

The Black Mountains Group Benefice

NEWSLETTER

April 2020



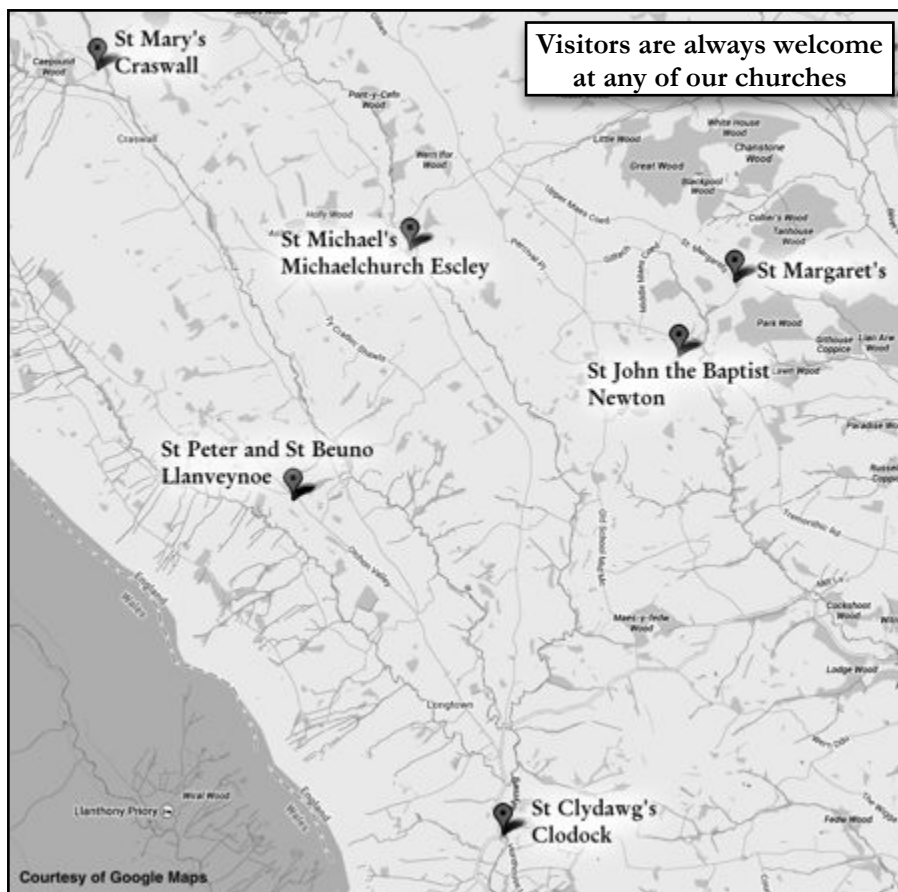
The Parishes of Clodock & Longtown with Craswall, Llanveynoe,
St Margaret's, Michaelchurch Escley & Newton

Vicar and Rural Dean:

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Min
50p
donation

www.bmgparishes.org.uk



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From the Vicar

THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST OF TIMES

Well, let's start with the worst. This is manifestly a time of anxiety, fear, illness and dispiritedness. There are many people who are having to isolate themselves until the middle of June: there are many people who face financial trouble: there are many who are unable to see their loved ones. The list goes on. And, of course, we have seen the dark side of human nature in all of this. In a country where there is no shortage of food and household products, to see people clearing shelves in supermarkets of things that everybody needs has been ineffably depressing. Selfishness is not just an unattractive trait; it is a self-destructive one, as the more you focus your attention just on your own needs, the narrower the boundaries of your world become.

But what about the best? I think it has been really heartening to see the way in which people are caring for each other practically and personally. People are going out of their way to help those who cannot shop or get other services. Local businesses are being really helpful about arranging deliveries. And people are obviously on the look-out for those who may be worried or lonely. We could well be in for the long haul, so it would be wonderful if those signs of basic human goodness were to grow and spread.

I am one of those annoying people who think it important, whenever something dreadful happens, to find something positive out of it. Yes, we have seen the dark side of human nature, but we have seen the bright side as well, and if, once this is all over – and it will sometime be over – that bright side were to have become a much stronger part of our communal nature, that would be brilliant. It would also be good if those struggling to live in a house bulging with toilet paper and dried pasta might just ask themselves whether, if they are prepared to put themselves through all of that in order to escape a virus, they might just be a little more sympathetic to those who have to become refugees from their own countries in order to escape war, terrorism, famine and tyranny.

But let us all use this opportunity – terrible though it is – to show compassion for our neighbours, and not let the enclosing walls of our own houses narrow our vision of our world and its people. It is a golden chance to make the world a better place.

And, if you are getting weary of carolling 'Happy Birthday to you' umpteen times every day, try reciting the Lord's Prayer instead. It takes the same time and is spiritually much more efficacious.

Nicholas

THE VIRUS AND US

I am writing this about a fortnight before the end of the month and am well aware that things might have changed exponentially.

