NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



Cover photo by: Becks Bagnall

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ST CHAD'S STOCKTON - UPDATE

Hopefully we will have seen many of you at the Harvest festival & community lunch which took place on Sunday 28th September 2025.

We also held a successful concert with the Epsilon Brass quintet, sponsored by Imperial Bricks, Balfours & Stockton House Weddings, followed by supper at Stockton House which raised £2,626 towards ongoing repairs.

We are hopeful that a potential new priest in charge of the Six Parishes, who is attending an interview and visit to the churches on 16th and 17th September 2025, will be a good fit.

Meanwhile, we have re-established work with the Community Payback team who have done an excellent job strimming the new churchyard and will soon work on the old churchyard.

Lights have been fixed and the electrics made safe. All this thanks to kind donations and fundraising as well as voluntary work.

In addition, Revd. Matthew Lefroy, our Rural Dean who is retiring has given us an upgraded sound system. Many thanks to Revd. Lefroy for looking after the Six Parishes so well since Keith retired and for the sound system.

We expect to hold a **Remembrance Service** on **Sunday 9th November 2025 at 11am** and hopefully Carols before Christmas.

Everyone welcome.

NORTON VILLAGE HALL

Keep your eyes peeled for posters going out on village noticeboards & Facebook for upcoming events. In the pipeline we have Carols, Bingo, Quiz & Games nights. All are welcome & your support would be very much appreciated.

THE PARISH PUMP

Notes from the Parish Pump Parish Council 2025 July and September meetings:

The Parish Council held its bi-monthly meetings in July and September which covered several areas of interest. The main focus remains the A442 and the state of the road repairs. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to report defects to the carriageway, drains and signs through Fix my Street https://improvingyourroads.shropshire.gov.uk/,

The Parish Council has co-opted a new Parish Councillor; Doug Dyas who lives in Norton. Readers will find the contact details of all Parish Councillors attached to this report. A presentation for long-standing service to the Parish Council will be made shortly to Henry Phillips who stood down at the May 2025 elections.

The Rights of Way working group continues to focus on the seven footpaths across the parish and during November will be walking several to identify which could be recommended for designation as 'permissive rights of way' in order to lobby for their creation.

Parish Councillors agreed at the September meeting to move forward with the creation of a second pilot wild flower area on the left verge leading to Stockton Church. The size of the area is approximately thirty feet by ten feet (imperial measurement) that will need to be scarified this Autumn prior to seeding. Anyone interested in volunteering to help out with these types of environmental projects can contact the Clerk whose details are set out below.

Complaints have been raised about the new Bus Service (113) and the length of time it now takes to get from Telford to Bridgnorth and back. These concerns are to be raised with Shropshire Council the Transport Authority. Any Parishioners who have had a similar experience can contact the Clerk whose details are set out below.

The Play Park in Windmill Lane has had all the ROSPA inspection repairs completed thanks to the Parish Council's term contractor Rob Weir. An application has also been submitted for a new piece of equipment (image attached) to the Lottery Awards for All programme at a capital cost of £14,235 (plus VAT) after thirty two likes from Norton's Facebook page.





Dates have been agreed for future Parish Council meetings which are held at Norton Village Hall at 7.30pm on the following Wednesdays 7th November, 2025 and the 7th January, 4th March and 6th May 2026.

Contact details: Stockton Parish Council Clerk Graham Bould, 18, Mendip Close, Little Dawley, Telford. TF4 3JG. gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk / 07792 300702 (m)

All of the five fruit trees planted at the Play Park creating the start of the community orchard have survived the recent very dry weather. (image attached)

Shropshire Council is consulting all Parish and Town Councils across the County about a different way of working by offering to devolve a number of non statutory services to those who would like to deliver them. This is being driven mainly by the lack of funding and the Parish Council heard about this at their September meeting under the theme of 'Shropshire Councils Together'. The Parish Council agreed to contact neighbouring Parish Councils in the Rural Shifnal Division to seek their views and also Shifnal Town Council. Parishioners will be kept informed of ideas and developments as they materialise through this newsletter and bi-monthly meetings.

The Clerk has announced his retirement date as the end of December 2026 and Parish Councillors are now starting the process of pulling together the paperwork required to advertise the post in the Spring of 2026. Anyone interested in finding out more about the role can contact the Clerk using the details set out below.

