

The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter

Kingsthorpe, Much Birch, Little Birch,
Aconbury & Wormelwold March 2024



Easter Prize Bingo

See Page 10



 **GIGABIT BROADBAND
VOUCHER SCHEME**

You're Invited... to Our Gigabit Fibre Broadband Meeting

Where: **Little Birch Village Hall**
Date: **Monday 4 March**
Time: **7pm onwards**

Come and join your friends and neighbours to discuss and understand this amazing opportunity. Representatives from Openreach and your local Parish Council will be present to explain the benefits and answer any questions. The meeting is open to all residents of Little Birch, Much Birch and Much Dewchurch.

Sign-up before Sunday 31 March 2024
www.openreach.com/connect-my-community

Table Tennis

**Urgently Needed
help with sessions in
Little Birch Village Hall
For more info please call
07854 629193**

LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
PRESENTS

COMMUNITY PUB NIGHT

WITH LIVE
Acoustic
MUSIC

PERFORMED BY LOCAL MUSICIANS

FRIDAY

22

MAR

7PM



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£5 PER PERSON

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AN EVENING THE WHOLE
FAMILY CAN ENJOY



Dawn Chorus Walk p11



King's Thorn & Little Birch Garden Club AGM 27th March 7.30pm Little Birch Village Hall

This year the AGM will be run slightly differently. We are going to include a Q&A session about "Growing From Seed". There will be a quiz to see if you know your seeds, then a Q&A about the best way to grow from seed.

In between the quiz and Q&A sessions will be the AGM. There will also be time for a seed swap – so bring any extra seeds you have and see what you can get to grow in your garden ready for the Annual Show!!

Any queries contact : Lesley Chapman 07834 771838

Much Birch Parish Walk

On a dry Sunday afternoon in January, 20 walkers and 3 dogs met outside the Much Birch village hall for my first Birches walk. I led as we walked through the fruit farm, across the A49 and down the sunken path over Wrigglebrook. There were aconites and plenty of snowdrops at this time of the year. The recent weather made the way a little muddy in places and there was one tree we had to negotiate either under or over! We discussed how old this ancient path must be and are determined to keep it open and used. We passed Little Birch church and walked down to Higgins Well, seeing our first daffodil of the day, then returning back on the Herefordshire Trail. As we climbed the hill, we said hello to the Valais Blacknose who seemed very curious to see us. Then we returned to the village hall for tea, homemade cake and biscuits. People very generously donated over £20 to the Maji Mazuri education charity, which provides education and support for the children of the Mathare slums of Nairobi, of which my wife is a trustee.

Next Parish Walk 2pm Sunday 24th March from Much Birch Community Hall.

Little Birch Lent Lunch

Little Birch Village Hall

Friday 22nd March from 12.30pm

Come and join us for a delicious selection of home made soups. All donations received will once again be going to the Sightsavers charity who do incredible work. We look forward to seeing you on the day.

FIREWOOD

Seasoned apple logs for sale
£85 for a large bulk bag
Free delivery in local area
Please phone Robin Haig
07817 587442

Help Needed With Local Footpaths

I have now been Little Birch Footpath Officer for just over a year and have a better of what the job involves. Like most outside jobs there are different things that need doing each season. During the spring and summer the paths can become overgrown very quickly and it is a real challenge to keep them open. By keeping the paths clear of brambles, stinging nettles and holly, walkers are encouraged to use them, which in turn can help to keep them clear.

I would like to bring together a small group of volunteers who would be willing to help monitor the paths in Little Birch and Aconbury. This might mean taking a pair of secateurs when you are out walking the dog or even just giving me a ring if there is a problem. I have already had offers from a couple of people but if we could find a few more it would help to spread the load and help to keep our local paths accessible.

If you are interest in helping please get in touch. **Chris Fowler**

Aconbury and Little Birch Footpath Officer Email chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk 07931292998



The Art of the Possible:

Revd Mark Hi Everyone.

People often reduce politics down to a single line, the art of the possible. And, in many cases, it is an apt aphorism. There seems no reason to have great dreams if they are impossible to achieve. Yet without the great dreams, even the smallest advance in politics would never have happened. You can apply this to all sorts of situations, from the abolition of slavery in Britain and colonies to the eradication (well almost) of smallpox, to tackling malaria, now one of the developing world's biggest causes of illness and with global warming, spreading to parts of the developed world as well. Sometimes it is necessary to dream big. I think about this when I look at the Easter story. Not just Easter Sunday but what

happened in the week before, which we now call Holy Week. What was the big idea driving Jesus? How much did he know about what God was asking of him? When he prayed that "this cup should pass him by, yet not my will but yours be done" in those desperate moments in Gethsemane, what was Jesus' big idea? It certainly wasn't about chocolate eggs and fluffy chicks and bank holidays! Jesus' vision was for something bigger, something that transforms humanity, and restores us to a right relationship with God. His giving of himself was to be that catalyst. It was partly successful, I would say. We are still the same petty human beings, with all our faults and failings but we can see something much bigger than ourselves and give ourselves to live that way, even if comes at a cost.



