



5 ALIVE!

February 2026

Buckland Dinham lychgate restoration.

Page 9

News from
Buckland Dinham, Chantry,
Great Elm, Mells with Vobster and
Whatley

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FROM THE EDITOR

BIT LATE BUT Happy New Year to everyone, especially to all of our contributors, the volunteers who deliver this magazine door to door, to our printer and our advertisers without whom 5Alive would not exist. Please use their many and varied services!

And do please read Hazell's jottings. I'll be more than happy to pass on any views you may have about her comments towards the end of her contribution, not just out of politeness but because I completely agree with her.

According to the BBC weather people, meteorological winter was half way through in mid-January. PHEW!! That means spring will be here on March 1st. Can't wait!! *Peter*

JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

WELL, HERE WE ARE in the second month of 2026 so a very belated HAPPY NEW YEAR to all! I hope everyone had a lovely Christmas, spent however they chose, quietly or riotously and surrounded with the joy of loved ones. And for those for whom Christmas brought sad memories I hope they found some peace, comfort and joy in good company. On the whole, I think many of us would feel that 2025 was not one of our best years so let us hope for brighter things in 2026.

I had a lovely cheerful phone message from a thoughtful friend to say that she had seen three daffodils in flower at Whatley and the sun was shining on them. The sun has remembered to shine on the odd day although most of the time it seems as if it had joined the ever-growing groups of strikers.

In spite of – or perhaps because of – this unpredictable climate so many shrubs and plants are flowering weeks ahead of their usual time. My chimnanthus fragrans (winter sweet) is now in the most profuse blossom I have ever seen. So frustrating as I cannot now get out to see it so must rely on a phone photo taken by a friend. But this doesn't convey the wonderful perfume. Smelly phone would be so useful. Sadly, my legs have run off and gone walkabout without permission, so I have to be wheeled everywhere or rely on furniture grabs in the house. This seems to be the price to pay for depending on steroids for life but a small price for keeping me afloat and, hopefully, useful.

Snowdrops in the churchyard are already in flower, as are those in my orchard, well ahead of their due date of January 21st when we moved here 50 plus years ago to find them scattered like a lace cloth everywhere, having failed to raise more than three

Editor: Peter Corbett mellsmag@hotmail.com

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Deadline for MARCH 2026 is FEBRUARY 13th

but do check as it could change

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CONTACTS

Mells Group of churches is currently in a vacancy.

Church laymen and women Church wardens	Parish council chairs and clerks
Buckland Dinham Jenny Waller, 07887 556936	John Reckless 01373 461841 Diane Sleigh 07907 156735 clerk@bucklanddinham-pc.gov.uk
Chantry Hazel Tovey 836384 Valerie Rawlins 836252	
Great Elm Sally Rosa 07833 900947	
Mells/ Vobster Hilary Ingram 01373 311073	John Earl 01373 812450 Joy Book 07704 584953
Whatley Mrs K Gay 836175	Andrew Bramston 01373 836513 Rachel Nash clerk.whatleyparishcouncil @gmail.com

Roman Catholic Services

"back home". Something I cannot grow here sadly is winter aconites. I do love their cheery buttercup faces lifted above their little green choirboy frills but three successive annual plantings – done "in the green" as instructed – have failed to produce one flower the following year. However, my daphne odora by the front door is in full flower weeks ahead of its normal time and wafts its sweet perfume over anyone who brushes past it to enter the door.

We must hope that this strangely unpredictable climate manages to keep food supplies available when birds and other wildlife require, otherwise birds who are tempted to breed early through mild weather may find insect life not available because earlier cold weather has killed them off – or fruit and berries which matured early may have been withered by frosts or eaten by hungry autumn birds.

A few weeks ago, in my "jottings" (ramblings?) I mentioned a radio programme from the 1930s – Monday Night at Eight – which I had enjoyed as a child. I'm sure no-one else would have remembered this. Must have thought me quite potty. Coming further forward though I wonder if anyone recalls the wonderful Tommy Handley "ITMA" (It's That Man Again) radio show during the 1940s as a morale booster in wartime.

