AUTUMN 2026

NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



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NORTON VILLAGE CROSSING

The Taming of the A442: Norton's Statistical Crusade for a Crossing

The Parish Council's campaign to secure a pedestrian crossing on the A442 has entered a formidably cerebral new phase, as we attempt to nudge Shropshire Council into commissioning an official traffic survey. Our immediate objective is simple: to prove that this is a pressing safety hazard worthy of their time and scrutiny. For the uninitiated, attempting to traverse the asphalt ribbon of the A442 in Norton currently demands immense tactical foresight and the nimble footwork of a ballerina. It remains an exercise in existential dread, wherein there is a frequently endless stream of motorists, some of whom are convinced that our village is merely a particularly scenic chicane on a racetrack.

While there is an undeniable, heart-stopping thrill to dodging an HGV whilst merely attempting to walk the dog or post a letter, the underlying reality is entirely serious. The A442 effectively bisects Norton, creating a tarmac moat that isolates the very members of the community who require the greatest protection. To transform our collective grievance into an unassailable bureaucratic weapon, we have been dissecting the most recent census data. The metrics reveal a stark truth: Norton possesses a significant cohort of vulnerable residents, from our treasured elder statesmen (1 in 4 residents are over the age of 65) to parents navigating push chairs and children crossing to catch the bus. 44% of the village population are consequently deemed 'vulnerable'. For ALL residents however, getting from one side of the road to the other is not just a minor inconvenience but a high-stakes lottery no one asked to enter.



To add weight to the application we have reached out to the Shifnal and Albrighton Safer Neighbourhood Team. The constabulary are often deployed in the bus stop and opposite South Lodge, radar equipment in hand, quietly observing the velocity of our motoring visitors. One has long suspected that certain drivers were attempting to break the sound barrier; this police data could help provide the cold, hard evidence required to trigger that vital traffic survey.

Once Shropshire Council (hopefully) takes the bait and looks at the hard data, we are confident the sheer volume (not just velocity) of the traffic will make one thing instantly clear: a pedestrian crossing – typically a 'Puffin' crossing for an A-road and nominally a £100,000 investment - is not a luxury, but an absolutely vital piece of village infrastructure. We shall keep you fully apprised of our diplomatic manoeuvres in future dispatches of the Norton Natter. In the interim, we urge you to exercise the utmost vigilance, look both ways, and endeavour to survive until the authorities grant us safe passage.

Councillor D. Dyas

THE PARISH PUMP

Parish Council - July and September 2026 meetings.

The Parish Council held meetings on the 1st July and the 2nd September 2026 . The areas of focus from these meetings are set out below.

The A442 – The campaign for a pedestrian crossing on the A442 close to the junctions of Cheswardine Lane and Windmill Lane has started to build momentum after receiving data, based on local intelligence and research at the last meeting. Cllr Doug Dyas who lives on the A442 is leading this campaign (see the relevant article in this edition) The nub of the argument being developed focuses on **pedestrian vulnerability**. This starts to give creditable weight to any assessment. Considering children and older residents crossing the road and the potential difficulty in judging vehicle speeds and needing more time to cross. This is further compounded by the disproportionately dangerous road layout, relentless traffic volume, speeds and vehicle sizes.

The Parish Council also now understands that the promised resurfacing works on the A442 will be undertaken in March 2027. However, please continue to report any defections on 'fix my street' on the link below so nothing gets missed and the strength of concern over the road condition continues to be registered. **https://improvingyourroads.shropshire.gov.uk/**

Historic Stockton Finger Post – A442: The last update of the Stockton finger post was that it had been taken to an 'unknown' blacksmiths for repair. Parishioners will be pursuing both a Freedom of Information request and formal complaint against Shropshire Council about the way this whole issue has been dealt with.

Local Plan – Place Plan updates: The Parish Council has responded to the Shropshire Council with a submission for the 'scoping' call for ideas as part of the local plan process. The next stage is likely to be around May 2027 when all those ideas, key principles, comments and potential sites are consolidated into the next stages of consultation.

Devolved Services from Shropshire Council: The potential development of devolved services from Shropshire Council to Local Councils has taken another step forward. Local Councils have been asked to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) on-line. The Parish Council have undertaken this task but have indicated as part of the survey that a substantial increase in the Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) is required as the best way to address service improvements in a very rural parish. Stockton Parish Council already work and partner with local volunteers around litter picking, and targeted verge maintenance, the Probation Service for targeted verge maintenance, Rob Weir and Samco for improvements to street furniture, foot-ways, pull-ins, gullies and drainage ditches across the area and could do more with an enhanced grant per year.

