

THE *Birches*

Community Matters

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

First published 1977 **July 2020**

A note from the Editorial Team of "The Birches" Newsletter

The Little Birch Village Hall Committee have been considering options for reopening the Hall for some events but, obviously, precautions need to be taken regarding distancing, insurance and many other considerations. They are contacting the organisers of events to take their views.

We understand that both The Pilgrim and The Axe and Cleaver will be reopening in July but would suggest that you contact them or visit their websites before turning up on the doorstep!

We are, once again, very grateful to those who have contributed to this edition of the Newsletter.

The Birches community

Learning about kindness, giving and receiving the past 3 months

Context.....The cancellation of an important post chemotherapy Consultant appointment at the Renton unit (scheduled for two days after lock down) was a huge disappointment but the experience of 'post treatment' consultations provided the basis for a positive forward plan for living and we hoped that we would not be forgotten or lost in the system? We took the decision that we would both keep to the recommendations of the government shielding letter.

Survival essentials ...learning how to negotiate shopping on line (hours of seeking a slot) was an immediate challenge and the arrival of the first supermarket delivery van and driver whilst a symbol of a small personal success was met with unexpected (from me) tears of gratitude. This emotional reaction was further (unexpectedly) evident when following a local delivery from the Wormelow stores there was a cheerful wave and hello from Ella at the end of the drive. The team at the local shop have been a consistent source of positivity and link with the wider community.

Time to 'get a grip!' and say Thank you. The need for acceptance of a new role of being a recipient of offers of help from others was a challenge and I am immensely grateful to those who quietly kept in touch and provided assistance with the practical issues such as posting letters (the small packages that require attendance at the post office!) and making face masks. We have really missed the community presence of John Bryant but Betty has been in touch and the daily visit by our ever-cheerful postman is a real tonic. We have also much appreciated the community spirit engendered by the Thursday evening celebration of the NHS keeping us in loud touch with others in Much Birch and Little Birch. On days when there was a possibility of it all becoming a bit overwhelming, the daily e-mail message from Rev Mark provided confidence and a reality check.

Things are looking up! The Consultant phoned and we are once more working towards a plan for return to positive good health. Our son and Japanese daughter in law with whom we had been in skype contact came for a surprise Father's Day garden visit and we look forward to seeing the sea sometime in the near future? In the meantime, life continues in this new and different way and we very much appreciate having a garden and the privilege of living in this community.

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Please send copy for the August Newsletter to editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or written contributions to Liz Hall at Walmere, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AW. —by 18th July please.

Carrot and Wine Stores remains resolutely open. Well done to everyone there



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Carrot&Wine Stores is brand new to the Hereford area. Our family run company aims to offer all the convenience and family friendly service of a local store with the added benefit of locally sourced produce.

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WORMELOW

Little Birch Parish Council

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Cllr Peter Rees	Chair
Cllr Janet Gwinnett	Vice Chair
Cllr Kate Dillon	
Cllr Michael Davies	
Cllr Kate Robbins	
Angela Middleton	Volunteer Footpath Officer
Sophie Glover	Clerk 01432 617306

For updates and notifications of future meetings please check out the website – www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org.

lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Much Birch Surgery

Much Birch Surgery remains open, please contact Reception if you require an appointment. Patients are only able to enter the practice by prior appointment. Please wear a mask if you have one but please do not come to your appointment if you or any member of your household are showing any signs that could be related to Coronavirus (temperature, cough, loss of taste/smell).

Routine national screening programmes for immunisations and cervical screening are continuing. Please be reassured that we have stringent Infection control measures in place to ensure your safety.

Dispensary

Opening times for collecting repeat medications remains 10-4.30pm.

If you are having trouble getting through on the 541 167 repeat line please call the main surgery number (01981540310) and choose option 2.

Patients visiting hospital for outpatient appointments

The use of face coverings is essential for all members of the public when in hospital, including those visiting patients or attending outpatient appointments.

As the hospital restarts outpatient clinics, patients are encouraged to attend their appointments.

