# Village Voices

## The newsletter of Halford and Alderminster

## December 2026

*The Village Voices production and delivery teams wish all our readers a warm and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.*



We love to include your seasonal or topical photographs please send them to *Stephen.scott6@btinternet.com*

... and a Merry Christmas from me, the Editor (and novice photographer!).

Thank you to everyone who has sent me photographs for the newsletter, I can't print them all but, having the scope of photographs in "my library" means we have an interesting and diverse publication. Happy clicking to all of you for 2027!

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# Halford News

A big thank you to all those who have returned contributions to support the Village Voices for 2027.
Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome, through the letterbox at Mistletoe Cottage or by email to jmarthur53@gmail.com Deadline for January issue - **15th December**.

## Saint Mary's Church Halford

### Church Windows

Our project to restore, repair and clean all the windows in the church continues and the two repaired and cleaned windows are back in the church. The third window has been taken out as part of the restoration project. We are grateful to all those who have offered support and contributed to this major work.
The church will remain open as usual, but there may be minor changes to services during that time.

### Saturday 28th November - Christmas Coffee Morning

Our annual Christmas Coffee Morning will be held in the Village Hall at 10:30am. This will be a time to meet friends and neighbours over a cup of coffee and cake. There will be a fantastic raffle with plenty of great prizes and cakes to buy and eat at home!

### Dates for Your Diary

**Sunday 20th December - Christmas Carol Service**
Our Carol Service will be on **Sunday the 20th December** at 6:00pm. Your favourite Carols will be sung with the Organ being played by our Guest Organist, Maddy Evans. Come along with your families and enjoy a festive and happy occasion. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available afterwards.

**Friday 25th December – Christmas Day Service**
Our Christmas Day Service will be held at 9:30am. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

## Parish Council News

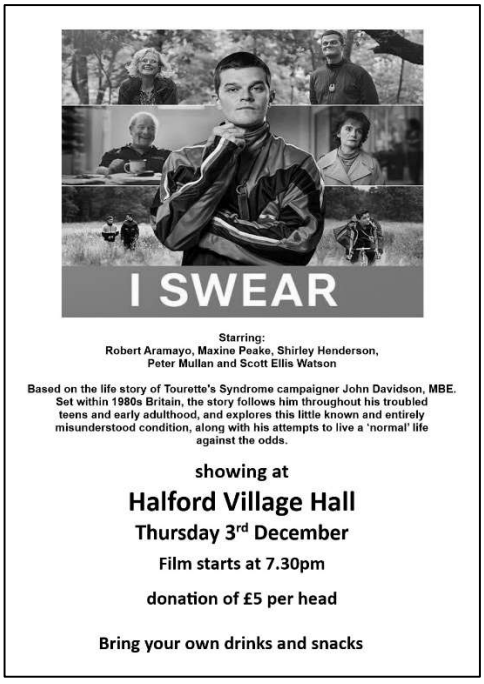
### Halford Parish Council

At the last meeting on 21st October the precept was discussed. It was decided that the precept would not be set at this meeting but would be deferred until the January meeting so that the council could spend more time considering the longer-term plans and strategies for the village. More on this in the coming months.
The development on the Idlicote Road is now seeing some basic preparation for the groundwork which will take place over the next 3-4 months after which the houses will start to be erected. Initially two houses will be built for clients and a further 3-5 will be erected to help with marketing the development, (planning permission for this change is currently in progress). In due course these “market build“ houses will attract CIL money for the village.
The next meeting will be held on **6th January 2027** at 6:30pm in the Halford Village Hall.

*Graham Sara 07970 010398 glsara@yahoo.com*

## Halford Village Hall

**Monday 14th December: Table Tennis** at 7:30pm all welcome. Contact Gerald at geraldnewell@gmail.com to confirm dates and for more information on joining this Monday group. There’s always room for more!
**Tuesday 1st, 8th & 15th December**: Yoga at 7:30pm with Deborah - Please contact Deborah on 01789 740321 or at lazycatyoga@btinternet.com for information on dates etc.
**Thursday 3rd December: Evening with Film** - will show “I swear”. John Davidson: diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome at a young age which alienated him from his peers, he struggled with a condition few people had witnessed.




Doors open 7pm for a 7:30pm start and a donation of £5 would be appreciated to cover costs.
**Wednesday 16th December: Coffee Morning** 10:30am to 12pm all welcome.