SAMCO

STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL - CONTACT DETAILS FOR PARISH COUNCILLORS & CLERK

Name	Address	Email
Chairman Councillor Lord Gavin Hamilton of Dalzell	Harrington Hall Shifnal TF11 9DR	gavin.hamilton@apleyestate.com,
Vice Chairman Councillor Barry Spittle	12, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	barryspittle1@gmail.com,
Councillor John Pigg	4 Home Farm Bungalows Norton TF11 9EJ	john.pigg@icloud.com,
Councillor Steve Bagnall	18 Cheswardine Lane Norton TF11 9EQ	stevebagnall@gmail.com,

Name	Address	Email
Councillor Andrew Bennett	The Old Shop, 8, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	andrew.r.bennett@hotmail.com,
Councillor Catherine Griffiths	Bramble Barn, Bridgnorth Road, Norton TF11 9EE	catherine@brambledevelopments.co.uk,
Councillor Doug Dyas	South Lodge, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	dyasdoug@hotmail.com,
Clerk Graham Bould	18 Mendip Close Little Dawley Telford TF4 3JG	gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk Mobile: 07792300702

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM / SHIFNAL AND ALBRIGHTON / WEST MERCIA POLICE

Seven men have been sentenced to a combined 25 years and 5 months for their involvement in a series of thefts targeting farms and rural businesses across Shropshire and Montgomeryshire.

The offences, which took place between August 2022 and February 2024, involved the theft of agricultural equipment valued between £5 million and £10 million. Following a rise in rural burglaries, officers from West Mercia Police and Dyfed-Powys Police launched a joint investigation, using CCTV, forensics, and mobile data to identify suspects.

On 20 March 2024, coordinated warrants were executed in Broseley, Cross Houses, and Telford, leading to the arrest and charging of seven individuals with conspiracy to steal.

Sentences handed down at Shrewsbury Crown Court (15 September 2025):

Name	Sentence
Wayne Price	9 years
Andrew Baker	4 years 5 months
Thomas Nutt	4 years 5 months
Dean Rogerson	3 years 1 month
Ryan Taylor	2 years 6 months
Neil Shevlin	1 year 2 months
Christopher Downes	7 months

Police praised the support of local communities and encouraged residents to join Rural Watch and sign up for Neighbourhood Matters to stay informed and help prevent future rural crime.

For more information on protecting your property and reporting suspicious activity, visit the West Mercia Police website.

Many thanks,

PCSO Sam Newbrook 40447
Police Community Support Officer | LPAF / Safer Neighbourhood Team / Shifnal and Albrighton | West Mercia Police
Shifnal Police Base, Tudor Way, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8DJ

Mobile: 07814285101
Email: sam.newbrook@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

A COUPLE OF BEAUTIFUL PRAYERS

Kindly sent in from John Webb - Six Parishes Dementia Friendly Co-ordinator.

God of compassion and grace,
we pray for all those who, through infirmity find themselves imprisoned within the loneliness of home,
watching a world outside that once had their involvement increasingly pass them by.
Be with and bless them Lord,
along with family and carers calling through the week to help.
May they know that they are loved,
still precious in your sight, and feel your arms support them in the day and through the night.
Amen

Thank you, Lord for the wisdom of age, such a valuable guide for those walking unfamiliar or hazardous routes.
Amen

RAES RECIPE

I must credit Mary Berry for this recipe. The favourite book it comes from is testament to the amount of use it has had, with its well-worn corners and many tell-tale splashes on most of the pages!

This recipe always works well. It's also easily adapted by adding your own elements to tailor it to your liking or what you have in the cupboard.

CHOCOLATE AND WALNUT BROWNIES



Try not to overcook these as they are at their best with a slightly gooey texture.

Pre- heat the oven to 190c/375F /Gas 5. Grease and line a 12x 9 inch (30 x23 cm) roasting tin with greaseproof paper.

Cooking time: approx. 40-45 minutes

Ingredients for servings:

12 oz (350g) plain chocolate broken into pieces
8 oz(225g) margarine
2 teaspoon instant coffee
2 x tablespoons hot water
3 x extra large eggs
8 oz (225g) caster sugar
1 x teaspoon vanilla essence
3oz (75g) self-raising flour
6oz (175g) walnut pieces, chopped
8ox (225g) plain chocolate chips

METHOD

Melt the chocolate slowly in a bowl with the margarine over a pan of hot water, stirring occasionally. Allow to cool. Dissolve the coffee into the hot water.

