

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

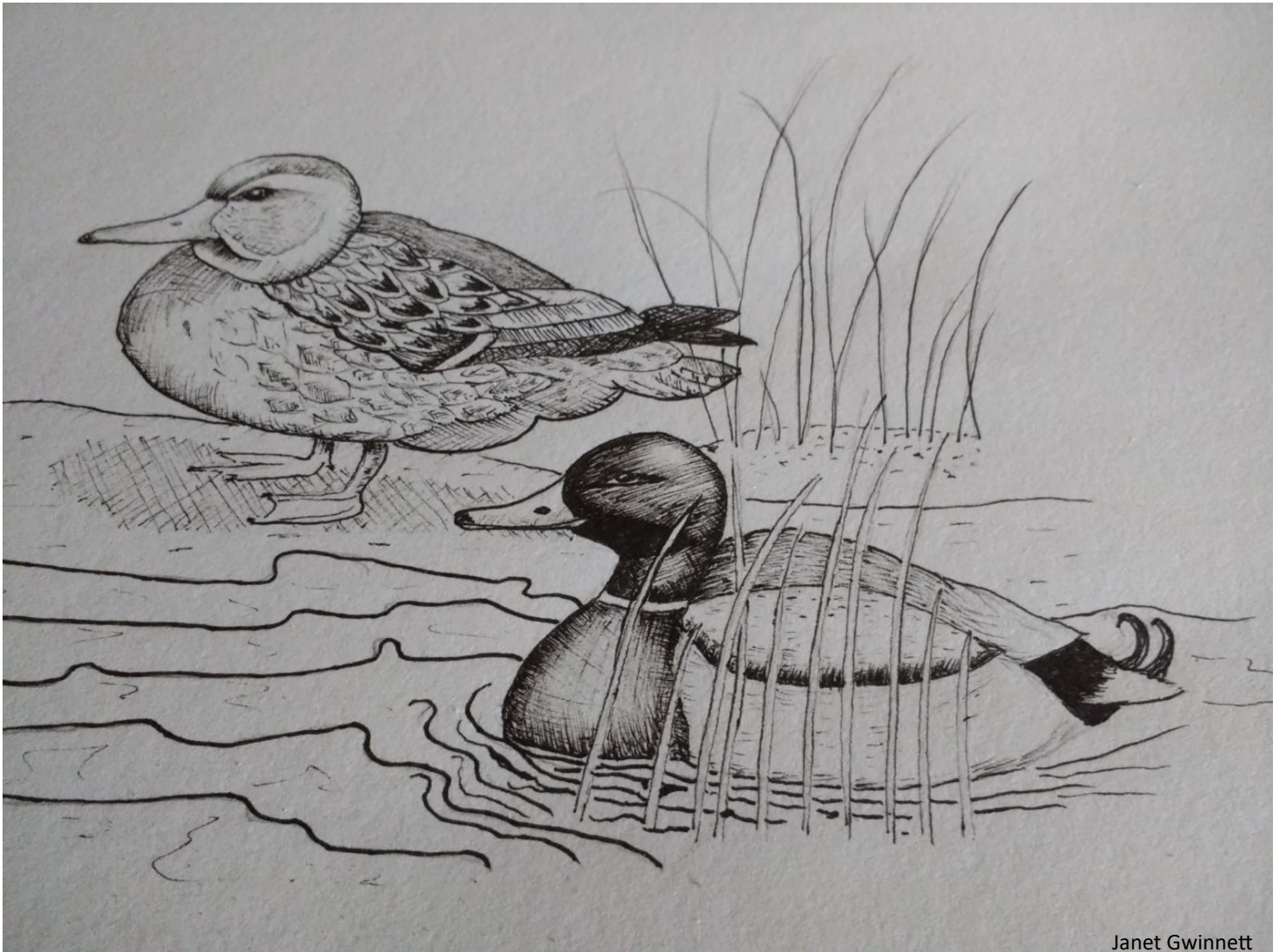
**Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelow**

January 2022



First published 1977

**Happy
New
Year**



Janet Gwinnett

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.



The first Parish Walk of the Year
Sunday 16 January at 1.45pm

walking from Little Birch Village Hall
down Conigre Lane past Strickstenning
Hall and back through Athelstan's Wood
to the hall for refreshments - **4.2 miles**.
All welcome!

Angela Middleton

01981 540377 ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk

Little Birch Voluntary Footpath Officer

Trouble with Footpaths?

