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ELECTRICITY Scottish Power (Manweb as was)	0800 001 5400
KNOCKIN Medical Practice	01691 682203
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Orthopaedic Hospital	01691 404000
PARISH COUNCIL email: westfeltonpc@gmail.com https://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk/	
POLICE, West Mercia Non-Emergency number	101
Oswestry Police Station	0300 333 3000
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PRADOE CHURCH: Chairman: Andrew Kenyon	01691 610218
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SHOP: West Felton Stores	01691 610863
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Shrops Councillor: Cllr David Walker	01743 256863/ M 07484 541576
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Year 33

FEBRUARY 2026

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Details page 15



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WI 2nd Thursday of the month 7pm Village Hall

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5 February	10am COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING Village Hall	
28th February	7pm JACK DENT MAGIC ENTERTAINMENT Village Hall	
14th March	10:30-2:30pm SPRING FOOD, ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR Village hall. Free entry, refreshments available.	

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Articles/advertisement amendments for inclusion
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to Editor by email (preferred) or phone

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

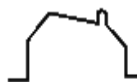
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Parish Office: 5 Newtown Gardens

Baschurch Shrewsbury SY4 2HF Tel 01939 262 881

Email: westfeltonpc@gmail.com Website: www.westfeltonparish.co.uk

Chairman Cllr John THORNHILL 07714 759 466
Vice-Chairman Cllr Ozcan OZAGIR 07955 232 199
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Cllr Chris JONES 01691 610 354 (Rep SALC Area Committee).
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

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

10 February 2026

14 April 2026

10 March 2026

12 May 2026

To Contact the Parish Council:

Clerk – Rosemary Wood – 01939 262881

Email: westfeltonpc@googlemail.com

Website Address - <https://www.westfeltonparish.co.uk>

Under the main heading 'Contacts' on first page

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Report from West Felton Parish Chairman, Cllr John Thornhill

I would like to wish you all a very Happy New year and hope you had an enjoyable festive season.

We had a very full meeting with discussions on a number of issues which included agreeing projects for the year and setting the budget to enable delivery of these projects.

Progress on matters relating to the highways such as LED Street lighting along the Avenue, the installation of speeding signs are subject to support and co-operation from Shropshire Council, which has previously been very limited.

In some cases such as overgrown hedgerows in the village, these are purely the responsibility of Shropshire Council. Our Shropshire link Councillor, David Walker is hoping to have a discussion with Mark Wootton, Area Manager (North) for Developing Highways to ensure delivery of these projects.

Equipment in Playing Field

In December edition I highlighted an item in the safety report we had received from the Royal Society for Prevent of Accidents (ROSPA) on our playing field. Our Groundsman, Graham Taylor, had secured the site and for now removed the relevant equipment. Cllr Chris Jones met with Gra-

ham to inspect the equipment and confirmed that it was rotten. A new swing bay crossbar was ordered on 7 Jan with a week's delivery time so will be replaced soon.

Council held a full discussion on the 98 page comprehensive report. The vast majority of items were considered Low or Very low risk with many not needing any remedial action. Council agreed that a work plan should be devised to respond to those items where some remedial action was indicated to ensure that for the coming spring and summer activities all equipment is safe for full use.

We have also received confirmation from Balfour's that the lease on the playing field will be renewed for a further term of 15 years, at a rent of £250 per annum, with rent reviews at years 5 and 10 in accordance. This is a very reasonable slight increase on the current rent for the field which provides a lot of amenities for parishioners.

Applications for Grants

We received three applications for grants to support activities within the village. Whilst we considered there was merit in each of the appli-

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

cations, relevant details were lacking in two at this stage, so we were only able to make one grant of £500 to support the continuance of the very important Parish Magazine.

Defibrillator

This is now back in full operation after its use for an incident.

Litter

We have had a letter from a parishioner regarding litter in the Queens Head Area. The Council has installed letter bins and will consider this matter further. Unfortunately, it seems that some of this litter is a result of it being thrown from passing cars.



Shropshire Councillor Report Councillor David Walker

Happy New Year. I hope everyone had a good Christmas. For me Christmas came as a well-earned break, with very little downtime since the election. Even with a couple of weeks off, I still had 30 meetings over the last month. I've worked to deliver tangible improvements for Whittington and West Felton while balancing wider council responsibilities.

Road Closures - Please notice on page 13.

