



FECKENHAM

December 2025

NEWS

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

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Feckenham News in December

Dates for your Diary

December

3rd	S&B Gardening Club
6th	Christmas Tree Erection
9th	Readers Group
11th	Parish Council Meeting
13th	Big Band Village Hall
15th	WI
24th	Carols on the Square
26th	Boxing Day Walk
27th	FeckenOdeon

Regular Sessions

Mondays	Dance Academy
Tuesdays	Tai Chi
Wednesdays	Playgroup (term time)
Thursdays	Bridge; Hatha Yoga

Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library

First Tuesday of the month:

Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions

First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir

Second Wednesday Art Club

Third Monday of the month: WI

1st and 3rd Fridays : Erstwhile Morris Dancers

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www.feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

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

Editor's Note

This month's magazine is full of Christmas events going on in the village, There's plenty to choose from whatever your tastes: Carols around the Christmas Tree, Church services, entertainment in the Village Hall and the Boxing Day Walk to name a few. Hopefully something for everyone with their visitors - or even a chance to get away from them for a while!



You will have received the village Christmas Card with the magazine. We will know the full amount raised for Shelter next month but I know that currently it's in excess of £800. Thanks to all who sent in their good wishes and their donations, all of which go to the charity as the Church funds the printing. Below are some greetings that arrived too late for the card.

Sometimes not getting what you want can be a wonderful stroke of luck: a quote from the Dalai Lama. I often mention this to people when I'm mentoring. It might be about their job or relationships: almost anything. At this time of year we are giving and receiving gifts. Perhaps we have hinted what we might want. What if our wish isn't granted and we receive something else? That might open up a whole new chapter in our lives. Just a thought!

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy, peaceful 2026.

Vivien and Ian Hunter wish all their friends in and around Feckenham a Joyful Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year

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Tuesday, 2nd December in the Bar from 8pm - Free

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

**Thurs 11th December - XMAS JUMPER
Turkey Dinner & Pudding - £15.95**

FESTIVE MENU now available
for pre-Christmas dining. Booking essential

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Full menu - join us for a relaxed start to the New year

www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

Happy Christmas and have a
splendid 2026
Love from Kathy and Tommy

A Very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year to everyone in
Feckenham
Chris and Tave Bristow

Wishing you all a very Happy
Christmas and a Happy and
Healthy 2025!
Love Malcolm & Vanda xx

Feckenham Square Management Committee



MERRY MUSCLE REQUIRED

Feckenham's village Christmas tree will soon be in place for all to enjoy - but it'll take more than a wave of Santa's magic wand to heave it into place. If you're able bodied and have an hour or so to spare on **Saturday, December 6th** you can help us erect the tree. Please meet at **10am on The Square**.

CAROLS ON THE SQUARE CHRISTMAS EVE AT 6.30pm

Everybody's welcome to join the merry throng on The Square on Christmas Eve for Feckenham's traditional welcome to Christmas. Carols on The Square will feature all the usual ingredients - mulled wine, mince pies, raucous singing and guaranteed snow in abundance. A few minor additions to the formula are planned but, for the most part, it'll be the usual warm hearted opportunity to kick off the festivities in traditional style.

We suggest that you abandon your preparations, leave the turkey to stuff itself and head to the centre of the village for an hour amid friends and neighbours. Everything's free - it's the Square Committee's way of thanking the village for support throughout the year. (There will be a collection for the County Air Ambulance Service). There'll be soft drinks for the kids and a large portion of goodwill for everybody!

Feckenham Village Hall



SLEIGH BELLS SWING

Tickets are selling fast for the return of one of the biggest and most popular bands ever to play in Feckenham. The Neil Coley Big Band has been entertaining audiences across the West Midlands for the past 27 years. The 20 piece band was formed in 1998 by keyboard player Neil Coley and boasts a varied musical mixture of well-loved tunes and exciting new arrangements. The band will be joined by a selection of fine singers and soloists for this year's Feckenham show which will be chock full of festive favourites... which is why they've called it **"Sleigh Bells Ring Swing"**

THE NEIL COLEY BIG BAND AND FRIENDS

Saturday, 13th December at 7.30pm

TICKETS for shows at the Village 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

IMPROVEMENT FUND DRAW - A REMINDER

The first draws of the 2025/26 year will take place on Dec 2nd so if you wish to be included in the chance of a monthly cash prize of £25, £15 or £10, it is just about not too late to enter.

