesn't make much money but does the job because he loves it.  
In 1998 Wigtown was designated Scotland's National Book Town, (There are 20 book related businesses in the town) and the Wigtown Book Festival attracts hordes of visitors every year.  
Shaun's grumpy but witty descriptions of his customers and staff are a joy. He famously despises Amazon and Kindles and once shot a Kindle and mounted it on his wall!

Jenifer



## St. Mary's Church Christingle and Carol Service and Lent Lunch

Thank you to Hereford Christmas Trees for once again providing us with a lovely tree, thank you to those who helped decorate it, it looked beautiful. Thank you to everybody who did their windows, the church looked really festive, all the candles were lit for the Christingle service which was well attended with everybody receiving a Christingle orange to take home. After the service we had tea and homemade mince pies, provided by Christine and Peter Dowsett, thank you they were delicious. The collection at the service was £166.24 which has been sent to the Children's Society.

Easter this year is very early and so therefore is the Lent Lunch, which will take place at Little Birch Village Hall on 20th February at 12.30. Come along and enjoy a selection of delicious homemade soups, if anybody would like to make a soup please let John Caton know, tel. 01981540415. All donations will go to the Sightsavers Charity, which we have always supported, they do life changing operations that really do make a difference. Help us to raise as much as we can and enjoy this worthwhile event.

## Use of the roadside grit bins

With the recent cold weather and icy conditions a reminder that when using the grit in the roadside bins it only needs to be spread thinly as it is moved on by vehicle tyres. For treating roads, paths, and driveways, the generally recommended amount is 10 to 30 grams of grit per square metre, this is roughly equivalent to a heaped tablespoon. Leaving it in big clumps uses the bin stock up quickly and doesn't give any more benefit. Also a reminder that the grit is for the road and not for use on private drives.



## Much Birch Community Hall

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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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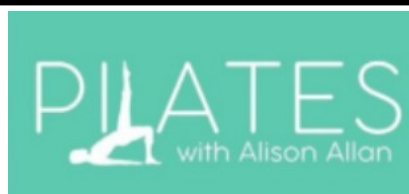


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Web: [www.plumbingbusters.co.uk](http://www.plumbingbusters.co.uk)



## 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](http://www.perfectbalance.life)  
Email ✉ [alison@perfectbalance.life](mailto:alison@perfectbalance.life)

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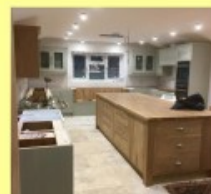


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Your Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) is a group of local police officers and staff dedicated to serving your community. The team is made up of police officers, special constables, police community support officers and volunteers, supported by additional officers and staff from the wider area.

We work closely with local authorities, community leaders and residents to decide our policing priorities for your area. This helps us to find useful, long-term solutions to local problems, while maintaining our wider focus on preventing and reducing crime, protecting the vulnerable and providing reassurance across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire.

How to contact our local policing team:

Team email: [herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.police.uk](mailto:herefordsouthside.snt@westmercia.police.uk)

- Safer Neighbourhood Officer:  
PC 21260 Martin Gillett Mobile: 07970 544262
- Safer Neighbourhood Officer:  
PC 21946 Jack Davies Mobile: 07817 158224
- Safer Neighbourhood Officer:  
PC 2347 Lyn Johnson Mobile: 07773 048377
- Safer Neighbourhood Officer:  
PC 22088 Dan Ovel Mobile: 07929 721340
- Safer Neighbourhood Officer:  
PC 21198 Brian Gosson Mobile: 07973 846336
- Police Community Support Officer:  
PCSO 6324 Carol Marsh Mobile: 07890 524667
- Police Community Support Officer:  
PCSO 40259 Hayley Warne Mobile: 07773 052560
- Police Community Support Officer:  
PCSO 40272 Lewis Thomas Mobile: 07773 051508

They are happy to receive calls from Members of The Public but please do not use these to report crimes and/or incidents. For more information on reporting a crime/incident please go to [www.westmercia.police.uk](http://www.westmercia.police.uk) and select 'Report' or call 999 (Emergency) / 101 (Non-Emergency).

### From the Editor

Having moved to Kingsthorpe in 2021, retiring from a busy working life in 2024 I have been pleased to be able to help out with a few local community roles. In late 2024 I became Treasurer of Little Birch Village Hall and of the Kingsthorpe and Little Birch Gardening Club. I also rediscovered my musical past and now play the tuba with Forest of Dean Brass. It's great to have the time to do all of these things and keep active!

My latest assignment has been taking on the editorial work for The Birches Newsletter in November. I'm enjoying putting together the various pieces of information, photos and local adverts and believe that a good Newsletter relies on your input. Any community information or news items for inclusion are welcome and can be sent to me at the email address in the block to the right. Here you can also find the deadline for the next edition and details of how to advertise with us.