In another bowl, mix together the coffee, eggs, sugar and vanilla essence. Gradually beat in the chocolate mixture. Fold in the flour, walnuts and chocolate chips, and then pour the mixture into the prepared tin.

Bake it the pre-heated oven for 40-45 minutes or until firm to the touch and a dull crust has formed. Leave to cool in the tin. When the cake is completely cold cut into squares.

You can adapt the recipe with different flavours think, about orange zest, fresh raspberries or cranberries, or change to white chocolate, or swop the walnuts for pistachio or hazelnuts or leave them out completely. The options are endless!

Enjoy!

COME AND HAVE A CUPPA AND A CHAT AT NORTON VILLAGE HALL



£2.00 each (to cover cost of room hire and cake)
2pm – 4pm

- Thursday 16th October
- Thursday 13th November
- Thursday 18th December

All are welcome. Any questions call Paula on 07977 777557



THE STORAGE SMITH LTD

For the past six years, our self-storage facility has proudly served the community by providing secure, convenient, and affordable storage solutions tailored to every need. Within the local area we have sites at Cotsbrook, Grindle and Much Wenlock.

What began as a local vision to give residents and businesses more space to grow has steadily become a trusted resource in the area.

Whether you're moving, downsizing, expanding your business, or simply need a safe place to store belongings, we've built our reputation on offering clean, well-maintained units in a variety of sizes to suit every situation.

Security has always been our top priority, which is why our property is equipped with modern surveillance systems, gated access, and round-the-clock monitoring for complete peace of mind.



Just as important, we know that storage is about more than just space—it's about customer service. Our friendly, knowledgeable team is always available to answer questions, help with rental options designed to fit both short- and long-term needs.

Over the years, we've grown alongside our customers, listening to their feedback and continuously improving our facility to ensure we deliver the highest level of service. With easy drive-up access to all of our sites we've worked hard to make storage simple and stress-free.

Being part of this community means everything to us, and we're grateful for the trust and support our neighbours have shown since we first opened our doors.

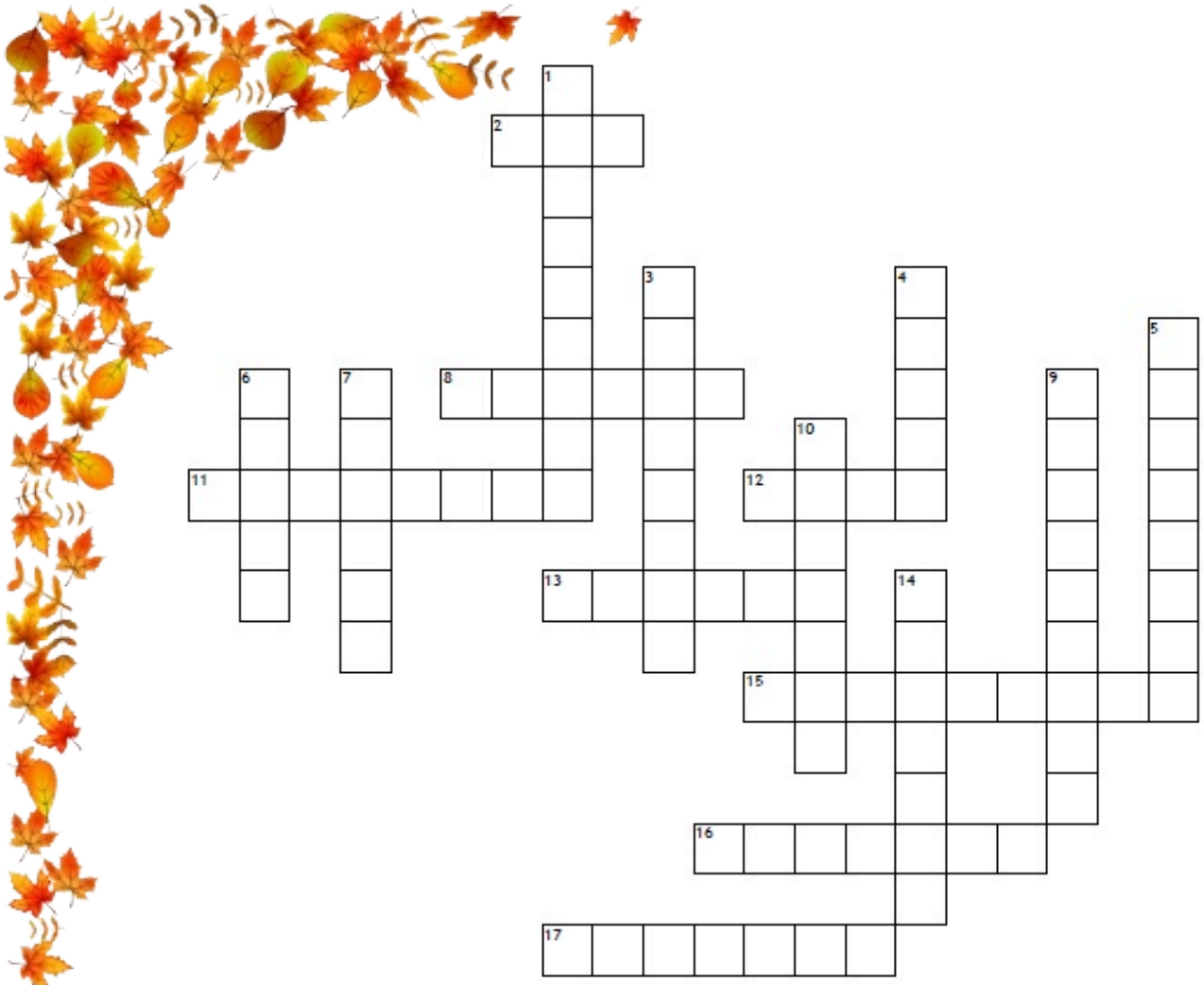
We look forward to continuing to serve as your reliable self-storage partner for many years to come.