### Village Hall Lottery

The November draw took place during the Village Coffee Morning on 21st October and the winners were:

1. Natalie Green
2. Anne-Lise Axup
3. Suzanna de Freitas

Thanks to everyone who has supported the lottery this year.

### Halford Village Hall Lottery 2027

The Village Lottery is a major source of income for the Village Hall maintenance and your support over the years is much valued. I will be collecting for the 2027 lottery over the next few weeks, but you can request

your numbers earlier (and pay by bank transfer if possible £20 per number) it would be appreciated. Alternatively, please email me (glsara@yahoo.com) to reserve your numbers and I can collect. (Bank details are Halford Village Hall Sort Code 30-98-26 Account Number 01620038 Please include name and preferred numbers on the reference)

*Graham Sara 07970 010398 glsara@yahoo.com*

**Dates for your diary**

**Thursday 7th January:** Evening with Film – "Pressure"

If you are interested in booking the Village Hall, all the hiring information including costs can be found on www.halfordvillage.uk/village-hall. For booking enquiries, please contact Muriel Parr on 01789 740857 or murielparr@gmail.com

# *Alderminster News*

***A MERY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS***

## CHURCH NEWS

A full list of Services is printed separately in Village Voices. Everyone is welcome to any of the Services in our beautiful iconic Village Church, and coffee and biscuits are usually served afterwards, so why not come along?

In December along with regular Services there will be the following:

**21st December** - Carol Service at 6.30pm

**24th December** - Christingle/ Crib service at 3.00pm

**24th December** - Midnight Mass at 11.30pm

More details will be given in the next Village Voices and are shown on the Church notice boards and can also be found on the website 'A Church Near You'; the direct link to St Mary and Holy Cross Alderminster is https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13087/

All are welcome.

Remember that the Churchyard and path are used by many villagers, but all this needs constant work to keep it safe and in good condition. Please note that although the path down to and along the riverbank is now open, anyone who uses it does so at their own risk, especially when there has been bad weather or flooding.

**Foodbank**

If you wish to donate items to the Shipston Foodbank, please bring them in a bag to the church porch between 10.30 and 11.30 every Saturday; hopefully Jane will be there to meet you, otherwise please leave any items in a carrier bag in the porch.

**Fundraising**

The PCC are constantly looking for ideas to raise funds that are also interesting for the whole community to join in with; in the past these have included wine tasting, quizzes and concerts. If you have an idea or even wish to put on an event, please get in touch.

**Church Tower**

The stonemasons continue to work on the tower, working from the top level downwards. The PCC would like to offer their apologies for any inconvenience this may cause, but also make a request for care and vigilance for anyone using the Churchyard as it will effectively be a building site.

**Church Clock**

The clock face and hands have already been safely removed for repair, redecoration and regilding. As mentioned last month, the planned repairs to the clock mechanism will take place once the Tower project is complete.

**Bell Ringing**

Whilst there is work being done on the tower, the opportunity for bell ringing may be restricted, but if you would like to learn more about bell ringing, contact Rebecca Lockwood rebeccalockwood3@gmail.com

## PARISH COUNCIL

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on **Monday 11th January 2027** Alderminster Village Hall at 7.30pm; all are welcome.

There is currently a vacancy on the Parish Council; if you think that it is something that you may be interested in please contact The Parish Clerk at alderminsterpc@gmail.com for more information.

## ALDERMINSTER VILLAGE HALL

*The Village needs the Village Hall but the Hall needs you and your support!*

The Village Hall and its facilities are available for hire at very reasonable rates. Jane Jones has all the information on 01789 450672. The Hall has daytime space for classes; if you know of anyone who wants to run an exercise class or other activity please put them in touch with Jane.

**Alderminster Village Hall breakfast**: Build yourself up for Christmas shopping, with a freshly cooked treat on **Saturday 5th December**, 8.30 - 10.00am; the hall will be looking festive thanks to MEGA. Cash or card payments accepted, all proceeds go to support the Hall. The "50 Club" draw will take place during the morning. The winners of the November 50 Club draw were:-

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | No. 27 | Pam Bailey | £20 |
| 2nd | No. 32 | Liz Preston | £10 |
| 3rd | No. 22 | Claire Jeavons | £5 |

2027 subscriptions are now due and there are additional numbers available. Many thanks to all who have already paid.
Any queries or for purchase of numbers call Neville Palmer (01789 555930 or 07810 145420).
Payments can be by bank transfer (Alderminster Village Hall 50 Club, sort code 30-98-26, account number 00793389), cash or cheque at the breakfast or direct to Neville Palmer (01789 555930 or 07810 145420).