With best wishes for 2026  
John Ellis-Braithwaite : **Editor**



## 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 13th February 2026**

You can contact the Editor at the following email address:

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

### Would you like to advertise with us?

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## Local winter landscapes

Photo by Geoff Nichol

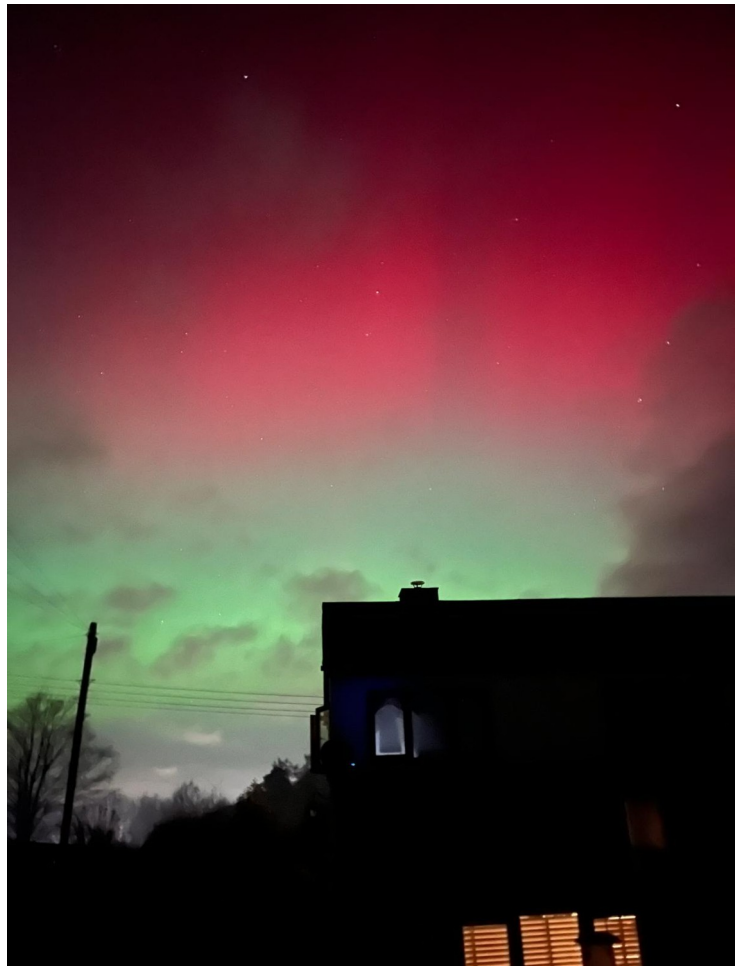
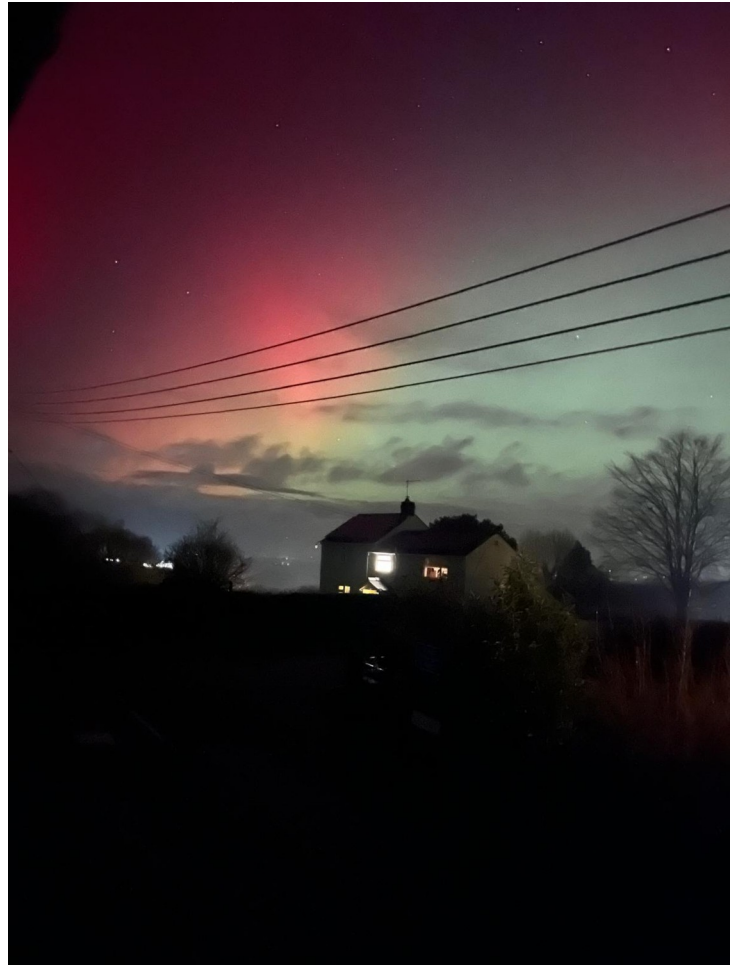


Photo by Ed



Photo by Ed





Northern Lights Photos by Chris and Wendy Fowler