Which is why communication is so important. We are collating a contact list for everyone who we think would consider themselves part of the church community. But anyone can be on it. Do let me know if you would like to be. This will keep everyone up to date with a very changing situation. Updates from the Church of England are being posted on to our website. The Abbeydore Deanery Facebook

page is updated with astonishing frequency: and it is not just about events – in does include things that might just cheer us up – and who does not need that?

All regular services have had to be cancelled. I am waiting for guidance about baptisms, weddings and funerals. I suspect that the recommendation will be to delay the first and allow the last two, but in very reduced circumstances.

Pastoral visits are not possible, but conversations can be had over the phone. In that regard, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. I sometimes say to those who are bereaved or in great distress that if they just need someone to scream at, that is part of my job. People do take me up on that!

There are various schemes afoot – and obviously not just from the churches – to help those in need. I do hope that people will say if they need help or if they know someone who does or if they feel they can in any way volunteer.

Our churches are always open. Do please take advantage of that if you need a quiet space. There are prayer cards in each church specially designed for this circumstance. Do use them. We are also producing similar cards for those unable to attend funerals.

We are anxious to do all we can to meet the spiritual, pastoral and social needs of all our people. We are planning a digital *Thought for the Day* for everyone as well as a podcast service on Sundays: again further details when we get them. I will say Morning and Evening Prayer at 11.00am and 3.30pm at a church each Sunday. If you would like to follow that service at that time, you can get it via the Daily Prayer app on your smart phone, if you have one.

Nicholas

ANNUAL PARISH MEETINGS

The Church Annual Parish Meetings will all have to be postponed. It has been suggested that they take place in the last fortnight of May, by which time Government restrictions, according to their timetable, may have been lifted. Can I ask each parish to put a bid on for a slot?

Nicholas

BOOK CLUB

The meeting this month will have to be postponed: I will post a possible future date in the next issue. For those of you anxious to find something to read, give our book a go: it is *The Joy of God* by Sister Mary David.

Sister Mary David was a nun of the Benedictine contemplative community of St Cecilia's Abbey on the Isle of Wight. American by birth, she was educated at Loyola University, the University of Virginia and Christ Church, Oxford. After a distinguished teaching career, she entered religious life in 1985. For 22 years until her early death from cancer she guided the young nuns of her abbey with enthusiasm, wisdom and wit.

The spirituality to be found in the pages of this book demonstrates to the reader why her influence should have been so great and so deep. Her notes to the novices deal with issues of relevance to a world beyond the cloister: What is the meaning of suffering? How do we cope with living with people who annoy us? How do we relate to a God we cannot see? How do we make the big decisions of life?

Sister Mary David's teaching was both profound and intensely practical, suffused with faith in God's joy in our work, leisure,

community and family life but above all in our view and understanding of ourselves. This book, with an introduction by Abbot Erik Varden OCSO (author of *The Shattering of Loneliness*) shows us how to realise the Joy that is God. *Nicholas*

A PERSONAL NOTE

A number of you have noted that our new Bishop, in one of his very first acts, showed a worrying lack of judgement when inviting me to become a Prebendary of the Cathedral. (For those of you who have no idea what this means but also have problems sleeping, I will send you a screed explaining what this means.) Anyway, I am very grateful to those of you who have congratulated me on this. I am due to be installed and collated (don't ask) at Evensong at the Cathedral on Sunday May 3rd at 3.30pm. I would have said now that the chances of that happening are vanishingly small, but I will keep you in touch, and, if it does happen then, it would be really lovely to see some of you there. *Nicholas*

Deanery Events

THIS MESSAGE COMES FROM THE DEANERY CHAPTER FOR ABBEYDORE

**Nicholas Lowton, Luci Morriss, Hilary Morgan,
Jane Rogers, Anne Lloyd, Simon Lockett,
and Mark Godson**

We want to offer encouragement and advice at this very difficult time. We recognise what a very unusual and painful time this is for everyone and we want to stress that we hold you all in our prayers.

As the challenge of the coronavirus grips the world, and as the Government asks every individual and every organisation to rethink its life, the Church of England is here to serve all people in a new way. Public worship will have to stop for a season.

Our usual pattern of Sunday services and other mid-week gatherings must be put on hold. But this does not mean that the Church of England has shut up shop. Far from it.

Church services and events

- Churches will remain open as usual during daylight hours, and if possible 24/7.
- Welcome posters will advise people of hygiene precautions.
- Resources for prayer will be provided for people to take away.
- Christenings will not take place other than in an emergency.
- Weddings will very likely be postponed.
- Funerals will be conducted under the new restrictions.

Being a part of the Church of England is going to look very different in the days ahead. Our life is going to be characterised less by attendance at church on Sunday and more characterised by the prayer and service we offer each day.

Providing care and support

We will send occasional email updates offering:

- Ways to care for neighbours and those in special need.
- Resources to help you sustain your faith.
- Suggestions for sharing prayer and worship by phone, Skype, Zoom etc. as well as links to national resources provided by the Church, the BBC and others.

