WINTER 2025

NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



Cover photo by Jackie Bennett

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NORTON BIN COLLECTION SCHEDULE

You may have noticed that residents have not received the usual bin collection information card for this year. Shropshire Council have issued a statement on social media explaining that it only recently came to light that the previous administration had cancelled the printing contract. They suggest looking up the bin collection schedule on- line via the Shropshire Council web site. In case this isn't possible for you please find a screen shot of the next 2 months collection dates. Note the rescheduled date over the Christmas period.

Dec 2025

1 Monday
- Recycling Collection

8 Monday
- General Waste Collection (Black Bin)

15 Monday
- Recycling Collection

RESCHEDULED 20 Saturday
- General Waste Collection (Black Bin)

29 Monday
- Recycling Collection

Jan 2026

5 Monday
- General Waste Collection (Black Bin)

12 Monday
- Recycling Collection

19 Monday
- General Waste Collection (Black Bin)

26 Monday
- Recycling Collection

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

COFFEE MORNING

We want to thank everyone who supported our very successful coffee morning at the village hall in September. We were delighted to have so many local people join us to see a bit of what we do at our meetings and, of course, enjoy a cuppa with us. £769.25 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support - a fantastic amount!

We hope to host another coffee (and cake!) morning again next year and show off some more of our sewing too. Thank you.

Shiona from the Bridgnorth Patch & Quilt Group.

THE PARISH PUMP

Parish Council November 2025 Meeting

The Parish Council held its meeting on bonfire night the 5th November 2025 . The areas of focus at the meeting are set out below.

The A442 and the state of the repairs were again highlighted by parishioners. These concerns continue to be raised with Shropshire Council over the condition of the highway, speed and volume of vehicles. Parishioners are therefore encouraged to continue to report defects to the carriageway, drains and signs throughout the parish including the A442 through - Fix my Street https://improvingyourroads.shropshire.gov.uk/, if the problem is not reported in this way it will not get resolved at all.

Over hanging hedges along the A442 have also been reported to the Parish Council. Some parishioners have cut back the offending overhangs. Some overhangs are still making it impossible to walk on the proper footpath meaning you have to venture on to a very busy road in places. Some urgent action is required to address this problem.

A second verge has been planted (picture 1:). The Probation Services Community Payback Teams have been involved with seeding a stretch of verge along Church Lane to help pollinators sustain themselves thereby helping to pollinate the food we eat.



(picture 1)



(picture 2)

The good news is that the 'Awards for All' lottery application has been secured for a new piece of equipment for the play park off Windmill Lane. Survey works are underway for the siting of the equipment featured in the last Norton Natter with a potential start date of March/April 2026. All those who responded to the online survey which helped secure the grant are being encouraged to contact the Clerk directly about forming a 'Friends of Norton Play Park' if you are interested please get in touch details below. Also attached is a recent picture of Parish Councillors putting up the nesting boxes at the play park (picture 2) and Shropshire Councils Wild Team from Social Services involved in the planting of wild meadow flowers at the site (picture 3).



(picture 3)

Rights of Way Project

The Parish Council have formed a working group to look at the half a dozen rights of way across the parish. The group is part-way through a themed approach to this work through 'walking it, reporting it, repairing it'. Most of the walking has taken place, coupled with all the reporting through to Shropshire Council. The project is at the repair stage with some additional bonuses. One of which is the potential for a new permissive path which could link up parts of Norton. New finger posts are already going in and new stiles and gates are proposed. Once completed the Parish Council will be encouraging Parishioners to use these improved rights of way. One way that could help would be to publish local maps within promotional leaflets showing starting and finishing points at local venues within the parish to encourage use. Watch this space for more updates.

Devolution of services

Discussions have opened up with Shropshire Council and neighbouring Parish Councils in the Shifnal Electoral Division: Earlier this year a Stockton Parish Council representative attended a county wide conference to discuss the potential for devolving certain services and budgets. The focus since then has been on devolving a service and associated budget known as 'Street Scene' . In order to develop this dialogue, the Parish Council has signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Shropshire Council as a key next step in this devolution journey. Parish Councillors agreed at the November meeting to meet with neighbouring Parish Councils and Shifnal Town Council in December 2025 to see if any common ground can be reached and then to approach Shropshire Council with a potential offer. The outcome of this matter will be reported at the next Parish Council meeting in January 2026 and later through the Spring Edition of Norton Natter.