Most village households will have received an individually numbered letter earlier in the month explaining how to contribute the £12 entry to the monthly draws. If you haven't yet, but do still wish to participate, please quote the FVH*** number on that letter when making your contribution.

If you still wish to join, and have mislaid or didn't receive the letter, please contact the treasurer, Peter Chute (chutes@btinternet.com) before 2nd December, and we will be able to add you to the draw list.

Last year's Fund contributed £1,044 (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.

CHURCH SERVICES



PARISH CHURCH of ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Vicar - Vacant following the appointment of Fr Glenn to the Arch Benefice near Evesham.

Assistant Curate - The Rev Fiona Carter (unpaid volunteer - part time only)

Church Wardens - Vacant.

Weddings and Baptisms please contact the Rev Fiona Carter on fiona-carter@hotmail.co.uk

To arrange a Funeral please contact your Funeral Director

For all other enquiries please contact Ian Hunter, Secretary to the Parochial Church Council preferably by email to secretary@feckenhamchurch.org.uk or 07874 800108.

Website www.feckenhamchurch.or.uk



PARISH CHURCH
OF
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
FECKENHAM

Services for December 2025

7th December	10.30am	Eucharist	Rev. Fiona Carter
14th December	10.30am	Family Service	Rev. Fiona Carter
21st December	6.30pm	Nine Lessons and Carols	Rev. Fiona Carter
24th December	10.30am	Crib Service	Rev. Fiona Carter
24th December	10.00pm	1st Eucharist of Christmas Adn.	Nikki Groake
28th December		No service	

Drop in (in church)

Wednesday at 10.30am - 12.00pm on 10th December
All are welcome (coffee and cake)

Coffee Stop (in church) Tuesday December 9th

All are welcome (coffee and cake)

And toys for children: 2pm - 3.45pm Service

FECKENHAM ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

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)

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

Reverend Fiona writes...

Waiting in Hope: Advent and Christmas Reflections

As the days grow shorter and the chill of winter settles in, the season of Advent invites us into a time of quiet anticipation. In the midst of the hustle and bustle—shopping lists, school plays, decorations, and festive gatherings—Advent gently calls us to pause, reflect, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

Advent is not just a countdown to Christmas. It is a sacred season of waiting. We wait in hope, just as the prophets did. We wait in faith, like Mary and Joseph. And we wait in love, knowing that the birth of Jesus is the ultimate expression of God's love for the world.

Each candle on the Advent wreath marks a step on this journey:

-  **Hope** – for a world renewed
-  **Peace** – in the midst of chaos
-  **Joy** – that lifts our spirits
-  **Love** – that transforms hearts

Then, on Christmas Day, we light the central candle—the Christ candle—celebrating the light that has come into the world. The birth of Jesus is not just a historical event; it is a living reality. Emmanuel—God with us—reminds us that we are never alone.

This Christmas, may we rediscover the wonder of the nativity. Whether we gather in candlelit churches or around family tables, may we hear again the angel's song: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

Let us carry that peace into the new year. Let us be bearers of hope, joy, and love in our communities. And let us remember that the true gift of Christmas is not found under a tree, but in the manger—in the presence of Christ among us.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas.

Fields of Gold Charity Concert

I'm delighted to report that a total of £1306.08 was raised at our concert on 11th October. This will be split equally between two charities: The Leprosy Mission, in particular their renovation project at Danja Hospital in Niger. The Friends of Feckenham Church, which helps fund repairs and maintenance of our beautiful parish church and church yard.

Huge thanks to those who supported the event by coming along or making a donation, buying raffle tickets and providing prizes.

Clare Furey

T4U CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL 2025

On behalf of all the children, Thank you, for the love you have sent this Christmas. Thank you, for caring !

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas x x



I don't know as yet where are boxes will be distributed this year, I will let you know in January. You have made such a difference to so many children's lives this Christmas thank you so much ! I am sure that at some point on Christmas day we will be thinking of them all and imagining the fun they are having exploring their very own Special Boxes of delight. Lin



Friends of Feckenham Parish Church

As some villagers may be aware, the roof on our historic Parish Church has to be renewed and, together with a number of other necessary works, this means the Parish has to raise a total figure in the region of £750,000, in a number of stages, over the next few years.

Replacement of the roof is the first stage. As the fundraising arm of the PCC, 'Friends' are now engaged in this major project. We are hopeful that the major part of this can be sourced from various grant funding bodies, principally from the Lottery Heritage Fund. However, we still have to raise a significant proportion ourselves. The Church is a central and important feature of our community from many perspectives, not just the religious, and we very much appreciate the support and assistance given by many local residents.

