

FECKENHAM

July 2025

NEWS



Published by Feckenham Church for the village.
Editor Gilly Cooper - feckenhamnews@gmail.com

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Feckenham News in July

Dates for your Diary

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Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library

First Tuesday of the month:

Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions

First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir

Second Wednesday Art Club

Third Monday of the month: WI

1st and 3rd Fridays : Erstwhile Morris Dancers

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Front Cover

Photo: At the Wake by the editor

Magazine online at www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

Many articles in Feckenham News are contributed by members of the public. They remain the responsibility of the writers and neither the production team nor the publishers can be held responsible for the views and assertions contained therein.

Editor's Note

As we arrive in midsummer and in the middle of a heat wave I've been thinking about how we celebrate this time of year and take opportunities to enjoy the long days in so many different ways. The Wake and then Fun on the Square (details on page 7) are times when we gather together as a community and enjoy ourselves within the village. The Wake has been going for centuries while Fun on the Square is relatively new, starting some 30 years ago after the village acquired the Square and took responsibility for its maintenance.



I'm writing on the day after the Wake, and what a lovely event it was once more - worth the heroic efforts of the committee and their many helpers. Despite the heat and some drizzle people much fun was had. I'm sure the village really appreciates all the work.

Villagers are also involved in other summer events in their individual ways.



For instance, the other morning I saw Lucie Demetre and Ron Ashworth from Droitwich Road take off for Royal Ascot by helicopter from the cricket ground. By contrast, I came across Pete, who is a



traveller and who writes for us about his organic allotment, on Berrow Hill Lane preparing his incredible wagon for display once more at Glastonbury. He was quietly seated on the verge in the warm sun with his paints adding new decoration to some of the panels.



Let's all celebrate in our individual ways and have a wonderful summer.

Also in this month's magazine is important information about the Local Plan and battery storage planning applications. On a lighter note but for a serious cause, 4 of our residents are riding the East Coast of Ireland raising money for Heartlands Hospital Cystic Fibrosis Ward. They would really appreciate sponsorship to encourage them on their way.

Village Notices

Feckenham Artisans at Hanbury Hall

Following their successful exhibition at Number 8 Gallery in Pershore at the end of last year, a number of the group will be exhibiting in the Long Gallery at Hanbury Hall over the Summer from 19th July until 3rd August. With 9 different artist/creators involved, the focus will be on variety, in terms of media, styles and subject matter, with hopefully something of interest for everyone.

Further details on the Hanbury Hall National Trust website.

Some of the group will also be involved in the Worcestershire Open Studios event at the end of August - details in next month's magazine.

FABSSS LATEST NEWS

There is a new planning application for YET ANOTHER battery storage facility. This time it is adjacent to Shurnock Court, opposite Tink's Trove.

We urge all residents to respond to the public consultation which closes on 3rd July 2026.

For your assistance, we are issuing a note setting out the principal points of objection which can also be found on our website www.fabsss.co.uk and our Facebook page.

You can make your comments on the application from Grenergy on the Redditch Planning portal:

<https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications/>

The reference number is 25/00628/FUL

Grand Summer Coffee Morning in aid of Feckenham Church Roof

Yet again we had an outstanding success. We made £850. Thanks to everyone. It was quite a party, the sun shone and it was a great chance to catch up with old friends and new ones.

Shirley Harman

Children's Society

I am pleased to let you know that the box holders of St John the Baptist Church, Feckenham have collectively raised a total of **£867.78** for the Children's Society this year. Many thanks to all those involved.

PUBLIC NOTICES

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL & REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Advertisement Key: LBS = Listed Building Setting,
MAJ = Major Development.

25/00628/FUL

MAJ LBS

Site: Land South of Salt Way, The Saltway,
Feckenham, Worcestershire

Proposal: Battery Energy Storage System with
access and associated infrastructure

Application forms and plans may be inspected
online <https://publicaccess.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk/online-applications>

Comments can be submitted online, via email
to newplan@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk or
in writing Planning Services, Redditch Town Hall,
Walter Stranz Square, Redditch B98 8AH.

Comments should be made within 17 days of the
date of this publication. The Council does not
acknowledge comments but will make these
available for inspection online.