**Have a blessed Lent and Holy Week
and a joyful Easter Revd Mark**

Services for March

| | |
|--|--|
| Sunday 3 rd March (3 rd Sunday of Lent) | 9.15 a.m. Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion |
| Sunday 10 th March (4 th Sunday of Lent) | 9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Holy Communion 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Morning Worship |
| Sunday 17 th March (5 th Sunday of Lent) | 9.15 a.m. Much Birch – Morning Worship 11.00 a.m. Little Birch – Holy Communion in Traditional Language |
| Sunday 24 th March – Palm Sunday | 10.00 a.m. Pencoyd – Blessing of Palms 10.15 a.m. Pencoyd – Procession to Llanwarne 11.00 a.m. Llanwarne -Holy Communion and Blessing of Palms |
| Monday 25 th (Monday in Holy Week) | 7.00 p.m. Llandinabo – Compline |
| Tuesday 26 th (Tuesday in Holy Week) | 7.00 p.m. Dewsall – Compline |
| Wednesday 27 th (Wednesday in Holy Week) | 7.00 p.m. Little Birch – Compline |
| Thursday 28 th (Maundy Thursday) | 7.30 p.m. Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion and Tenebrae |
| Friday 29 th (Good Friday) | 10.30 a.m. Much Birch Community Hall – Good Friday Reflection for the Stations of the Cross |
| Sunday 31 st March – Easter Day | 9.15 a.m. Llandinabo – Holy Communion 9.15 a.m. Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion 11. a.m. Little Birch Church |

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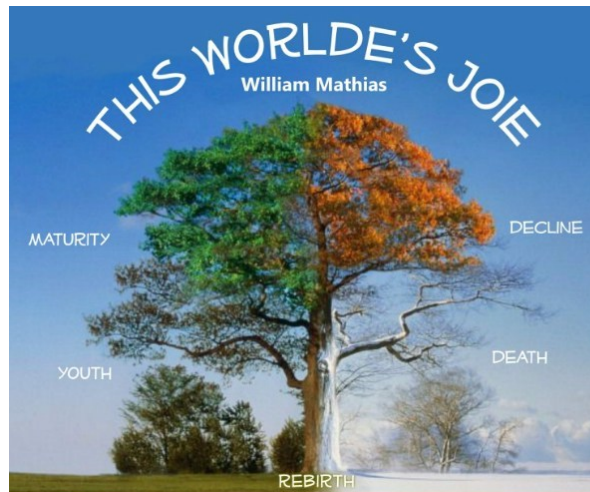
The Birches Community Quiz

Friday 12th April 7.30pm
Much Birch Community Hall

Teams of four are invited to take part, £12 per team includes refreshments. If you want to bring your own drinks, glasses will be provided.

Please get in touch with Carole if you are interested in taking part by email at carole.chichester@btinternet.com or telephone 01981 540095

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Photography Group

We are a friendly local group who are keen and enjoy our imaging skills. We invite anyone who has an interest in taking photos to come and join us. You will be made very welcome.



Meeting at Kempsey for Wild Daffodils Walk with tea and cake in hall after, Sunday 17th March.

Photographing Hereford City Tuesday 26th March details tba. For more information contact Sally Nichol 07803 032928 or 01981 540001 email sally.nichol@btinternet.com



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Art and Craft Space



Friendly Art and Craft Group

We meet every Thursday afternoon 2 until 4 at Little Birch Village Hall at the top of Barrack Hill HR2 8AZ

We bring along our own projects and have a monthly theme. The theme for March is Easter & Spring. Feel free to do your own projects. You don't have to follow the themes if you would rather do something else. For more information please contact Sally Nichol tel. 07803 032928 01981 540001 email sally.nichol@btinternet.com

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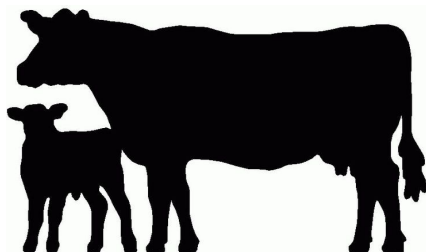
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Contact Lucy for more information
on 07974 053804
or email lucymason@hotmail.com
Merrivale Farm Little Birch
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Items for **April** newsletter to
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk or paper
copy to Elisabeth Taylor 07854 629193 by
8th March

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Little Birch Village Hall Pantomime

The tradition of an annual pantomime in Little Birch Hall continued this year with a production of Beauty and the Beast ably directed for the first time by Bob Barnett. The series started in 2007 by the late Hilary Gould with her version of Treasure Island. As part of her introductory remarks she announced the birth of her grandson. She would have been delighted to know that grandson, Ronan, was destined to play the part of the Prince this year.