We should like to express our gratitude to Shirley Harman for her coffee morning in June which raised a most impressive £850 and to Clare Furey for the excellent Fields of Gold concert in October from which we were delighted to receive a donation of over £600 from the proceeds.

We also held a huge Sale of vintage and pre-loved Christmas decorations and collectables on the 8th November which was a great success. Our thanks go to Roger and Felicity Burman whose inspiration it was and who generously donated a huge quantity of wonderful



decorations collected over many years. In addition, Felicity also kindly made and donated over 100 festive mince pies! Thanks also to our helpers on the day and to our other kind friends who donated many desirable decorations and collectables. People attended from all over the county and the event raised over £1,200 towards our roof fund.

We are always looking for new ideas for fundraising so should anyone have any helpful suggestions, please do get in touch.

Andrew Fisher

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FESTIVE FEATURES

The folks at Swansbrook Radio always enter into the Christmas spirit and it has been known for some of them to drink a drop too much of it...

We're all conscious that we can be heard anywhere in the world thanks to the Internet and that means that we can reach Feckenhamsters in exile - perhaps working abroad or emigrated - as well as folk closer to home. If they can't come to you for Christmas we can send them a greeting and play a piece of music for them. All you need to do is to drop us an email with the details to radio@swansbrook.com - and, if you feel like a more personal approach, we can even record you reading your greeting. Just contact us and we'll make the arrangements.

Our programmes already have a tinsel tinge - Chris Fletcher's **Christmas Classical Swansbrook** is now airing with a fine selection of carols (traditional and unusual) as well as Christmas classics from round the world - many of them requested by listeners. Ian Bellion's **Happy Hour** will be featuring the somewhat dafter side of Christmas and will also contain your requests - while Colin James will be **Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree**... Nick Ledbury is preparing his Christmas Special - **I Like Christmas Like That** - two hours of great music from around the world We'll also have some festive music in our Longer Listen streaming programmes. So... twiddle that dial to swansbrook.com for a Feckenham Festive sound! Hours of Merry Music and fun to enjoy while you wrap your Christmas presents or indulge in some mulled wine and mince pies...

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

LISTEN TO THE SWANS

Go to www.swansbrook.com and follow the instructions you'll find there. Most of our programmes are available for you to play ON DEMAND - listen when and where you like - as often as you like.

FECKENHAM'S OWN Local Radio

www.swansbrook.com

The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



OUR CHRISTMAS CRACKER

Fancy a break from the Christmas telly? Bored by board games? Had enough Merry banter to last a lifetime? Fear not. Escape is at hand. The FeckenOdeon's Christmas show will whisk you away to a time when life was brighter (even if it was in black and white). Our warm and welcoming picture palace awaits. Bring your Christmas guests, your friends, your significant others... or even just yourself. Our fully licenced bar will welcome you before before you settle down to enjoy our supporting programme of amusing oddities. We'll have a short interval during which you can treat yourself to an ice cream (or more drinks) before we move on to our main movie...

SERIAL KILLING FOR CHRISTMAS

When you're eighth in line to a title (and the wealth that comes with it) there's only one way your chances of inheriting can be improved... and that involves the deaths of all of those further up the family tree. In "Kind Hearts & Coronets" young Louis D'Ascoyne decides that the process needs to be accelerated. Dennis Price stars - Alec Guinness plays almost everyone else. From the Golden-Age of Ealing comedies comes a classic of British cinema - now immaculately restored to its original high definition glory. You may have seen it on the TV - but it belongs on the big screen - best enjoyed in company! (UK 1949)

KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS (PG)

Saturday, 27th December at 7.30pm

Change to advertised programme: The cinema release of "Mother's Pride" has been delayed. We'll therefore be replacing it with "The Ballad of Willis Island" (12A) on 28th March, 2026.

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

HOUSING NEEDS

By the time this magazine reaches you the deadline for responses to the Council's Housing Needs Survey will have passed. The survey is being carried out on the Council's behalf by Community First who will now analyse the data and present a report to the Council.

The Council hopes that this will provide information that can be used to inform decisions which will have to be made in response to the government's house building targets.

CALL FOR SITES

At the meeting on 13th November it was revealed that, in response to Redditch Borough Council's "call for sites": 3% of the proposals came from Feckenham, 15% from Astwood Bank and 79% from the Callow Hill area. The exact locations of these sites have not yet been disclosed.

FLOOD PREVENTION

Discussions are ongoing with North Worcestershire Water Management, Worcestershire County Council, Environment Agency, County and Borough Councillors about the much needed flood prevention works.

Following the withdrawal of some funding it is likely that the Parish Council will need to contribute more to the flood works than originally thought. The Council expects to have more detail in December.

COUNCIL FINANCES

Preliminary discussions about the the precept to be levied next year are now taking place. The precept is the amount you pay through your Council Tax bill which goes towards the running of the Parish Council. The Council faces increased and more complex challenges and costs related to these have risen. Matters are further complicated by the lack of clarity regarding the roles Parish Councils are likely to be asked to take on

following the upcoming local government reorganisation. The level of the precept will be decided in January.

LOCAL TRANSPORT

County Councillor Sue Eacock reported that the Worcestershire On Demand bus scheme is likely to be extended to Feckenham sometime in the New Year. The scheme, similar to Redditch's Dial-a-Ride scheme, is designed to help people to make essential local journeys. The new service would include journeys to Droitwich and Worcester while the Dial-a-Ride scheme would continue to cover journeys within Redditch Borough only. More information will be available soon.

BROADBAND REMINDER

As reported in last month's Feckenham News, residents are encouraged to express their interest in an improved Internet service for Feckenham. Project Gigabit exists to help poorly served areas get access to new higher speed services - but it can only do this if there is sufficient interest. You can register your interest by going to www.openreach.com/broadband-network/fibre-availability

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 11th December at 7.30pm in the back room at the Village Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. There is an "open forum" section at the beginning of all Council meetings where you can raise matters of concern or ask questions of the Council.

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

NEED INFORMATION?

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.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

The Parish Council wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2026.

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WHAT'S ON IN

FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

The NEIL COLEY BIG BAND & Friends

Sleigh Bells Ring Swing

Saturday, 13th December at 7.30pm
Book online at feckhall.org
by phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown
or The Village Shop

Fight the Christmas FLAB!
Join us for our 49th Annual

BOXING DAY WALK

Friday,
26th December



Meet on The Square at **1.45pm** -
Walk starts at **2pm prompt**

Stout, waterproof footwear
essential - Dogs on leads please
Tea stop half way round

Feckenham Square Management Committee

CAROLS

round the CHRISTMAS TREE
On Christmas Eve

Wednesday, 24th December

6.30pm on The Square

Hot Punch - Mince Pies - Everything FREE
Collection in aid of County Air Ambulance

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, 2nd December



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

AGM followed by VINTAGE GARDEN TOOLS

A talk by

JOHN AND CAROLE MATTHEWS

Wednesday, 3rd December - 7.30pm

Stock & Bradley Village Hall



Feckenham Parish Council

MEETING

Thursday, 11th December - 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.

Feckenham READERS GROUP

Tuesday, 9th December - 7.45pm

This month's book:

**BRING THE HOUSE
DOWN**

By Charlotte Runcie

Information: 01527 892285



THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY



A hilarious study in the gentle art of MURDER

FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 27th December 7.30pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall

Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop

Telephone Booking 0333 666 3366* Online Booking* & full information at

www.feckencodeon.co.uk

*Booking Fee applies to Phone and Online Bookings

*Phone calls answered by Ticketsource and charged at standard rates - NOT a premium line

Christmas Opening Times at The Rose & Crown

19th - 24th December: 12 - 11pm (Sun 10.30)

Christmas Day: 12noon to 1.30pm - Drinks ONLY

Boxing Day: 12 - 6pm - Drinks ONLY

27th to 29th Dec: 12 - 11pm (Sun 10.30)

New Year's Eve: 12 - 00.30

New Year's Day: 12 - 11pm (Food 12 - 4pm)

Food times vary - please call or book a table.

theWOMEN INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 15th December

SELF DEFENCE

with Pete Martin

8pm - meet at Village Hall car park

Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details

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

Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute

This month an aerial view of the Church and the Old Vicarage which looks as though it was taken some years ago-from a hot air balloon? Any information appreciated. Large gardens or even allotments?





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Feckenham WI

I find I use this word a lot when I do my write-ups of our meetings, but tonight more than ever, I really feel it applies: The Mission Morogoro talk truly was deeply inspirational. How such a small group can make such large and lasting changes to people so in need of fundamental facilities was incredible to hear about.

Thank you so much to Margaret Green, her husband, John, and Tricia and Tony for their time tonight and for giving us an insight into the vital work they have been doing since 2011.