Play Park off Windmill Lane: The Annual ROSPA inspection took place in late June 2026 and the Parish Council at their July 2026 meeting agreed the repairs to address the outstanding items within the inspection report. This included the jet washing of a number of pieces of equipment, timber upgrades on several structures, improvements to some surfaces and a new set of two seats on the toddler swings. The play park has also seen increased use of the site during the summer as evidenced by the fuller than usual bin on the site. The secondary problem the site suffers from is rabbit holes and any suggestions of help in trying to resolve this problem would be most welcome.

Rights of Way (ROW) updates: A number of outstanding items are still to be agreed with Shropshire Council and the landowners on whose land the rights of ways are located.

IT policy and web site: Cllr Catherine Griffiths has recently developed an IT policy for the Parish and Council and has taken over the responsibility for the web site. Any views, suggestions or help with the web site would be most welcome. Cllr Catherine Griffiths can be contacted via email on catherine.griffiths@stockton-pc.gov.uk,

Norton Village Pond grant application to Severn Trent: The Parish Council would like to thank all those Parishioners who have taken the time to complete the recent survey both from the last newsletter and on social media to help with the grant application for Severn Trent. The application is likely to be considered in mid 2027 and in the meantime work will shortly start with Apley Estate to develop a long term lease for the pond that the Parish Council will take responsibility for. This process is similar to the approach taken for the lease of the Play Park which the Parish Council operates. If the grant application is successful, the 'heavy works' would be undertaken through a contract with SAMCO. In addition some environmental works would be developed with the 'Probation Service Community Payback Teams' around what is called 'social value'. Any local Parishioners interested in getting involved in environmental volunteering at the site please contact the Clerk whose contact details are highlighted at the end of this article.

Drought Order River Severn: The Environment Agency issued a drought order on the River Severn on the 14th August 2026 which the Parish Council did not object to.

Planning Applications: The Parish Council has raised no objections to two recent applications. The reduction of the copper beach and crown lifting at Norton Villa and ground solar panels at The Crowgreaves.

First Aid courses – interest: A recent health episode within Norton has highlighted the potential for 'Community First Aiders' within the parish. The Parish Council agreed to see if any Parishioners are interested in First Aid courses. If this is the case please contact the Clerk whose contact details are highlighted at the end of this article.

Interviews for a new Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: Interviews are due to take place for the vacancy of Clerk. Anyone interested in the post should contact the current clerk as soon as possible using the contact details below.

Contact details: Stockton Parish Council Clerk
Graham Bould, 18, Mendip Close, Little Dawley, Telford. TF4 3JG.
clerk@stockton-pc.gov.uk 07792300702 (m)

Come and have a cuppa and a chat at Norton Village Hall

The first Thursday of every month:

1st October
5th November
3rd December

£2.00 each (to cover the cost of room hire and cake)

2pm - 4pm



All are welcome. Any questions call Paula on 07977 777557

WEST MERCIA POLICE - THE FRAUD & SCAM BULLETIN

COURIER FRAUD

Courier Fraud continues to be a common method used by criminals to defraud members of the public. For that reason, we need to ensure that the public remain alert and can recognise this method frequently used to defraud unsuspecting victims.

Courier Fraud occurs when a fraudster contacts victims by telephone usually claiming to be a police officer, bank official or other law enforcement official. The caller may also be able to confirm some easily obtainable basic details about the victim such as their full name and address. The caller will try and build up trust with the potential victim before proceeding.

Their aim is to get the victim to reveal their PIN, credit or debit card and /or bank details, and more than often will target the elderly as potential victims.

How does it work?

- The scammer calls you claiming to be from your bank or as a police officer and will tell you either a fraudulent payment on your account needs dealing with, or sometimes that a person has been arrested using your details and cards.
- You may be asked to call the bank back to convince you the call is genuine using the number on the reverse of your card. However, the Scammer has still kept the line open, so you are still touch with the Scammer.
- If you do try to call your Bank back, always wait at least 5 minutes for the line to clear or safer still use another phone as fraudsters are now using recordings of dial tones to convince the victim the line is clear.
- They will either ask you for your card PIN number or tell you to key it into the phone – you should never be asked for your PIN or pass it over on the phone.
- The Caller then tells you they will send a Courier to pick up your card – they may often provide a “password” to give to the courier to make it sound even more genuine

Once they have your card and your PIN, they then have access to your money.