Contact numbers below if you have any foot-
path issues

Aconbury - Mike Leigh 01981 540698

Much Birch including Kingsthorpe - Al Davies
07872 548440 or alanrkd@gmail.com

Little Birch - Angela Middleton 01981
540377 or ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk



Join us at the
Community Café
@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 8 January 2022
10:00 - 12:30

and continuing every 2nd Saturday of the month
12 February 12 March 9 April

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



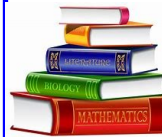
*A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links
and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.*

Coffee Morning with Book Exchange

Thursday 6th January
& Saturday 15th January

10.00am - 12.00 noon

Little Birch Hall



Come and enjoy a cup of
tea or coffee, some cake or biscuit.
Make new friends or catch up with
old friends.

Take a book, leave a book, or both.

Exchange recommendations for a
good read. Families and well be-
haved dogs very welcome.

looking forward to
seeing you



New Year, New Ideas

The editorial team have been thinking about the
newsletter. What would you like to see in it? Do let
us know if you have suggestions. We look forward
to hearing your ideas. We also welcome contribu-
tions of articles, news, photos and artwork.

The printed copy version of the newsletter has two
pages in colour, but if you view it online on Much
Birch or Little Birch Parish website you can see all
the photos in full colour.

If you prefer to get your newsletter by email let us
know editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

May you have a happy and healthy New Year.

Editorial Team

Hi Everyone,

And a happy New Year to you all.



I hope that Christmas was a good as could be hoped for and that 2022 treats you well!

Following on from COP 26 in Glasgow last year, the world set some ambitious targets for reduction of CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses. The question is, can we hold governments and corporations to these targets? As “little people” we have only small levers with which to change the way the world is run. However, as St Paul points out, a rudder is only a small lever and yet has a great effect on the direction of a ship. We all know, though, that to skilfully pilot a large vessel, you need to know where the currents are, which way the wind is blowing and where the sandbanks are. So it seems to me that we need to know what governments and corporations are doing and then hold them to account.

It is easier to find out about some governments than others, and pretty hard to find out about corporations! Both are very good at greenwash! But if we don't make the effort and push these organisations, we will struggle to get them to change and make the world sustainable for us and the generations to come.

Can I just big up, then, the Save the Wye group. Here are local people taking the time to work to protect the local environment. There are a number of challenges facing them, but by bringing in a wide group of people, they are able to find the expertise required and get the local councillors, politicians, farmers and water companies to pay attention. If you want to volunteer some time to support them as a New Year resolution, they would be very grateful of your support.

It is grassroots organisations like this which can ensure that the little levers are magnified and that action is taken!

With every blessing,

Revd Mark



Service for Jan 2022

Jan 2: 11.00 am Little Birch – Holy Communion

Jan 9: 9.15 am Much Birch – Family Communion

11.00 am Little Birch – Morning Worship

Jan 16: 9.15 am Much Birch – Celtic Morning Worship

11.00 am Little Birch – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

Jan 31: 10.30 am Much Birch Community Hall – Informal Café style service

Feb 6: 10.30 am Llanwarne – Special service to celebrate 70th Anniversary of the Accession of the Queen to the Throne with a performance of “Zadoc the Priest” by a gathered choir.



Jobs in the garden for January



Poinsettia – Shop outlets have a habit of displaying these near a door to catch your eye. It is likely that the draft and incoming cold air will cause the foliage to drop off within a short while. Buy those that are displayed in a warmer location in future. For a bit of fun try keeping a plant with a view to it flowering the following year. When the leaves fall, cut the stems back to about 2 to 3 inches. Keep the compost almost dry. In early May, water well and then repot removing some of the old compost. Feed regularly. The plant should start to produce new growth. Keep the strongest 4 or 5 new shoots and remove any others (those cut off can be used as cuttings. Stand in water for a few hours to stop the latex bleeding from the cut). The important bit – Each evening from the end of September for 8 weeks you must exclude light from the plant for at least 14 hours daily. Cover with a box or place in a cupboard and ensure complete darkness for the whole 14 hours duration. After the 8 weeks treat the plant normally. I have succeeded a couple of times.

What else can we do?

Prune young deciduous trees while leafless to improve the structure and with mature trees, thin the branches, and if desired, raise the canopy.

Destroy spotted/blotched leaves of Pansy/Viola as this is probably a fungal disease.