**Christmas Fair**: There will be a Christmas Fair taking place on Saturday 28th November 10.30am-12.30pm with seasonal refreshments, raffle, tombola and stalls to get you in the mood for the 25th. If you have items to sell and would like a table for the morning, the cost is £10.00. (Contact Gill on 07790 435870).

**Warm Space**: Warm Space will be in the Hall on **14th and 28th Dec.** (2-4pm) and Indoor Curling on **2nd and 16th Dec.** (2.30-4.00). Just drop into Warm Space for free refreshments or play a few games of curling with free drinks and biscuits.

**Winter Warmers Lunch**: With a break in December, come and join us for a soup and pudding, cost £5, at Alderminster Village Hall on **4th and 18th January 2027** 12.30-2pm (last orders 1.30pm). We look forward to welcoming you for food, friendship and good conversation. In the meantime, we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

**Alderminster Cinema**: Our film on **Friday 18th December** will be "Little Women" based on the famous book by Louisa M Alcott; it has an all-star cast of Florence Pugh, Timothee Chalamet, Emma Watson, Eliza Scanlon, Meryl Streep and Saoirse Ronan. Doors open 7pm with refreshments served before the film; film starts at 7.30. You are welcome to bring your own drinks and snacks.

## ALDERMINSTER GARDENING CLUB.

The Club has a tradition of going out for a Christmas meal in December, this year we will be going to the White Hart at Newbold, we like to support local pubs. The Club resumes in the hall on **Tuesday 12th January** at 7.30pm for the AGM and there will be a demo from Mary Smith of a winter flower arrangement. The program for the year will also be available to members paying their subs which will be kept at £15.00 for 2027.
**Gill's Green Tips**: On good days go out into the garden and have a tidy up, rake leaves off flowerbeds and lawns, try making leaf mold by bagging them up in black plastic bags, tying the top, then piercing the bag with a fork, then put them in a corner out of the way until next spring. If you have ornamental grasses, leave their foliage on until February. Look out for winter bulbs in pots in garden centres, it's a good way to get things like aconites growing in your garden if you plant them out from the pots and it adds some colour. Make your own door swags with evergreens from your garden, tied up with ribbon and decorated with baubles or fir cones, much cheaper than buying a wreath and more fun. A bowl of bulbs makes a much better present than a poinsettia and can be planted in the garden to come up again when the flowers have died down. If you like spring bulbs don't be afraid to buy them if they are reduced in the sale, planted now they will come up in the spring, especially the dwarf varieties which are hardier.

## MEGA

*Monday Evening Group Alderminster*

MEGA's December meeting is taking the form of a trip to the pantomime to see Robin Hood at the Art's House for which tickets have already been sold.
Our next meeting in the Village Hall will be on **Monday 25th January** at 7.30pm and will take the form of a Cocktail, Casino and Canapes Evening. We will be providing the cocktails and canapes, but you are welcome to bring your own drinks if you prefer. The meeting is open to all with a £5 charge for visitors. For more information and to book a place contact Pauline on 07810442651 or Rita on 01789748084.
It just remains to wish everyone a ***MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR***

## AMBLERS

On a rather overcast November morning with a chill wind blowing, six amblers set out from Honington. We followed the Centenary Way uphill to be rewarded with spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. We walked along grassy paths and bridleways before eventually descending towards St. Dennis and retracing our steps back to the start.

Our next amble is planned for **Wednesday 2nd December** which will be our Christmas amble when we'll meet at 10am at Alderminster Village Hall. If you are interested in the amblers and want to go on the mailing list, please contact Alison on 01789 450703 or alisonkbenton@outlook.com

