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February 2025



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Great Elm, Mells with Vobster and
Whatley**

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FROM THE EDITOR

FIRST OF ALL, many apologies to our editorial contributors for not putting the correct deadline date in the last issue of 5Alive. I've put the right one in this time - it's a bit early but it's because February is a short month and I need to make sure the magazine is available by the beginning of March.

Can I add my thanks to all those contributors who combine to make 5Alive the magazine it is. Without them the magazine would not exist. And can I say the same about our advertisers. Please use their many and varied services. We rely 100 percent on them to meet the costs of the producing the magazine.

Enough from me! Enjoy this issue. *Peter*

JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

WELL, A BELATED Happy New Year to all. Christmas is now just a memory, but I hope it brings some happy memories of joyful gatherings of friends and family. Many perhaps gathered to celebrate in one of our local parish churches, all of which were lovingly decorated by volunteers with seasonal Christmas trees and cribs. Thanks to all who worked hard to maintain the true meaning of Christmas celebrations among all their personal and domestic commitments.

I had the busiest time I have had for years, entertaining 14 different groups of friends and family during Christmas and the preceding week. It was enormously enjoyable, exhilarating but exhausting and at one point I realised I had filled the dog's bowl with parrot food.

Editor: Peter Corbett mellsmag@hotmail.com

Advertising: Peter Corbett, 01373 466536, mellsmag@hotmail.com

Deadline for MARCH 2025 is

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 14th but do check!

Printed by Frome Printworks 01373 800 300

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

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

The parrots would have happily crunched dog pellets but my poor Ebbie would not have appreciated parrot mixtures. Luckily sanity resurfaced in time to recover the error. I could blame it on old age but in earlier years when I did B&Bs I once added a box of dog biscuits to the packets of breakfast cereal choices so such errors are obviously the fault of a feeble mind under stress.

Wildlife also generally doesn't know whether it is coming or going. Up until the post-Christmas freeze the weather was so mild that everything just kept on growing. The climbing nasturtiums in my porch reached a height of about 15 feet, up and over the front door and were still flowering cheerfully at Christmas. And some mysterious insect had recently eaten holes in my geranium leaves, a thing I have never known before in December. Round holes, as a caterpillar would make, what but what kind of caterpillar would be active in December? And why choose tough geranium leaves when plenty of softer foliage

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surrounded them? Any ideas anyone? Usually by December my geraniums are tucked away by the kitchen door walls and the shelter of the surrounding stable yard wall so that whatever mysterious predator has attacked them might not have found them before. This year the poor things have been caught in the front porch I haven't yet had anyone to help move the heavy pots so I hope they will survive. An odd thing I have noticed at the time of writing this in the second week of January is the absence – or invisibility - of my garden snowdrops. As I am sure I have mentioned in earlier years, ever since we arrived here 50 odd years ago on January 21st to find a carpet of snowdrops in flowers they have bloomed each year on that date. At the moment there is no sign of them of even when scraping aside the fallen autumn leaf cover. I thought perhaps they were just having a later flowering year but on wandering around the churchyard, I see there are hundreds -thousands? – of white bells scattered over graves and beneath trees. So, where are mine? My bluebells are already well up along the path and the ever increasing patch of hyacinths (from many gifted bowls, later planted out for succeeding years' flowering) are well about ground. For 50 odd years I have revelled in my

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snowdrops and I simply could NOT grow them “back home”. Could squirrels have dug them up? But not all surely. One thing is certain they will have to do it quickly, like speeded up cycles of growth cycles we see on TV wildlife films.

Something I cannot grow despite many money wasting attempts is winter aconites. I do love them cheerful buttercup faces sitting above their green choirboy frills. Such a brave prelude to early spring.

Having achieved two a few years ago (out of 20 planted) I thought I had succeeded at last but I haven't seen them since. Any ideas as to why, or advice, would be very welcome. They were planted “in the green” (pre-flowering) and recommended.