This was so crammed with memorable characters and their signature sayings that one still hears the odd line today. There was the kindly Colonel Chinstrap with his "don't mind if I do", the sinister whispered threat of Funf, "Funf has spoken", the ever-



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present char, Mrs Mop with her “can I do yer now, sir?”, the diver with his with his glug-glug water sounds and his “going down now, sir”, and the seller of dubious postcards with his “feelthy postcards, very feelthy, very good”.

And apart from cheerful radio, there were morale boosting posters and newspaper instructions – still occasionally revived from archives as postcards – like “keep clam and carry on”, or “be like Dad and keep Mum”, (a warning that “careless talk costs lives”) and the eye-catching images and slogans such as the “what no?”, reminding us to be patient and cheerful in the face of wartime shortages – not only obvious things like imported or rationed goods but essentials like candles and matches.

And the squander bog, urging us not spend on frivolities (not that there was much frivol to buy – cosmetics shampoo etc very scarce) but to invest in Government Savings Certificates where it could be directed towards the “war effort”. Everything was geared towards that “war effort”. Iron railings (many of historic value) were ripped out. Iron saucepans and utensils were sacrificed to be melted down for aeroplane building ad no-one doubted the necessity. China and glass too were scarce – must have been needed for munitions. The only glass was thick green recycled bottle glass and cups were without handles – unnecessary work – so they were like tiny china pudding basins balanced on carefully hoarded saucers so at least some of the social “niceties” were preserved. Clothes and fabric were rationed but not, strangely, curtain fabrics. Wartime brides not in uniform often borrowed wedding dresses from family and friends or married in curtain material, or, if likely enough to have acquired on, in fabric form a silk parachute.

But the carefully guarded secret from the public (not possible in today’s media rich culture) was the close threat of actual Nazi invasion across our tiny strip of channel. The country had to keep cheerfully sacrificing with no hint of possible defeat. I’m sure that there are still some among us reading this (if anyone does read it!) who remembers this time. Do forgive this burst of nostalgia. Whatever brought it on I wonder!

I am now determinedly looking forward to all the good things this year will bring. Good things do happen even if they go largely unreported in the media. Why must we have the present output oh horror, crime and gloom served as “entertainment”? Why can we not have cheerful, uplifting, morale boosting material to carry us forward with hope and determination in this present world of unrest? One hopeful trend seems to be emerging from the consumer driven attitude of “throw it out, send it to landfill, buy another” is the idea that perhaps “recycle, re-use, make do and mend” is becoming acceptable and approved rather than regarded as a rather “cranky” concept. I would love to have feedback of anyone’s views and Peter Corbett will happily pass to me anything sent to him as I have no email etc.

Sorry too much of “me” and not enough “churchyard” this month. I’ll do better in March – I promise!

Anyway, enough of all this. Again, Happy New Year! Raise a glass to all the good things to come. Spring is on it way, too. God’s gift of the cycle of seasons (even of slightly changed) never fails. See you in March. *Hazell*

ROUND AND ABOUT

JOIN THE NSP CHOIR FOR EASTER

Caroline Whitehead is hoping to include a choir for Easter Sunday at Norton St Philip church and would be interested to know if anyone in the area is interesting on joining.

A note about the Christmas Fayre held at NSP. We raised over £1000 for our funds. Thanks to all who came and supported this event

FROME TIMES NAMES FROME COMMUNITY DRIVERS AS THE 'VOLUNTARY GROUP OF THE YEAR – 2025'

Three of the volunteer drivers are from Whatley, Olly Goodden, Tony Thomas and Scheme Director Gerry Copsey but as yet there are none from Chantry! It is a very easy scheme to volunteer for as there is no commitment required from the drivers as they just do the journeys that fit in with their own lifestyles and schedules. The scheme pays fuel costs expenses, and it is a lovely way to help people in our community get to and from important medical appointments.]

We did 2,225 journeys in 2025 – 96% of those we were asked to do – and demand is rising steadily so we need more drivers!

