SUMMER 2026

NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



In this issue

NORTON VILLAGE POND RESTORATION

We need community help to strengthen a grant application to help restore the Norton Village pond. Please read the outline proposal below, complete the survey questions and post your response through the Norton village hall letterbox as soon as possible. The ability to demonstrate that our local community is interested and will benefit from such a scheme really adds weight to the application and improves the chances of its success.

NORTON VILLAGE POND RESTORATION PROPOSAL

Do you support the restoration of Norton village pond?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why do you support the restoration of Norton village pond?
(tick all that apply)

- to restore nature
- to be a restful place to relax.
- educational for children & adults about nature.
- other (please describe)

How often do you visit the pond currently?
(tick the one that most applies)

- once a week
- once a month
- a few times a year
- hardly ever

How often would you visit the pond if it was restored?
(tick the one that most applies)

- once a week
- once a month
- a few times a year
- hardly ever

Would you be willing to volunteer in any way?
(please tick all that apply)

- observation wildlife surveys?
- maintenance (pond weed clearing, trimming vegetation etc)

Name & contact details ('phone or email)

Thank you for completing this community survey, please post it through the Norton village hall letter box

THE PROPOSAL

To restore the Norton Village pond to make it a peaceful place with open water surrounded by a natural habitat of trees, wildflowers, grass and water vegetation and the accompanying birds, insects and amphibians. This will create somewhere in the village for people to relax, observe and learn about nature.

Unfortunately, in recent years the pond has been neglected. It is 95% shaded with a large number of willow & broad leaf trees. The pond has become silted up with fallen leaves and wood.

Advice has been obtained from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The proposal is to:

- Fell surrounding trees to reduce shading to approximately 30%
- Dredge the pond to remove fallen wood and increase the centre depth to approximately 1m, shelving to the banks, but leaving approximately 25% as vegetation/ marshy land. Materials dug out to be spread on neighbouring farmland.
- Ensure that the risk of run off from the road is minimised
- Expose the outlet drain/ stream and ensure that it is set to retain a level of water in the pond.

This will:

- Create a biodiversity epicentre in Norton, improving the diversity of vegetation, amphibians, insects and bird life.
- Act as a natural reservoir, slowing the flow of water into the nearby Norton Brook after heavy rain and thereby reducing downstream flooding
- Capture and store carbon dioxide in the surrounding vegetation and sediment
- Provide a tranquil, water-based location where villagers can enjoy nature and relax, experiencing mindfulness and improving mental health and wellbeing.
- Provide a natural classroom where local people especially children can observe and learn about ecosystems, natural life cycles of birds, insects and amphibians through activities such as pond dipping or taking part in organised bird counts.

We are hoping to get this project at least part funded by a grant from Severn Trent Water. They are interested in whether this work will have a community benefit and is supported by the community. Please complete the community survey as soon as possible.

THE PARISH PUMP

Parish Council - March and May 2026 meetings.

The Parish Council held meetings on the 4th March and their Annual meeting on the 6th May 2026 . The areas of focus from these meetings are set out below.

The A442 – This road continues to dominate the public sessions and agenda for the Parish Council. With the increase of traffic volumes, noise, size and speed of vehicles through to the increased difficulties for parishioners to walk or ride across the road from either side in Norton.

Information recently shared on social media by parishioners from MP Stuart Anderson highlights that the resurfacing work will be carried out between April 2026 and March 2027 on the A442 from Vicarage Lane to Stockton, Norton and the A442 Sutton Maddock Island, Sutton Maddock (night work). Work will be carried out by Kier Infrastructure on behalf of Shropshire Council with the capital works team currently planning the resurfacing scheme to be undertaken in September 2026.

Several members of the Parish Council however have some serious doubts about the structural integrity of sections of the road surface and the community does not seem to be any further forward in terms of gaining a commitment from the Shropshire Council over a much-needed crossing.

Members of the Parish Council have therefore started to research what other parts of the UK are doing to address similar issues and problems in their localities. It appears that local communities can undertake their own highway safety surveys by utilizing participatory mapping, structured resident questionnaires, and volunteer-led observational studies to identify hazards, assess risk, and prioritize improvements. A successful community-led approach combines subjective resident experiences with objective data, such as collision reports, to build a comprehensive safety picture. This work will start to develop over the coming months and parishioners will be invited to help with what is seen as a vital piece of local research to secure additional capital resources based on need.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO REPORT ALL ROAD DEFECTS via the following link to help with the road improvement campaign across the Parish

Fix my Street https://improvingyourroads.shropshire.gov.uk/, if the problem is not reported in this way it will not get resolved at all.

