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Oswestry Police Station	0300 333 3000
Safer Neighbourhood team—email: oswestryc.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk	
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Shrops Councillor: Cllr David Walker	01743 256863/ M 07484 541576
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WASP Problems Emergency number	01691 831251 / 07772 006994
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Year 34

AUGUST 2026

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Badminton Every Tues evening: 8pm to 9:30pm. Village Hall

Tuesday Tots Every term time Tuesday 9.15 - 10.30 West Felton School

Felton Flexors Wednesday mornings 9:30am to 10:30am Village Hall

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WI 2nd Thursday of the month 7pm Village Hall

Short Mat Bowls contact Glynnis on 01691 610336

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6th August	10am Community Coffee Morning	19
20th August	County Councillor Surgery - see below	
17th October	WF ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR	



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to Editor by email (preferred) or phone

Last day for submission of copy and
deadline for content changes
10th AUGUST 2026

Editor: Colleen Hughes

Tel 01691 610300

colleenhughes748@btinternet.com

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Parish Office: 5 Newtown Gardens

Baschurch, Shrewsbury SY4 2HF Tel 01939 262 881

Email: see list. Website: www.westfelton-pc.gov.uk

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 Cllr David CURTIS 01691 610 665 (Rep WF Primary School & SALC Area Committee)

Cllr Alastair FORBES 01691 610 524
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 Cllr Pat MABE 01691 610 400
 Cllr Ed NICHOLAS 01691 610 230 (Rep ABP committee)
 Cllr Neil SUMMERS 07523 318 005
 Cllr David WALKER 01691 897 117

Our Shropshire Councillor : Cllr David Walker T: 01743 256863
 Mobile: 07484 541576

Our Member of Parliament : Helen Morgan T: 01939 809387
 E: helen.morgan.mp@parliament.uk

PLEASE NOTE NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR PARISH CLERK AND COUNCILLORS

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John Thornhill	john.thornhill@westfelton-pc.gov.uk
Ozcan Ozagir	ozcan.ozagir@westfelton-pc.gov.uk
David Walker	david.walker@westfelton-pc.gov.uk
Marian Hesketh	marian.hesketh@westfelton-pc.gov.uk
David Curtis	david.curtis@westfelton-pc.gov.uk
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WEST FELTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS 2026/27

No August meeting	8 December 2026	13 April 2027
8 September 2026	12 January 2027	11 May 2027
13 October 2026	9 February 2027	
10 November 2026	9 March 2027	

WEST FELTON PARISH COUNCIL Report from Chairman Cllr John Thornhill

Neighbourhood Plan.

A meeting of the above team took place on Tuesday 30th June 2026 at which Steve Jerman kindly offered to take on the role of Chair and Sally Morris agreed to act as Secretary. A designated WhatsApp group was also set up for communication between members. It was agreed to have a stall at the parish Carnival on Sun 12th July 2026 to engage with parishioners on what our objective is and how you can play a part. I would just like to say a big thank you to those who came to work on the stall at the Carnival.

Our Secretary Sarah put a lot of time into preparing for the day creating and collating the paperwork with valuable help from David Walker, Stephen Coombes, Stephen Jerman, Justin Walker, Jeff Morris, Maggie Lindsay, Barry Shakespeare and Ian Lambie. It was a great success and we had contributions from a wide range of attendees and some interesting discussions.

Those members of the parish that attended the stall and engaged in positive conversations were from all over the parish and across a range of ages. A table top map produced by David Walker enabled attendees to locate their residence with sticky coloured dots identifying their age range. They were then asked to complete a housing survey about what they would like to see in the future. The third activity was to complete a coloured post-it note in age range stating the three most important developments they would like see in the village.

The main concerns in order of frequency of response were - *Traffic Management/Queens Head, Improved Phone/Wifi Coverage, Keep village Same Size/no more houses, School Facilities, More shops/library, More Affordable Housing, Improved Road Maintenance – Potholes, Bus Service Improvement, Doctor / Health Services, More Facilities for children and young people, Festivals / Concerts,*

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

More Amenities, Youth Club, Allotments, Cash Machine, Football Pitch, Green Spaces, Local Pub Suitable, Tennis Court.