THE LUNCHTIME CONCERT



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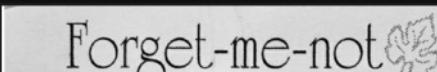
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Mells Group of Churches

February 2026

	1 st February	8 th February	15 th February	22 nd February	1 st March
Chantry	10.00am Group Holy Communion Service Martin Weymont	11.00am Matins Hazel Tovey	11.00am Holy Communion Chris Hare	11.00am Matins Val Rawlins	
Great Elm			9.30am Holy Communion Robin Isherwood	9.30am Informal Service Richard King	10.00am Group Holy Communion Service Catherine Llewelyn-Evans
Mells		9.30am Holy Communion Martin Weymont			
Whatley		9.30am Matins Hazel Tovey		9.30am Holy Communion David Gatliffe	

Mells Every Wednesday at 09.30, Matins/Morning Prayer, in St. Andrew's, Mells

Great Elm At 7.30am on Wednesdays Richard King leads a prayer session in church

HARDINGTON VALE SERVICES FEBRUARY 2026

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Sunday 1 Feb	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Informal Breakfast Rode , Holy Communion Laverton , Holy Communion Rode Chapel , Meeting Place
Tuesday 3 Feb	9.00 am 11.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Ecumenical Holy Communion
Wednesday 4 Feb	8.30 am 5.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer Tellisford , Evening Prayer
Thursday 5 Feb	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 8 Feb	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Rode , Informal Breakfast Norton St Philip , Holy Communion Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Iona/Taizé Service
Tuesday 10 Feb	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 11 Feb	8.30 am 11.00 am 5.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Tellisford , Holy Communion Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer
Thursday 12 Feb	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 15 Feb	9.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Farleigh Hungerford , Holy Communion Rode , Holy Communion Norton St Philip , Informal Worship Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Holy Communion
Tuesday 17 Feb	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 18 Feb ASH WEDNESDAY	8.30 am 5.00 pm 6.00 pm 7.30 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer Tellisford , Evening Prayer Norton St Philip , Holy Communion & Ashing
Thursday 19 Feb	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 22 Feb (purple) 1 st Sunday of LENT	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Rode , Contemplation and Coffee Norton St Philip , Holy Communion Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Iona/Taizé Service
Tuesday 24 Feb	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 25 Feb	8.30 am 5.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer
Thursday 26 Feb	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer

Version: 18 January 2026

If anyone from Chantry (or anywhere else!) is interested in finding out more about doing some volunteer driving, please ring Gerry Copsey on 07701 250250 / 01373 836123 to have a chat.

“EXCITED” TO TAKE PART IN QUARRY COURSE

Heidelberg Materials’ Whatley quarry is supporting the next generation of engineers through a new partnership with Somerset Studio School, Radstock,(part of the MNSP Trust) and the Somerset Earth Science Centre, giving a local student a valuable hands-on experience in the quarry as part of their Engineering T Level qualification.

Harrison T, 17, from Frome, spends one day per week at Whatley quarry completing the 45-day industry placement required for the qualification which is equivalent to three A Levels and is designed to prepare students for skilled employment, further study or apprenticeships.

“My industry placement at Whatley quarry is a great opportunity to see engineering in action. I’m learning how plant and machinery, including the wash plant, are maintained, how safety is managed and how different teams work together to support the quarry’s operations,” said Harrison.

“It’s giving me skills that I wouldn’t get in a classroom alone, and I’m excited to pursue a career in the construction industry after completing this course.”



MENDIP COUNTRY PRACTICE VACANCY

We are looking for a conscientious, enthusiastic and reliable person to join our Reception and Administration team. Your role will be to provide administrative support to the primary care medical team and front of house service to our registered patients. Previous experience of working in a GP surgery an advantage but not essential. Good IT skills and customer service essential. Job descriptions and application forms are available on our website mendipcp.co.uk/about-the-surgery. 26 hours per week over four days, (surgery hours 08.00am – 6.30pm) Salary- subject to experience and this post is NHS pensionable and permanent. Previous applicants need not apply. Closing date Wednesday 4th February 2026

BUCKLAND DINHAM

CHURCH NEWS

It seems such a long time ago that we had our Carol Service but what a delight it was. The service was taken by Rev. Pauline Reid to a congregation of 103 with a choir from Norton St. Phillip and one from Buckland Dinham. With carols and lessons and a talk from Pauline, who reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas,

and the fun the children had placing knitted sheep in the crib, it was agreed by all who stayed for the sherry and mince pies that it was certainly a very happy way to begin the Christmas holiday. Our thanks to all who made this service so special. The services for February will be as per schedule, if you enjoyed the Carol Service why not come again. You will be sure of a very warm welcome from the few "regulars".