Other versions of this scam include:

- Asking you to withdraw a large sum of cash which the police will mark and return to the banking system in an effort to identify a corrupt banking person – one you hand over the cash to the Courier it is gone
- A person claiming to be a police officer is investigating sales of counterfeit goods and asks you to buy an expensive item such as a watch or jewellery from a specific retailer. You are then asked to hand it over to the Courier to deliver to the “Police”, and again that is the last you see or hear of it.
- A further common variation is to tell you that your bank account has been compromised, and you need to transfer all your money into a supposedly “Safe Account”. Once again, you have delivered your cash directly to the criminal.

Protect yourself

- Your bank or the police will never call you to ask you to verify your personal details or PIN by phone or offer to pick up your card by courier. Hang up if you get a call like this.
- If you need to call your bank back to check, wait five minutes; fraudsters may stay on the line after you hang up. Alternatively, use a different line altogether to call your bank.
- Always ask anyone calling at your door and claiming to be from the Police, Utilities, or similar businesses or organisations to show you clear identification
- If you think you have been defrauded, use the dedicated “159” telephone number for direct access to your Bank

FAKE LETTERS

In recent weeks we have had reports of fake letters sent to victims of fraud which appear to come from bona fide organisations such as banks and the National Crime Agency (NCA).

Whilst the copy, headers, logos and content in the letters appeared very authentic, the hand written envelope via Royal Mail Special Delivery was far from authentic.
If you receive any unexpected mail such as this, first of all check with the actual bank or organisations using their listed numbers – not the phone number in the letter, and if it proves to be fraudulent, report the incident to REPORT FRAUD – details below.

Please feel free to share these messages with any vulnerable friends, relatives or neighbours.

If you have fallen for a fraud, Report it to Report Fraud (formerly known as ACTION FRAUD) on 0300 123 2040 or via www.reportfraud.police.uk

Scam Text messages can be forwarded to 7726 to help phone providers take prompt action and block numbers that generate spam on their networks. You can also report Scam mobile calls by texting 7726 with the word “Call” followed by the fraudulent caller’s phone number.

Forward Fake Emails received to report@phishing.gov.uk

If you think your bank account or personal banking details have been used fraudulently, then use the short phone number - 159 - to contact the Fraud Prevention Department of most major UK banks.



Sadly, Rae Parnham has decided to stand down as the resident Norton Natter chef and has closed her recipe books. We pass on our heartfelt thanks to Rae for all the lovely recipes she has shared and also all the delicious free samples she sent our way! You really are one in a million and we'll miss your expertise, experience and all- round cheekiness! If anyone out there would like to take over the recipe slot you would be very welcome. We require just four tried and tested recipes a year that you're willing to share with the Natter community. Please do get in touch.

In the meantime here is a firm favourite in our household called Paul's Puglia Pasta. Named because I first tasted it in Puglia and it was cooked by my friend Paul. It's best cooked with Orecchiette pasta which translates into 'Little Ears' because of its small, rounded and slightly cupped shape. It's made by hand in the Puglia region of Italy but you can often get it from Lidl or TK Maxx. If you can't find it, any pasta shape will do.

PAUL'S PUGLIA PASTA



SERVES 2-3 GENEROUSLY!!

Ingredients:

- 8 x Sausages – M&S Italian style are perfect, but any good quality sausage will do
- 250g Orecchiette pasta (or similar)
- 200g tender stem broccoli
- Handful of pine nuts (pumpkin & sunflowers seeds or a combination of all 3 works really well)
- 3 x tablespoons pesto sauce
- Dried chilli flakes to taste

