

# FECKENHAM

March 2024

# NEWS



Published by Feckenham Church for the village.  
Editor Gilly Cooper - [feckenhamnews@gmail.com](mailto:feckenhamnews@gmail.com)  
(Copy Date 14<sup>th</sup>)

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# Feckenham News March

## Dates for your Diary

### March

2nd	Churchyard Working Party
6th	S&B Gardening Club
7th	Parish Council Meeting
9th	Maybe Dick in the Village Hall
11th	Richard Hillman Memorial
13th	Readers Group
15th	FeckenOdeon 2
16th	Churchyard Working Party

### April

9th	Lunch Club
14th	Desert Island Flicks
20th	Quiz and Chips

### Regular Sessions

Wednesdays Playgroup  
Thursdays Bridge; Hatha Yoga; Pilates  
Fridays Meditation Class  
Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library  
First Tuesday of the month:  
Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions  
First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir  
Third Monday of the month: WI  
2nd and 4th Fridays : Erstwhile Morris dancers

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## Front Cover

Picture by the editor.  
Flowers at Chestnut House

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[www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](http://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

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## Editor's Note

As usual there's lots going on in the village but you will see - on page 10 - a call for more people to step forward to help on our various committees that make our village what it is today. The average age of those who are committee members is getting higher as the active people age and as few younger people step up to take us forward and bring new ideas. The physical effort of putting on events is much more significant as one ages. When I first came to Feckenham in 1983 I joined the Village Hall Committee for a short spell and came back much later, having been busy with work and having children, to the Wake Committee. Being involved with the Wake was great fun. Other than a few meetings over the winter, all the work is in the run up to the day and the day itself. The event had almost died away but a few people stepped forward including Paul Furey who was the lead before I took it on. I passed the baton to Marion Chute who then passed it to Julian Bull, who now chairs. The group gives their imagination free rein. The Wake was restored and continues strongly. Any money raised goes back into the village and the stalls run by village organisations keep their profits.



Others have done much more than I ever have, whether it's being on the Parish Council, helping with the Shop or running Feckenodeon, to name just a few. If you are tempted to get involved, please contact Alan Smith ([alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)) or myself ([feckenhamnews@gmail.com](mailto:feckenhamnews@gmail.com)) and we can direct you to the person who takes the lead on the committee in which you are interested.

I noticed that there's a will to do things in the village which is communicated on the village Facebook page, Feckenham

Community & News. Recently a few people have been planning a group litter pick prompted in part by children. I also know of people who have taken a stretch of road that they clear of litter from time to time. The Saltway is not a safe place to litter pick without some protection from traffic. I know this as I did the stretch going out of the village towards Droitwich myself a couple of years back. I certainly wouldn't want children putting themselves in danger on that road. I hope the initiative being planned on Facebook comes to fruition. It shows that there is a will amongst our residents to do things that help the village and then it's a small step for those interested, to join already formed groups or to start new ones that are relevant to how they want the village to thrive as a community.

## In Memoriam Richard Hillman

Those who remember Richard Hillman will be saddened to hear of his death on Saturday February 10th 2024. He loved the village and all the activities, especially the pantomimes, when Frances, Paul and Vicky were at the helm. He came to church with me for companionship, chats and coffee and read the lessons so beautifully. Mostly I think because he loved the sound of his own voice!

Richard had a rotten last 10 years with poor health and for the last 4 years was wonderfully cared for by a bunch of angels at Burcot Lodge. I will miss him. His memorial is at St John the Baptist Church on March 11th at noon.

Janie Anderson

All enquiries to Thomas Brothers – 01527 547777

# My Visit to Guantanamo Bay - Maggie Stephens

As many will know, my elder son Neil, was killed in the Bali terrorist bombings on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2002. Neil was 27 and, with his partner, was living and working in Singapore. He was on a rugby tour to Bali. 202 people were killed and hundreds were injured. The bombings, by Al-Qaeda, were co-ordinated to take place one year, one month and one day after the 9/11 attacks on the USA.

It has taken over 2 decades for some of those responsible to come to trial. The mastermind, Hambali, remains in Guantanamo, his trial not scheduled until 2024 at the earliest.

I, along with other family members travelled to Guantanamo recently, for the court proceedings of 2 defendants involved in the conspiracy.

Guantanamo Bay is in Cuba – but this is no idyllic Caribbean setting. GTMO is a naval military base covering a large desolate area and housing the prison. High level security systems dominate, barbed wire fencing and soldiers with guns are everywhere.

This was a military court. My working life was spent in the British criminal and family courts, but this was far removed from anything I experienced.

Family members watched proceedings at the back of the court, behind a glass screen. We were prosecution witnesses, reading out our Victim Impact Statements in the witness box, having taken the oath.

It is virtually impossible to describe the experience – it was scary and surreal, but I wanted to achieve some form of justice, in whatever small way I could, for those we lost. We had great support from the Foreign Office in Washington who travelled with us.

The defendants had suffered torture. One was a good artist and had drawn graphic pictures, from memory, of the various measures he was subjected to; these were shown by the defence. I can only describe them as horrific. Due to the torture, the prosecution case was compromised and could not proceed to a full trial. Therefore a “deal” had been agreed. The defendants were sentenced to 23 years’ imprisonment. They had already been in prison for 20 years although the military system does not give credit for time already served). The “deal” was 5 years’ imprisonment. We understand they will soon be transferred back to a Malaysian prison to serve their sentences.

I was away for nearly 2 weeks, the whole experience was physically and emotionally exhausting – but in the end, I did what I needed to do, for Neil, his memory and our family.



# CHURCH SERVICES



## PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar: Fr Glenn Reading 01527 894436  
[vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk](mailto:vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk)

Church Warden: Vacant

For Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals please contact Fr Glenn

Website: [www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk](http://www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk)



PARISH CHURCH  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

## Services for March 2024

3rd March	10.30am	Eucharist	Rev John Green
10th March	9.00am	BCP Communion	Fr Glenn Reading
	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter
17th March	6.30pm	Evensong	Rev Fiona Carter
24 <sup>th</sup> March	10.30am	Palm Sunday Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading
28 <sup>th</sup> March	7.30pm	Eucharist (with foot washing)	Fr Glenn Reading
31st March	10.30am	Easter Day Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading



Drop in (in church)  
Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm



13<sup>th</sup> March and 27<sup>th</sup> March

## 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](http://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

# Church Notices

## Feckenham Churchyard

In 2022 Jeff Matthews masterminded a project to improve the biodiversity of the churchyard using funds from the County Council's Natural Networks Programme. In 2023 we followed this through by nurturing the newly planted trees and by mowing and removing the hay from the wild flower meadow on the eastern side of the churchyard. We followed the advice to not mow the areas in front of the church during May. However, the grass growth last spring was so strong that our volunteer mowers found great difficulty in making the June cut. As admirable as the idea may be, we will not have a 'no mow May' this year. There are plenty of other areas where we can encourage wild flowers.

Our thanks go out to all the volunteers, both long standing and newcomers. We do not receive any external funding for the maintenance of the churchyard and we rely entirely on volunteers from congregation and the wider village community.

The rota for the fortnightly mowing of the front of the church is now complete but we are looking for additional volunteers prepared to strim around the old grave areas.

We are holding two churchyard work parties on the mornings of **Saturdays 2nd March** and **16th March**. Tasks will include mulching and staking the new trees; emptying the compost bins and creating a new bin for grass cuttings; removing ivy and other growth from tombs. Please consider joining us then – even if only for half an hour - many hands.....!

The PCC understands that concern has been expressed about the suitability of the paths within the churchyard for use by motability

scooters. Some of the paths crossing the churchyard are public rights of way and their maintenance is the responsibility of the County Council. The PCC is anxious to facilitate where possible, access to all areas of the churchyard, regardless of physical ability. However most of the paths are grass and the PCC does not consider it possible to guarantee that these can be used by all types of scooter or wheelchair.

Ian Hunter on behalf of Feckenham Parochial Church Council

**Easter Lilies** Easter Sunday this year is on 31st March and once again the flower group would like to include lilies. Anyone wishing to make a donation towards Easter lilies in remembrance of loved ones should send their contribution to Angela Fletcher, 12 Mill Lane, Feckenham B96 6HY tel.no. 01527 893231 (cheques should be made payable to Feckenham PCC). Thank you for enabling this tradition to continue. Margaret and Marg Co-ordinators

**Lunch Club** Due to the Easter weekend occurring at the end of March/beginning of April, Lunch Club will move to the 9th of April in that month. Jill Rowe

This **large brown urn has gone missing** from the flower room in the church (last seen at Christmas) and we would like it back so if anyone has borrowed it or knows of it's whereabouts let the church flower group know.



## Rev Fiona writes...

I absolutely love this time of year with the shoots of spring flowers coming up in the garden once again. It is a miracle that it happens every year, but it is always wonderful. Also, I enjoy seeing the lambs in the fields in and around Feckenham. I am really excited every year when I see my first lamb, who is normally keeping close to it's mum.

The slightly warmer weather is also welcome, with the promise of things to come, and that this will evolve into much warmer weather in the later Spring and Summer. Hopefully, also the end of being freezing in the house, being able to ditch our winter coats and wear t-shirts rather than jumpers, and more chances and possibilities of being able to sit outside cafes and sitting in the garden, which I really love. At the time of writing, the season of Lent is about to start with Ash Wednesday on February 14th. Lent gives us time to reflect, maybe give up something or do something extra like visit someone who would appreciate the company. It culminates with the most special time in the Christian calendar – Easter. At Easter we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus defeated death through the crucifixion and because of his resurrection we also can be confident of eternal life.

The church always looks so beautiful at this time of year with the Easter lilies and spring flowers, that the flower arrangers do so beautifully. The church services are also very special as well, and we are very fortunate this year to have services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday in our church in Feckenham. (See times in the Feckenham News or church website or noticeboard).

We journey with Jesus in Holy Week with the agony of Maundy Thursday. Jesus being double crossed, abandoned and rejected by his friends. Sometimes we may feel like we

have been rejected or let down by people as well. Jesus knows how we feel. He was rejected by nearly every one of his followers on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Trusted friends who ran away, or as in the case of the apostle Peter who denied that he ever knew Jesus three times. This was a man who had spent three years with Jesus watching and learning and experiencing the miracles. That was an extreme low point for him, and he must have felt terrible. But then Jesus who loved him so much and loves us as well, brings him back into the fold after the resurrection. Good Friday and the crucifixion are followed by the joy of his resurrection on Easter Sunday.

I hope you will all be all be able to have some time for rest and relaxation over the Easter period. It is a lovely time of year, and we are all so fortunate to be able to appreciate the beautiful countryside in this part of Worcestershire. So, I will end by wishing all of you a very happy and blessed Easter.

God bless.  
Reverend Fiona



## Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute

Here's a puzzle. This photo has been sent to the archive as one of a Feckenham house. Does anyone recognise this house? It's got me beaten. Maybe it's been knocked down? Please email me with any ideas, marionchute@me.com.



## Feckenham WI

As Feckenham Women's Institute prepares to enter its 3rd year, we are pulling together our provisional programme for the coming twelve months. Once again we will be asking members of our community to share their expertise (and patience!) with us, and thank you very much to everyone who has so far said they will run sessions.

We are a small and very local group who like to do activities and get out and about in our community. We welcome women of all abilities, interests and ages and currently have members spanning over 40 years in

age! We meet at Feckenham Village Hall at 7.45pm on the 3rd Monday of every month and our meetings start at 8pm. Lifts are readily available for any members who don't drive. Membership runs from April to the end of March and the fees are £48 (TBC) for 11 meetings (we only have to run 11 meetings per year, but we like to do 12 and have 1 free). This works out at only £4 per meeting. We welcome guests at £5 per meeting they attend. For more information, contact Jen Cary at [jen@thecarys.co.uk](mailto:jen@thecarys.co.uk) or 07773 883 039.

# “They” – Who are They?

We have the privilege of living in our lovely village with many events, activities and groups, making it a vibrant community.

A common conversation, often overheard in the village, refers to “THEY”.

Are “THEY” going to run...

The Wake?

Carols on The Square?

Fun on The Square?

Scarecrows?

The Open Gardens?

The Village Hall?

The Village Shop?

Feckenham in Bloom?

...and all the other groups, organisations, and events during the year?

Why are **THEY** letting this / that happen?

Why don't **THEY** do something about it?

Why don't **THEY** sort the, “whatever”, problem in the village?  
etc etc etc

Well, the truth of the matter is that you will see the same faces on the various organising committees, and those faces are growing older and older, to the extent that there is a real danger that some of the events currently enjoyed throughout the year may not be able to continue for much longer without new blood joining the teams.

The answer to the question, therefore is:

**THEY are YOU**

and

**YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS**

**YOU**

If you can spare some time, or are interested in helping ensure the longevity of village life please get in touch:

**[alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)**



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## **FLOODING**

The Parish Council recently met with Worcestershire County Council Highways Department, Cllr Mike Rouse, Cllr Brandon Clayton, Cllr Craig Warhurst, North Worcestershire Water Management and landowners to discuss the problem of flooding along Astwood Lane and Swansbrook Lane. Improvements and works have been agreed to try and resolve the flooding as much as possible. The Parish Council hopes to be able to help with the funding of these works and to make provision for future management of this problem.

## **TRAFFIC**

The Parish Council has applied for grants from the Police and Crime Commissioner with the aim of further reducing speeding through the village. The Council has made two separate applications as there were two parts to the fund. The first part application was for better sited VAS machines. The second was for more traffic management on the B4090 (both exits/entrances) and Astwood Lane. There is no guarantee that Feckenham will be successful as the fund was open to all of the West Mercia area. The results of these applications will be known by end of March. The Council would like to thank the Highways Group for their help and in particular their Chair, David Rowe whose PowerPoint presentation highlighted the problems throughout Feckenham.

## **FECKENHAM IN BLOOM**

The first of the snowdrops planted by Feckenham in Bloom are just appearing on the path from the churchyard leading to Winfields. They are a welcome message that spring is on its way. It would be wonderful if the entire length of this passageway could eventually be lined with plants. So, this is a bit of a plea for help.... A suitable time to transplant snowdrops is just after they have flowered. If anyone has any plants, they would like to donate they would be most welcome. If you would like to plant some in memory of a loved

one, feel free to pick your spot, otherwise Feckenham in Bloom's volunteers will happily plant them for you.

Feckenham in Bloom has been successful in applying for a Redditch Renew Grant which is to be used to improve Church Walk (the path from The Square to the church). It will have additional plants to the right-hand side which contribute to biodiversity in the village by using native plants and bulbs.

FIB is a volunteer working party under the Parish Council and is always looking for new members. Meetings are held regularly at the Rose and Crown to decide on their next project. Even if you are unable to do any physical work, enthusiasm, and an interest in keeping our village looking lovely is all that's needed.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The Parish Council will meet in the Back Room at Feckenham Village Hall on Thursday, 7th March at 7.30pm. All are welcome to attend.

At every Council meeting there is an opportunity for Parishioners to bring matters to the attention of Councillors and to ask questions. This "public forum" is usually at the start of the meeting and is supposed to last only 15 minutes. You are therefore asked to prepare your comments clearly and concisely so that there is time for everyone to have their say.

## **CONTACT THE COUNCIL**

Should you require any help or further information please do not hesitate to contact Feckenham Parish Council on telephone number 01527 892522, email [clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk) or check the website at [www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk)



## The Worcester Buoys - Back on Dry Land!

Writing by the warmth of a log fire with the February rain hammering outside the last few months feels like a bit of a dream! Setting off from La Gomera 3 months ago, Matt immediately began suffering from severe seasickness. After 3 days of throwing up anything that he tried to consume (including water!), even I began feeling sympathetic. We called the medical officer and were sharply told you can't die of seasickness, and that it was a bit late to turn back now, and so the tone was set for the next forty days. The first couple of weeks was our toughest test, with 30-foot waves, gale-force storms and ever-changing weather taking a constant toll on our bodies, equipment and psyche. Boxing Day was a particular low, with winds against us we resorted to putting out the sea anchor, I can't tell you how frustrating it is to slowly drift backwards from our intended destination, losing some very hard earned miles!

Once the weather changed though, and we banned any talk of land on the boat, we settled into our rhythm, 2 hours on, 2 hours off. The days went painfully slowly but the weeks seemed to fly by. Between the storms, there were periods of calm where the water turned to glass, and the Milky Way shone across the whole sky - something I will never forget. Although at times it was incredibly gruelling, never once did I wish I wasn't there, and I can look back and say it was the most incredible experience I have ever had. We are still processing the whole journey and settling back into normal life, but are overwhelmed with the support we have had throughout the whole campaign. Thank you to everyone who has donated, whether it was a fiver or your time over Christmas watching us on the tracker - we will have raised well over £100,000 for Acorns which is a testament to how fantastic you all are!

Lots of love, Matt and George



# WHAT'S ON IN

## theWVI

INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting - Monday, 18th March

### YOGA

Come along and have a go!  
8pm at Feckenham Village Hall  
Visitors welcome - £5

## QUIZ & CHIPS



SATURDAY, 20TH APRIL

7pm for 7.30

Feckenham Village Hall  
Join us for a fun Quiz and  
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Form a team (up to 6 people)  
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to join.

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SATURDAY, 9TH MARCH



## DESERT ISLAND FLICKS

LIVE  
LOCAL



SUNDAY, 14TH APRIL

## HARP & MONKEY

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SATURDAY, 18TH MAY

## OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR

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# FECKENHAM



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FECKENHAM  
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First Tuesday of every month from 8pm  
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 5th March

Stock & Bradley  
GARDENING CLUB



JOHN MASSEY'S  
GARDEN

Bradley Green Village Hall  
Wednesday, 6th March  
at 7.30pm

ERSTWHILE



BORDER MORRIS

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

Feckenham Parish Council

## MEETING

Thursday, 7th March - 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.

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15

FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 23rd March at 7.30pm

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\*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings  
\*Phone calls answered by Ticketsource and charged at standard rates - NOT a premium line

Feckenham READERS GROUP


Wednesday, 13th March - 7.45pm

This month's book:

## REMEMBER, MR SHARMA

By A.P.FIRDAUS

Details: 892285



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



## A WHALE OF A TIME

Live shows return to the Village Hall this month. First up is **Maybe Dick** - Hambledon Production's new parody of Herman Melville's Moby Dick - NOT to be missed if you need a good laugh!

John Hewer performs his spectacular one man show playing over eight different characters.

There is Captain Ahab who bears more than a passing resemblance to Abraham Lincoln, Starbuck who brings the captain a wide variety of coffee in the morning, and Elijah the ship's oddball. His incredible range sees him transform seamlessly into characters with such a huge variety of flawless accents.

Maybe Dick is jam packed with silly humour but you don't need to have read Moby Dick to get the jokes. John Hewer says "The story-telling comes second to joke-telling, even though we've managed to stay pretty faithful to the book and the original characters."

The Pequod's galley will of course be open to dispense grog throughout...

### MAYBE DICK

**Saturday, 9th March at 7.30pm**

*"Hilarious! It NEEDS to be seen."* - Grimsby Live

*"You will be hit with wave after wave of silliness, leaving a warm glow and a great big smile."* - Review Culture

## Draw results

### Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund February draw.

The draw was carried out on 6th February, 2024.

1st (£25)	48	Paul & Dinny Pynsent
2nd (£15)	33	Pauline Bastik
3rd (£10)	79	David Checkley

**Sunday, 14th April:**

### DESERT ISLAND FLICKS

Spiltmilk Dance bring us a fast moving blockbuster, adventure and rom com rolled into one, Desert Island Flicks re-imagines, remakes and spoofs 90 of the most memorable movie moments of all time in as many minutes.

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

**Saturday, 20th April:**

### QUIZ AND CHIPS

Sharpen your wits and satisfy your tastebuds at the same time. Get together a team for an evening of fun and brain teasing. Your ticket price includes a Fish & Chip supper.

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

**Saturday, 18th May:**

### HARP AND A MONKEY

Songs about cuckolded molecatchers, a lone English oak tree that grows at Gallipoli, care in the community, medieval pilgrims and Victorian bare-knuckle boxers... We can only be talking about the acclaimed song and storytelling trio Harp & a Monkey. Returning to Feckenham having survived the plague...

**TICKETS ON SALE NOW**

**Friday, June 7th:**

### OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR

Just booked! A professional production of this perennially popular musical. More details soon.

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Desert Island Flicks

# Mobile Library



My name is David and I am the County Mobile Library Customer Advisor. Many of you may not be aware that the mobile library visits in your area and many other rural areas of Worcestershire each calendar month.

The mobile stocks a wide range of adult fiction and non-fiction, large print books, local history, and spoken word CDs. There is also a selection of children's books from pre-school to teenage. New borrowers can join on the mobile without having to visit a main library and reservations can be made and collected from the mobile on the next visit or sent to any other library. In addition, items that are issued from other sites can be returned to the mobile and you can also return mobile loans to any other county library. The existing mobile has been in service for nine years and offers a pleasant, bright environment with full disabled access.

Check the timetable to see if the mobile stops in your area.

The mobile also visits a number of other villages in the surrounding areas and across the county. If you wish to find out where, go to the libraries and learning page of the Worcestershire County Council website and click the mobile library section to access an A to Z list of all the stops in the county or call 01905 822722 and speak to a member of the libraries hub team.

Libraries and Learning Service

## Mobile Library Timetable

**County Mobile Library**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in the month**

09:50 – 10:05	<b>Stoke Prior</b>	Astwood Lane
10:10 – 10:25	<b>Stoke Prior</b>	Walls Road
10:30 – 10:45	<b>Stoke Prior</b>	Orchard Crescent
10:50 – 11:05	<b>Stoke Prior</b>	Navigation Inn
11:10 – 11:25	<b>Hanbury</b>	Court Close Bungalows
11:35 – 11:50	<b>Bradley Green</b>	Post Box
12:00 – 12:20	<b>Feckenham</b>	The Square
12:35 – 12:50	<b>New End</b>	Neville Arms
<b>LUNCH</b>		
13:25 – 13:45	<b>Cookhill</b>	Lower Cladswell Lane
13:50 – 14:05	<b>Cookhill</b>	Oak Tree Lane
14:25 – 14:40	<b>Portway</b>	Cottage Farm

David Foley  
County Mobile Library Customer Advisor

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## BRIGHT AND BRITISH...

This lively and inventive British comedy follows Georgie, a resourceful 12-year-old girl who secretly lives alone in her flat following the death of her mother. She makes money stealing bikes with her best friend Ali and keeps the social workers off her back by pretending to live with an uncle. Out of nowhere, her estranged father Jason (Harris Dickinson) arrives and sparks fly... (UK 2023)

### SCRAPPER (12A)

Friday, 15th March at 8pm



## A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE...

When a lively young family moves in next door, grumpy widower Otto Anderson meets his match in a quick-witted, pregnant woman named Marisol, leading to an unlikely friendship that turns his world upside down. Tom Hanks gives a great grumpy performance as Otto in a film based on the Swedish "A Man Called Ove" (which we showed in FeckenOdeon 2 in 2018). We have every expectation that Otto will be as amusing. (USA 2022)

### A MAN CALLED OTTO (15)

Saturday, 23rd March at 7.30pm

*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](http://www.fecknodeon.co.uk)*



## LOCAL NEWS

We live in "interesting" times - not only on a national and international scale - but locally as well. A cannabis farm has been raided by police only a couple of miles away from Feckenham, there have been floods at the edge of the village and there are major plans for industrial developments right on our doorsteps. An ideal time for local news gatherers to swing into action to investigate and report you might have thought. Unfortunately our local newspapers are shadows of their former selves, our BBC local radio stations have lost many staff and only broadcast local content for a few hours a day and regional television is rarely tempted by stories outside the major conurbations. This could be Swansbrook Radio's finest hour. We could be out there finding the news and making waves... and there's only one thing stopping us doing that: Lack of people. A shortage of folk willing to spare a few hours making great radio for their community. The current staff manage to keep the show on the road with magazine type content and music but we could do so much more with just a few more people... so, if you think you could be a budding newshound, if you think you could help us make great local content and help us sharpen up our output please get in touch. Just email [radio@swansbrook.com](mailto:radio@swansbrook.com) and we'll be glad to talk with you about the possibilities. If you've never done this sort of thing before we can offer training. So, take the plunge, drop us an email and you could be an ace reporter in no time!

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## Feckenham Village Shop - Alan Slater

I have always believed that our Village Shop serves several functions other than being just a local retail outlet. Of course it is primarily functions as a shop and cafe and has to make a profit in order to continue in business but there are other important aspects in which it serves our Village Community.

For example, like our pubs, churches and village hall, it is one of the social hubs of the Village and a great place to meet friends and catch up on local news and I daresay local gossip. Even more so since we extended the cafe area to include an attractive outside terrace. It also provides an opportunity for our Volunteers, many of whom to have retired professionally, to continue working on a part time basis, and enrich their lives by making a contribution to their local community. Thirdly, the Shop gives us a vehicle to raise money to support village events and organisations as well as worthy causes beyond the boundary of the Feckenham Parish. Two fine examples of which are Project Morogoro in Tanzania and the Worcester Acorns Hospice.



Project Morogoro has had our support for many years, mainly through the wonderful efforts of Margaret Green's innovative knitted products that appear every Christmas and Easter. Her Easter Bunnies are now on sale, with all the proceeds going to the Project in East Africa.

What more can be said about the amazing Worcester Buoys and their incredible row across the Atlantic in the middle of winter. During their 'voyage' our customers donated £380 in the Shop collection box and, as promised, the Board has agreed to match the collection so £760 will be sent to George and Matt to add to their magnificent grand total. It's definitely 'doubles all round' in more ways than one!

As our trade continues to flourish, a word of thanks to our Buying Team who are somehow managing to keep up with our customers' demands. The shelves remain fully stocked and due to their efforts we rarely run out of product. We also like to maintain our customers interest by trialing something new. For example, this month, we have introduced two new sauces from the Made for Meat range. It may be a little early to get the barbecue out, but why not try them out in readiness for the blazing hot summer ahead that is promised by the weather forecasters. Finally we always welcome customer feedback, for instance if there is a particular cake you like in in our cafe then please let us know and we will do our best to ensure it is regularly available.

Anyhow despite all the recent rain it's good to see the first spring flowers and it will soon be time for us to think about the Shop's outside planters and hanging baskets. We are fortunate to have such a multifaceted village shop so make the most of it. We are most grateful for your continued support.

## An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

By the time this month is out the days shall be longer than the nights and spring truly springs out of the earth as dormant seeds come to life.

So it's out with the hoe to stop it from springing on freshly prepared beds.

This month and the next are the main germinating and sowing season. During last month with forking and feeding, beds for my potatoes, broad beans, onions and salads. Nearing the end of March broad beans sown in pots in February should be ready to transplant into the ground.

Earlier in the month I shall have planted onion sets, covering them with fleece cloches before mid April until the end of May to protect against the flight of the onion fly. Shallots planted last month, this month show as green shoots that lengthen with the days.

The garlic I planted last November is looking strong, I forked into its raised bed a good feed of my own composted veg matter and along with my onions, I shall give them the occasional top dressing of compost. Leeks sown in February in trays should soon be ready to transplant into pots. Each leek to its own pot to grow on in the polytunnel to plant out in mid summer.

At this time of the year I always bang on about the virtues of Jerusalem artichoke,

one of my favourite winter crops. March is the month when I plant a dozen that I have kept from the last plant I harvested in February. My latest discovery with them this winter has been cooking' Jerusalem artichoke chips'. Absolutely delicious and seem to bring out the flavour of them with a bit of rocket salad on the side.

Early potatoes I sow during the first half of March. I'm not growing first earlies this year, instead I am planning a row of second earlies, leaving room for more main crop spuds. The main crop potatoes I sow nearer the end of the month/early April.

This year I intend to try growing sweet potatoes which are grown from "slips" (cuttings). A new one for me, I'll let you know how it turns out later in the year. In the polytunnel this month or sometimes on my window ledge I shall sow into pots: cucumbers, peppers, chilli and tomatoes. Also anything else that needs a long growing season to establish plants and produce plenty of good fruit. Also I shall prepare the beds for when they are ready to transplant from pots.

Outside, I shall sow my first early salads.

Lettuce, red lettuce, rocket, chard and mustard. I love radicchio but I sow that in April. All early salad I shall keep under cloches until well established and frosts are over. I thin lettuce as it grows, harvesting thinnings as young salad. Once plants are established I harvest their outer leaves.

On going this month is the preparation and feeding beds planned for summer crops.

The runner beans trench is filling up with veggie compostibles and I am forking my own compost into the prospected beds for peas, beetroot, dwarf beans, more salad, carrots and parsnips. Some sow parsnips early but I have had more success waiting until the ground has warmed up a bit. As I wait until new year to harvest them this leaves plenty of time for their growing cycle, all of these I should be sowing next month. With beds ready and prepared... that is if it ever stops raining... now where is that hoe?



# Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

## Effective Spring Foliage

Early spring is a time of year when any splashes of colour are welcome in the garden, and even more so when the colour comes from long lasting foliage rather than short-lived bloom.



My first two choices are both *Iris*, a genus more renowned for its flowers than its foliage, but these two all have good coloured foliage in April. *Iris pallida* 'Variegata' (left) has typical leaves, but strongly striped in pale green, gold, and cream.

The foliage stands at about 450mm, and the soft blue flowers overtop the leaves to about 750mm.

*Iris* 'Glory of Amlwch' is my second choice and is a plant rarely offered. I bought ours at the now defunct Beacon Nurseries in Eckington, Gloucestershire in April 2003 and have never seen a plant for sale anywhere since. Its new foliage is a pale creamy yellow, eventually deepening, and ending up green by about July. It is short growing at about 600mm, and has pale yellow flowers. The name, I think, commemorates the village of Amlwch on Anglesey. If you see it, buy it!

A number of plants have spring foliage appeal which is transient. One such plant is the Honeysuckle *Lonicera caprifolium* 'Anna Fletcher' (right) which has round leaves through which the stem penetrates (perfoliate). In early



spring, before the stems extend, the layers of leaves are close together and give a most unusual foliage effect. Another good plant is *Valeriana phu* 'Aurea' which shines a brilliant yellow in the Spring when its new foliage emerges, but by the time its loose heads of small white flowers appear it is time to cut it back hard and enjoy another round of emerging leaves later in the year.

For a foliage plant, *Veratrum nigrum* (left) takes a lot of beating, and in spring the fresh and pleated leaves are simply stunning. It is very slow to bulk up for propagation, and even slower from seed - but worth the wait if you have the patience.

Although lots of people despise the Loosestrife, I find that the variegated form *Lysimachia punctata* 'Alexander' (right) is a lot less vigorous than the roguish species, and its new creamy coloured foliage is strongly flushed with pink for a longish period in April. It eventually turns to green and cream, and then its yellow flowers appear and last until August - a long season of interest.





Our February 7<sup>th</sup> event was a talk by John Tilt entitled 'Butterflies'. John is the warden of the nature reserve at the nearby Grafton Wood and he describes the butterflies to be found there as well as other features of the reserve. His talk concentrated on the factors affecting the rise and fall of butterfly numbers.

## **NEXT CLUB EVENT - Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 7:30pm**

Our next meeting at Bradley Green Village Hall is a talk by Nigel Hopes entitled 'A Year in John Massey's Garden'. John is the owner of Ashwood Nurseries near Wolverhampton and his garden is renowned for its beauty and huge range of plants. Nigel is the Head Gardener and will describe how the garden looks throughout each season.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'a flowering spring bulb - (cut flower(s) or growing in a pot).

Membership of the Gardening Club is currently by £5.00 annual subscription which becomes due on 1st January each year, so please come prepared to renew. Please make cheques payable to 'Stock and Bradley Gardening Club'. We welcome new members to join us at any time throughout the year.

*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 2024. 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 Football Club - Peter Philips

The team continue to make great strides under the management team of Matt Phillips and Wayne Bunn, since coming together they have been on a amazing run of 11 unbeaten games with 9 wins and two draws .

The weather has taken its toll on our fixtures with only three games at Mill Lane since November (pitch watchers please note).

But this run of results has taken the club up to second place and into a promotion position ,but still a long way to go with still 11 games to go.

The current league standings are :-

	P	PTS	GD
--	---	-----	----

AFC SOLIHULL	23	58	44
FECKENHAM	21	49	61
NORTHFIELD	19	45	34
CASTLE VALE	23	45	17
BIRMINGHAM AFC	20	41	22.

With the top two going up automatically the pressure is definitely on by the time you read this our fate may be more clear as we play Northfield on the 17th Feb (weather permitting ) at Mill Lane then the following week away to Solihull if it come down to the wire our superior goal difference could be crucial .

The lads were handed a difficult draw in the Smedley Crokee cup away to Darlaston Town who play in the premier division of our league, three levels above us, to put into perspective a bit like Liverpool playing Walsall.

We made the long trip up the M6 to the Paycare stadium to play them under floodlights .

The lads put in a terrific performance and were holding out at 1-1 into the 90th minute, just as we were looking at penalties Darlaston scored a very controversial late goal after a clear foul on our goal keeper .

At the end of the day we could not have been more proud of the boys, but they have set their own standards now and need to take that on into the remaining league games .

These are the fixtures for March if you feel like coming along and giving the lads a cheer to push them on it would be great always good food and drink in the club house and some thing on the big screen we will be showing the six nations England v Ireland on the 9th March .

9th March	Sillhill	ko 3.00pm	
16th March	Continental star	ko 3.00pm	
23rd March	DSC Utd	ko 3.00pm	
1st April	Leamington Hibs	ko 3.00pm	(bank holiday Monday)

UP THE MILLERS

## Feckenham Cricket Club Bob Gordon

Snowdrops are appearing and so spring can't be far away. The ground is still soft but a neighbour tells me that the March breeze will dry things out – let's hope so. In preparation for this our mowers and other equipment are being checked and serviced and work will begin soon on mending our ageing boundary fences.

The huge bonfire pile has been reduced somewhat – helped enormously by the removal of a number of fence panels which will be repurposed for a club members new garden.

Good news was received late in January when Redditch Borough Council confirmed that our planning application for artificial practice nets has been approved. We now have to find the money needed! In that respect Nev Drumm has recently lead a sponsored walk from Arrow Valley Lake to the club, which raised several hundred pounds towards and our next fundraiser will be a Horse Race Night on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>.

The club will continue to operate three senior teams in the Worcester County League in 2024, with junior cricket squads at U12/13, U14 and U15. We will be running the 8-week ECB's ALL Stars program that provided an introduction to cricket for 5-8 year old boys and girls and for the first time we will also be running the Dynamos scheme for 8-11 year old. Both will run on Friday evenings, starting on May 24<sup>th</sup>, All Stars runs from 5:30pm and Dynamos from 6:30pm. We are able to do this only because of the effort of a group of club members and parents – if you would like to get involved, please contact me or the club from our Facebook page.

Before Covid we had a ladies/girls softball team and would like to revive this - if you are interested please get in touch.

In relation to that, womens' sport is very much a thing now but it actually isn't that recent. Did you know for example that the first recorded cricket match between two ladies' teams took place in Surrey in 1745, the year of the Jacobite Rebellion

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