Historic Stockton Finger Post – A442 – The Parish Council understands from a 'third party' that the recently broken cast iron finger post hit by a car has been collected and is in for repair. Everyone awaits a positive outcome to this localised vehicle vandalism.

Local Plan – Place Plan updates.

An announcement has been made by Shropshire Council the week commencing the 4th May 2026 of reports being submitted to the Council's cabinet, setting out the process of a new Local Plan. Details of these reports can be found via the following link - https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/mgAi.aspx?ID=26150#mgDocuments,

As reported in the last few editions of Norton Natter the Parish Council raised the question of **'small scale infill of brown field sites could be supported locally within a defined settlement boundary within the parish'.** This view will be communicated to Shropshire Council by the Parish Council during the timescales set out in the attached link.

As part of the May 2026 annual meeting Graeme Manton the Estates Director at Apley came to discuss Apley's ideas for potential development sites within the Norton village boundary. Apley have submitted three sites for consideration. The estate yard and land adjacent to the play park in Windmill Lane, including a site within Norton Farm opposite the bowling green. Graeme Manton said that these sites are at the very early stages of consideration by Shropshire Council as part of the Local Plan process and anyone interested in talking to Apley about these ideas should contact the estate office, The Old School, Norton. TF11 9ED 01952-582770 and arrange to call into the office to see the plans and talk about the ideas being developed. Apley Estate are engaging an architect to start and develop the ideas as part of a master planning process in due course.

Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) – Shropshire Council have increased the EMG for 26/27 to £1,000 from £750 in 25/26 and the Parish Council will again be submitting an application based on 50/50 match funding. The projects being put forward are the third dropped kerb by Church Lane, Stockton on the A442 footpath and edging of the A442 footpath from the centre of Norton to the boundary with the Sutton Maddock parish. The Parish Council is also working with the Probation Service to undertake some ditch clearance works in Cheswardine Lane. The success of the grant application will depend upon the monitoring returns for the 25/26 spending being accepted and a robust application for 26/27.

Play-park off Windmill Lane – The new play park climbing frame is in place thanks to the grant funding from the 'National Lottery Awards for All' programme which grant aided the project with £14,235.00 and with the Parish Council claiming back the VAT on the project at £2,847.00 giving a total investment of £17,082.00. The Parish Council understands that the new equipment has become very popular in the short time it has been on site and is a tribute to all those Parishioners who helped complete the original Community Facebook page survey which showed to the Lottery the breadth of local support for the project



SAMCO

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

June 4th - Paula's garden
20, Village Rd (weather permitting)

A break over July & August.
Returning to Norton Village Hall

10th September
8th October

£2.00 each (to cover cost of room hire and cake) 2pm – 4pm



All are welcome. Any questions call Paula on 07977 777557

PARISH PUMP continued....

Norton Village Pond grant application to Severn Trent - We want to try for another grant application of around £10,000 from Severn Trent to help improve the village pond at Norton. We need your help again! The Parish Council must demonstrate the real need and impact of the project. Informing Severn Trent how it will benefit the local community of Norton, and how the community will be engaged in its development through surveys, consultations, statistics and social research. There will be a need at the end of the application process to share the supporting documents as evidence of local need and involvement in this historic pond. The Parish Council will also need to look at how to monitor and evaluate the project to measure success and 'prove' how the project will benefit the community and the impact it will have locally. In order to help develop the application the Parish Council will be looking for help from the administrators of the community Facebook page to help with the surveying so keep a look out please. We have also included a survey within this edition of the Norton Natter – and would appreciate as many local residents completing and sending it in as possible. It really does help to strengthen the application for the grant.

Parish Council Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.
The Parish Clerk who is also the Responsible Financial Officer for the Parish Council is due to retire in December 2026. Stockton Parish Councillors are starting the process of drawing up a job description and person specification for the post to be advertised later in the year. Anyone interested in the position should contact the present Clerk for more information.

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

STOCKTON FINGERPOST UPDATE





Many of you will have noticed the disappearance of the cast iron finger post on the junction leading up to St Chad's Church at Stockton. This rare survivor had suffered significant damage following a car collision one morning last winter. Luckily a quick-thinking member of Apley Estate team moved it to a safe place away from further harm or theft. It was also quickly reported to both the local Police, Shropshire Council directly and via 'Fix my Street' by a number of local interested parties. However, nothing had been heard about any action that had been taken since then.