Thank you

The practice would like to thank all those who have kindly given their time to help with delivering medication to patients who are unable to collect themselves. We have also gratefully received homemade masks, visors and plenty of home baking to keep us going! Thank you for all your kind support.

Please see our website and facebook information page to sign up to our newsletter.

Website: www.muchbirchsurgery.co.uk

Facebook—Much Birch Surgery Patient Information



Thank you!

Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



Find the latest news, events and business listings all in one place.

You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area.

Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook



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Wordsworth in Lockdown:

I wandered lonely as a cloud,
Two metres from the madding crowd,
When all at once my name was called
To enter Waitrose hallowed hall.
This was the pensioner's special hour
I'd gone to get a bag of flour,
But I forgot -when through the door -
What I had gone to Waitrose for.
The Waitrose staff are extra kind
I told them it had slipped my mind,
They ask what else I had forgot
They clearly thought I'd lost the plot.
I phoned my wife again to ask
She reminded me of this special task
"I need some flour to bake a cake
With all that cream you made me take!"
"Ah yes, I recall" I had to lie,
I dared not ask what flower to buy,
But then I saw them at the tills
A bunch of golden daffodils.

LITTLE BIRCH CHURCH "BRINGING THE CHURCH TO YOU" BROADCASTS

With the church in lockdown, Little Birch Church is "Bringing The Church To You"

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www.facebook.com/stmarylb

EVERYONE WELCOME

OWL GOOD NEIGHBOURS

0794 030 8696

Five years ago, shortly after retiring from 44 years in nursing I went to a conference held in Hereford organised by the Bishop of Hereford. The topic was "loneliness", which was just then becoming an issue of **CONCERN**. I was shocked to learn that being lonely was just as harmful to health as smoking 20 cigarettes a day. The conference suggested a number of ways for a community to address this but the one that appealed to me most was a "Good Neighbour Scheme", mostly because they said there are no hard and

fast rules you just adapt to the community you are in. I liked that flexible approach.

I went to talk to the people running the scheme in Peterchurch and took away copies of some of their paperwork. I put adverts in the Parish Magazine and local notice boards asking for volunteers. I organized a free training session with a free lunch to tempt people to attend. Twelve people came and enjoyed soup, sandwiches and fruit in Orcop Parish Hall. I had organized speakers on "Safe Working in the Community" and "Dealing with Dementia". We had a discussion and six people agreed to form a committee with me. The Cathedral agreed to pay for the D.B.S. (i.e. the police checks). The County Councillor at the time was David Harlow who was very supportive and became our chairman. I talked to the local Parish Councils and invited them to donate so that we could get started. The first three to give me money were Orcop, St Weonards and Llandwarne so when I needed to think of a name I put the first letters of their names to form OWL. Garways donation produced an as yet unsolved conundrum!. I managed to find a friendly looking Owl on the internet images and that became our logo..



We had a launch party and received more donations. I secured a mobile phone that can be diverted to any number so various volunteers can take calls. We started in May 2016 with 15 volunteers all "police checked" and a committee of 6.

In normal times we mostly undertake transport helps giving lifts, to surgeries, hospitals, foot care, hairdressers and shops. A few people we support in other ways supportive phone calls and social visiting. We have taken urine samples into hospitals, returned medical equipment, taken family members to visit hospital patients. The most memorable "help" I have done was to go into a 101 year old ladies home and light her wood burning stove as the electric was being turned off for a short while prior to trimming some trees. She had regular carers visit but their agency would not let them light the stove for "health and safety" reasons. All her family lived away.

Owl Good Neighbours has a small group of regular clients and others come and go depending on circumstances. Sometimes we have a client who has a problem and needs help for a short time and then all is well

for them. We help all ages , mostly elderly but have also helped with younger people from time to time. We do not charge for the service but are happy to accept donations, we manage to survive on donations and some fund raising activities. The volunteers can claim expenses of 40p a mile which is all the charity commissions recommendation. Owl holds insurance for drivers and passengers and any fundraising events we hold.