Budget and Finances

Council considered the budget and the Action Plan for development. Costs are rising everywhere and with the need to improve and replace items on the playing field and the requirement to install new IT facilities and website there was a very long discussion on this issue. It was agreed to extend the budget to cover these and other items and increase the parish precept. This will mean that for a Band D Council Tax property the Parish precept, which for 25/26 is £ 36.52, will increase to £7.30 the new rate for 26/27 will be £43.82. ♦

For Whittington, I had a meeting about advancing a 20-mph zone outside the school, a critical step towards safer roads for children and families as part of School Streets initiative. I also progressed discussions on the community car park and play area enhancements.

In West Felton, I again had meetings with officers to progress a new street light on The Avenue which has frustrated the Clerk and parish council members for a number of years. I have also assisted the clerk in reviewing the effectiveness of the council's website and will be recommending an

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 47) *A hint for Christmas*

one knows too many people. One cannot give them a Christmas card each; there is not enough powdered glass to go round. One has to discriminate, and the way in which most of us discriminate is either to send no cards to anybody or else to send them to the first twenty or fifty or hundred of our friends (according to our income and energy) whose names come into our minds. Such cards are meaningless; but if we sent our Christmas cards to the right people, we could make the simple words upon them mean something very much more than a mere wish that the recipient's Christmas shall be "merry" (which it will be anyhow, if he likes merriness) and his New Year "bright" (which, let us hope, it will not be). "A merry Christmas," with an old church in the background and a robin in the foreground, surrounded by a wreath of holly-leaves. It might mean so much. What I feel that it ought to mean is something like this:-- "You live at Potters Bar and I live at Petersham. Of course, if we did happen to meet at the Marble Arch one day, it would be awfully jolly, and we could go and have lunch together somewhere, and talk about old times. But our lives have drifted apart since those old days. It is partly the fault of the train-service, no doubt. Glad as I should be to see you, I don't like to ask you to come all the way to Petersham to dinner, and if you asked me to Potters Bar--well, I should come, but it would be something of a struggle, and I thank you for not asking me. Besides,

we have made different friends now, and our tastes are different. After we had talked about the old days, I doubt if we should have much to say to each other. Each of us would think the other a bit of a bore, and our wives would wonder why we had ever been friends at Liverpool. But don't think I have forgotten you. I just send this card to let you know that I am still alive, still at the same address, and that I still remember you. No need, if we ever do meet, or if we ever want each other's help, to begin by saying: 'I suppose you have quite forgotten those old days at Liverpool.' We have neither of us forgotten; and so let us send to each other, once a year, a sign that we have not forgotten, and that once upon a time we were friends. 'A merry Christmas to you.'" That is what a Christmas card should say. It is absurd to say this to a man or woman whom one is perpetually ringing up on the telephone; to somebody whom one met last week or with whom one is dining the week after; to a man whom one may run across at the club on almost any day, or a woman whom one knows to shop daily at the same stores as oneself. It is absurd to say it to a correspondent to whom one often writes. Let us reserve our cards for the old friends who have dropped out of our lives, and let them reserve their cards for us. But, of course, we must have kept their addresses; otherwise, we have to print our cards publicly--as I am doing now. "Old friends will please accept this, the only intimation." ♦






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(Continued from page 8)

upgrade to improve usability at our next meeting.

These local actions sit alongside broader policy work—such as reviewing Community Infrastructure Levy, suggesting operational changes to officers and scrutiny committees. More meetings around supplementary planning documents, around Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SuDS) policy, improving Enforcement, reviewing shop fronts policy, boundary and other legal issues like road adoptions. Discussions about improving digital tools at Shropshire Council to make services more efficient and cost effective.

The emphasis has been on practical, visible outcomes for residents whilst dealing with the financial mess left by the last council. Safer school zones, improved play facilities, securing community assets, and clearer housing standards are all steps that strengthen quality of life and meet broader needs.

Neighbourhood planning and wider planning meetings featured strongly. The new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the newly passed Planning and Infrastructure Bill, and the new Local Plan setting framework, have been much discussed. Particularly, the way they will shape development in Shropshire. Many contradictions have become apparent and Shropshire Council is

seeking clarification on these issues. For example, the new local plan setting framework suggests a spatial strategy (where development happens) should be decided at the end of the process. When clearly it should be at the start. However the bill says a separate strategy to the local plan. I also attended Baschurch Parish Council meeting and spoke on planning issues for nearly 2 hours. Acton Burnell is my next parish council visit.