After numerous chasing emails and a formal 'Request for Information', Andrew Keyland from Shropshire Council Highways Maintenance was finally able to confirm that the old fingerpost had been collected from its safe place just before Easter and taken to a local blacksmith for repair. Although he was unable to give an exact date for reinstatement, at the very least it seems the intention is there to restore it and return it to the corner. It will be nice to see it back where it belongs.

Hopefully steps can then be taken to add the sign to the list of assets that come under the direct care of the local Parish Council.

CHURCH NEWS

Hello, I am the Revd Prebendary Harvey Gibbons, licensed as the Interim Minister of the Six Parishes for a period of 3 years. Interim Ministers are specifically appointed to be a guide, a source of support, and a provider of encouragement during a time of change and transition in the life of a church, parish or benefice.

That all sounds rather formal, so in a nutshell I am here to be your parish priest, to minister among you for 3 years in a similar capacity to that of a vicar or rector - leading Sunday services, taking baptisms, weddings and funerals, visiting and generally being around, along with all the admin and meetings that come with the job. On top of that, I shall be working alongside and resourcing people to discover new opportunities for our six churches to work together to rebuild our church communities and their involvement in the life of our villages in a sustainable fashion.

We will need to identify those practices and traditions which can be built upon and those that need to change, identify and introduce new patterns of worship and community engagement, and encourage people to reflect on how they can work together across parish boundaries to enable the churches to flourish. It will certainly involve taking some risks and almost certainly making a few mistakes along the way, but we step out in faith and with God's good grace, we will hopefully succeed.

Services at Stockton, will for now, continue to reflect the agricultural seasons and our next Sunday services are Lammas Sunday on 2nd August and Harvest Sunday on 4th October. I hope that both will involve food of some description! In addition, I am looking at the possibility of starting something new on a Sunday afternoon in Norton Village Hall in the Autumn, alongside other community events across the six parishes. So please do look out for further information.

For those who would like a little background information about me:

- I am married to Liz; we have two adult children and three grandchildren as well as elderly parents. Prior to ordination I had a career in agriculture following three years at Harper Adams Agricultural College. I spent roughly ten years working as an agronomist - a few years overseas, largely in the Middle East turning the deserts green, then in Wiltshire, Dorset and Somerset.
- I was ordained in 1999 and have ministered in many different contexts where I trained clergy and teams of lay people. I am currently Warden of Readers for the Diocese of Lichfield, a Bishop's Adviser for Ministry and was privileged to be made a Prebend of Lichfield Cathedral in May of this year.

I am very much looking forward to discovering the people of our 6 parishes and working alongside you. May God bless us richly as we journey together.

The Revd Prebendary Harvey Gibbons The Rectory, Beckbury TF11 9DG 01952 445171 revdharvey@gmail.com

WEST MERCIA POLICE

West Mercia Police Economic Crime Unit highlights fraud and scams including actions to prevent getting drawn in by the scammers.

West Mercia regularly highlight Romance Fraud as it remains one of the more common forms of online fraud. It is moreover a very damaging type of fraud not only from a financial view but also from an emotional view and the damage caused to the victim's mental health and well-being.

It is also important to recognise that victims should be treated with empathy and understanding and not with blame, and shame. The criminals behind most Romance Frauds are skilled at manipulating and coercing their victims. They may use similar tactics to Domestic Abusers and are coercive and controlling.

The fraudsters will draw their victims into false relationship, gain their confidence, before the requests for money start to come in. These are accompanied by heart rending pleas about personal, or family problems, and emergencies which need finance.

Are any platforms safe?

Fraudsters continue to target users of popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as dating sites such as Tinder and Plenty of Fish, and many others.

Messaging sites such as Google Hangouts and WhatsApp may also be used to find unsuspecting victims.

As well as conventional dating platforms, online Gaming platforms may be used to seek potential victims since there are fewer protective measures in place.

Who are their targets?

Females over 40 years are common victims as well as younger males, but users also need to be aware on age related dating platforms too.

How does it work?

Basically, criminals will go to great lengths to gain the victim's trust by claiming they are in a genuine relationship which is built up over time.

