

FECKENHAM

MARCH 2025

NEWS



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

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Feckenham News in March

Dates for your Diary

March:		
1st	Jazz for The Spring	Village Hall
4th	Lunch Club	Village Hall
4th	Feckenham Sessions	Rose & Crown
7th	Erstwhile Border Morris	Village Hall
12th	Church Drop In	Parish Church
13th	Paish Council Meeting	Village Hall
14th	The Critic	FeckenOdeon
17th	WI Wine Tasting	Village Hall
19th	Readers Group	
21st	Erstwhile Border Morris	Village Hall
23rd	Tim Kliphuis Trio	Village Hall
26th	Church Drop In	Parish Church
29th	A Haunting in Venice	FeckenOdeon
April		
5th	Midland Sinfonia	Village Hall

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Front Cover:

At the Rose & Crown Pete proudly displays his biggest ever parsnip - freshly dug from his allotment

Photo by Mel Clarke

Left:

A spectacular rainbow over School Lane pictured by Maureen Conway

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 publisher can be held responsible for the views and assertions contained therein.

Production Team

Editor: Gilly Cooper

feckenhamnews@gmail.com
07500115581

Distribution: Neil Newland

neil.newland@btinternet.com

What's On: Ian Bellion

whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk

Newshound: Jen Cary

jen@thecarys.co.uk

Advertising: Mary Smith

fnadvertising@btinternet.com

Editor for March & April 2025:

Ian Bellion - 01527 892130

feckenhamnews@gmail.com

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Editor's Note



Regular readers will be used to this column being adorned with an attractive picture of the Editor in some exotic part of the world. This month you've got a picture of a grumpy old man with a glass of wine. The reason is, of

course, that the Editor is again in the aforementioned exotic parts of the world...and has left the grumpy old man in charge of the magazine for the next couple of months. The last time this was allowed to happen was in 2010... but the lawsuits have been settled, apologies have been made to minor Royalty and the passage of time has left the wounds less raw... so here we go again....

WAKE UP!

We are, of course heading into spring. The grey days of January and February have passed and we're looking forward to balmy days to come. You may be surprised to learn that the Wake is already being planned - work started at the end of January. It'll all come to fruition on 21st June when the sun is bound to shine (we live in hope).

Like all village events this one is entirely dependent on voluntary effort. From erecting the marquee to selling raffle tickets - it all has been tackled by willing villagers. There will be pleas in this publication, on Facebook and on other platforms for people to help on the day. No doubt a few good souls will come forward - but the vast majority will just roll up to enjoy the show... and pop off home before the clear up work starts.

For some folk it's almost as if they're living in some kind of Disneyland where the elves magic up all sorts of fun things for residents to enjoy - but beware. This fairytale could have an unhappy ending. Feckenham's elves are getting old and tired - and may not be able to conjure things up for much longer.

Younger folk wake up! If you want Feckenham to carry on being a lively place to live in you really do have to get involved and **DO SOMETHING!**

IN YOUR OPINION...

Elsewhere in this edition you'll find the results of the Parish Council's Poll about the proposed Battery Energy Storage Systems. The impressive thing about that is that over 44% of people took the trouble to take part - a much better turnout than for any recent local election. Now all you have to do is respond when you're asked to take action in support of the result!

25 YEARS ON...

On the next page you'll find a suggestion for another "portrait of the village" exercise. The fact that it's a quarter of a century since we did the last one comes as a bit of a shock. Equally, the fact that the new version will probably be done using pictures generated by mobile phones emphasises just how things have changed since the turn of the century. One thing that is certain is that it'll still take a good deal of time and effort to put together - any volunteers?!

IT'S YOUR FECKENHAM NEWS

I know I'm only in the hot seat for a couple of editions but it does give me the chance to remind you that this magazine is for everyone in Feckenham. That means that contributions are welcome from all who live or work in the village. Whether you want to tell the village about something you're organising or just have some comments on aspects of village life, we want to hear about it. No party political diatribes please! This is a great place to live so it's worth celebrating that in these pages. Letters, articles and pictures are welcome. Just send them in an email to

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FECKENHAM FILE 25 YEARS ON!

Jen Cary writes:

To commemorate the millennium, nearly every house and every event in the village was photographed and documented for posterity, with the results being the "Feckenham File 2000" book and an exhibition

in the Village Hall. The print run of original books has now run out, so for those of you who haven't seen one, the book is a fascinating snapshot of our village at this historic point in time.

A REPEAT?

Now it's a quarter of a century later and I was wondering if there was an appetite in the village to do something similar again? It would involve whoever wants to be included to provide a photo of them and their house and a short article about themselves, as well as coverage of all the events in the village that year.

TAKE PART

The next 9 months would be spent gathering the material and collating it into a book, with it being published in Spring 2026. If anyone thinks this is a good idea, and especially if anyone would like to help out with producing it, please contact Jen Cary: jen@thecarys.co.uk or 07773 883 039.



Brian escorts a mystery guest to the theatre

FREE THEATRE TRIPS 2025

Brian Robson writes:

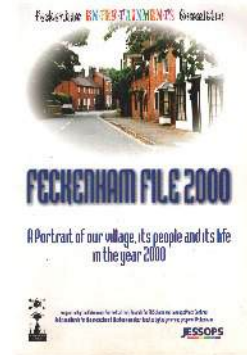
I have outlived the rest of my family so it is important that I continue to keep my outside interests. One of these interests is the theatre. I spent thirty years acting on the stage, but gave up in 1993 because my life changed & there were other considerations.

During lockdown, theatres were worried about lack of audiences, so decided to give cut price tickets, to some in the industry, to help fill empty seats. Since then I have been able to get reduced price tickets to a number of shows. This privilege is not permanent. I have currently secured tickets to several popular shows in 2025 including Only Fools & Horses, Calamity Jane, Chicago, Tina Turner Musical, Moulin Rouge & Miss Saigon.

Because I can get two tickets for less than the price of one ticket I decided to take a companion to the theatre for FREE. I find it more enjoyable when I have company.

Since lockdown I have taken 17 different companions (11 female & 6 male) to 69 shows. Some of these people I was meeting for the first time. I would like to open this offer to other theatre minded people to have a FREE theatre experience. If you are interested then please contact me for all the details. The offer is ONLY available to ONE person per show.

Email : brian.robson693@btinternet.com



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TAI CHI

Our February meeting carried on the theme of well-being, with an introductory session to Tai Chi from Chris Groom from Whitespace Meditation. Chris took us through the history of Tai Chi and its principles and then we all gave it a go. The session was very interesting and invigorating – no wonder Chris's classes in the village are so popular!



WI...NE

Our next session on the 17th March is a W.I. local group meeting when we will be hosting women from our local W.I.s. As it's customary for the hosting W.I. to provide refreshments, we thought we would do a wine tasting session! We won't be having an April meeting as it clashes with Easter, and our May meeting will be recovering from doing the teas at the Open Garden Festival (17th/18th May).



CALL FOR CAKES

Speaking of the Garden Festival – we will need around 100 cakes over the course of the weekend, which is a lot to ask for from our small group! Therefore, if anyone wouldn't mind baking a cake or two between now and mid-May, that would be so helpful. Please write the ingredients down and get in touch with Jen Cary and I can arrange storage 07773 883 039. Expenses for cakes can be reimbursed and 50% of the profits go towards the upkeep of the church.

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Children's Society Collection Boxes

The boxes are due to be opened in **April**. If you have one, please pass it to Mary Smith, who has taken over from Vivien Hunter as the box coordinator for St John the Baptist Church in Feckenham.

Boxes can be handed over to Mary at a church service, or she can be contacted on 01527 550826 if you would like her to collect the box from you.

Alternatively, Jo Warrillow has kindly agreed that boxes can be dropped off at her house (Timber End Cottage) at the beginning of April.

The Children's Society

Feckenham Village Hall

There's a busy time in store on the Village Hall's stage - three great shows for music lovers of varying tastes



BIG BAND SPRING

First up, on the 1st of March, is The Out of The Blue Big Band with a charity concert in aid of The Sick Children's Trust.

Out of The Blue is a big band that brings serious swing, plenty of sass, and just the right amount of brass. Think bold solos, toe-tapping rhythms, and enough swagger to make you forget your problems (or at least where you parked your car). They can belt out Sinatra and Buble classics and jazz standards one minute and dazzle you with Santana, Oasis, The Monkees and Elton John the next!

The band is conducted by Jo James and features vocalist Lee Hamblett.

All proceeds will go to The Sick Children's Trust - a charity which provides accommodation at hospitals so that families can stay together in trying times.

JAZZ FOR THE SPRING

with OUT OF THE BLUE BIG BAND

Saturday 1st March - 7pm

TIM RETURNS

Dutch fiddler Tim Kliphuis last visited Feckenham in 2016 and the show came close to disaster. Tim and his guitarist arrived on time

and began the setup - but there was no sign of the double bass player. As the audience began to arrive there were panicky phone

calls made which revealed the awful truth. The bass player had misread his instructions and headed off to Fakenham... in Norfolk. The trio had become a duo. During the interval the Hall doors crashed open and a red faced man puffed into the Hall carrying a large instrument - disaster averted... but who knows how many speed limits were ignored!

It's hoped that no such drama will attend Tim's visit on 23rd March when he'll again be proving that he's one of the finest jazz violinists playing today. Classically trained and widely regarded as "the successor to Stéphane Grappelli", Tim breathes new life into existing styles with a high-energy blend of classical, gypsy jazz and folk music. *"One of the World's finest fiddlers" Nigel Kennedy*

THE TIM KLIPHUIS TRIO

Sunday, 23rd March - 7.30pm

TICKETS for shows at the Hall are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown.

Book online through www.feckhall.org

Book by phone on 0333 666 3366



THE MIDLAND SINFONIA

Saturday, 5th April - 7.30pm

This acclaimed professional orchestra will be playing a lively programme of music inspired by divine & evil! Including Shostakovich's Sinfonia for Strings, Elgar's Elegy, Bernard Herman's Suite from Psycho & Charlie Daniel's The Devil Went Down to Georgia... and many more!

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund
February draw.

Carried out on 4th February, 2025.

1st (£25)	64	Graham & Janine Eason
2nd (£15)	111	Chris & Tave Bristow
3rd (£10)	117	Alan Jones



PARISH CHURCH of ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar: Fr Glenn Reading 01527 894436

vicar@feckenhamchurch.org.uk

Church Warden: Vacant

For Weddings, Baptisms & Funerals please contact Fr Glenn.

Website: www.feckenhamchurch.org.uk



Services for March 2025

2nd March	10.30am Eucharist	Rev Fiona Carter
5th March	7.30pm Eucharist with ashing	Fr Glenn Reading
9th March	10.30am Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter
16th March	6.30pm Evensong	Fr Glenn Reading
23rd March	10.30am Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading



Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm

12th March and 26th March

All are welcome (coffee and cake)



EASTER LILLIES

Easter Sunday is on 20th April this year and once again the flower group would like to include lilies in their displays.

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.

FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St John Fisher & Thomas More

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

Mount Carmel 6pm 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 893898

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

January seems like the longest month, short days, long nights, oppressive grey and cold, yet throughout this time the Church keeps the season of Epiphanytide, we recall the visit of the Magi, those wise men from the east who sought out the baby Jesus, an event so momentous that for hundreds of years in western culture it was a celebration more important than Christmas.

The visit of the Magi was the moment that signified that Jesus wasn't just for the Jewish people, but for the Gentiles too, Jesus comes for Jew and Gentile alike, for the whole of humanity.

Epiphanytide ends on Sunday 2nd Feb with the celebration of Candlemas, here the baby Jesus is brought to the temple by Mary and Joseph. There in the temple Simeon, a man promised by God that he will see God's plan for Salvation before he dies, knows that God's promise has been kept as he holds the baby Jesus in his arms.

Candlemas gives us a moment when we look back one more time to Christmas, the birth of Jesus, before we turn and look ahead.

March will bring the season of Lent, here Jesus the baby has become Jesus the man and his journey to the cross has begun. Christians journey with Jesus through Lent, we spend time in prayer, fasting and service to others. Lent is a time of self- reflection, a time of restraint, we recall Jesus' exile in the desert and his suffering. This culminates with Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem and the final week of his life on earth.

Holy Week is the name we give to the last week of Jesus' life. A week that sees Jesus arrested, placed on trial, humiliated and crucified on the cross...

Good Friday, the cross, Golgotha, seemed like the end, it wasn't. That weekend felt like January, long nights, oppressive, cold and without hope. Yet we hold the faith, because

Easter Sunday is coming, a bursting from the tomb, a marvellous resurrection. Hope is re-born and the promise of God fulfilled, the realisation that God's good news, God's salvation, God's plan of redemption is realised in the resurrected Jesus.

Psalm 30 captures the Lenten and Easter journey perfectly when we read 'weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.'

If you would like to journey with us this Lent, Holy Week and Easter then you will be more than welcome in church. The good news is simply for everyone, no caveats, no small print, just a welcome into God's family

God bless you and those you love.

Fr Glenn



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Feckenham Square Management Committee

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Following a safety inspection and report work has now been carried out to remove dead wood from two of the trees on The Square. Regular inspections are carried out to ensure that the trees are in good health and pose no danger to the public. The Committee would like to thank residents for their cooperation in keeping the area clear of parked cars so that the work could be carried out unhindered.

SUMMER FUN

As the trees come into leaf the Square Committee will be making efforts to ensure that The Square is looking its best for the spring and summer events. First up is the Flower and Garden Festival which is due on 17th and 18th of May. The Square will be the location of various stalls and attractions. The Wake will occupy the site on 21st June and The Square's own "Fun on The Square" event will be on 26th July. There will be no Scarecrow Weekend this year.

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



THE PEN IS MIGHTIER...

An extravagantly malicious theatre critic who strikes fear into the thespians of 1930s London, Jimmy Erskine (Ian McKellen) is known for many proclivities, but mostly for his savagery. So when his job at the Daily Chronicle is threatened, Jimmy's response is as vicious as that of a cornered honey badger in a cravat. Gemma Arterton and Mark Strong are all collateral damage in his machiavellian scheme. Wicked, compelling fun. (UK 2023)

THE CRITIC (15)

Friday 14th March at 8pm



GREY CELLS AT WORK IN VENICE

Kenneth Branagh grows the famous moustache of Agatha Christie's Belgian super-sleuth in a new adventure which he also directs.

In post-World War II Venice, Hercule Poirot, Now retired and living in self-imposed exile in the world's most glamorous city, Poirot reluctantly attends a séance at a decaying, haunted palazzo. When one of the guests is murdered, the detective is thrust into a sinister world of shadows and secrets. Based on an original story by Agatha Christie. (USA 2023)

A HAUNTING IN VENICE (12A)

Saturday 29th 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

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Sunday, 23rd March - 7.30pm
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by phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown
or The Village Shop

The Midland Sinfonia
THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE...
Saturday, 5th April - 7.30pm

JUNIOR CRICKET



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FECKENHAM



THE
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First Tuesday of every month from 8pm
NEXT SESSION: Tuesday, 4th March



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

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10 to 12 noon
Bradley Village Hall



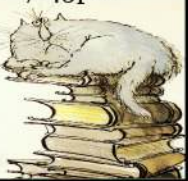
Feckenham READERS GROUP

Tuesday, 19th March - 7.45pm

This month's book:
DRIVE YOUR PLOUGH
OVER THE BONES
OF THE DEAD

By OLGA TOKARCZUK

Details: 892285



Feckenham Parish Council

MEETING

Thursday, 13th February - 7.30pm

Feckenham Village Hall

(Back Room)

THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 14th March at 8pm



IAN MCKELLEN GEMMA ARTERTON MARK STRONG LESLEY MANVILLE

THE CRITIC

FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 29th March at 7.30pm



A HAUNTING in VENICE

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall

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Feckenham's Own...



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SAVING LIVES THROUGH FOOTBALL



In 2011 a group of us were invited by Rev Isaac Mgego, Director of Berega Hospital in Tanzania, to visit. He wanted us to see the challenges of delivering medical care with very limited resources at Berega Hospital and at a rural health centre in the remote village of Tunguli. So, in 2012 we made the first of many self-funded visits.

We could never have anticipated the impact that this first trip would have on us all and the various healthcare projects that followed. But one project in particular surprised us all - and might surprise you, too! In 2024, when we returned for another of our monitoring visits we found ourselves hosting the final of a massive football tournament watched by around 2000 people.

‘What has a football tournament got to do with supporting healthcare in Tanzania?’ I hear you ask. It was suggested by our partner, ‘SAWA’ (Sanitation and Water Action), a Tanzanian NGO whose fantastic team worked with us on installing 11 rope pump wells in Tunguli village. Tunguli is remote and there is no infrastructure, safe water is scarce, and help with disease prevention minimal. SAWA know from experience that football can be a vehicle for spreading messages on disease prevention to young people and motivating them to act. Although we were, I must admit, somewhat sceptical ourselves. ‘We’ve done it elsewhere and it really works,’ they told us. They were so right!

And so it is that on a warm afternoon in October 2024, we sit on a platform on the edge of ‘the pitch’ - for ‘pitch’ think rough, sloping field rather than Old Trafford! A vehicle drives slowly towards us bringing an official from the District office, the guest of honour, to join our group. Teams of finalists are warming up around us, some in pink kit as, for the first time, women’s teams are competing. In order to qualify, every team has to meet SAWA’s stringent requirements, either by improving hygiene at home or by helping with cleaning the village rope-pump wells, keeping them animal-free. The SAWA team visits players’ homes and the wells to check for compliance with the rules, as any team who has not fulfilled its commitments is eliminated. Teams are enthusiastic to take part, so the drop-out rate is very low.

The tournament kicks off and the crowd of spectators grows. Breaks in play are punctuated with loud speaker messages about disease prevention strategies and the spectators are hearing these messages through the universally loved language of a football match. As people travel from surrounding villages and hamlets, the number of spectators swells to about 2,000.

It is not, of course, just about the messages. There are trophies and prizes, and teams have trained hard to become the champions, so the atmosphere is electric. Such is the balance of skill that three out of four matches go to penalties - the crowd goes wild! Prizes are distributed, teams celebrate and partying is heard long into the night. How right SAWA are, and what power they harness through this fantastic tournament.

Healthcare has been at the heart of our work since 2012, and this event is just one part of a much bigger picture.

You can read more about this and our other projects on our website

www.missionmorogoro.org.uk

Mission Morogoro

THE BUNNIES ARE COMING

Regulars in Feckenham Shop will already know the seasonal gifts beautifully knitted by Trustee, Margaret Green, to raise funds for our maternal health projects. They are always much in demand and every penny goes to improving healthcare for mothers and babies. So, look out for the Easter bunnies that will be arriving soon - they will help fund a much-needed Premature Baby Warmer Cot.

Thank you to everyone for your support of Mission Morogoro. If you are able to make a donation, however small, it will be much appreciated and can be done through our website. Our work goes on!

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Trustee
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BESS POLL RESULTS

The recent Poll undertaken by The Parish Council with the support of local Borough Councillors yielded the following results:

- There was a 44% return of papers both online and ballot box.
- 91.5% wish the Parish Council to object to Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).
- 7% were in support of BESS.
- 1.5% registered no comment.

The Council is pleased that this response gives it a clear indication of the wishes of parishioners.

The Parish Council thanks the Borough Councillors (Cllr Brandon Clayton, Cllr Craig Warhurst, and Cllr Chris Hoyz) for their house-to-house delivery over two very cold weekends.

The Parish Council would also like to thank so many Parishioners for taking part in the poll.

CONSULTANT

The Parish Council has decided to engage an energy development consultant to aid the Council's response to BESS applications on behalf of the village. These applications are extremely complex and need specialised knowledge to ensure that information the Council uses is verified and that the grounds for objection are sound.

NEW COUNCILLOR

The recently advertised vacancy has been filled by co-optation at the Council meeting on 13th February. Jacqui Barrett-Meade will be joining the Council at the next meeting. The Council is grateful to Mrs Barrett-Meade for putting herself forward.

HOUSING ALLOCATIONS

Comment has been received claiming that information publicised by Feckenham Parish Council (FPC), in relation to the notification by the Government to Redditch Borough Council (RBC) on additional house provision, is incorrect.

The matter was presented to FPC at the meeting in December by RBC councillors. This information was in the public realm. RBC councillors have said that the details were correct and in order.

We can now update the situation to some degree. These figures still stand.

At the time of writing the Government have asked that RBC put forward plans informing how, when, and where, the additional housing can be provided. Over the course of the next two months RBC will be discussing, preparing, and submitting their plans to the Government.

If the plans are accepted matters will go ahead, if they are not the government will impose their own plans on RBC.

Until this time it is not possible to be definitive in the matter because the data does not yet exist.

We are working closely with our local members to do the best we can for the parish in this regard

UNITARY COUNCILS

The Government has decreed that Unitary councils will be formed. Worcestershire was not included in the first round of the decision-making process. Plans are now being prepared, for submission to the Government, as to how this may be taken forward. Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is part of these plans.

It is most likely that a unitary council will be formed, and RBC will be absorbed into that body. It is also most likely that in May next year there will be elections for councillors for the shadow Unitary Council, the information that we have is that existing parish councils will not be dissolved, and that they will most likely be given more responsibilities and powers relating to local government.

The parish Council is monitoring the situation closely.

LITTER PICK

The Parish Council will be organising a litter pick on Saturday 10 May between 10am and 2pm. This is to support the Garden Festival the following weekend. If you feel able to volunteer, please do contact the clerk on 01527 892522

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 13th March at 7.30pm in the Back Room of the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

There is an open forum section at every meeting during which residents can raise matters of concern or ask questions.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have queries or need help with local problems you are very welcome to contact the Council. Initially you can call the Parish Clerk on 01527 892522 or Email:

clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk



Visit the Parish Council's website for information about the Council, planning issues, local organisations and useful contact details to help you solve problems. You'll also find digital editions of Feckenham News going back to 2012.

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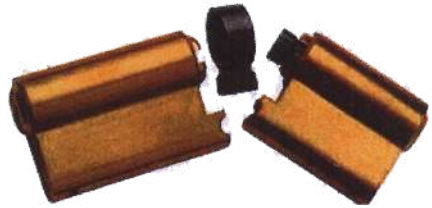
LOCK SNAPPING

UPVC doors generally offer a good level of security, however the Redditch area has recently had a number of burglaries where the actual locks on the UPVC door has been forced and entry gained. This method of breaking into houses is known as "Lock snapping"

The types of locks attacked are called Euro Profile cylinders. An example is shown below



When a lock like the one above is snapped the result is pictured below.



As a result of an increase in this type of burglary a new British Standard for locks and door furniture has been introduced (TS007). It is recommended that, in order to maintain the highest level of security, your locks and door furniture should be rated as "3 star".

A 3 star rated lock is pictured below



The very minimum level of security you should fit is a TS007 one star rated lock with anti-snap. For advice on locks for your specific needs you should consult a member of the Master Locksmiths Association

MEMORIES from the Feckenham Archive

THANKS...

Thank you to the people who responded to the photos in the last magazine. Clearly, as these pictures show there were quite a few shops at one point.



From Carol Onions:

I remember when we first came into Feckenham that the shop next to the Needle Mill was a General Village Store but had just closed.

It became an Antique Shop at which a Mrs Gertie Johnson used to work, I believe it was owned by A Mr. Van Swanenburg (Not sure of the spelling). I don't know what was next to it but there was a Cobblers near there.

From Pete Masters:

Re your picture in Feckenham News. It was known locally as the Top Shop and it was a general store, grocery, hardware and the like. The Post Office was there before moving to the Co- Op. It was owned by Mr Palmer later joined by Mr Payne and was referred to then as Palmer and Payne.

The building below the pub was a shoe repairers his name was Mr Ernest Morris who lived where Val Neale lives. He was known as spriggy, he kept the sprigs in his mouth before hammering them into shoe. It was then used by Chester Smith to sell cycle spares



From Frederick Hicks:

I was born in the village in my parents shop, in the High street. My uncle Bert & Uncle Frank Hicks were the village bakers as was my father. He and his brothers were in last months Feckenham news

I have quite extensive knowledge of Feckenham too much to put on a email. Butchers shop etc

The Top shop you are enquiring about in the 1950s was an ironmongers selling vegetables etc with stabling-family name was Palmers, they sold up to a family called Freestone late 60 early 70



Keep your contributions coming!

Send pictures and snippets of information to
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WE'VE IMPROVED...

Over the last few years we have enjoyed a fourfold increase in our annual profits at the Shop. This tremendous achievement has not been at the expense of our customers or the brilliant business acumen of the Chairman but to the Board applying some common sense and three basic commercial principles.

1. Reinvesting in the business
2. Offering products than customers want to buy
3. Reducing wastage

It's that's last principle which requires further explanation.

NO WASTE!

Five years ago the value of monthly wastage was over £500 per month, now it is between £50 - £80 per month. It is still a lot of money over the year and represents about 0.5 percent of our retail turnover. Of course we would like the figure to be zero but with our modest sales and limited buying power that target is realistically unachievable. External factors that reduce our footfall such as the Weather or road closures also have a severe impact upon our ability to sell short life perishable items before they reach their sell by date. So how have we managed to limit our losses to such low levels ?

Simply it's been a big Team effort

Firstly our Volunteers check the stock on the shelves on a daily basis to identify any products that are approaching their best before date and reduce the sale price accordingly.

Secondly our Buying Team try not to over order by purchasing minimum quantities wherever possible. We don't always get it right so that is why you will sometimes see reduced items for sale on the till counter. There are customer bargains to be had at lower than supermarket prices because we would rather sell at a loss than get nothing at all by having to throw products in the waste bin. So the control and reduction of wastage has had a major impact on our improved financial performance, a practice we intend to continue.

BUNNY TIME



On a lighter note, the knitted Easter Bunnies will be appearing again this month with all the sale proceeds going to Project Morogoro in Africa. In anticipation thanks for your continued custom and support.

Alan

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ROB COLE'S GARDENING TIPS

MERTENSIA VIRGINICA THE VIRGINIA BLUEBELL



Mertensia virginica, commonly known as the Virginia Bluebell, is the type species for the genus *Mertensia* and is named in honour of Francis Karl Mertens (1764-1831), a professor of botany in Bremen, Germany. There are about 50 species found in the north temperate regions of the world and all are herbaceous perennials.

The Virginia Bluebell is native to most of eastern North America, from the Appalachian Mountains west to Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri and grows in moist woodland areas (a rough guide to its requirements in cultivation). Plants are listed in The Plant Finder as being hardy to H4 hardiness zone (-10°C to -5°C) but in the winter of 2010/11 our plants endured -18°C for a whole week without harm.

The leaves are rounded and grey-green, borne on loosely held stems up to 300mm tall, but emerge dramatically from the ground during early to mid March with fascinating purple-flushed leaves. These gradually expand and lose the purplish colour, and are petiolate at the bottom of the flower stem and sessile at the top. The flower buds are pink, and the flowers have five petals fused into a tube with five stamens and a central pistil, borne in mid-spring in nodding spiral-shaped cymes at the end of arching stems. The flowers are



at their best from late March to mid April, and are typically soft blue, but white or pink flowers have been found, although rarely. I have never come across either, but will buy them instantly if ever I do!

In early summer, each fertilized flower produces seeds and if you want to collect them you should visit the plant every day and collect the seeds just as they turn brown - otherwise they will drop and you will miss most of them. They are clearly visible individually and are large enough to dislodge one by one. Of course, if you want the plant to self-seed at random, you can just leave it to nature.

Once the seed has been produced, the plant quickly dies back and lies dormant until the following spring. It is at this dying-back stage that



slug damage is at its most prevalent, so take precautions until the stems have finally withered and then cut them all back to ground level.

I have heard it said that *Mertensia virginica* can be invasive, but this has absolutely not been my experience in over 20 years of growing it. Yes, it does self seed but it doesn't invade, and if you dig up the seedling freebies and pot them up you have plenty for gifts to friends. It is such a good, reliable and distinctive garden plant, and has been awarded the RHS Award of Garden Merit - and rightly so.

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Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 5th February 2025

The meeting on 5th February was a talk entitled 'Pruning Shrubs and Their Aftercare' by Duncan Coombs. Duncan has been a regular speaker at our club over the years and gave us an entertaining account of why, how and when to prune our garden shrubs, and showed us the various tools to use for the job.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 5th March 2025

The Gardening Club will celebrate its 50th anniversary in March and there will be a special celebratory 'Afternoon Tea' at the Jinney Ring on 5th March starting at 3:30pm, instead of a meeting. Pre-booking is essential and members will be advised of the arrangements in good time.

There will be no monthly competition at this meeting.

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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JUNIOR CRICKET

As Spring approaches it is becoming a busy period on the Junior Cricket front. Feckenham will be running teams in three different Worcestershire Junior leagues in the 2025 season: Under 14 - Pairs (8 a side) Under 14 - T20 (11 a side) Under 15 - Pairs (10 a side) The fixtures are currently being planned out across the summer months. We are really keen to know of any new players (Year 8-10) that would like to join us and strengthen these squads. So please let us know if you have any sons, daughters, grandchildren, nephews, nieces or friends who would like to play.

To support the new season, Winter Junior Nets will start on Saturday 8th March 2025 from 130-230pm for a six week period at St. Augustine's School in Redditch.

Winter senior nets will start Thursday February 27th at 6pm at Evesham Prince Henry's. All potential players welcome.

The season will get into full swing after the Easter holidays where we will have weekly outdoor nets for Juniors on a Friday evening at Feckenham. There will be an All-Stars programme (5-8 years) and a Dynamos programme (9-11 years) running again. We will also be involved in four Under 9 softball tournaments across the summer which will be a perfect introduction to competitive but inclusive cricket.

Please contact James Reynolds on 07841-615410 for more details around these Junior cricket opportunities.

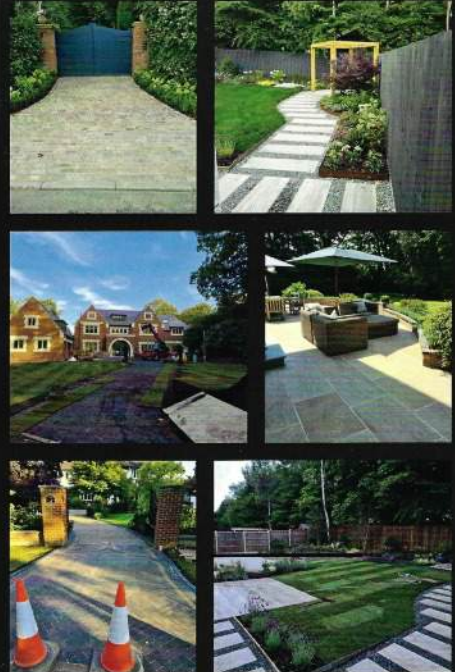


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