

PARISH NEWS

OF THE UPPER WYLYE VALLEY

MARCH 2026

"SLAYER OF THE WINTER, ART THOU HERE AGAIN?"



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*Boxing Hares by Joanne Cope,
www.joannecope.com*



O WELCOME, THOU THAT BRING'ST THE SUMMER NIGH!".

STOP PRESS

At the Open Meeting of the Raymond Trust on 10 th February, 84 residents of our three villages attended, plus 1 observer from Warminster. After debate, the result of the vote was all 84 in favour of attempting to buy the land. Also 13 other residents had sent written statements in favour, making a total of 97 in favour and 0 against.

WORD WEAVING

Do you enjoy penning words - whether for a book, poetically, for work or just for fun? Want some encouragement and/or fancy meeting a few fellow wordsmiths once a month?

Local writer and poet Lizzie Leigh is going to start hosting 'Codford Word Weaving' breakfasts on the New Moons (which means it's not always on a set day of the week). They'll start Thursday 19th March at 9 a.m. at Codford Tea Rooms and will include a croissant or pain au chocolat and unlimited tea/coffee for £10 pp.

No rules, bar it being a non-judgmental relaxed space to spark ideas and spur each other on. No accountability or need to attend every month, just celebrating tales and 'fails' and raising sails (or/and sales) ...sharing what you'd like to share and 'yarn' about the writing process.

E-mail Lizzie at willdrhymlizzie@gmail.com or message her on 07940 584752 if you'd like to attend the first one!

SUTTON VENY VILLAGE HALL
Tuesday 24th March
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Sarah Buttenshaw tells her fascinating true story as a young migrant who spent three years working and travelling around Australia. She mined for opals; swam with freshwater crocodiles; climbed Ayers Rock and lived life to the full!

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UPPER WYLYE VALLEY MEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFASTS

At the February breakfast our local MP, Dr Andrew Murrison, delayed his Monday morning departure for Westminster to talk to the Breakfasters about 'Britain in a Changing World'. Opinions were mixed on how he came across, but all were impressed at Andrew's ability to express his views on a wide range of, mostly international rather than domestic, subjects so clearly and without notes. As a Royal Navy doctor and with extensive experience in Defence matters, his choice of the Royal British Legion was an understandable. Over £150 was raised.

At the next breakfast, on Monday 2nd March, the speaker will be the Rector of the Upper Wyllye Valley Team, Revd Mike Duff, who has been in post since mid November last year. It is still a bit early (and he is far too discrete!) to devote his speaking slot to his first impressions of the benefice. Instead, he plans to talk about 'Getting it right - appointing vicars around the country', drawing on the last 6 years of his career when he was responsible for running appointment processes for churches across England. As Patronage Secretary to the largest patron in the country he has worked closely with PCCs, Archdeacons and Bishops - looking for the right leader, so that churches and communities can flourish.

The breakfasts take place at The George Inn, Longbridge Deverill beginning at 8.15am. The cost is £15, of which £2 will go towards the charity of the speaker's choice. Please note, this is not a club, but is open to all. Just contact the organisers via email (uwvmfb@gmail.com), before the preceding Friday at the latest, if you'd like to attend.

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CODFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tuesday 17th March in the Small Hall of the Codford Village Hall 7.30pm

A talk on the artist John Piper and the South West to coincide with the opening of a major exhibition of his work at the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes given by David Dawson, Director of the Wiltshire Museum. All are welcome, £3 on the door for non members.

FILMS AT THE WOOLSTORE

Tickets £7. Doors open 7pm, films start 7.30pm Woolstore Theatre reg charity no 800154
www.thewoolstoretheatre.co.uk

Wednesday 4th March F1 THE MOVIE (12A)

Fast and fun, starring Brad Pitt and Javier Bardem. After a near-fatal crash that almost put paid to his career, Sonny Hayes (Brad Pitt) has retired from Formula One and now freelances. When an offer comes from his old friend Ruben (Javier Bardem), now the owner of a struggling team called APXGP, Sonny makes a return to Formula One racing alongside a hot new rookie teammate.