Keep in touch

We are co-ordinating care for those in need and increasing our presence on social media:

- let us know ideas you have and the names of anyone you think are in need
- find and join our Facebook page
- use a church near you if you want to find information on your local church
- have a look at the resources on the Church of England website.

Contact us

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Diane Bates (Reader)	dianembates@me.com 01432 487485

DEANERY UPDATE

The first series of Benefice meetings is now complete. A huge thank you is due to all those (and there were lots!) who attended the meetings and engaged with this process.

“Give up your Vicar for Lent” was well received with a warm welcome given to all clergy everywhere. We hope that you found this opportunity to get to know all the clergy better helpful and inspirational.

We're still keen to recruit more people to the steering groups for each mission stream - please don't hold back if you've been thinking about getting involved. Ask us before we ask you! Chat to someone who is already involved - they're the best advert we have for getting more closely involved with the mission work that's starting to thrive here.

We are also delighted to let you know that our Rural Dean, Nicholas Lowton, will be collated and installed as Prebendary and member of the College of Canons in due course.

For more details, please contact the Deanery Mission Coordinator, Anne Lloyd on 07432 873422 or email abbeydoredmc@gmail.com. Look on our Facebook page “Events in Abbeydore Deanery” or look at the website A Church Near You.

Forthcoming Events

Editorial Note: We are going ahead with publishing these events even though most, if not all, will be or have been cancelled. **Please check on the situation with the group or club advertising.**

It's important that we keep in touch with each other and the item from Abbeydore Deanery on this page provides information on this.

The Sixth Bridge Quiz

It has been necessary to call off the SIXTH BRIDGE QUIZ that was scheduled for 29 March. It is postponed, not cancelled. We will rearrange when the situation permits. *Matthew Engel*

Wildflowers of Herefordshire

7.30pm, 1st April, Escleyside Hall

Our speaker, **Peter Garner**, was Herefordshire Recorder for wild plants for more than 10 years.



Due to coronavirus this event may be cancelled at short notice. Check our website for updates:
<https://escleysidegc.wixsite.com/club>

Concert at Ewyas Harold Hall

Saturday 4th April

The concert in aid of St Michael's Hospice on **has been cancelled** this year due to the Coronavirus.

LONGTOWN AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On Monday 6 April, Longtown Village Hall, HR2 0LD
Chris Over: Picture postcards and popular photography: a social insight into Herefordshire life a century ago.

Please note that this event is cancelled. The hope is to resume next year. *Bob Davies*

Michaelchurch Flicks in the Sticks

Showings cancelled until the autumn.



EWYAS HAROLD U3A

Wednesday 8 April – This event is cancelled.

Concerts for Craswall



A SPECIAL FUNDRAISER

Wednesday April 29th at 7pm

Regrettably, this event has been postponed in light of everything and in line with government guidance on public events/social gatherings.



Unfortunately, this event has been postponed.

LONGTOWN THURSDAY CLUB

We are very sorry that we have had to **postpone** our annual fish and chip lunch at White Haywood, scheduled for the 16th April. It is also likely that we shall have cancel the ordinary meetings due to be held on the 2nd and 30th April. However, members will be contacted individually about these and other developments. In the meantime we extend our sympathy and concern to everyone affected by the corona virus.

Pauline Jones (01873 851782)

NEWTON WOMEN'S GUILD

Our visit to the Vowchurch Pub in April **will be postponed**. Hopefully we shall be able to meet again on Thursday 14th May to find out about **Peg Loom Weaving** from Caroline Gilbert. Please do join us in Newton Church Room 7.30pm. Tel: 07794920729.

Local Newsround

CLIMATE ACTION MEETING LONGTOWN

Report of the meeting held in Longtown Village Hall at 6.30pm on 19th February 2020

PRESENT: Fifty members of the public were present including Parish Council representatives.

Cllr Cecil welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. She introduced the agenda and provided some background on the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Parish Council and the way forward to tackle the issue. Herefordshire Council had declared an emergency in 2019 and had encouraged local parish councils, including Longtown, to declare an emergency as well.

The aim of the meeting was to encourage local action to begin. It was important that the initiative was community led and it was hoped that a Steering Group to begin developing an action plan could be formed.

Action needed to be taken individually, in the local community and by putting pressure on regional and national decision making bodies including Central Government and Herefordshire Council. The aim was to try to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and not 2050.

The focus of action would be on the following areas:

- Energy
- Travel and transport
- Bio diversity
- Waste and Recycling

Those present provided a large range of ideas for each section. It was agreed to collate these and a Steering Group meeting was arranged on Tuesday 25th February 2020. Cllr Jim Hardy would be the Parish Council representative.

A number of those present offered to sit on the Steering Group. They provided contact details.