They will manipulate and exploit the victim to the extent they are persuaded they are in a real and genuine relationship. They create convincing personas such as military personnel, medical staff, engineers and many others to convince the victim they are genuine. Then, when they ask for money, the victim is convinced there is no problem with the request. The requests can be very emotive citing reasons such as medical emergencies, travel costs, payment of fines or taxes, or even claiming their bank account has been frozen. Another Red flag is "Love Bombing" which is a common technique where the person shows excessive interest in you by way of extreme flattery, strong communicating of their feelings for you and promoting ideas of your future together at a very early stage – beware if they get too serious – too quick.

Tell-tale signs a friend or family member is involved in a Romance Scam

They may be very secretive about their relationship or provide excuses for why their online partner has not video called or met them in person. They may be unwilling to discuss their online relationship, very often because the fraudster has persuaded you not to tell your family or friends. They may express very strong emotions and commitment to someone they have only just met. They have sent, or are planning to send, money to someone they have not met face-to-face. They may take out loans or withdraw from their pension to send money.

Stay safe

Never send money to someone you have never met in person. Never part with your bank or personal details to strangers online however genuine they claim to be. The fact that they may request payment to another named bank account, not their own, can be another tell-tale sign of a fraudster. Always seek advice from somebody trusted before parting with any money in any format, whether it is bank transfers, PayPal, Gift Cards or bitcoin currencies. Profile photos are very often fake; you can research any image by doing a "Reverse Image" search to find photos that have been copied from elsewhere. Never share images of yourself that you would not want your own family and friends to see.

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

if you have fallen for a fraud, Report it to **Report Fraud (formerly known as ACTION FRAUD) on 0300 123 2040 or via 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.

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

NORTON
VILLAGE HALL



THINKING OF
HOSTING A
GATHERING AT THE
VILLAGE HALL?

PLEASE CONTACT
PAULA AT 07977 777557
FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

LETTER FROM CANADA



Michael Day 1950 Aged 6

A few months ago, Mike Edwards from Calgary in Canada got in touch telling us that he had grown up in Norton in the late 40's early 50's and would we like a few words about the fond memories he holds for the place? Of course we were only too delighted to accept. Hopefully some of you will remember the young Michael Day pictured here?

Memories of my early years as a young boy in the Norton area.

At the time I was known as Michael Day and my mother's name was Vera Alice Day. She had grown up in Leytonstone, London; the youngest of eight.

In 1942 with her mother's encouragement, she signed up to join the Army which led to her serving as a driver in the ATS stationed at Shrewsbury from 1942 to 1944.

She became pregnant by an officer in 1944 and after being disowned by her mother also had to leave the ATS.

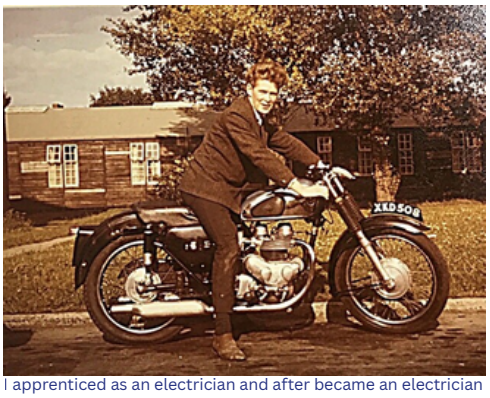
After the war my mother was offered the position of housekeeper to Mr William Wall who was, at that time Head Forester on Apley Estate and lived in Stockton Lodge at the entrance to Apley Estate. The neighbours at that time were Mr George Farmer and his family. Mr Farmer was the gamekeeper for the estate.

This was now 1949 and I was 5 years old; at the time when I started school in Norton. I remember the school was across the road from the Hundred House Hotel which in the early days served as a part-time court house. Those judged guilty of a crime may have found themselves put in the stocks across from the Hotel (which I understand still remain to this day). A large oak tree close by to the stocks had a hollow centre which my friend; Kenny Lawley and I would climb up and occupy. We would throw acorns down on the heads of those waiting for the Midland Red bus going to Bridgnorth with those below cursing the crazy squirrels.

Mr Wall was very good to me, he would often take me to St Chads church at Stockton where he would go each Sunday as the bell ringer, summoning folks to church to listen to the Reverend Coupes services.

While my mother was working for Mr Wall, Bill Edwards an estate worker from Sutton Maddock would have occasion to drive a big noisy Field Marshal tractor through the gates to the Estate. Bill noticed my mother and they started dating. In April 1950 they were married in St Chads church at Stockton.