In our second year Owl was approached by a group who's monthly lunch meeting had ceased. We were given a grant by the local Parish Magazine and started a Community Lunch in Orcop Parish Hall which had just had a new kitchen installed. Six ladies trained in food hygiene and we got started. The food is all freshly prepared . We ask £7.0 for 2 courses and a drink. Owl can also provide transport if needed. All local people are welcome to attend , on the first Wednesday of the month. Most times there are 20 plus people who join in and at Christmas for a traditional turkey meal we have many more.

The committee was conscious that most of our clients are elderly and wanted to offer more for other age groups so held a few family fun days. A barbecue was set up and there were games for all. Old fashioned races such as "egg and spoon" and "sack" races proved very popular.

Five days before the present lockdown began Hereford Council rang to ask if Owl would continue to operate during the crisis. Of course we all said yes. The Much Birch surgery was contacted to let them know Owl would deliver medications. It was agreed a team would go to the surgery each Wednesday afternoon to collect medication to be delivered. Some of the patients lived outside the original area

covered by Owl but it was felt that they could not be left out so they were included and we began. One of the last sessions I did we covered from Kings Capel to Garway and Kingsthorpe to Peterstow. It has been a rewarding time with everyone being very grateful. One pair of volunteers, a married couple treat it as a day out and take sandwiches and a flask to enjoy as they make their visits. Owl has two requests for the community
If you can collect your medication please do so .The surgery will accommodate you outside normal working hours. Owl delivers to 20 homes most weeks so is busy enough and may struggle if asked to do more.

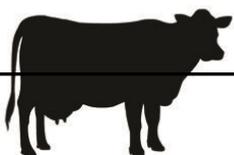
Please make sure your house name can be clearly seen. We are given a post code which may cover up to 30 houses and have to search for the house by name . Most have a name on display but some get worn away or obscured by vegetation. On one occasion we drove up and down several times without spotting the house then the house holder came out and moved the wheelie bin and the name was revealed!.

If you would like to know more about Owl or would like to join us in our Good Neighbour scheme just give me a ring I shall be pleased to hear from you. If you require help of any kind the same applies .

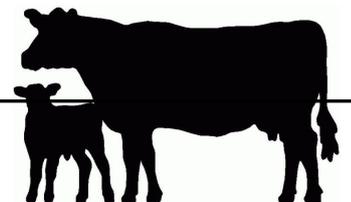
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Stay at Home / Stay Safe / Save Lives / Watch Films

With no Flicks in the Sticks community gatherings in the region for the foreseeable future we just wanted to share with you a few of the many ways that you can enjoy movies from the relative comfort of your living room FOR FREE.

To start off with, there are plenty of free streaming services that accompany your regular tv channels, where you can catch up on movies:

BBCiPlayer – www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/categories/films/featured

ITV HUB – www.itv.com/hub/categories/film

ALL 4 - www.channel4.com/categories/film

MY 5 - www.my5.tv/categories/films

And even though our friends at *The Courtyard Cinema* have also had to close their doors for the time being, they have secured an offer from the movie streaming service MUBI, where you will find classic, independent, and award-winning movies from around the world – for FREE, for three months:

<https://mubi.com/thecourtyardcinema>

And beyond film, the good people at Arts Alive are updating their website homepage weekly with what the National Arts organisations (Theatre, Opera, Ballet, Exhibitions and more) are offering up FREE across Facebook, YouTube and other Social Media platforms:

<https://www.artsalive.co.uk/>

Stay at Home, Stay Safe and catch up on those movies you were always meaning to see.

See you soon,

The Much Birch Flicks in the Sticks Team

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Little Birch in lockdown

When I first heard of all the lockdown “rules and regulations” my thought was that it would not affect me too much. Daily dog walks in the woods and weekly shopping would all still be possible. We are all so lucky here with woodland walks and the bonus of exceptional weather to enjoy the pleasures of watching the sequence of spring flowers opening, culminating in the exceptional bluebells. I’m sure the birdsong has been much louder and more varied and the air so much clearer. Whatever time I go walking there always seems to be someone else in the woods to stop and chat to (at 2 metres distance of course!).