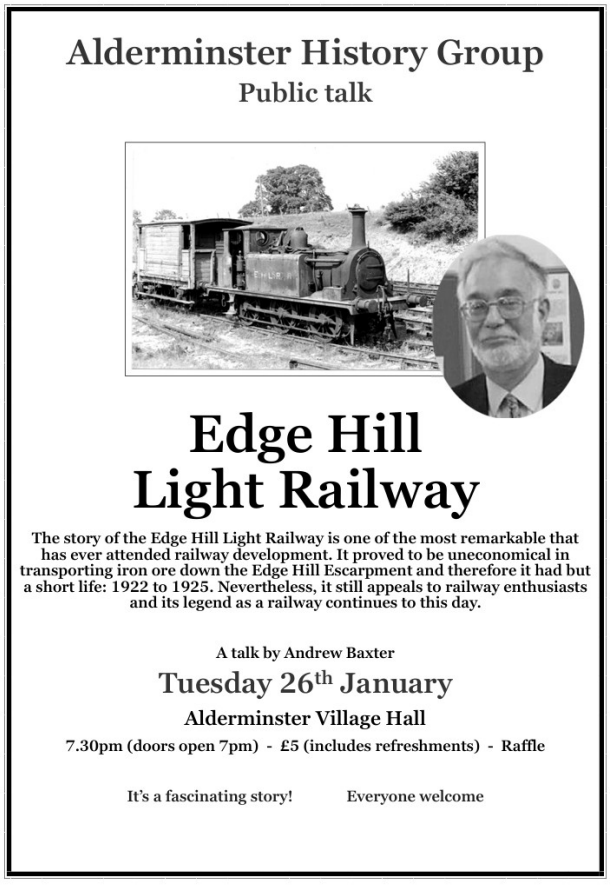
## ALDERMINSTER HISTORY GROUP

Cartoon King – Walt Disney: Christmas is coming and with it our usual choice of festive films. What better than a Disney classic! Walter Elias Disney, pioneer of the American animation industry, was born in Chicago on December 5th 1901. As a child he was always keen on drawing and became a commercial illustrator at the age of 18. Early in the 1920's he and his brother Roy moved to California and established Disney Brothers Studio. One of his most famous characters, Mickey Mouse, was created in 1928 and Disney himself provided the voice of Mickey during the early years. Several innovations in animation technology followed in the 1930's and 40's and this resulted in films such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Pinocchio, Fantasia, Dumbo and Bambi. Live action films followed in the 1950's and 60's including Mary Poppins which received 5 Academy Awards. The first Disney Theme Park was opened in July 1955 in Anaheim, California with an entry fee of $1 for adults and 50 cents for children. Sadly, Disney died of lung cancer in December 1966. Sixty years on his films are as popular as ever and continue to enchant us.

**Next event**: **Tues 26th January 2027** "***The Edgehill Light Railway***" – by Andrew Baxter.

"*Of the many chapters that have been written about the history of railways in Britain, few are as fascinating as The Edgehill Light Railway*".

Alderminster Village Hall 7.30pm. Entrance £5 (includes refreshments). Raffle. Don't miss it! Everyone welcome.




## ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The Stratford-upon-Avon Astronomical Society meets every first and third Tuesday at 8 pm (doors open at 7.30 pm) at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more. Usually, the first Tuesday is a club night, and the third Tuesday is a speaker, but in December the club night will be on the 3rd Tuesday (**15th December**) and is our Christmas get-together. On the first **Tuesday, 1st December**, the speaker will be Dr Conor Byrne from Warwick University, with a talk called "The earliest stars and galaxies". Please note that the speakers usually start quite promptly at 8 pm.

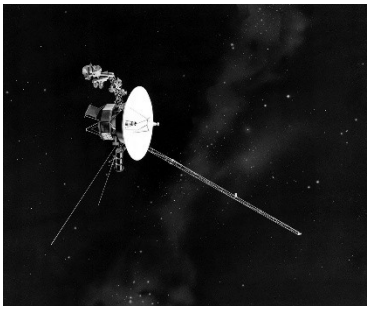
Each month one of our members, Adrian Wakeham, writes an article on aspects of astronomical observation.

**My Voyager of Discovery**

One question I get asked regularly is what got me into astronomy.

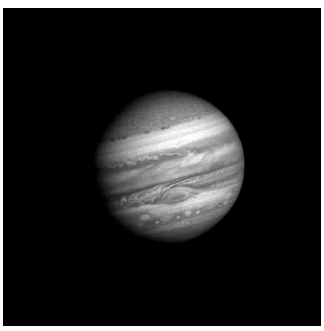
The first things that mesmerised me were the Voyager Probes. They started in my childhood and have continued exploring the unknown into my adult life.

