The Athelney Magazine



£1

Covering the church parishes of Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory

June 2025

Who's Who

Details of other roles can be found on the website, athelneybenefice.com/whoswho

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Churchwarden	Vacant	
Treasurer	Steve Loveridge	07808 656329, stevejloveridge@gmail.com
School Room Bookings	Pat Sollis	01823 490750, pat.sollis1@btinternet.com

The Athelney Bulletin

As well as this monthly Athelney Magazine, there is a weekly publication available online and in each church. The Athelney Bulletin is emailed out each weekend and printed copies can be found in readiness for Sunday worship. The bulletin contains all the readings for each Sunday and also news and notices of upcoming events. If you would like to receive this bulletin in your email either contact vicar@athelneybenefice.com or complete the form on the benefice website, athelneybenefice.com/signup

Coffee, Tea and Fellowship across the Benefice



Each month there is a pattern of gatherings, featuring tea, coffee, cakes and conversation. All are open to all. All are wonderful opportunities to chat and all the cakes are guaranteed to be of a very high standard.



You can find the coffee mornings here:

Burrowbridge

1st Saturday of each month, from 10am to 12pm in church.
Free to all.

Lyng

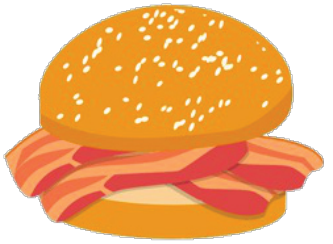
Lyng Big Bart Breakfasts are held monthly on the third Saturday of the month, 10.30am.

North Curry

Wednesdays at 10am in church.

Stoke St Gregory

The Levellers meet at 2.30pm every third Tuesday in the Williams Hall. A time of conversation and fellowship, often with a visiting speaker.



Thank you to everyone who helps with these events

To Submit Copy

Copy deadline is **14th June** for the July Magazine; Please note: July and December are double months.

Please send **content** in an email attachment (ideally a Microsoft Word document) to **magazine@athelneybenefice.com**. Please add "CONTENT" to the subject line. If you are sending content pertaining to more than one thing, please send separate attachments and for each item, making it clear in which edition it is to appear. Please use 12-point Arial font and ensure that it fits into a maximum of 2 A5 pages where possible. To check this set your word document to be in landscape orientation with 2 columns. ***If none of this makes any sense, please just write it out long hand and put it through the vicarage door…***

To Subscribe: NB new price

Our printing costs have recently incresased owing to the general price increases of so many things. The annual subscrioption, therefore, will be increased accordingly. **Subscriptions this year (2025-2026) will be £10** and will run as usual from May to April. Please pay your deliverer the £10 requested.

Thank you!

To Advertise

If you wish to advertise in the magazine, please contact us via email using this address: magads@athelneybenefice.com

Prices are for 10 editions of the magazine Full page £100, Half page £55. We no longer offer a quarter page. One off (single edition) adverts are £10 for up to one full page.

To Contact

Any questions please send an email to magazine@athelneybenefice.com and we will respond as soon as possible. Please use the group emails provided rather than sending things direct to one person.



The Athelney Benefice

Which side are you on?

I am a political creature. I have been more or less left of centre my whole life, once I knew there was such a thing as politics, anyway. I recall a conversation in Secondary School, aged probably 12 years, still not quite sure if there was any difference between Hitler and Stalin. Now, there's a good 'O' Level history essay (in old money…).

As a child I lived in the Bristol South-East constituency, which until the reshaping of the boundaries in the 1980s, was fond of returning Tony Benn as their MP. I have always seen him as a colossus of parliamentary behaviour and it was a sad day when he was ousted in the 1983 election. (I almost ran him over outside Temple Meads Station, but that's not for now.)

I offer this information here and now not to pick a debate with anyone (I am very well aware that my politics will be at odds with many) but to introduce the idea of politics at all. Rather than keeping religion and politics out of polite company, I am almost duty-bound to bring them in. As a Christian I have a strong sense of social justice, especially for those who are oppressed by the abuse of power; I consider so much of what is good in our society, the welfare state itself, to be a product of a Christian way of living.

We are in tricky times, nationally and internationally, diplomatically and politically. To quote scripture, "And you will hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." (Matt 24:6) and it all seems to some that we are on a long old road towards the inferno in a rather rickety hand cart.

The most obvious cases of this international trouble are Gaza and Ukraine, of course, but pretty much wherever you go, it's not long before you bump into some conflict or other, and not long after that, if you scratch around in the rhetoric you will find someone who wishes to overpower someone else. The Big Bad Guy (mostly guys…) who sees someone else as a problem or a barrier to what they desire. It was not much different back in the good old days of AD33, when Jesus was resisting the powers that be. We know what happened there, right? And 2000 years on, has much really changed? Big Bad Guys come and go.

But, what does this have to do with my politics or anything else, even? The world out there, beyond the Hundred Acre Wood, beyond The Shire, is going to do what it does without my or your or anyone-round-

about's input, right? No matter whether I stand Left of him or her, whether I look up to her and down to him, nothing will change the way the world wags, surely? I must just know my place?

The issue isn't about where you or I stand on some notional spectrum from Right to Left but where our hearts sit within our souls. I have been appalled at the happenings in Gaza. I have wept at the situation and at how "The West" has handled it. The slaughter, the kidnapping, the innocent lives lost; it is tragic and unjust. I know (from many conversations) that I am not alone. I do however have a mouth piece of a few hundred people (you're reading it) and I do feel it is important to share my concerns. Biggest of my concerns is that we must not give up on our desire for peacefulness and grace and mercy with whomever we might encounter. And, yes, even the small actions of a single person in Athelney can change the world, one act at a time. It wasn't "The Ideas of the Apostles". It was "The Acts of the Apostles".

One major act is to instill hope and love in the generations to come. Over the past few years in the benefice I have increasingly been drawn to speaking of peace to our young children. At the memorials in Stoke St Gregory and North Curry in particular, I have stood before our children and seen in them our desire for Peace. They carry the weight of the future on their small shoulders, and, small though they may be, with our encouragement and hope in their humanity, they can shoulder the burden. Our encouragement to them as they grow needs to be one of hope in showing love to one another, in seeing the value of letting people have control over their own lives and in being ready to speak about the need for politics in a world that currently tends to jettison it in favour of idle populist tropes. Politics is about working out how society can thrive. Its is a positive step, not a negative defense.

Jesus had a political agenda. (There…said it…!) His agenda was not one of making sure his message crushed anyone, but was one of showing concern for all people (*polos* means "people"). His politics was to encourage the freedom of people to self determine. He wasn't the zealot his followers expected. He didn't advocate insurrection or incarceration. Neither did he speak of exclusion. He taught unity, through patience and gentleness but also through the need to see beyond one's own greed. In two thousand years, it could be argued that we haven't made much progress. But, without Christ, would there be free prescriptions?

Sometimes I write benign pleasantries, other times I share what has been getting under my skin a little more. If you would like to respond to either, I am always interested, please let me know what thoughts in you my words elicit. vicar@athelneybenefice.com

Martin's Musings

A monthly observation on life

Pardon?



As we get older, we acquire things. Some, like my blue badge are much appreciated. vOthers, like my hearing aids, less so.

It was a few years ago I realised that I was going deaf. Until then, I just assumed that people were simply mumbling or not speaking properly. When realisation dawned, I had a test and was told that I was moderately deaf.

Now, getting deaf does have some advantages. The world can be a very noisy place and it is good to tone it down sometimes. I have great admiration for the audiology department at Musgrove, who have been nothing but kind in helpful in trying to help me to hear better. However, when fitted, they told me that I should wear them all the time so that my brain could get used to these large grey foreign bodies shoved in my lug-holes and that, in time, I wouldn't know I was wearing the.

Beware, gentle reader: this is a black lie. I have tried, really I have, but you don't get used to them. So, as a true Anglican, I have sought the middle-way. I wear them when I must. I wear them to watch television so that the girls are not deafened and, in order of importance, the Vicar, The Almighty (these two are not to be confused) and last but not least – the rest of you.

I can manage quite well without them, thanks to some useful tips that I am happy to share with you. I am getting quite good at lip reading. Also, you must pay attention to people's faces. If they are happy and smiling, you follow suit, if sad and serious, you do likewise and (the most important) if they tell a joke or humorous story, you laugh. You have absolutely no idea what you are laughing at but that's fine. The other important point is that, if you are talking with someone with hearing aids, do please speak clearly. They do help a lot, but they do not replace perfect hearing.

Finally, don't let on to the lovely audiologists at Musgrove my helpful techniques for managing my hearing loss. If any are reading these words, please be aware that these musings are a work of fiction.

[Editor's note: The Vicar is trying to remain humble, having been placed in order before The Almighty.]

Beneficial or Not

David Akerman, North Curry Parish

What

It is known that the diocese is seeking to add Othery and Middlezoy to our benefice increasing the number of parishes, churches and schools by 50%. I see this as a local manifestation of a national problem with too little finance in the parishes and too much spent on diocesan overheads which absorbs both money and people

The church risks perpetuating a downward spiral in attendance and services and parish income by making bigger benefices with fewer clergy in parishes and dwindling attendance and engagement in the parishes.

At present our relatively new vicar (Simon) has established a pattern where each of the four present Athelney churches has a prayer morning each week. North Curry has two communion services most weeks and the other churches have frequent regular services. In comparison, one of our neighbours, The Benefice of Seven Sowers, four of the seven churches have only one or no communion services scheduled for May. At present, and fortunately, Revd Simon can draw on the assistance of Revd Martin and Ralph Roberts (our Reader) but this may be for a limited time.

There is evidence of success in Athelney both of growth in regular attendance in church and of community involvement. Also, regular contact is maintained with the two schools in our benefice. This momentum may be lost if the benefice is expanded.

Given the task of saving 1.5 full-time priest posts within the Sedgemoor Deanery one can see a desk-top logic in adding the Othery and Middlezoy parishes to the Athelney Benefice. If the proposal is enacted, then no doubt Revd Simon will do his very best to make it work. However, that could be to the detriment of more focussed work in the present Athelney benefice and may not meet the real needs in Othery and Middlezoy .

Why

I suspect that the proposal arises from the immediate problem of "balancing the books" within the diocese. The Bath & Wells Annual Report and Accounts for 2023 states that " the operating deficit arose from the continued low level of parish share receipts." However, the 2023 income from parish share and the diocesan stipends fund was £10.4m compared with the published cost of parish ministry of £8.9m. The operating

deficit arises from the overhead cost of the diocese not necessarily a shortfall in parish share. Parish clergy could be afforded and are potentially available (according to Save the Parish there are more than 900 ordained people in the Church of England who are not in parish posts).

The Archdeacon may be bearing down with ideas for mergers, the true motivation for which is for the diocese's rather than the parish's benefit, to sell more property, or to reduce the number of clergy to reduce the costs of their stipends. In such circumstances, the PCC needs a clear head about its inherited responsibilities in a parish system which goes back to Saxon times and was further developed by the fourteenth century and should know and understand its responsibilities to future generations.

We need to establish how far the process has got.

We can resist the proposed change, but this must be done in a structured way. The potential penalty we face by objecting is that if/when there is a vacancy in the benefice it would not be filled. If Revd Simon were to leave Athelney the diocese could impose a lengthy or indefinite interregnum. I think we should resist the proposal and take the risk because in another ten years the Church may have a different policy. The signs of a change in direction are already emerging. A paper presented to General Synod in February 2025 says:

"In light of deteriorating financial sustainability in dioceses, the Diocesan Finances Review aimed to identify mechanisms to ease dioceses' current financial stress in a way which helps to develop the Church's longer-term missional and financial health, focusing on:

- The financial support of dioceses by the national Church
- The simplification of the Church's financial systems primarily in respect of financial flows between dioceses and the National Church Institutions

The proposals recognise the immediate financial pressures on dioceses and the need to ease this stress, whilst enabling change within a longer-term mission, financial and people plan for sustainability and flourishing, as well as seeking to simplify complex, opaque and burdensome arrangements currently in place. The total package represents a cost of £220m time limited funding over 9 years, plus £30m in perpetuity. The Triennium Funding Working Group will therefore need to consider affordability and balance priorities alongside other funding requests in developing the spending plans recommendations for 2026-28."

Source https://www.savetheparish.com/2025/03/18/diocesan-finances-review-update-2025/

What Can be Done

The joint issue of request for greater parish share and the inability of the

diocese to pay for priests in parishes or benefices of manageable size should be thoroughly and prayerfully examined and debated by each PCC and, if thought fit, representations should be made to the Archdeacon, Chancellor, and Bishop.

Meanwhile organise locally. The vicar is a trustee, maybe ex-officio, of local organisations such as the local school and, some local facilities such as local charities. There are two points here: Firstly, try to engage these organisations to support our arguments for retaining our own clergy – or at least resisting further enlargement of our benefice. Secondly, in making our case point out that if our vicar is stretched over too many parishes, their contribution to these organisations will suffer from a lack of church input.

Everyone must insist on the absolute priority of the parish as the basic unit of the church. PCCs can easily become downtrodden with dwindling congregations and lack of volunteers. Suggestions of mergers or other forms of sharing resources can seem attractive. However, an incumbent living miles away may not be inclined to focus on our church if other churches in the benefice are faring better in attendance terms or have easier geography, parking, etc.

The PCC has unique statutory powers and responsibilities with which to determine the future of the parish and has the right (and sometimes the duty) to seek the support of the Charity Commission.

- If the diocese is hatching plans for our church's future, an early indication that our parish will strongly resist attempts to dictate our parish's future may be effective to deter the diocese from proceeding. The PCC's need to know how far the proposals have got in this process:
- The diocese seeks the views of "interested parties" via Archdeacons and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee (DMPC)
- The diocese recommends proposals to the bishop (who can make a Bishop's Mission Order or a Pastoral Order if all interested parties have agreed).
- We should see that any comments made by the PCC are passed on fairly to the bishop by the DMPC.
- Draft Scheme or Order published (anyone may object to Church Commissioners)
- If there are objections the Church Commissioners decide whether the Scheme or Order should go ahead.
- The bishop makes a Pastoral Order unless the Church Commissioners decide it should not be made.
- Objectors may seek Leave to Appeal against the Commissioners' decision on a Pastoral Scheme or Pastoral Church Buildings Scheme.
- The Church Commissioners make a Scheme unless they decide it should not be made or there is a successful appeal against their decision that it should be made.

The functions of parochial church councils shall include raising of such matters as the PCC consider appropriate with the deanery or diocesan synod and we can both object to the proposal itself and also to the procedure if it has not been correctly followed.

Consequences

Some dioceses have gone much further than B&W has done yet in creating larger benefices or equivalent, with fewer priests. I am not aware of any reorganisation of this sort producing increases in church membership. The requests for parish share are becoming impossible to meet. The church risks perpetuating a downward spiral in attendance and services and parish income. But it doesn't have to be this way. Local people must wake up and fight for what morally and legally belongs to their parish, not just meekly submit to proposals sent down to them by the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) or the Archdeacon. Use all the rights of appeal provided in church legislation. Appeals are heard by a national committee of the Church Commissioners, with a further right of appeal in some cases to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council where the case raises a point of law.

The links indicated in this article can be visited via the online version of the magazine (athelneybenefice.com/magazine) or here:

- Diocesan Annual report: https://issuu.com/bathwells/docs/03184_-_deanery_gatherings_issuu
- Save the Parish: https://www.savetheparish.com/
- Save the Parish at Synod: https://www.savetheparish.com/2025/03/18/diocesan-finances-review-update-2025/

Thanks to David for this well constructed and informative article. It has been shared with the Archdeacon and Area Dean and was valuable in the recent discussion all four PCCs had with them both at the end of May. The process continues to move forward and no clear decisions have yet been made. Please watch this space in subsequent magazines.



Rogation 2025: Ten miles of beauty

Ten miles!?

Yes. Ten Miles.

Fifteen of us left North Curry Church at 9am on Saturday May 3rd and ten miles later eleven of us sat down in the Sunday School Room at Stoke St Gregory, grateful for the end to have arrived, but satisfied with out achievement. Of those eleven, seven made it to the Open Gardens at Hillcrest for a well earned cake and beverage. (Don't fret: those eight who didn't make it to the Gardens had lifts home; we didn't just roll them into a hedge and leave them be).



Rogation is a moment in the church calendar where we ask God to provide us with a good harvest. (*Rogare* means "to ask" in Latin.) So, as we journeyed around the four parishes of Athelney we stopped to pray and acknowledge the beauty of this world. For sure, as we sat in Stoke St Gregory rather hotter than we'd expected, we also gave thanks for the shade.

Food, glorious food

As we rogated (a new verb I have coined) we also gave grateful thanks for the wonderful refreshments we'd received all the way around the route. Thank you, Anne, Mary, Sue, Margaret, Ali, Julie, Sue, Jane, Pat, Annette, and everyone in the team at Stoke St Gregory for our food and beverages! We marched on our stomachs, I'd say.

We began at North Curry with bacon butties, eastwards along the East Dean Way. Mary and The Boys left us at the picnic table, and we descended to Hook Bridge and Turkey Cottage where St Bartholomew's beckoned along the meandering "Crooked Drove" (does what it says). We crossed the moor and over the railway line. The fields were green and alive: it is such a strange feeling to recall them flooded only a few months ago. Suddenly we encountered the A361





and took care to our Lyng stop, then, after cakes and drinks we were off, back along Cutts Road to the Monument, where we paused to remember St Athelwin and his spiritual insights and also Alfred the Great, both a local and a global influencer from so long ago.

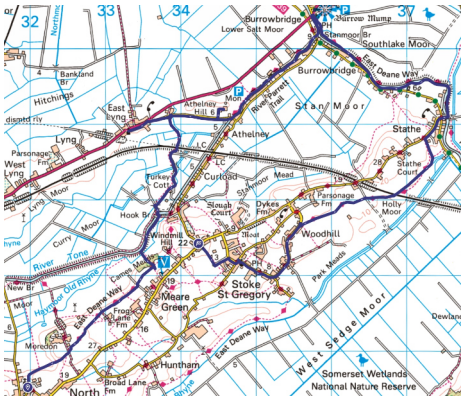
The river was beautiful, a peaceful and mysterious line through the moor and another reminder of how the floods are so significant for our landscape. We smiled and waved to those on the opposite bank and felt the humid air of the vegetation as the day grew warmer. Just as St Bartholomew drew us to a coffee break, so the Mump guided us to St Michael's for a most delicious Ploughman's. Julie and Sue provided our lunch and we took a rest, saying goodbye to three more of our happy band.

We plough the fields



Continuing along the Parrett Way we crossed to Stathe and began our toil up the ploughed fields, once more along the East Dean Way (now heading west) and eventually relieved to reach the road in Woodhill, and then to Stoke St Gregory. It was hot and without shade. But worth the slog. A good feeling of a job well done. We'd engaged with the world of God's creation and seen around us the life we all value, often without noticing it: the life which brings forth our sustenance.

We gave thanks to God one more time in the Sunday School Room and then strode off to Hillcrest where the smiling faces of our friends met us at with the tea and cake. Dusty and crusty with the day's exertions, we sat and smiled at the beauty and the satisfaction.



Thank you, Lord, for this fine day: all ten miles of it.

Christ beside us in the joys and sorrows of life

By Toby Wright, Dean of Wells



One of the great gifts of the Church, and to the Church, is the way in which we are invited to share in the significant life events of our communities. As we share in baptisms, confirmations and weddings, there is a great opportunity for us to be a part of people's real lives in real ways.

A key moment in the Christian journey is the moment of Baptism. John Chrysostom in the C4th said, 'When we immerse our head in water, just as if in a grave, the old man is buried, and having sunk down, is entirely hidden once for all; that, when we emerge, a new man arise again. Just as it is easy for us to be immersed and to emerge, so it is easy for God to bury the old man and raise up the new.'



For Christians baptism is important as it puts us in the place of Christ and we start a new way of life. We become part of Christ's body. Titus 3.5 describes baptism as 'the laver of regeneration'; it is an antitype of the Exodus (as we see in 1 Cor 10.1-2). It is us being born again from above (John 3.5). Above all, Baptism is the giving of the Spirit - which is the principle of the Christian Life.

It is our entire life, and indeed death, which are united in the death and resurrection of Christ. In Baptism we are united to God by adoption, having access to the divine life. And in Baptism we find ways of sustaining ourselves on the journey of life. As Lancelot Andrewes put it, 'By Him taught all our life long that we know not, put in mind of what we forget, stirred up in what we are dull, helped in our prayers, relieved in our infirmities, comforted in our heaviness'.

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Burrowbridge



Victory in Europe

It might seem a long time ago, but we still, thankfully, have some among us who remember the joy and relief of VE Day on May 8th 1945. Those of us who did not experience it first hand have heard many stories of how people celebrated and gave thanks that day when the prospect of peace became more than just a vague hope.



On May 4th we gathered in St Michael's, Burrowbridge to remember and to once more give thanks that the Second World War came to an end. As is the tradition of St Michael's, it was a moment of great hospitality, with tea and cakes and more, and we all celebrated by simply beign together.

The Second Weorld War seems very distant now, of course, and us younger ones (though also getting older) have new concerns in this world that is far from peaceful. Even so, we can pray and hope and have faith that, whilst the world bickers we can be disciples of peace.



Update on the churchyard wall

It is some time since we began to plan for the repair to the wall… it collapsed in 2023! After much water under many bridges, we are pleased to announce that work should be underway any time soon! Thank you to everyone for your prayers on what turned out to be a very complicated matter!



Lyng

What's happening at Lyng Village Hall



We had fantastic weather the weekend we held our VE Day Celebration, with an afternoon Picnic in the Hall garden. We were treated to a couple of live sets from local singer & guitar player Paul Fleet. Some of our elders remembered VE Day the first time around.

Community Lunch the First Wednesday of every month.

Food service starts at 1.00 pm. The price of the 2 course meal plus hot drink is £7.00. Great value.

Friday Night Club

… is held on the last Friday of every month. Doors open at 7.00 pm. Pizza & Chips are available to buy.



Save the date:

We are holding a Country Fete on Saturday 12th July in the afternoon from 2 – 5 pm, where there there will be local community organisations and crafts stalls in the garden. Afternoon Cream teas & cakes will be served.

Keep up to date with our Hall activities, on our What's App group. Send your name & number to Debbie on 07860135751 if you wish to be included in messages about events.

Pilates Classes

These are continuing on Wednesday evenings. To book a place, please contact Emily on 07940276265 or emzpilates@gmail.com

Gardener Gang

We have launched our Community Garden Project and recruited volunteers to our Garden Gang. Together we are going to lay an accessible pathway, create beds for growing our own flowers, vegetables to share amongst the community. Our focus is to make the garden a communal space that helps with improving our health and well-being. with a sensory garden with benches for all to enjoy and relax in.

If anyone is interested in joining the garden gang, we are looking for skills and experience; you do not need physical strength, just a sense of humour. Equally you may have old tools, plants that you could donate.

Please get in touch with Marion Nicol on lyngvillagehall@outlook.com with your contact details or phone Debbie on 07860135751.

Jumble Sale!



You can't beat a good old fashioned rummage in jumble: bric-a-brac, pre-loved dresses and shirts, crafts and art work. It was all on display in St Bartholomew's last month, along with bacon butties and all manner of refreshments.

The reason? To raise funds of course, for the church itself (always required… bits keep falling off and we need to heat and light it), but also towards the clock which is in dire need of repair. There will be more on this next month, but for now, we are grateful to everyone who supported and attended the Jumble Sale.



As Tesco remind us, every little helps. The church building has been around for many centuries. It has a wonderful story to tell us… we are all thankful that the story continues through our care and enthusiasm.

Keep up to date with our Hall activities, on our What's App group. Send your name & number to Debbie on 07860135751



North Curry

200 CLUB

The 200 Club still has room for one more! Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only £18 per year (£1.50/month). Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10. Proceeds for churchyard maintenance.

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179. Cheque payments to North Curry PCC, Standing Order/ BACS payments to North Curry PCC, Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45.

Please note that the North Curry PCC recently decided that the annual "Christmas Bonus Prize" would no longer be offered. The bonus of Christmas 2024 was the one to be awarded.

Winners
Sun 4th May

1st Lorna Pine
2nd Janet Dare
3rd Janet Bradbury

North Curry Coffee Shop

On Tuesday 1st April, we will introduced our Summer Menu, with a different 'Special' every week, ranging from our delicious homemade quiches, lattice pork pie and smoked mackerel, served with a healthy crisp salad. We will also be bringing back our lovely homemade scones for our excellent cream teas, and you can still get a slice of one of our famous home baked cakes or a cheese scone considered by cyclists to be the 'best in Somerset'!

Don't forget we sell a variety of lovely local art, crafts, cards and jewellery too.

Please note that while our opening hours are from 10 am to 4.30pm, Tuesday to Saturday, with last orders at 4.15 pm, on Sundays, we have decided to close earlier at 4pm (last orders 3.45pm).

As always, we are looking for new volunteers so if you would like to join our friendly team, please email us at coffeeshop@north-curry.com or call us on 01823 491414. It's a great way to meet people while helping the community and raising money for your chosen charity. We're very proud to have raised over £250,000 for charities and local good causes since opening in 2006. We look forward to welcoming you.

North Curry Music Festival

Thursday 19 – Sunday 22 June

Thur

Time to Spare guitar quartet: open play of popular music covers
Greenway Pavilion, 2.30-4.00, free of charge

Friday

North Curry Ukulele Orchestra: open practice
Greenway Pavilion, 2.30-4.00pm, free of charge

Tango Calor + dancers Tangopuro: Argentine tango
Parish Church, 7.30pm, £16 in advance, £18 on the door

Saturday

Music al fresco in Queen Square Garden*: free of charge

- **Ringing of the church bells**, 9.30-10.30am
- **The Sound of the Streets Big Band**, 10.30 – 11.30am
- **Carillon Duo**: Louise & Kevin Toller, classical guitar duets, 12.00 noon
- **Nigel Lawrence**, 1.30-2.15pm
- **Jazzical Swing**, 2.15-3.00pm
- **The North Curry Orchestra**, 3.45-4.30pm
- **North Curry Ukulele Orchestra**

Making it up as we go along - improvisation workshop with Tim Hill
Everyone can improvise! Bring an instrument or your voice.
Village Hall, 2.00pm, £10 (only 20 places, age 14 or older – book early!)