Flooding, potholes and winter weather issue have been prominent this month. I have a meeting next week to discuss strengthening SuDS policy to better design out flooding issues at source.

The recent government's spending settlement was very disappointing. As you may have seen in the press. Telford and Wrekin were given a large rise while Shropshire a large cut. This has been a hot topic for discussion in a number of meetings. Next week Shropshire Council will be responding to the government funding consultation in the strongest possible terms. The Government have withdrawn the weighting applied to support delivering rural services. Instead moving more money to urban council. Something the government had previously pledged they wouldn't do. Most urban areas get 41% more funding per head than rural areas like Shropshire.

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(Continued from page 45) A hint for Christmas

standing that the contents were to be worth five shillings exactly would avoid this embarrassment.

And now I am reminded of the ingenuity of a friend of mine, William by name, who arrived at a large country house for Christmas without any present in his bag. He had expected neither to give nor to receive anything, but to his horror he discovered on the 24th that everybody was preparing a Christmas present for him, and that it was taken for granted that he would require a little privacy and brown paper on Christmas Eve for the purpose of addressing his own offerings to others. He had wild thoughts of telegraphing to London for something to be sent down, and spoke to other members of the house-party in order to discover what sort of presents would be suitable. "What are you giving our host P" he asked one of them.

"Mary and I are giving him a book," said John, referring to his wife.

William then approached the youngest son of the house, and discovered that he and his next brother Dick were sharing in this, that, and the other. When he had heard this, William retired to his room and thought profoundly. He was the first down to breakfast on Christmas morning. All the places at the table were piled high with presents. He looked at John's place. The top parcel said, "To John and Mary from Charles." William took out his fountain-pen and added a couple of words to the inscription. It then read, "To John and Mary from Charles and William," and in Wil-

liam's opinion looked just as effective as before. He moved on to the next place. "To Angela from Father," said the top parcel. "And William," wrote William. At his hostess' place he hesitated for a moment. The first present there was for "Darling Mother, from her loving children." It did not seem that an "and William" was quite suitable. But his hostess was not to be deprived of William's kindly thought; twenty seconds later the handkerchiefs "from John and Mary and William" expressed all the nice things which he was feeling for her. He passed on to the next place....

It is, of course, impossible to thank every donor of a joint gift; one simply thanks the first person whose eye one happens to catch. Sometimes William's eye was caught, sometimes not. But he was spared all embarrassment; and I can recommend his solution of the problem with perfect confidence to those who may be in a similar predicament next Christmas.

There is a minor sort of Christmas present about which also a few words must be said; I refer to the Christmas card.

The Christmas card habit is a very pleasant one, but it, too, needs to be disciplined. I doubt if many people understand its proper function. We convey our printed wishes for a happy Christmas to everybody or to nobody. This is a mistake. In our middle-age we should discriminate.

In middle-age--by which I mean anything over twenty and under ninety--

(Continued on page 49)



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THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

Rector Alan Brannigan 1993

Alcoholism is often talked of as if the problem were a modern one (like many other matters). But it has always been a social problem, in town or country, and was frequently the only escape to be had from intolerable living and working conditions. My own mother used to tell of horrifying scenes in the shipyard town of her childhood, and the novelist Charles Dickens writes graphically about it in the mid-nineteenth century. But, looking recently through a church magazine for 1879, I found the report of the local Branch of the Church of England Temperance Society; it may be worth quoting in full.

"The Monthly Meeting of the West Felton Branch was held in the Grimpo School on Tuesday November 4th. In consequence of the lateness of the harvest, the tea party could not be held in October, as proposed. It is hoped it may

be held on the date of the last monthly meeting of the present series of meetings. Notice will be given hereafter. The Secretary reported that the members of the Branch are: Abstinence Section (adults) 24, (juveniles) 62, Temperance Section 38 thus making a branch total of 124. Mr Dixon, the Diocesan Secretary reports that at the end of 1878 the number of members in the Diocese of Lichfield was as follows: Abstinence Section (adults) 5,762, (juveniles) 7,351 plus Temperance Section 3,352 making a total of 16,465."