His 17th birthday was celebrated during one of the performances. As usual there was a matinee and two evening performances. Tickets sold out. Bob Barnett deserves congratulating for the success of the performances which were up to the high standards of previous years, clearly demonstrated by enthusiastic audience participation.

This version of Beauty and the Beast had a French theme, taking place in the village of Petit Birch near to Beaucoup de Birch. All of the cast performed well. Worthy of special mention is Millie Meredith in her first major role as Beauty. She gave a very assured performance and was well supported by the Prince. The Beast, Richard Green, was very convincing and, despite his threatening appearance, eventually gained sympathy from the audience.

Ellen Green, playing the part of Felix, a talking French poodle, appeared in most scenes and skilfully encouraged audience reaction. Jane Bolam who directed several previous pantomimes was on stage this year as Malabelle, a very nasty witch. Loud booing by the audience proved how well she performed. Seasoned performer, Frank Ryding, was the dame, mother of Beauty. He successfully got audiences to be sympathetic to his problems. Judging from the loud groans, his corny jokes were well up to pantomime standards.

Other actors played the unlikely sounding parts of a blacksmith, a talking clock, a table, a lamp, a rug and even a chest of drawers. The witch was transformed into a friendly female French poodle and joined Felix with the intention of producing "oodles of poodles". It all did make some sort of sense! A stage performance such as this needs a lot of time and teamwork. Considerable effort and expertise are required to provide scenery, lighting, sound effects, make-up, costumes and stage management etc. to provide back-up for the actors.

This year the performances went extremely smoothly so Bob Chance, Geoff Nichol, David Baldwin, Mandy Williams, Peter Rees, Patricia Kelly, Dave Williams and others are to be congratulated for their artistic ability and professionalism. Thanks for all the people involved. The Drama Group is an asset to the local community that should be strongly supported by us all. Long may it continue. **Mike Morley**



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Much Birch Parish Council

At Much Birch Parish Council Meeting on 8th February the Parish Council discussed the parish land and possible future use of a recently surrendered part of the land near to "Valley View" and a local planning consultation application 240148 for the Pilgrim Hotel, Much Birch. The plans are for the replacement of the existing rear conservatory and terrace with a larger single storey extension and terrace.

The parish council resolved to support the proposals.

Dates for forthcoming meetings, in 2024, are:

March 7th, April 4th, May 9th, June 6th, July 4th, No meeting in August, Sept 5th, Oct 3rd, Nov 7th and December 5th

The next Much Birch Parish Council Meeting will be on **Thursday 7th March at 7.30pm** in Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend the meeting and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

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

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

MUCH BIRCH PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council is seeking to appoint a new Lengthsman for the Parish. Duties will include mowing, strimming, clearing ditches and gullies, digging grips, cleaning signs, trimming overgrowth of plants and general minor roads upkeep and maintenance. Relevant experience and appropriate insurance are essential.

If you are interested in applying for the post an application form can be obtained by contacting: Alison Wright (Parish Clerk)

E mail: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com

Tel: 01981 250860

Little Birch Parish Facebook Group

Find the latest news, events & 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 local area.

Little Birch Parish Group on Facebook

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 roisiburge@hotmail.com 01981 540724

Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT chris@pickering-grey.uk 07712 813218

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

Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AU 01981 540840
magyeman92@gmail.com

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 Councillors

Cllr Steve Coles Cllr Tom Palfrey
Cllr Chris Atkinson Cllr Nick Deacon
Neil Barrington, clerk lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Website www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org

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 Church

Compost still available for free

Free compost is still available from Much Birch Churchyard. Some has already been removed exposing the really 'rotten' good stuff at the bottom of the pile. If you would like some for your garden, please do help yourself. It is situated in the front churchyard under the trees to the left of the shed.

Join us at the
Community Café
@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 9 March 2024
10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

13 April

11 May

8 June

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.