Shropshire Local Plan

Parishioners may well be aware that the 'Shropshire Local Plan was rejected by Government inspectors earlier in the year. This has resulted in a re-start process. The first stage will involve approaching landowners across the county to put forward potential sites for development. This will then be followed by inviting comments on what a new local plan could/should look like, taking any new local plan through to 2038.

Many very rural areas like Stockton and Norton are defined as 'open countryside' and as such only 'exempt' sites are given planning permission. The Parish is therefore seeking views from Parishioners to see if 'small scale infill and brown field sites could be supported locally within a defined settlement boundary within the parish'. If this was supported it could bring additional capital resources to help develop some of the infrastructure needed to improve settlements within the parish. One example could be a road crossing on the A442 at Norton. The capital infrastructure ideas are set out here entitled ; Stockton Parish Council Place Plan. This plan could be submitted along with a request to allow development only if the infrastructure projects on the attached list were to be funded and delivered.

PLEASE LET THE CLERK KNOW YOUR VIEWS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING ON THE 7TH JANUARY, You can either text or email using the contact details set out below.

Contact details: Stockton Parish Council Clerk Graham Bould, 18, Mendip Close, Little Dawley, Telford. TF4 3JG.
gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk, 07792300702 (m)

NORTON VILLAGE POND

Quotes are being requested from suitably qualified contractors to make improvements to Norton village pond. This will allow the opportunity to bid for external grants. Any further updates will be published in future editions of Norton Natters. The large poppies have again been placed around the parish for Remembrance. Work is in hand again this year to provide the Christmas tree lights on the tree generously provided by Apley Estate.

Stockton Parish Council wish a joyful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all Norton Natter readers.

Dates have been agreed for future Parish Council meetings which are held at Norton Village Hall at 7.30pm on the following Wednesdays the 7th January (setting of the Parish Council Tax), 4th March and 6th May 2026.

STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL

Contact Details for Parish Councillors and Clerk

Name	Address	Email
Chairman Councillor Lord Gavin Hamilton of Dalzell	Harrington Hall Shifnal TF11 9DR	gavin.hamilton@apleyestate.com
Vice Chairman Councillor Barry Spittle	12, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	barryspittle1@gmail.com
Councillor John Pigg	4 Home Farm Bungalows Norton TF11 9EJ	john.pigg@icloud.com
Councillor Steve Bagnall	18 Cheswardine Lane Norton TF11 9EQ	stevebagnall@gmail.com

Name	Address	Email
Councillor Andrew Bennett	The Old Shop, 8, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	andrew.r.bennett@hotmail.com
Councillor Catherine Griffiths	Bramble Barn, Bridgnorth Road, Norton TF11 9EE	catherine@brambledevelopments.co.uk
Councillor Doug Dyas	South Lodge, Bridgnorth Road, Norton. TF11 9EE	dyasdoug@hotmail.com
Clerk Graham Bould	18 Mendip Close Little Dawley Telford TF4 3JG	gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk Mobile: 07792300702

NORTON VILLAGE HALL

If you're interested in booking the Village Hall please contact Paula 07977 777557



POLICE ADVICE

A message from the Police

Keeping Our Communities Safe This Winter

As winter settles in across our area, your Safer Neighbourhood Team is here to help keep everyone safe and supported. The colder months bring their own challenges, darker evenings, icy roads, and the hustle and bustle of the festive season, so here are a few simple steps to make life easier and safer for all of us.

1. Light Up and Lock Up

With the nights drawing in, homes can look empty, which can attract opportunistic thieves. Use timer switches on lights, keep doors and windows locked, and don't leave valuables on display. A little preparation goes a long way.

2. Look Out for Each Other

Winter can be tough for some, especially the elderly or those living alone. A quick phone call or knock on the door can make a big difference. Community spirit is one of our greatest strengths, let's keep it shining bright.

3. Stay Safe on the Roads

Frosty mornings and wet conditions mean extra care is needed. Slow down, allow more time for journeys, and check your tyres and lights. If you're walking, wear something bright so you're visible in the dark.

We'll be out and about in the community throughout the winter, so if you see us, give us a wave! We're always happy to stop for a chat and hear what matters most to you.

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

RAES RECIPE

This is a really easy recipe that I have used many times for Apley shooting lunches.

After the cake is made I often add more brandy by making holes with a small spike and drizzling the brandy to soak in. Of course this is optional extra!