The first home for Bill and Vera was at 1, Bridgnorth Road. Their neighbours were the two Parton sisters. This was a tied thatch cottage built in 1620 and it was here that my parents had three children. The property had a garden with plum and apple trees and a pig stye which was home for a pig my stepdad called Grunter would you believe?



I apprenticed as an electrician and after became an electrician prior to leaving for Canada in 1968.

The school was a lot closer while we lived there, also the village shop which was run by one of the close neighbours Mr Ted Lewis. The village policeman at the time was PC Evans who lived across the road from the post office on Cheswardine Lane.



About 50 years later, I took my wife and daughter to visit Stockton Lodge and we went to the gamekeeper's door. Mrs Farmer opened the door, I said to her "I am not quite sure how to start this conversation but as a small boy I lived next door" and to my surprise she exclaimed "Michael!" which was just amazing after all those years.

Sadly, after we left the old thatch to move to Bromley the next folks in, lit a big fire in the fireplace which resulted in embers coming out of the chimney setting the thatch on fire and so today after many years the house is called Primrose Cottage.

I'm a grandfather now, here I am with my two granddaughters on returning from a birding trip to Ecuador in 2023.

Mike Edwards



SUMMER WORD SEARCH - GREAT WRITERS

P X K Y N M R M C K F F U W K B X S G M F M S B
E A R Z D Z C N S V G E P R S D Z W E R E O F M
M P J Z W G P E Y N W C E Q O L B F N S R Q N G
W U V H I T X W G U M A R K T W A I N A N P F I
L O X O L R E W Y I E H V Q P I H I Q M E H X C
K A J W U S N R F P Y U J C N X X W X Z S I S Z
B L C A F S U W A Y M U E M D E I Y D C T L G G
K R Z P N I V M H E J C B U L X Q E H X H I Y Y
K Y S X L E F M P C P X K D O B O N Z M E P T N
H S C V W N A W V J H S O J L S A V L O M P L C
P T I B Q Y U U U N Y O E C C T O E X J I U B Y
K P T W U Z W K S Q W X L K Z K O K M X N L O M
O Q X B E N J N O T B L C G A T J B H B G L A F
K M Z U R L S H A A E D R Q O H I Y E C W M Z B
M E M U Y J S T G W Y N P L D X S S C V A A O L
X S N G M Z E C R K Z Z S X X L U M B U Y N T U
Y U W R O R S O I N F T Q K N Z M W A Q H S P V
H A O M A T E K Q R O F J P K V J V M I M T K Q
U P R G Q G K W F Y D L M P D V G D Z A L Q A B
K N R I R C H A R L E S D I C K E N S J T L O R
I A C O M D G N I L W O R K J D L S G K U J I D
M A E F O G R U P R O M L E A H C I M L Z A G W
J G M X V Z J S O X F Q U R S P Z E I Z S H S X
D I G V P Y P U F Q B J N E R U X B U C X A Y F



Philip Pullman

George Orwell

Ernest Hemingway

Jane Austen

Michael Morpurgo

Margaret Atwood

William Shakespeare

CS Lewis

Leo Tolstoy

JK Rowling

Mark Twain

Charles Dickens

Rae's Recipe

This lovely desert can be made a day ahead and kept in the refrigerator. It can also be frozen, wrapped in foil or cling film for up to 2 months. Defrost overnight in the refigerator and bring to room temperature before serving.

THE ULTIMATE CHOCOLATE ROULADE

If you like, add some fresh or frozen raspberries to the filling and scatter lots of fresh raspberries around the roulade on a servicing platter it will look stunning.

SERVES 8 469 CALS PER SERVING



Ingredients:

Butter for greasing
175g (6oz) plain dark chocolate, broken into pieces
6 large eggs, separated
175g (6oz) caster sugar
2 tbsp cocoa powder, sifted
300ml (½ pint) double or whipping cream*
Icing sugar for sifting
23cm x 33cm (9inch x 13inch) Swiss roll tin