COFFEE MORNING. The December coffee morning was well attended and as I am writing this the day before the January meeting, hopefully you will all be coming to that and again in February. I know we will be short of helpers in January so if you would like to volunteer to help occasionally, I know the team would be very grateful. These coffee mornings have been a lovely way to meet, chat and enjoy homemade cakes and really get to know other villagers. They are always the third Saturday of the month, 10.00 to 12.00, so we look forward to seeing you next time.

LYCHGATE RESTORATION

The restoration of the historic lychgate is under way as you'll have seen from the scaffolding around it. It dates back several hundred years and was restored in the late seventies and again in the nineties. It's hoped that the work will be finished in the late spring or early summer. It's going to cost a lot but funding is well under way, thanks to the legacy of Rev Dan Olive (remember him? He was our vicar in the eighties and early nineties), proceeds of every coffee morning and from the walks Corrine King organises. If you want to add to the funds, contact us!

MARY DODS, 1939-2025

On Monday October 1st a funeral mass took place in St Michael's Church, to give thanks for the life of Mary Dods.

Mary's coffin looked beautiful, covered with a delicate display of yellow roses and white gypsophila. The service was conducted by Canon Richard Dwyer. Music included the congregational hymns *O Lord my God* and *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, and a recording of *Ave Maria* sung by Luciano Pavarotti

The processional music was *The Fields of Athenry* by the Dubliners reflecting Mary's Irish heritage, and at the end of the service her coffin was carried out to a recording of *Save the Last dance for Me* by the Drifters, reflecting her love of dancing.

The gospel reading was from John 6:37-40, while Jon Evans read Christina Rossetti's *Let me Go*.

The Eulogy was provided by Mary's daughter Emma and told us of Mary's love of dancing, yoga and aerobics, as well as ceramic hedgehogs! She loved sport and was a keen Ireland supporter in the Five Nations championship. Mary had a way with people and could talk to anyone and enjoyed a close circle of family and friends. In later years Alzheimer's brought about changes, but for Emma it was important to remember the lively, fun-loving person she was before her illness. Even in her last years, Mary's love of music stayed with her.

In his Homily, Father Richard reflected that, difficult as it is, we have to accept that part of life is loving and letting go. Just as we let go of our children to pursue their dreams, so we have to let go of those we love when God calls them away. That doesn't mean they are lost to us, however.

Father Richard went on to reflect on life's many unacknowledged saints and unsung heroes, of whom Mary was one, living her life to the full. He was reminded of the line from the poem, the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Mary's influence as a mother and friend was immeasurable and he thanked her for that.

Mary had a strong faith which she believed brought out the best in her. She died believing in the power of God to defeat sin and death and to bring her to eternal life. Donations were for Dorothy House and The Catholic Children's society.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Mary's family at this difficult time.

Jenny Waller, Churchwarden

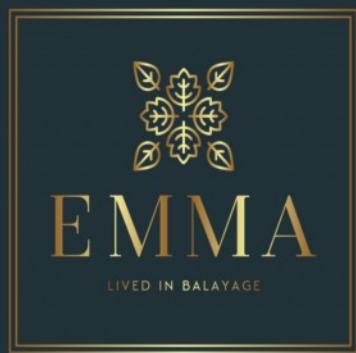
BUCKLAND BUDDIES, FEBRUARY 3rd

These meetings in the Village Hall, 7.15 for 7.30, are for any ladies in the village and this month we are delighted that Bob Rogers is returning to give a talk and slide show on the Cairngorms entitled "Beauty and the Beast". We look forward to seeing you.

Jill Wright

LATEST FROM THE WEBSITE

NEW: we've added a photo gallery, made pages easier to view on smart phone, added Playing Field Association as a Group, expanded Village Businesses to show more detail and added location maps throughout.