GLAZED FRUIT CAKE

Pre- heat the oven to 150c Fan / 330fF/ Gas 2 An 8inch square or rounds cake tin lined with greaseproof paper.

Ingredients:

8 oz (226g) butter
1 lb Self raising flour
10 oz(283g) caster sugar
12 oz (340g) currants
8 oz (225g) raisins
8oz (225g) sultanas
4oz (113g) mixed peel
4oz (113g) glace cherries
4 large eggs
4 tablespoons brandy
2 oz (56g) flaked almonds
Whole almonds to decorate
Sieved apricot jam to glaze



METHOD

1. Rub butter into flour until you have a fine breadcrumb texture. (If you use a 'Magimix' or similar, it makes life easier!
2. Stir in the sugar, fruit and flaked almonds.
3. Make a well in the centre and stir in the beaten eggs and brandy (add more randy if it seems too dry).
4. Pour mixture into the lined cake tin.
5. Use the back of a spoon to level the top, then add the whole almonds to decorate.
6. Bake in the centre of the oven for 2 ¼ - 2 ½ hours. Or until the cake tester comes out clean.
7. Remove the cake from the oven and while it is still warm, glaze the top with apricot jam.

I hope you try making and more importantly enjoy eating this cake!



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

An extract from Wendy Mitchell's book - What I wish people knew about Dementia

In the animal world, words aren't necessary: there are purrs and licks, and a nose from a new mum is often enough to keep her new brood in line. Why do humans, then, place so much stock in words, when most of the time there are never enough of them to say what we really feel inside?

Before dementia, I enjoyed long dinners, sitting in restaurants, conversations bouncing back and forth between courses. But as I have already explained, after my diagnosis the clanging of cutlery, the background noises and my inability to keep up with conversations meant that I retreated from the table. I sat back in my chair, just content to listen. Did my silence mean that I wasn't contributing? Perhaps. But did my chair around the table make me still feel included. Most definitely.

A passage from the bible.

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." Lamentations 3:22-24

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICES - NORTON

The Mobile Library: calls at the car-park at Norton Village Hall alternative Wednesdays (07/01/26 & 21/01/26) for 10 minutes between 12.40pm and 12.50pm. This is route 3 and stop 5.

Other Shropshire Library Services
Please be aware that there are no age restrictions on e-Books/audio and all available titles are searchable and borrowable on all adult and junior tickets.

e-Books and audiobooks
This service is provided by Cloud Library and can be accessed through a browser or app, available from your device's app store.

You will need your library card number and PIN to access this service. Support (including device compatibility) App user guide Video how-to

e-Newspapers and magazines
This service is provided by PressReader and gives access to over 7000 newspapers and magazines, including most of the UK national papers.

To access this service you will need to select 'Library or Group' sign in, choose Shropshire Libraries from the list, and then enter your library card number and PIN.

Free access expires every 30 days but can be refreshed simply by logging out and then in again.



Online Reference - available in branch only
The following are free to use in library branches. Where sign in is required, this will be your library card number and PIN.

BFI Replay
BFI Replay is a free streaming service for public libraries with thousands of digitised videos and television programmes from the collections of the BFI National Archive and UK regions and nations film archives, alongside contributions from other significant archives such as BBC and ITV.

The videos span six decades, from the 1960s to the 2010s, offering a glimpse into Britain's past, its people and places; recording and revealing an era of rapid social, industrial, political and technological change.

National Theatre screenings
Titles from the National Theatre Third Collection are available free to public library users on site. The National Theatre is excited to be bringing a brilliant and varied set of titles to members of the public, so they can also enjoy high-quality screenings put on by their local library or by accessing the screenings themselves within the library spaces.

Access to Research
Free access to over 30 million academic articles from leading publishers who have made their journal content available for free. You can view which articles and journals are available from home, but for access to the full text please visit a library branch. Printing facilities are available in all libraries, chargeable at the current rate. Find out more about your local library, including opening times.

British Newspaper Archive
Access to over a million fully searchable pages, including Salopian Journal and Shrewsbury Chronicle. You can create your own account now but to receive unlimited free access please sign in at a library.

Ancestry family history
Search your family history using Ancestry's selection of UK censuses, parish records and many other national and international databases. This resource can be accessed free in your local library, via the public computers in all libraries or via the library Wi-Fi network where available.

