

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelw April 2023



SAVE THE DATE
7TH MAY - SEE PAGE 4

Little Birch Church Annual Lent Lunch



in aid of Sight Savers
Friday 31st March
12.30-2pm

Little Birch Village Hall

Come along and enjoy our delicious
home made soups with
bread and cheese.

Last year we raised £200 for the
Sight Savers charity who do life
changing operations, many of
which are on children, who benefit
so much from the procedures.
So, come and join us, we look
forward to seeing you.



Parish Walks

After a week of very wild weather we were very pleased to see nine people turn up for our parish walk on Sunday 12th March on a dry and mild afternoon. We were led on a 5 mile walk by Angela Middleton along the footpaths of Little Birch and Little Dewchurch.

For a newcomer like me it was a great opportunity gets to know the area, meet some of the local walkers and share tea and cake at the end. Angela will be leading another walk later in the year so look out for the date. It would be good to see even more people next time.

As the new Little Birch and Aconbury Footpaths Officer I have been getting out to check on the condition of the paths, signposts and way markers, I have noticed several improvements that would help to keep people to stay on the right path, these have been flagged up to the council and hopefully will be addressed as soon as possible.

The footpaths of Little Birch and Aconbury are very well used, if while out walking you notice anything that you think I should be aware of please get in touch so it can either be reported or repaired by myself.

Chris Fowler,

Little Birch and Aconbury Footpaths Officer

07931292998

Chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk

Our Riparian Responsibilities

Local residents may have noticed that many local ditches have been cleared recently. During the process it was made clear to us, following discussions with Balfour Beatty and the local lengthsmen, that few local householders/landowners were aware of their riparian responsibilities. These refer to the requirement for individuals who have a watercourse (stream, ditch or culvert) running through their property, or adjacent to the boundaries of that property, to keep those courses free of obstruction. It should be noted that in cases where landowners persistently fail to maintain watercourses then the local authority has the power to charge for carrying out necessary work.

The main issues that we see in the parishes are hedge clippings not removed, grass clippings dumped after mowing and excess earth, so please find somewhere else to dispose of these in order to avoid obstructing the ditches. Blocked ditches cause water run off on our roads which cause problems in freezing weather and erosion of the highways.

The following web site offers helpful information and further advice about the subject.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/flooding/7>

From Little Birch and Much Birch Parish Councils

Hope Spring eCards

**Anniversaries Birthdays Christmas
Easter Father's Day Mother's Day
New Year Valentine's Day**

**Send greetings for any occasion online
INSTANTLY!**

www.HopeSpringCards.co.uk

Sleeping Beauty Little Birch Pantomime

Photos on page 1

Millie Barnett as Prince Orlando with
Rhiannon Jenkins as Princess Aurora,

Milly Meredith as Kitty with
Ellen Green as Spindleshanks,

Peter Rees as King Norbert with
Bob Barnett as Queen Dorothy.



Jobs for the Garden in April

In my young days, February was often referred to as “February fill dyke” because, during that month, there was usually a lot of rain and often a few inches of snow. The ditches around fields and alongside the roads always seemed to have water gushing along them.

Not so in the last two years, this year in particular we had no rain at all, apart from a couple of light showers. The soil in our garden was dry enough to start work on it. I was waiting for the weed seeds to begin germinating to indicate that the soil was warm enough for sowing my seeds.

What happened? Mother Nature decided to dump 15cm (6”) of snow on the garden over a period of 48 hours and then it rained! It has put a dent in the plans whilst I wait for the ground to dry out again. The seedlings and plants are growing slowly in the greenhouse, although I have lost some cucumber plants, two eaten by a slug and one rotted off. The toad that has lived in our greenhouse for several years, obviously missed that slug.