It was noted that the Parish Council website had links uploaded (www.longtown-gpc.org.uk) and a Facebook page had been set up (Longtown Ideas For the Environment or LIFE).

LONGTOWN OUTDOOR LEARNING CENTRE UPDATE

At the time of writing centre staff and trustees are fully immersed in their preparations to prevent Covid-19 from arriving or spreading at the centre whilst at the same time forming plans to mitigate the impact of the possible loss of business that may result in the days and weeks ahead. Despite the trying times, centre staff remain upbeat and the centre remains open for business.

The Spring term has seen a flurry of recruitment activity at the centre and we have been delighted to welcome John Clark from Llangula as a new Outdoor Learning Tutor. Two apprentice activity instructors are due to join the team in late March. The one appointment that has so far eluded us is that of an additional cook to join the centre team for our peak

period. We are open to employing someone on a freelance, fixed term or permanent basis and hours can be flexible to dovetail with other family / employment commitments. If you (or anyone you know) think you might be interested in joining our small, friendly, dynamic team to help provide tasty, filling food for young adventurers please do get in touch or pop into the centre for a chat (contact details below).

Centre staff have been involved in two charitable events this term. KO63SUP was a 68 km fundraising journey by Stand Up Paddleboard board on the River Nene to raise funds for the Young Minds Trust. This event was completed by a team of 5 instructors from the centre in February and proved to be a good test of determination, team work, fitness, balance and humour (not to mention swimming skills)! The weather was generally kind although on one day spirits were sorely tested as we battled a strong headwind for most of the day's paddling. We saw lots of fantastic British wildlife en route and discovered some beautiful parts of the county of Northamptonshire that we had not visited before. Our efforts will have raised £1250 for the charity which does such important work promoting positive mental health for young people. A big thank you to all those of you who supported the event directly or who attended my Tasmania talk at either Ewyas Harold or Longtown as the retiring collection also went to the Young Minds Trust.

The Black Mountains Trek in early March was a 19 mile Charity Walk across the Black Mountains based at the centre. It was co-ordinated by centre staff on behalf of St. Michael's Hospice. The beautiful circular route took in Hatterall Hill, Cwmyoy, Garn wen, Bal Mawr, Chwael y Fan, Capel y Ffin, The Vision, Hatterall Ridge and the Darrens before returning to Longtown via Lower Turnant. Marshals from the centre joined forces with Longtown Mountain Rescue Team to provide safety cover on the route. Despite the strong winds and heavy rain that have been a backdrop to much of the Autumn / Winter, the weather on the day was generally kind although stiff winds challenged the walkers on the home straight on Hatterall ridge. Forty-one walkers took part in the challenge. In doing so they managed to raise £4000 for the work of St. Michael's Hospice – a great effort. They were greeted at the finish line by the welcome sight of a 2-course meal served by Doris Phillips and her team.

January is traditionally a time for maintenance / repairs / training and resource preparation. This year has been no exception. A substantial programme of interior decoration has been completed in the Monnow Wing together with maintenance and estate works throughout the grounds.

In response to DfE's Character framework and Ofsted's revised inspection framework centre staff have developed a new 'Character and Resilience' framework that sets out the approach of the centre. The new framework can be found on the centre website but do get in touch if you would like to know more about it. The centre is committed to equipping our staff to provide the best possible service to groups. To that end five staff have recently completed the Mental Health First Aid course and six have completed the Level 2 award in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health.

This term we have already welcomed final year BA (Hons) Education students from Gloucester University, Key stage 4

and 5 groups from Northamptonshire schools, and Key stage 2 groups from Herefordshire schools (including Longtown and Burghill Primary Schools). In coming weeks we will also be hosting residential programmes for Birmingham and Cardiff schools. The Friday night Outdoor Adventure Club continues to flourish for local youngsters. From 14 – 17th April the centre will be offering an exciting programme of day activities for children aged 6 – 13. Each day runs between 9 am and 4.30 pm. Full details can be found on the centre's facebook page, alternatively please ring Rebecca Gould at the centre (number below) or pop in to find out more.

Tuesday 14th April Centre Challenges for 6 – 13 year olds

Wednesday 15th April Hill Walk /

Den Building for 6 – 9 year olds OR

Wednesday 15th April Hill Canoeing for 8 – 13 year olds

Thursday 16th April Canoeing for 6 – 9 year olds OR

Thursday 16th April Rock Climbing for 8 – 13 year olds

Friday 17th April Caving for 8 – 13 year olds

On 18th April we are hosting the Longtown Llanthony Loop fell race, a tough 8.5 mile fell race across the local hills. If you are interested in taking part full details can be found at www.entrycentral.com/longtown-llanthony-loop. Alternatively, if you would be interested in joining our volunteer event marshal team please do get in touch. The event coincides with the Longtown Mountain Rescue Team training weekend which will be based at the centre. If you'd prefer to be a spectator the race starts at 2 pm.