The Voyager mission was conceived in the summer of 1964, (at the same time as I was!) by a postgrad student, Gary Flandro (Voyager, not me!), doing a summer job with NASA, when he discovered a once-in-175-year alignment of the outer 4 planets, with the potential of a Grand Tour of all four of them in one mission. This gave very little time to plan, prepare, approve and fund the mission to send 2 probes to visit Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, explore the outer reaches of the solar system and then venture into interstellar space. Each probe carried a gold plaque and information to allow another alien civilisation to gather information about Earth and Mankind, if ever recovered.

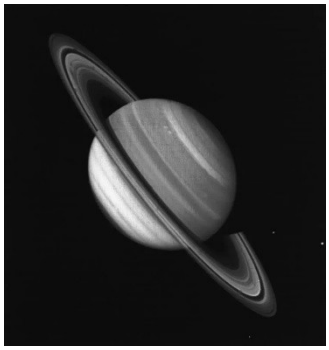


In August 1977, Voyager 2 launched, and Voyager 1 launched 2 weeks later and set off on a 2-year voyage to Jupiter.

Voyager 1 arrived in April 1979, followed by Voyager 2 in July. The images were spectacular, discovering new moons and photographing close-up views of many of them, including icy ones, volcanic ones and heavily cratered ones. It showed close-ups of Jupiter's swirling atmosphere and the Great Red Spot storm system. Both probes flew past Jupiter, gaining a gravitational assist and boost to direct it onwards to Saturn. In November 1980, Voyager 1 was directed to do a close-up pass of Titan, Saturn's largest moon, before flying past the planet. In August 1981, Voyager 2 took a route



through the Saturnian system to get a boost and was redirected to Uranus.



The ring system was seen for the first time in close-up; new moons were discovered, and others were seen close up, as was the planet.

In January 1986, Voyager 2 arrived at Uranus. The planet and moons rotate at 91degrees to the plane of the solar system. This meant the probe was like a dart flying at a dartboard. More moons were discovered, as were a set of rings. As it skirted the cloud tops, before being redirected to Neptune, the coldest temperatures in the solar system were recorded.

It arrived at Neptune in August 1989, discovering moons, rings and storms, before being redirected to Triton, its largest moon, believed to be a captured asteroid, orbiting in the opposite direction to the other moons

This might sound like it would be the end of both probes' missions, but in February 1990, Voyager 1 took a family photo of 6 of the Solar System's planets. Earth was a single blue pixel, so the photo became known as 'The Little Blue Dot'.

To save power, most of the instruments have been slowly turned off, but the magnetometer and other instruments to measure interstellar space are still working. In 2010, it crossed the generally accepted boundary of the Solar System, sending invaluable data back to Earth via antennas using similar power to a fridge light.

As they venture further into space, the time taken for signals to return to Earth increases. Jupiter was 20 mins each way; Saturn 40 minutes each way. By November 2026, another major milestone was achieved when Voyager 1 reached 1 light-day from Earth; this means that even light itself, which travels at 186,000 miles per second, would take a full day to reach Earth. Putting this into perspective, it only takes about 8.5 minutes for sunlight to reach us. Voyager 1 is a long way out.

Their missions continue until their Plutonium reactors run out. This means power for another 20 years. (Hopefully I have another 20 years left in me as well)

## MORE ABOUT ALDERMINSTER ?

Visit: www.alderminster-pc.gov.uk

Village Voices is available on the Parish Council website www.alderminster-pc.gov.uk/village-voices

The deadline for the January 2027 edition of Village Voices is **Saturday 15th December**.

Club Nights offer more information on what to look out for each month. If it is clear, we do some observing just outside the Village Hall, so please join us. There is no charge initially to come along and find out more, but if you do want to become a member then the fee is just £20 a year, and it's free if you are in full-time education. For more details, go to the website http://www.astro.org.uk or contact the Chair, John Waller, john.waller@astro.org.uk or on 07703 192188. Happy Observing!

## BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU

On the 20th November, Jim and Angela Meadows hosted a Beaujolais Nouveau tasting in Alderminster Village Hall. The intrepid travellers drove over to France earlier in the week and brought back a selection of wines for us to sample in the hall. They photographed their journey so, as Jim introduced each wine, we also had a slide show of places they visited and the sights they saw. Thirty-one people attended an informative, fun and extremely convivial evening. A good time was had by all!






Thank you, Jim and Angela!

The profits from the evening will be donated to Alderminster church.