You can find out more and donate here:

<https://www.missionmorogoro.org.uk/>

Our next meeting is on Monday 15th December and we shall be doing a self defence class in Redditch with esteemed anti-knife crime campaigner, Pete Martin. We will be leaving the village hall car park at 8pm sharp. Please wear suitable clothes for an active session. Members are free and guests are £5. You can find out more about Pete's work here: <https://redditchselfdefence.co.uk/>



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All About Daybreakers

Where every story shapes the day

Daybreakers is a Day Care Members' Club for people living with memory loss and dementia.

Our Aim

To provide a safe, welcoming environment where members enjoy belonging, purpose, and fun—while also giving caregivers a much-needed break.

What We Offer

- Engaging daily activities: from new experiences to old favourites
- Monthly trips out and special events
- A freshly cooked lunch, plus snacks and refreshments
- A caring, fully trained team (including medication administration)

Club Details

- Open Monday to Friday, 10am–4pm
- Members can attend from 1 to 5 days a week
- Held in a warm, comfortable, and appropriate setting

At Daybreakers, every life is a rich tapestry. Our goal is to create days filled with joy, connection, and meaningful experiences.

 Jinney Ring, Hanbury Road, Hanbury, Bromsgrove, B60 4BU
 Honor: 07356294332 Michelle: 07356295616
 Info@daybreakers.co.uk

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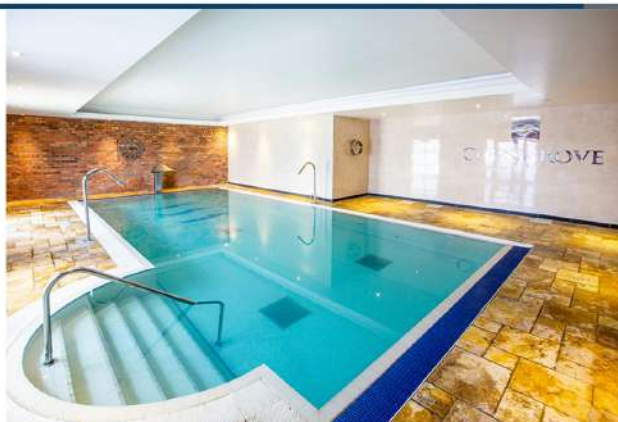
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Village Shop - Alan Slater



On behalf of the Management Board let me begin by wishing you all a very happy Christmas and hope you have a most joyful festive season. The Shop has been decorated in

anticipation of a seasonal influx of trade and my thanks to Rhian and Lisa for their efforts in making us ready for Santa's visit. Although we will be giving our hard working elves (volunteers) three days off, we will be open for most of the Christmas and New Year period. So please note that our revised trading hours are:-

Wednesday Christmas Eve	8 am - 4pm
Thursday Christmas Day	Closed
Friday Boxing Day	Closed
Saturday 27 th December	9am - 4pm
Sunday 28 th December	10am - 1pm
Monday 29 th December	9am - 2pm
Tuesday 30 th December	9am - 2pm
Wednesday New years Eve	9am - 2pm
Thursday New years Day	Closed

Normal hours resume from January 2nd

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with the Outdoor Pig Company who are the principal supplier of products for our Deli counter. Many of you already enjoy their delicious pasties, bacon pockets and quiches and we are pleased to confirm that these favourites will continue to be stocked. In addition their range has been expanded to include a tempting selection of sausage rolls and gourmet pies - perfect for quick lunches, easy weeknight meals or stocking the freezer before the Christmas rush.

As you know by supporting your village shop you are helping us to support the community both locally and further afield. This month the Shop will again be making a substantial donation towards the cost of the Over 60's Christmas lunch.

We have on sale Margaret Green's wonderful hand knitted decorations and dolls, the proceeds of which will be sent to Project Morogoro in East Africa.



So thank you for your continued support, whether you are popping in for some daily essentials, a friendly chat over coffee and cake or a treat from the Deli, we will be delighted to see you. (silly Santa hats and Christmas sweaters optional)

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An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

So here we are at the last moon of the year, from the new moon on 20th November to the new moon on 20th December, with the following day being not only the first day of the next moon phase, but the first day also of the natural new year as the calendar passes through the shortest day and all of nature stirs to welcome in the coming year.

During November I plant out garlic for next year, during December then they spring up green shoots.



My pumpkin store has served me well, I cure them in a chest with a sheet of glass for a lid as squashes need light to cure for storing. I grew traditional orange and grey Jamaican pumpkin, the latter having a nice thick flesh. My butternut squash turned out small but sweet when cooked.