Here are a few ideas for April

- *Deadhead daffodil flowers as they fade but don't cut the leaves off or tie them in knots.
- *Now is a good time to move or plant evergreen trees or shrubs as long as the ground is not dry or waterlogged.
- *Plant out autumn and winter sown sweet peas. Seed can be sown direct into the border now.
- *Mulch as much of the borders as possible with manure, compost or woodchips to a depth of 5 -10 centimetres.
- *It is not too late to repot pot bound houseplants, moving them on to a pot one size larger than the one they are leaving.
- *Protect fruit blossom from frost with fleece if practical.
- *Plant early seed potatoes at the beginning of the month and main crop at the end of April or beginning of May. If they pop their heads up and a frost is forecast draw soil over the leaves or cover with fleece.
- *In a prepared seed bed sow beet, carrots, leeks, parsnips, spinach, salad crops including spring onions and peas.
- *Plant onion sets and seed grown onions.
- *Sow Brussels sprouts early in the month, and also small quantities of brassicas for successional crops through the Summer.
- *Pot up tomato and pepper seedlings.

- *Sow squashes, courgettes, cucumber and sweet corn on a bright window ledge or in the greenhouse.
- *Keep listening/watching the weather forecast so that tender plants can be protected if a frost is imminent .
- *If you have forced some rhubarb, harvest stems at 20 -30 cms long. Afterwards mulch around the crowns with manure or compost and do not harvest until 2025 because forcing weakens the plant.
- *Nesting is now under way so keep feeding the birds and provide fresh water.
- *Sow a small patch of wild flowers if you have a bit of space.
- *Leave a little area of lawn uncut if practical.
- *Divide any overgrown marginal or bog plants in your pond to prevent them becoming too congested. Anything to be discarded should be left on the side of the pond for a day or so to allow creatures to return to the pond. **Derek Scrivens**



The Easter Bunny—or Hare dates back to 16th century and earlier. In Germany it was thought that the Easter Hare brought eggs to children who were good

YOUR VILLAGE HALL NEEDS YOU!

Little Birch Village Hall Committee is seeking new committee members or volunteers who would like to help with the many local events that we run at the hall.

There is no commitment to come to every meeting or to help at every event, you can be involved as much or as little as you like.

For more details please contact Ben Roberts
07702 760789 or ben.roberts@outlook.com



ADVANCE NOTICE - SAVE THE DATE.
TO CELEBRATE THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III
LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE WILL BE HOLDING
A BRING AND SHARE LUNCH ON SUNDAY 7TH MAY
FULL DETAILS TO FOLLOW NEXT MONTH.

Dawn Chorus Walk



Easter Sunday 9 April at 5.30am
for a 5.45am start.

Meeting at Little Birch Village Hall and
walking with bird enthusiasts Adrian
Hodges and Bob Mason for a few miles in
Aconbury Woods.

No dogs please.

Afterwards at the hall the Mason's of
Merrivale Farm providing bacon
butties/toast&marmalade and tea/coffee.

Donations to charity.

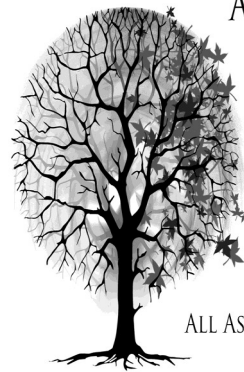
If you are coming, to help with planning, please contact

Angela Middleton ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk

01981 540377

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richard@teaandtech.co.uk

07739953864

I'm Richard, and I offer IT tech support around rural Hereford. I have 25 years' experience of working within technology, supporting a vast range of people, from technophobes to technogeeks!

I aim to specifically support the more senior users within our community, who often appreciate a completely different approach. I won't burden anyone with jargon and will offer only gentle and compassionate support. This can help the user feel more comfortable with tackling technology and lead to a growing confidence. Sometimes, the tech issue might be the initial reason for contact and all that's really required is someone to sit patiently and share a cuppa. I can do that too, I'm a great listener!