Following the success of their pilot programme in the Autumn, Abbey Dore Deanery will now be running a programme of events for local young people based at the centre this Spring / Summer. Each day will provide young people with the opportunity to tackle a range of challenges together with time for reflection, discussion and support. More information from Anne Lloyd, 07432 873422 or abbeydoredmc@gmail.com

Events are running on the following days:

Saturday 28th March, 10am-2pm, for years 8 & 9

Saturday 25th April, 10am-2pm, for years 6 & 7

Saturday 9th May, 10am-4.30pm, for years 8 & 9

Saturday 13th June, 10am-4.30pm, for years 6 & 7

Saturday 11th July, 10am-4.30pm, for years 6-9

If you'd like to know more about the work of Longtown Outdoor Learning Trust or are interested in developing your own programme, do get in touch. *Mike Fawcett, Head of Centre*

mike@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk

www.longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk / 01873 860225



Half way through the school year and time is flying past. We have had a very busy term since January at Longtown Primary. We are all looking forward to the weather improving and the school field drying out so we have more space to play and enjoy break times.

The arrival of Spring and the beginning of March is celebrated in many ways but for school children around the country it means all the amazing activities that happen for World Book Day and Longtown is no exception. We had a fabulous World book Day in school with a visit from Catherine Barr, a local author. She shared her new book

about Colour and led an assembly before talking to the classes individually. We then created our own character masks in school which were later paraded on a catwalk to a number of parents who joined us for biscuits and shared stories in the afternoon.

It's not just the children at Longtown Primary School who have been busy. It's been a busy month for the parents too! They have attended Parents' Evenings, to hear about how well their children are doing and a Celebration Assembly just before Spring half term.

Class 3 have been working hard on their Netball skills ready for a tournament in Hereford this week. We wish them luck with their first ever netball match.

Class 2 have had a fabulous half term learning about the Egyptians and have wowed us with their imaginative story writing.

In Class 1 the children have had many visitors from 'real-life superheroes' to support their Superhero topic. They loved looking around a Police Car, Fire Engine and Tractor on the playground.

To keep updated with what's going on at Longtown School just log onto our website www.longtown.hereford.scb.uk or follow us on Facebook.

MICHAELCHURCH ESCLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

As Covid 19 is changing all our lives at the moment, life in school has a slightly different feel about it. We've had to ask parents to drop children at the gate, washing hands has become a big thing throughout the day and sadly various school visitors and upcoming events (e.g. our School Music Concert which the children were really looking forward to) will now not be taking place. Having said that, the resilience, positivity and compassion the children are showing is magnificent. There is no panic, no unnecessary worry or upset. The children (especially the older ones) understand by being vigilant with their hand washing, this is not only helping themselves, it's also their social responsibility. They even invented a game where in order to free themselves they had to pretend to wash their hands! I am always so proud of all the children at Michaelchurch, but particularly at the moment in these challenging times.

So, apart from some small changes to school life, things are pretty much carrying on as normal...for now. The children and staff had tremendous fun recently raising money for Sport Relief. The Year 6 children ran a carousel of activities for the rest of the school which included wanging wellies full of porridge and throwing shaving foam custard pies. The day was rounded off with a session of 'Splat the Teacher' (with baked beans) - much to the delight of the children. The school raised over £90 for Sports Relief.

Back in March we also had a great World Book Day. It started off with a bookish breakfast with parents, relatives and friends coming in and reading with the children, followed by an assembly where the staff were decidedly 'crayony'! (The staff had all dressed as crayons from 'The Day the Crayons Quit' by Oliver Jeffers.) We also launched our Extreme Reading Challenge, where children are challenged to take a photo of them reading a book in the most extreme or wacky location!

Pre-school children in Squirrels class have grown in numbers recently and have been making the most of the glorious non-rainy days! They've been getting plenty of fresh air on their daily walks and have been having some extended adventures over in Elke's woods and further afield. Their theme of The Gingerbread Man has been particularly popular and the children have been engaged in various gingerbread activities in the classroom. Keep your eyes open for our next 'Stay and Be Curious' events. We've not yet put new dates out, but will do as soon as we can.

So at this point, I usually warmly welcome any visitors or families into school or preschool who want to have a look around. At the moment though, I'm afraid you'll have to look on Facebook and email us any questions – which we'll happily reply to. In this worrying and challenging time, all of us at Michaelchurch hopes everyone stays safe and well and we look forward to getting through this as a united community.

Louise Crocker

LONGTOWN & DISTRICT WI

The Speaker at this month's meeting was Hazel Cushion who told us about her varied and fascinating life and career.

Hazel originally trained as a silversmith and went on to have many interesting occupations, at first working as jeweller on the QE2. Hazel went on to run a wine importing business, worked in recruitment, imported Balinese goods, started an adventure charity and then ran an independent publishing company .

At present Hazel runs a charity called "Socks against Suicide" . This sets up local groups where people can get together and knit socks. Group knitting benefits mental health and encourages conversation and friendship between members who then have the option of donating their socks to people who are vulnerable or impacted by suicide. *Libby Davies*

Please note that our April meeting is cancelled.