Please feel free to call Tel. **07908 124 175**

The Storage Smith LTD



NORTON NATTER JUMBLE - AUTUMNAL LIGHT



Across

2. Low in brightness, like late afternoon light
8. What lengthens as the sun sinks
11. Longest or shortest day
12. When the day begins to surrender
13. Golden hour's final act
15. Cozy flicker on a chilly night
16. Day and night briefly equal
17. Portable glow in the gathering gloom

Down

1. Winter sleep that follows a shorter day
3. Archaic word for twilight
4. Timekeeper, especially in the dark months
5. Fading light between day and night
6. Mood or atmosphere of a sunless day
7. Settle in warmly as dark comes
9. Natural glow at night
10. It fall's at day's end
14. The days calm descent

We are Bramble Developments, a team of builders based in the beautiful Shropshire countryside with a passion for renovation and interior design.

We specialise in converting barns and other historical buildings full of history into beautiful modern day living spaces.

CREATING LUXURY PROPERTIES
BRAMBLE
DEVELOPMENTS

For more information please contact Dan Griffiths on 07815056608 or visit www.brambledevelopments.co.uk

COMMUNITY NEWS

We are fast approaching the end of our bowling season in the Highley & District Bowling League and the Mid-Shropshire Bowling League.

Stockton A are currently 7th in Division 1 of the Highley League, but with a margin of 7 points between 4th place and us we are hoping to finish slightly higher with good results on the final matches left to play.

Stockton B our new team have enjoyed their 2nd year playing in Division 2 of the Highley League, they have had some good match results. They hope to build on this in the league next year. They are also looking to form a team to play in the Mid-Shropshire League for 2026.

Stockton A are currently positioned as 5th in the Mid-Shropshire but actual overall placing should be 3rd as we have a match in hand. We currently have 4 players in the top 10 of the Division 3 league averages. Rob Weir, Martin Bennett, Simon Zacharek and Jeanette Bennett.

We will be attending the Mid-Shropshire presentation evening on14th November at the Shropshire in Muxton. The Highley knockout finals/presentation day will be held Sunday 28th September at Cleobury.

The Club has been successful with grant applications from the Parish council and Shropshire crown green bowling association which we are very grateful for, we are still awaiting updates from 2 other fundraising sources.

I would like to thank everyone who attended our fundraising BBQ in August it was lovely to see so many residents from the village supporting us. We made £400 towards the upgrade to our floodlights. Work to start to replace them should take place hopefully, when the season finishes.

Members have been very busy the last couple of weeks working on and around the green, as judging took place for the Dennis UK SISIS best kept green for 2025 competition on Thursday 28th August. 11 clubs had entered. We received some good feedback on how to improve and maintain the green going forward for next season.

If anyone is interested in joining us as a member to play, to learn or just to socialise, all ages welcome. For more details contact Jeanette Bennett 01952 730339 or Martin Bennett on 07870511655. For more updates visit our Stockton bowling Facebook page and Norton Community page.

APPEAL ON BEHALF OF STOCKTON BOWLING CLUB

Our beloved sports club in Norton has been part of this community for 87 years, and we're now facing some tough times. With bills piling up and the aftermath of COVID still affecting us, we need your support to keep our club thriving.

We're looking to replace our outdated drinks fridge with a new under-counter glass-fronted model, which will cost between £400 and £600. This upgrade will not only improve our service but also create a welcoming environment for all members and visitors.



Major AW Foster Bowling the First Wood 1938

Many of us, including myself, are stepping up to contribute, but we can't do it alone. Your help would mean the world to us, and I promise to pay it forward by supporting other local causes. Let's work together to ensure our club remains a vibrant hub for everyone.

Thank you for considering this, and I appreciate any support you can offer.

Best regards, Martin Bennett

SCAN ME

SPARTANS

Rob Woodcock Chairman of Spartans writes.....

Spartans are working hard to get the pitch back to its former glory.
The aim is to have a few games played in the autumn to see how the pitch holds up. Please come and watch and be part of this exciting time.

Keep an eye on Spartans facebook for up to date information.

https://www.facebook.com/BridgnorthSpartansJFC/



COMMUNITY BANKING

Most banks have now closed their traditional High Street branches citing the increased use of on-line banking as the reason. However in response to this many rural communities are starting to develop their own partnerships to change that trend and bring back a 'face to face' service to towns and villages. Nearby to Norton, community banking has been developing:

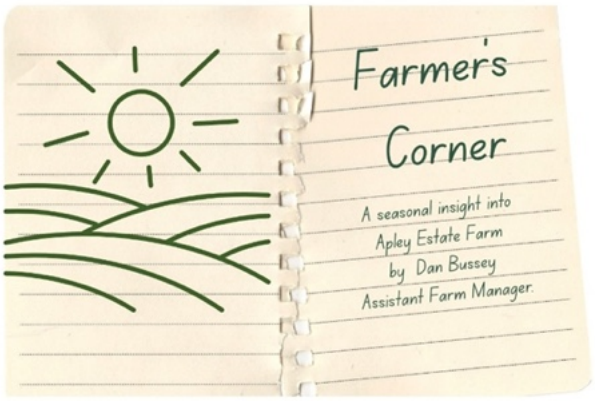
- In Shifnal a 'pop up bank' in the Old Fire Station is available every Monday with Dudley Building Society.
- At Bridgnorth Library with Lloyds Bank every Wednesday fortnight till the 22/10/25 and then on Friday 5/12/25 and 19/12/25 (closed at lunch time).
- Dudley Building Society has also opened a High Street branch in Bridgnorth enquires@dudleybuildingsociety.co.uk,

Other forms of community banking which have been around for a while now are Credit Unions and in Shropshire the contact details are 01743 252 325 (phone), email info@justcreditunion.org, if you would like to find out more.

In other rural areas across the UK pop-up banks have also appeared in village halls offering a temporary, limited banking service and/or event to support customers with tasks such as online banking registration, making payments, or getting advice on financial products and services, though they typically do not offer cash withdrawals or deposits.

The research information contained in this article has been provided by the Parish Council Clerk who can be contacted on gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk, or text/ring 07792300702 (m)

APLEY FARM NEWS - DAN BUSSEY



When I took on the role of assistant farm manager at Apley, it wasn't just a career move it was the beginning of a shared adventure for my whole family. We moved here 18 months ago and from the moment we arrived, we felt welcomed which was lucky as 2024 harvest began immediately along with its long days and nights!

2025 has been one of the driest spells Apley has seen in a long time. Our soil, our crops and our parkland (and our gardens!) have all suffered from lack of water.

