NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



Cover photo by Becks Bagnall

In this issue

PARISH PUMP NEWS

JUMBLE - GET GARDENING

VILLAGE HALL AGM

CHURCH NEWS

Apley Estate Office

A belated Happy New Year from the Estate Office.

We had a busy year in 2024, finally completing the 4 new build houses next to the office. As we go into 2025, having obtained planning permission last year, we'll be converting the Old Smithy into a house during 2025. It'll be a 3 bedroom house and we hope to start the work in April, completing in early 2026.

At Apley Farm Shop the schedule of events for the year is quite varied with lots of interest for families and children. After the success of the Dog Show in 2023, this event is back and bigger this year with more attractions on Sunday 1st June 2025. On Sunday 6th April 2025 the Vintage Tractor Run starts at Apley Farm Shop, an event we've hosted many times in the past. This is always a good day out for the tractor owners and enthusiasts. They also raise a lot of money for the Air Ambulance, over £100,000 since the runs started, so we are very happy to continue to support this great event. Last year we held the first Colour Run to raise money for the Lingen Davies Cancer charity. It was a very successful event and so we are pleased to confirm this shall return and be held on Saturday 17th May 2025. If you want to take part in this great cause, have a look at the Lingen Davies website where you can register, www.lingendavies.co.uk/news-events/events.

Keep an eye on our website and you'll see what's going on at the Farm Shop and Apley more widely.

Norton Village Hall chairperson Paula says "it's time to retire"

I am afraid my time has come to retire from village hall duties. I would like to thank everyone who has helped and supported me over the years. Hopefully new members will come forward and join the committee to take the village hall into more exciting times for the community. Village life is special, please support it.

The Norton Village Hall AGM meeting where a new committee will be elected for the coming year will take place on the 19th March starting at 7:30pm. All are welcome.

THE PARISH PUMP

Parish Council 2025 January meeting:

The Parish Council held its bi-monthly meeting in January covering a number of topics and would like to extend greetings for a healthy and prosperous 2025 to all parishioners and partners. The meeting looked at the amount of money required to manage the affairs of the Parish Council for the 2025/26 municipal year and agreed a budget of £6,517 an increase of £310 on 2024/25 municipal year to help fund community projects across the area.

The very poor condition of the road surface on the A442 continues to dominate the Parish Council discussions, actions and concerns. This relates to the speed of traffic, increase in potholes and the state of the carriageway and the continual erosion of road markings. These concerns have been reported through the highways system at Shropshire Council but have made little impact on the ground. The Chairman of the Parish Council Lord Gavin Hamilton has therefore agreed to make direct contact with Shropshire Councillors to raise this growing list of concerns into what is a major highway running through Norton connecting a variety of communities and businesses across the county. The Parish Council will keep parishioners updated on any progress.

The Parish Council also supported the recent planning applications submitted by the Hundred House at Norton to replace the temporary marquee with a permanent building including the conversion of the existing building to the entrance foyer.

In terms of parish projects underway, the Rights of Way working group is continuing its activity by walking and reporting back on several footpaths within the parish. The next steps will be to compile a list of works required so they are all accessible with proper signage. The play park at Windmill Lane remains in good order for continued use. A number of signs and structures on verges have blown down during the recent bad weather and these are being inspected in order to create a list of works to upgrade them this year.

The remaining Parish Council dates for Parish Council meetings are the 5th March and 7th May (including the Annual Parishioners meeting) 2025 at Norton Village Hall from 7:30pm.



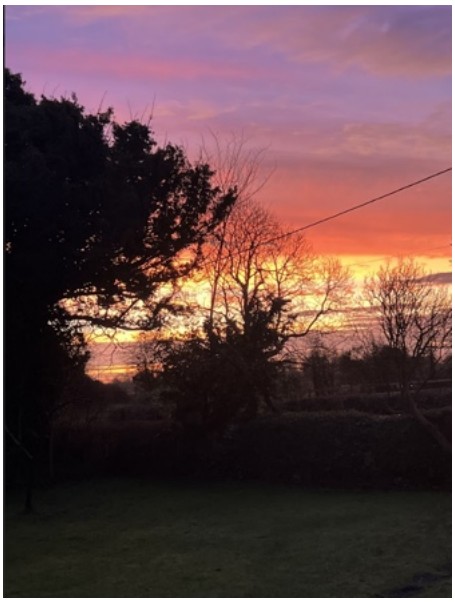


Photo by Gary Joy

FORESTRY ENGLAND

Set out below is a potential funding link for a rural focused project.