Of course, at the beginning I don’t think many people expected the lockdown to go on so long, as long as we could get hold of food everything else would wait. I realised this was not quite true for me when my watch battery went – inconvenient but what does it matter what time it is? In the meantime we look at what we can do, adapt and keep busy.

My garden was in desperate need of the many hours I have put into it and it still commands my attention. Spring cleaning of the house has no excuse now and I’m working my way through it. Being one of those people who feels guilty if not working on the above I don’t get around to all the pleasurable activities I would like to do such as reading, painting, doing puzzles, or even playing the piano (I’m sure practising would benefit performance!) I do try and organise my day so that I can indulge myself with these for a while. Incredibly I occasionally wish for a really wet day when I can’t garden and so enjoy these.

Yes, I do miss going to all the village activities and chatting with people, telephone call and the internet are not the same. I do love my Zoom sessions with all my family and seeing all my children and grandchildren but it is still not the same as visiting (written at the end of May)

Some relaxation of lockdown came with the beginning of June, of course so did the changeable and cooler weather – no longer sitting out with the 6 people which we are now allowed to do. At least my various children have been able to visit as long as we pick the right day which has been lovely.

Further easing is underway and for those of us brave or silly enough, we could now go and join the queues in High Town to pour into the shops and spend, spend, spend which is apparently just what the economy needs

No holidays are likely this year but we live in such a lovely part of the world and many of us are retired that it is like a holiday every day. However, a change of scene might be nice! I suppose our new motto should be – “be patient and keep busy”

Alison

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ALL ASPECTS OF TREE WORK UNDERTAKEN

About us & Coping with Lock-down from Owen and Sylvia

Sylvia and I had known each other for many years before getting together, late in 2008. We both sold our respective properties, and bought our own house together, in our home town of Bournemouth. I was then aged 56, and Sylvia was 70, and to us, that age difference was just not an issue, and we are pleased to say, it never has been.

In 2010, on Sylvia's birthday, she had a huge surprise, with wonderful help from Jane McDonald at her concert in Bournemouth, where, in front of the whole audience, Sylvia and I got engaged!

In July of 2013, after watching too many episodes of "Escape to the Country" we sold-up and moved away from Bournemouth, and arrived in the Parish of Aconbury, to settle down in "Greenacres", our bungalow down near the A49, overlooking our neighbour's large wooden dragon.

A few months later, in September 2013, we finally got married in Hereford's beautiful Town Hall.

We slowly settled in to our new countryside home (and married life of course!) and enjoyed making some changes to the property, and trying to get to grips with the large garden. This proved more difficult than we had expected, as neither of us are really gardeners!

Eventually, with the help of our lovely neighbour, we did find ourselves a lovely chap to help us with our garden, and, along with the purchase of a ride-on lawn mower (definitely boy's toys!) we started, but only to an extent, to sort of get to grips with it!

We slowly continued to make new friends, and at an Aconbury Parish meeting, I met Mike Leigh, who, along with his wife Jennifer, have been lovely friends ever since. Mike got me involved in the steering group for the Local Development plan, and also in the printing and delivering of this newsletter, and certainly helped us to start feeling part of this community, so thank you both!

A big thank you too must go to our other near neighbours, Alan and Sue from Mount Skippet, for allowing us the use of their field to exercise our dog called Cookie, who loves every minute of it! Of course this has been invaluable recently as we don't have to travel there, just walk through the gate! Thank you both!

All had continued to go well for us, until the beginning of last year when Sylvia felt unwell. She had suffered a mini stroke, resulting in her having Mild Cognitive Impairment. This is now having a big effect on her memory, and she has now also been diagnosed with having a heart murmur, which is causing her problems with erratic blood pressure, for which we have been told she needs a replacement heart valve. After various tests, an operation was being discussed, when Lock-down descended upon us all. We now have an appointment in September to discuss this further, and we shall see where we go from here.