Coffee Morning With Book Exchange

Thursday 7th & Saturday 16th
February 10.00-12.00 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 and well behaved dogs all welcome

We look forward to seeing you



FLICKS
IN THE
STICKS

at Much Birch
Community Hall

BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL SCREENINGS

Saturday 9 March - THE ETERNAL DAUGHTER 12A

The Eternal Daughter stars Tilda Swinton in the dual roles of an artist and her elderly mother confronting long-buried secrets together as they return to a former family home, now a hotel haunted by its mysterious past.

Thursday 14 March - TYPIST ARTIST PIRATE KING 12A

This film puts forgotten artist Audrey Amiss on the map. Inspired by her extensive archive of diaries, letters and art, the film weaves real events into an imagined journey as Audrey goes on a road trip with her psychiatric nurse.

Borderlines Tickets £5.50 (£4.50 under 16s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up in April... Thursday 11 April - ONE LIFE 12A

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



Is it time to learn some simple relaxation tools to let go of unhelpful learned behaviours?

Is it time to change your relationship with yourself?

My work led me around the world teaching individually and as a course leader offering WorkShops (or maybe RestShops!) to slowly soften, unwind and return home to ourselves, allowing our bodies to rest and our minds to slow down through profound yet simple relaxation practices. Maybe it's time to give yourself these easily learned gifts?

I hold regular small afternoon groups as well as individual sessions in my Garden Studio in Little Birch. If you know you need to dial down please get in touch 07985 252166

Upcoming events : Deep Relaxation afternoons @ Little Birch Village Hall 10 Feb, 4 May, 3 August, 2 December.

Areas of interest and training include Yoga, Yin Yoga, Vinyasa Yoga, Reflexology, Fascia Release, Wheel of Consent, Shamanic Practices including Sweat Lodges and Women's Wisdom Circles.

amanda.hamilton2004@yahoo.co.uk



Jobs for the Garden in March

Derek Scrivens

It is still very squelchy everywhere as the rain continues to fall most days, only being punctuated by the odd few hours of sunshine. I have only ventured onto the veg. patch to collect produce of late as the ground is too wet to do anything else.

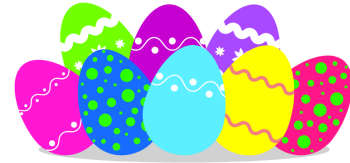
I have lost a few savoys (normally very hardy) and a couple of red cabbage which have rotted in the middle of the ball. I have not seen this before and presume that the wet autumn and winter have contributed to this.

A number of stored onions have had to be thrown away as they have rotted too, again I suspect not being able to dry and ripen them sufficiently due to the damp late summer and autumn. Better luck this year as the process of growing starts all over again.

Here are a few things to do

- *Apply a general purpose granular fertilizer to hungry plants such as roses and clematis and fork in lightly.
 - *Lift and divide clumps of snowdrops as foliage yellows. The same process can be applied to large clumps of daffodils that have been naturalizing.
 - *Pot up dormant dahlia tubers and canna rhizomes. Protect from cold but in good light – water sparingly.
 - *Dead head daffodils & tulips, leaving foliage to die off.
 - *Level out dips and bumps in the lawn. Cut a letter 'H' with a spade over the uneven area. Peel back the turf and add or remove soil. Replace turf and firm down.
 - *Clean the greenhouse.
 - *Sprout or 'chit' seed potatoes indoors, placing the potatoes in trays or egg boxes with the 'rose' end (small indentations from where spurts will emerge) uppermost.
 - *Sow tomato seeds in pots in propagator or on a window sill.
 - *When the soil feels warm to the touch and is not saturated, parsnip seeds can be sown. (Soil is usually warm enough to sow seed when you see weed seedlings appearing)
 - *If you have potted up strawberry plants, grown from runners last year, they can be planted this month.
 - *When the soil has dried out sufficiently to walk on, if not already done, prepare trenches for runner beans, peas and Sweet peas. Put a good layer of manure or compost plus grass cuttings and vegetable peelings in the bottom and leave open to the elements until nearer to the planting time.
 - *Mixed salad leaves and beetroot can be sown in cell or seed trays, even if you do not have a dedicated vegetable patch. Plant the seedlings in the flower border to add some interesting colour and then eat them when they are mature.
 - *Onions, shallots and early potatoes can all be planted at the end of March.
 - *This month is the start of the breeding season for our garden birds. If you have any waste wool or hair from brushes, hang it on the branches of shrubs or wire fences.
- If you have a pond, remove debris that got in it during winter.
- * No mow May has become popular. You may wish to let a small area of your garden go wild. We have been letting an

Easter Prize Bingo



**LITTLE BIRCH VILLAGE HALL
FRIDAY 15TH MARCH
EYES DOWN AT 7:30PM**

**Fun for the whole family
Refreshments available**



"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."