FOOTPATHS

I am the Footpaths officer for the parishes of Michaelchurch Escley, Newton and St Margaret's.

My responsibility is to walk each of the footpaths once a year, to check the markers and the condition of the stiles and footbridge, and report any defects to the county PROW team. I have walked the St Margaret paths, and am now working my way through the Newton and Michaelchurch paths. However it is possible that defects may arise within the year after a path has been checked, so do please let me know if you find a problem with any of the paths, and I will follow it up.

Send me a message to emaylittlem@gmail.com

Around the villages

VOWCHURCH

Vowchurch Country Market April 25, 10am - 12 noon. This popular market opens its doors again after the winter break. Quality local produce including Alex Gooch bread, cheeses, sausages and meats, honey and preserves **PLUS** warm and welcoming cafe offering fresh coffee, home made cakes and bacon butties.

Pop up Pizza Thursday April 2, 3pm - 9.30pm and alternate Thursdays throughout the summer months. Everyone

welcome for freshly made pizzas, dips, home made ginger beer, fun and games. The bar will open for grown up drinks from 7pm

The Village Pub will re-open in October.

VaT50 Savings Club Winners of the March draw were Iris Price (£50) and Kip Waistell (£20). Funds raised by the club go towards maintaining and equipping Vowchurch Hall. Membership costs £3 a month or £36 a year with the chance to win prizes each month. The next draw will be made at the market on April 25.

TaiChi and Qigong Mondays 6.30pm at Vowchurch Hall. New members welcome, suggested donation £6. Contact: janefleet88@gmail.com

Exercise & Pilates classes at Vowchurch Hall with physiotherapist Hannah Thomas, Tuesdays at 6pm and 7pm. Contact: hannabmtbomas@hotmail.com

Bowls Wednesdays 7 - 9pm at Vowchurch Hall. Contact: joyceandmelvinpowell@gmail.com

Hall hire Vowchurch Hall is the ideal venue for parties, meetings, film screenings and all other events. Rates from £8 per hour. www.vowchurchturnastonehall.co.uk. Phone 01981 550791.

PETERCHURCH VILLAGE HALL WHAT'S ON?

Day Centre every Monday 10am – Noon. Please ring Mrs Kath Gaze 01981 550579 for details.

Youth Club every Tuesday during term time 3.30pm - 5.00pm. Please contact Jedda Hart for details on the Youth Club Facebook page.

Parish Council every 3rd Tuesday 7-9pm.

Music evening Saturday March 28th 7-11pm with local band Blue Moon.

VE Day Celebrations Friday 8th May 2-5pm free for all.

Future date for all you budding Gardeners, Bakers and Crafters next years Summer Produce show will take place on Saturday 25th July. Hopefully we can make next year even bigger and better. If anyone would like to help please feel free to contact any of the Hall committee.

We hold meetings the 1st Monday of every other month.

Don't forget that there is a book exchange in the hall which you can access when the hall is open.

Thinking of having a Birthday party, a Celebration or starting classes why not hire your Village Hall £10 per hour. Just ring Sarah Murrin on 07774457887 for details.

Notices and Advertisements

Missing Cat

Sooty black female cat with white spot on chest

Very friendly. Micro-chipped

Lost in New St Margaret's

Any information, good or bad, would be appreciated

Call Kristan – 01981 510167

HEREFORD FOOD BANK

We have been told that in the current crisis there has been an increase in requests for Food Bank help. Throughout the coming months the usual way of people donating and delivering items to them will be affected. They are appealing on Facebook for monetary donations so that they can shop on our behalf, for individuals and families in need.

If you would like to donate you can do so in one of the following ways:

- Write a cheque to 'Hereford Food bank', their address is: 41, Monkmoor Street, Hereford HR1 2DX
- Via Facebook you can search their name and follow the link for Donations Via bank transfer the details are: CAF bank, Account: Hereford Food bank, Sort code: 40-52-40, account number 00030491

Your continued support will be very much appreciated.

Many thanks

Jayne Davies and Polly Pascoe

TEA SET

In these challenging times the Tea Set will not be opening, but hope to be able to resume our monthly meetings in due course.

GOWN AMNESTY

Some time ago the benefice choir were given blue gowns - we still have a few. However it would be helpful to gather them all up so that we know how many there are. Please, if you have a gown, could you return it to me at Little Marises or send me a message (emaylittlem@gmail.com).

THE HEREFORDSHIRE CURLEW PROJECT

The Curlew is an iconic bird of our countryside which is in serious decline throughout the country. There has been a national loss of over 50% in the past 25 years and in lowland areas it is even worse. Many readers will remember a time when the "bubbling" call of Curlews would have been a normal sound in the fields along the edge of the Black Mountains and 60 years ago the bird was described as "common and widespread" in Herefordshire. Now there are probably less than 20 breeding pairs in the whole of the county and in 2019 out of 18 identified nest sites only one young was known to have survived to fledging.