Forestry England Woodland Partnership

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership offers long-term leases with guaranteed income for public and private landowners to create new woodlands. The partnership scheme supports government plans for woodland creation, nature recovery and progress towards net zero targets.

Forestry England are looking for sites of at least 50 hectares suitable for woodland creation for leases of between 60 and 120 years, and landowners will receive a guaranteed annual rent throughout the lease period. Forestry England will design, plant and manage every woodland created, ensuring each is resilient to a changing climate, supports wildlife, and provides wider ecosystem services.

All woodlands created through the partnership scheme will be open to the public, providing valuable health and well-being opportunities for communities.

Part of the Nature for Climate Fund to support the government's tree planting commitment, the Forestry England Woodland Partnership aims to create at least 2,000 hectares of predominantly broadleaf woodland over the next five years.

Applications are open all year round. Full details and brochures for public and private landowners are available on the Forestry England website.

https://www.forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation

POLICE ADVICE

A message from the Police

There have been recent reports of fraudsters across the area claiming to be from various police services around the country.

These criminals are pretending to be police officers in an attempt to defraud people and scam them into handing over or transferring money or sharing PIN information.

Please remember the following information…

The police will NEVER:

- Contact you to ask for your PIN or bank details
- Ask to withdraw cash to hand over to them for safe-keeping
- Ask you to transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons
- Send someone to your home to collect cash, PINs or cards

This crime, known as 'Courier Fraud', has seen elderly and vulnerable people targeted. However, anyone can be a victim to this crime.

If the crime is still in progress, because for example, you have recently provided bank details or handed over cards or cash or are going to visit your bank or the caller has arranged for someone to visit your address to collect items, you should call the police on 999.

You can also report crime online, on the West Mercia Website or by calling 101.

It is only by the police and the public working together that we can prevent and detect crime.

PCSO Sam Newbrook 40447
Police Community Support Officer | LPAF / Safer Neighbourhood Team / Shifnal and Albrighton | West Mercia Police

Shifnal Police Base, Tudor Way, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8DJ
Mobile: 07814285101
Email: sam.newbrook@westmercia.pnn.police.uk

LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

Within the blink of an eye, 2025 arrived. I am writing to you, having just begun my recovery from reconstructive surgery on my foot. I suffered a high velocity gunshot wound during a live firing attack at the age of just 17, which shattered my foot and has required treatment ever since. I am using this opportunity to highlight the ongoing physical and mental impact that ex-service personnel face. As home to some 4,000 veterans, I know many others in South Shropshire share this experience. That is why I am so committed to making Shropshire the best place to be a veteran – ensuring it is as easy as possible to access the right support at the right time.

The new year has begun with a scurry of announcements from the government, following the Prime Minister's 'Plan for Change' published in December. Sadly, his Plan does not mention rural areas even once. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the government has decided to plough ahead with its decision to 'redirect' funding previously dedicated to rural areas. Last year, it saw Shropshire Council equipped with an extra £9 million to deliver services. As the Council has reported, Shropshire's rural geography means that it takes longer and costs more to deliver services than it does for most other authorities. Without the necessary support, rural councils may have to resort to steep increases in the council taxes levied on local residents. Due to financial pressures being faced by the Council, it is looking to save an extra £8.5 million and launched a public consultation.

On the final week of the parliamentary year, the government announced it will not provide financial compensation to women affected by increases to the State Pension Age. Almost four million women were impacted. The Ombudsman found two incidents of maladministration – in 2005 and then again in 2006 – when the government at the time could have been better in communicating the changes. It has made a clear recommendation that compensation should be paid to those impacted. Ignoring their advice erodes trust in politics. I am calling on Ministers to step up to their responsibilities and take swift action to address injustices inflicted the last time that they were in government.