If it seems old-fashioned and even funny, we might reflect that there was not necessarily any more hypocrisy then than there is now. If part of their motive then was patronising, at least it was recognised that excessive drinking was not only a social problem in itself, but brought all kinds of other problems in its train. What a good job they didn't have motor cars and lorries then!♦



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T	2	9	16	23	30	
W	3	10	17	24		
Th	4	11	18	25		
F	5	12	19	26		
S	6	13	20	27		
Su	7	14	21	28		

October						
M		6	13	20	27	
T		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24	31	
S	4	11	18	25		
Su	5	12	19	26		

November						
M		3	10	17	24	
T		4	11	18	25	
W		5	12	19	26	
Th		6	13	20	27	
F		7	14	21	28	
S	1	8	15	22	29	
Su	2	9	16	23	30	

December						
M	1	8	15	22	29	
T	2	9	16	23	30	
W	3	10	17	24	31	
Th	4	11	18	25		
F	5	12	19	26		
S	6	13	20	27		
Su	7	14	21	28		

January						
M		5	12	19	26	
T		6	13	20	27	
W		7	14	21	28	
Th	1	8	15	22	29	
F	2	9	16	23	30	
S	3	10	17	24	31	
Su	4	11	18	25		

February						
M		2	9	16	23	
T		3	10	17	24	
W		4	11	18	25	
Th		5	12	19	26	
F		6	13	20	27	
S		7	14	21	28	
Su	1	8	15	22		

March						
M		2	9	16	23	30
T		3	10	17	24	31
W		4	11	18	25	
Th		5	12	19	26	
F		6	13	20	27	
S		7	14	21	28	
Su	1	8	15	22	29	

April						
M		6	13	20	27	
T		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24		
S	4	11	18	25		
Su	5	12	19	26		

May						
M		4	11	18	25	
T		5	12	19	26	
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S	6	13	20	27		
Su	7	14	21	28		

July						
M		6	13	20	27	
T		7	14	21	28	
W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	3	10	17	24	31	
S	4	11	18	25		
Su	5	12	19	26		

August						
M						
T						
W						
Th						
F						
S						
Su						

Holiday	Phonics screening & MTC
PD day	Charity Days
Christmas Plays	Leavers event
Assessment week	Arthog
Parents Evening	Christian events church or school
SATS	Harvest (church), Christingle (School) Mothering Sunday (school), Leavers Service (church)

A Hint for Next Christmas

by A.A. Milne 1920 (Abridged)

There has been some talk lately of the standardization of golf balls, but a more urgent reform is the standardization of Christmas presents. It is no good putting this matter off; let us take it in hand now, so that we shall be in time for next Christmas.

My crusade is on behalf of those who spend their Christmas away from home. Last year I returned (with great difficulty) from such an adventure and I am more convinced than ever that Christmas presents should conform to a certain standard of size. My own little offerings were thoughtfully chosen. A match-box, a lace handkerchief or two, a cigarette-holder, a pencil and note-book, Gems from Wilcox, and so on; such gifts not only bring pleasure (let us hope) to the recipient, but take up a negligible amount of room in one's bag, and add hardly anything to the weight of it. Of course, if your fellow-visitor says to you, "How sweet of you to give me such a darling little handkerchief--it's just what I wanted--how ever did you think of it?" you do not reply, "Well, it was a choice between that and a hundredweight of coal, and I'll give you two guesses why I chose the handkerchief." No; you smile modestly and say, "As soon as I saw it, I felt somehow that it was yours"; after which you are almost in a position to ask your host casually where he keeps the mistletoe.

But it is almost a certainty that the presents you receive will not have been

chosen with such care. Probably the young son of the house has been going in for carpentry lately, and in return for your tie-pin he gives you a wardrobe of his own manufacture. You thank him heartily, you praise its figure, but all the time you are wishing that it had been chosen some other occasion. Your host gives you a statuette or a large engraving; somebody else turns up with a large brass candle-stick. It is all very gratifying, but you have got to get back to London somehow, and, thankful though you are not to have received the boar-hound or parrot-in-cage which seemed at one time to be threatening, you cannot help wishing that the limits of size for a Christmas present had been decreed by some authority who was familiar with the look of your dressing-case.