Cut back the foliage on Hellebores so flowers aren't obscured by old leaves. This will also help to control Hellebore leaf spot disease.

Pinch out tips of Autumn sown sweet peas. Provide protection if adverse weather occurs.

Sow summer brassicas – cauliflower calabrese and cabbage – in a propagator or on a warm window sill. Grow on in a frame or greenhouse.

Buy seed potatoes and onion sets.

If you intend to show large onions (over 9 oz) sow seeds at the beginning of the month in a seed tray or cell tray. Place on a warm window sill if you do not have a heated propagator. When germinated and the seedlings have reached the 'crook' stage prick out and plant into individual pots, providing as much light as you can.

Begin forcing rhubarb by placing a large inverted receptacle over the crowns.

Do the monthly check of stored apples, pears, potatoes and onions, removing any rotten fruits.

Keep bird feeders stocked with fresh food, birdbaths clean and with fresh water, and clean out and re-hang nesting boxes.

Recycling in the garden – plastic yoghurt and cream pots, margarine tubs and fruit punnets all make good growing containers. Cardboard tubes – from toilet rolls and kitchen towels – can be placed on their ends in boxes or large plastic catering size mushroom trays and filled with compost. These are ideal for sowing beans and sweet peas. **Derek Scrivens**

Much Birch Parish Council

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House, Gooses Foot, Kingstone, Herefordshire HR2 9NE
Tel. 01981 250860 Email: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com 4th December 2021

PARISH MEETING - held in the Much Birch Community Hall 2nd December 2021.

The Parish Council looked at two further planning applications for the parish, and one for a neighbouring parish, and agreed on comments to be made. The Parish Council also heard further updates on the work of Herefordshire Council from Ward Councillor Toni Fagan. The dates for next year's meetings have been set and are advised below:

January 6, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 9, July 7, September 8, October 6, November 10 and December 8. No meeting in August.

The next Ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 6th January 2022 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 the meeting and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

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 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 [rois-](#)

Defibrillator Locations

Did you know that there are a number of AEDs available to use locally for those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest? A defibrillator is a sophisticated, yet easy to use, medical device that can analyse the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electrical shock or defibrillation to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

Allensmore – located at Locks Garage

Backney – located on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage

Bridstow – located on the outside of the village hall

Garway - located on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub

Harewood End - located at Harewood End Inn on the outside of the pub around the back in the beer garden

Little Birch - on the outside of the village hall

Llanwarne - located on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall

Much Birch - located on the outside of the church hall

Much Dewchurch - located outside Steiner School, first building after the church

Peterstow - located at the Yew Tree pub

Sellack - located on the outside of the parish hall (key code required)

St Weonards – located on the old BT phone kiosk off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage

Wormelow – located at the Cricket Club AND at the Carrot and Wine shop

Wilton – located on the wall at the BP garage on the roundabout



THE MASONS AT MERRIVALE

I wrote my last article back in July and so much has happened this year. We took our first cut of silage in late May instead of much earlier in the month because of the very cold April and then wet May. We thought this delay would mean we would only manage 3 cuts this year, not the usual 4, but of course nature sorting itself out, we took our final cut in the good weather in mid October. In contrast to 2020, we have a good supply of silage to feed through this winter.

On top of that, we have the fodder beet, a new crop for us this season. We have had a great yield from it but are learning as we go and, weather permitting, will plant it later next year to allow us more time to cultivate the ground for weed control. This year the beet grew fantastically, as did the fat hen with it! Being organic, our only method of weed control is by cultivation & hoeing so the more we can do before we plant to produce a clean seed bed the better.

The cows absolutely love eating the beet. It is obviously very tasty for them and is a very valuable high energy feed, being very beneficial to fresh calved cows who relish the energy boost. Their winter diet consists of grass silage, whole crop silage, fodder beet and a concentrate blend. This is fed at barriers outside the milking robots and then they eat extra cow cake while milking in the robots.

We have been fortunate in being able to rent an additional 60 acres of land locally and will use this to grow more cereals in a bid to make ourselves more self sufficient in concentrate feed. The ground will go into organic conversion in the spring and will then take 2 years to gain full organic status. It has been planted with winter wheat which will have to be sold as we cannot use this in the first year of conversion. In the second year (C2), we will be allowed to feed a certain percentage before it is fully organic from the third year onwards. We have sheep everywhere on the farm at the moment cleaning up the pastures to ensure fresh grass growth in the spring. These sheep are all organic, one flock from Holme Lacy College and another from the Welsh hills.