I can support you with many problems (here's a sample):

- General tips and advice
- Fault finding
- Software support
- New PC Installation / Setup
- Virus & Malware Removal
- Email Troubleshooting & Setup
- Broadband Internet & Router Setup
- Wi-Fi Range Issues
- Software Installation
- Windows Reinstall / Refresh
- Slow Computer Clean-up
- Printer Installation / Troubleshooting
- Backup Advice & Solutions
- Solid State Drive (SSD) Upgrades
- Data Recovery
- Laptop Battery Replacement
- PC & Laptop Upgrades & Advice

If you need a friendly chat over a cuppa, while I sort out your IT issues, please get in touch using the info above.

PILETES

with Alison Allan

Mondays 10.00 am - Intermediate level

11.15 am - Senior Citizens

Wednesdays 9.30 am - Beginner level

7.00 pm - Intermediate level

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Holme Lacy - Village Hall

Little Dewchurch - Village Hall

Individual sessions, by appointment, at The Studio, Little Dewchurch

Pre-booking essential; limit

Alisonpilates2016@gmail.com

01432 840491

07947 011707

[Facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA](https://www.facebook.com/PilateswithAlisonA)



Much Birch Parish Council

At the Parish Council Meeting held in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 2nd March 2023 the Parish Council discussed, and agreed to comments in regard to a local planning application, for 7 dwellings, at a location of land south of the Wormelow Carrot and Wine Stores.

The parish council discussed the forthcoming parish and ward elections and the councillors received their election packs. Further details will be displayed on the parish notice boards in the bus stop at Kingsthorpe, by the bus stop adjacent to the A49 and near to the school and also by the Much Birch Community Hall.

A reminder of the way to report defects/faults on the highways etc. Report defects and issues on the Highway and Public Realm via the Herefordshire Council website : <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/roads-1/report-problems-road>

Customer Services. If urgent then please call 01432 261800

Or use the report it app <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/reportingapp/>

The dates for the forthcoming meetings, in the year 2023, are as advised below:

April 6th, May 11th, June 8th, July 6th, No meeting in August
Sept 7th, Oct 5th, Nov 9th and Dec 7th

The next Parish Council Meeting, of the Much Birch Parish Council, will be held on **Thursday 6th April 7.30p m** at the Much Birch Community Hall. All welcome to attend.

Much Birch Parish Councillors

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

Cllr Andrew Crum Tan-y-coed, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, HR2 8AX, a.crum@btinternet.com 01981 540002

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

Cllr David Baldwin Perry House, Much Birch, HR2 8HS
baldwin79@btinternet.com 01981 541198

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR28HT chris@pickering-grey.uk 07712 813218

Cllr Joseph Goldsmith Quantock House, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, HR2 8HX josephgoldsmith@hotmail.com
07967 728590

Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright Longfield House, Gooses Foot, Kingstone HR2 9NE muchbirchclerk@gmail.com
01981 250860

Minutes of meetings www.muchbirchparish.org.uk.
<https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>

Little Birch Parish Council

Councillors Kate Dillon and Kate Robbins have announced that they will not be standing for a further term as Parish Councillors. The PC thanked them both for their commitment and hard work during their terms of office.

The PC, therefore, has two vacancies and if anyone would like to stand then applications have to be received by Herefordshire Council before 4pm on the 4th April. Nomination papers have to be delivered by hand and individuals may stand for election if: - 1) They are registered electors for LB parish. 2) They have for the whole of the preceding 12 months occupied as owner or tenant of land or other premises in the parish. 3) Their principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months is in the parish or 4) They have during the preceding 12 months resided in the parish or within 4.8km of it. If anyone is interested could they please contact the Parish Clerk, Mr Neil Barrington via email.

The parish lengthsman has undertaken the drainage work determined by the PC in September. This will be at a total cost of about £2500 and will consume the whole of the PC's budget for the lengthsman duties for 22/23 and 23/24.

The local Safer Neighbourhood police team attended the meeting. If parishioners wish to receive updates from the local team then this can be done by signing up on www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk. The team can also be contacted for non-999 and non-101 matters by email on herefordshiresouthside.snt@westmerci.police.uk. The council thanked them for their attendance.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday the 5th April at 7pm.