Find my past
Free online access to some collections including Shropshire records is available through the public computers in libraries. Other records may require a paid for subscription.

Which Online
Test reports and best buy recommendations for goods and services. (Available in Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Market Drayton, Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch Libraries – please ask a member of staff for access)

Bridgnorth Library: Listley Street Bridgnorth Shropshire WV16 4AW
want to find out more email: library.support@shropshire.gov.uk, or ring 01743-255024.

PETER RABBIT WORDSEARCH



B	H	U	N	C	A	M	U	N	C	A	M	O	Q	Y	E	F	Z	P	W	J	C	N	W
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Jemima Puddle-Duck
Mr. Jeremy Fischer
Johnny Town-Mouse
Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle
Mrs. Tittlemouse
Samuel Whiskers
Squirrel Nutkin
Benjamin Bunny
Pigling Bland
Timmy Tiptoes

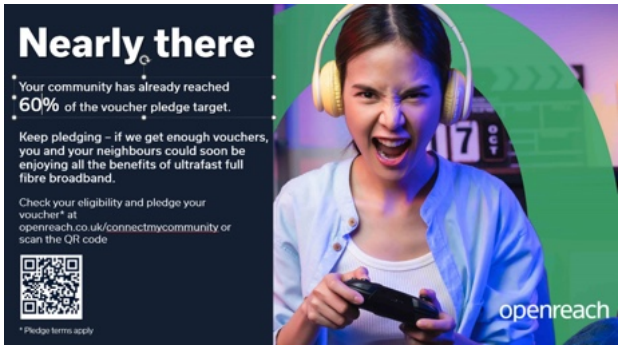
Hunca- Munca
Mr. McGregor
Peter Rabbit
Cotton-Tail
Miss Moppet
Mrs. Rabbit
Tom Kitten
Mr. Tod
Flopsy
Mopsy

GREAT NEWS!

Ultrafast Full Fibre has arrived in part of Norton!

Openreach have confirmed that they have completed the work to enable 97 properties in Village Road, Windmill Lane, Cheswardine Lane and Bridgnorth Road to allow them to order ultrafast full fibre to their properties. You can check if your home is included by going to the Openreach website and entering your postcode into the eligibility checker.

www.openreach.com/connect-my-community



However, there is still work to be done to include the whole of Norton (41 houses are yet to be enabled) Openreach are asking for more people to pledge their interest. This just means that you agree that you will switch to Ultrafast Full Fibre Broadband once enabled. It's still up to you to shop around the 600 plus Internet Providers (IPs) and chose the best deal for you. Openreach just need 34 more pledges to achieve their target and allow the work to go ahead.

Openreach have been working with government funding to upgrade the network for 138 premises in Norton. All it takes is your pledge of interest to complete the work– at no cost to you or the community.

✅ Each pledge contributes £4,500 towards the build
✅ Zero disruption – we use the existing network
✅ Speeds and reliability for work, gaming, streaming & more
✅ Over 600 providers to choose from for the best deals

They need 60 pledges in total to finish the work and enable all households in Norton – The total stands at 36 so far.
So, if ultrafast full fibre is something you would order when it's available and you haven't already pledged, pledge today by going on the Openreach website and help future-proof your network
www.openreach.com/connect-my-community

COMMUNITY NEWS

We have now played our final matches for this bowling season in the Highley & District Bowling League and the Mid-Shropshire Bowling League.

Stockton A finished 5th in Division 1 of the Highley League.

Stockton B our new team have enjoyed their 2nd year playing in Division 2 of the Highley League, they have had some good match results and hope to build on this in the league next year. They are also looking to form a team to play in the Mid-Shropshire League for 2026.

Stockton A finished 4th in Division 3 of the Mid-Shropshire, just 7 points behind Donnington Wood B who came 3rd. Bowring B won the division overall. On our team averages overall placings in Division 3 were Simon Zacharek who finished 2nd,, Rob Weir 3rd, Martin Bennett 4th and Jeanette Bennett as 5th and top leading lady just beating Lorna Williams from Bowring B . Well done to everyone who played for us this year.

We attended the Mid-Shropshire presentation evening on 14th November at The Shropshire in Muxton where we enjoyed a lovely meal with live entertainment.

Work is to start on replacing our floodlights shortly, which will be completed before our new season starts again in April 2026.

We are holding our end of season dinner on 8th February 2026 at the Hundred house Hotel again who always make us feel welcome and put on a lovely menu for us.