FECKENHAM CHARITY

Funds are dispensed from this ancient charity to individuals and organisations within the boundaries of the Ancient Parish of Feckenham, as the Trustees think fit.

Closing date for the receipt of applications

30th September, 2025

Further enquiries / applications to:

Mrs J. Bate (Clerk to the Trustees),
‘Wychway’, Droitwich Road,
Hanbury, BROMSGROVE.
B60 4DB

Tel 01527 821285

FECKENHAM EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENT

The endowment makes grants to young people in the pursuit of further education or training. If you are under 25 and live in the Ancient Parish of Feckenham or the District of Redditch you may be eligible for a grant. Any such grants are divided on the basis of 4/5 to the Ancient Parish and 1/5 to the District of Redditch. All applications will be carefully considered. An individual may make a maximum of three applications. The decision of the Trustees is final.

Closing date for the receipt of applications

30th September, 2025

Further enquiries / applications to:

Mrs J. Bate (Clerk to the Trustees),
‘Wychway’, Droitwich Road,
Hanbury, BROMSGROVE.
B60 4DB

Tel 01527 821285

Charity Cycle Ride

A GIANT RIDE

Following Mel’s triumphant London cycle ride back in May, the Rose & Crown’s Clarke family are at it again. This time it’s the turn of Matt and Eoin to head off on a marathon two wheeled adventure. They’ll be joined by Moors Lane residents Sharon and Aiden Lavin on the BICA East Coast of Ireland Ride which will see them cycle the stunning east coast of Ireland, from the iconic Giant’s Causeway to the historic Ballynarry Castle, covering an incredible 600 miles along some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the country.

ALL FOR CHARITY

The ride is not just about the adventure—it’s about making a tangible difference for those in need of support. All expenses for the cyclists are covered, meaning 100% of the funds raised will go directly to charity.

Matt and Eoin have nominated the Heartlands Hospital Cystic Fibrosis Ward as their chosen charity - Parish Clerk Jane Bull is one of the charity’s Trustees. The ride will also support a further 12 good causes.

The gallant cyclists will set off on 18th July - no doubt looking forward to the fantastic scenery - and the rugged terrain.

To sponsor the Feckenham cyclists just pop into the pub

or email info@roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

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Tuesday, 1st July in the Bar from 8pm - Free

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

18th July **MATT & EOIN** set off
on their 600mile charity bike ride

26th July - **FUN ON THE SQUARE**
We're here for all libations!

Thursday, 31st July

THEMED MENU

August Bank Holiday **BEER FESTIVAL**

www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

Feckenham Square Management Committee

FUN IN THE SUN

This year's **Fun on The Square** is scheduled for **Saturday, July 26th starting at 6.30pm.**

This is a laid back event for villagers. A chance to enjoy our village green on (hopefully) a balmy summer evening. There'll be no sales pitches or pressure to spend money (apart from a raffle) - just an invitation to come out and socialise, meet old friends and perhaps make some new ones.

BRING YOUR OWN

This is a do-it-yourself affair. More of a village picnic than anything else.

- We shan't be selling booze - so bring your own.
- We shan't be selling food - so bring your own. There'll be a big barbecue all fired up and ready to cook any steaks, burgers or other meaty pleasures.
- If you want to sit down - bring a chair.
- If you want to eat at a table - bring a table.

ENTERTAINMENT

We shan't be engaging any trapeze artists or flying in Madonna for a glamorous gig... but there will be a bit of music. Sing along if you wish.

CHILDREN

We'll be organising some games to amuse the junior funsters - adults be warned - you may get dragged in.

RAFFLE

Just for fun we'll be selling tickets for a **WHEELBARROW RAFFLE.** There's only one prize - a wheelbarrow load of goodies. Winner takes all - the wheelbarrow itself isn't included - but we might help you push it home.

FUN ON THE SQUARE

Saturday, 26th July - from 6.30pm



Wheelbarrow Raffle prize - contents may vary!

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



NOT A PUSH OVER!