Footpath Officers

If you have any queries about footpaths, contact:

Little Birch and Aconbury: Chris Fowler
chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk
07931 292998

Much Birch including Kingsthorpe: David Irwin
david.irwin13@btinternet.com
07766 135068



Much Birch Community Hall

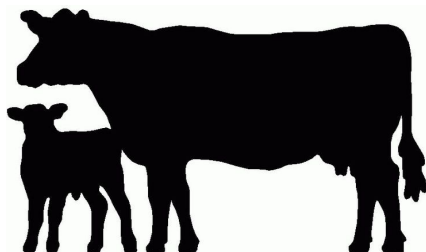
Much Birch Community Hall has a new website!
Check it out here for information about booking the hall and more -
www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org

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Items for May newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or paper
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by
14th April

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It is very common for ears to become blocked with wax, which leads to discomfort, pain and hearing loss.

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The Maple Room
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CONTACT:-

Anita Phillips mobile 07930145273

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We moved to Kingsthorpe/Much Birch last year and are looking for a suitable space to move our small sustainable business, currently based in Birmingham.

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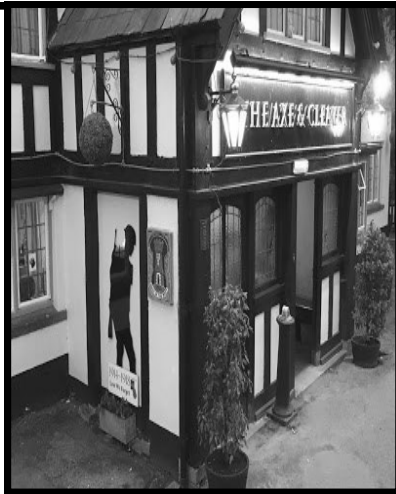
Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



Find the latest news, events

and business listings all in one place. You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area. Look for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

*The Axe &
Clever
Much Birch
Contact us on
01981 540203
or on our
Facebook
page*



Join us at the

Community Café
@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 8 April 2023

10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

13 May

10 June

8 July

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



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

The Yellowhammer's Nest

Just by the wooden brig a bird flew up,
Frit by the cowboy as he scrambled down
To reach the misty dewberry—let us stoop
And seek its nest—the brook we need not dread,
Tis scarcely deep enough a bee to drown,
O it sings harmless o'er its pebbly bed
Ay here it is, stuck close by the bank
Beneath the bunch of grass that spindles rank
Its husk seeds tall and high—'tis rudely planned
Of bleached stubbles and the withered fare
That last year's harvest left upon the land,
Lined thinly with the horse's sable hair.
Five eggs, pen-scribbled o'er with ink their shells
Resembling writing scrawls which fancy reads
As nature's poesy and pastoral spells—
They are the yellowhammer's and she dwells
Most poet-like where brooks and flowery weeds
As sweet as Castaly to fancy seems
And that old molehill like as Parnass' hill
On which her partner haply sits and dreams
O'er all her joys of song—so leave it still
A happy home of sunshine, flowers and streams.
Yet in the sweetest places cometh ill,
A noisome weed that burthens every soil;
For snakes are known with chill and deadly coil
To watch such nests and seize the helpless young,
And like as though the plague became a guest,
Leaving a houseless home, a ruined nest -
And mournful hath the little warblers sung
When such like woes hath rent its little breast.

John Clare



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St John Passion

Tuesday 4 April, 7.30pm at Hereford Cathedral

Bach's sublime masterpiece sung by the cathedral choir with Marches Baroque. Tickets: priced at £25, £18 or £10 are available from herefordcathedral.org or the Cathedral Shop (01432 374 210).