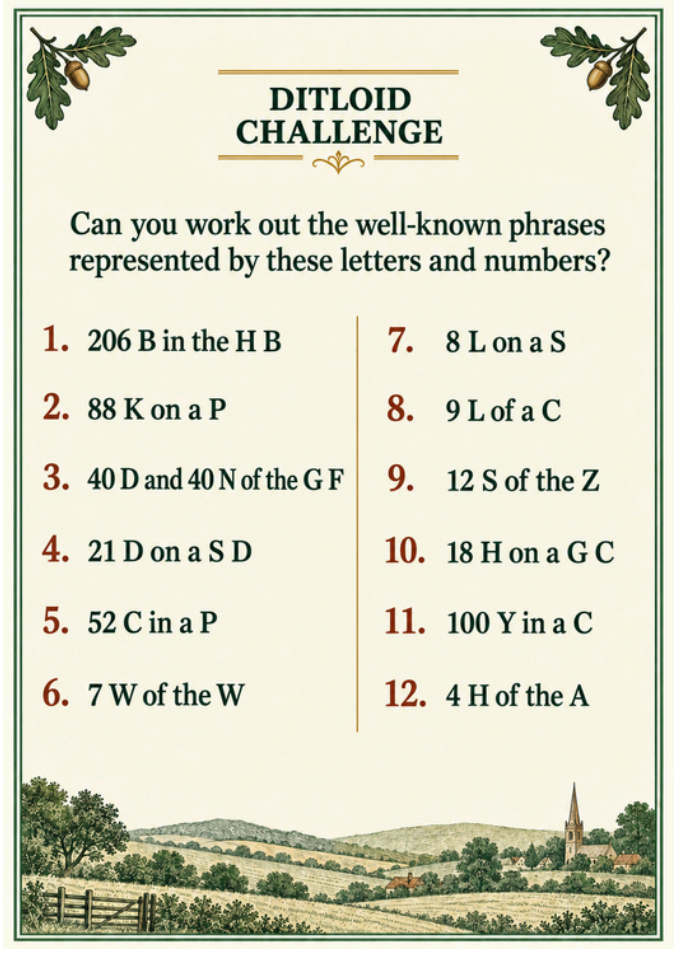
METHOD

Preparation: (can be done some time before the final cooking)

1. Remove the skin from the sausages and cut them into six small pieces rolling them into balls.
2. Take a few spoonfuls of the pine nuts, pumpkin and sunflower seeds and roast lightly in the frying pan. Set aside.
3. Cut up the broccoli spears, separating the stems from the florets. Simmer in boiling water for a minute. Remove the broccoli from the water whilst still firm, and set aside, but keep the water for the pasta later.

Final Cooking:

1. Put the pasta into the broccoli water, bring to the boil then turn down to a fairly gentle heat for 12 minutes or so.
2. At the same time, fry the sausage meatballs on a fairly gentle heat for about 15 minutes, in a large frying pan or similar. Season with plenty of black pepper.
3. Drain the pasta, **saving aside about a mug full of the water **
4. Add the cooked pasta into the meatballs in the large frying pan, and stir.
5. Add the pesto and chilli flakes to the mix, add about one quarter of the saved water, then simmer for 4 or 5 minutes, stirring regularly.
6. Add the broccoli to the mix, add another quarter of the water, continue to simmer and stir.
7. Check the seasoning, add pepper, salt, or more chilli flakes if required.
8. After a few minutes you could add more water and continue to simmer and stir, but if you think it's ready – and certainly before the broccoli gets too soft and starts to break up - serve onto pre-heated plates, sprinkle the toasted pine nuts on top, and eat.





LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

THE
STORAGE SMITH LTD
WEST MIDLANDS LTD
SELF STORAGE
FOR YOUR HOME & BUSINESS
CALL: 07908 124 175
GRINDLE - SHIFNAL- COTSBROOK

I am truly excited to launch my latest local campaign. Having already taken views on our high streets, health and social care services, and pubs, now I want to celebrate the individuals who quietly make a positive difference in our community. My 'South Shropshire Hero' competition will be running until the end of the year and I want as many constituents as possible to get involved. Categories for nominations include assisting with food banks or community kitchens, charity fundraising, helping neighbours, litter picking, running sports or youth clubs and many more. It has been fantastic to see thousands of residents taking part in my previous surveys, so I look forward to reading all the nominations in the months ahead. You can nominate your local hero right now on my website.

One issue which comes up time and time again in conversations with constituents is our local public transport. So, I have written directly to the Prime Minister urging him not to leave rural communities behind in any future public transport reforms. As an area with many elderly residents, buses in particular are essential in South Shropshire. I regularly speak with constituents who are unable to drive and therefore depend on buses to connect with friends and family, do their shopping, and attend appointments. Many younger residents also rely on buses to get to schools, colleges, apprenticeships, and jobs.

However, the fact of the matter is that existing services are scarce, unreliable, and expensive. Shropshire Council's core funding to support and improve the local bus network has fallen from £3.07 million to £2.86 million – a direct cut of £210,000. Meanwhile, the national conversation (not least from the Prime Minister himself) has been utterly dominated by urban areas. I firmly believe that buses are more important in rural areas than anywhere else, as there are often no alternative means of getting around. So, going forward, I will be ensuring the new Prime Minister does not leave rural public transport behind.