*(*recommend adding some whiskey or rum to the cream)*

METHOD

1. Lightly grease the tin, then line with baking parchment, pushing it into the corners.
2. Put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl. Put the bowl over the pan of hot water and heat gently until the chocolate has melted, stirring occasionally. Remove the bowl rom the pan and allow the chocolate to cool slightly until warm.
3. Put the egg whites into a large bowl and beat with an electric whisk on high speed until stiff but not dry. Put the sugar and egg yolks into another large bowl and beat with the same whisk (no need to wash) on high speed until light, thick and creamy. Add the chocolate to the egg yolk mixture and stir until blended.
4. Stir 2 large spoonfuls of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, then carefully fold in the remaining egg whites followed by the cocoa powder. Turn into the prepared tin and gently level the surface.
5. Bake in preheated oven at 180°C (160°C fan, Gas 4) for 20-25 minutes until risen. Remove from the oven and leave the cake to cool in the tin (it will dip and crack a little).
6. When the cake is cold, whip the cream in a bowl until it just holds its shape (add whiskey or rum!). Sift icing sugar over a large sheet of baking parchment. Turn the cake out on to the paper with one of the short edges facing you, and peel off the lining paper. Spread the whipped cream over the cake, then make a shallow cut through the cream and cake along the short edge nearest to you, about 2cm (¾ inch) in from the edge. Roll up the roulade away from you, tightly to start with and using the paper to help. Don't worry if it cracks - this is normal and how it should be. Sift icing sugar over the roulade before serving.

LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

Littering in our beautiful constituency is unacceptable. My Shop Local Survey last year received thousands of responses, many of which mentioned the urgent need for this problem to be tackled. As a result, I have committed to working with local groups in the coming months and years to clean up our high streets. However, litter does not only occur in our towns. More than 1.2 million cases of fly-tipping were reported across the UK last year, and South Shropshire has been far from immune to this vile crime. So, in Parliament, I am glad to have secured new measures from the Government to punish fly-tippers by placing penalty points on their driving licence. We must send a clear message that those who fly-tip will face severe consequences.

In Parliament, I have also been pushing for support for those in South Shropshire struggling with heating oil costs which have risen exponentially since the beginning of the Iran War. In a recent Westminster Hall Debate on this issue, I declared that: 'Shropshire Council has more than 53,000 off-grid households, of which more than half are in my constituency, yet it has been allocated only £750,000. That equates to £14.29 per house, whereas the average across the country is £35...I want the minimum order level to be addressed, and I want future provision to ensure that my constituents, particularly the hardest hit, can have heating oil without having to choose between that and food.' I will continue pushing for long-term measures and meaningful support for my constituents in light of the deepening energy crisis.

Since I was first elected as the Member of Parliament for South Shropshire in 2024, I have been constantly fighting to improve connectivity within the constituency. I recently met with Digital Economy Minister Liz Lloyd to demand the acceleration of Broadband delivery in our area. When she previously visited Stottesdon in March, Baroness Lloyd promised that we would not be left behind in the rollout of reliable broadband, yet only 350 connections have been built so far under Project Gigabit. I know how frustrating poor connection can be, particularly in rural areas. Trust that my campaign to improve Broadband provision across the constituency is ongoing and I will keep pushing Ministers to act faster.

I have also been busy in recent weeks meeting residents and businesses across South Shropshire to listen, support, and deliver on the issues that matter most to them. Recently, I visited Border Holdings (Britpart) in Craven Arms to hear directly from the team about ongoing local infrastructure issues that are impacting their day-to-day operations. My team and I are now working alongside the relevant local authorities to secure long-term solutions. This follows the recent debate I led in Parliament on the state of roads in rural areas to again stress the need for urgent action. I also recently enjoyed a truly special visit to Lady Forester Nursing Home and Foresters Court Independent Living Facility in Much Wenlock. I was grateful for the opportunity to speak with residents, tenants, staff, and leadership about their own personal experiences as well as the wider challenges facing the care sector

I recently held advice surgeries in Ludlow and Bridgnorth where I discussed a wide range of issues with local residents. I would also like to thank everybody who attended my recent MP Coffee Mornings in Much Wenlock and Cleobury Mortimer. These events provide the perfect opportunity for an informal chat about local or national issues over a cup of tea or coffee and a cake. Upcoming dates and locations are advertised on my website or you can phone my constituency ofice at 01746 555025.



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

Another extract from a book by Wendy Mitchell

I understand that it must come as a surprise to some people who read my blog (Wendy Mitchell) to see me in person if I am not reading from a pre-prepared script. They are probably expecting someone far more eloquent to who I am in the flesh. There are also those who think that people like me- dementia activists, if you like- are giving a false impression of what this disease really represents. Some eminent names have gone so far on social media to cast their doubts on our diagnoses, and their abuse can be hurtful and devastating to our confidence.