The causes of decline are varied and not always the same in different parts of the country but in Herefordshire two of the main ones are (1) predation of eggs and/or young, typically by foxes or crows and (2) changes in farming practices.

In order to help stop the decline, Herefordshire Ornithological Club has set up the Herefordshire Curlew Project. This has been running for the last four years and over that time we have identified most of the remaining sites where Curlews are still nesting and have been working to protect the nests we have found. Curlews are long-lived birds (the record is 32 years) and return year after year to the same site to breed, often to the same field. Despite this, the nest is very hard to find so keeping it safe from harm can be challenging. Once a nest is found it may be possible to surround it with electric fencing to keep out predators and farmers and landowners are usually very willing to allow this. In addition they are often willing to adjust their land or stock

management so the nest area is left undisturbed. Unfortunately we are not helped by the breeding habits of this bird! Eggs, usually four of them, are laid at the beginning of May and the nest is nearly always in a field of grass. They take just over four weeks to hatch after which the young, although defended by the parents, are on their own in the grass and are not able to fly for a further four weeks. During that time their natural instinct to danger is to “freeze” in the grass which, while it may deceive a predator, is no defence against a mowing machine! Thus for a period of over two months, right at the peak of the silage and haymaking season, either the eggs or the young are at high risk.

Despite the impact it has on their farming practices we have been gratified by the understanding and cooperation we have received from the farming community in our efforts to protect this bird and we hope to continue this project for the foreseeable future. If you would like to know more or would like to help with our work please get in touch with me. I am especially keen to get more information about Curlews in this area so if you see or hear any I'd love to hear from you!

Chris Robinson (Project Leader)
herefordbtorep@btinternet.com / 01981 510360

HEREFORDSHIRE 'COMMUNITY THAT CAN'

Are you a Community that Can...be active and creative?

ignite cic are looking to hear from rural communities in Herefordshire with very little or nothing in the way of regular creative and/or physical activities currently taking place, and who want to 'get things going'. ignite and their project partner in Worcestershire have received funding to support approx. 56 communities to do this. The project is called 'Our Community Can'.

'Our Community Can' is a four-year project that launched in January 2020. The project aims to support communities across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, particularly those in rural areas, to be active and creative by bringing people together through fun and engaging activities. Pilot project activities included bowls, rounders, clay workshops and dozens more.

The project is led by the communities themselves who are supported to: understand local needs and motivations; network with other individuals and organisations; deliver taster sessions or events; support new local active and creative activities to become sustainable; train volunteers and group leaders and access potential funding.

The project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and is being delivered in partnership by ignite cic and Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

ignite are ready to respond to expressions of interest share further information or discuss an idea with you. Please contact Leoni Linton – leoni@ignite-cic.co.uk or 07983 495892.

A link to our expression of interest form is available under 'Our Community Can...be active and creative' from <https://www.ignite-cic.co.uk/our-activities>.

Choirmaster Denise bids fond farewell



For many years the St Michael's Hospice Community Choir has entertained audiences, but the 30-strong group will this month bid a fond farewell to its Choirmaster, Denise Bishop.

Denise is standing down at the same time as retiring from her role in the Fundraising team at St Michael's, based in Bartestree.

"I'd like to thank everyone for their support, not only towards me but the Hospice as a whole," she said.

"I've met so people I simply wouldn't have done had it not been for this role.

"There's a real mix in the group. Some are staff members and volunteers, others are patients' relatives. For relatives, I think it's a way of staying in touch with a place which means so much to them. I shall miss them all."

"We were only supposed to be getting back together for the one event, but everyone seemed to enjoy it so I asked them whether they'd be interested in meeting again."

Since then the choir has enthralled audiences at a variety of Hospice-led events including Midsummer Lights and the Flower Festival at Lyde Arundel last September.

The Choir has also staged its own concerts, notably One Glittering Night, One Starry Night, and Sounds of Summer at Eastnor Castle, and performed to the likes of Princess Alexandra and Monty Don.

If you would be interested in becoming the Hospice's new Choirmaster, which is a voluntary role, call Jill Groves at St Michael's for more information on 01432 852 606.

Listening Support Volunteers

When Sally Kowal lost both parents within three weeks, she had little idea that six months later the calming nature of a Hospice volunteer would provide such invaluable support.

Sally was put in touch with Listening Support Volunteer Fran Jones and the pair meet regularly at Sally's home.

"When mum and dad died, it left such a gaping hole," said Sally. "After a few months I was told about Listening Support Volunteers and it just seemed appropriate.

"My husband was at St Michael's for six weeks back in 2009," said Fran.

"One of the main reasons I put my name forward was because I wanted to give something back to the Hospice by way of thanks for the wonderful care my husband received. As the title suggests, we are listeners. We spend time with those who are bereaved or terminally ill.