If anyone is interested in joining us as a member to play, to learn or just to socialise, all ages welcome, 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.

BRIDGNORTH SPARTANS KICK OFF AT SPARTANS PARK

Rob Woodcock from the Spartans writes:...

Bridgnorth Spartans have now officially kicked off at the Norton Playing fields with their new home named Spartans Park. A good handful of matches have already taken place, with some excellent performances and results across the teams.

The pitch is settling in well and a great deal of work has gone into making sure that players, match officials and visitors are comfortable and well looked after whenever games are held at Norton.

Spartans have also worked hard to ensure that no parking takes place on Cheswardine Lane, Parking officials will continue to be present at every gam e to help guide visitors and keep everyone parked safely off the road and the club would like to thank residents for their patience and support.

The club is extremely grateful for the many kind messages of good luck and encouragement received from the local community - they have been hugely appreciated.

Spartans would be delighted to welcome local residents to matches at Spartans Park. If you do come along, please make yourself known to one of the volunteers who will be happy to welcome you.

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

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

Stuart Anderson MP
Member of Parliament for South Shropshire
Tel: 01746 555025
Email: stuart.anderson.mp@parliament.uk
75a High Street, Bridgnorth, WV16 4DX

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.



CHURCH NEWS - WELCOME

The Rt Revd Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury has now formerly announced that The Revd Harvey Gibbons (currently Vicar of Oswestry and Rector of Rhydycroesau) has been appointed as Interim Minister of Beckbury, Badger, Kemberton, Ryton, Stockton and Sutton Maddock benefice, locally known as the Six Parishes.

There will be the opportunity to attend:

Revd Harvey's Licencing Service
on Monday 16th February 7pm
at St. Mary's Sutton Maddock Church
conducted by the Rt Revd Sarah Bullock, Bishop of Shrewsbury

Meanwhile there is Advent, Christmas and Epiphany to look forward to.

Beckbury Badger Kemberton Ryton Stockton Sutton Maddock



Come and have a cuppa and a chat at Norton Village Hall
£2.00 each (to cover cost of room hire and cake)
2pm – 4pm

- **Thursday 18th December**
- **Thursday 15th January 2026**

All are welcome. Any questions call Paula on 07977 777557

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AT VILLAGE HALL

Christmas Carols at Norton Village Hall
Friday 19th December, 7pm
Bring & share supper
ALL WELCOME

We would be very grateful for one or two more to join the Parochial Church Council.

The main role is to help in odd jobs around the church and assist at services and weddings.

If you would like more details please contact:
Tina Dalton at tina.dalton@hotmail.co.uk or Gavin Hamilton at gavin_hamilton@outlook.com

STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL PLACE PLAN - NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS 2025

1. The following projects have already been registered by Shropshire Council on Shropshire Councils Place Plan Neighbourhood Projects for the Stockton Parish area.

- Highway works at Astol crossroads Stockton to address accident cluster at Stockton 1PT

South – 1-5yrs

- Road safety works A442 Stockton crossroads (6 months)
- Accident cluster site A442 Brockton A442.

2. The following projects have/are being registered by the Parish Council on Shropshire Councils Place Plan Neighbourhood Projects for the Stockton Parish area.

- Consideration of a by-pass for Norton Village.
- Speeding traffic on the A442 through Norton and overtaking on double white lines remains an issue.
- Speeding and large agricultural vehicles along Cheswardine Lane.
- Lack of appropriate parking for Bowls Club and Village Hall.
- Poor road surface on A442 causing increased noise.
- Footpath extension needed to Apley Farm shop from Astol crossroads.
- Development Plan for waste and infill areas in Norton to include provision of more bungalows.
- New pedestrian crossing required for the Norton across the A442.

3. For further discussions for submission as a neighbourhood project – requested from Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project (RSVP).