One of the biggest changes to Apley farming this year came before the dry spell. In January, Apley made the difficult decision to sell its entire commercial herd of 200 in-calf suckler cows a herd that had been part of the estate for 25 years. I wasn't here for most of that journey but I saw firsthand the weight of that decision and the care that went into the dispersal sale. It marked the end of an era but also the beginning of a new chapter.

Now, instead of breeding, we buy in young stock and finish them for Sainsbury's. These cattle graze our restored parkland and are housed through the winter, contributing valuable organic matter to our integrated farming system. It's a model that offers more flexibility and aligns with our stewardship goals—something very important to Apley.

By July, the dry weather had taken hold. Rainfall was scarce and our free-draining sandy soils struggled to retain what little moisture there was. Crops matured rapidly under stress and yields reflected the pressure. Winter barley and oilseed rape were harvested up to three weeks early, followed by winter wheat and rye. Despite careful management, our lighter land blocks underperformed. Winter wheat yields are down 30%. The barley yields are down 40% on previous years and oilseed rape, which had faced early flea beetle pressure had a reasonable yield given the dry spell we've had and some oilseed rape fields exceeded expectations, thanks to better soil conditions. Winter beans performed terribly. Combining was completed easily – certainly easier than I've witnessed in my career - four weeks earlier than last year. That early finish gave us a head start on fieldwork and drilling.

As soon as the combines left the fields, we are turning our attention to soil recovery and preparation for next year's crops. Autumn drilling began early, taking advantage of the dry conditions to establish legume fallow blocks. These nitrogen-fixing crops are already working beneath the surface, improving soil structure and fertility. Cover crops, catch crops and stubble turnips have been drilled. These green covers aren't just filling gaps; they're feeding the soil, protecting against erosion and laying the groundwork for future fertility as well as providing fodder for sheep grazing through the winter.

Grassland has found the dry spell a struggle. Our traditional, biodiversity-rich varieties dried out prematurely, leaving grazing tight for our young cattle. With the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier scheme prohibiting supplementary feeding on restored parkland, the switch to finishing cattle proved invaluable. It gave us the flexibility to manage grazing rotations more strategically and maintain animal welfare, even as pasture availability declined.

The dry spell lingered well into August and with no meaningful rain in sight, we held off drilling oilseed rape. This was eventually planted at the beginning of September, once conditions allowed. Some rain in early September has helped to establish the crops and new grass leys. Timing in farming is everything and this season has demonstrated this as we've had to be patient before planting oilseed rape.

The dry conditions have also prompted deeper reflection. Apley has long invested in regenerative practices—minimal tillage, organic fertilisers, cover cropping—and this season has reinforced their importance. Building soil resilience isn't just a long-term goal; it's a daily necessity. Our soils need to be able to withstand extremes and every decision we make now is with that future in mind.

As September draws to a close, we've had a good level of rainfall which will help barley and wheat drilling when we start. The warm moist soils have meant the OSR has had a good start and will hopefully be more resilient to flea beetle. The grass land is changing colour from brown to beige and we are hoping back to green ready for the Autumn grass flush for the youngstock before they go into their winter housing and the winter routines start over again.

	Rainfall (Total) 2025	**Rainfall (Total) 2024**
September	*65 mm (15/09/25)*	142 mm
August	16 mm	26 mm
July	33 mm	78 mm
June	35 mm	42 mm
May	19 mm	75 mm

Answers to Autumnal Light crossword

Across: 2,Dim 8,Shadow 11,Solstice 12,Dusk 13,Sunset 15,Firelight 16,Equinox 17, Lantern.

Down: 1, Hibernate 3,Gloaming 4,Clock 5, Twilight 6, Gloom 7,Nestle 9,Moonlight 10,Curtain 14, Evening









EDITORIAL TEAM

Jackie Bennett - Social & Digital Media, Content & Advertising
Graham Bould - Parish Clerk
Louise Pollock - Editor & Executive Assistant to the Estate Director, Apley Estate
John Pigg - Distribution

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If you'd like to advertise your business in the Norton Natter, please get in touch. Send your events, news, photographs and contributions for future editions to Jackie Bennett at jackie.a.bennett@hotmail.com or the Parish Clerk, Graham Bould at gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk by **19th November 2025**.

Follow our Parish Facebook page www.facebook.com/nortoncommunitygroup.

We'd love to hear what you think of the Norton Natter and we welcome ideas and suggestions to improve the content and add news and updates to the newsletter and Facebook pages.