*Charles Dickens
Great Expectations*

area of our paddock go wild for 20+ years, until about July, mainly because daffodils and English bluebells are naturalizing there, and it is surprising how many different flowers and grasses appear during that 6 month period.

THE MASONS AT MERRIVALE

A quick catch up of the last couple of months as several people have asked how we're getting on with our Danish replacement heifers. If I had written at Christmas, my feelings would be very different to now.

We thought from the records passed on to us, that most of these heifers would have calved in November. This was not to be. We do try to make Christmas easier for everyone by not having too many calvings at that time. Just the routine work is enough to do, so we actually have some rest during the holiday period. The Danish heifers made sure this didn't happen. To complicate things they were also crazy. You only had to look at some of them and they jumped gates to get away, challenging stuff!



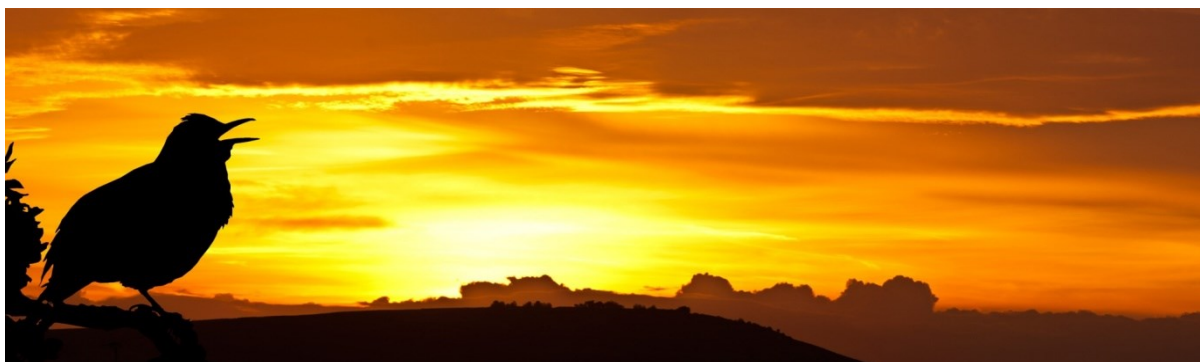
They obviously haven't been handled as much as our stock, who are usually very obliging.

Now, thank goodness, it's all very different. Thirty two out of the thirty three heifers we bought have now calved and entered the herd. Having mixed for some time with our chilled out cows, they are now very different and well settled in. We have twenty six Holstein heifer calves out of them so far, so will have plenty of replacement heifers for the future. All depends on the future TB situation of course.

As for the rest of the farm, in the few dry spells, muck has been spread and slurry irrigated on the silage grass. Hopefully spring is not too far away but I think I'm being optimistic. Last year the cows went out for two weeks on 14th February, obviously that's not going to happen this year.

Bob has ordered his vegetable seed and plants for the coming season so hopefully we'll have plenty of veg for the milk hut this year. At the moment we are waiting for cauliflowers and greens to come on, warmer weather would do the trick.

Dawn Chorus Walk



Sunday 7th April 5.30am for a 5.45am start.

Adrian Hodges and Bob Mason will lead us through Aconbury and Athelstan Woods. No dogs please. Meet at LBVH or Merrivale Farm depending on weather. Afterwards breakfast at Merrivale Farm. donations to charity. Please let us know you are coming.

Chris Fowler chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk 07931292998

Diary Dates March 2024

| | |
|---|------------|
| Coffee & Books Thurs 7th LBVH | p9 |
| MBPC Thurs 7th MBCH | p8 |
| Easter Bingo Fri 15th LBVH | p10 |
| Coffee & Books Sat 16th LBVH | p9 |
| Lent Lunch Fri 22nd LBVH | p2 |
| Photography Group LBVH | p5 |
| Art & Craft Thursdays 2-4 LBVH | p5 |
| Borderlines Thurs 9th & 16th MBCH | p9 |
| Community Café Sat 10th MBCH | p9 |
| Pub Night LBVH Fri 22nd | p1 |
| Church Services in March | p3 |
| Community Quiz 12th April | P4 |

Advertising Rates

11 editions per year (no August newsletter)

1/16 page £4.20 per issue or £42 per year

1/8th page £4.80 per issue or £48 per year

¼ page £5.40 per issue or £54 per year

½ page £9.60 per issue or £96 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

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- ▶ Landlord Inspections
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