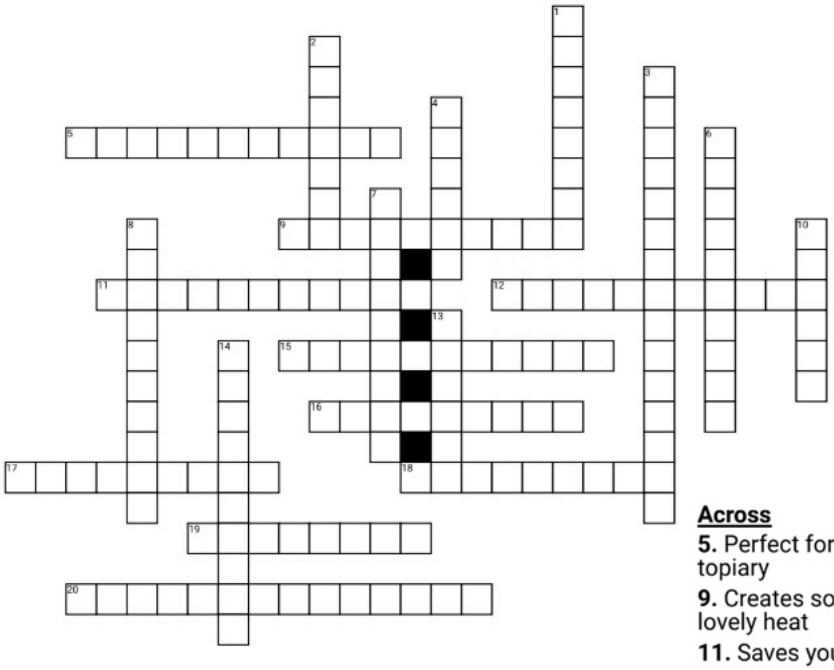
The start of the year also brought with it news of increasing energy prices, as the Energy Price Cap has increased by a further £21. This will be worrying for many residents across South Shropshire. When added to October's increase, it means that the Cap on typical annual bills has risen by £170 since October – an increase of more than 10 per cent. I want to ensure vulnerable households get the support they need. So, I am pleased to be supporting Energy Savers' Week. It is an annual campaign, to raise awareness of how to make homes more energy efficient and get the best deal from energy suppliers.

South Shropshire is home to many historic buildings – like New Market Hall in Bridgnorth. Yet, urgent action is needed to ensure its continued use. So, I was delighted to meet Bridgnorth locals, Huw Rees and Richard North to discuss it. Huw has initiated a petition calling on Shropshire Council to use its powers to acquire the building for the good of the community if urgent remedial action is not taken by the owners. After a decade of disrepair, it is time to revive the building for the future.

This year, the litmus test for me will be whether the government's plans will benefit rural communities, where we have so much unlocked potential to drive economic growth and prosperity. I am clear that the government must not only continue its financial support for farmers but secure a fairer price for their produce, who are too often ripped off by larger companies. I also want to find out your thoughts on what the government should prioritise. Whether it is health, housing, education, or planning your feedback is important to me. So, do visit my website and share your views. If you prefer a paper copy, just let me know.

Stuart Anderson MP
Member of Parliament for South Shropshire
Tel: +44 (0)20 7219 8612
Email: barnaby.burrowes@parliament.uk,

NORTON NATTER JUMBLE - GET GARDENING!



Across

5. Perfect for the topiary
9. Creates some lovely heat
11. Saves your joints
12. Somewhere to retreat to in the rain
15. Irrigation tool
16. Sweeps through the lot
17. Can be a festival frightener
18. Protects the juicy stuff
19. Gathering in the moss
20. Cutting edge technology

Down

1. Great for chopping off weeds
2. Spikey things
3. Protect those digits
4. French bell for protection
6. Some say the engine room of the garden
7. Prunes to perfection
8. Essential tool in your grip
10. Constantly shifting
13. Assistance with bulbs
14. Gets the seeds of to a good start

RAES RECIPE

One of the Norton Natter team were lucky enough to taste these muffins and can confirm they were the very best muffins ever! Why not give them a try?