A feel good film for a summer evening proving that being old is no barrier when you put your mind to it... Thelma Post is a 93-year-old grandmother who loses \$10,000 to a con artist on the phone. When the police prove inept, Thelma takes matters into her own hands. After stealing a souped-up mobility scooter from her friend Ben (Richard Roundtree), the pair eventually team up, setting out to retrieve her money from the scammer (Malcolm McDowell). June Squibb, herself 94, gives the performance of a lifetime in this warm hearted film. (USA 2024)

THELMA (12A)

Friday, 18th July at 8pm

Doors open at 7.30pm - Licenced Bar

NEW SEASON STARTS SEPTEMBER

Pick up a brochure from the Shop, Rose & Crown or The Village Hall - or see fecknodeon.co.uk

Tickets for all FeckenOdeon shows are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown. You can also book by phone on 0333 666 3366 or online at www.fecknodeon.co.uk

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Flower and Garden Festival 2025 - Cathy Fisher

After an early spring accompanied by many weeks of unusually warm, dry and sunny weather our triennial Festival went ahead on the 17th and 18th May. How lovely for our enthusiastic garden owners to have such weather to prepare their gardens! On Saturday the 17th May after a cool, cloudy start the sun shone and visitors arrived in their dozens. On Sunday, we awoke to blue skies with the anticipation of a glorious day ahead. Our super-efficient and dedicated field car park team were welcoming and directing our multitude of visitors throughout both days.

We welcomed visitors from far and wide including Canada, Australia and various parts of Europe as well as from all over the UK, keen to enjoy the Festival. They related many heart-warming stories and were delighted with the welcome they received.



After many months of hard work, 31 gardens opened to visitors. I am extremely grateful to all those who so generously agreed to open their gardens and for their enthusiasm, hard work and support -

thank you. Once again, our most creative Flower Group produced another outstanding Flower Festival in our historic Church, themed 'Renewal'.

At least sixteen hundred visitors

came to the Festival during the weekend and I cannot thank enough our car-parking and admission volunteers for their much valued assistance and commitment. A huge thank you to them all and to Tom Edwards and Lionel Hill for the use of their fields. Our thanks also to the Square Management Committee and all the residents who helped to make the Village look at its best.

Our very own Feckenham WI, supported by many helpers, rose to the challenge of providing their "Teas" in the Village Hall – a huge success! This was supplemented by the BBQ at the Catholic Church where the wonderful All Round Voices Choir gave a joyful performance each day. The Square was busy both days with plant sales, the Barn garden accessories and Milk Blossom ice cream, who each contribute to our funds. The Village Shop (who kindly sponsored our programme), both pubs and the cricket club were also kept busy all day, boosting their own funds.

In addition, I would like to thank those special people (you know who you are) who have helped me with the enormous amount of preparation required for the Festival and without whom this kind of event would not be possible - I am most grateful.

The total sum raised for the maintenance of our Parish Church and Churchyard after all the numerous costs and various donations, including for maintenance of The Square, is a fantastic £13,000.



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PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for July 2025

6th July	10.30am	Eucharist	Bishop Martin
13 th July	9.00am	Traditional language Communion	Fr Glenn Reading
13 th July	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Linda Nicholas
20 th July	6.30pm	Evensong	Fr Glenn Reading
27 th July	10.30am	Eucharist	Archdeacon Nikki



Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm
9th July and 23rd July

All are welcome (coffee and cake)



FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH St John Fisher & Thomas More

Mass will not be held at St John Fisher and Thomas More until further notice.

Mount Carmel 6 pm Sunday Mass is now the Live Streamed Mass.

Link: www.eventcast.uk/live (Type the link into the browser)

Fr. Anthony Rohan, The Presbytery, Redditch. Tel 63096

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

Redditch Borough Council local plan consultation: update on impact on Parish

Following discussions with both officers and councillors of Redditch Borough Council (RBC), the Parish Council would like to clarify matters relating to what impact the Local Plan Consultation may have on the Parish.

We have been issuing statements both via the magazine and social media advising of the extent of the oncoming residential developments in the Borough for some time now. We also did a house-to-house mail drop advising of the consultation from RBC at the Village Hall on 10th June.

No matter what stories may be bandied about, the Borough have to provide approximately, an additional four thousand homes, above and beyond that already included in the current Local Plan. This is as result of directives from Government. This figure may, and will, vary but be assured, they will have to be provided.

RBC have to allocate sites whereby this figure can be achieved if they fail to do so the Government will enforce sites on their behalf. This is a Borough wide scenario, not specifically, but including the Parish of Feckenham.

The Government have already relaxed the Green Belt restrictions and created "grey field land." There is, therefore, potential / possibility for development which may have a significant impact on the Parish. As individuals we would urge you to respond to the consultation, via the Web link, or QR code, (please see below), to let the Borough have your views in compiling sites for development.



**To respond to the
consultation, view
consultation documents,
see upcoming consultation events,
and view the privacy notice please
visit:**

**[www.redditchbc.gov.uk/
redditchplan](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/redditchplan)**

In addition to this:

The Parish Council will be obtaining the views of parishioners' both by a local online survey and instructing a full "housing need survey" to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Borough Council.

The "online "questionnaire will be available shortly, via our web site and Facebook page, and also the community Facebook page. Hard copies will be able to be downloaded from our website, and paper copies will hopefully be made available from the shop, the Rose and Crown, and the Lygon Arms. The paper copies can be returned to a post box at the village hall.

We will advise further when this will be available to parishioners

Update on Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

JULY 2025.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) proposals have been coming forward all across the UK, including some with connections to the National Grid Substation at Feckenham. Some across the country have been approved by the local planning authorities. Some have been refused by local Councils only to be approved when appealed.

The main environment effects from BESS is the change of use, often from agricultural land, and the associated unsightly visual and landscape effects of industrial looking containers in the countryside. The other main controversy with BESS has been fire safety, as the lithium batteries can spontaneously catch fire, which leads to a chemical thermal runaway of the batteries. Providing appropriate fire safety measure is causing some problems for BESS applications.

Another issue with BESS developments is that there is very little guidance to planning authorities on how to decide planning applications for BESS. Whereas there is government guidance for solar farms, wind farms and other forms of renewable generation, BESS doesn't constitute generation. So, BESS is in a limbo land with Councils having to make up their own mind.

Whilst the Government accepts that grid connected BESS proposals will be put forward,

there are questions over whether BESS really has value for the energy system. In the short term, over the next few years, BESS developers are seeking to exploit the difference in electricity prices during a day. They will buy electricity at night, when the electricity price is low, and then sell it in the early evening, when the wholesale electricity price is high.

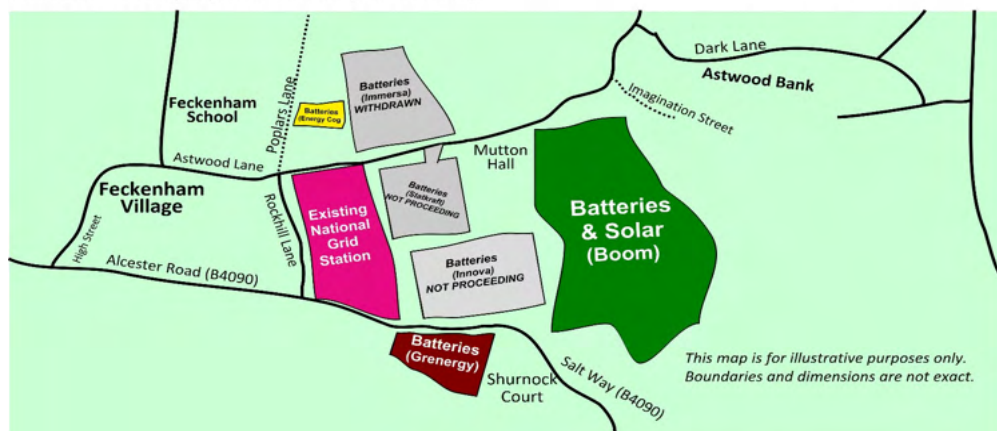
However, rather than connect electricity storage to the grid, in the longer term, energy storage would be much better located in homes and in electric vehicles, in the places where electricity is used. When electricity storage is common in homes and EVs have replaced combustion engine vehicles, perhaps in a decade or so, there won't really be need for grid-connected storage. One wonders what use grid-connected BESS, such as those being proposed for Feckenham substation, will be then.

Locally, at the time of writing, we have received information confirming that The Statkraft, Immersa, and Innova applications will not be proceeding.

However an application by Grenergy, has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority, and Energycog are at the pre application consultancy stage.

In addition to this local knowledge informs us that Statkraft are approaching land owners between the power station and Astwood Bank. As we said at the very first public meeting our best form of defence is

DELAY DELAY DELAY



The Slow Unmaking of Feckenham

Dr Hugo N Hammersley

Evening settles over Feckenham, the kind of English village that wears its history without showiness—timbered houses bordering the road, a modest church tower, hedgerows tracing old field lines. Life here follows a quiet rhythm, shaped more by seasons than by deadlines. And yet, even here, the machinery of speculative development turns steadily on.

Developers arrive with smiles and glossy brochures, speaking in the smooth tones of consultants. They bring maps and digital renderings showing the future as something already packaged. They speak of need, targets, and national interest, as if the land were silent. But Feckenham speaks—in the bend of its lanes, the light in the trees, and the memory of its people. These things don't show up in spreadsheets.

A field becomes a 'site'—a blank canvas for profit. Planning language is used like camouflage: 'sustainable', 'appropriate scale', 'enhancing local character', 'essential infrastructure'. Behind it is a simpler aim: build fast, sell fast, move on.

The pattern is familiar. Developers are often chasing opportunities created by politicians who roll out ambitious energy and housing policies without thinking through the practicalities of where they will land. Schemes vary—battery storage, solar arrays, new homes—but the spirit is the same: a hunger for returns, dressed up as public benefit. They are rarely about Feckenham, and always about the developer's bottom line.

The pressure is constant and subtle. The Green Belt is reinterpreted; past refusals are challenged with new language. There is no memory in the system—only the next opportunity.

And so, the damage creeps in. One heritage asset loses its setting to homes, a battery storage facility is to be screened by a giant hedge meant to sanitise its ugly, dangerous industrial core. A centuries-old sense of space is severed by security fences and lighting. Each change may seem small—but together, they undo the quiet coherence that makes the village what it is. This is the slow unmaking of Feckenham.

Some plans claim to respect heritage. They reference the Conservation Area, listed buildings, traditional materials. But too often this is lip service. Biodiversity net gain from a giant battery array doesn't make it part of the village. Replanting a hedge removed for a housing access doesn't undo the loss. Real respect means leaving some things alone. Not every piece of land must be turned into something new.

The irony is that the very qualities drawing developers here—beauty, peace, historic character—are the first things their schemes erode. They sell the image of rural charm while dismantling its foundations. And they rarely stay to see the outcome. Once

approved, a scheme is handed off—to subcontractors, investors, anonymous managers. Responsibility evaporates.

Feckenham isn't against progress. It simply knows the difference between real need and opportunistic development. It welcomes careful, thoughtful growth. But it resists the idea that every field must justify itself in economic terms.

There's wisdom here—in those who remember the land's stories, who know when that old oak was planted. They see Feckenham as a whole place, not an asset class. They know that once something is lost—a view, a boundary, a sense of space—it's gone.

The risk isn't sudden destruction but slow unravelling. A new road here, a compound there—and soon the village is still called Feckenham, but the real thing has slipped away. So, vigilance matters. So does honesty. When politicians and planners promise benefits, the community must speak clearly about what it stands to lose. Planning isn't just technical—it's about values. And Feckenham's values are worth defending: space, scale, history, silence. These aren't sentimental. They are the foundations of a meaningful life.

To protect heritage is not to freeze it. It's to honour it. And that kind of future won't come from those chasing margins. It will come from those willing to listen, wait—and sometimes, say no.



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WHAT'S ON IN

Feckenham Square Management Committee
presents



FUN ON THE SQUARE

Saturday, 26th July from 6.30pm

Bring your own booze, food, chairs and tables.

We'll provide a big barbecue - cook it yourself.

Entertainment from a fine musical TRIO

Take your chances on our WHEELBARROW RAFFLE

A village picnic for Feckenham Folk

Send details of events for FREE listing to:

FECKENHAM



THE
FECKENHAM
SESSIONS
TRADITIONAL
MUSICMAKING
at THE ROSE & CROWN
First Tuesday of every month from 8pm
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 1st July

**FECKENHAM
VILLAGE HALL**

**ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING**
Tuesday, 1st July - 8pm
Back Room - All welcome
Why not join our Committee and help to
run this village facility?

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 21st July
WATER QUALITY TESTING
8pm - Feckenham Village Hall
Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details

Feckenham Parish Council
MEETING
Thursday, 10th July - 7.30pm
Feckenham Village Hall
(Back Room)
All welcome
Meetings include a Public Forum where
parishioners can bring matters to the attention
of the Council and ask questions.

THE
FECKENODEON CINEMA
SOCIETY

THELMA 12A



FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 18th July at 8pm


The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall
Tickets for all shows from **The Rose & Crown** and **Village Shop**
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ERSTWHILE



BORDER MORRIS
Twice monthly Sessions
at Feckenham Village Hall
2nd and 4th Fridays - 7pm

Feckenham READERS GROUP
Thursday, 10th July - 7.45pm
This month's book:
**DEATH OF
VISHNU**
By Manil Suri
Information: 01527 892285



whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk or call 892130

Feckenham Wake 2025





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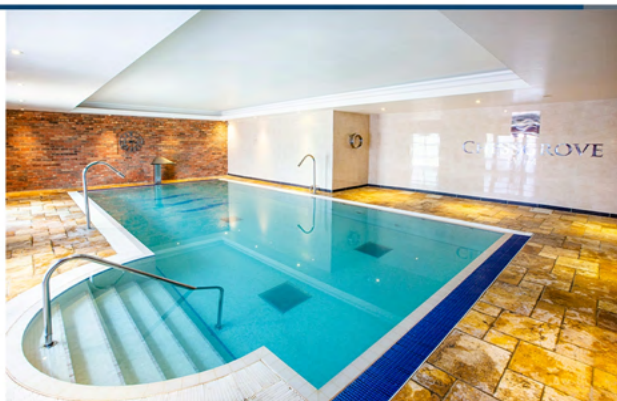
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Feckenham Village Hall

NEVER ENDING STORY...

Looking after an older public building is a bit like the old proverb about painting the Forth Bridge - you just think you've done everything when you need to start all over again. The Hall was built in 1935 and is inclined to throw up problems when you least expect them.

NEW ROOF

Last month's nasty little surprise came in the form of a leak in the flat roof above the Main Hall store rooms. This was built as part of the major refurbishments of 2003. Thankfully the leak was discovered before any major damage was done. Investigations revealed that the roof covering had cracked at intervals along its length. A complete replacement of the covering will be required but a temporary repair has been made and hopefully that will last until the bigger job can be done later this month.

SLOW RUNNING

Less serious but more worrying was the discovery during the extremely busy Garden Festival weekend that the cisterns in the ladies toilets were taking ages to fill. This turned out to be a fault with the building's 90 year old main inlet valve. The valve has now been replaced and normal service has now been resumed. We apologise for any inconvenience.

THE BENCHES ARE COMING

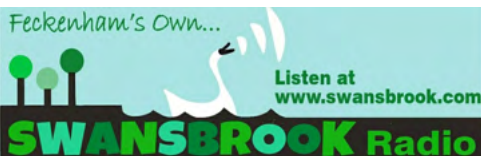
A sample section of the Hall's new side benches has been installed. There are minor adjustments to be made but they do seem to be a major improvement both in appearance and in comfort. Improvements like these and the repairs detailed above are made possible by the generosity of villagers buying stakes in the Improvement Fund Lottery (latest winners below) and, in the case of the benches, by generous grants from The Feckenham Charity. Thanks!

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund June draw.

Carried out on 3rd June, 2025.

1st (£25)	154	Roy and Theresa Hayfield
2nd (£15)	157	Roy and Theresa Hayfield
3rd (£10)	51	John May



OLD DOGS TEACH NEW TRICKS

Truly local radio stations are rapidly becoming extinct in the UK. The BBC has trimmed its local output to such a degree that the majority of its programmes cover multiple areas... and the independent stations have largely abandoned any pretence at local content. Broadcasting skills are rapidly being lost as technical and presentation standards are abandoned in favour of rough and ready streaming content. Swansbrook's team of regular presenters are all of the old school - they can bring a programme neatly to time so that they never bump into the following item, they can time their introductions so that they cue in music just at the right point and they know how to control an interview so that it remains interesting for just the right amount of time. These aren't skills that can be taught in a simple lesson - they take years of experience to perfect. We can give you the chance to gain that experience - so, if you're struggling to add polish to your podcasts perhaps you'd like to join us? We can show you the tricks of the trade - and you can gain some experience of good old fashioned broadcasting. Just email us at radio@swansbrook.com and we'll talk about the possibilities.

OUR PROGRAMMES

Regular programmes currently airing on Swansbrook Radio include:

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- I Like It Like That** with Nick Ledbury
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- The Classic Prog Rock Show** with Nick Ledbury
- In Conversation** with Paul Furey

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Village Shop - Alan Slater

I signed off last month's article hoping for good ice cream weather and an influx of customers during the Open Garden weekend.... I wasn't disappointed. The sun shone on Feckenham and about two thousand visitors descended on the Village. Not all of them visited the Shop but several hundred did. With extra Volunteers and some additional outside seating, we just about managed to cope. As a result we enjoyed a record weekend of sales and we didn't run out of ice cream! So I must extend congratulations to the organisers of what was a huge success for Feckenham and in particular to Catherine Fisher (one of our volunteers) for all her hard work in making the event so memorable. We were delighted to be a major sponsor and we will also be sponsoring the upcoming Feckenham Wake, the Feckenham Horse Show and the Hanbury Countryside Show. All this is only possible as a result of the ongoing financial success of the Shop and the support we receive from you as customers. These events enrich



our Village and the Shop is proud to be involved. Long may it continue.

With the sun continuing to shine at the moment, the Shop is looking at its most

attractive. This is largely due to the effort of Eunice O' Brien who not only plants our flower tubs and hanging baskets, but also ensures they are regularly watered and are kept looking at their best throughout the year. You may have noticed that she has recently used some of our old teapots as plant holders to create attractive table decorations for our cafe and decking area.

We have also introduced some new cookies and brownies in the cafe, so come down and give them a try the next time you join us for morning coffee.



Although we have yet to finalise the 2024/25 accounts, it looks as if we have enjoyed another highly successful year. I'll share the details with you soon, so continue to enjoy the summer and as ever thank you for continuing to support your Village Shop.

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An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

This month begins a period that is the heart of the main summer cropping season. Broad beans and salads already cropping, now follow peas, runner beans, french beans, courgettes, 2nd earlies potatoes and in the polytunnel cucumber and tomatoes, the first of which are coming red as I write this in mid June. I use my beds in the greenhouse in a three year crop rotation, swapping beds between cucumber and tomatoes for two years, growing in pots or grow bags in the third year. On a tip from another grower, I have planted tomatoes in collars sticking up out of grow bags, so as to create more room for root growth and water retainment.



This year I am having another go at growing sweet potatoes. Last year they turned out ok in taste but very small. This time I have got them in the ground a bit sooner and am feeding them on comfrey water occasionally as I would with potatoes. This season's new experiment on my plot is 'peanuts'. Yeah I know, crazy eh. I spotted them in Botany Bay Nurseries one day. Reading up on them, they are part of the pea family and the nuts grow under ground off the root stem. As I say, this month I shall hope to harvest my 2nd earlies potatoes, along with three rows of main crop, they are all now brightening up the plot with their array of flowers. This year as I crop my

potatoes it is my intention to spread leaf mould, grass and other compostables between the rows before raking over the crops earths. This is to begin an early feeding of the bed as potatoes always take a lot out of the land. Also this year I am pleased to have a decent crop of parsnips growing. I have previously experienced their hit and miss germination. In my brassica net, greyhound and red cabbage, green and red sprouts are all looking as healthy as I have grown. Regular slug searches are important. I have mentioned previously, I have found that once a family of slugs is removed from a particular cabbage, there is a period of time before other slugs inhabit that cabbage. In my fruit area (netted against birds) I am getting a good



crop of raspberries I can hardly keep up with, gooseberries are ripening into a decent crop too and my three year old grape has grapes! Tiny for now, but there!

On the whole so far, it seems to be a good growing season, a little dry, but healthy plant growth in general across the plot. However all growers know, adverse weather or a pest problem and things can change very quickly in the nurturing of produce to fruition and harvest. Good growing, good harvest. .

Rob Cole's Gardening Tips: Spring Foliage

Good Bedfellows

Although we like to think that we plant up our gardens with a keen eye for colour association, textural contrasts, and general harmony, I have found that many of the best plant combinations come about by accident. There is nothing wrong with that, and over the years I have noted many such instances. Here are three which I think are particularly good.

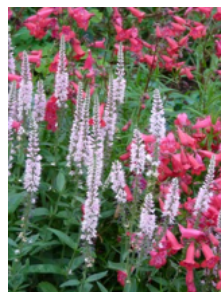


This stunning combination of *Papaver commutatum* 'Ladybird' and *Phalaris arundinacea* 'Picta' came about as the result of the poppy self-

sowing from an adjacent bed. The poppy is an annual, so we have to re-sow each year to continue the effect.

We sow the seed in mid-February in cell trays and by the end of April the plugs are either planted out directly where they are to grow, or are potted into 9cm square pots for growing on before planting

My second example is a lovely soft mix of *Veronica* 'Pink Damask' and *Penstemon* 'Garnet', both reliably perennial and easy going.



These were, in fact, planted in the hope that they might be good together, but the result exceeded expectations. They are both long flowering varieties and the combination is effective from late June to the end of August.



I photographed this beautiful association in July 2010 on a visit to the garden at 'Warble Bank', near Dublin, whilst on a four day garden visiting trip.

The combination is very simple, but the contrast between the blue and white *Geranium* 'Rozanne' and the white *Iberis* 'Betty Swainson' is so clean and effective. Both plants are shade tolerant and very long flowering.



CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 4th June 2025

The Club meeting on 4th June was a talk by Samantha Hopes entitled ‘Pot and Container Gardening’. Samantha is a regular speaker at our Club and once again gave us an informative talk, this time on what plants to grow and how to best grow them in containers.

NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 9th July 2025

Our next event is our annual coach outing, this year to two beautiful gardens, one in Derbyshire and the other in Staffordshire. Pre booking for members is essential and there are very few spaces left.

Club meetings are normally held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Village Hall, Church Road, Bradley Green starting at 7.30pm, and are free to members for an annual subscription of £5.00 for 2025. Visitors are made very welcome and may attend for £3.00 per meeting.

If you require any further information, ring Rob Cole (Chairman) on 07544 832052.



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Feckenham Cricket Club

The Men's 1st XI has had a tough month and they currently sit in the relegation zone of Division 3 in the Worcestershire League, hopefully with a bit more luck & some steadier availability the fortunes will change.



The 2nd XI however are having an excellent season and sit comfortably at the top of Division 8 with 5 wins from 6 as the team searches for promotion at the earliest opportunity. A key win was Away against Astwood Bank, who were the existing League leaders at that point. A strong disciplined bowling performance followed by resilient batting saw the team safely home with a 3 wicket win.

The 3rd XI has been making solid progress with some good wins against Five Ways and a weak Pedmore team in Division 9. There have been debuts for three new Juniors (two U14 and one U15) in the team this year, which is really pleasing.

The 2025 U14 and U15 Junior cricket season has had a great start with wonderful weather and a sensational 7 wins in the first 7 games.

The Under 14 team have played a total of 6 games and had 6 wins including 5 consecutive wins in the Pairs competition which they head by a large margin. The highlights have been two wins against both Bromsgrove & Hagley as well as a strong win against Old Hill in the T20 format. A feature of the team has been disciplined bowling performances from everyone and a really positive team spirit.

The Under 15 team won their first League match against Ombersley in a tense finish and they have 3 further matches to play in their league.

In a senior's 'international' against the Welsh tourists, the local hero led the charge for the county over 70's & much to the relief of the groundsmen got himself out to a full toss, meaning no blame could be apportioned.

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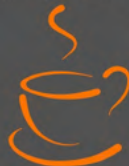
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