Anyone knows that once you put your head above the parapet to speak about a topic, you are opening yourself up to a certain amount of criticism. I remember one of the first events I attended, where a small group of people sat around a table discussing dementia and what it meant for them. Those days were the early ones on my own diagnosis, and I could perhaps speak with more eloquence than I can now. But as we went round the table and I had finished saying whatever it was that I wanted to say, another man piped up that his own mother had 'real dementia' and looked at me as if I were in some way faking it- forgetting, as people tend to do, that this disease has a beginning and a middle, as well as an end.

I faced a lot of criticism like this over the years since my diagnosis. It still hurts me on weak days and I feel like I just want to hide away this 'typing me', to take it off and give the critics what they want. Soon though, their comments fade into insignificance, overridden by my love of-and need for-typing.

John Webb Six Parishes Dementia Friendly coordinator.

A pray for caregivers of dementia.

Please help me stay calm patient and kind.
Please help me be my personal best.
Please stop me from taking blame for things beyond my control or putting that blame on someone else.
Give me grace under fire, strength when I am weary, courage when I am scared.
Grant me the ability to be in touch with the love that lives in my soul so I may feel it for myself and spread it to those who need it.
Let me be grateful beyond measure for this day I have been granted so that I can make it the best of days.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Stockton Bowling Club held its annual opening of the green on Sunday 29th March 2026, it was well attended and the weather was kind, we played for the Tony Scott Doubles Shield the winners were Debbie and Tony Jones; two new members who have joined the club this year.

The new season for Stockton A has started well; currently holding 4th position in Division One of the Highley League.

We remain in Division Three for the Mid-Shropshire league this season, gaining new members for the Team.The Mid-Shropshire league recently contacted us to host a Merit qualifier. The bowling was of a high standard and helped the club raise additional funds. We have also been asked to host a junior competition in June

Our Groundsman Rob Weir has been working hard on the green getting it ready for matches and in-house competitions. The green is running really well.

Members of the club have been busy with their paint brushes giving the club a bit of a makeover. The new garden area is now starting to establish itself with the new plants put in last year.

After much fund raising and grants awarded, we now have 8 new floodlights on the green which have much improved the playing conditions.

Our next main aim is to resurface the driveway for parking and access to the club. We are looking at further fundraising during 2026 season.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

Saturday 20th June 2026 QUIZ NIGHT – Norton Village Hall at 7pm £15.00 per team entry fee (up to 6 people per team) all ages welcome it's just a bit a fun to socialise. You are welcome to bring your own alcohol/refreshments as the village hall no longer holds a licence to sell alcohol. As we will be holding a raffle any donation of raffle prizes would be appreciated. To give us an idea of numbers please get in contact with Jeanette or Martin if you would like to enter a team. (details below)

Saturday 8th August 2026 BBQ – Stockton Bowling Green commencing at 3pm, all ages welcome. Come and have a go at bowling or just watch, eat and drink.We will be holding a raffle any donation of raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated.

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 07870 511655. Keep an eye on the Norton Community Group for updates and our Facebook page Stockton Bowling Club.



SPARTANS - END OF SEASON UPDATE

Rob Woodcock from the Spartans writes:...

Bridgnorth Spartans are approaching the end of the first season at Spartans Park on the Norton playing fields.

Overall, the season has gone really well, with some fantastic matches played by:

⚽ Men's 1st Team
⚽ Women's 1st Team
⚽ U18s
⚽ U16s
⚽ U15s

The space has worked really well for Spartans so far and we have been thrilled to see so many local people coming up to Norton to support the teams and enjoy the atmosphere.

Like all voluntary organisations, Spartans relies heavily on volunteers and we are always keen to hear from people who may be interested in helping out.

This could include:

⚫Helping set things up on match days
⚫ Supporting with general maintenance around the site
⚫Getting involved behind the scenes as the facility continues to grow

If you would be interested in helping in any way, please contact Spartans via Facebook.

Thank you again to everyone who has supported Spartans Park during its first season at Norton. The journey is only just beginning.

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

Rob Woodcock Spartans

APLEY FARM NEWS



It's been a wet, miserable and surprisingly mild winter but despite the conditions the crops have come through it remarkably well. After months of grey skies and soggy fields, it's a relief to see everything looking healthy as we move towards summer, it was this time last year we were heading into a drought.





Even so, the season has been slow to get going. The cold snap that followed held things back but at last the legume fallow, which is part of our Sustainable Farming Initiative (SFI), has started to grow. The crimson clover and blue linseed has really got going; this is a welcome sight after a slow start in the spring.