Also growing green on my plot are a bed of Romaine lettuce. I left one plant from

summer crops to go to seed this autumn, I then neglected to collect the seeds, but as luck would have it several lettuce sprang up where the seed had fallen. I transplanted them into a freshly compost fed bed and built a cold frame around them to protect them from winter frosts.

This year I have had a good crop of sprouts, I removed all of the lower leaves to protect them from disease and pests. I cut the leafy heads from the plants and ate them in stir fry. Sprouts, I either cook up or slice them raw into salads.

Parsnips are looking healthy, tops showing above the soil. I leave them until the end of the month and eat the first as a festive treat on midwinters day.

Although my tomatoes finished last month, I have to mention the abundant crop this year. Harvesting from early July until mid November. I stop watering near the end to panic ripen them.

Of course at this time of the year I continue to add greenery and veggie peelings to my compost heaps to make feed, throwing in chicken and horse muck to create a compost of multi nutrients with which to feed the plots beds during the winter months.

Can't think what to do with your garden?
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Rob Cole's Gardening Tips

More Early Winter Berries and Fruits



Nicandra physalodes (left) is an annual, grown for its prolific soft blue flowers emerging from almost black calyces. When the flowers are over and the fruits begin to swell the whole plant takes on a different and sinister look. It sets copious seed and unless it is deadheaded ruthlessly it can become a bit of a weed, but enjoy the colour for a while.



Our best fruiting trees were both crab apples. The first was a tree which we bought in memory of my Mum, who died in 2004. As we arrived at Golls Nursery, near Evesham, we could see a wonderful fruiting tree overhanging the fence to the car park. We both said "That's gorgeous" and headed off to see what it was. The label read *Malus x atrosanguinea* 'Gorgeous' and we knew it was destined to be ours.

The other is *Malus* 'Evereste' which we bought in 2017. It grew well, and three years later when we left Meadow Farm, we decided that it was a tree that would be suitable in our new and much smaller garden in Salford Priors and was the first thing we planted. The flowers are typical apple blossom white and pink, and the fruit is a good red orange. And they last well (right).



Just a few things to finish with now. *Chaenomeles* varieties reward us with fruits regularly and reliably, and I have raised many seedlings from the 'apple pip' seeds within. They look as good when they fall to the ground (left).



Magnolia is not a subject renowned for its fruiting prowess, but in some years they do fruit quite noticeably, as in this *Magnolia x loebneri* 'Merrill' (left centre) which I photographed in late October 2013. In the cruel winter of 2010/11 the fruit of *Viburnum opulus* showed up splendidly amongst the hoar frosted branches (right centre) and, whatever the weather, we found that the fruits were always the last to be taken by the birds. And finally, the seedpods of *Wisteria* (right) last well into the new year before falling and splitting to reveal the disc-like seeds inside.

So when deciding what to do to make your garden more interesting in the early winter, remember to make more use of these fine and readily available plants.



CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 5th November 2025

Our meeting at the Village Hall on Wednesday 5th November was a talk entitled 'The Late Summer Garden' given by Jack Wilgoss. Jack and his wife Laura run Wildegoose Nursery in Shropshire and Jack shared the secrets of achieving a colourful and interesting garden during the months of September and October.

NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 3rd December 2025

Our next meeting at the Village Hall will be on Wednesday 3rd December and will start with a short AGM, followed by a practical display and talk about 'Vintage Garden Tools' by John and Carole Matthews. If you have any examples, you are welcome to bring them along for discussion.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'Coloured Stems'.

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

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



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Feckenham Cricket Club

Mercifully the weather stayed dry for the annual bonfire night presentation, and considering spells of rain for three or more days bookended the evening the stars must be shining down on the club from somewhere. A great night was had by all in what was a big success in an adventurous format for the club, meaning more fireworks, less traders and more in house options being on offer and a wider variety of wares available. In particular the mulled cider was very popular, as were the doughnuts and samosa's. Many thanks to all that helped on the night and to Tom Edwards for the use of the field for parking, and then opening another field when it got too busy.



The club has recently installed Sky Sports in the clubhouse with a new large screen and all football games will be shown Friday to Sunday, so feel free to pop in and see what we're doing with the old place as the close season gives us chance to take stock and move forward.

Memberships are available for families or singles alike, and we're always looking for new players for next season.

Christmas wishes to one and all as we move into the festivities

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