Supported by WA Cadbury Charitable Trust and Hereford Cathedral

Coffee Morning with Book Exchange



**Thursday 6th & Saturday 15th April
10.00am - 12.00 noon**

Little Birch Village Hall

Come and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, some cake or biscuits. Make new friends or catch up with old friends. Take a book, leave a book, or both. Exchange recommendations for a good read. Families & well behaved dogs welcome.

look forward to seeing you



Revd Mark Writes

In the news over recent weeks have been a large number of strikes, from railway workers to teachers to junior doctors. All these and more have felt that to get their point across, they needed to withdraw their labour and sacrifice a day (or more) of paid work to get “management” to listen to their grievances. And, of course, the impact of these strikes is not just the loss of income for the strikers but also the inconvenience of school closures, longer waiting times at A&E or children out of school and the impact on their education and on parental nerves!

But is there a theology for striking? In several places the Bible mentions the unjustness of withholding a labourer’s wages, and that you have a duty to pay the daily labourer at the end of the day so they can feed themselves and provide for their family.

In the New Testament John the Baptist, when asked about how soldiers should behave, tells them not to extort people and be satisfied with your wages (Luke 3 verse 14).

All of this is wrapped up in the quest for justice. It is a just thing to give a labourer their wages and an unjust thing to withhold them. What it doesn’t say is the amount that should be paid. We do have some guidance on that, though. A daily wage was a denarius, a unit of Roman coin that was accepted across the Empire. It is very difficult to put into modern terms what that would be worth but it was what was expected by a skilled labourer. It would be enough to live on for a day and put a small amount aside for recurring costs (clothes, oil for lamps etc). But at the end of the day, expectations were very different. No saving up to go on a holiday to Tenerife, for example!

As a society we need to decide what is just and what is right and pay people appropriately. If you look at the wages of the CEOs of the FTSE 100, they earn 350 times more than their average worker. Where is the justice in that? So, although the strikes disrupt our lives and make things more difficult, if the strike is just then perhaps our response is to support them and seek those wider changes that will lead to a just and fairer society.

Services for April

Sunday 2nd April – Palm Sunday

10:15am at Pencoyd Church - a service of the blessing of palms followed by a walk to Christ Church, Llanwarne

11am at Christ Church, Llanwarne - Holy Communion and blessing of palm crosses

Mon 3rd April – Monday of Holy Week

7pm at Llandinabo – Compline

Tues 4th April – Tuesday in Holy Week

7pm at Little Birch – Compline

Wed 5th April – Wednesday in Holy Week

7pm at Dewesall – Compline

Thurs 6th April – Maundy Thursday

7.30pm at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion and Tenebrae

Fri 7th April – Good Friday

11am at Much Birch Village Hall – Stations of the Cross

Sunday 9th April – Easter Day

9.15am at Much Birch – Holy Communion

9.15am at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion

11am Little Birch—Holy Communion

11am at Little Dewchurch – Holy Communion

Sun 16th April, 2nd Sunday of Easter

9.15am at Much Birch – Morning Worship

11am at Little Birch – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

Sun 23rd April – Third Sunday of Easter

9.15 am at Llandinabo – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

Sun 30th April – Fourth Sunday of Easter

10.30 am at Much Birch Village Hall – Café style Communion service

Uncle Norman's Wartime Memories part 3

Kate Dillon shares the last instalment of Uncle Norman's memoirs from his time in Little Birch as an evacuee during WWII

Always on the lookout for a bargain, Mr Dyke purchased a vintage Austin tourer. This was converted into a makeshift tractor by removing all the body work and fitting a flat bed truck body, steel tinned rear wheels and a transfer gearbox. We called her Phyllis and she proved herself very useful for haymaking and the like. This was the first vehicle I ever drove; in a field and far too young for a driving licence.

Another bargain Mr Dyke bought was a "failed" hunter called Thomas, very tall and bony, totally unsuitable for the milk round and unrideable. However, I remember my father, also Thomas, had been taught to ride in the 1914/18 war when he spent four years in France, so he volunteered to ride the horse. He lit his pipe, mounted and cantered off, but Thomas took a dim view of this and bucked violently sending my father sailing through the air. However, he immediately remounted and had no further trouble. During this whole episode the pipe never left his mouth.