Of course our big event of the year was the opening of the milk hut on 1st October. We had hoped to open in April but there were so many hold ups with the grant application, sourcing materials, availability of contractors, machine deliveries and everything else COVID had to throw at us.

The first week of opening was manic, those who visited us will remember the machine payments weren't working properly and had to be manned for a few days, a far cry from the self service option we thought we'd signed up for!

Teething problems now sorted, we've been delighted and very grateful for all of the local support. It's a real morale boost to meet customers old and new and have a chat when they visit. I really do enjoy meeting folks when I'm at the hut. I try to go when it's not too busy as I'm not generally dressed in my best, maybe I'll have smarter gear for Christmas!

We have been surprised by the popularity of the vegetables and due to this realise we will have to up our acreage next year to keep up with supply. Bob has spent hours planning next season's planting quantities and schedule to maintain a constant range of fresh veg next year.

Emily has also had to increase the number of cakes she's baking to keep up with demand but has now settled into a routine, as the rest of us have, to manage supply. We're not quite sure what will happen over Christmas and just how busy we will be but I can let you know all about that next time.

The winter routine on the farm is in full swing now, with all animals housed meaning they're kept in the warm and fed and bedded daily. The fantastic dry weather has meant we have been able to cart muck out to the fields ready for spreading in the spring. I think like everyone, we look forward to passing the shortest day so we can think ahead to spring and the cycle beginning again, who knows what next year will bring.

In good news, Zorro Patty the little calf that broke her leg has mended nicely. After much TLC from everyone, her cast came off after 6 weeks & although a little crooked it's mended nicely. She's now weaned and growing nicely ready to be turned out with her pals in Spring.

We thank everyone for the support they have given us over the past year and wish you all the very best for 2022.



We started table tennis sessions at Little Birch Village Hall in April 2019 and have been running every month since subject to Covid-19 regulations. Since restarting after the last lockdown we have introduced enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of all tables and equipment as well as removing one of the older tables to allow for additional separation of the remaining three tables. Attendance has been good and everyone seems to enjoy themselves, no doubt assisted by the homemade cakes provided by Denise. We enjoy the company of all players no matter what your capabilities or standard of play. You will always be made welcome.

You don't need to dress up in any specific clothing as long as it's comfortable for you. Neither do you need any equipment as we have more than enough to ensure that everyone has their own bat, although we do have one or two members who insist on changing bats regularly as theirs always seems to develop technical faults!

Sessions are held on the first Tuesday of every month between 7pm and 9pm subject to any Covid restrictions. We charge just £2.00 a head to help with the cost of refreshments and heating. If you need more information please contact me on 01981 541356. **Peter Rees**



Father Christmas and husky (not reindeer) at the Craft Fair photo Caroline Pritchard



**FLICKS
IN THE
STICKS**

**at Much Birch
Community Hall**

Thursday 20 January 7.30 pm - Supernova (15)

Concert pianist Sam (Colin Firth) and novelist Tusker (Stanley Tucci), partners for 20 years, are travelling into the Lake District in their trusty camper van to visit friends, family and places from their past. Since Tusker's diagnosis of early-onset dementia two years previously, they are all too aware that their time together is precious. Subtle, moving and believable, the movie rests on two low-key but masterful performances.

Refreshments including hot dogs available from 7pm

Tickets £4.50 (£3.50 under 16s)

Tickets available in advance or on the door - 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 (online booking available!)

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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

Little Birch Parish Council

Your Councillors

Peter Rees Chair

Janet Gwinnett Vice Chair

Kate Dillon

Michael Davies

Kate Robbins

Angela Middleton, Volunteer Footpath Officer

Sophie Glover, Clerk 01432 617306

lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Website www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org



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The Nightmare

Bar and Events

We are a mobile bar set up on a semi permanent basis opposite the closed country pub The Castle Inn in Little Birch. Offering a range of cask ale and Draught products as well as a wide variety of hot and cold drinks.

Whether you want a quiet drink in our fairy light grotto or a good old chinwag with our friendly patrons, you can come and relax after that stressful week in one of our heated gazebos. Let all worries float away in to the night sky because you and I know we all need it after the last two years. We welcome all here.