There are two detailed reports on these responses in the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Parish Council website under the tabs - The Council and Information. One lists the response from the post-it notes in three columns and sorted according to the age range. The second lists the various responses in order of frequency listed.

If you were not able to attend the stall at the Carnival you can still tell us what you think about how your village should develop. Please send any thoughts or views to the Parish Clerk, whose details are in 'Round and About.' The team is meeting again on Tuesday 28th July 2026 in the back room of the village hall and will consider the responses and move forward on the next stage of development which will include an open meeting for members of the parish to be involved and contribute.

Lighting on the Avenue.

I am pleased to say that after a long delay and due to the intervention of our Shropshire Councillor David Walker we have now got movement on this long standing issue. A site meeting was held on 8th June which resulted in the Council agreeing to look further into our requests and provide us with a quotation for the installation of the

lighting we have requested. David Walker reported that there had been positive exchanges with Highline about this matter including solar lighting for the A5 bridge and that the development has been passed to National Highways for approval.

Road Maintenance. Work will begin on the major resurfacing of the road from Queens Head through Rednal to the parish boundary. The work will be carried out in 5 chunks and will involve a full closure during the day with some night-time closures.

The details are as follows:

Start Date: **27th July 2026** -

End Date: **16th August 2026**

Road closure **weekdays and weekends** 08:30-15:30.

Road closure **nights of 10-12 Aug 26:** 20:00-06:00.

It would seem that during the repair works there will be limited access into and out of the village with restrictions from the Queen's Head / A5 Junction until just after the turning for Rednal.

Conservation Area signs.

We are still pursuing this matter and have now been out in touch with another new member of the team at County Hall. We await a response.

Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC). The Local Plan Scoping Consultation. Councillors David Curtis

(Continued on page 9)

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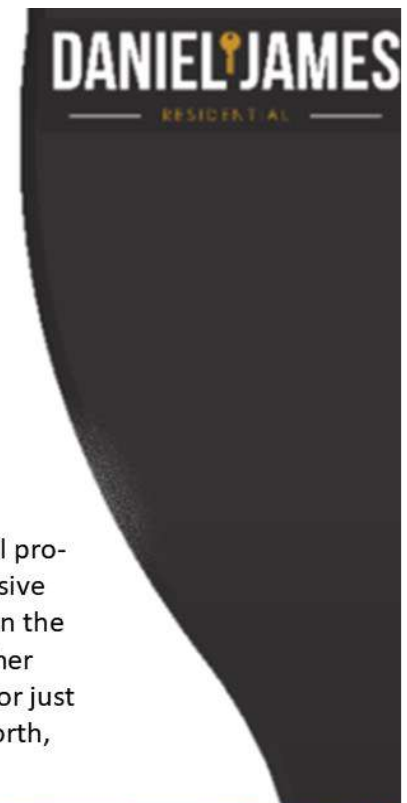
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(Continued from page 8)

and Marian Hesketh had prepared a response which was considered in depth at the meeting. This has been submitted and we strongly argued that West Felton had been placed in a category of village that did not take into account the infrastructure and lack of relevant and important services not available within the village. Members agreed that we should raise this issue to have our category revisited and amended to take account of these factors. The original placing was based on what is called the Connectivity Index - the ability to travel without the use of cars and therefore ascertain where development may be most

appropriate. We have pointed that we feel that Infrastructure should be a major consideration. West Felton may meet the criteria in terms of dwellings and population but we lack many of the services and infrastructure necessary. Our 'connectivity' relies on our proximity to the A5, but in reality many of the dwellings included are located in the hamlets surrounding the village centre and have no access at all to public transport. There is only a daytime public bus service through the main road of the village, which is totally inadequate for connecting the population to places of employment. We do not have a Surgery, Post office or Library.●



Shropshire Councillor Report

Cllr David Walker

Over the past month I have continued balancing my role as local councillor with my responsibilities as Cabinet Member for Planning. Much of my time has focused on strengthening planning services, supporting recruitment, progressing Local Plan work and dealing with a range of local issues raised by residents across both parishes.

Local Issues and Casework

Highways, planning and development-related matters have continued to generate the majority of local casework. I have been working with officers on road condition concerns, resurfacing schemes, road markings, highway safe-

ty issues and developer-related infrastructure matters.

I have also continued pursuing several long-running issues involving unfinished developments, road adoptions, and associated developer responsibilities. While some matters are constrained by legal processes, I continue to press for progress and practical solutions where possible.

Regular engagement with residents remains a priority and monthly surgeries continue to provide opportunities for residents to raise concerns directly.

Some positive exchanges with Highline about The Avenue lighting including solar lighting for the A5 bridge. That has been passed to National Highways

(Continued on page 11)



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(Continued from page 9) County council for approval. Resurfacing of Fox Lane footbridge has moved forward with Shropshire Council now accepting responsibility.

Good to see the Neighbourhood Plan steering making some progress.

Planning Portfolio

A major focus this month has been ensuring Planning Services have sufficient capacity to manage current workloads and prepare for the next Local Plan which starts in earnest in September. Recruitment activity has continued, with additional planning, enforcement and development highways staff being secured and further work underway to strengthen Planning Policy resources, add bandwidth and increase income from developers.

The Local Plan scoping process

has continued to progress, with an encouraging response rate. I have also spoken at more town and parishes across the county highlighting the changing national picture, threats and opportunities.

Discussions with officers about improving planning enforcement processes, refreshing public information, and updating guidance to provide greater clarity around enforcement priorities, procedures, and timescales.

Alongside this, work is progressing to improve planning, heritage and highways information available on the council website, with the aim of reducing repeat enquiries and improving the

overall experience for residents and businesses.

Transformation and Service Improvement

A recurring theme throughout the month has been modernising council processes and systems. Discussions have included planning, highways, and tree management systems, together with opportunities to improve efficiency through better technology, automation, and performance reporting.

A significant amount of officer time continues to be absorbed by complaints, repeat enquiries and information requests. Improving processes and public information should help release capacity and improve service delivery.

Wider Council Work

Beyond planning matters, I have continued to contribute to discussions on the council's financial sustainability, transformation programme, and future service delivery. I have also participated in wider discussions on infrastructure, environmental improvements and the relationship between planning policy and future growth across the county.

The Corporate Peer Challenge Review had a positive outcome, with recognition of the progress made to stabilise and get the council onto a secure financial footing. Shropshire Council remains between a mountain and a hard place. Still some way to go though.

(Continued on page 13)

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(Continued from page 11)

Looking Ahead. My priorities for the coming month include:

- Continuing Local Plan preparation and engagement.
- Supporting recruitment and work-force development within Planning Services.
- Progressing planning enforcement improvements and updated guidance.
- Improving development highways

and road adoption processes.

- Pursuing local highways, drainage and infrastructure issues affecting residents.

- Maintaining regular engagement with both parish councils and local communities.

As always, if there are matters, either parish or county council, you would like me to pursue, please let me know.

David Walker●

Information received 22 June 2026 from SHROPSHIRE HIGHWAYS

Essential carriageway resurfacing work, Queens Head to Rednal Mill planned to begin on 27th July – 16th August.

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Next Action Team Meeting: 28th July 2026

The team will set the work plan to be communicated at a future public meeting.



Attend the Critical Public Meeting

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**Oswestry is about to see the launch of a fantastic new initiative
 This September - Oswestry Youth Orchestra -
 based at the brand new
 Grove Performing Arts Centre at Oswestry School.**

The orchestra is open to young musicians aged 9 to 18 and aims to provide regular ensemble playing and performance opportunities for young people across Shropshire and the surrounding area.

The main orchestra is open to all young musicians of grade 2 standard or above with no audition requirement, and affordable fees. The aim is to complement the excellent musical work already taking place in schools by providing another pathway for young people to perform regularly, build confidence, and develop their musicianship as part of a supportive ensemble. In this accessible environment, less experienced players can develop their ensemble skills alongside more advanced musicians and the older, more experienced players will have the opportunity to audition for the Chamber Orchestra.

**Orchestra rehearsals will take place weekly at :
 the Grove Performing Arts Centre on the Oswestry School campus,
 on Tuesday evenings from 7.00 to 8.15pm,
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There is a free taster session on
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Local Priorities Wildlife Crime Issues Message

I wanted to provide you with an update regarding Wildlife Crime Issues, which people around your area have highlighted as an issue of concern on the priority survey: **Wildlife Crime Update – Shropshire**

Good afternoon,

Thank you to everyone who has recently contacted us regarding wildlife concerns across Shropshire through Neighbourhood Matters.

We continue to receive reports relating to a variety of wildlife issues, including suspected poaching, disturbance of protected species, illegal trapping, hare coursing, and damage to habitats. Information provided by members of the public remains invaluable in helping us identify patterns, direct patrols, and take appropriate enforcement action where offences are identified.

As we move through the summer months, we would encourage residents, landowners, and those enjoying the countryside to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. If possible, please note descriptions of persons, vehicles, registration numbers, locations, dates, and times, as these details can significantly assist investigations.

Many wildlife species are protected by law, and offences against wildlife and the countryside can carry substantial penalties. We continue to work closely with partner agencies, conservation organisations, and local communities to protect Shropshire's wildlife and rural environment.

To report wildlife crime or suspicious activity, please contact West Mercia Police via:

101- for non-emergency matters

999 - if a crime is in progress or there is an immediate threat

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Thank you for your continued support in helping to protect our wildlife and rural communities.

PC Phillip Nock,
Rural Crime Team,
West Mercia Police





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(Continued from page 37)

ities of life in general, I can only recall peace and tranquillity even if there were but few luxuries.

Behind high walls lived our local large farmer, a mysterious place to young minds, until one day two ladies emerged in a horse and carriage and told us of a squirrel's nest farther along the road. This was, in fact, a hole in a tree where they hid sweets for us children and what sweets! My mouth still waters as I think of them.

I went to work in our local co-operative creamery and five years later I came to Birmingham to work for the BSA. These were heady days when there was full employment and life was lived to the full. It was during this time that I met and

married Pat. The ninth of twelve children he came from an identical background. The next years were a welter of activity, getting a home together and rearing six children - four boys and twin girls. I worked nights at a Security firm, my husband left a declining plant hire industry, went to British Steel and from there to the hotel industry.

As our family grew up we surfaced and thought about our dream of running a village post office and store. Instead we settled for a mini supermarket in a shopping precinct in south Birmingham - trade boomed, customers became friends, but then reluctantly we admitted to our advancing years and sold up earlier this year. At last we feel our dream has come true. ●

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Fri 24 July	TOY STORY 5 (PG)	13:30 & 16:30
Sat 25 July	TOY STORY 5 (PG)	13:30 & 16:30
Sun 26 July	TOY STORY 5 (PG)	12:00
Thur 30 July	TOY STORY 5 (PG)	14:30
Fri 31 July	TOY STORY 5 (PG)	16:30
Fri 7 Aug	MINIONS & MONSTERS (U)	17:00
Sat 8 Aug	MINIONS & MONSTERS (U)	12:00 & 14:30
Sun 9 Aug	MINIONS & MONSTERS (U)	12:00
Fri 14 Aug	PIRATES IN AN ADVENTURE WITH SCIENTISTS (U) MOANA LIVE ACTION (PG)	14:00 & 16:30
Sat 15 Aug	MOANA LIVE ACTION (PG) MOANA LIVE ACTION (PG) sing along version	12:00 & 16:30
Sun 16 Aug	PIRATES IN AN ADVENTURE WITH SCIENTISTS (U) MOANA LIVE ACTION (PG)	12:00 & 14:30
Thur 20 Aug	MOANA LIVE ACTION (PG)	18:30
Fri 28 Aug	SHAUN THE SHEEP THE MOVIE (U)	16:30
Sat 29 Aug	SHAUN THE SHEEP THE MOVIE (U)	14:30



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10-12noon

Thursday, 6th AUGUST



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biscuits. Bacon baps £1 extra.**



The sun shone on the delightful gardens at Rivacres, Grimpo on July 4th. Visitors arrived early and all day.

Caroline and the Chenery family wish to thank all who so generously contributed to the amazing total of

£874 for Cancer Research UK.

A lovely day enjoyed by all.

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(Continued from page 35)

run her to the station or to Oswestry, and on one occasion was known to have expressed a preference for the bay horse as the black one was inclined to suffer from wind and was not considered suitable for a lady.

Feeding stuffs were also sold in small quantities for the villages about, 10 lbs at a time, but gradually during the thirties the grocery side of the shop declined due to multiple stores beginning to open and local road transport being more freely available for villages to take themselves into Oswestry so Stephen Edwards came to supply the feeding stuffs in bulk more to the local farmers and had three wagons delivering over a fifteen mile radius.

The second world war and rationing would not have made a shop an easy place to run either. After the war, in 1946, Milton Edwards, Stephen and Sarah's younger son, returned from active service and opened the Post Office. Milton ran the post office in conjunction with the shop for over thirty years and the grocery side of the shop as you know it today grew again and survived to provide the villagers of West Felton with a shop and post office facility that a lot of villages do not enjoy. The foot and mouth epidemic of 1968 signalled the end of the feed side of the business, and this was closed down shortly after.

In January 1980 George and Audrey Seabury took over from Milton and ran the shop for nearly ten years. George had connections with West Felton from years back as his grandparents had lived in West Felton from about 1870 and his father and three aunts were all born in the village. All George's school holidays were spent at Grimpo with one of his

aunts who taught at our local school for forty years. George and Audrey had previously run a very busy shop at Wallasey but as the children grew up they decided to slow down slightly and took the opportunity to move back to West Felton when Milton decided it was time for him to retire. Sadly, Audrey died in July 1989 and George did not want to carry on running the shop so again it changed hands and Fred and Pat Butler took over. Fred and Pat had at one time run the White Lion at Whittington so were familiar with the area and bought their energies to West Felton so that the tradition of the shop could continue. They have now gone back to their first love of running a busy pub.

And now we have new people again! Mary and Pat Rattigan who I am sure you all welcome to the shop. They have not been here very long yet but are friendly and welcoming - I hope their time in the shop is successful and happy and that the shop continues to serve the people of West Felton for as long a time again.

**From the new Shop owner,
Mrs Mary Rattigan**

As a recent arrival in West Felton I feel very honoured to be asked to contribute to your magazine. My name is Mary, my husband is Pat, and we are ably assisted by Mrs Eileen Hanmer - we now run your village post office and store.

I was born near the west coast of Ireland, the eldest of five children. Our home nestled in a valley at the foot of mountains with a lake at the bottom of our land. My parents had a smallholding, and although these were lean years for small farmers generally, I have no recollection of any shortages. Isolated from the harsher real-

(Continued on page 39)

WEST FELTON VILLAGE HALL EXERCISE CLASSES

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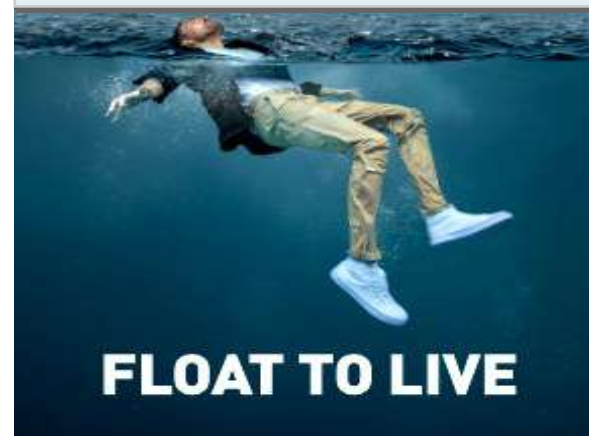
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It has helped save the
lives of more than 50
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The water is home to unseen threats.
Threats that will take your breath away.
Cold water and hidden currents catch out
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If you find yourself
struggling in the water, remember
FLOAT TO LIVE ...



FLOAT TO LIVE

1. The best way to float is to tilt your head back with your ears submerged.
2. Try to relax and breathe normally.
3. You can gently move your hands and legs to help you stay afloat if you need to.
4. Spread your arms and legs out to improve stability – and it's OK if your legs sink, we all float differently.
5. Once your breathing is under control, call for help or swim to safety.
6. Practise floating in a supervised location like a swimming pool.

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NACS MEMBER 12/05



It's September 1992 and this appeared in the WEST FELTON

VILLAGE MAGAZINE,

Editor Pat Mabe – price 25p

We all take the village shop for granted but how many of you know its history? Sometime about the turn of the century the shop was run by Mr William Edwards and his wife Annie and was, in about 1912/13, taken over by his son, Mr Stephen Edwards and his wife Sarah. Sarah had been the village school mistress until her marriage to Stephen Edwards. The shop then was fairly typical of many village shops and stocked and supplied a far greater variety of goods than it does now. Apart from basic grocery items, like flour, bread, tea, sugar, cheese, bacon, butter and lard you could buy treacle, cocoa, dried fruit and even canned fruit and fish. These items did not come in convenient packages but in bulk, stored in sacks and boxes, and apart from the canned goods had to be cut or measured and weighed, as required by the customers. Butter, unless it was farm butter, came from New Zealand in 56lb boxes and used to be cut with a cheese wire. Bacon came salted in boxes and had to be scraped to remove as much of the salt as possible. Tea, sugar and other dried goods would have been measured or weighed and sold in paper bags. Most of these provisions were supplied by David Jones of Red Cross Street, Liverpool and were delivered once a fortnight by road. Fruit and vegetables would have been mainly seasonal and grown as much as possible by people in their gardens, but at Christmas a box of oranges and apples would be purchased by Mr Edwards for

Christmas fare and presents.

Milk would have been collected from the farm by children as one of their chores, or brought home by the father from his place of work. Meat was bought separately from the butchers, and there was a butchers at one time at the rear of Brick House run by Mr Vernon Wilde.

Apart from provisions the shop stocked a wide selection of ironmongery; buckets, shovels, tools, brushing hooks, saucepans and frying pans, all hanging from the hooks provided around the shop and displayed outside. These were purchased wholesale from Thomas Goode of Birmingham. Thread, needles, buttons, knitting needles, small linen goods like towels; paraffin, candles, lamps, lamp glasses, salt in half ton blocks all displayed or stored in countless drawers under the counter. The shop was packed with all these plus soaps in bars and softsoap for scrubbing floors and overalls, soda for washing. All this and much more was available to the villagers of West Felton from the store.

The shop was no bigger then than it is today, in fact, at one time the stairs to the store room above went from the shop itself approximately where the post office is now. Living accommodation was at the rear and in the cottage next door comprising a sitting room, living room and four bedrooms. At the rear of the premises two horses were kept plus two traps, an everyday one for deliveries and a smart one for the carriage trade that Stephen Edwards ran as well. It was not uncommon for people to need a ride to Rednal Station and the maid from The Grange would be sent up to request that the trap call to pick up Mrs Congreve and

(Continued on page 37)

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Fifteen folk Monday 6th July for Away Day walk. Car share from Punch Bowl and on to Morton church to park. Walk, led by Mike, along past old Sycamore pub, now a house, across B3496 and along to the new school bridge to see the progress the canal trust is making on restoration of Montgomery canal.

Dropped down onto tow path and back along from Crickheath wharf to see Pear Cottage which Mike and Kay ran as a b&b.

Our trip continued along towpath to Morton pool where we rejoined road returning to church and cars, where we unpacked chairs and flasks and sat opposite church under shady tree and spent a lovely 20 minutes chatting.

A lovely and interesting walk in beautiful weather.●





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(Continued from page 31)

endorphin release, the scientists were able to show that religious activities were associated with endorphin release and thus the associated feelings of well-being in both societies. Karl Marx may have been ahead of his time when he stated that 'Religion is the opium of the masses' though probably not realising the mechanism by which it occurred.

Dementia comes in many forms. Memorising recent events becomes more difficult; unfamiliar surroundings cause confusion; anxiety in not being able to understand what's going on increases a sense of isolation. The result is a feeling of not belonging and being cut off. Many families keep a memory box of photographs and objects that help older people reconnect with their lives from the past. Such recollection may also come from participating in religious activities. The present generation of older people will often have been brought up in a religious surrounding. They may be familiar with prayers, especially the Lord's Prayer. Music is often cited as a means for those with dementia to reconnect with the past. Thus the use of familiar old tunes and hymns as part of worship may enable them to join in. Some thought does however have to be given to the service since those with dementia now will have been brought up on the Book of Common Prayer. But as noted above the engagement with others in prayer

and singing will enhance the release of endorphins and promote a feeling of well-being and belonging.

Many activities recommended by the church do not necessarily have to be church related. Group sessions be they coffee get togethers or communal singing are helpful. Texts about helping dementia patients emphasize the importance of speaking slowly and doctors are continually on the lookout for hearing loss, which can lead to isolation through not being able to take part in life, and the need for spectacles to allow people to read notices or newspapers.

Whilst giving support to those with dementia is valuable, it is also important to consider the care of the carers. Looking after people who are not healthy is demanding and can place strains on both the principle carer and the family. Nurses and carers in institutions have the relief of going home after work. For a relative there may be no respite. The clergy are often in a privileged position to be able to visit such families and be in a position to alert the social care teams when help is required.

Many thanks therefore to all of you who have responded to the questionnaire. Your answers have made the PCC think more profoundly and have certainly improved the way that the profile is being put together. ●

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West Felton Women's Institute

**Summer Fun...
in the sun...?**



WFWI has been out and about now that the days have lengthened, if not consistently brightened. May's Annual Meeting of the Shropshire Federation at Theatre Severn was attended by a couple of members who thoroughly enjoyed their day out at the venue and in our county town. We were all warmly welcomed by Federation Chair Bridget Thurgood and, as is traditional, sang 'Jerusalem'. Guest speakers included the admirable Benjamin Butler, winner of 2025's Second Chance Achiever Award sponsored by the RAF and the Royal British Legion; then we heard a Shropshire based speaker from the West Midlands Air Ambulance Service and finally the inspirational Professor Lucy Easthope whose field is emergency planning and disaster recovery. Her best-selling book 'When the Dust Settles' sold out on the day but we were pleased to acquire her 'Come What May' for our WFWI library.

Our annual outdoor meeting saw us heading Whitchurch-wards to 'Nature's Safe', the wildlife cryo-biobank with its charity's mission being to save animals from extinction by storing and regenerating cells from wild animal species. Founder Tullis Matson was as informative and passionate as ever. It is no surprise that this committed team has been nominated for The Earthshot Prize; how wonderful to hear something positive about the future.

A trip to the stunning, historic Port Sunlight Village on the Wirral was organised by County and thoroughly enjoyed. It consists of over 900 listed buildings, Arts and Crafts architecture and parkland as well as the nearby Lady Lever art gallery. A great day out for Shropshire members – and there are over 100 WIs in our shire with some 3000 members spread throughout our many villages, market towns and larger conurbations!

June's meeting was back indoors, no bad thing given the weather. Performer Gabriela La Foley entertained us with tales of the history of the ukulele. Did you know that the little instrument's name comes from the Hawaiian language, 'uku' meaning 'flea' and 'lele' meaning 'jumping'? We also had a report on our National Federation's Annual Meeting which took place at the start of the month and which our delegate Jo attended online. Membership nationwide voted on proposed resolutions, which will see us campaigning in the near future on accessible toilet facilities and women's homelessness. A

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Community spirit, Inclusion and dementia

In the course of preparing a profile attractive to prospective priest (Rector) to come to St Michael's church, our representatives preparing the profile sent out a questionnaire asking residents what they would like to see in a new Rector. Your answers were imaginative, useful and very helpful. Included in the comments were: the value of social events in church; the study of the Bible and prayer, and a strong community spirit which is enhanced by the church. Community does of course include all of us and the church's teaching requires us to consider those who may be at a disadvantage. This latter consideration drew the Parochial Church Council's (PCC) attention at a recent meeting to discuss a particular group, namely those people with dementia. This discussion not only caused us to start considering points made by respondents to the questionnaire, but also was useful to our reps because the Diocese of Lichfield is encouraging the presence of a dementia friendly church and the reps could be asked by an applicant what our church was doing.

There does exist a considerable literature, including much published in highly regarded scientific journals, about the effects of religious activities helping with bonding and inclusion. In



a recent study in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, the effect of religious practices on bonding and affect was studied. Affect is a psychological term expressing feelings of emotion, feeling and mood and can be either positive or negative. The most primitive form of bonding is that expressed by animals in grooming, but this limited to one to one behaviour. The researchers investigated the effect of singing, praying, listening to a preacher in a UK population and praying, dancing, singing and hearing a preacher in a Brazilian community.

The investigators were interested in learning about how these rituals might enhance feelings of bonding, positive affect and well-being in subjects. It is already known that opioids such as morphine engender such feelings and also that the human body produces its own opioids known as endorphins. These also act as the body's own mechanism for relief of pain. Using a measurement of pain threshold as an indirect measure of

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Join a free Shared Reading Group at Oswestry Library.



The Reader, a national Shared Reading charity based in Liverpool, runs a free, weekly Shared Reading group in Oswestry library every Monday afternoon 2.30pm to 4pm. Everyone is welcome.

People connect and share experiences using stories and poems. There is no pressure to talk or read aloud or to come every week.

Shared Reading brings people together through stories and poems, creating opportunities to connect, reflect and share experiences in a friendly and supportive environment. There is no pressure to read aloud, speak, or attend every week – you can simply come along and listen.

The charity has more than 420 Shared Reading groups across the UK and 850 volunteers. Research shows that Shared Reading can improve wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and help build stronger, more supportive communities.

To find out more about Shared Reading come along to Oswestry library any Monday afternoon or visit www.thereader.org.uk

New members are always welcome.

(Continued from page 25) WI

highlight was listening to British Scientist Michelle Dougherty, the Astronomer Royal and professor of space physics at Imperial College London. Her work currently includes leading un-crewed exploratory missions to Jupiter and Saturn. Wow! Another speaker was Anne Boden, the impressive founder of Starling Bank. She was 54 when she decided to create her digital bank offering free and fair banking. Another 'Wow'!

Plans continue apace for our appearance at this year's carnival – in the tea tent and on the float. Many thanks to the village's dedicated team who make this traditional, fun-filled event such a success. We're also involved in the annual Oswestry Show in August, taking part in the many WI craft and cookery competitions. Plenty to do!

WFWI meets on the second Thursday of every month excepting August so do come along, ladies, to join in the fun, the finding out and the friendship which we enjoy, whatever the weather. See you in the village hall for a 7pm kick off. Visitors £5. Ring 07375997782 for further information or email WestFeltonWI@wi-shropshire.co.uk

Oswestry Rural South SNT (oswestryrs.snt@westmercia.police.uk)



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Up the Garden Path with Topiarius

On the home straight of summer

The work of keeping on top of weeds intensifies as we go through May, June and July. By August, you may like me have got a bit weary of it, a feeling that can be added to by the garden generally beginning to look a bit tired. Never mind, as temperatures start to drop and we get some rain it will all brighten up again. Inevitably, there will also be the first little urge to start on the jobs you identified in last month's review of the garden.

Apart from the routine tasks from weeding to pruning grapes plus plenty of harvesting, August is a relatively quiet gardening month. In fact, the only planting I have on my list is potting on the second lot of cucumbers. Among the harvesting work is picking the early apples, in our case Red Devil. We never buy apples so when they come into season it is a special treat. One important job for us is to order vine weevil nematodes in preparation for doing our best to avoid damage to plants in containers. Towards the end of the month the summer raspberry canes can be cut down.

Some people argue that you wait until August to summer trim hedges because then growth has slowed down and there will only be a little regrowth before winter. I don't agree for the simple reason that by that time there is too much growth and the hedge will look untidy. Hence, I summer trim such

things as holly in mid to late June.

Whenever you trim, it is only too easy to make the mistake of leaving a little extra growth each year. That results in the size increasing until drastic action is needed. We have all been there. It is better to try and cut back to the origins of this year's growth and not worry about a few bald spots as they will soon regrow.

Following the garden review, as well as severe cutting back, moving and replacing, it is possible that some people will conclude that they need a large scale redesign. They then have the choice of employing a garden designer or working out the design themselves. There is no doubt that professional garden designers can produce stunning gardens and will have the knowledge to deal with the problems of your particular site. On the other hand, there are two good reasons for doing it yourself. Firstly, most of the clients of professional designers have rather deeper pockets than most of us so cost could make DIY essential. Secondly, there is great satisfaction to be gained from doing the design and then knowing that it is all your own work. After all, in the great majority of cases the garden is for you and not other people. If it suits you that is enough. As a compromise, you could consult a professional if you get stuck with a specific problem. ●