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# Local Noticeboard

## CARERS4CARERS

**Carers4Carers** – Is a local support group for family carers. We'll meet on **Friday 11th December** 10.30am-12 noon at Kineton Village Hall: as the year draws to a close, we'd be pleased to welcome you to our December gathering. There will be mince pies, an opportunity to chat with others who understand the caring role, and some seasonal songs led by the Swan Singers. Loved ones are welcome and can attend our Companionship Group during the meeting.
For further information, or assistance with transport arrangements, please contact Gillian on 07947 893504, email kcarers4carers@gmail.com or visit our website www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk.

## WARWICKSHIRE MOBILE LIBRARY

On Thursdays **3rd December 2026** and **7th January 2027** Warwickshire Mobile Library will visit Old Road, Alderminster from 10.15 to 10.35am and The White Hart Inn, Newbold on Stour from 10.45 to 11.15am.

## BREAST SCREENING

Ladies who are over 70 are entitled to a mammogram every three years but will not be called automatically. Contact the Breast Screening Service on 02476 967200 who will be able to tell you when you had your last scan and give you an appointment if you are now due for one.

## CLOTHES BANK

The clothes bank situated on Alderminster's village hall car park, courtesy of the British Heart Foundation accepts CD's, toys and games as well as good condition clothes, so why not declutter your home whilst supporting a good cause. NB: - The clothes bank is only emptied once a fortnight; please do not leave bags of items in the car park when the clothes bank is full.

## WINTER WARMERS LUNCH

With a break in December, come and join us for a soup and pudding, cost £5, at Alderminster Village Hall on **4th and 18th January 2027** 12.30-2pm (last orders 1.30pm). We look forward to welcoming you for food, friendship and good conversation. In the meantime, we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

## ALDERMINSTER HISTORY GROUP

**Next event**: **Tues 26th January 2027** "***The Edgehill Light Railway***" – by Andrew Baxter.
"*Of the many chapters that have been written about the history of railways in Britain, few are as fascinating as The Edgehill Light Railway*".
Alderminster Village Hall 7.30pm. Entrance £5 (includes refreshments). Raffle. Don't miss it! Everyone welcome.

## STRATFORD BEEKEEPERS TASTER DAY

Are you interested in Beekeeping but not sure what is involved? Why not join our Taster Day at Luddington Village Hall on **Saturday 30th January 2027** 10am - 3pm. This is an informal and low-cost opportunity to find out more through practical demonstrations (no live bees)!
Visit www.stratfordbeekeepers.org.uk for more details, including our Introduction to Beekeeping Course, a seven-session theory and practical course starting mid-February £25.

## POPPY APPEAL RESULT 2026

**ATHERSTONE, PRESTON, ALDERMINSTER, WHITCHURCH and CRIMSCOTE**

Many thanks to everyone for their tremendous generosity in supporting the Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal. The total amount raised for the local area was £1,925.90 - a terrific effort and a fantastic achievement. Sally Keegan, Poppy Appeal Organiser.


## Christmas Tree Collection

Thomas Fox Landscaping, supporting Shipston Home Nursing, will collect your real tree from outside your property

**Trees can be collected from the following areas: CV35, CV36, CV37 and OX15 postcodes**

- £10 minimum donation per tree
- Maximum of three trees per property
- Collection from outside your property w/c 4th January 2027

**Book online at: www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk/news-events**



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Thomas Fox
Landscaping & Maintenance

# Stourdene Benefice Service Rota

From Revd David Jessett

Dear Readers,

"Happy Christmas!" No doubt we will say that many times around the end of this month. It's a friendly greeting. But have you ever wondered why Christmas should be a happy time?

For some people it may be simply because they get a few days off work and – as far as finance allows – the chance to splurge a bit on presents, food, drink and celebrating with family or friends. But the Christian faith believes there is much more to it than that and that the 'more' is something that lasts through the whole year.

For Christians the birth of Jesus is much more than the birth of a great teacher, though it is that as well. It is also the belief that in Jesus, God, the creator of everything and everyone that is, came among us as one of us. We believe God did this out of love for humanity and creation, to teach us to love one another more completely and to live in peace with the rest of humanity and the creation. Why do Christians think love was the reason?

Firstly, why would God have come in Jesus if not out of love for humanity? Secondly, during his earthly life Jesus taught people that to love God and to love your neighbour as much as you love yourself were the two most important rules to live by. And thirdly, the Christian belief in God as Trinity, the idea that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit yet all one and the same God, suggests that there is relationship and community in the way God is. In other words, love is the very nature of God.