Ivy is said to be wonderful thing to grow for wildlife. The bees love the blossom and the birds love the berries and also find shelter in the thick growth. Having a 9ft wall along my north boundary this is always ivy covered although every few years in summer I have it cleared so it doesn't actually grow in among the old stones to

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Church services in February

	2 nd February	9 th February	16 th February	23 rd February	2 nd March
	Candemas	4 th before Lent	3 rd before Lent	2 nd Before Lent	Sunday next before Lent
Chantry	10.00am Group Service: Holy Communion Barry Davies	11.00am Matins Hazel Tovey	11am Holy Communion	11.00am Matins Valerie Rawlins	
Great Elm			9.30am: Holy Communion Robin Isherwood	9.30am Informal Service Richard King	
Mells		9.30am Holy Communion		9.30am Morning Prayer Janet Cauldwell	10.00am Group Service: Holy Communion
Whatley		9.30am Morning Prayer Hazel Tovey		9.30am Holy Communion	

If you want to keep an eye open for any changes to services, you can check the schedule on the Mells Group website, www.mellsgroup.church/whatson.

Hardington Vale Church Services – FEBRUARY 2025

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Sunday 2 February	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Informal Breakfast Rode , Holy Communion Laverton , Holy Communion Rode Chapel , Meeting Place
Monday 3 February	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 5 February	8.30 am 6.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer
Thursday 6 February	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 9 February	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Rode , Informal Breakfast Norton St Philip , Holy Communion Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Iona Service
Monday 10 February	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 12 February	8.30 am 6.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer Tellisford , Evening Prayer
Thursday 13 February	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 16 February	9.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am	Farleigh Hungerford , Holy Communion Rode , Holy Communion Norton St Philip , Informal Worship (piano blessing) Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Holy Communion
Monday 17 February	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 19 February	8.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Tellisford , Holy Communion Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer
Thursday 20 February	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer
Sunday 23 February	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Rode , Contemplation & Coffee Norton St Philip , Holy Communion Laverton , Matins Buckland Dinham , Evening Service
Monday 24 February	9.00 am	Norton St Philip , Morning Prayer
Wednesday 26 February	8.30 am 6.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hemington , Morning Prayer Rode Chapel , Informal Prayer Tellisford , Evening Prayer
Thursday 27 February	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip , Silent Prayer

undermine it. And I do love to see stone walls anyway. Apparently in the heyday of full time gardeners peaches and nectarines were trained along the orchard wall. Two of the old trees still survive and flower some 15 feet above the wall every year but never produce any fruit as far as I can see.

However, the ivy has now begun to grow on the north wall of the house and what was originally an attractive lacy frame to the lower windows has now begun to obscure the daylight so I shall have to find someone to fight their way along the wall to remove it before the house is engulfed like the fabled “cottage-in-the-woods” (complete with resident “old-woman-in-the woods”).

And now I see, through the lattice of ivy the first of the promised snow is beginning to fall so I had better go and post this in case we get snowed in. See you in March, *Hazell*

ROUND AND ABOUT

MENDIP COUNTRY PRACTICE

Mendip Country Practice will be improving access to the building with building work starting February 10th. We anticipate this to be all complete by Friday February 15th. We remain open as usual with access to the building through the Mendip Room causing minimal disruption. Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

BUCKLAND DINHAM

OUR VERY OWN REPAIR SHOP SAVES THE NATIVITY

Every year at St Michael’s we reach up to the top of the vestry cupboard to find the box labelled ‘Christmas’ and unwrap the nativity figures to put in the crib. They have traditionally been much used and much loved, as evidenced by flaking paint, missing hands and ears, and even a wobbly head repaired many times with sticky tape.

Last Christmas, however, all that changed. Vivienne Bolton, who attends St Michael's church regularly, spotted the rather worn and dilapidated state of the set and volunteered to carry out her very own Repair Shop rescue.

First of all, Vivienne did her research. Our set, she discovered, was probably between 80 and 100 years old, reasonably rare, and so worth restoring. By comparing it to photographs of similar sets, she discovered that one piece was missing, probably an angel. Because it was made of a soft plaster, it was hardly surprising that it had become damaged over the years. Also the dampness of the church meant the plaster would have absorbed water from the atmosphere over the years.

How did Vivienne go about the restoration?

First of all, she used air-drying clay to re-form missing ears and hands, and indeed a thumb. When the clay parts were dry, she then glued them back on using epoxy resin. Fine sandpaper ensured the joins were invisible. Vivienne then mixed acrylic paints to match the original colours, and oh-so-carefully painted the new parts, finishing with a satin varnish.

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The restored nativity set is now stored in a secure plastic box which includes a capillary mat to catch any lingering damp. Each figure has its own wrapping to prevent damage from knocking against the others, and we have strict instructions NOT to lift the figures out by the head (or ears). Just as in the more famous Repair Shop, we were very moved both by the result of the restoration (it looks beautiful!) and the love, skill and care Vivienne brought to the task. It formed a very fitting centre piece for our carol service this year – especially when the children added a flock of knitted sheep to the scene.


Thank you, Vivienne. And I believe you may have another set to restore for Norton St Philip next year...

Jenny Waller, Parish Warden, St Michael's church, Buckland Dinham


MRS GLENYS MELLOR, 1941-2024


At 1:00pm on Thursday December 12th 2024, a funeral service took place in St Michael's Church, Buckland Dinham to celebrate the life of Glenys Mellor. The church was full, as family and friends from the village gathered together to remember Glenys. A beautiful display of

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lilies decorated the altar, a fitting tribute to Glenys who was an avid gardener.

The service was conducted by The Reverend Pauline Reid.

Hymns were *Love Divine* and *Abide with me*, two beautiful choices.

Scripture readings were Psalm 23, and John 6:35-40.. Pauline began her address by sharing with us how privileged she felt to hear about memories of Glenys from her family, and to build up a picture of her life. She led a varied and active life - as a farmer's wife moving around the country in the early years of her marriage, as a mother of two daughters, and as a youth support worker in Frome in her later years. In retirement, Glenys set an example to us all by making the most of her time, travelling the world with her husband Ben and their close friends.

At home, Glenys was always busy and a passionate gardener, to the extent that her garden was referred to as "paradise" by her friends. She also took part in many village activities including Open Gardens and the much-remembered Christmas Tree Festival which filled the church with trees sponsored by local enterprises.

Pauline observed that someone so close to the natural world as Glenys would be familiar with the cycle of life. She suggested that one way to think of her passing is to imagine her going home. Although losing a loved one is never easy, there is comfort in knowing that Glenys is safe in God's hands. Glenys was buried in St Michael's churchyard beside her husband Ben. Following the burial, the funeral party gathered in the village hall. Glenys leaves behind two daughters as well as two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends at this time.

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CHANTRY

IT'S A BIT LATE BUT A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE

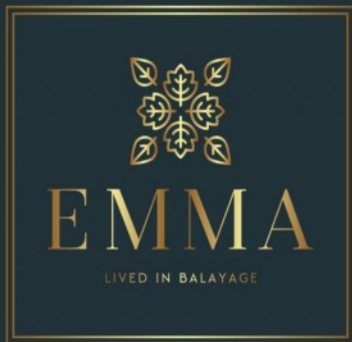
The Christmas Services were very well attended. Both services were led and devised by Barry Davis - thank you Barry for all your hard work. The services were followed with mulled cider and mince pies, thanks to Jan and Andrew for the mulled cider. It was lovely seeing so many friends and having a catch up.

We had a lovely letter from the Salvation Army thanking us for all the gifts presented at the Toy and Carol service. There were so many, my car boot and back seats were crammed with them all.

Thank you very much for giving so generously.

Thanks also to all of you who helped with decorating and cleaning for both services, especially to Jan and Andrew for decorating the magnificent tree

The February Group Service will be hosted by Chantry Church at 10.00am on Sunday 2nd..



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MAINTENANCE

	Flowers	Cleaning
01-02-25	Hazel	
08-02-25	Laureen	Claire
15-02-25	Val	Dolly & Val
22-02-25	Val	

GREAT ELM

Our Carol Service on Christmas Eve was well attended with a congregation of 78 people.

My thanks to those who helped decorate the church and to the various members of the village who kindly sang solos and read the lessons which helped make the service a community event. The collection raised £224 for the Children's Hospice South West. The additional repairs to the roof seem to have sorted out the problem and the plastering repair work of the ceiling will recommence at the end of February.

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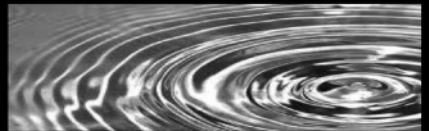


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A tea party at 3.00pm on January 19th in recognition of flower and cleaning rota members being held at Judy Duffus' was open to everyone.

It would be wonderful for some new names to come on to the rotas. The flower arranging is not expected to be professional looking with lots of expensive bought flowers but more for the church to look like a welcoming English country church that is loved.... a pot plant, a vase with some flowers in, some herbs or hedgerow contributions are some suggestions. Contact Judy to find out more.

Please note these future dates:

Sunday March 30th – 9.30am Mothering Sunday. Richard King will be taking the service. Distribution of posies and Simnel cake.

Saturday April 12th – 10.00-12noon. Spring tidy of the church yard

Preparation for the new Electoral Church Roll will start in March with a notice on the church notice board from March 12th.



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MELLS WITH VOBSTER

EVA DIANA COX 1944-2024

Friends and Family gathered in St Andrews on January 14th to remember the life of Diana Cox.

Diana was born in Mells but moved to Vobster a few months later where her three other sisters, Angela, Rosemary and Margaret, were born. They had very happy childhood memories.

Diana and family move back to Mells when she was nine and attended Mells school. She was christened, confirmed and married in St Andrews, learnt to ring the bells and sang in the choir, such lovely memories.

After leaving school Diana went to work at Butler and Tanner in Frome where she met her husband, and they married in March 1966.

They settled in Frome in 1967 where Teresa, Rachel and Linda were born. Diana loved dancing and achieved a Gold Medal in ballroom and Latin American dance.



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Diana's last job was working at Critchill Court as a carer for the elderly, which she enjoyed so much, she was a caring person. Diana's family was her life. They enjoyed going camping, sailing and moving on to a caravan when the grandchildren, Nicola, Ana and Marco, came along. Then in the last ten years great grandchildren Alfie, Eva Frankie and Belle joined them. Diana was a loving, beautiful, caring, kind, gentle understanding and forgiving person. She will be greatly missed by all her family. Good night. God bless. **RIP**

MARGARET KATHLEEN MORRIS 1932 – 2024

Friends and Family gathered in St Andrews on December 3rd to remember the life of Margaret Morris. She was born in Inverness where she lived with her parents and four siblings, spending time with her sister Sheila in Elgin with their great aunt. They had many happy times there Margaret was a keen swimmer as a teenager, she was part of an early morning swimming club at Loch Ness. She left school at 15 and joined



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the Milk Marketing Board where she greatly enjoyed her life and made lifelong friends.

In the 1950s she met her husband, and they married in 1961. They moved to Elgin, Margaret's happy place, and Joanna was born in 1965. They then moved to Reading and Steve was born in 1967. In the 1970s Margaret became a dinner lady, teaching assistant and bookkeeper, her last job was at Ogee's hair and beauty, jobs that she enjoyed so much. She retired in the 90's and becoming a grandmother in 2005/6 meant the world to her. She also loved travelling, particularly Italy, including a special time at Lake Como. Despite her last 12 months being challenging Margaret was a deeply caring, loving, warm, funny person with a cheeky wink and smile to a child if the adults were getting to serious. She will be greatly missed by family and friends RIP.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCHYARD

Following the success of the morning we organised in September, and a very positive response to the results achieved, we are inviting all Mells residents, or anyone with a family connection to the church, to come together again to help tidy up the churchyard, on Saturday March 15th, 10.00am-12.00pm. If you would like to help

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the other volunteers to keep our wonderful churchyard looking its best, do join us (please bring your own gloves/tools/strimmers etc). All welcome, tea, coffee and cake will be provided.

MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (www.mells-pc.gov.uk – NOTE NEW FULLY ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE)

Notes of Mells Parish Council held on Tuesday 14 January 2025 – full minutes on website

Somerset Council, Councillor’s report

Household Support Fund: Applications can only be made online and close on 31 March 2025. somerset.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/somerset-household-support-fund/ **The Clerk will assist anyone who does not have internet access.** The Household Support Fund cannot make direct payments towards bills. It does not provide cash payments or make payments to your bank account. Where support is approved, vouchers will be issued for an agreed monetary value. **Gas and electricity** – If you have a pre-payment energy meter, your cards or keys can be topped up. You must redeem your voucher within five days of receiving it. For help towards all other energy bills, food vouchers can be given in place of

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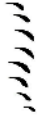
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ii. Local Plan Call for Sites: Somerset Council will be launching a Call for Sites in the new year as it prepares to develop its first Local Plan. The Call for Sites is a six-week period where landowners, developers, and site promoters are invited to submit land they want to be considered for future development. Submissions can be for various uses including housing, economic development, gypsy and traveller pitches and plots, and renewable energy installations.

SLINKY transport service: This demand responsive transport is a bookable, flexible service which residents can use if there is no public transport alternative. All users need to do is register online to start using the Slinky bus to get to the shops, to visit friends and family, get to college or social clubs, or access medical appointments. You can also call: 01749 880482 for Mendip area. The



service is available to anyone in Somerset who does not have access to a regular bus service. Car owners can also use Slinky.

The Boundary Commission has launched a consultation on new division boundaries in Somerset - lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset. Mells is not affected by the proposals.

MATTERS ARISING

Quarry noise: Cllr West reported that there had been four noise complaints at night and three in the evening over the past few months. An electric vehicle has been ordered which should further decrease noise.

Trees in Vobster graveyard: These have been looked at by the PCC and arrangements will be made to remove them as they are likely to cause damage **to the wall if left in situ long term.**

Bus shelter graffiti – Vobster: Cllrs Brady and West will carry out the work.



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HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

Condition of grass triangle – Bottom Lane: Cllr Henderson will confirm with the resident that they may go ahead with the planting of a memorial crab apple tree.

Area in front of Vobster Inn: Cllr Seviour will obtain quotes for the planting barrels. There is currently an abandoned vehicle on the land which has been reported to Somerset Council.

Speeding vehicles in Vobster: No response has been received from Highways. Clerk to approach again to ask if it is feasible to reduce the speed limit and what the process is.

Park Corner: Cllr Seewooruttun reported that the details of another two vehicle accident had been passed to Highways. Clerk to ask Highways to accelerate their intentions for this junction.

Damaged bridge – Vobster Cross: Clerk to approach Nick Jacklin, Head of the bridge department as no progress has been made to date.

PLANNING - New applications:

2024/2251/HSE: Erection of single storey front porch and single storey rear extension – Stone Cottage, Upper Vobster Road. No objections.

2024/2291/TCA: Beech x 6 – raise canopy by three metres – Mells Green to Little Green, Mells Estate (notification only, being dealt with by Tree Officer)

2024/2055/HSE: Erection of single storey extension and associated works (retrospective) – 6 St Edmunds Terrace, Upper Vobster Road. No objections

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Budget and precept setting: After discussion, it was agreed by all present, that the precept should increase by £1,500 to cover the additional costs of emptying the bins and general village upkeep etc. The precept therefore for 2025/2026 was set at £16,500.

Items to report, items for next agenda

Funding for church: Cllr Asquith asked if other churches in the area received funding from the parish council as the situation was getting quite critical for the church. This would need a substantial increase in the precept to cover the costs and would require the support of the parish.

Lime Kiln Hill – debris: Cllr Brady will contact Penny's to request that the road is kept clear of mud and gravel.

Verge – Top Lane: The verge is being eroded by the works being carried out at Bridge Cottage. Clerk to ask the owner to reinstate once works are completed.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday February 11th, 7.15pm in the Barn

Joy Book, Clerk, email: clerk@mells-pc.gov.uk (NEW EMAIL ADDRESS)

WHATLEY

CHURCH CLEANING

February 1st. Judy Boorer. February 8th. Pippa Witt

February 22nd. Jenny Norris

Mary Scott thanks the cleaning crew who kept the church in good order in 2024 and looks forward to our continuing support in 2025.

It is wonderful to see the possibilities of our new social space fitting in with the rhythm of the church.

We thank Alice Kettle who masterminded our magical Christmas service. The tree was magnificent, our singing much enhanced by the skilled organist, Andrew Branston (thank you Andrew) and our hearts were warmed by our young actors, including Lexi and Reuben with their beautiful animals.

Best of all was seeing the church completely full of all generations who now live in or have lived in and been part of Whatley life, all celebrating Christmas together.

Our new space was used effectively before Christmas also. Many Chantry and Whatley front doors were graced by home-made wreaths, created under the guidance of Gilly Palmer and Alice Kettle.

In November there was a well-attended talk organised by Lizzie Dekkers, so we are beginning to see the diversity of possibilities for the use of this community space.

Now we look forward to 2025, wishing all our neighbours the happiest of years, with much community good will and companionship.

The collection from last month's Group Service, including Gift Aid, amounted to £56.25 and was given to Fair Frome.



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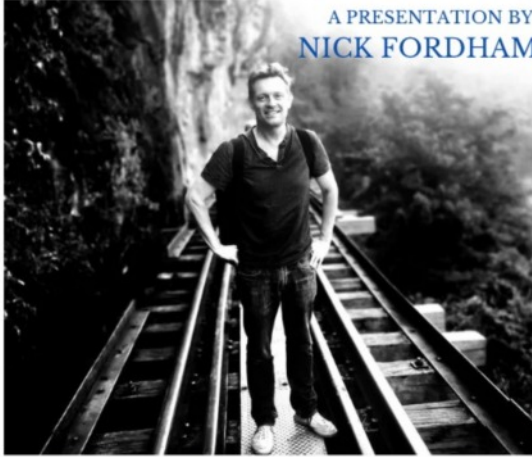
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Nick Fordham read Modern History at the University of Oxford and has spent the last 15 years living and working in Asia.

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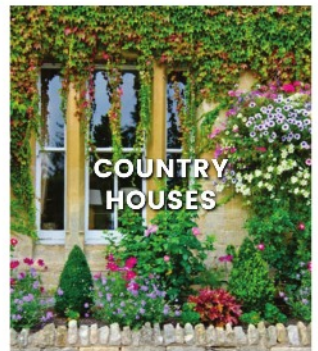
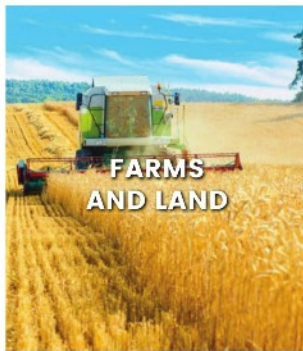
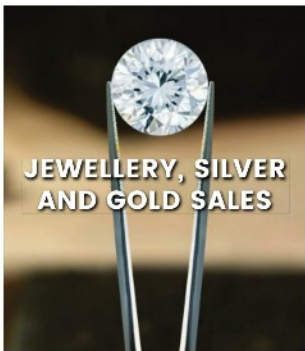
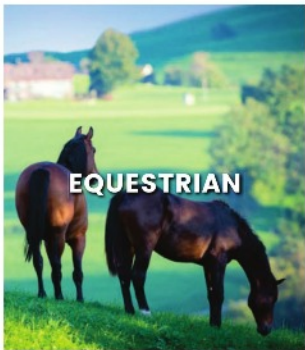
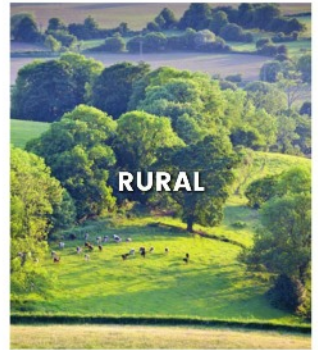
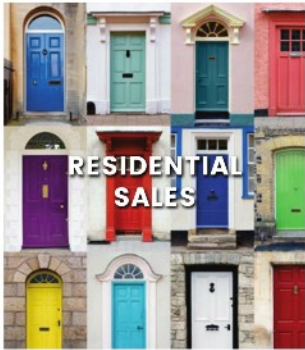
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