With grass growth finally picking up, the cattle are now back outside and settling well. After a long winter indoors, it's good to see them out grazing again and making the most of the spring grass. This year we also had sheep graziers lambing in the park which is lovely to see. The sheep have been busy too, moving through parkland after grazing the stubble turnips though the winter months. They're doing a brilliant job tidying up and adding a bit of diversity to the grazing. The mix of ewes and lambs is benefiting the pastures.

On the arable side, spring drilling went well. Both the spring barley and the maize are in the ground and away, which puts us in a strong position as the weather improves. A bit of warmth now will help everything to grow. Spraying is also up to date and the crops are looking fantastic after the warm winter albeit a cold spring that followed. The winter crops, mainly wheat, barley and oil seed rape are growing well.



Alongside the livestock and arable work, we've been making steady progress on our Woodland Creation Scheme. New trees have gone in across the parkland, adding long-term structure, habitat and resilience to the estate. It's enjoyable work - the kind of project that will shape the landscape for years to come.



We've also been busy on the environmental front. Hedge laying at the Farm Shop and hedge coppicing around the farm have both been completed this winter. These traditional jobs take time but the benefits are huge:

- Biodiversity boost — rejuvenated hedges produce thicker, denser growth from the base, creating ideal nesting and sheltering habitat for wildlife and birds.
- Wildlife corridors — well-managed hedges link habitats across the farm, allowing species to move safely between fields and woodland.
- Net gain for the environment — coppiced and laid hedges store more carbon as they regrow, support pollinators and improve overall landscape resilience.
- Long-term hedge health — both practices extend the life of the hedge, preventing it from becoming gappy, leggy, or collapsing under it's own weight.

Around the yard, building works are progressing steadily. It's one of those seasons where several jobs have been started at once but the improvements will stand us in good stead for the years ahead.

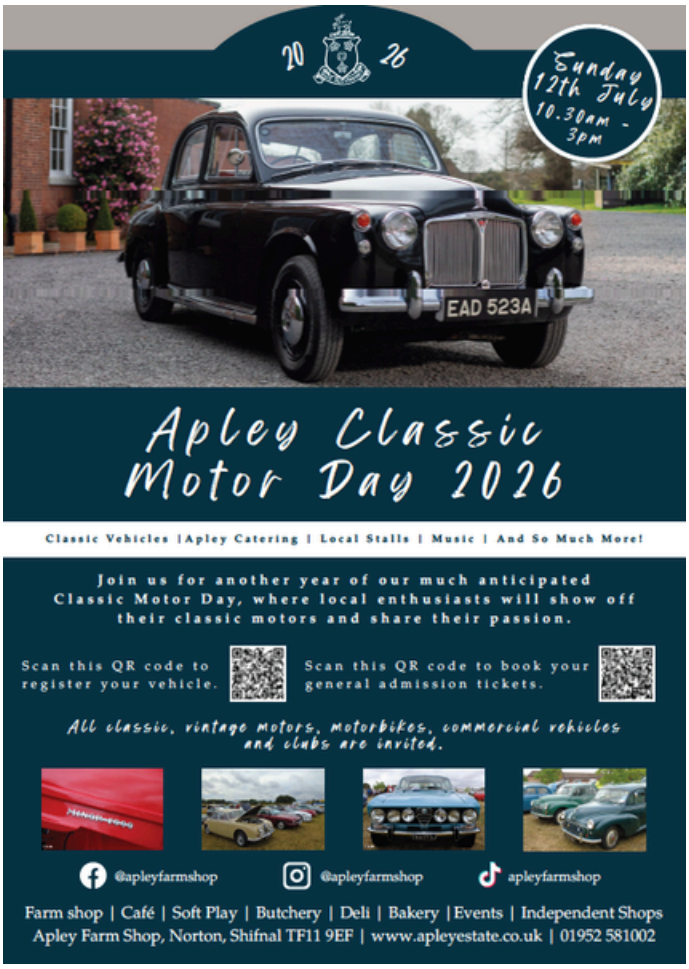
With the grass growing well now, we have completed first cut silage. This will form some of our winter feed for the cattle, so the quality as well as the quantity of the silage we make now is important to take us through the winter. Now the first cut is in its storage bag, attention will quickly turn to the next busy period.

While things are relatively quiet, we're already preparing for combining, machinery checks, shed space, grain store preparation - all the usual groundwork that makes harvest run smoothly. It won't be long before we're back in the thick of it and getting ahead now always pays off later.

By Dan Bussey

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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 **21st September 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.