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MINISTRY LETTER

As I observe our garden at The Rectory and watch to see what is coming through this spring, I am reminded of an embroidery sampler I saw on someone's wall some years ago. It read "Bloom where you're planted". At the time we were living in Indonesia at the foot of a volcano, so the soil was very rich. We could pick a leaf off a plant in our garden and stick it in the soil and it would root. We planted papaya, lemon and mango trees and they all grew and produced fruit. The conditions were just right and it was a joy to spend time in our garden.

While our garden on Java thrived, I fared less well as I was challenged by a new culture, language, customs, church and education system for our two young children. This got me thinking about what I needed to bloom where I was planted, what sort of soil did I need and what sort of climate. Of course, blooming is to a degree a personal choice, making the most of where we are and the treasures to be found. As people we need kindness, friendship and a safe home. We are social beings and do well in community and with activities which interest us and help us to be part of something bigger than

ourselves.

We have moved house three times since returning to the UK in 2007 and are used to arriving in a new community and getting stuck in, finding our place and adapting to new ways of doing things. It's not always easy and it takes time to develop friendships, so patience is needed.

Of course, we don't need to move to a new community to learn something of how to bloom in new circumstances. A new baby, change of job, retirement, illness or bereavement can tip us into a new way of life where we can flounder for a while, trying to find our new normal. In the Bible, God promises us that he has plans for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us (Jeremiah 29:11) and that he is with us and will watch over us wherever we go (Genesis 28:15). I take comfort in these verses and others too, that even when I am uprooted and life is tough for a while, God is by my side and in time I will bloom in my new situation. So, as spring gathers pace and the sun is warming our fields, I am putting down roots too but know that my strongest roots are those I put in my faith in God through Jesus.

Rachel Duff

BISHOP'S LETTER

"Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."
(Matthew 17: 4)

John Hackett, seventeenth century Bishop of Lichfield, preached that offering to build dwellings for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah was "...the greatest error that St Peter committed". Hackett's verdict has always struck me as somewhat harsh. True, Peter does not respond to a scene of unearthly glory with a paean of awestruck wonder. But then Peter was a fisherman. He was good with his hands. He was used to mending boats, gutting fish, and patching up nets. Brought face to face with the light of Heaven he reverts to type. What can he do? Make some 'dwellings' - obviously!

It's a relief to me that we read a Gospel account of the Transfiguration on the Sunday next before Lent, that we catch a glimpse of the divine before we descend to the wilderness and begin the weeks of penitence and fasting. It's a relief to me because St Peter manifestly fails to rise to

the occasion. He does not do what the circumstances seem to demand. He does not utter beautiful words that we still sing as a canticle in our worship. He does not leave the mountain-top with a serene countenance and a steadfast heart, forever a changed man. No. He reverts to type. He offers to get his chisel and plane out and knock something together.

And this is a relief because the weeks of Lent compel me to acknowledge that, like St Peter, I very rarely rise to the occasion. I make vows about abstinence and study, only to break them. I receive ash on my forehead and daub it on the foreheads of others, only to find myself thinking about my supper. I hear the gorgeous music of the Cathedral choir and walk in solemn procession behind them, only to obsess about impossible neighbours, unwritten sermons, and difficult colleagues. In short, I revert to type - gluttonous, distracted, and cross.

But perhaps the expectation that I might rise to God's occasion or live up to God's moment is just one more example of human vanity, one more instance in which I'm convinced it's all about me. It's not.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their ancestors.'

When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer. Therefore say to them, 'This is the nation that has not obeyed the Lord its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips.

Jeremiah 7 v22ff

RH

Lent, however, imperfectly observed, leads to Passiontide, when God in Jesus does not rise to the occasion. He descends to it. To the scourge, to the nails, to the crown of thorns. He comes down the mountain and joins us. And that's why there is hope.

Dean Nick Papadopoulos

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER
FRIDAY 6TH MARCH
Upton Lovell Village Hall
6.00pm supper followed by
service in the church

Join us on this global ecumenical day, prepared this year by the Christian women of Nigeria. The day starts as the sun rises on the international dateline in Samoa. As the earth rotates a great wave of prayer begins to build. The wave reaches Europe and moves on until the sun finally sets over American Samoa. 146 countries and islands take part before a worldwide circle of prayer is completed.

Join us for this special service.

If you need to know more please contact
[Ali alisontebbs7@gmail.com](mailto:Ali.alisontebbs7@gmail.com)

ART CHALLENGE



When Robin, the editor, mentioned hares as a possible illustration for the cover of this edition, it reminded me of my two attempts at painting hares. They are mystical creatures and often found in art works.