As regards to the Corona Virus lock-down, we have dealt with everything reasonably well so far, getting our food shopping delivered, sending birthday cards etc to family, grandchildren, and great grandchildren etc, online via Moonpig, and only venturing out very rarely for things like petrol for the lawn mower etc. We even postponed any further visits from our gardener, until further notice.

My intention from the beginning was to shield myself and Sylvia as much as possible because of her age and ongoing health issues, and overall I think it has been achieved very well, but just maybe too well!, Here is my big problem – I am now finding it very difficult, and even scary, to relax our isolation routine, even when it comes to allowing family to come for garden visits etc. I had a sleepless night after the first occasion, as I could see that the guidance rules were not being fully adhered to, and when I asked the family to postpone any further visits for a few more weeks, it caused some considerable upset. We did agree to a second visit, which was better organised, but it still makes me feel uncomfortable about the risk to us both, with our ages of 69 and 83 this year, and particularly with Sylvia's problems.

I can't believe that others don't have the same feelings, with younger generations wanting to visit, and encouraging us to get out more, but, as they are younger, not having the same fears of what the outcome could be, as we do. All I can hope is, that as time goes on, I will gradually overcome this fear, and we can both emerge safely at the end of this pandemic together.

PS, Sylvia and I would like to send everyone our very best wishes, at this difficult time for us all.

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Community Café @ Much Birch Community Hall

Sadly there will not be a Community Café for the time being, but we will look forward to getting back to it as soon as we can.

In the meantime, if you need any help with shopping, picking up of medication from the surgery, posting letters or would just like a chat on the phone occasionally, please let us know!



Ring Kay on 01981 540666 and she will find someone to help.

We would like to say a big **THANK YOU** to all the volunteers helping at this time.



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Meanwhile, our team of volunteers will be ready to help you over the phone or by email so that, immediately the lock-down is lifted, it will be safe to benefit from their personal experience, advice and practice.

Until then, we are providing a "Safer Driving" hotline; ring Stella Boyd-Carpenter, Group Contact, on 01432 840835, or email group-contact@advanced-drivers.org.uk. She will then contact your nearest team of advisors, so that you can discuss how we could help when things return to normal.

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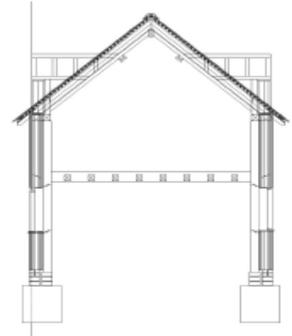
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12th June 2020

PARISH MEETING - at the Parish Council Meeting held on the Zoom Platform, during Covid 19 Virus Lock down, on the 11th March 2020 from 7.30 pm.

The Parish Council heard about reserved planning matters concerning planning re-consultation 192979 for land at Tump Lane, Much Birch.

The Parish Council noted the following information concerning the progression of the Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan. The Parish Council are committed to keeping people informed on the progress of the plan.

The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 9th July 2020 from 7.30pm** - on the Zoom Platform. All are welcome to attend.

Dates for further 2020 Parish Council Meetings are: 3 Sept, 8 Oct, 5 Nov, 3 Dec 2020. No meeting in August.

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.

A reminder that:-

Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-

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

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

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

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

Cllr David Baldwin The Granary, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HS baldwin79@btinternet.com Tel. 01981 541198

Cllr Veronica Thomas 4, Queens Close, Wormelov, Hereford, HR2 8FD Tel. 01981 540646 (no e mail)

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.

You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>

Much Birch Parish

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Regulation 16 Notice

We wish to advise all parishioners that the Herefordshire Council have commenced their Regulation 16 Consultation on the Much Birch Neighbourhood Plan.

The Consultation commenced on 27th May and will be finished on 8th July 2020

Should you wish to view the plan it can be found on the Council website at:- <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk>

Comment relating to the plan should be addressed to Herefordshire Council at:- neighbourhoodplanning@herefordshire.gov.uk