"We usually meet in the client's home and it just gives people the opportunity to talk about their grief to someone outside the family."

LSV's may also do some signposting for clients but they are not counsellors. They may, however, refer people to counselling if appropriate.

For more information, contact Karen Evans or Sarah Jenkins at St Michael's on 01432 851 000.

BABYSITTER WANTED

One year old Meadow needs someone to look after her for a day or two here and there throughout the summer and beyond. Likely to be one or two days a month.

Duties are light and involve taking her for a walk, playing with her and giving her lunch. Mum will be around, but needs some time to do some work!

The location is in St. Margarets.

Please call Jane 510288 if you are interested.

LONGTOWN COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Tea Party

Wednesday 8th April is cancelled

If you are absolutely desperate for a book, please contact
Jill Cook on 01873 860408



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Late night Thurs:	7.30 am - 7.00 pm
Saturday:	7.30 am - 4.00 pm
Sunday (Nov - April):	10.00 am - 12 noon
(May - Oct):	10.00 am - 2.00 pm
Bank Holiday Mondays	10.00 am - 2.00 pm

Smiling

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Community Spirit

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The Details

- When self-isolating, just call us on **01873 860444**
- We will call you back on a different number to keep our telephone line clear.
- Collate your items when we are on the phone, offering alternatives where needed.
- Process it through our tills and then take payment over the phone by card.
- If you can drive we will put it in the boot of your car or we will arrange to have it delivered
- If you can't pay by card we are happy to accept cash or cheque – this is not a problem.

New reality

All our planned events are cancelled, we are adapting to the changing situation.

Our refill shed is still operating **Thursday between 3pm and 6.30pm** with plant-based Bio D cleaning products, Faith in Nature body products and Dr Bronner Lavender liquid 18 in 1 and the Little Soap Company **Organic** Grapefruit & Orange range, including a hand & body lotion. Let's keep making a difference in 2020.

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April Truffle Treat, when spending £5 pick up a **FREE** postcard and send it to a friend and family to brighten up their day.

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Book of the month - Diary of a Modern Country Gardener by Tamsin Westhorpe.

A light-hearted and informative diary about gardening in the country, from the potting bench of Stockton Bury Gardens, shortlisted in the NGS Nation's Favourite Garden Competition. Tamsin is a hands-on gardener at her family garden, Stockton Bury in Herefordshire, which regularly features in round-ups of the best UK open gardens to visit. She is also a public speaker, podcast presenter and RHS judge. Her proudest achievements are being a judge at RHS Chelsea and the fact she started her career as a green keeper at a young age.

If you are thinking of having a newspaper every day, we accept all newspaper vouchers and it will reduce the cost by 20% - 40%.



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SAVE TIME Even more banks have joined our banking scheme with the Post Office, so pop in and see what you can do with **YOUR business or personal bank account**.

Many of the new online banks that sync perfectly with accounting software only offer banking at Post Offices as they don't have high street premises keeping their prices lower with access all over the Country.

Need to **top up your mobile phone**? Do it at Longtown Post Office. When the Post Office is not open, leave your card and cash, the next time it is open we will complete the transaction. Next time you are in the shop you can collect your receipt. This can also be a perfect gift to keep in touch.

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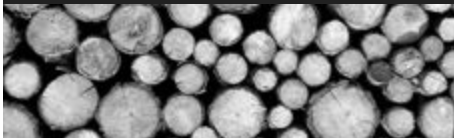
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LONGTOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

LOCAL CORONAVIRUS HELP

Please make contact if you require help of any sort

ewyas.lacey@gmail.com

www.longtownvillagehall.org.uk/cv19

The following people have kindly offered to be contacted if you require help, and will be happy to help point you in the right direction of support that is available:

Nicholas Lowton	01981 510675
Christine Hope	07875 384439
Sheila Watkins (Crown Inn)	01873 860217
<i>(willing to do take-aways and deliveries)</i>	
Isobel (Cornewall Arms)	01873 860677
Mary (Longtown School)	01873 860239
Christy Crouch	01873 860607
Mark Ewins	01873 860829
Pamela Tribe	01873 860260
Mike Fawcett	01873 860219
Ed Dickson	01873 860254 or 07967 409856
Rob & Sophie Sparks	01873 860561
Liz Knight	01873 860347
Paul (Parish Council Clerk)	01547 529025 or 07726 185975

If you require any help during this time, please email, or contact any of the above who will link in with one another.

Prescriptions collecting,

OR some shopping collecting,

OR assistance with feeding animals

OR feel lonely, frightened or worried

OR would like to link in with our band of volunteers

Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team
Peterchurch Police & Fire Hub, Hereford HR2 0RU. 01981 550253

PC 3687 Jeff Rouse 07870150972

PCSO 6173 Fiona Witcher 07773 054 582

fiona.witcher@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 6378 Pete Knight 07773 053 919

peter.knight@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

Contact: 101 ext 4820 – Email: goldenvalley.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