Friday 1800 till 2200

Saturday: 1500 till 2200

Sunday 16.30 till 2100





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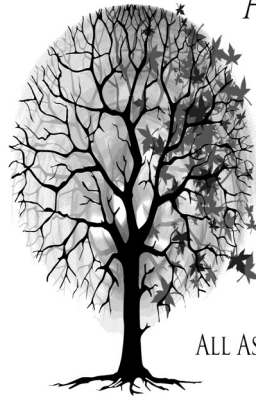
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Update from Herefordshire Advanced Drivers

During the autumn we were able to continue with the mentoring of those who had started the Advanced Driving Course before the lockdowns. Many have now passed whilst most of the remainder have reached test standard and are awaiting their test drives. This is now enabling us to arrange Driver Refresher Days which will begin early in the New Year. Apart from those arranged for specific organisations, we are organising a programme of such days for the general public across the county and throughout the year. Feedback from previous participants shows that almost all of them are of the opinion that having attended they are driving more safely and with greater confidence in difficult driving conditions.

The sessions include an observed drive in participants' own cars with a trained and experienced observer whose role is to gently and encouragingly ensure that the various principles of safe driving discussed during the day are being put into practice. Thereafter, many participants decide to take the Advanced Driving Course but the really important factor is that they are driving more safely. Incidentally, these days are suitable for drivers of all ages provided they hold a valid UK driving licence and anyone who would like further details should contact Stella at: group-contact@advanced-drivers.org.uk or tel. 01432 840835.

Driving in Winter

Driving conditions in winter can be particularly hazardous and it is vital to be prepared for the worst. Before setting out on any journey check the weather forecast. Ensure tyres are at the correct pressures and that all lights are operating correctly. Are windscreen wipers in good condition and is the battery fully charged? Also, check all liquids (oil, coolant, brakes, power steering and windscreen fluid – it is worthwhile adding screen wash to prevent freezing of the windscreen fluid). Clean all windows, light covers and mirrors. Take a torch with you together with a blanket, emergency food and a hot drink if very cold weather is forecast – you could be delayed by blocked roads or accidents.

Switch on lights as soon as visibility deteriorates. Aim to avoid any sharp braking by good anticipation. Maximise visibility of the road ahead by good positioning, check in mirrors before signalling and do so in good time. Limit speed so that you can always stop within the distance of the road ahead that is clear and maintain at least that distance from the vehicle ahead. Beware of being blinded by low sun and watch for ice particularly where sunshine does not reach the road surface due to overhanging trees or shade from buildings.

Finally, do not be intimidated, frustrated or angered by poor or aggressive driving by others. Your priority is to arrive safely and to do all you can to ensure the safety of other road users. A very happy New Year to you all and drive safely.

Bereavement Counselling

The Counselling and Bereavement Team from St Michael's Hospice can offer support to anyone in Herefordshire who has experienced loss, whether or not their loved one was cared for by the hospice. This could include a listening ear, coming along to a pub meal, an art group or joining in with one of our walking groups embracing our fine country air. To find out more please contact Sarah on 01432 852627 or email sjenkins@smhospice.hereford.org



Arts and Crafts Space



The art and craft group has been running successfully, fortnightly on a Thursday from September through to December 2021.

The Art contingent of the group has been drawing and painting with a variety of Media on subjects such as Landscapes, Nature, Birds, Flowers etc.

The Crafters have produced quilting and knitting for local businesses knitting teddy bears for the local hospital and knitting animals for School Fayres.

The highlights of the term included a session taken by Bob Chance who made still-life great fun with cutting and sticking coloured paper and drawing bottles and bowls. A very enjoyable time was had by all.

So thank you very much to Bob.

Next Janet Gwynnett led a Christmas wreath making session, bringing with her a lot of foliage and Christmas materials to use. It was a great success with everyone producing a Christmas wreath to be proud of as well as having a lot of fun and with much laughter.

And lastly Helen Atkinson did a Christmas cards workshop. Also bringing an amazing array of items and materials for us to work with. Another resounding success enjoyed by all.

So thank you so much Helen for that.

The group is starting again on Thursday 13th January.

Thank you to all those supporting Arts and Crafts Space this year. Looking forward to seeing you all again in the new year.

Sally Nichol sally.nichol@btinternet.com



Kings Thorn and Little Birch Gardening Club – Exciting News

After a long gap in our activities the gardening club are getting organised for a new season of talks and visits and of course the highlight of the year, the Annual Horticultural Show. We will start up again in January 2022 and hope that all previous members will return and of course we extend an open invitation to anyone who may be interested in one, some or all of our talks and activities.