Blueberry Muffins

This recipe makes 12 muffins.

INGREDIENTS:

250g / 8oz plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
150g / 5oz caster sugar
175ml /6fl oz milk
2 large eggs
150ml / ¼ pint sunflower oil
110g / 4oz blueberries
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

You'll also need a 12-hole muffin tin (line with muffin cake cases).

METHOD

Pre-heat the oven to 180º (160º fan, Gas mark 4).

Put all the ingredients - except the blueberries - into a bowl, and beat with an electric whisk until evenly combined and smooth.

Stir in the blueberries.

Divide the mixture into the muffin cases. (This can be messy, so I pour the mixture from a jug).
Bake for 25-30 minutes until well-risen and golden.

I brush the top of the muffins with lemon curd or honey. I like them served warm, so if not eaten immediately, they can be re-heated in the microwave for about 30 seconds.

Enjoy!

SPRING
BY Graham Jones

I believe that farming and gardening are still the most popular topics of conversation in Norton and the surrounding district.

Spring, a new beginning, is always looked forward to, this is the season of seeding and planting. To help with the job highly sophisticated machinery has been developed, it has not always been so.

I remember well the fields between Astol and the main road. Here men, women and children were brought together, not to do potato planting but tater dropping. They worked in pairs, the taters came in wooden trays with handles on opposite sides. The pair moved slowly along the trenches carrying the tray between them and dropping taters about a foot apart. My favourite partner was Roma Reynolds.

Our most memorable partnership was in the battle against poppies that were regarded as an invasive weed. Mr Pigg set us the task of clearing the poppies from a field of sugar beet. We wandered about the field. Roma spotted the poppies (I am colour-blind) and I ripped the plants out of the ground. I remember this activity so well because it was here that I found my first fossil. I took it to school to show Mr Wells, my geography teacher.



He said it was not particularly rare, an ammonite perhaps, a relative of the nautilus that still lives in tropical seas. I said, “But there are no tropical seas in Shropshire”. He explained that in the distant past Wenlock Edge had been part of a coral reef.

I did consider, briefly, riding my bike to Wenlock to investigate but I did not. I was told that there were other fossils nearby, delivered to the door by the coalman.



When coal mines were nationalized in 1947 there were fourteen collieries in Shropshire. South of Norton were pits at Alveley and Highley and to the north were Kemberton and Madeley.

I learned from The Observers Book of British Geology that giant ferns that grew in swampy areas were largely responsible for the creation of the coal seams. All the plants of this sort grew in swampy areas and would eventually be covered by layers of silt and compressed into coal.

This is of course an artist’s impression, there were no humans around at the time. There were plenty of lizards and dragonflies with two foot wingspans.



We cannot imagine how the landscape has changed over 300 million years. A visit to the Discovery Centre in Craven Arms can help a little perhaps. A replica of a woolly mammoth is exhibited there.

A lady walking her dog near Condover came across an almost complete set of mammoth bones. Early man shared the countryside with these impressive beasts, just 30 thousand years ago. The landscape was quite different then, no hedgerows, and little attempt at agriculture. We are so fortunate to have the fields, the woodland, the river, and as spring arrives we can look forward to enjoying country life.



I love the fields and lanes around Norton. When I visit the area I return to childhood - dropping taters, spreading muck, pulling poppies, helping with harvest, picking up stones with a horse and cart. I never found another fossil, but just one had made me curious, and I still am.

SAMCO

SPARTANS FC

Rob Woodcock Chairman of Spartans writes.....

Spartans have been quiet over recent months as rain, snow and then frost have stopped play mostly since late November.

The hope is that the weather will be kind to enable a good run at games across the club and this will also allow work at the Norton pitch to resume.

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

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

CHURCH NEWS





Many thanks to Paula Davies for organising the Christmas Carols in Norton Village Hall and for the kind donation. St Chad's also holding the traditional Plough Sunday service on Sunday 4th January 2025.