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EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

Mondays – Pilates for Cyclists – 6.00pm; Tuesdays – Chair Yoga – 10.00am;

Wednesdays - Pilates - 9.30am.

3rd – Buckland Buddies - 7.30pm; 6th – Live Music – 7.30pm; 10th – Lunch Club – 12.00; 8th – Iona/Taize Service – 11.00am; 15th – Holy Communion – 11.00am; 19th – Parish Council Meeting – 7.00pm; 21st – Coffee Morning – 10.00am; 22nd – Iona/Taize Service – 6.00pm; April 27th – Annual Village Gathering.

See Bucklanddinham.org for details

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BUCKLAND DINHAM VILLAGE HALL

1/3/26, 16:00–18:00

BUCKLAND DINHAM HALL

1/3/26

CHANTRY

The Christmas services were very well attended, thank you all for your support. The service was beautifully led by Barry. It was enjoyed by all who attended and was followed with drinks and mince pies.

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The Salvation Army was extremely pleased with the vast amount of gifts donated. I have a letter of thanks but have not been able to post it in the church due to a leg injury.

The Christmas Eve Mass was also well attended in our lovely decorated and candlelit church. Many thanks to Vall, Jan and Andrew and anyone else who helped to keep our traditions alive. I do not have a list for maintenance, but I am sure that all of you will carry on during 2026.

FRIENDS OF CHANTRY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

THIRSTY THIRD THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19th. Holy Trinity Community building. From 6:00pm for beers, wines, gin and Prosecco at affordable prices, convivial banter and a warm welcome. If you haven't been, then make this your first visit! We'd love to meet you if you are new to the village - quite a number have recently joined us.

April 9th and 16th

Simon Bristow a resident of Chantry has a knowledge and a passion about World War II he would love to share. The evenings start with an open bar from 6:30pm ready for a 7:00pm start for a presentation and viewing of the World at War DVD.

Both evenings will evoke reverent appreciation for those who either can still remember the war or have a family member they remember went to war, and for all of us who enjoy our lives today because of those who fought for us. Do join us and stay for a drink and chat after.



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BA DipArch MSc ARB**

e: annahammond@ymail.com

m: 0772 941 1360

t: 01373 834439



The first evening will be as follows:

HOME FIRES: (1940-1944). A time of gas masks, Winston Churchill, Dig for Victory, evacuation, George Formby, the Land Army, ITMA, the Squander Bug and the Beveridge Report.

The second evening will be based on

WOLFPACK: (1939-1943) U-Boats and the Battle of the Atlantic. High technology, underwater detection devices, a starving Britain as supply ships are targeted and allies hounded in packs.

Thank you to Simon in advance for all the time you are taking putting this together. If you have a special interest, hobby or skill you'd like to share, and you live in or have lived in Chantry, do let me know. We can help with items for display, talks and screening as we diversify and find more and more talent here in our little village.

Hope you all had a good Christmas followed by a Happy New Year

GREAT ELM

Martin Weymont conducted a Memorial service on November 28th for Elizabeth Molony who along with her husband were great contributors to village and church life. The family brought along a sculpture that Elizabeth had made of her and her husband facing one another which gave a focal point during the service. We are grateful for the donation made by the family to the church.

The Carol Service on Christmas Eve saw about 100 people inside the church. Our thanks to all the readers, singers and musicians. The retiring collection made £300 which has been equally shared between Children's Hospice SouthWest and Julian House

The Carol Service on Christmas Eve saw about 100 people inside the church. Our thanks to all the readers, singers and musicians. The retiring collection made £300

GREAT ELM VILLAGE HALL

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www.communities.heidelbergmaterials.co.uk/en/whatley-and-westdown-quarry-community-page



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BOOKINGS SUSIE HICKS

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which has been equally shared between Children's Hospice SouthWest and Julian House.

Church cleaning and flower arranging rotas have been drawn up but we have a gap for cleaning in July. Usually done by a couple of people prior to our third Sunday service anyone who is ready to give up an hour during the month to spruce up the church please contact Judy.

MELLS WITH VOBSTER

ST ANDREW'S CHURCHYARD

The next churchyard spring tidy up will be on Saturday March 14th, 10.00am – 12.00. Please do join the other volunteers who work so hard to keep our churchyard looking its best. Bring your own gloves and tools, refreshments will be provided. All welcome.

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (full minutes can be found at mells-pc.gov.uk)

Notes of meeting held on Tuesday January 12th.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Resident asked for consideration to be given to introducing 20mph zones in some areas of Mells due to the high number of children walking to school, dog walkers and tourists and suggested Top Lane, near Longfield, Gay Street and Holes Lane. Cllr West mentioned that even if a limit was in place, there was a low likelihood of any form of enforcement. The PC were receptive to looking into a reduction and as an interim measure would look at placing 'Drive through the village carefully' signs and speed indicator devices.

SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27 Published: The settlement is a one-year allocation but includes illustrative funding figures for 2027/28 and 2028/29. For Somerset, Core Spending Power increases from £653.6 million in 2025/26 to £684.95 million in 2026/27. The Council's structural budget gap now stands at £54.9 million, reduced from £101 million earlier in 2025.

Planning Service Recovery Motion Approved: Somerset Council has approved a motion calling for improvements to the planning service following the temporary emergency measures introduced in July 2025 to address backlogs, staffing shortages, and unsustainable workloads.

Council 'Got It Wrong' After Cutting Over 500 Job Posts: Somerset Council's Chief Executive has acknowledged that the authority "got it wrong" in at least three depart-

ments after more than 500 posts were cut over the past year. He told councillors that recruitment is now one of the biggest challenges facing the Council, with shortages of experienced and qualified applicants making services harder to run. He said the Council is using reserves to rebuild capacity in areas such as housing, where teams are no longer considered large enough to manage workloads.

MATTERS ARISING

Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground: The Directors have forwarded a copy of their Heads of Terms with a proposal that the PC funds £2,500/year for an initial period of three years. Clerk to invite the Directors to the next meeting to discuss the terms.

Car share scheme: Clerk to look into the legal requirements for running a scheme.

HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

Speeding vehicles in Vobster: Traffic Management has explained the discrepancy between their quoted figures and the works should not exceed £10k. The PC will now put in an application for a survey to be done and pay the £500 non-refundable fee.

PRECEPT SETTING: Unanimously agreed to increase the precept by £10,000 from £16,500 to £26,500. It is the intention of the parish council to utilise the extra money to provide a better environment for everyone by funding installation of speed limits (if permitted by Highways) in Mells and Vobster, improving the children's play area,

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ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Christmas tree for land by shop: The Estate ran out of time to sort the logistics of providing a tree in time for Christmas but will look at providing one in the future.

Whatley Quarry noise: Cllr Earl reported that he had noticed an increase in noise around 10.00-11.00pm over the last few months. Cllr West will report this back to the liaison committee next week.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday February 10th at 7.15pm in the Barn.

Joy Book, Clerk, Tel: 07704 584953 Email: Clerk@mells-pc.gov.uk

WHATLEY

Dear Villagers, please accept our apologies. The following article should have been in November's edition of 5Alive but somehow slipped through the net. The good news is, that, between the publishing dates, the final total of the money raised for Macmillan Cancer rose to £660.93. Amazing! Laura Baber wishes to thank all who helped make the morning such a success, but we wish to thank Laura for her enterprise and energy in leading this happy fundraising occasion.

Thank you also to those who came and joined in with such enthusiasm that a very generous sum of money was raised.

The weight-of-the-cake was won by Simon Baber. Orla Murcott, with the help of her grandpa, guessed there were 116 sweets in the jar (there were 115!) The raffle had numerous donations so consequently many winners, including Whatley's oldest resident, Marianne Marrs, who won her first ever raffle prize!

In Whatley we always welcome people to our sociable coffee mornings on the second Saturday of each month, but this month the team excelled themselves. The table looked as if the finalists of 'Bake Off' had been preparing for a celebration.