Obviously, too, there should be a standard value for a certain type of Christmas present. One may give what one will to one's own family or particular friends; that is all right. But in a Christmas house-party there is a pleasant interchange of parcels, of which the string and the brown paper and the kindly thought are the really important ingredients, and the gift inside is nothing more than an excuse for these things. It is embarrassing for you if Jones has apologized for his brown paper with a hundred cigars, and you have only excused yourself with twenty-five cigarettes; perhaps still more embarrassing if it is you who have lost so heavily on the exchange. An under-

(Continued on page 47)

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stove mix offcuts £160.00

Notification of Road Closure:

GRIMPO ROAD, WEST FELTON

Start Date: 2nd March 2026 - End Date: 2nd March 2026

Purpose: Road Closure - Pole Test

Works Promoter: Openreach

Works Promoter Ref: BC008PLT3158641830032025-01

Enforcement pattern for Grimpo Road, West Felton:
9.30 - 15.30hrs

You can view the closure and diversion route by clicking here:
<https://one.network/?tm=GB147172712>

Should you have any queries regarding this closure, please
call Customer Services on 0345 6789006,

or contact the Street Works Team

E: streetworks@shropshire.gov.uk

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people ages 11 -18



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(previously Kinokulture, opposite the library).

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(Continued from page 41) Shrops Directory

- * money matters, benefits, grants and financial assistance;
- * SEND local offer, clothing and footwear, continence, toys and equipment, speech and language difficulties, support groups;
- * staying safe, anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, home, online, road, and water safety;
- * sports and fitness activities, walking groups, sports clubs and organisations, leisure centres;
- * things to do for children and families, days out, school holidays, youth clubs; and
- * volunteering opportunities.

As well as being available to the public on the Shropshire Council website, or via your chosen search engine, the Directory is used by Community and Care Co-ordinators, plus other health and care professionals as part of the NHS social prescribing service, which aims to help people take charge of their own health and wellbeing, and improve their lives.

The Directory can be found by following this link:

<https://directory.shropshire.gov.uk/>

It is possible to search the Directory using a keyword or phrase, plus a postcode in order to find the relevant services available near to where a user lives or works, and a search can also be narrowed further by 'audience', ie age group, or by a date range or day of the week. From the results of the search, users can access a variety of information about the groups, including contact details, a brief summary of the services provided, and where and when meetings / sessions take place. Where available there will also be a link to the organisation's website or social media for more in-depth information.

Please do have a look at the Directory and bookmark it as a 'favourite' for quick and easy reference, or if you are unable to access the internet at home, pop into your local library for assistance.

Lynn Ford, Community Directory Officer

December 2025

WEST FELTON VILLAGE HALL EXERCISE CLASSES

Tuesday mornings

9:30am Beginner/mixed ability pilates
10:45am Intermediate/advanced pilates
12 noon Dance Fit

T: 07904456368

E: abi:glover-davies@hotmail.com

Fb: Abigailcharlottefitness

Instagram: Abigailcharlottefitness



Pilates classes £8.50

Dance Fit - £7.50

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The hall will be laid out café-style and guests are encouraged to
bring their own drinks (alcohol definitely allowed) and snacks.

There may even be some nibbles included in the price.

West Felton Village Hall

Doors open 7pm.

Performance starts 7:30pm.

Saturday

28th February 2026

Tickets £7.50

TICKETS from West Felton Stores, WFFVH committee members,
in the Punch Bowl and on the door. Because of the party layout
of the hall, tickets will be somewhat limited so

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The Shropshire Together

Community and Family Directory

If you haven't come across it yet ... the Shropshire Together Community and Family Directory is a free online database containing information about all sorts of local community groups, clubs, and organisations, covering Shropshire and the immediate bordering areas, as well as a few more regional and national sources of advice and support.

The Directory, which replaced the previous Shropshire Community Directory and Family Information Directory in April 2025, is provided by Shropshire Council, and currently hosts in excess of 5,000 entries.

The Directory offers signposting information on a vast range of subject areas, including:

- * advice and information, disability information;
- * business and economy, fund-raising and grant aid, charities;
- * care and support services, home care providers, day centres;
- * childcare and early years, child minders and nurseries;
- * climate, environment, composting and recycling;
- * community and living, community transport and venues, parish and community magazines;
- * education and learning, adult and further education, schools and tuition services;
- * employment and careers, jobs and job seeking;
- * family support, adoption and fostering support, parenting support, relationship advice;
- * health and wellbeing information, self-help groups;
- * housing and homelessness;
- * leisure and cultural activities, hobbies, art, drama, music, history, and heritage;

(Continued on page 43)

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Bacon baps £1 extra.



West Felton Walking Group

We meet at 10.00 am Mondays at the Punch Bowl car park

EXCEPT on the first Monday of
the month when departure is 9:30
to allow time to travel to our cho-
sen destination for the away day
walk.

New members always welcome.