Having successfully completed the roof repairs in October, unfortunately Storm Darragh removed some of the tiles and damaged the flat roof covering. This has now been repaired and will hopefully be covered by insurance. In November, the Six Parishes Tower Captain – Andrew Pooler, who arranges bell ringers in all six churches and Jeremy Dyas (PCC Member) went into the bell tower to repair fraying bell ropes. St Chad's has a peal of six bells, all working well. As well as for weddings and some services they are rung by visiting bell ringers. If anyone is interested in trying bell ringing/ campanology please be in touch with a church member.

In October St Chad's had its five yearly survey. Unfortunately, more repair concerns were raised, the most pressing one being the state of the electrical circuit which will be the next repair project. There is also the need to do some deep cleaning of the tower and have an annual maintenance program. Anyone who would kindly wish to volunteer to help, please be in touch.

Progress towards recruiting a new Rector for the Six Parishes carries on. Lichfield Diocese has agreed to fund part of the cost for three and hopefully ultimately six years. Therefore the new priest will be a 'Priest in Charge'. The Joint Council will have a meeting with Bishop Sarah of Shrewsbury in early February to finalise the Parish Profile and hopefully agree, the advertisement of the role.

Services planned for the next few weeks are as follows. Please double check before setting off.

If you wish to hold a service at Stockton please contact: gavin_hamilton@outlook.com

Date	Time	Location	Event	Priest
9th Feb	11.00 am	Kemberton	Communion	Janet Holmes
16th Feb	9.30 am	Beckbury	Communion	
23rd Feb	9.30 am	Badger	Communion	Matthew Lefroy
2nd Mar	11.00 am	Sutton Maddock	Communion	Janet Holmes
9th Mar	9.30 am	Ryton	Communion	Justin Bailey
16th Mar	11.00 am	Kemberton	Communion	Janet Homes
23rd Mar	9.30 am	Beckbury	Communion	Janet Holmes
30th Mar	9.30 am	Badger	Communion	Matthew Lefroy

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

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

BRAMBLE DEVELOPMENTS

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

STOCKTON BOWLING CLUB NEWS

We are fast approaching our new bowling season in the Highley & District Bowling League where Stockton A have been promoted to Division 1 along with Broseley this year. We are currently in the process of applying to the Mid-Shropshire league to enter Stockton A in Division 3 on a Friday night which enables the green to be used more and generate a bit more income for the club.

We held our annual presentation dinner on 9th February 2025 in the Tithe Barn at The Hundred House Hotel where 39 members, family and friends attended. We also held our A.G.M in February. We are always on the look-out for new members to join, all ages welcome, whether to play or just be sociable and come along to have a drink and a natter. We will post the date on the Norton community/face book page nearer the time if anyone would like to come and join us.

On 29th September 2024 Stockton A played against Bridgnorth B in the Highley League Division 2 Knockout Final, which we won, but only by a few points. Stockton B were the losing semi-finalists against us on the Bylet No. 2 green, it was a close match.

We are looking to boost our funds by approaching local businesses in the community for sponsorship. We would look to promote sponsors on the new team shirts next season. If anyone would be interested in becoming a sponsor please contact me.

We also attended the last parish council meeting in November 2024 to see if there was any help or support available to us, they agreed to look at a small grant contribution through an increase in the 25/26 precept to help with the fundraising provision for new floodlights on the green.

We have applied through different grant funding schemes to get help with replacing our floodlights and maintenance of the drive way. Unfortunately, we did not meet their core aims.

Our aim now, is to continue to raise funds by organising events in the coming season, we are only a small club and every bit of help and support would be very much appreciated. We are looking to hold a BBQ again in August.

For more details contact Jeanette Bennett 01952 730339 or Martin Bennett on 07870511655. For more updates visit our Stockton Bowling Facebook page and Norton Community page.

TRIO AMOUNG DAIRY STUDENT OF THE YEAR 2025 FINALISTS

A trio of Harper Adams University scholars are among the finalists for this year's Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers' Dairy Student of the Year competition.

The competition – whose winner is set to be announced early next month – has narrowed its participants down to a shortlist of six, with Joseph Compton, Matthew Butterfield and Caitlin Townley the three Harper Adams finalists.