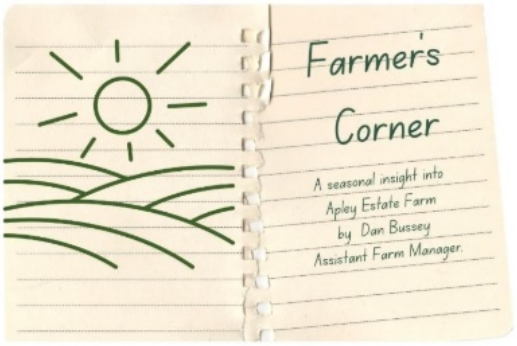
- Development of wild flower meadow planting within verges.(the Parish Council have undertaken two pilot verge sites)

4. Agreement required to develop with potential partners:

- Improved bus service between Telford and Bridgnorth. (Shropshire Council)
- Poor state of village pond in Norton. (project being costed – Apley Estate)
- Church is not a focal point and is not well supported. (Parochial Church Council)
- Community Safety-burglaries. (West Mercia Police).
- Additional play equipment at the Play Park Windmill Lane (Parish Council)
- Improvements/upgrading of street furniture. (Parish Council).

Graham Bould
Clerk Stockton Parish Council
November 2025

APLEY FARM NEWS - DAN BUSSEY



As we moved into October and November, the weather finally turned in our favour. After such a dry summer, we were pleased to see some rain showers that gave our soils the drink they'd been waiting for. October brought a rare window of ease. With the ground still dry and workable, we enjoyed an easy drilling period. All our autumn crops were planted and established during October in good weather conditions. It was a welcome contrast to the challenges of the summer.

Our young cattle saw a flush of grass after the dry spell which they enjoyed and meant we did not need to put them in their winter housing until the beginning of November. Stock prices remain high but so do the inputs.

November bought some very sad and unexpected news when we completed our routine TB test and were informed that we had 2 animals who have reacted to the test and may be possible TB carriers. We will now need a routine test every 60 days until we have two clear tests which brings on much more work and stress to the animals as well as Ian and I.

As part of our management, the cattle will be weighed every 5 to 6 weeks to monitor growth rates and performance. It's a simple but vital step in making sure we're on track, especially with finishing stock and it helps us make informed decisions around feeding and health.

Sheep will also be grazing parkland, stubble turnips and grassland and following on from the cattle grazing to add diversity to our soils. This not only adds fertility to the land through natural nutrient cycling but also contributes to farm income during the winter season. It's a practical and regenerative way to make use of cover crops and pasture, keeping the system productive even when the weather turns.

With all the crops now safely in the ground, our focus is shifting toward winter conservation work. Through the Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme, we'll be concentrating on fencing, tree planting, hedge laying and hedgerow coppicing. These efforts not only support biodiversity and landscape resilience, but also help shape the long-term health of the farm. It's rewarding work—hands-on, visible, and deeply connected to the stewardship values that underpin everything we do at Apley.

Still, the unseasonably warm and damp conditions have brought their own complications. Some areas of Oilseed rape have struggled with slug pressure—wet soils and mild nights have created ideal conditions for damage. At the same time, we're keeping a close eye on aphid activity. With temperatures staying higher than usual we're doing all we can to avoid reaching for insecticides unless absolutely necessary. It's a delicate balance between protecting the crop and preserving beneficial insect populations. On the plus side we haven't seen signs of flea beetle which can be devastating to the crop in the early stages.

	Rainfall (Total) 2025	Rainfall (Total) 2024
November	*72mm (17/11/25)*	41 mm
October	54mm	77 mm
September	118mm	142 mm
August	16 mm	26 mm
July	33 mm	78 mm
June	35 mm	42 mm
May	19 mm	75 mm

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With the wet weather conditions, we avoid any kind of machinery movement and activity on the arable land now as it does significant damage to the soil structure and you can see it for the rest of the year!

Winter barley hasn't escaped unscathed. We've seen early signs of mildew in some fields—again, a result of the lingering warmth and humidity. It's a reminder that while mild weather can ease fieldwork, it also extends the window for pests and disease. We're hoping for a cold, dry winter to help reset the balance and knock back some of the pressure heading into spring.

On a more positive note, our Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) areas are coming through nicely. The coverage is good and we're already seeing the benefits of those green corridors. Come spring, they'll blossom into valuable habitat, encouraging more wildlife and enhancing biodiversity across the estate. It's rewarding to see those efforts taking shape, proof that even in a challenging season, there are bright spots worth celebrating. Winter work will also include roadside hedge cutting so apologies if we hold any of you up on the lanes.

With the cattle now housed and winter routines settling in, the focus shifts to care, observation and preparation. After a year of extremes, it feels good to see the land recovering, the crops established, and the systems we've built holding steady. There's still plenty to manage, but we're heading into winter with cautious optimism—and a firm eye on the season ahead.







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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 **29th January 2026**.
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