The first is one I did with the grandchildren during lockdown, as an Easter theme, a variation on the Easter bunny. It is colourful with egg shapes in its body. The other is an Arctic hare, painted during an art class on a cruise to the Arctic. Actually it wasn't done during

the class but on my own afterwards. The art teacher gave us a lot of step by step instructions during the classes, which I found very limiting and my first result was awful. It taught me a lesson. It is always important and helpful to look at works of art for ideas and inspiration...but you must develop your own style and not try to exactly copy that of someone else.... unless you intend to become a counterfeiter!!

There are so many different ways to create a picture, even water colourists disagree about whether to do the dark areas first or last...there is no 'right' way. Be brave, be original, accept that there will be disasters.....then send us some examples of your work.



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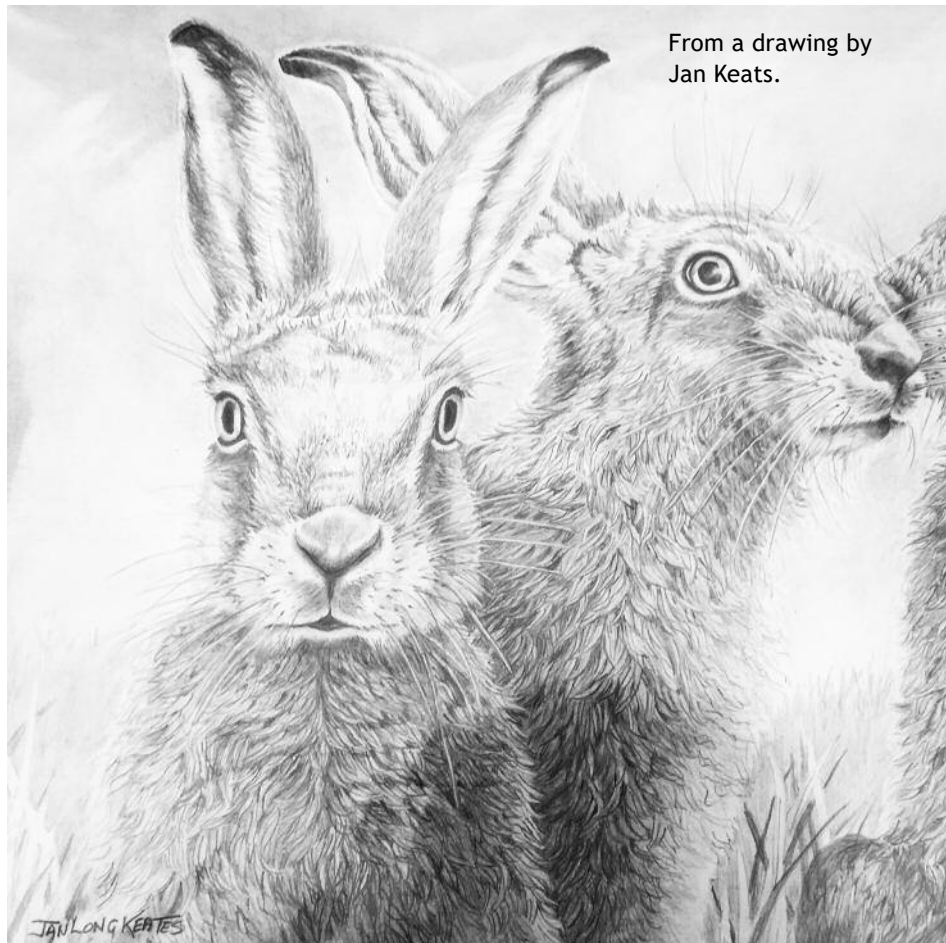

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From a drawing by
 Jan Keats.

TURBO'S DOG BLOG FOR EARLY SPRING

I've just had a 'surprise' visit to the Vet for my annual booster jabs, and you might be asking why when it must be booked in advance. Well, off we went on the only sunny morning of the month as the Guvnor lured me into the car with a cheery 'fancy a trip up the road to check your weight and pick up a couple of biscuits if you stand still?' What's not to like? The next thing I knew I was up on the table with the admittedly nice and gentle Vet wielding a massive syringe.

The experience was, however, OK but I have not forgiven the duplicitous and scheming way my Guvnor behaved - and not for the first time. We have history up there and the reader who has followed my stories from the beginning will remember the irony of my having earned stud fees on two occasions, only for the Guvnor to use said funds to have me 'seen to' when it all got to be too embarrassing for him - and too much for the female terriers of the village.

And there is more to it; the Vet said that the procedure would not only do the obvious trick but would improve my temper and enable me to control my bladder better. We had to return three weeks later for a check-up when, and even under control on the lead, I managed to frighten a cat in its basket and lifted my leg on the Receptionist's counter.

The next visit began better. All I had to do was stand still on the weighing machine while my weight was recorded; 9.4kg - today I am 6.8kg to put this tale into perspective. My check-up was fine, but the Vet suggested a lighter hand filling the food bowl for a few weeks (aaaargh!) and the Guvnor took note. When we reached the car he opened the tailgate, looked down at me and said, 'Well, Fatty, do you think you can jump into the back of the car, or shall I go and hire a crane to lift you in?'

Apart from the intolerable use of politically incorrect language worthy of a strongly worded complaint to the RSPCA, it wasn't even funny - even though I admit

it took me two goes to get into the boot. I thought I was in the clear for a bit, but the Guvnor has just said, 'Got a treat for you, Turbs old son; you're going 'down under' shortly to have your teeth cleaned.' Whatever can he mean?



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DID YOU KNOW? Marmalade

For many of us, a morning cup of tea and a piece of hot buttered toast with marmalade makes an excellent start to the day. But what are the origins of marmalade?

It is believed that marmalade or 'marmalada', was first imported to England in the 16th century from Portugal. It was originally made using quinces, which are hard yellow pear-shaped fruit and formed a firm sticky paste. This quince paste was made by cooking the fruit with sugar, as it is still made today. The marmalade which we eat today evolved predominately in Scotland, where bitter Seville oranges replaced quince. The Keiller family in Dundee are credited with commercialising marmalade as a popular breakfast staple in the 18th century and this tradition was soon adopted by the English.

Much of the marmalade which we eat today is made from the juice or peel of Seville oranges, but other citrus fruits can be used. The Seville orange is usually favoured because of its naturally high pectin content. Pectin is a water soluble fibre found in most fruits and plants and gives the marmalade its thick consistency. In addition, the Seville orange has a bitter, distinctive flavour. Marmalade is distinguished from jam by its use of peel, pulp and juice, often focusing on a balance between tart, bitter and sweet flavours. Depending on one's choice, the marmalade can be 'thick-cut' (chunky) or 'thin-cut' (shredded). Some marmalade also has added spirits.

Orange marmalade appears in literature often as a distinctly British, nostalgic, breakfast accompaniment. In the Victorian era, marmalade became an iconic fixture on the breakfast table and was a hallmark of a comfortable, refined and proper English home.

Famous poems about marmalade often evoke nostalgia and give us a feeling of home life. The lighthearted poem 'The King's Breakfast' by A.A. Milne (1924) describes the king who requests butter for his bread, but is told 'That many people nowadays like marmalade instead!'

A contemporary poem by Alison Hackett entitled 'The last two pots of

marmalade' focuses on the scent of orange marmalade bringing back memories of her father. The last two lines of the poem read, 'Butter jewelled under a slick of marmalade, creamy sweetness flecked with citrus tang'.

In British children's literature, the fictional character, Paddington Bear, created by the author Michael Bond is widely associated with his love of marmalade sandwiches, which he keeps 'as a wise emergency' in his hat!

Paddington's love of marmalade is, I am sure, shared by many of us. A very wise choice!

J W

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THOUGHTS FROM MY GARDEN

The days are getting longer, which probably means I should get up earlier! I find it's hard to get out of a warm bed when it's cold! March is a tricky month because it can still be very cold and very wet. Better to spend time in the garden preparing for the growing season which is about to come upon us in earnest. Pots need washing, tools need to be checked over and maybe the lawnmower needs a service! It's time to get on top of it all, the birds are busy looking for nests, so it's too late to cut back hedges, I know the sap on the plum trees needs to rise before pruning to prevent disease getting in but that's about it. I'm quite pleased with the shape of shrubs in my garden they look neat and tidy.

I have spent a bit more time on house plants in the last few weeks, I don't have many as I'm not very good at keeping them alive, but I have a lovely Hoya in the conservatory which spreads over one wall and fills the conservatory with the most wonderful Mediterranean scent when in flower. I'm going to have to give it some serious attention soon because it's in need of food, but it's in a pot that I can't move because that would mean detaching it from the trellis that is holding it up. So I

need to dig out what soil I can and try to feed it with more goodness. I must say it's a very forgiving plant and I've had years of pleasure from it. I keep my geraniums and a hibiscus and two lemon trees in the conservatory over winter and they will be wanting to grow and flourish in the garden as soon as I'm sure we are free of frost, probably not for another month. The lemon trees are full of fruit and although rather small lemons they are very juicy and delicious.

Colours are already beginning to reward us in the garden with daffodils and tulips, so let's get up and running out there. Leave the pond for frogspawn but stay glued to the weather forecast. Look out for frost and slippery surfaces and maybe lots of mud! And if gardening is too tricky maybe a good walk to see what is coming out in the hedgerows and fields.

Ali Tebbis



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VILLAGE NEWS

CODFORD COMMUNITY KEY EVENTS MARCH 2026

- 2nd Men's Fellowship breakfast at the George Inn, Longbridge Deverill at 8.15am
- 4th Film night at the Woolstore theatre showing 'F1- The movie' - 7.30pm
- 6th - Fishy Fridays (fish and chips) at Codford Tea Rooms - 5.00pm - 7.30pm
- 7th - Free drama workshops at the Woolstore theatre 10am - 12 noon
- 8th- Codford park run at Codford village hall grounds 10am
- 8th - Live music with Tariqa at Codford Tea Rooms - 1.30pm - 2.30pm
- 11th Ladies circle breakfast at the Hillside cafe at 9.30
- 12th Hearing aid clinic at Codford village hall (small hall) 10am - 12pm
- 13th Food truck 'We Meat Again' at Codford village hall grounds 5pm - 8pm
- 13th Mothers ruin and a twist of rhyme' at Codford Tea Rooms 5pm onwards
- 14th Winter warmers (a delicious bowl of soup, a roll, a cup of tea and a biscuit) free event at Codford village hall 12pm - 2pm
- 15th Mother's Day roasts at Codford Tea Rooms 12 - 2pm
- 15th Monthly drinks at the Woolstore theatre - 12 - 2pm
- 15th Arts and crafts market at the Ginger Piggery, Boyton 10am - 3pm
- 17th Codford local history society talk on 'John Piper and the south west' at Codford village hall - 7.30pm
- 18th Codford and District Gardening club talk on 'Seasonal plants with impact' at Codford village hall 7.30pm
- 19th Launch of Codford Word Weaving breakfasts by Lizzie at Codford Tea Rooms - 9am
- 20th Golden Oldies with a menu to match at Codford Tea Rooms from 5pm
- 21th Free drama workshops at the Woolstore theatre 10.30 - 12.30
- 22nd Car boot sale at Codford village hall grounds - 7am for sellers, 8am for buyers
- 27th Live music - Eve with Taylor Clarke at Codford Tea Rooms 1.30pm - 2.30pm
- 30th Parish Council meeting at Codford village hall 7pm

www.codfordvillage.org.uk

COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHINES BRIGHTER THAN EVER: £7,000 DONATED TO LOCAL GROUPS!

Thanks to the incredible support for last November's Codford Fireworks Night, the Codford Fireworks Committee is delighted to announce that £7,000 has been donated to local community groups – marking our third consecutive year of giving back in a truly meaningful way!

Your enthusiasm, generosity, and community spirit continue to spark wonderful initiatives across our village. Here's how this year's funds will be put to work:

- Codford Village Hall - helping fund ongoing improvements, including a much needed industrial cleaner to keep this well loved space welcoming for everyone.
- Wylve Valley Parish News - supporting production costs, including the special editions many of us look forward to.
- Wylve Valley Primary School - enabling a variety of extracurricular activities that enrich learning and bring joy to children.
- Codford Caterpillars - contributing to further enhancements of the pre school's outdoor play areas.
- Wylve Valley Riding for the Disabled - helping support their inspiring annual summer camp.
- Codford & District Tennis Club- assisting with the replacement of the remaining fencing to keep the courts safe and well maintained.
- Woolstore Theatre - supporting essential roof repair works to preserve this cherished local venue.

A huge thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, donated, or simply cheered us on. Together, we're not just lighting up the sky – we're lighting up our community.

Here's to more shared moments, big-hearted celebrations, and the joy of coming together!

CODFORD COMMUNITY CAFÉ SHINES! PROUD TO CELEBRATE A 5-STAR FOOD HYGIENE RATING.

Wonderful news for Codford – our much loved Community Café has officially been awarded a 5 star food hygiene rating! A huge well done to the amazing volunteers whose hard work, care, and high standards made this achievement possible. Pop in, enjoy a cuppa, and taste the efforts of a team that truly puts the community first.

MyWilts App - An Easy Way to Report Local Issues

The MyWilts app is a simple, easy to use tool that lets you report problems in Wiltshire straight to the council. If you spot things like blocked drains, fallen trees, damaged signs, dangerous potholes, or anything that needs attention, you can report it quickly through the app.

It's free to download, and it helps the council fix issues faster – keeping our community safe and tidy.

CODFORD VILLAGE HALL ACTIVITIES EACH WEEK:

Tue: Pilates & short mat bowls.
Wed: Pilates, Choir, Fit club.
Thurs: Community café, Happy hearts, Clubercise and Badminton.

To find the Codford community website, type 'Codfordcommunity.co.uk' into your search bar. There, you will find various useful and informative content. A new quiz has also been added, which can be found on the home page.

Codford Parish Council minutes can be found on the Codford Parish Council website (codfordpc.org.uk) or you can find a link to them from our Codford community website.

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VILLAGE NEWS

HEYTESBURY HAPPENINGS

As I write this it is raining... no surprise there I hear you say. At least the water birds are enjoying this wet weather and our family of three swans on the river have an expanded territory to use as the fields get covered in water. Thankfully the ancient water meadows are doing their job, having been saved from building development, thus safeguarding nearby houses from flooding.

The big topic in our parish this month is the question of whether, or not, to make an offer for the unsold recreation land in Park Street. Professional guidance has been sought on this issue leading to a Raymond Trust Open Meeting. This was held in Heytesbury Church on the 10th February (as this article goes to press) to ascertain the wishes of the residents of Heytesbury, Knook & Tytherington, who are the beneficiaries of the Trust. A vote was taken after discussion. Further news will be posted on the website, www.heytesburyparish.co.uk and Facebook pages.

The setting of the Parish Council budget (called the precept) has taken place, and we are pleased to announce that there will be NO increase in the Parish Council precept for 2026/27. When you receive your Council Tax Bill from Wiltshire Council, you will see that the Parish amount has stayed the same as last year. This has been made possible by careful budgeting and prudent spending throughout the last ten months.

Grateful thanks go to the landowner of the Parsonage Farm field for cutting back the brambles that were invading the footpath. And also, our thanks go to stalwart litter picker-ups: Lady Granville-Chapman who can often be seen in her Hi-Viz vest patrolling the verges of the A36 where drivers have mindlessly thrown their rubbish. Plus, Primrose Hibbs who often helps by collecting litter on her daily walk. Thank

you to both ladies. We aim to hold a village Litter Pick-up morning in the Spring.

The Planning application for development of The Vicarage and its grounds was discussed at the Parish Council meeting in January. A number of residents raised their objections on a variety of issues which led to the PC formally Objecting to the plan. Subsequently the applicant has withdrawn his application. No doubt a revised version will be re-submitted later.

The next Parish Council meetings will be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 24th February and on Tuesday 31st March. *SB*

AURORA BOREALIS OVER HEYTESBURY

Like many other places in the Southwest, the night sky in Heytesbury was illuminated by vivid red and green streaks of light. Many of us missed the spectacular sight but Sandra Hares photographed the aurora borealis over Heytesbury Church. You can see the photograph on Heytesbury, Knook and Tytherington Villagers Facebook page or better still, buy a card which Sandra has kindly offered to produce in aid of Heytesbury Church. Details will be posted on the HKT Facebook page and Heytesbury Stores notice board.

With spring possibly on the horizon, we are looking for volunteers to help with the church flowers by either joining our team (only requirement is enthusiasm) or offering flowers or greenery from your garden. We have a WhatsApp group so if you would like to join, please email Emma Halford-Macleod at elhm@me.com.

Tina Sitwell

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NEWS FROM HEYTESBURY CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We have had a busy term in school, and the six weeks since the Christmas holidays have just flown by!

In the middle of the coldest, darkest (and at the moment wettest) time of the year we brought light and joy by celebrating our Christingle Service in St Peter and St Paul Church in Heytesbury with our whole community. We welcomed families into school the day before the service to help make our Christingles during an open classroom event, and then shared songs, poems and prayers during the service to celebrate how Jesus is the light of the world.

Other highlights of the term have included welcoming a visitor into school to bring to life the learning we have been doing in RE lessons about the Jewish faith. We learnt about the Torah and the rituals of Shabbat, and particularly enjoyed trying some special challah bread which Jewish families use to welcome in their day of rest each week.

Our ethos in school comes from the parable of the mustard seed, and we work hard to enable all children to grow and flourish and 'become trees' like the tiny seed in the story. We have set up a school council this term so children across the school can develop responsibility and leadership skills. Pupils wrote and presented election speeches before we held a secret ballot to choose our councilors democratically. Our school council is now working hard to plan and organise events for World Book Day and Red Nose Day next term.

Our Y6 children took part in the Bikeability cycle training programme earlier this month, to build their skills and confidence to cycle on the road. As well as practising their skills cycling round the village and on local roads, they also learnt how to look after their bike and how to keep themselves safe. We were very proud of how well they all did.

We have a week left to half-term and we still have our Y5 and Y6 children going out on a trip to Ufton Court to learn about the Ancient Greeks, and our KS2 children taking part in a dance festival at Dautsey's School. I think we will have earned the holiday when half term comes around! *Lindsey Hermon (Headteacher)*

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VILLAGE NEWS

SHERRINGTON

Written in February, my least favourite month! I have just staggered back from 2 hours of serious mud sliding and my thoughts went back to last summer. We had those days and weeks of pretty relentless sun, ground baked to rock, no grass growing and no mud for those birds that need it for nest building. My goodness rain would have been so welcome then but be careful what you wish for.

However, Spring is pushing open the door of the year and the signs are here. Of course snow drops, delicate heads drooping on stems amongst leaves of soft, smoky green. Every year they seem to spread their pristine drifts and appear in new places. First daffodils always appear against the wall where the road bends entering Boyton. This morning there is a cheerful little clump of tete-a-tete in the churchyard, crocus too and first primroses, harbingers of the carpet that will be shaken across the grass. In the Great Ridge hazel bushes are hung with gold and cheerful catkins dance in hedgerows everywhere. Not long now before the mist of Spring green washes over the willows by the cress bed and lights the larch in the wood. What of birdlife? The feeder bustles with finches and sparrows as it has done throughout the winter. Blackbirds left the garden during the drought and have not returned. I fear that young did not survive, as well as rock hard ground they had to contend with magpies, elegant birds but such predators and I see we have a nest in the ash tree! Small flies dance at the slightest hint of sunlight and that is good news for wrens and other small birds that rely on insect life in the air or on the ground under leaves. I did not see many fieldfare but they have been in the area as the generous crops of hawthorn berries are all taken. So good to see more hedgerows planted, huge benefit to the beleaguered farm land birds, sparse in this area. Times must be difficult for the barn owls.

Numbers were decimated last season as field voles, their staple diet, did not breed in sufficient numbers and as a result the owls often did not reach breeding condition. The constant rain we are having now must also be taking its toll. Soft feathers, so perfect for silent flight become easily waterlogged so hunting is a life threatening problem. Life must be a struggle.

A film has been made from the fascinating book H is for Hawk written by a woman who trained a goshawk, the dedication necessary helped her to come to terms with the loss of her father. I do hope the film does not cause an upsurge in wannabe falconers, expert instruction is so essential, not to be undertaken lightly.

Elizabeth Stewart loved Sherrington Church. At 102 she is to be laid to rest in the churchyard with her parents. *BL*

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VILLAGE NEWS

Community Unites to Revive Sutton Veny's Historic Woolpack Pub

In response to widespread enthusiasm and a desire to restore this iconic establishment, residents and supporters



UPTON LOVELL RAMBLINGS

I want to celebrate a couple of things that I find wonderful. As I write this the first signs of the emerging Spring can be seen and heard when out and about. The woodpeckers are drumming, the garden birds are starting to make their voices heard and taking on their mating plumage. I never cease to wonder at the resilience of the nature around us, snowdrops down the lane towards Suffers Bridge spend most of the year under water, frozen, driven over and generally abused but in late January suddenly spring up from nowhere and carpet the verges, banks and hedgerows all around the valley, brave and brilliant and a cheerful harbinger of the Spring. A great place to go for a day out to see hundreds of different varieties is the Rococo Garden at Painswick. Millions of snowdrops in a beautiful setting and a rather good café for lunch.

The other wonder are the water meadows, which, as we all know after the incessant rain the fields bordering the Wylfe, are waterlogged but, although the river has overflowed and the Winter-bournes are full, very few houses are flooded by the river. Unfortunately for some the rising water table does create problems.

The history of the water meadows in the Wylfe valley dates back to the 17th century and are unique to England representing some of the earliest and largest engineering feats in the pre-modern world. They create an extensive system of

channels and meadows harnessing the natural characteristics of the springs of the chalk aquifers, which flow to the surface in winter at a temperature above the normal air temperature, promoting early growth of the grass and protecting it from frost and increasing agricultural yield.

I find it incredible that many new developments across the country are built on ancient water meadows and flood plains, the very name of which might give a hint of potential problems if houses are built on them! Sadly, planners and developers do not always realise the importance of local history and the increasing need for housing means that what seems like a potential space for new homes is covered, so blocking the ancient routes that surplus water took across the meadows.

I hope the next rant will celebrate dry dog walks, sunshine and new life emerging in our beautiful valley. AC

have launched an initiative to purchase and re-open the pub as a Community Benefit Society (CBS).

A public meeting was convened in late October 2025, a working group was established from the over 60 plus attendees. The group comprises, Lucy Fryer, James Sullivan-Tailyour, James Woodrowe, Clive and Sophia Black and Charles Goodbody. The team offer experience in Accounting, Hospitality, Conveyancing and legal matters and marketing. As the project grows they will be looking to add people with specific skills to the working group.

Further details and information can be found at www.suttonveny.co.uk/village-matters/community-pub.

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Lent 2	Codford St Peter	11.00am	Parish Communion	choir
St David's Day	Heytesbury	11.00am	Sunday Worship	
	Upton Lovell	6.00pm	Evensong (BCP)	
Friday 6 March	Upton Lovell	6.00/ 7.00pm	World Day of Prayer with supper first	
March 8	Tytherington	8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	
Lent 3	Upton Lovell	9.30am	Celtic Morning Prayer	
	Heytesbury	11.00am	Parish Communion	choir
	Codford St Mary	6.00pm	Evensong (BCP)	
March 15	Boyton	8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	
Mothering	Codford St Peter	9.30am	Mothering Sunday service	
Sunday	Sutton Veny Hall	9.30/10.00am	Café church	
	Norton Bavant	11.00am	Parish Communion	choir
	Tytherington	6.00pm	Evensong (BCP)	
March 22	Sutton Veny	8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)	
Lent 5	Codford St Mary	9.30am	Parish Communion	choir
Passion	Knook	11.00am	Parish Communion	
Sunday	Heytesbury	6.00pm	Evensong (BCP)	
March 29	Codford churches	10.00am	TEAM SERVICE	
Palm Sunday	Upton Lovell	6.00pm	Evening Communion	choir
Monday 30	Knook	6.00pm	Compline	
Tuesday 31	Tytherington	6.00pm	Compline	

UWVT WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesdays Sutton Veny 8.30 am Morning Prayer (BCP)

FROM THE REGISTERS

Wedding

Congratulations to

Alison Wild and Clifford Cork
on 6 February at Sutton Veny

Pallavi Dodia and Mark Gooding
on 7 February at Tytherington

*May they have many
happy years of married life together*

Baptisms

We welcome into the Christian Church

India Sarah Antoinette Ponsonby
on 25 January at Sutton Veny

May she grow in the Christian Faith

Interment of ashes

*Our sympathy and love to those
who mourn the passing of*

John Stickley

on 17 January

at St Mary's Church, Codford

Robert Nicholson

on 2 February

at St Peter's Church, Codford

Jane Wootton

on 3 February

at St Peter's Church, Codford

*May they rest in the peace
and light of Christ*

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	Edward Moore	840420
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