Whilst working in Bristol, my father acquired an old-fashioned bicycle to visit us on at weekends, a 60-mile ride. On one occasion he had left as usual in the small hours, and after he had covered many mainly downhill miles (somewhere near St Weonards we think) he had to come back and start all over again, as he had realised he had left his full set of dentures behind by his bedside! (Editor's Note – his route was to cycle to Monmouth on the 'old road' then down the Wye Valley to Chepstow where he would cross the Severn on a ferry before continuing down to Bristol.)

My education at this time was very disrupted. The local school consisted of two classes, Juniors and Seniors, and was reached up totally unmade-up tracks. The toilets were two earth closets which had a distinctive and unforgettable odour! Disorder reigned supreme and all I was taught there was to how to skin a rabbit and how to take a blood sample from a hen! My father was so worried he sent me to a private tutor, a Miss Stevens, a genuine Victorian relic complete with a velvet 'choker', a dislike of small boys and a deft wrist action when twisting an ear! The next step was Hereford Cathedral School. What a shock!! The school was a very traditional public school where the curriculum was Chapel, Divinity, Latin, English, History, French and Maths, and where the Prefects could freely administer corporal punishment. I have never forgotten that first night's homework which was to learn a Collect from the Book of Common Prayer and the Latin verb "amo---".

Whilst at HCS I watched history (almost) repeating itself. During the siege of Hereford during the Civil War one arch of the mediaeval Wye Bridge was blown up to defend the city. During the second world war they drilled holes in the same arch ready for sticks of dynamite if required..... Now that would have stopped the Panzers!!

The journey to school and back was quite a challenge, involving a walk of over a mile to the bus stop on the main road often in the dark due to "double summertime". Sometimes the bus, when it arrived was full and no more could be packed on board. Motorists would pick you up though, I remember one time I had a ride on the top of a lorry load of wastepaper and other times of having to walk all the seven miles to school. I doubt whether the current nine to ten-year-olds would be allowed to do this now!

Diary Dates April

Lent Lunch Friday 31st March 12.30-2 LBVH p1
Coffee & Books Thurs 6th Sat 15th 10-12 LBVH p11

LBPC Meeting Wed 5th 7pm LBVH p7

MBPC Meeting Thurs 6th 7.30 MBCH p7

Community Café Sat 8th 10-12.30 MBCH

Dawn Chorus Walk Sun 9th 5.30am p4

Coffee & Books Sat 18th February 10-12 LBVH p2

Borderlines Sat 18th MBCH 7pm p1

Flicks Thurs 27th MBCH 7pm p11

Coronation Big Lunch Sun 7th May LBVH

Tiddlers and Toddlers Fridays 9.30-11.30 MBCH

Table Tennis 1st Tuesday 7-9pm LBVH

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¼ page £4.50 per issue or £45 per year

½ page £8 per issue or £80 per year

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Defibrillator Locations

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs available to use locally for those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and, if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

Allensmore Locks Garage

Backney on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage

Bridstow on the outside of the village hall

Garway on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub

Harewood End at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.

Little Birch on the outside of the village hall

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

Much Birch on the outside of the church hall

Much Dewchurch outside Steiner School, first building after the church

Peterstow at the Yew Tree pub

Sellack on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)

St Weonards old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage

Wormelow at the Cricket Club & Carrot & Wine shop

Wilton on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout



Thursday 27 April - FISHERMANS FRIENDS - ONE AND ALL 12A

AKA FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS 2 - this is the sequel to the hit UK film. It follows the group from the highs of performing on the pyramid stage at Glastonbury to the lows of struggling with their second album.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 16s)

Please note new prices from September 2022

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up in May...

Thursday 25 May - THE PHANTOM OF THE OPEN 12

Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted) - for further info or to book tickets please email muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097

For further information about films and screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