On January 26th we will welcome Alun and Gill Whitehead from Aulden Farm, Leominster. They are going to talk about the **‘Hidden Gardens of Herefordshire’**. This will get us all in the mood for getting out and about again after such a long period where many of us have not gone very far at all.

On February 23rd we will welcome Kevin Alviti who will talk to us on **‘Unusual Fruit and Vegetables’**. Kevin is an enthusiastic grower who will entertain us with his amusing anecdotes of how he attempts to be as self sufficient as possible with his young family. He will also inspire us with new ideas and I am sure that we will all be trying out some of his ideas in the new season ahead.

On March 30th we will be holding our AGM when the new program will be revealed. We will also be hearing a short talk from Derek Scrivens, our local gardening guru, who we all admire for his lifetime of knowledge and experience.

All of our meetings take place in Little Birch Village Hall at 7.30pm. We always have refreshments and time for a chat and usually we have a bring and buy stall where members can bring surplus plants etc. There will be no charge for the first two meetings (Yes, free entertainment) but we will be charging our bargain fees after that.

For further information phone Janet Gwinnett 01981 540651 and leave a message.
All are welcome to attend.



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Articles for February to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or
paper copy to Elisabeth Taylor
07854 629193 by **18th January**

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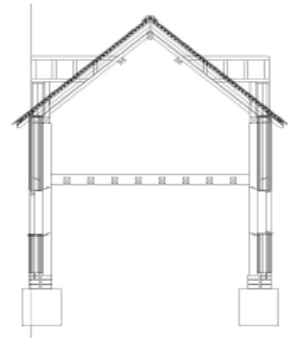
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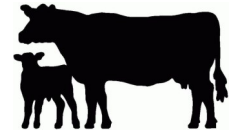
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The beef is available in mixed boxes which start at £65. Individual cuts and packs are also available.

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



Recycling Christmas

Cut up old Christmas cards to make tags for presents next Christmas. Use a hole punch to make a hole in the card and thread with ribbon, wool or string.

Save your wrapping paper. Iron out creases if necessary (or get the cat to sit on it). You can use ribbons and wool (instead of sticky tape) to tie up parcels so the paper does not get torn when they are unwrapped.



Yesterday upon the stair

I met a man who wasn't there

He wasn't there again today

I wish that man would go away



**Healthy
Efficient
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Award winning straw and timber panel system for your house, extension or a garden studio

Contact: George Mikurcik 07817 779419
Website: ecococon.eu



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.

My clients are aged between 18 and 95 so there is no excuse! Just give me a call!

Tel: 01432 840491 Mob: 07947 011707

Email: Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com

Or on Facebook



Parish Photography Walk

Angela Middleton, the footpaths officer, very kindly organised a photography walk on Sunday 21st of November led by Nick Daly, a local professional photographer. We started off in Aconbury woods and then walked around Kingsthorpe.

Throughout the walk Nick demonstrated many aspects of photography such as composition and camera settings, explaining in detail how to go about producing outstanding images and photo-editing techniques. Eventually then, how to sell your images commercially. The walk was very well attended with at least twenty of us.

At the end of the walk we all went back to Little Birch village hall for very welcome refreshments kindly laid on by Angela. Nick continued his talk and explained the use of flash in photography. A good time was had by all and everyone was able to take away something new to them about the enormous subject of photography. With thanks to Angela Middleton for organising the Photography Walk and much appreciation to Nick Daly for a successful, informative and most interesting session. Many thanks, Nick.



Herefordshire Walking Festival celebrates its 20 year anniversary from Saturday 18th June to Sunday 26th June 2022. It originally started in 2002 following the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease. Since the start the Walking Festival has been a huge success. "We are really excited that 2022 will give us the opportunity to be bigger and better by celebrating walking and all Herefordshire has to offer" said organizer, Liz Hill. One advantage during lockdown was that so many people were able to explore new areas on their own doorstep. We would like the festival to encourage more people to continue to find new 'hidden gem' walks and join like-minded people during this annual event."

We Want You!

Herefordshire Walking Festival are looking for new volunteer Walk Leaders based in Herefordshire who would like to showcase their area to both local residents and visitors. We are looking for walk leaders or back markers at all levels of ability. The festival committee members can provide mentors and advice, if required. If this is something that you would like to try and get involved in, please get in touch.

Liz Hill 01432 370514 info@herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk