



5ALIVE!

**December 2024
January 2025**

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CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR!!**

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FROM THE EDITOR

ANOTHER YEAR COMING to an end! Where does the time go? Anyway, I won't ramble on about it, just want to say very many thanks to everyone who contributes to 5Alive, to Andrew Bramston who manages the distribution of the magazine and to all the volunteers who pop it through letterboxes, to all our advertisers without whom 5Alive would not exist so please support them and use their services and to anyone and everyone who plays even the most minor of minor roles to helping me put it all together. Have the happiest of happy Christmases and a brilliant New Year!

Peter

JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

I LOVE AUTUMN. It's my favourite season, although November this year has been rather damp and soggy. But we mustn't complain, remembering the terrible floods in Spain and other places. I look forward to Spring, with its renewal of life and flowery surprise but it's the anticipation of it that I enjoy. I find the reality too fraught with restlessness and promises so often unfulfilled. Autumn for me is a time of quiet reflection and contentment – the end of anxieties such as will the weather be fine for outside events commitments, will I have unexpected guests when I am in the middle of a pile of ironing, washing my hair or the lawn needs mowing? In the shorter days of autumn there is less chance of distant visitors so one can invite local friends, light the log fire, ignore the lawn and exchange local chat or "put the world to rights" as my Mum would say.

At this time of year, too, I love my long garden path. It is flanked with a huge beech on one side and a Spanish sweet chestnut on the other. Between them the copper pennies of the beech and the serrated ovals of the chestnut form a golden carpet winding through overarching shrubs from my rickety iron gate to my hidden house. And if we get a few dry sunny days I have the joy of scuffling through the leaves and beechmast revelling in the rustle and crunch like an aged toddler, alongside my beloved dog, Ebbie, who wears her years more gracefully and thinks, no doubt, that I am quite mad.

As I write this in mid-November, we are fast approaching Advent in the church calendar. I have just finished refreshing and re-dressing the Advent wreath,

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Deadline for DECEMBER/JANUARY is FRIDAY

NOVEMBER 22ND but do check!

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CONTACTS

Mells Group of churches is currently in a vacancy. For any enquiries please contact the church warden in your parish. For weddings contact the benefice administrator, Mrs Catherine Brown, email catmellsgroup@gmail.com. She works on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

Church laymen and women Church wardens	Parish council chairs and clerks
Buckland Dinham Jenny Waller, 07887 556936 Chantry Hazel Tovey 836384 David Rawlins 836252 Great Elm Sally Rosa 07833 900947 Mells/ Vobster Hilary Ingram 01373 311073 Whatley Mrs K Gay 836175	John Reckless 01373 461841 Diane Sleight 07907 156735 parishclerk@bucklanddinham.org John Earl 01373 812450 Joy Book 07704 584953 Andrew Bramston 01373 836513 Rachel Nash clerk.whatleyparishcouncil@gmail.com

Roman Catholic Services

Mells: Sundays at 11.30am Frome: Saturdays 5.30pm.
Wednesdays 11.30am Sundays 10.00am

Somerset Councillor: Philip Ham 01373 812152

Others to be confirmed

Chantry and Whatley Francis Hayden 07970 839532

something I enjoy doing every year. The fat (and expensive) red candles which have done many years of service are growing a bit short so I have experimented by adding a block of polystyrene glued to the bases and covered in red tape to match the candles. The extensions sink into the candle-holders, hidden by foliage, and will give at least a couple more year of burning time so I was quite pleased with the result. At my age (92) a couple of years is as far as I can optimistically plan so perhaps when the time comes for candle replacements it will be someone else's problem.

Talking of looking ahead, another thing I do at this time of year is walk around all my old trees, especially the ancient apple trees in the orchard, telling them to rest well and sleep quietly though the winter and wake refreshed and renewed in Spring. And I tell them "I will be here to see you" as much to reassure myself as for their benefit. I have been so blessed with good health up to now – it is two and half years since my cancer op and as far as I know I am "fit as flea" (well as a fit as a 92-year-old flea anyway). But circumstances can change in an instant so I keep praying "Please Lord, don't send the bill in yet", there is still so much I need to do. But, season by season, I feel I mustn't be greedy and ungrateful.

Oh dear! All this and I haven't mentioned the churchyard yet. There, like everywhere else at the moment, is a season of calm and little happening. By the time the next 5Alive appears in February the grass will be laced with thousands of snowdrops, patched with clusters of pale mauve crocus and the worms and wind will have removed most of the huge hand-shaped leaves beneath the conker tree. That tree, like its companions, is now showing its beautiful bone structure. Its cloak of of summer leaves now shed, each tree exposes its individual silhouette and whatever birds are around are easier to spot among the branches.

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Talking of birds, a bird-watching – perhaps I should say a bird-aware - friend said last week that fieldfares had already arrived locally. That seems early and I wonder why. Surely with global warming universal, there is less inclination for migrants to travel early to warmer climates? Perhaps someone with greater knowledge of migratory habits might have views of this?

Well, by the time this appears in print, December and the run up to Christmas will be upon us. I am sure that, in what can be a stressful time of preparation socially and economically, we all spare time to remember what Christmas is really about: sharing the joyful celebrations of the arrival of the Holy Child.

I hope everyone has a joyful, peaceful Christmas, spent in congenial company. And if anyone finds themselves – or knows of someone who would be – unexpectedly and unwillingly alone on Christmas Day, there are always spare chairs at Bird Shadows and a warm welcome by the log fire. Wishing everyone all the blessings of Christmas and a really good New Year. See you in 2025.

Hazell

ROUND AND ABOUT

JACKDAWS IS DELIGHTED TO BE HOLDING A WINTER AFTERNOON CONCERT ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 6TH 2024

Jackdaws is very excited to present a concert performed by international duo Marta Fontanals, Simmons (mezzo-soprano) and Lana Bode (pianist). Marta and Lana will be performing songs from their new album 'Somnia', which includes three under-performed song cycles by Ethel Smyth, George Crumb and Frederic Mompou.

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Tickets £10 available from the office or via the website,

jackdaws.org.uk/events/jackdaws-afternoon-concert/, 01373 812383

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL: Please join us at St Giles Church, Leigh on Mendip BA3 5QJ on Saturday December 7th and Sunday December 8th, between 11.00am and 4.00pm. Our beautiful 14th century village church will be filled with sparkling, brightly-lit Christmas trees to usher in the festive season. Entry is free and delicious light lunches and refreshments will be available on both days.

FROM MARTIN WEYMONT

I'd like to say thank you for a donation for the Ugandan church handed to me at Great Elm after a Sunday service in November. Thank you, *Martin Weymont*

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Church services in December and January

	1 st December	8 th December	15 th December	22 nd December	24 th December	25 th December
Chantry		11am: Matins	11am Toy Service	11am: Holy Communion	10.00pm Midnight Mass	
Great Elm			9.30am: Holy Communion	9.30am Informal Service Richard King		
Mells	10.00am Group Service: Holy Communion David Gatliffe	9.30am Holy Communion David Gatliffe		9.30am Morning Prayer Martin Weymont		
Whatley		9.30am Morning Prayer		5.00pm Carol Service led by Richard King		9.30am Holy Communion Martin Weymont

The rota for January was not available as we went to press apart from Whatley.

January 5th Rev David Clark 10.00am, January 12th
Jan 11.00am Rev Chris Hare; January 19th 11.00am
Mrs Valerie Rawlins Matins, 26th January, 11.00.
11am tba.

Keep an eye on village websites etc for details of services elsewhere.

Hardington Vale Church Services – Dec 2024 – Jan 2025

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Sunday 1 Dec 1 st Sunday of Advent	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Informal Breakfast Rode, Holy Communion Laverton, Holy Communion Rode, Chapel, Meeting Place
Monday 2 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Tuesday 3 Dec	11.00 am	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Holy Communion
Wednesday 4 Dec	8.30 am 5.00 pm	Hemington, Morning Prayer Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
Thursday 5 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 8 Dec 2 nd Sunday of Advent	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Rode, Breakfast Church Norton St Phillip, Holy Communion Laverton, Matins Buckland Dinham, Iona Service
Monday 9 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 11 Dec	8.30 am 5.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hemington, Morning Prayer Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer Tollisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 12 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 15 Dec 3 rd Sunday of Advent	9.00 am 11.00 am 3.00 pm 3.30 pm 6.00 pm	Farleigh Hungerford, Holy Communion Laverton, Carol Service Rode, Outdoor Nativity Buckland Dinham, Carol Service Norton St Phillip, Carol Service
Monday 16 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 18 Dec	8.30 am 5.00 pm	Hemington, Morning Prayer Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
Thursday 19 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 22 Dec 4 th Sunday of Advent	10.30 am 11.00 am 4.00 pm 6.00 pm 6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Holy Communion Laverton, Matins Rode, Carol Service Buckland Dinham, Reflective Service Farleigh Hungerford, Carol Service
Monday 23 Dec	9.00 am 5.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer Tollisford, Nativity
Tuesday 24 Dec CHRISTMAS EVE	3.00 pm 5.00 pm 11.00 pm 11.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Crib Service Norton St Phillip, Crib Service Rode, Holy Communion Norton St Phillip, Holy Communion
Wednesday 25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY	9.00 am 11.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am	Farleigh Hungerford, Holy Communion Laverton, Holy Communion Norton St Phillip, Family Service Rode, Family Service

Hardington Vale Church Services – Dec 2024 – Jan 2025

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Sunday 29 Dec	10.30 am	Rode, United Holy Communion
Monday 30 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Sunday 5 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Informal Breakfast
	10.30 am	Rode, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Holy Communion
	6.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Meeting Place
Monday 6 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 8 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Prayer
	6.00 pm	Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 9 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 12 Jan	9.00 am	Rode, Breakfast Church
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	11.00 am	Buckland Dinham, Iona Service
Monday 13 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 15 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Prayer
Thursday 16 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 19 Jan	9.00 am	Farleigh Hungerford, Holy Communion
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, Christingle
	10.30 am	Rode, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	11.00 am	Buckland Dinham, Holy Communion
Monday 20 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 22 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Prayer
	6.00 pm	Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 23 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 26 Jan	9.00 am	Tellisford, Holy Communion
	9.00 am	Rode, Contemplation & Coffee
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	6.00 pm	Buckland Dinham, Iona Service
Monday 27 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 28 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Prayer
	6.00 pm	Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 29 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer

MENDIP COUNTRY PRACTICE CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Monday 23rd December 08.00 - 18.30, Tuesday 24th December 08.00 - 18.30, Wednesday 25th CLOSED, Thursday 26th CLOSED, Friday 27th 08.00-18.30, Monday 30th December 08.00 - 18.30, Tuesday 31st December 08.00 - 18.30, Wednesday 1st December CLOSED, Thursday 2nd 08.00 - 18.30, Friday 3rd 08.00-18.30.

Please note the surgery closes between 1.00pm and 2.00pm during surgery opening hours.

For repeat prescriptions please request them no later than December 19th.

Requests made after this are not guaranteed to be ready in time for Christmas.

For any urgent or medical needs whilst we are closed, please contact 111 or 999.

BUCKLAND DINHAM

CHURCH NEWS

November was a busy month in St. Michael's church which started on the first at 16.30 with a well-attended very moving All Souls service taken by Barbara Day. On the 6th Fergus Stewart officiated at the funeral of Julia Dawkins (see details on separate note below). The 10th was Remembrance Sunday, with the service taken by the Reverend Pauline Reid. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers and poppies when we remembered the sacrifices made by so many service personnel. On the 17th our communion service was taken by the Reverend Stephen Jones, who has very recently moved to Norton St. Phillip. It

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was lovely to welcome him, his wife Gill and little dog Archie. So we will end the month with an 18.00 service before the start of Advent.

December and January as rota. Please do all come to the CAROL service on the December 15th. We look forward to seeing many children on this special afternoon at 3.00p.m. which will be followed by mince pies and sherry for Mothers and Fathers and soft drinks for the children.

As 2024 comes to an end I would like to say a big thank you to Jenny and Rob Waller, Meg and Jonny Griffiths for all they have done to keep St. Michael's as a welcoming place of worship, and for the ladies who continue to decorate the church with lovely flowers.

COFFEE MORNINGS

These too have continued through the year on the third Saturday of every month, the next on December 21st and January 18th 2025. We are very grateful for the delicious cakes that arrive every month and they are very much appreciated by all who comes to these social gatherings. If you have not come before, please do have a break from busy Christmas preparations and enjoy a chance to relax, sit, and chat to other villagers, then return home refreshed!

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS FAYRE!

And a gentle reminder that the now annual and very popular village Christmas Fayre and light switch on returns on Friday December 6th, between 6.00 and 8.00pm at the village hall and gardens.

The advertisement features a dark grey background with white and light blue text. On the left, the text 'Control Your Financial Future' is prominently displayed. To the right, a circular inset shows a person's hands pointing at a tablet displaying a bar chart. Three circular callouts with icons (thumbs up, shield, magnifying glass) contain the text: 'Gain Confidence: Make well-informed spending decisions', 'Gain Control: Step into a more secure future', and 'Gain Clarity: Grasp your financial situation'. Below these, a list of services includes Marriage, Retirement, Career Change, House Building, and Divorce. A central question asks 'Has Your Financial Situation Changed?'. A QR code is located in the bottom left corner. The bottom of the graphic contains contact information: 'graphicalanalysis@outlook.com' and the phone number '01373 673140'.

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We have many local craft stalls ready with gifts to start your Christmas shopping mulled wine, hot dogs, mince pies and Prosecco plus much more.

Entry is free but we ask that if able you bring a donation for Fair Frome FoodBank please. See you there to start the village festivities!

The church is organising a raffle at the Christmas Tree Light Fayre with a Christmas hamper as the prize. We're looking for donations of appropriate items to go in the hamper. If you have anything you'd like to donate, drop it down to Sara Corbett at 3 Bethel Place.

MRS JULIA (JULIE) DAWKINS, 1960-2024

On Wednesday November 6th a funeral service took place in St Michael's Church, Buckland Dinham, to celebrate the life of Julie Dawkins.

From 10 o'clock onwards a steady stream of colleagues, friends and family began to arrive until by the time the service began at 11.00, the church was packed full, a tribute to the many people Julie had touched throughout her life.

The service was conducted by the Reverend Pauline Reid. The coffin was carried in to the music of Andrea Bocelli singing *Ave Maria*. Hymns were *Morning has broken* and *Abide with me*.

Julia's son Tom gave the eulogy, recalling Julie's childhood in the 60's and 70's and her love of the pop icons of the time, such as the Bay City Rollers and David Cassidy. At the age of 17, Julie joined Cooper and Tanners as a junior assistant and stayed there for the rest of her working life. This loyalty was typical of Julie, who went on to become a loving wife to Simon and mother to Tom and Sophie, with a wide circle of friends and colleagues. In later life Julie enjoyed hiking and travelling and walking in Italy. The eulogy was followed by a poem chosen by Simon, Leo Marks' *The life that I have is all that I have*.

For her scripture reading, the Reverend Pauline chose the famous passage from 1 Corinthians 13 about the importance of love. She reflected that although this was usually chosen for weddings, it was very fitting for Julie since she was so beloved throughout her life. In particular, Julie's family meant everything to her. Pauline went on to reflect on how to deal with the pain of loss, something God understands and shares with us. While it is unbelievably hard, it is important to remember that the love Julie's friends and family shared with her will never be lost and will continue to nurture and sustain them. The coffin was carried out to a recording of Bocelli's *Time to say goodbye*, to be buried in St Michael's churchyard.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Julie's family and friends at this time.

Very Happy Christmas, and blessing and good wishes for 2025. Jill Wright.

BUCKLAND BUDDIES

In December we will meet for our Christmas Lunch, sorry if you have missed booking for this as numbers had to be in before this goes to print. However, we shall meet again on January 7th. At the time of writing these notes I am not sure whether afternoon or evening so please check on the Buckland web page.

BUCKLAND SINGERS

Coming to a doorstep near you on December 15th! The newly formed Buckland Singers will be doing the rounds in Buckland Dinham bringing traditional Christmas carols in four part harmony. We're a small group of villagers who have recently come together with the aim of bringing a little musical Christmas cheer to the village. We'll be collecting as we go with all proceeds going to We Hear You (our local counselling charity who provide much needed support to those bereaved due to cancer or other life threatening illnesses).

If you can read music and fancy joining us then please do get in touch, particularly if you're a tenor or a bass! Contact Chris on 07727 074856

CHANTRY

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND SONGS - community sing-along. **Holy Trinity churchyard Chantry Sunday December 8th, 18.00**, with fire-pit's mulled cider, soft drinks and mince pies to lift your voices! Wear your tinsel and jingle with us for an hour. Come and join in the fun and kick-off the festive season. All welcome (in case of bad weather we'll move inside the church).

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The toy and carol service will be held on Sunday December 15th. As usual toys and gifts are requested to be donated to the Salvation Army to be handed out to those unfortunate children and families who otherwise may have nothing. We feel so sorry for children who do not have the excitement of



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Christmas to look forward to so please do your best to help. Gifts should be loosely wrapped with ribbon or tape. Please do not use sticky tape as the helpers have to suit gifts to ages and sexes without having to tear wrappings. The service will be led by Barry Davies.

We always enjoy his services and would love to see some of the younger generation at this very joyous event. The church will be decorated on Saturday 14th from 2.00pm.

If you wish to donate you can leave your present then or better still bring it with you on Sunday 15th.

The Christmas eve Mass will be at 10.00pm (which is midnight Bethlehem Time). We hope to see you then, the service being followed with mince pies and hot drinks.

MAINTENANCE

Cleaning
07-12-24 Claire
14-12-24 Sue
21-12-24 Sue
28-12-24 Dolly

No flowers during Advent

Flowers Val

Mary Scott thanks all those who voluntarily help St, George's church to look so lovely. She wishes you all a happy Christmas and much merry dusting in 2025.

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GREAT ELM

GREAT ELM CHURCH NEWS

The funeral service of Una Machlachlan was held on November 20th. She joined her husband Thomas who is also buried at Great Elm. Una was the postmistress of the village in the 60s and 70s and the eulogy was a wonderful reminiscence of her life and Great Elm at the time.

CHRISTMAS EVE. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to our Christmas Carol Service at 5.00pm on Tuesday December 24th. During the service children will be invited to bring a toy up to the crib to be blessed. Afterwards there will be mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine at the Village Hall. Contributions of mince pies etc would be much appreciated and should be left at the Hall in the late afternoon.

Church fabric update – the repair of the church wall is complete, but the ceiling plaster repair has suffered a setback with the heavy rains exposing that not all points of water ingress had been found. Further work has been done and these we hope are now resolved.

MELLS WITH VOBSTER

MARGARET HOUSE 1942 – 2024

Friends and Family gathered in St Andrews on November 11th to remember the life of Margaret House.

The reading “She’s gone” was read by Sue Johns and “Remember me” by Toby Butler.



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Margaret lived in Kent, the Forest of Dean and then Somerset. Here the wider family would come for get togethers, for support in times of trouble and need. Such times Margaret experienced herself. It was devastating for the family when her sister died in her thirties, and there was more sadness for Margaret when Philip died shortly after they married.

Margaret was helped through her sorrow by the delights of her lifelong devotion to soft coated wheaten terriers. Gail her daughter was familiar in 1969 with the notion of women leaving work to have a child, but she knew of no one else whose Mum left work to have a puppy. Margaret devoted a great deal of time, energy and ingenuity to improving the breed, right down to the detailed level of eradicating a genetic flaw in the dogs. She was a judge at Crufts' and at shows all over the world. 2019 saw the remarkable achievement of spending 50 years in close association with the breed. Margaret last move was to Okehampton to be closer to her daughter Gail. She continued to travel to shows visiting Holland and Ireland and driving up and down the country. Although she could not visit her son Gareth and his family in New Zealand she maintained online contact for as long as possible after their visit in 2022. Margaret was laid to rest in Mells churchyard with her husband Philip. RIP

JOHN (JACK) INCH 1933 – 2024

Friends and Family gathered in St Andrews on November 18th to remember the life of John Inch known to all as Jack. Readings were "Jack" by Jackie Inch, Revelations Chapter 21: verse 1-7 by Christian Davis and "Your Father" by Anthony Inch



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Jack was born in the "Potteries" Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, so he inherited a collection of pottery and was a lifelong supporter of Stoke on Trent FC from an early age.

Jack met Shirley while he was in the army and the Queen at Holyrood Palace. He was known as "Stick man" due to his smartness on duty, something he maintained through his life.

They were married in 1953, living in Stoke for 13 years where Jackie and Martin were born. They then moved to Warminster for a few years before arriving at Mells, firstly with Jack as a gardener at Mells Park and then into the village residing at Garston House for 50 years (Martin Moore did maintenance and became a friend) where he returned to lorry driving. He worked for Ken Andrews and then Lime Kiln Quarry where he had a great group of friends.

In 1973 Jack and Shirley fostered a beautiful baby boy called Antia better known as Anthony, eventually he lived with them permanently and called them "the Rescuers" becoming Jack's sidekick in the lorry.

Dogs were a big feature in family life with a succession of various breeds passing through the family. Then along came grandchildren Christian, John, Jason, Holly and Ben. Sports and food and frolics are fondly remembered in the times spent with Grandad Jack. He was also an accomplished wood worker and supported Shirley with her causes including running a youth club together. A proud moment for Jack was in 2013 when Christian asked him to be his best man. Great grandchildren Jack, Millie, Jane and Alfie were also given the loving treatment.



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A dear friend said recently that “the village has lost a great man, a kind person and with his wife an irreplaceable couple”. A couple too valuable or special to be replaced. Jack said that “She was the best lady, everyone loved Mum but not as much as me”. Jack is now together again with his beloved wife Shirley. RIP

“SPELLBOUND” AT VICTORIA CROSS TALK

On November 11th, Armistice Day, some 70 people were spellbound by Mark Smith's (of Antiques Roadshow fame) talk in Mells Tithe Barn on the Victoria Cross. The event was one of a series of lectures in memory of Simon Fordham, to raise money to support the running of the Mells Shop and Cafe. Without the aid of notes or slides, Mark described mesmerising deeds of indescribable courage, valour and heroism. You could have heard a pin drop. Delicious refreshments were provided halfway through the evening by volunteers, and all the money raised went to help the shop and cafe. Thank you to Mark for very kindly donating his time, and for a fascinating and unforgettable talk.



CHRIS JOINS CENOTAPH MARCH

And on Remembrance Sunday, Mells' own Chris Raithby had the honour of joining the thousands who marched past the Cenotaph, representing the Army Cadet Corps. Well done, Chris, you helped do everyone who has served or is currently serving with our armed forces proud!

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NOTES OF MELLS PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 12TH 2024 (Full minutes can be found at mellsparishcouncil.org.uk)

SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT:

Winter Fuel Payments: In a move to safeguard vulnerable older residents, Somerset Council overwhelmingly passed a motion to oppose the Government's changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Recycling: Somerset Council has been given the green-light to roll out the collection of plastic bags and wrapping to more than 25,000 households. From October 2024 a further 25,000 residents in and around Wells, Draycott, Frome and Chilcompton will benefit from getting these hard to recycle plastics collected from home.

Sale of Disposable Vapes: The sale of disposable vapes is to be made illegal from June 1st 2025. There are currently five million sold weekly, each of which contains a lithium battery which cause frequent fires in recycling trucks and centres.

Overspend for year: This is calculated as ranging from £66 to £169 million as unforeseen issues and demands on finances cannot be quantified.

Planning: This is in a dire state at present with applications not being given approval for years in some cases. There is also no enforcement strategy in place. Both issues are hoped to be in a better position in the next year or so.

Household support grant: Grants of up to £1,000 are still available.

Council tax relief: Relief for those on benefit is under review and it is likely the single persons council tax relief will be reviewed too.

MATTERS ARISING

Barn lease: The lease has been agreed and is ready to sign. The parish council will continue as the leaseholders for the Barn.

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Pavilion lease and future of recreation ground: Gary Smart, Director, reported that they had met with the Estate who were willing to offer a shorter lease of 10 years with a five year get out and a peppercorn rent as they wish to see the recreation ground continuing as such. This offer is more appealing for the directors to take on lease themselves and would release the parish council from their obligations. However, it was agreed that subject to S137 conditions and ongoing budget constraints, the parish council would be willing to continue their financial support as currently the income from the Recreation Ground is not sufficient to sustain the long term future although other income opportunities are being considered.

Quarry noise: Cllr West was contacted by a resident one evening regarding the quarry noise at their house. Cllr West agreed that the noise was worse in the garden than on the road which was probably due to the enclosed nature of the garden although he did not believe it was breaking any planning permissions. The quarry will be publishing the results of a noise survey taken with handheld devices in the near future and have recently trialled an electric train. £600k has been spent on improving the rail system this year and another similar amount is budgeted for next year.

HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

Speeding vehicles in Vobster: Clerk to find out the procedure to get the speed limit reduced and whether offering some funding towards the implementation of a scheme would improve the chances of it being moved forward. Cllr Brady will speak to the police regarding the speeding vehicles.

Park Corner: Another accident occurred on November 9th involving three cars with a police presence. Clerk to inform Highways.



PLANNING

2024/1858/LBC: Retrospective permission for additional conservation roof lights to north elevation, ground floor timber partition, first floor mezzanine and replacement of flooring at first floor – Vobster Church Studio – For the listed building consent office to decide. No objections.

FINANCE

Lloyds bank account charges: From January 14th 2025, the account will become a Community Account with a monthly charge of £4.25 for account maintenance and varying charges for other services (10p per direct debit, 7p per BACS payment, 50p per cheque). Although disappointing, the charges are considerably less than the £12/month account maintenance fee that HSBC had charged. The first 100 transactions will be free.

Preliminary budget and precept discussion: The Parish Council resources will be stretched further next year due to the following expenditure that is new for the coming year:-

- **Bank charges** £4.25/month + additional transaction charges
- **Website charges** (£33/month)
- **Dog waste and litter bin emptying:** Somerset Council is withdrawing this service for any bins not owned by them. Unfortunately, all Mells bins are owned



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by the PC. The current figure being given by Somerset Council to buy in the service is £12.50/bin empty. Mells has a total of 10 bins that would require emptying. At this price and continuing the fortnightly emptying schedule, the annual costs would be £3,250!! It is hoped that the two dog waste bins in Fairview would be counted as one as they are side by side and this would reduce the annual total to £2,925. The Clerk is trying to source a contractor who can provide this service more cheaply as it an essential service.

ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Trees in Vobster graveyard: Concerns were raised that these may cause issue an issue as they get bigger and damage the boundary wall. As the church is a listed building the wall is within the curtilage of that listing damage to the wall needs to be prevented.

Damaged bridge: As the bridge has been in disrepair for a while, the warning orange tape has become entangled with brambles which need removing to ensure the tape is visible and fit for purpose. Clerk to contact Highways.

Vobster Cross junction: Clerk to request reinstatement of the give way markings.

Speeding traffic – Lime Kiln Hill: Cllr Brady has contacted the local MP requesting calming measures and the police witnessed vehicles approaching the village at a speed deemed to be over the limit.

Wooden fingerposts: Cllr Brady is assessing the work required. Somerset Council will supply new posts if required.

Signs: Thanks were extended to Cllr Brady for continuing to clean the signs around the village

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, December 10th in the Barn.

Joy Book, Clerk to Mells Parish Council, Email: parishcouncils.frome@gmail.com,
[07704 584953](tel:07704584953)

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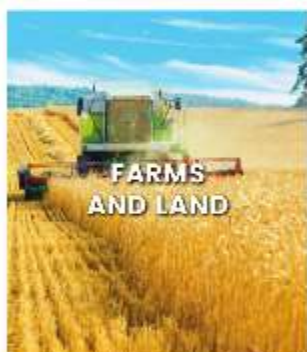
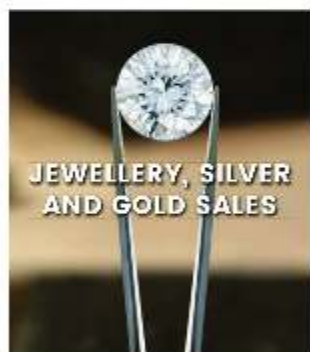
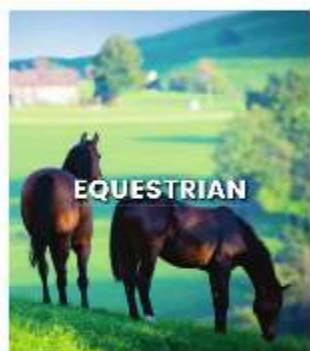
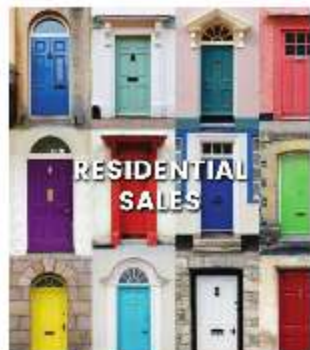
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