So, if we believe that the Being who is the source of everything that exists, including us, is characterised and motivated by love, that is fantastic news for the whole year - not just happy but amazing. So, trusting in that God of love I wish you a Happy Christmas but also an amazing year!

To find out more about Christmas services and events in our six Churches see elsewhere in this Newsletter or go to www.achurchnearyou.com and enter your postcode to find out about your local Church; or go to **www.stourdene.com** for times of Services in all 6 of our Churches.

David

| December | Time | Church | Service |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sunday 6th<br>2nd Sunday of Advent | 9.30am | Halford | Holy Communion |
| | 9.30am | Newbold | Morning Worship |
| | 10.00am | Alderminster | Morning Worship |
| | 10.30am | Pillertons | Morning Worship |
| | 11.00am | Ettington | Holy Communion |
| | 6.00pm | Butlers | Evensong |
| Sunday 13th<br>3rd Sunday of Advent | 9.30am | Halford | Morning Worship |
| | 9.30am | Butlers | Morning Worship |
| | 10.00am | Ettington | Holy Communion |
| | 11.00am | Alderminster | Morning Worship |
| | 11.00am | Pillertons | Morning Worship |
| | 4.00pm | Newbold | Christingle |
| Friday 18th | 6.30pm | Butlers | Carols by candlelight |
| Sunday 20th<br>Christmas Eve | 9.30am | Butlers | Family Service |
| | 10.00am | Ettington | Morning Worship |
| | 6.00pm | Pillertons | Carol Service |
| | 6.00pm | Newbold | Carol Service |
| | 6.00 pm | Halford | Carol Service |
| Monday 21st | 6.30 pm | Alderminster | Carol Service |
| Thursday 24th<br>Christmas Eve | 2.30 pm | Alderminster | Crib Service |
| | 3.30 pm | Butlers | Crib Service/Pantotivity |
| | 4.00pm | Newbold | Crib Service |
| | 5.00 pm | Ettington | Crib Service |
| | 5.00 pm | Pillertons | Crib Service |
| | 11.30 pm | Alderminster | Holy Communion |
| Friday 25th<br>Christmas Day | 9.30am | Halford | Holy Communion |
| | 9.30am | Butlers | Holy Communion |
| | 11.00am | Ettington | Holy Communion |
| | 11.00am | Newbold | Holy Communion |
| Sunday 27th<br>John Apostle and Evangelist | 10.30 am | Alderminster | Benefice Communion |

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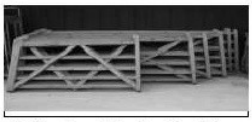

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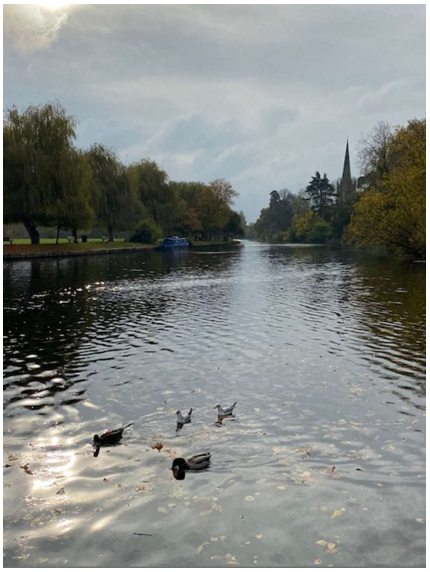





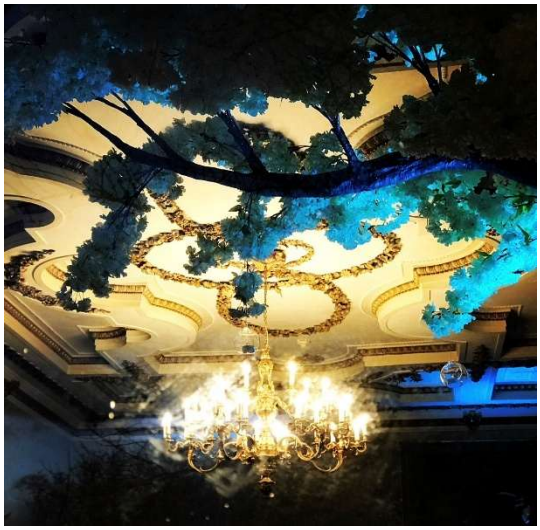

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Thank you,
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