Finally, it is an absolute honour to have been appointed by Kemi Badenoch as the Shadow Minister of State for Defence. The world is in its most precarious situation since the end of the Second World War, so the UK must be ready today to face the wars of tomorrow. Ministers must prepare us for conflict, which requires a whole-of-society approach in partnership with industry and backed by firm spending commitments. I look forward to working closely with Shadow Defence Secretary James Cartlidge and the team in holding the Government to account on such an important issue.

As a Shadow Minister, I will be responsible for holding Labour to account on a whole host of defence matters, raising questions and leading debates in Parliament. I will also be actively reviewing the readiness of our nation's armed forces and helping to shape Conservative Party policy in the area of defence. In this role, I will be applying over three decades of experience working in defence and security around the world, from serving as a rifleman in the Royal Green Jackets to recently completing the Royal College of Defence Studies' Global Strategy Programme.

Stuart Anderson MP
Member of Parliament for South Shropshire

I produce a regular newsletter which keeps constituents updated with my work in South Shropshire and Westminster. To sign up, please visit https://www.stuartanderson.org.uk. For my privacy policy head to https://www.stuartanderson.org.uk/privacy.





Many thanks to John Webb our Six Parishes Dementia Friendly Co-ordinator for sending this in

Another extract from the book by Wendy Mitchell

It can make people feel like a failure if they are not 'willing to go to war.' For example, the way that I go about my life and the effort I put into 'out-witting' my dementia is a daily challenge, one that I find exhausting and that other people may not want to take on. Does that make them a failure and me a fighter? No. We're just choosing to deal with this disease in different ways. It is also not at all helpful to think of dementia as a 'death sentence' which I know is something that a lot of people describe it as perhaps even I did internally in those early days. Referring to dementia in these terms has nothing but negative connotations.

John Webb Six Parishes Dementia Friendly coordinator.

A pray for caregivers of dementia.

Loving God, bring peace to those living with the confusion and fading memories of dementia. Soothe restless spirits, calm anxiety, and let your tender, loving presence be felt when words fail. Grant strength, patience, and comfort to their families and caregivers on this difficult journey.
Amen

COMMUNITY NEWS

Our Bowling Season is now nearing its end, our position in the Mid-Shropshire league is tight. At the top of the league we are currently 3rd Place on 140, 9 points behind Donnington Wood in 2nd place who we still need to play. Shifnal B currently hold the lead with 178 points.

The presentation evening is to be held at The Shropshire, Muxton on 21st November 2026.

In the Highley League we were knocked out of the Presidents cup in the Quarter finals by Horsehay we drew on points scored, but as they had won more games, they progressed to the Semi-finals.

Finals day was held on Sunday 27th September on Presentation Day at Broseley.

In the League we currently hold 5th position in Division One. We hope to improve on this position over the next few weeks remaining fixtures.

Our new floodlights have been put to good use and we have had many requests from other competition organisers to use our green as a neutral venue for the County ladies cup and Mid-Shropshire Merit.

We have had good attendances for our fundraising events this season at our BBQ and Quiz night.

We are holding our Annual Mixed Open Doubles on Sunday 20th September from 12pm.

If anyone is interested in joining us as a member to play, to learn or just to socialise, all ages are welcome, for more details contact Jeanette Bennett 01952 730339 or Martin Bennett on 07870 511655.

Keep an eye on the Norton community Group for updates and our Facebook page' Stockton Bowling Club'



LITTER PICK WITH THE NORTON WOMBLES

A date will be arranged soon for the Autumnal Womble.
All are welcome to join.

It's a great way to have a wander, a natter and help to keep the village litter free at the same time!

Please keep your eyes peeled for the next date on Facebook post

NORTON VILLAGE HALL

THINKING OF HOSTING A GATHERING AT THE VILLAGE HALL?

PLEASE CONTACT PAULA AT 07977 777557 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL - COUNCIL TAX NEWS

Shropshire Council have been looking at their council tax support scheme for 2027/28 and as part of this they are proposing to disregard child benefit as an income.

In 2013 Shropshire Council took the decision to remove the child benefit income disregard. This change was detrimental to low-income families with children as it meant that a lot of families were suddenly paying an increased amount towards their council tax liability due to receiving an income which is paid to assist in supporting their child's needs.

Shropshire Council are now proposing to change our scheme for 2027 onwards, to disregard child benefit as an income in their calculations for council tax support. This change will benefit low-income families with children as it will result in a reduced council tax liability, as the income used in the calculation will be lower. This will allow them to have more money to support their household. Shropshire Council see this as a very positive change for Shropshire residents by helping those who are more financially vulnerable.

If you would like to share your views on this proposal, you can do so here Council Tax Support Scheme - 2027 onwards | Get Involved - Shropshire Council Consultation Portal

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APLEY FARM NEWS



The past three months have shown clearly how extreme weather shapes every part of a mixed farming system. With little rainfall, soils dried out rapidly, grass growth stopped and arable crops struggled.

Grass has died off throughout the drought with our green parkland turning brown. Not alone, there has been a nationwide shortage of forage with many farmers feeding winter forage to their cattle over the summer. Ian's expert eye on our cattle has been needed as they have struggled in the heat.

The sheep have been grazing the parkland which helps us to naturally support weed control. Their lighter grazing pressure is ideal for tidying up problem areas and rotational moving helps maintain pasture condition despite the dry weather.

Arable crops also felt the impact. Yields are down by around 25%, driven by small grains. We have taken a different approach this year to direct drill where we can which will help control our weeds by limiting soil disturbance. Although disappointing, these results are typical in a drought and highlight the long-term value of improving soil structure, retaining moisture and organic matter.

Despite the hot weather, the harvest itself was exceptionally smooth. Crops ripened early, grain moisture remained low and Mike did an excellent job keeping the wheels turning on the combine harvester from dawn to dark. The entire harvest was completed in just two weeks by the end of July, making it both the easiest and quickest I've ever been involved in.

We planned to establish summer cover crops early but with our soil hard and dry, there was a risk that the seed would not germinate so we waited until rain was on the forecast. Oilseed rape was planted at the beginning of September and into damper conditions with showers after planting. This allowed the crop to germinate quickly giving it the strong start needed for successful establishment. However, the return of warm, dry weather has now created conditions ideal for cabbage stem flea beetle activity. These beetles thrive in dry, warm spells and young OSR plants are particularly vulnerable at this stage. Moisture enabled germination followed by a sudden dry period often results in increased flea beetle pressure, making monitoring and crop protection essential. Slugs will also appear in any rainy spells.

As we move towards the end of September, our attention is turning to plant the winter wheat. We are weighing up whether to plant early into dry conditions or wait for some wet weather in the forecast. The challenge is that once the rain arrives, it may not stop, potentially making drilling difficult or even impossible. It is a fine balance between securing a timely establishment and avoiding the risk of drilling into waterlogged soils which could cause the seed to rot.

As autumn progresses, we hope for the right level of moisture and warmth needed to support planting conditions so we are in good stead to go into the winter season. Sheep will stay on the parkland throughout the winter and the cattle will be housed on winter rations.

Hopefully see some of you at the harvest festival on 4th October.

By Dan Bussey

MORRIS
GARDEN MAINTENANCE
Garden & Grounds maintenance contractor

MORRIS
GARDEN MAINTENANCE
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www.morrisgardenmaintenance.com

SAMCO

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN EDWARDS

We are delighted to feature a selection of photographs by Ian Edwards, through the changing seasons, showcasing the beauty of Apley Park in all its splendour.

From the fresh greens of spring and the warmth of summer sunshine to the rich colours of autumn and the frosted tranquility of winter, his photographs showcase the park's ever-changing character. Ian's images invite us to pause, appreciate our surroundings and see this treasured local landscape through fresh eyes.







DITLOID ANSWERS

1. 206 Bones in the Human Body
2. 88 Keys on a Piano
3. 40 Days and 40 Nights of the Great Flood
4. 21 Dots on a Standard Die
5. 52 Cards in a Pack
6. 7 Wonders of the World
7. 8 Legs on a Spider
8. 9 Lives of a Cat
9. 12 Signs of the Zodiac
10. 18 Holes on a Golf Course
11. 100 Years in a Century
12. 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse

EDITORIAL TEAM

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

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If you'd like to advertise your business in the Norton Natter, please get in touch.
Send your events, news, photographs and contributions for future editions to Jackie Bennett at jackie.a.bennett@hotmail.com or the Parish Clerk, Graham Bould at clerk@stockton-pc.gov.uk by **20th November 2026**.
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.