Pelléas Ensemble (Flute, Viola, Harp) perform Purcell, Bax, Couperin & more
Parish Church, 7.30pm, £18 in advance, £20 on the door

Sunday

United Benefice Family and Village Service with children's choirs
Parish Church, 11.00am. Ringing of the church bells from 10.00am

Pantasy Steel Band play traditional and modern Caribbean music
Greenway Playing Field, 1.30pm – 4.30pm, free of charge
Barbecue and ice cream from 1.00pm. Bring your own picnic.

www.northcurrymusicfestival.org.uk

Tickets available from 12 May at North Curry Post Office and www.ticketsource.co.uk

With thanks to Somerset Community Foundation. Presented by North Curry Parish Church, Charity No. 1194715

** Programme subject to change*

NORTH CURRY

Parish Council

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: It was lovely to see so many of you at the APM, it was a great night with great talks from local groups and organizations, and an update from the Neighbourhood Plan team who have been working very hard. Thank you to all of our speakers, and to everyone who came along!

PHARMACY CONSULTATION: Somerset Council currently has a consultation on their draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) which is looking into the current and future needs of pharmacy provision with a focus on access to pharmacy services. Have a look at the draft PNA and have your say here: https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/public-health/pna-consultation-2025/

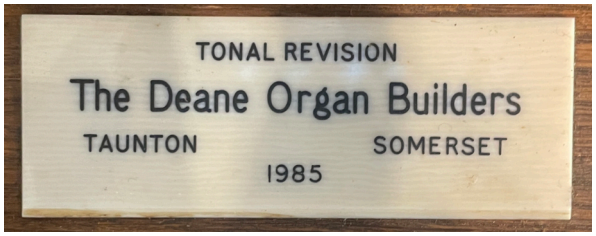
REMINDER ON HEDGES: With the reappearance of the sun, everything is growing very quickly now. This is just a reminder to keep on top of cutting your hedges to ensure they don't overhand into the road or on footpaths, cover road signs, or obscure junctions. If you need to maintain your hedges from the roadside, please ensure to work safely.

OXEN LANE UPDATES: There is now a section on the website for the latest monthly Oxen Lane updates under the 'News' heading (https://northcurry.com/?page_id=3973). These updates will also be shared on Facebook and Nextdoor. If you aren't able to access these online, please visit the Parish Office during opening hours and the Clerk can print a copy for you.

The Parish Council Office

Wednesdays 10:00am – 1:00pm and Thursdays 1:00pm – 4:00pm
Phone: 01823 490136 or email: parishcouncil@northcurry.com.
Please check the notice board, website or Facebook for the Council's diary. Council Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month with any extra planning meetings as needed on the last Wednesday of the month (both in the Meeting Room, Village Hall at 7:30pm).

The last time the organ was rejuvenated...



The Bluebirds Theatre Company

THE MAGIC FLUTE

BY MOZART



Join The Bluebirds Theatre Company and Somerset Opera in a brand new production of Mozart's opera The Magic Flute; watch a dynamic cast of opera singers and puppets in a flight of imagination. Meet monsters, villains, heroes and heroines in a saga of love and deceit set in a magical circus of Light and Dark. Let the magic begin!

"Absolutely loved it and it blew me away!"

"Amazing fun! Epic singing, great puppets, silly story, wonderful dragon"

North Curry Church

Sun 27 July at 6.30pm

Tickets: Adults £20 (Under 5's free)
www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-bluebirds-theatre-company
or from North Curry Post Office

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www.thebluebirds.org.uk
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North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners



Why not join us?

We are enthusiastic gardeners from North Curry and nearby who meet on the first Friday from September to May at 7:45pm in North Curry Village Hall. Invited speakers entertain us on a variety of gardening- related topics. Refreshments and a chat round off the evening.

There's something for everyone with an interest in gardening and plants.New members and visitors are always welcome (membership £12 annually, visitors £3.00/visit).

Need more info? Telephone Sue on 01823 491658 or email northcurrygardeningclub@gmail.com

North Curry Organ: Church Arrangements...

North Curry organ is currently being renovated and for reasons of health and safety the PCC have decided to keep the church locked when unoccupied. Other than the usual Sunday Services, the church will be open for the coffee morning and midweek communion (Wednesdays from 9.30am) and for morning prayer on Fridays (9am). The South Porch remains open for shelter etc.

The work will continue throughout May and some of June. If you need to get into the building whilst it is locked, then please call Revd Simon Bale 07970 936325, Mary Piers (churchwarden) 01823 491434 or Tom Jeanes (churchwarden) 01823 490562.



NORTH CURRY F I L M CLUB



Our next film on **Wednesday June 25** is the Aussie classic Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. It is a vibrant, heartwarming tale that follows the journey of three drag queens on a road trip across the Australian Outback in a bus named Priscilla. The film is celebrated for its dazzling costumes, catchy disco soundtrack, and its ability to balance humour with poignant moments. It explores themes of identity, acceptance, and friendship, while also addressing the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals. It is a classic that continues to resonate with audiences.

The Village hall doors & bar open at 7pm., with the film starting at 7.30pm. Also open to guests (£5). Please see our website for trailers: www.northcurry-filmclub.org.uk or use the QR code.

We also have a Facebook page.

We are looking for help running the club. All offers of help are very welcome. Contact Don on 490 859.

Linarol Consort of Viols, 6pm, Tuesday 26th August in North Curry Parish Church

Renaissance music played by the Linarol Consort of Viols, with soprano Héloïse Bernard. Claire Horáček (née Harrison) returns with her quartet of five- or six-stringed bowed instruments based on an original made in Venice, to play an exquisite programme of music and songs from 16th and 17th century Italy.



NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

Annual Meeting, Wednesday July 16th, 7.30pm

We hope that you have enjoyed the North Curry Society programme of talks and presentations put together by your committee in this current year, which ends in July. The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 16th July at 7.30pm in The Pavilion, Greenway. Complimentary drinks will be served after the meeting which will not be lengthy! We look forward to seeing members, past members and potential members there.

An infusion of fresh blood into the Committee is now imperative! At least two new members are required and at present there are no female members. The Committee meets on three occasions during the year, and the demands are far from onerous. We would appreciate help setting up the Hall before each meeting, some assistance with the provision of refreshments, and some involvement in administrative and publicity tasks. If you would like to know more please feel free to contact the Chairman, Colin Trim, in person at a monthly meeting, by telephone (01823 490337) or by email (colinhtrim@gmail.com).

After a break for summer The Society starts up again on 17th September, generally meeting on the third Wednesday each month in the Village Hall (but on the second Wednesday in December and February) to hear about aspects of local heritage.

The Society generally meets on the third Wednesday each month for talks of local interest. A full programme of talks has been arranged for the year ahead, which you will see on the Membership Card that will be available that evening. If you are not yet a member, you'll still be welcome (on payment of the guest fee of £5, or taking out annual membership for £15). Doors open at 7.30pm for a hot drink and warm conversation. Our Chairman Colin Trim (490337) would be pleased to learn about topics and speakers of interest to you.



Spot the retired priest on a sunny Spring day

Pay It Forward for Somerset—a campaign that changes lives

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) is a Somerset charity working to make sure that no one in our county must face hardship alone. They have launched a #PayItForward-Somerset campaign, aiming to raise £25,000 to support vital services that help Somerset residents when they need it most.

CCS people · place · enterprise

Every day, CCS helps people like Amy, whose limited mobility left her without fresh food and the ability to cook for herself. Thanks to the support of a CCS Village Agent, Amy now has access to a food pantry and a home kitchen setup that allows her to prepare her own meals again. And then there's Ed, who was overwhelmed by memory loss and mounting debts. With support from CCS, Ed received help with finances, daily care, and now feels safe at home.

CCS has a team of Village Agents who work throughout the county helping people to avoid isolation, keep warm, put food on the table, find housing, care for a loved one and connect with their community. Last year they supported over 10,000 Somerset residents with all kinds of issues, large and small.

Every pound raised by the Pay It Forward campaign will go towards services like Village Agents and CCS's wider community work, addressing economic challenges, health needs and social isolation.

There are lots of ways to Pay It Forward in Somerset, from making a donation, fundraising eg. holding a coffee morning, or Knitting for your Neighbour. Please visit ccslovesomerset.org/pay-it-forward-for-somerset to find out more and help if you can.

PAY IT FORWARD for Somerset

You can meet your local Village Agent at a Talking Cafésomersetagents.org/talking-cafes/, or request support here: somersetagents.org/

Talking Cafe

North Curry:
3rd Friday, Village Hall, 2pm to 4pm

When?

Stoke St Gregory:
2nd Thursday, Village Coffee Shop, 10am to 12pm



somerset village & community agents
part of CCS





WHY POP IN?

Talking Cafes are great if you are looking for help and advice on important issues such as:

- caring for another
- housing
- health
- finance
- help with food/cooking
- adult social care
- children's services
- feelings of loneliness and isolation
- anything else that is worrying you.



Meet your local Village Agent and other support services.

www.somersetagents.org/talkingcafes

Funded by: Somerset Council, NHS Somerset

Provided by: CCS people - place - enterprise

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Stoke St Gregory

Open Gardens means lots of cake

By Jane White



Over a period of two days at the beginning of May, the St Gregory's catering team went through approximately 350 paper plates, 180 odd tea bags, 500gr of sugar, a 200gr jar of instant coffee, 16 pints of milk and at least 24 cakes. It must have been Open Gardens at Hillcrest again – and for the 11th year running.

Many congratulations to Charlotte and Charles Sundquist for continuing to make their lovely gardens such a powerful draw to the gardening enthusiasts in this area and pulling in the punters. And our very grateful thanks to them for allowing St Gregory's to offer the teas again. One of the most flattering remarks Charles passed on from a happy visitor was that Hillcrest was even better than a "National Trust garden," in that, as well as being a beautiful and lovingly tended garden, "the teas and plants for sale were excellent and much more reasonably priced". Praise indeed!

Well done to all who contributed to the event, in the setting up and tak-







ing down of the tea palace (I wish I had taken photos of that operation!), the preparation and serving of all those teas and cakes, and to Annette and her team for the ever popular plants. Between us all we raised almost £1800 of the badly needed funds for ongoing church expenses. The NGS also profited from a similar sum for a range of brilliant charities. I hope all involved enjoyed themselves as much as I did but, boy oh boy, I was happy when it was all over and packed away for another year. [Ed: Thanks to Jane and everyone!]

Shakespeare told us 'all the world's a stage'



Following their successful appearance on VE Day, the popular clog dancing group, **SWEET COPPIN** will again be performing outside the Royal Oak, i**n the Square at 7pm on Thursday 17th July**.

Clog dancing, a form of step dancing focused on footwork and rhythmic sounds, has origins in both English and American traditions. In England, it developed during the Industrial Revolution, particularly in cotton mills where workers used wooden-soled clogs for practicality and comfort. In America, clogging, a related style, emerged in the Appalachian Mountains, incorporating elements of European, African, and Native American dance traditions.



There will also be an opportunity for audience participation!

Somerset Council



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www.volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/drive

Alternatively, email **gemma.ruffle@somerset.gov.uk** or call **07855 285464** to make a difference in your community.

Street Pastors

The June members meeting of Stoke St Gregory WI is on Tuesday 10th starting at 7pm in the Village Hall.

Members will be hearing about the varied and sometimes comical work of Dave Knight who operates as a Street Pastor. Jackie Smith is running the trade stall, Kate Roberts and Mary Ginger our providing our refreshments, Ruth Wyganowski will be filling the rose bowl and Linda Willis is giving the vote of thanks.

We are an expanding Institute with friendship at the core of our membership. If you fancy coming along to find out more about us then you will receive a warm welcome.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch for more details.

Amelia Holt President 07985317252

We meet at Stoke St Gregory Village Hall on the **second Tuesday of the month with the meeting starting at 7pm**. Contact Amelia Holt, 01823 490401 or 07985 317252 for further details.



… hurtling past on our rogation walk.

Destination: beyond the Hundred Acre Wood



Garden Musings

A Rose by any other name?

By Revd Martin Mudie

My father loved roses and I think I must have inherited my love for them from him. We had a large garden filled with them. However, my father was no gardener and we never saw him actually gardening, for we had a full-time gardener, who actually did all the work.

What my father loved, like myself, was buying plants.

Each year, there was great excitement when the latest rose catalogues arrived and he would spend hours poring over them. You see, in those days, garden centres did not exist, and you could only buy plants from nurseries between November and March, when they could be lifted from the ground.

The roses my father loved were hybrid teas and floribundas (now called bush roses). A few enthusiasts like Vita Sackville-West at Sissinghurst or Graham Thomas grew the old roses which dated back in time, but they were few and far between. Many were bred in France in the 19th century and rejoice in such wonderful names such as the China Rose, the Comptesse du Cayla.

It was from these Chinese roses that hybridists were able to create the bush roses which have such long flowering periods. These old roses with their wonderful scent and shapely form are much more common and have been joined by David Austin's English Roses which are a hybrid between the species and bush roses, having the scent and shape of the old and the longevity of the bush type.



In my garden I have even picked some on Christmas Day.

A lovely garden to visit if you want to see these old roses at their best is Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire, where the National Trust house Graham Thomas' original collection which has been greatly expanded. It is a bit of a journey but well worth it.

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Mid-week Holy Communion



There is now a weekly Holy Communion service held at 10am in North Curry Church. It is a said service (no hymns etc.) and takes place in the Lady Chapel in the church. All are welcome: please just come along if you feel the need.

Rotas

Stoke St Gregory

Sidespersons

1st June	TBC (EP)
15th June	Annette & barbara M
29th June	Barbara P & John

Cleaners

1st June	Marilyn & Terri
8th	Linda & Brent
15th	Annette & Martin
22nd	Penny & Simon
29th	Dave & Janet

Readers

Please read both Old and New Testament readings as shown in the bulletin. If changing weeks please advise Jane or Pat

1st June	Jane
15th June	Jo
29th June	Barbara M

Flowers

15th June	Marilyn Clarke
29th	Flowers paid for by donation and produced by Edwina Hansford

North Curry

	Sidesmen	Intercessions	Readers
1st June	P Burgess S Keele	Z Sykes	H Baker
8th	L B-Brown J Sergeant	D Walker	J Satchwell
15th	J Dare	J Satchwell	D Farnham
19th	S Keele	M Piers	D Walker T Jeanes
22nd	P Burgess J Dare	Z Sykes	TBC
29th	T Jones Denise Waler	D Farnham	D Akerman
6th July	L Farnham P Burgess	D Walker	Z Sykes

Services across the Benefice

1st June Sunday after Ascension Day

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
10.00am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.00am	Stoke Baptist Church	Messy Church (starting with breakfast)
11.00am	North Curry Methodist	Church Service
6.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong

8th June Pentecost (Whit Sunday)

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Prayer Café with Communion
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Cancelled due to ill-health
5.00pm	Queen Square Garden	Pentecost Praise with NC Methodists

15th June Trinity Sunday

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
10.00am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family Worship
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church Service	
6.00pm	North Curry	Evensong

19th June 7pm (Thursday) Corpus Christi White

22nd June (NC Music Festival)

10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family Worship
11.00am	North Curry	Benefice family service for Music Festival United with NC Methodist Church

29th June (5th Sunday but not UBS) Festival of Peter and Paul

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10.00am	North Curry	Patronal Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family Worship
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
3.00pm	North Curry Methodist Church Anniversary Service with Tea	

6th July 3rd Sunday after Trinity

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
10.00am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
11.00am	North Curry Methodist Church Service	
6.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong