

FECKENHAM

November 2024

NEWS



Published by Feckenham Church for the village.
Editor Gilly Cooper - feckenhamnews@gmail.com
(Copy Date 14th)

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Feckenham News in November

Dates for your Diary

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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

Production Team

Gilly Cooper - Editor

feckenhamnews@gmail.com
07500115581

Neil Newland - Distribution

neil.newland@btinternet.com

Ian Bellion - What's On

whatson@feckenham.f9.co.uk

Jen Cary - NewsHound

jen@28highstreet.co.uk

Mary Smith - Advertising

fnadvertising@btinternet.com

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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

What a success the Scarecrow Weekend turned out to be! The winning entry in the children's category is on our front cover. We can now look forward to the Bonfire on Saturday 2nd November.



This month I've been giving some thought to promoting good health. Many of you know I am a keen cyclist and activity that not only keeps one fit but is also great socially. The weather hasn't been conducive so, this week, I went by car to meet my cycling buddies at Arrow Valley Visitor Centre and Boathouse Cafe. What a lively place it was. Not only were there many just out for coffee and a chat with friends, our cycling group, and a few using the cafe as a work space, there was an event initiated as October is Breast Awareness Month. They were promoting better health with a the Health Bus parked outside and some stands - Primrose Hospice who I think most people know but also Healthy Worcestershire, an organisation a new, free health improvement programme in Worcestershire. They say "Our weekly sessions will help you be active and healthy and have fun meeting new people in your neighbourhood." I checked out their website <https://healthyworcestershire.org.uk/> where there are lots of details. This may be of interest to some residents of the village.

Also on a health/ill health topic, I wonder how many of us know about the "Message in a Bottle" or MIAB scheme? It works like this:

A bottle is supplied which contains a pre-

printed form and two green cross stickers. The user fills in the form that contains basic medical details, etc.

The form is put back in the bottle and then stored in the fridge. One of the green cross stickers is put on the door of the fridge and the other is put on the inside of the front door. If two people live in the house, then they both fill out a form and both forms are stored in the same bottle.

In an emergency, the presence of the green cross stickers will alert the emergency services to the presence of the "Message in a Bottle" If a patient is taken to hospital then the form is taken with them and given to the hospital staff on arrival.

The Lions Clubs promote this scheme because we believe that this gives older or vulnerable people more confidence about their treatment in an emergency. It also gives peace of mind to relatives and friends that essential information will be available in an emergency situation.

Village Christmas Card: Reminder

Most of you will be aware of the village tradition of sending greetings to friends and neighbours through the village card. Instead of sending lots of cards, you can send just one greeting to all and a donation for charity. This is financially supported by the church and distributed by the magazine so all your donations go to charity. The card will be circulated with the December magazine and donations will go to The Trussell Trust run food banks across the country.

Contributions can be made by cheque (or even cash), but BACS payments to the Church Account with a clear reference "Xmas Card" are preferred. The Church account details are: Feckenham PCC Sort Code: 30 96 97 Account 01231863 Please send you wording to feckenhamnews@gmail.com or post with your donation to Angela Fletcher 12 Mill Lane, B96 6HY, Feckenham by 14th November.

Village Notices

FECKENHAM BOOK EXCHANGE

I am pleased to say that the Book Exchange, situated in the Village Church, has been a great success. It seems to be well used, with a good turn over of books, both children's and adults.

However, I would request that people do not to use it as a general dumping ground for their old unwanted books. The premise is that you feel free to **TAKE 1 or 2 books**, and **LEAVE 1 or 2 books – not the contents of your book shelves when you have a clear out.** Excess books dumped on the side bench have to regularly be taken to a charity shop.

Charity shops I believe, are now willing to take old books, and can be paid for their weight, if deemed to be unsellable. I would be very grateful if you would take your old unwanted books to a charity shop of your choosing.

Many thanks.

Gwyn Bradley

CHRISTMAS CLASSICAL SWANSBROOK

It is that time of the year again when I am encouraging villagers to send me requests for carols/Christmas music of their choice for the month of December on Classical Swansbrook (Swansbrook Radio). It would be really nice to hear from people who are, maybe, new to Feckenham. Just tell me what you would like to hear, with a dedication perhaps or simply say why you like that particular carol.

You can contact me directly on cefletcher44@gmail.com or email Swansbrook Radio on radio@swansbrook.com

Village Hall Improvement Fund Draw

You will note that the October Improvement Fund winners have been published in this magazine. This was the last draw for the 2023/24 year.

The first draws for the 2024/25 year will take place at the Village Hall Trustees' meeting on the first Tuesday in December. But first we have to collect your contributions for entry in the 12 draws from Nov'24 to Oct'25.

Three cash prizes are drawn each month - £25, £15 and £10 (£600 in total over the year). A £12 contribution buys you entry to each of the 12 monthly draws (your entry could win £300 over the year – very unlikely, but theoretically possible!)

Most village households will receive a letter inviting you to contribute during the next month, with an explanation as to how to pay by cash, cheque or bank transfer.

Last year's Fund contributed £888 (after paying out the £600 draw winnings), so this is a worthwhile and important contribution towards covering the cost of improvements to the hall and its facilities. If you've got room for a flutter, thanks in advance for any £12ses you can afford.

Peter Chute (Hon. Treasurer)



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Thursday, 21st November
QUIZ NIGHT
Thursday, 28th November
ITALIAN MENU

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The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



FROM GRIME TO GRAPE...

In October FeckenOdeon 2 offered a film centred around food - in November we concentrate on wine. *Blind Ambition* follows four friends who have conquered the odds to become South Africa's top sommeliers after escaping starvation and tyranny in their homeland of Zimbabwe. Driven by relentless optimism, a passion for their craft and a sense of national pride, they form Zimbabwe's first national wine tasting team and set their sights on the coveted title of World Wine Tasting Champions. (*South Africa, 2022*)

BLIND AMBITION (12A)

Friday 8th November at 8pm

Doors open at 7.30pm - Licenced Bar



EVERY LITTLE THING GONNA BE ALRIGHT!

A heart warming film which celebrates the life and music of an icon who inspired generations through his message of love and unity. Telling Bob's powerful story of overcoming adversity and the journey behind his revolutionary music. Produced in partnership with the Marley family and starring Kingsley Ben-Adir as the legendary musician and Lashana Lynch as his wife Rita. (USA 2024)

BOB MARLEY -ONE LOVE (12A)

Saturday 30th November at 7.30pm

Doors open at 7pm - Licenced Bar

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

Feckenham Square Management Committee



A FINE CROP OF SCARY CROWS RESULTS IN A GREAT HARVEST!

Once again Feckenham folk have thrown themselves into a project that gave joy to many and which has served a useful purpose. Feckenham's Scarecrow Weekend which (in case you didn't notice) took place on 5th & 6th October was an huge success. There were 35 amazing and creative entries in the competition - plus a few that just strolled in of their own accord. The weather on the Saturday was perfect and visitors and scarecrows revelled in the sunshine. Sunday's drizzle put some people off but there was still a steady flow of people trotting round the scarecrow trail. In fact this year's event attracted record numbers of visitors - it's difficult to put an exact figure on it but we know that almost 2,000 voting slips were issued - and some people didn't bother to pick up a slip.

Financially this certainly was a bumper year - whilst no charge was made for entry or parking, people were incredibly generous and donations combined with takings on teas and barbecues resulted in around £3,000 being added to the funds used to look after The Square. The participation of Feckenham Artisans added to the range of attractions offered to visitors.

THE WINNERS

A total of 1,412 votes for the Best Scarecrow were cast with the following results:

Children's Class: 1st - "Minion" by Autumn Harris
2nd - "Scar-y-Potter" by Dominic and Xavier Parrott.

Adults: 1st - "Every Dog Has His Day" by Phil & Trish Tricklebank

2nd - "Scarecrows Behaving Badly" by Alan Moore

3rd - "Spongebob Scarepants" by Janine Lynn

THANKS

The event was entirely mounted and staffed by volunteers and the committee would like to thank everybody who gave their time and muscle power. We'd also like to acknowledge the support of The Village Shop, Swansbrook Radio, The FeckenOdeon and The Village Hall who sponsored the map/programme, Tom Edwards for the provision of fields for parking and Winfields for being so supportive, even though we caused them some problems with parking.

Feckenham Village Hall

MAKE GOOD THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL

LIVE
& LOCAL

A new musical from Pentabus Theatre and New Perspectives Theatre.

In these days of shrinking budgets we've just heard that this show just got even bigger. The producers have informed us that they have added a 15 strong choir to the cast of leading players. The show promises to be both spectacular and moving... Over twenty years a silent tragedy has unfolded in the heart of our communities. Entirely innocent subpostmasters had their lives torn apart and faced bankruptcy, isolation, and jail for crimes that were never committed, for debts that never existed. Make Good, a new musical devised by talking to affected subpostmasters, tells the story of the Post Office Scandal, now recognised as one of the gravest miscarriages of justice in British history. Experience this most local of stories and witness the astonishing resilience of entire communities as lives were destroyed in a scandal that isn't over yet...

MAKE GOOD : THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL
Friday, 22nd November at 7.30pm

ALSO BOOKING

14th December : **THE NEIL COLEY BIG BAND**
A Swingin' Christmas with The Big Band Greats

9th February : **MUMBO JUMBO**
Four Hands and a Horn

23rd March : **THE TIM KLIPHUIS TRIO**
"One of the world's finest fiddlers"

5th April : **THE MIDLAND SINFONIA**
The Good The Bad and The..."

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

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund
October draw.

Carried out on 1st October, 2024.

1st (£25)	96	Ivor & Jenny Mason
2nd (£15)	132	Q & Jen Cary
3rd (£10)	77	Wren Chute



The cast of "Make Good" in rehearsal.

The show started its nationwide tour in Ludlow in mid-October and is visiting 28 theatres and arts venues over a 7 week period. The production is funded by Arts Council England and supported by the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The Feckenham performance is part of the Live & Local programme supported by the Arts Council, Worcestershire County Council and Redditch Borough Council.





BESS VOLUNTEER GROUP.

On Monday 7th October the first BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) volunteers' meeting was held. Cllr Alan Smith (Parish Council Chair) opened the meeting and explained that, due to the enormous amount of work required when looking at BESS schemes, a separate group would need to be established that could argue when necessary. There will be a need for fundraising to pay for the Consultants who would be a necessity to support objections to planning applications. The Developers have many Consultants and experts employed to counter opposition. The voluntary group would need to match these.

The formation of this group does not mean that the Parish Council will not object to applications, but it enables them to negotiate the best deal for the village should an application be allowed. This may take the form of grants for the village to mitigate the disturbance the village may suffer. The formation of the group would also allow the Council to concentrate on the technical aspects of the particular proposals.

If you are interested in being involved with the group, please contact the clerk.

ANOTHER BESS OR SOLAR PROPOSAL

The Parish Council has been made aware that there is another Developer looking for either a suitable BESS site or a Solar Farm. Do keep an eye on the Parish Council website for more updates. At this time the PC does not know who the Developers are or whether it will be BESS or Solar.

RESIGNATION

The Parish Council has received the resignation of Cllr Hugo Hammersley. Anyone who attended a Parish Council meeting will know that Hugo has been involved with the planning delegation with the Council for a long time and collaborated tirelessly with his fellow Councillors to try to protect Feckenham from the onslaught of BESS developments. The Parish Council on behalf of the

Parish thanks him for all the many hours he spent on this valuable work.

AUDIT CONCLUSION

The Parish Council has received its final Audit conclusion. There were no issues reported other than an error in calculating the asset value of items owned by the Parish. This will be adjusted in the 2024- 2025 figures.

WHITE GATES AND VAS MACHINES

You may have noticed new white gates in the village which have been paid for by the divisional funds of Cllr Mike Rouse and Cllr Craig Warhurst. The location has been changed and moved closer to the village. There will be two additional Vehicle Activated (VAS) on the B4090. These efforts are to try and slow the speeding traffic entering the village. Astwood Lane will have speed changes made more obvious and show the change in speed from 60 to 40 to 30, again it is hoped it will slow the traffic along with the new VAS machine. The Parish Council applied for a grant from The Police and Crime Commissioner's office and were successful. Thanks goes to the PCC and our County Councillors.

PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

There is a Parish Council vacancy. If you are interested in applying, please contact the clerk by phone 01527 892522 or email clerk@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will take place on Thursday, 14th November at 7.30pm in the Back Room of the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.



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.

CHURCH SERVICES



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



PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for November 2024

2nd November	3pm	All Souls Service <i>at The Bridge, Headless Cross</i>	Fr Glenn Reading
3rd November	10.30am	All Saints Eucharist	Fr Glenn Reading
10th November	10.30am	Family Service with act of remembrance	Rev Fiona Carter
17th November	6.30pm	Safeguarding Sunday Evensong	Rev Fiona Carter
24th November	10.30am	Christ the King Eucharist with blessing of the shoe boxes	Fr Glenn Reading



Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm

13th November and 27th November

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

Reverend Fiona writes...

So, we are already in November and “time waits for no man”. It is really a beautiful time of the year with the leaves and all the beautiful colours, but let’s not rush through autumn because of early planning for Christmas. Let’s savour it and enjoy it.

All the season’s vegetables we see are beautiful, aren’t they? Pumpkins, swede, butternut squash to name a few. And warming soups seem to be so much more appealing this time of year rather than in the spring or summer. Each season has something special about it and there is something very familiar about each season and autumn is no different. We have the cooler weather but still have some brighter days with that golden autumn sun.

Looking at the book of Ecclesiastes in the bible there is a time for everything. A time to plant and a time to uproot. Which is very much like saying there is a time for Spring and a time for Autumn. A time to tear down and a time to build. It was written almost 3000 years ago but there is still so much truth in it. Some of the verses are very hard hitting but I don’t think we should take them literally. It is amazing that then and now there is a time for everything in our lives.

Here is a few from my life. A time for education and a time to relax. A time for getting married having children and a time to let them go. A time to work and a time to retire. I am sure you have all got your own examples of different times that you have experienced. Sometimes in life our lives do change and go in a different direction, and we have to regroup and start again. But with God’s help we can.

I hope you all enjoy all these autumn colours and that you enjoy this season in all its beauty. In the church this season is called Ordinary time before the season of Advent and Christmastide. The latter are seasons of celebration, but we all need Ordinary time as we can’t go from one celebration to another. We need that period of the

ordinary where we can appreciate the simple things of life.

In church there is more Ordinary time than anything else and during this time we just walk with Jesus praying and just being with him. We walk through his story and our own stories. There is nothing ordinary about Ordinary time every day Jesus calls us into communion with him. So don’t rush into preparing for Advent or Christmas but have a blessed Ordinary time.

Blessings Rev’d Fiona

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Access to the Church

There have been a number of occasions in recent months when cars have been trapped in the churchyard by cars parked on the approach to the church gates.

Access to the church and the properties in Church Walk is essential at all times, for emergency vehicles and disabled. Maintenance workers, church & churchyard volunteers and delivery vehicles also need this access on a regular basis both during the day and in evenings.

We are not suggesting the culprits are village residents but would ask that visitors are told not to park on the approach to the Church.

Ian Hunter PCC Secretary

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX SENDOFF SERVICE SUNDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 10-30AM

Do come along to this lovely, moving service. Meet our T4U representatives and find out more about the Christmas Shoebox Appeal. During this special service, all of our boxes will be dedicated. At the end of the service we will load them onto the lorry to begin their journey to children in need this Christmas.

TOGETHER WE CAN CHANGE
LIVES ONE BOX AT A TIME



INFO Request

On June 2, 1942, the bomber Wellington flight LZ 8867 on its way to Essen, Germany was shot down by a German fighter plane over North Limburg.

The plane with five occupants crashed in Hegelsom/Horst, all five crew members were buried in Venlo and reburied in Nijmegen after the war.

Much has been written incorrectly about this flight and confusion arose about the crash of this plane, with the villages of Heer and Nederasselt being mentioned.

These men were never commemorated in a dignified manner, our local history association wants to put an end to that and also give them a place.

One of these man was Air Gunner GEORGE GASCOYNE, 27 years old, Son of George and Elsie Jane Gascoyne, of Malvern, Worcestershire. His brother John Patrick also died on service.

George and John had a sister NEWHAM Elizabeth Margaret (Betty) Gascoyne Born 1918 in Worcester, passed away peacefully on July 9th, 2009 at her Nursing Home in North London.

George is mentioned in a stained glass window in the church in Malvern and on a memorial plaque

Family lived in Droitwich Spa at Hanbury Park, the name we have there is Michael and Jennifer Carter.

I would like to get in touch with family or other people who can give me more information.

Thanks Wilfred

Email: w.vanroij@digitaleopspring.nl

WHAT'S ON IN

sparkle explode pop aaah! oooh! bang

whoosh flicker zoom wow! crackle

Grand Firework Display and BBQ
Saturday November 2nd 2024
at Feckenham Cricket Club (foot of Mill Lane)
Bonfire lighting around 6:45pm, fireworks at 7:30pm
BBQ and full bar

No entrance fee but please contribute to the bucket collections, to ensure that we can do it again next year

PLEASE DO NOT BRING OR USE SPARKLERS

firework fizz bonfire whiz flames

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FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

PENTABUS & NEW PERSPECTIVES present **LIVE LOCAL**

MAKE GOOD

THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL

RSC
ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

National Theatre

A NEW MUSICAL
BY JEANIE O'HARE AND JIM FORTUNE
FRIDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER - 7.30pm

Book online at feckhall.org - phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown or The Village Shop

The NEIL COLEY BIG BAND
A Swingin' Christmas
with the Big Band Greats
featuring singer RICH HAZLEWOOD

Book online at feckhall.org
by phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown
or The Village Shop

Saturday, 14th December - 7.30pm

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, 5th November

Stock & Bradley GARDENING CLUB



THE DARK MONTHS

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

Feckenham READERS GROUP

Tuesday, 12th November - 7.45pm

This month's book:

NORMAL RULES DON'T APPLY

By KATE ATKINSON

Details: 892285



Feckenham Parish Council

MEETING

Thursday, 14th November - 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

BLIND AMBITION ^{12A}



FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 8th November at 8pm

BOB MARLEY ONE LOVE

15



FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 30th November at 7.30pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall

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www.feckenodeon.co.uk

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

Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute



Brook House from an old postcard showing not only an extremely well dressed couple from the early twentieth century, but also the quiet rural lane that was the B4090! The photograph shows off the lovely iron work on the porch and the grand old trees in the garden.

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Heart of England Forest - on our doorstep Mike Hudson Volunteer Leader

Here in Feckenham it's all around you and it's growing all the time. Growing in two different senses The Heart of England Forest (HOEF) has planted well over two million trees across this end of Worcestershire and Warwickshire in recent times. Their mission is to create and conserve a thriving

broadleaf forest of 30,000 acres. Establishing and growing the forest on land that the charity has and continues to purchase, will ensure it is safe and protected for generations.

The UK has far less tree cover than

elsewhere in Europe, yet almost everybody recognises the health benefits of being able to spend time locally in nature and the environmental and climatic importance of trees is in the media spotlight all the time. With land around Coughton, Sambourne, The Lenches, Dorsington, Naunton Beauchamp etc. almost every HOEF site is within half an hour's drive of Feckenham. Not all the location are open to the public but many are and have well signposted walking routes, including fully accessible options suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs. Many of the access car parks have detailed information boards but the website - www.heartofenglandforest.org will tell you so much more about the charity's work.

Although it's a big organisation in itself, so much of the work is supported by volunteers. It's a very flexible volunteer programme and everybody is made welcome. It's great to be out there in the fresh air with a friendly bunch of people, doing something useful in the natural world.



Many of the volunteer activities are on weekdays but there are also sessions at weekends and on summer evenings. Tree planting in the mid-winter months is inevitably the flagship activity but there is so much more to do all year round. At the tree nurseries volunteers carry out essential work processing collected seeds and nurturing young trees ready for planting. Whilst others are out in the field surveying wildlife, clearing walkways or monitoring previous plantings. A personal favourite task of mine is removing the stakes and guards from established trees. Its somehow incredibly satisfying, setting them on their way. The tubes and supports do a great job protecting the plantings from wildlife and weather but after several years the trees are ready to look after themselves. The sight of a section of young forest you have helped create, even in a small way. is incredibly satisfying.

See you out in the forest sometime.



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Village Shop - Alan Slater

As I reported last month, despite the miserable weather and a road closure, our Macmillan Coffee Morning was a huge success. So much so that the final total of monies raised was a magnificent £1,020 which marginally exceeded the record amount raised the previous year. A superb effort by our Friday Team on the day, everyone who made a contribution of cakes, jam and prizes, and of course our customers who donated so generously.



Gay, Maggie, Rhian and Nancy. Some of our Friday volunteers who made our macmillan coffee morning such a success.

After the Coffee Morning we quickly had to move on to our preparation for the Feckenham Scarecrow Weekend. It was another success for the Shop as we broke our daily trading record on both days of the weekend. My thanks are extended to all the Volunteers who enabled us to cope with the huge influx of customers. The Friday Team deserve another round of applause for making our scarecrows, Miranda and Mike, who although didn't win the competition, did ensure that we were on the scarecrow trail and therefore attracted lots of visitors to the Shop. It was a brilliant weekend for the Village and a great team effort by the organisers who did a tremendous job. Congratulations to all those involved.



Our continued excellent trading performance not only enables us to financially support local events such as the Scarecrow Weekend, but also enables us to maintain the Shops fixtures and fittings in first class condition. Following the replacement of our chiller and freezer cabinets last year, we have now installed a new cold drinks unit. By continuing a rolling programme of upgrading our equipment we are making sure that we're not exposed to a massive capital outlay in any single year, so maybe next year we will consider replacing our outside furniture. Whatever requires replacing it's comforting to know that we have sufficient funds to meet any eventuality. This situation exists only because of your continued support of your village shop, so many thanks and long may that continue. Finally my usual plea for new volunteers especially on Saturdays, a couple of hours of your time would help tremendously.

An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

November begins as the ending of autumn and ends as the beginning of winter. The first thing I think on the first day of the month is: plant garlic. It needs the winter to grow in. It is said garlic needs frosts to split into cloves but I think it may be more to do with time in the ground.

I have had a busy autumn season of storing, preserving, pickling and bottling produce for the winter, bottled sauces of tomato and herbs (mostly thyme, sage and rosemary that I grew on the plot and at home). My own haricot beans in tomato sauce turned out very well and tasted just the same as regular beans on toast if not better but with bigger ORGANIC beans. I also made and bottled pumpkin and aubergine with garlic and herbs. I grew 2 aubergine plants in the poly tunnel and despite being swamped a bit by the cucumbers and tomatoes either side of them produced 2 aubergine fruit each.

This year I grew "Baby Bear" pumpkin. Each plant grew 2 or 3 small orange pumpkin not much larger than a handspan. I harvested 8



fruits from 3 plants. My butternut squash came very late and were small. I think they suffered from the summer and autumn's wet conditions. My courgettes, however, which also suffered early on carried on fruiting until late autumn. I find they keep well for a few weeks and I have some still lay in store with my other squash, which include a New Zealand pumpkin and a Jamaican pumpkin, both large and different shades of grey.

I had a reasonable harvest of shallots in summer, though not as good a crop as previous seasons which I think was also due to the wet conditions but still have a couple

of jars pickled in the cupboard. Beetroot on the other hand thrived after a slow start and I harvested several large beets that I sliced, cooked and pickled. So along with my usual runner bean and courgette chutney and 2 jars of my own gooseberry jam I feel well stocked for the winter months.

Of course not all the winter is about preserves, I only harvested my last cucumber at the end of October. I am still harvesting tomatoes, I stopped watering them to panic them into ripening and if it goes on a bit I cut branches still laden with green tomatoes, hanging them up to finish ripening.

For the last 2 winters I have grown late winter leeks which I do not begin to harvest until after winter solstice, they are looking good so far with no sign of the leeks' enemy " thrips". I check them regularly for a line of brown stain: if seen remove that layer of the leek and the layer below until there is no stain to eradicate.

Coming on nicely are my " Holland" winter cabbages, they obviously need regular slug checks.

Parsnips, which I also harvest after mid winter, are looking large and healthy, all from Gladiator parsnip seed.

Then there is my winter favourite Jerusalem artichoke that look as if they shall produce a good crop. I find them a great replacement for potatoes in the winter, especially when fried as chips.

I have 3 sweet potato plants, I have never tried growing them before. It looks as if they are forming tubers but are still very small and it seems a bit late for them. I shall see in time how they turn out. Well all of that produce and preserves it almost seems to make it worth while having



a winter for...if only we could have a summer now and again.

Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

Hardy Plants from Seed – Part One

Many wonderful and easy hardy plants can be raised from seed, and over the years I have developed a simple and straightforward method which has proved reliable. October to March is my seed sowing season, so now is the time to get prepared.

THE COMPOST MIXTURE

You will find endless suggestions for compost mixes in books and magazines, including all sorts of weird and wonderful ingredients. I was keen to find a simple compost which I could use for everything. After a little experimentation, I arrived at a rough 3:2:1 mixture (because it was easy to remember) 3 parts of peat (or peat free) compost, 2 parts of John Innes compost (which is soil based), and one part of 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") horticultural grit.

I sieve the ingredients through a 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ ") sieve (and use the 'waste' as a soil ameliorant when planting in the garden) and then mix the constituents together thoroughly. You might think that sieving is a bit of a chore (and so it is), but the benefits of producing an even, fine grade of compost become obvious at the pricking-out stage.

SOWING IN POTS

I sow the seed in 9cm ($3\frac{1}{2}$ ") round plastic pots, and always put 12mm (about $\frac{1}{2}$ ") of horticultural grit in the base of each pot before filling as this helps to retain moisture in the pot and to draw down the roots of the young seedlings. I then fill the pot with compost, level it off to the rim and then finally consolidate the compost by patting the base of the pot until it has settled a little way below the rim.

SOWING IN CELLS

For easy germinators, or if I want lots of plants, I use a 20 cell, half tray. This system is more time consuming in terms of preparation and filling, but the seedlings make good growth and can be potted up as 'plugs' with absolutely no root disturbance or damage.

Using a small hand shovel, I overfill the whole tray and then bang the tray down

firmly on the bench to settle the compost into the cells. I then firm each cell individually by shoving two fingers vigorously into each cell. I then fill the voids with more compost, level off, and then tamp the surface with a stiff brush. Unless this is done, the cells will be full of voids, and when they are watered the level sinks dramatically. The young seedlings have only a small amount of compost in which to grow in any case, and to reduce it still further is depriving them of a good start.

SOWING THE SEED

The secret of seed sowing is to sow sparingly, 30 seeds to a 9cm pot, or 3-5 seeds in each cell, is ample. Sprinkle the seed onto the surface of the compost carefully, and as evenly as you can, either direct from the packet or as a pinch from a pile in your hand. I then sprinkle a layer of horticultural grit over the seed, just enough to obscure the compost beneath.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT that you insert a label, identifying the seed and the date of sowing!

I water the pots after sowing, using a fine rose on a watering can - but DON'T OVERDO IT. The misguided advice given by some authors (and dog loving TV presenters) to immerse the pot or tray in a bowl of water to a level just below the surface of the compost is to be avoided at all costs!

In the December issue of Feckenham News, I will describe the next stages in sowing and growing-on seed successfully.



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Stock and Bradley Gardening Club Report



CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 2nd October 2024

Forty-one of our members were entertained by Tamsin Westhorpe from Stockton Bury Garden who gave a talk entitled 'Prepare for the Perfect Spring'. She gave us very practical advice about the jobs we should be doing now to ensure that our gardens were looking their best next spring.

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 6th November 2024

Our next meeting is a welcome return visit by Diane Clement who will give a talk entitled 'The Dark Months - Not Just Snowdrops'.

The theme for the monthly competition will be 'Hedgerow Fruit'.

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 Cricket Club Bob Gordon

The season ended in the middle of September and so the club is now far less busy than it has been, giving us an opportunity to carry out some work round the ground, which includes tidying up and repairing/improving the car park and vehicle entrance. Hedge trimming is also to take place very soon.

The annual renovation of the Square is finished and it was gratifying to see the number of club members that turned out to help, resulting in the fastest completion in recent times. The new grass is beginning to develop and groundsman Steve will no

doubt be tending it with loving care over the winter.

By the time that you read this Firework Night is either imminent or has just taken place. Planned for Saturday 2nd November we are of course hoping that we do not have a repeat of the very wet October that caused last year's cancellation.

By this time the club will be completing its knock-out darts tournament, 32 members having signed up and who are naturally practising relentlessly. As a precaution, first aid kits have been replenished.

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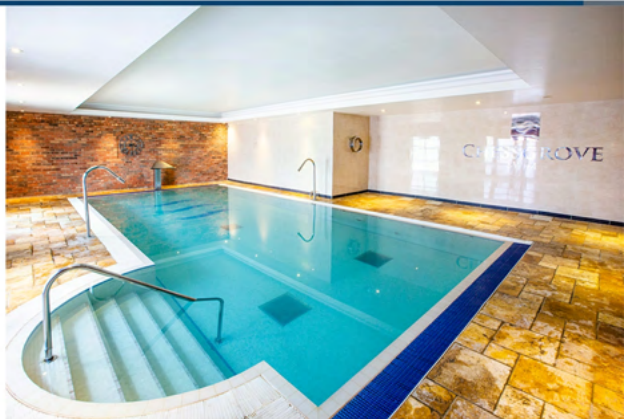
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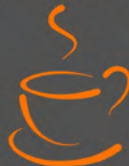
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