Walk leaders:-

Mike Bossen 01691 610623

Hilary Iles 01691 610707

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One night in the woods, lovers, fairies and friends gather...
Come along and find out more about our group, how you can
get involved both on and off the stage.

LADS will stage Shakespeare's A Midsummer Nights Dream in
June this year. Rehearsals are planned to begin in April.

We are holding two Informal play reading and casting sessions above, if you are keen
to be involved in the show or would just come along to the readings it would be great
to see you there.

If you cannot make the session below but would still like to be involved please reach
out to us on the email below.

If you would like anymore information ahead of the readings please email
ladstheatre@gmail.com.



We wish everyone a very Happy New Year.

Our summer production is Midsummer Nights Dream.

If you want to be involved come to the following play reading.

If you have any questions about any of the upcoming events please email:
ladstheatre@gmail.com.



Reading: A Midsummer Nights Dream

1 February 2026 - 2:00pm

Pant Memorial Hall

Informal play reading and casting session.
Come along and find out more about our
group, how you can get involved both on
and off the stage.

Our summer production of William Shake-
speare's A Midsummer Nights Dream will
begin rehearsals in April with performances
mid/end of June (dates/venues tbc)



One Act Plays
TBC

More info soon.

Contact

Email: ladstheatre@gmail.com

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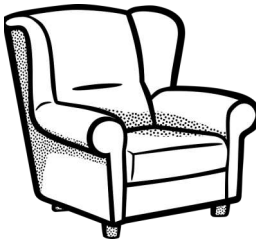


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Tuesday evenings

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(Continued from page 35) Parish Church

The failure of the heating placed a further strain on the church finances. Hence the treasurer's gratitude for your support mentioned above. The heating system is Victorian and the fault is a leaking pipe joint. The actual repair of a leaking pipe is relatively straightforward. The bureaucracy involved in its repair is anything but straightforward. Planning permission to do any repair has to be sought through the Lichfield Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Whereas repairing the pipe may not be unduly challenging, getting access to the pipe requires digging up some floor and this hurdle most certainly is. A specialist contractor must be engaged to dig up the floor. However the contractor won't begin until the floor has been declared free of asbestos. Asbestos is a silicate compound and was widely used from the later Victorian era in the UK for its insulating and fire retardant properties. Unfortunately it is also associated with a form of lung cancer and its use is now banned..

Digging up the floor may be one thing. Putting it back is another. Here the planning authority will have an organisation called the Victorian society at its heels. This organisation was founded only 65 years ago, with John Betjeman as President. It has undoubtedly been a great help in preserving buildings, notably St Pancras station. Latterly however it has taken great interest in any anything Victorian and has significant influence on decisions by planning authorities. The main aim at present is getting the floor dug up, the pipe repaired and the congregation warmed up. And the floor repair.....!

In the longer term the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is considering the installation of an electrical infra-red system. This will cost between £15000 and £25000 depending on how much area we heat. PCC members will be visiting places where such installations have been made and seeking testimonials from other churches which have fitted this heating.♦

How many Anglicans does it take to change a lightbulb?

(Choose from three possible answers!)

- **Six:** one to replace the bulb, one crucifer, two torchbearers, one thurifer and a member of the women's institute to take care of the set-up and take-down.

- **Eleven:** one to replace the bulb and ten to protest that they liked it better the way it was.

- **None:** unless you count the person who stands up and says "That bulb was donated by my mother, and you replace it over my dead body!"

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OUR PARISH CHURCH

Michael Davie, February 2026

The timing differences for copy deadlines and appearance in print inevitably leads to some news being out of date. Almost 6 weeks have now passed since our carol services which heralded Christmas. Both the traditional service and the community service were well attended and thanks must go to those who took part, those who organised and provided refreshment for the events and, most importantly, those who of you who came. The Treasurer looked gratefully upon your generosity of which more later. The school staged an excellent Christingle service and great deal of hard work had obviously been undertaken both by the children and the staff in preparing the oranges and in preparing the service.

We are still without a Rector and by the end of January when Oswestry Parish church becomes vacant, there will be thirteen churches out of the eighteen in the deanery without a priest. Given the difficulty in getting anyone to apply, as the Trefonen group have found, or the difficulty in funding a full time priest at £60,000/yr, it seems likely that we shall be reliant on the retired clergy for some time yet.

As some of you will have noticed the lack of a Rector has been accompanied by a lack of heat in the church.

The heating broke down at the end of October 2025. This was not only uncomfortable for the congregation but also for the church finances. Every five years the church has to have an architect's inspection and our last one found that plenty of repairs were required. Work on historic buildings often has to take place in stages. There has been a delay in dealing with the tower since the wooden shingles that cover the small "steeple" have been difficult to obtain. Masonry repairs can only be done when there is no frost and according to the availability of a suitably accredited mason. The presence of scaffolding due to go up this month round the church indicates action on this front. Unfortunately these repairs are expensive. An architect has to be involved, the planning authority (The Diocesan Advisory committee) has to give the go ahead and the money found. The whole works will cost about £28,000. We have been fortunate to get grants from the Historic churches trust and from other bodies, but still have to find half ourselves. Work like this is subject to VAT. We may get this back but in her first budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, moved to stop the reclamation of VAT on church works. Such has been the outcry, this may be reversed. At the end of all this work we hope that the church will be water tight.

(Continued on page 37)

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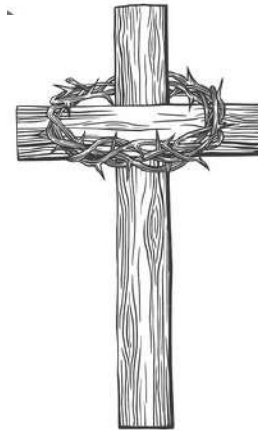
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PC Mark Wright M: 07977 957689 Direct Dial: 101.

PCSO Kurt Mabe 07870 219669

PCSO Stuart Carroll M: 07970 544372 | Direct Dial: 101 Ext. 7704043

Team email: oswestryrs.snt@westmercia.police.uk

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Up the Garden Path with Topiarius

Lull before the sowing storm

February brings the first planting of the year, starting with garlic at the beginning of the month and sweet peas towards the end. I have said before that I plant the garlic cloves in plastic rings filled with compost as this does a pretty good job of avoiding white rot. I sow sweet pea seeds in root trainers which gives them good root depth, and adding a length of split can would stop them flopping. Our sweet peas are planted out along a fence so the seedlings being in separate inserts is convenient. If you intend to grow your sweet peas in a wigwam or similar support sowing around the edge of a 2 litre pot would work well as the whole pot could be planted out in one go. There are plastic trellis inserts for pots to give support but split canes save the expense.

Another February pastime is to spring clean the glasshouse and sharpen tools, which is conveniently done when working outside looks decidedly unpleasant. When the weather is a bit more welcoming, the spring tidy up of prunings, paths and steps etc can be started. I also review my list of actions from the July garden assessment to check on what has been achieved and what is outstanding.

When the sowing season really gets under way the one thing I will not be aiming for is giant vegetables to enter in shows or even to break all out rec-

ords. This thought was prompted by reading that there were new UK records for longest radish, marrow, sweet pepper and aubergine plus the heaviest celeriac and tomato. The radish defies belief at nearly 8 metres. The tomato was over 4 kg and also beat the European record. I am more attracted to our onion crop in 2025 being at a record level. Unfortunately, it was also a record for how quickly they ran out, due to both increased use and the number that rotted early. I can see logic in the warm summer helping the setting of size and quantity records but am mystified why presumably well ripened onions failed to last. That's gardening. I thought the daftest things in the record breaking at the Mavern autumn show was the tallest luffa plant and tallest runner bean plant. The runner bean measured over 8 metres so you would need more than a couple of bamboo canes for that to climb up.

Things go in and out of fashion and one thing not in at the moment is auricula theatres. In case you don't know, they are backwards sloping staging to hold a collection of potted auriculas in tiers. I built one years ago just to defy fashion. Most owners of auricula theatres collected the more exotic varieties but mine are the simple easy to grow ones, albeit in a variety of colours. Attractive plants that, apart from water and feed, just need splitting every couple of years.♦

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(Continued from page 29) Healthwatch

Call: 01743 237884 (09:00–17:00,

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Email : enquires@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

Post: Healthwatch Shropshire, 4 The Creative Quarter

Shrewsbury Business Park Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6LG

Your feedback will help shape the future of spinal injury services in Shropshire and ensure that voices from the spinal injuries community are heard. ●

(Continued from page 27) WI report

watch 'The Unfriend' written by Steven Moffat ('Dr Who'; 'Sherlock'). Well done to the cast for all their efforts which made for an energetic and entertaining performance of this comedy of manners.

We look forward to celebrating Christmas with family and friends and to 2026 with all the hope that it brings. We meet on the second Thursday of the month at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Resolve to visit us and hopefully even join! Do ring us on 07375997782.●



The Community Carol Service

on Sunday 14th December was delightful. The church was full.

We were inspired and entertained. The School readers and choir were terrific.

The refreshments were very generous and especially appreciated.

Many thanks to all the organisers and participants. Especially as it followed another equally joyful Carol service the previous Sunday featuring the students of Packwood School and resident soloist, Lorraine.●



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West Felton Women's Institute

December's activities



We gathered for our Christmas lunch at The Punchbowl this year. Many thanks to Sally at the pub for providing such a delicious carvery with all its variety of meats and freshly cooked veg. We were almost too full for pud! Almost ...

Carols at the Abbey in Shrewsbury with our Shropshire Federation provided another festive treat. Readings from St. Luke, Proverbs and the work of Longfellow and Laurie Lee amongst others fulfilled the chosen theme of 'Peace'. Vicar Pat Aldred had flown back from a break in wintry New York that very morning - just as well too as he was conducting his daughter's wedding at the church the following day! A special 'guest' was 'Denman', the Blood Bikes motorbike supported by the WI and named after the first chairwoman of the WI Federation, Lady Denman. 'Denman' was retiring on that very day and will be replaced. The collection is to be shared between the Blood Bikes charity and the Abbey itself.

Our Oswestry North Group also held a carol service at Christ Church in town, well attended with wonderful singing. Over £200 was donated in the retiring collection for the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund.

Forthcoming birthdays were celebrated at our monthly meeting with flowers presented for those with a significant one to look forward to! Mulled wine was very welcome as was the array of seasonal cakes offered later. Locally-based playwright and actor Shaun Higgins performed as soldier-poet Wilfred Owen who went from Shropshire to the trenches of the First World War and who chronicled his experiences in such moving poems. Perhaps next time you're by Shrewsbury Abbey you'll take a look at the memorial sculpture to the poet: 'Symmetry' is designed to echo the Sambre-Oise canal and its pontoon where Owen was fatally shot just one week before Armistice was declared. The church bells in Shrewsbury rang out to herald the end of the Great War - while on that same day Owen's family in Monkmoor Road received the telegram informing them of their son's passing. Owen was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery in the 1918 autumn offensive. A life-size statue of him stands in Cae Glas Park in Oswestry, sculpted to commemorate him and the centenary of the end of the war.

More cheerfully we had visits on various evenings to the Attfield Theatre to

(Continued on page 31)

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Healthwatch Shropshire Launches Campaign to Hear People's



Experiences of Spinal Injury Services

Healthwatch Shropshire, the county's independent public feedback service for health and social care, has launched a new campaign to understand more about people's experiences of spinal injury services across the county.

The initiative follows a recent visit by Healthwatch Shropshire volunteers to The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital's Spinal Injuries Inpatient Ward in Oswestry, where staff and patients shared valuable insights into local health and social care services.

The campaign aims not only to gather feedback from people who have experienced spinal injury services - whether directly or as family members or carers - but also to raise awareness of the Spinal Injuries Association's (SIA) Strategy 2030, which focuses on improving the lives of people with spinal cord injuries.

Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, emphasised the importance of listening to the spinal injuries community:

"We want to give a voice to people in Shropshire who have experience of spinal injury services. Their stories matter, and they deserve to be heard. By gathering people's feedback, we can shine a spotlight on what is working well and where improvements can be made.

We also want to highlight the importance of the SIA strategy and ensure it is supported locally. We encourage anyone with any experience - good or bad - to get involved and share their views with us, whether online, by phone or email."

Brendan Fitzgerald, Regional Representative and Support Coordinator for the Spinal Injuries Association in the West Midlands, welcomed the campaign:

"As someone with a spinal cord injury myself I'm delighted that Healthwatch Shropshire are taking steps to highlight and raise awareness of spinal injury services in the county, as well as the SIA's 2030 strategy. This work is vital in ensuring that people with spinal cord injuries and their families receive the support, care, and opportunities they need to live fulfilling lives."

Call to Action

Healthwatch Shropshire is urging anyone who has used spinal injury services in Shropshire - either as a patient or a carer - to get in touch and share their experiences.

You can share your views in the following ways:

Online: www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/share-your-views

(Continued on page 31)