The winner is set to be announced at Dairy Tech on February 5, where the University's Future Farm team are also set to find out if they have won this year's RABDF Gold Cup.

Harper Adams Professor of Animal Science Liam Sinclair said: "I am delighted that we have thee students in the final of this prestigious competition again. Harper Adams attracts students from a range of farming and non-farming backgrounds, and their success in this competition reflects a very positive learning experience that prepares them well for a career in industry."

Each of the students made a presentation to the judging panel at the award's shortlisting event in December.



BSc (Hons) Agriculture student Joseph, from Glarryford, Co. Antrim, said:

"Before walking in, I'll admit I was quite nervous. However, the moment I entered the conference room and met the judging panel, their warm welcome, and approachable demeanour immediately put me at ease. This support helped me settle quickly and deliver my speech with confidence. Once I began, everything flowed naturally, and I genuinely enjoyed the experience, showcasing my deep passion for the UK dairy industry with enthusiasm and pride. Being shortlisted for the RABDF Dairy Student of the Year final was an incredible honour and a proud moment in my journey within the dairy industry. It felt immensely rewarding to have my hard work, passion, and dedication recognised on such a prestigious platform."



Fellow Agriculture student Matthew added:

"It is a great honour to have been selected as a finalist for the Dairy Student of the Year competition. The preparation stages were very interesting indeed and have helped me in practising business planning. Being a bit of an extrovert, the presentation stage was very enjoyable, especially talking to the panel and meeting the other candidates. I really felt the panel that I presented to were very interested in hearing the thoughts on the future of the dairy industry from myself and the other finalists."



And Agriculture with Animal Science student Caitlin, from the Lune Valley on Lancashire/ Cumbria border, said:

"I couldn't believe it when I was shortlisted for the award. There are so many keen young dairy students that I felt so privileged to be taking part. It felt like such an honour, I was against such great young passionate students and I felt so proud to be representing both harper Adams and the dairy industry as a whole."

As each student awaits to find out who will be named winner, they are working on their final year Honours Research projects – and looking back over their time at University as they prepare to graduate this September.

Joseph said: "I decided to come to Harper to challenge myself away from home comforts. It is a very well-respected University in the agricultural industry, and speaking with many past students reaffirmed my decision. I've cherished every moment of my time at Harper, gaining a wealth of knowledge and acquiring numerous new skills, whilst forming friendships that will last a lifetime."

Caitlin added: "I have always known that I wanted to come to Harper Adams after hearing about it from my friends at Young Farmers. It has such a good reputation and is well known in the agricultural industry for a well-rounded education in both professional and practical aspects. Without a doubt the past four years have been amazing, coming to Harper has really pushed me out of my comfort zone and has allowed me to gather great contacts from out in the dairy industry to build networks for future career opportunities."

And Matthew, from Wimborne in Dorset, said: "I came to Harper in 2021 - I never looked at doing agriculture anywhere else really. Wherever I could see innovation and excellence in agricultural practice, Harper always seemed to be behind it somewhere. Furthermore, having the farm on site meant that I would be able to see what had been taught applied right in front of me. It has been a very enjoyable few years here, with always something going somewhere. Spending time with like-minded people is always a great laugh. After all, where else would you find quite so many passionate agriculturalists in one place! My role as president of the Christian Union in second year would definitely be a highlight. I think everyone feels that the end of our time here is coming round a little too quickly!"



EXPERTS HIGHLIGHT URGENT NEED FOR SUGAR CROP PROTECTION RESEARCH AS PESTICIDE LICENCE TURNED DOWN

An insect-control expert has highlighted the urgent need for research and development of sustainable crop protection methods for sugar beet.

According to Dr Joe Roberts, Reader in Integrated Pest Management at Harper Adams University, the Government's decision to turn down an emergency application for the neonicotinoid pesticide Cruiser SB underscores a crucial challenge for UK sugar production - because alternative tools to manage aphid populations and mitigate the virus yellows disease they transmit have yet to come to market.

Dr Roberts and Entomology Research Group colleagues are investigating more sustainable control methods, but barriers - such as the time required for development, testing and regulatory approval - mean no direct replacement for Cruiser SB is currently available. This leaves farmers in a difficult position, with alternative control options proving less efficient or more expensive.

He said: "The decision to deny the use of Cruiser SB highlights just how urgently we need to accelerate our efforts to develop and implement new tools that can be incorporated into IPM strategies. Reduced productivity and higher costs could make sugar beet farming less competitive, potentially leading some to abandon the crop altogether. In that scenario, the UK's domestic sugar supply could be at risk."

Environment Minister Emma Hardy said the decision was taken because there was 'clear and abundant' evidence the pesticide is extremely toxic to pollinators such as bees. The Government, she added, is committed to protecting pollinators while supporting farmers in finding new ways to safeguard crops.

She said: "We recognise the threat that virus yellows can pose to sugar beet growers, and we will continue to support industry to develop alternatives to neonicotinoids on sugar beet that are effective at high levels of yellows virus infection."

Meanwhile, Defra is promoting IPM practices under the Sustainable Farming Incentive, helping to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides.

Dr Roberts added: "IPM offers a sustainable approach, combining careful pest monitoring, selective pesticide use, biological controls such as natural predators and crop rotation to reduce aphid populations. Precision-bred sugar beet varieties resistant to virus yellows are another long-term solution, but these developments will require focused research and cooperation across government, industry and academia to transition from lab to field."

He also emphasised that pollinator protection is a vital part of ensuring long-term agricultural resilience. "We must remember that pollinators play a key role in maintaining the health of our crops and surrounding ecosystems," he said. "Safeguarding them is crucial for UK agriculture."

In line with this, Harper Adams has launched a new on-campus apiary to facilitate pollinator health research and give students hands-on experience in ecological entomology - underscoring the university's commitment to holistic IPM solutions that protect both crops and the beneficial insects they depend on.

Professor Tom Pope, Professor of Applied Entomology and Entomology Research Group Lead, and his team are investigating how IPM principles can help combat viral diseases in other major crops and hope that lessons learned from these may be applicable to sugar beet.

Global potato production, for instance, is severely limited by aphid-transmitted viruses. Like in sugar beet, resistance to conventional insecticides, coupled with the withdrawal of key active ingredients, has complicated management of these viruses.

Professor Pope said: "Where farmers once relied more heavily on synthetic chemical solutions, we're now seeing a more nuanced approach - one that brings together cultural, biological, and chemical controls."

One promising avenue of research for controlling potato viruses involves push-pull strategies that use visual and olfactory cues to push aphid pests away from the main crop while pulling them toward trap plants or other attractive areas that can be managed. Techniques include intercropping and using mulches to interfere with aphid host-finding.

Professor Pope added: "If push-pull can be adapted for aphid vectors of potato viruses, it could significantly reduce the spread of viruses like PVY-especially since aphids can lose the virus during short probes on trap plants, making them non-infective by the time they reach the main crop."

Harper Adams is also engaged in cereal research, focusing on Barley Yellow Dwarf Virus, also transmitted by aphids. Following the withdrawal of neonicotinoid seed treatments, reliance on pyrethroid sprays has increased, but emerging resistance in some aphids underscores the need for new tactics.

"Improved risk assessments and targeted interventions are essential," Dr Roberts said. "Only a small proportion of aphids carry BYDV, so blanket spraying is wasteful and speeds up resistance. We need methods that identify risk hotspots, combine pest-resistant or tolerant varieties and deploy insecticides only when necessary."

Looking ahead, new barley and wheat varieties with tolerance or resistance to BYDV are becoming commercially available, demonstrating the promise of plant breeding within IPM frameworks.

Dr Roberts added: "All of these measures -crop monitoring, targeted sprays, resistant varieties - support the bigger picture of sustainability. Whether we're managing aphid vectors of disease in sugar beet, potatoes or cereals, our approach must consider pollinator health, insecticide resistance and profitability for farmers. The challenge we now face is urgent, but it also provides an opportunity to transform the way we protect our crops. If industry, government, and academia collaborate effectively, we can forge a sustainable path forward for UK agriculture - one that reduces reliance on chemicals while safeguarding pollinators and ensuring stable yields across multiple crop sectors."

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP TO EXAMINE HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN BOOST DAIRY CALF REARING

An interactive workshop examining how dairy calf rearing practices can be boosted by technology is set to be held at Harper Adams University.

The event – on February 6 – aims to bring together all those working to rear dairy calves, to examine the latest technology, how it is used – and what other tools farmers want.

Dr Laura Palczynski is one of the researchers from Harper Adams who has helped set up the day.

She said: "While there are numerous technologies available for use with dairy cows, fewer options exist for calves which, as in other aspects of the rearing process, are often overlooked. The day is all about understanding what tools are wanted and needed, and what is possible to achieve through technology development. So, we're inviting people with practical insights from the many different sectors of the calf industry alongside those with technology and animal research expertise."

Speakers during the day include award-winning dairy farmer Karen Halton, examining what really matters in calf rearing; Dr Clara Mancini, who will look at how technology design can focus more on animal needs - and Dr Lisa Morgans, who will talk how we can consider the users of technologies.

There will also be some lightning talks from technology providers including Wellcalf by Smartbell, Galebreaker, Peacock, Lely and Breedr.



Dairy expert and Senior Lecturer in Animal Science Dr Emma Bleach, who will also be taking part in the day, added: "We plan to incorporate structured networking activities into the event, designed to showcase the technologies currently available and highlight opportunities to develop both existing and new technologies.

"In doing so, we will highlight areas where further research is needed, both for further development of existing technologies and application of the new ones. We'll also be splitting into smaller groups to ensure a range of perspectives inform our recommendations for developing technologies that work for calves, calf rearers, farmers and the wider industry."

The day has been funded by the Animal Welfare Research Network using money from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC).

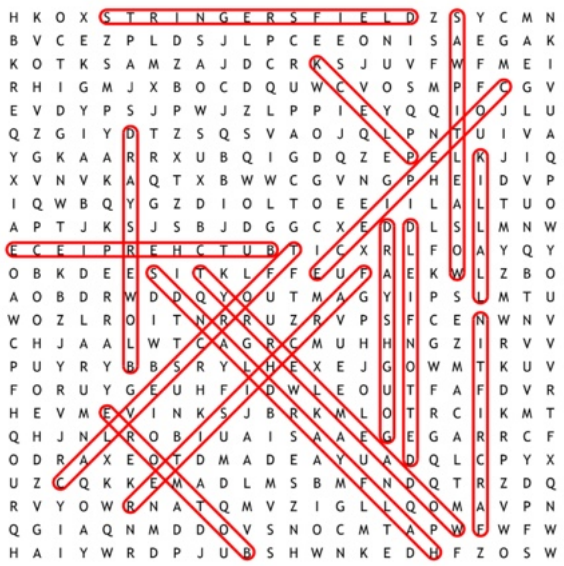
It is hoped that fresh research will emerge from discussions between academics, farmers, veterinarians and those working in the dairy and beef sectors on the day- and that networking opportunities at the event could lead to the formation of future research collaborations.

Laura added: "Ultimately, we want to support calf rearers with their calf management – so we want to hear what they want and need.
"The development of technologies specifically for calves can provide valuable insights that farmers can act upon to enhance health, wellbeing and productivity. However, these technologies need to be used to be useful! We hope these discussions help ensure that farmers can be confident, when investing in tools, that they will work for their staff, their business, and their animals."

To register for the event, visit harper.ac.uk/calffeb25



Answers to 1841 Field Names of Stockton Parish (Wordsearch from Winter Norton Natter)



half yard lands
detton field
stringers field
botmore
blowers yard
pleck
calves croft
kill all
far criftin
far chisiter
cote piece
goughs yard
butcher piece
tyrrel meadow
sawpit leasow



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If you'd like to advertise your business in the Norton Natter, please get in touch.
Send your events, news, photographs and contributions for future editions to Jackie Bennett at jackie.a.bennett@hotmail.com or the Parish Clerk, Graham Bould at gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk by 21st May 2025. Follow our Parish Facebook page www.facebook.com/nortoncommunitygroup.

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