St George, Whatley parish church, had the biggest congregation of the year for its traditional service of nine lessons and carols. It's uplifting to hear all the much-loved carols being sung with gusto and listen to the age-old words of the birth of Christianity. The highlight of the service was the procession of children, in costume, bringing the nativity to life with their pet animals, a Shetland pony, two black sheep and two miniature goats! It was also uplifting to see faces new(ish) to the village along with families who have lived here for generations. Afterwards the bar was opened, music played and we were all able to celebrate the beginning of Christmas.

On January 1st Whatley and Chantry residents did all, or part of, the New Year walk on the circular path around the massive quarry. It was a perfect day the stretch the legs. Over 15 people did so, arriving back at the church to the admiration of the lazier villagers who just turned up for the social! Davin and James did both the walk and organise the reception afterwards. There was hot punch, coffee available (although

most of us seemed to prefer the punch!) and the most delicious pigs in blankets. What a great start to 2026 for our communities.
We give a big thank you to James and Davin for making sure St George is a hub of hospitality for us all to enjoy, all year round.
Happy New Year to us all!

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH CLEANING ROTA.

Mary Scott thanks all those who help to keep the church clean and tidy. She did the necessary cleaning throughout January, so the team start again in February. Thank you, Mary, for all you do to keep us in order!

February 7th Jenny Norris.

February 14th

Alice Kettle

February 15th Sue Pollock.

February 21st

Mary Scott

February 28th Marion Ransome

Church news: The collection from January's Group Service at Whatley raised £100, including gift aid, and has been given to Fair Frome

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If anyone needs a lift to any events, contact FOW secretary Alice.kettle@gmail.com

And thank you, Hazel Tovey, for leading Evensong for us so beautifully. Several more joined us for a bring-and-share harvest supper, with plenty of choice of refreshment from our very own bartenders, James and Davin. We thank you both for the work and time you give to make sure that people are sufficiently refreshed when the opportunity arises.

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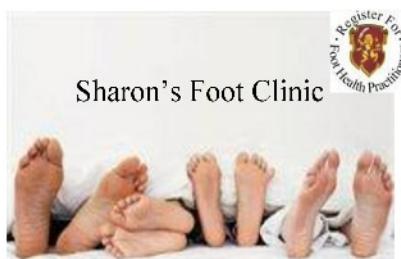
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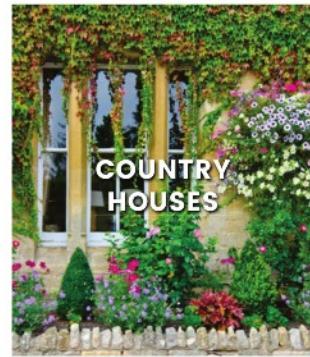
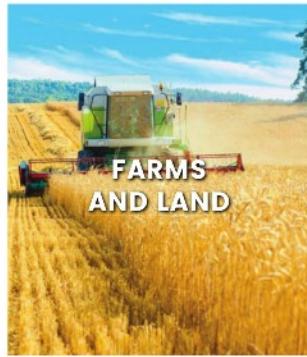
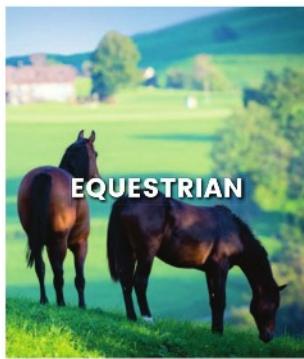
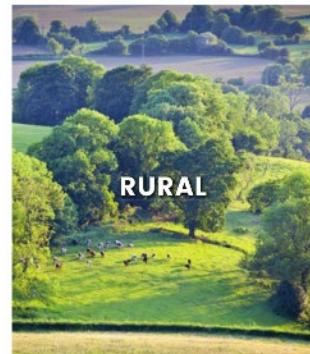
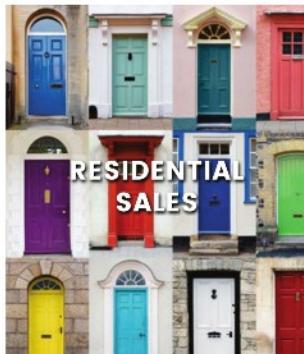
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