

FECKENHAM

NEWS

March 2026

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

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Second Monday of the month: Mobile Library

First Tuesday of the month: Lunch Club, Feckenham Sessions

Second Tuesday of the month: Craft and Natter

First and Third Wednesday: Community Choir

Second Wednesday: Art Club

Third Monday of the month: WI

1st and 3rd Fridays : Erstwhile Morris Dancers

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Front Cover

Photo: by the editor

Cyclamen coum

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

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

Editor's Note

Winfields

There was an interesting meeting to discuss the future of the Winfields site. If you are interested in the outcome, and would like to be on the steering group, please contact Alan Smith as detailed on the next page.



Bloomin' Lovely

I know it's very British to dwell on the weather but this month it's been so wet that it is really affecting our lives. Astwood Bank, just up the road, has been in the news as the one of the wettest places in England at times with a near-continuous streak of rain. As of mid-February 2026, the village recorded over 40 consecutive days of persistent rain.

It is so hard to get out and about on the paths which are water-logged and slippery, but ever the optimist, I have spotted signs of spring colour, particularly noting the very pretty daffs, planted by Feckenham in Bloom, emerging long Church Walk and the plant pictured on the front cover. I asked our resident expert, Rob Cole, to identify them and here's his reply:

"It is Cyclamen coum - and a particularly fine colour. It could have been planted, but ants take the seed because it has a 'sugary' coating, so it might have spread from a nearby garden. It is a very robust plant and will take any frost that nature cares to throw at it, even when it's in flower. Colour varies from dark pink, to pale pink, to white, and the leaves vary too and can be quite silvery in some varieties. It makes a lovely early flowering garden plant, especially with snowdrops and Winter Aconite."

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Tuesday, 17th March
ST PATRICK'S DAY - Irish Food & Music
25th - 28th March - **PIE WEEK**

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Winfield's Site and Building



I should like to extend my personal thanks to the Parish Council in liaising with the owner of the Winfield's Site and Building, and facilitating a preliminary meeting prior to the Parish Council meeting on February 5th. I'm sure others feel the same gratitude.

My feeling from that meeting was that there was general agreement that the offer by Joe Winfield was very welcome, needed much further work to define a way forward but had the potential to provide our community with fantastic additional local facilities and opportunities. This would not be without the risk of time being invested to little or no outcome.

I believe that to develop, the initiative needs a new and separate working group. The task may simply be to understand the commercial and contractual model that the owner envisages. It may be that the task extends further into researching and developing further partners who wish to establish commercial ventures on the site. Possibly some fraction of the site can house our own, even new, community enterprises; given that the village already has several valued community businesses with which we would not want to

compete or compromise.

We should not look a gift horse in the mouth, at the same time we should fully understand the potential costs and risks. This can only be done with further work and collaboration by ourselves and with Joe. It can best be achieved by a number of individuals joining together into a Working Group and only be done in a timely manner if that Working Group is small, say less than six people, even though that constraint would put a higher work load on each person. So the individuals need to be able to invest considerable time and effort. I am not self appointing myself to be part of that Group, but it needs to be formed. Can I suggest that if there is anyone interested in investing time and effort into a venture, with potentially no useful outcome, that they contact the Chair of the Parish Council, Alan Smith, (alansmith@feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk) who will collate interest and arrange a hand-over meeting for the Group to assume ownership of the whole proposal.

Martin Strange
Treasurer, Feckenham Village Square
Committee
FeckVAT@gmail.com

WINFIELDS

An open information meeting was held before the regular Parish Council Meeting on 5th February. A substantial number of residents were present to hear Mr Joe Winfield, director of Winfield Holdings Ltd., explain the company's vision for the Winfields (formerly Barretts) store on Astwood Lane. Mr Winfield expressed the wish that the premises could be used for something beneficial to the community. A number of ideas were suggested and moves are now afoot to create a steering group to further investigate the possibilities (see page 5).

It was emphasised that the Parish Council was only offering the chance for people to find out more and would not be involved in any commercial negotiations or arrangements.

LOCAL PLAN

At the Parish Council Meeting on 5th February Borough Councillor Brandon Clayton reported on progress towards meeting the government's housing targets. The recent call for sites had yielded sufficient for approximately 5,200 homes to be built in the Borough. The exact locations were not yet public knowledge. This was still 3,000 under the target figure. The houses would not need to be built until 9.5 years after the adoption of the new local plan - and this would be unlikely before the formation of the new unitary authorities.

AGGREGATE PROCESSING FACILITY

The Parish Council had been consulted by the County Council regarding a retrospective planning application for a processing facility on agricultural land off the Saltway. The Council sought technical advice and, as a result, has submitted an Objection to the plan on the grounds that the application is contrary to both the local development plan and relevant guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework.

feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

The full text of the objection and the reasons for this decision can be found on the Parish Council's website - feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

CRIME PREVENTION EVENT

There have been a number of burglaries in the Feckenham area. To highlight the problem and to advise residents on precautions they can take our local Community Police have arranged a **Crime Prevention Event** supported by the Parish Council. This will place at Feckenham Village Hall on **Saturday, 21st March** at Feckenham Village Hall from 10am to 2pm. Parishioners are welcome to drop in at any time.

ROUNDHILL SOLAR FARM

As we go to press news has reached us that that the application to build a large solar farm near Bradley Green has been withdrawn. Many thanks are due to the efforts of all those who have fought the application over the past years. For clarification, the application was finally withdrawn as a result of changing commercial and financial Implications relating to the applicant. The result, however, is the most important matter, and the application is now withdrawn. A great result for the local community.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

The Parish Council is aware of some comments on Facebook complaining about the state of some of the bridle and foot paths in the village. Worcestershire County Council carry out works to these, but the team has shrunk to an absolute minimum due to the funding crisis. We have been very lucky to have had parishioners volunteering and giving up their own time to try and maintain them to a very good standard. The most recent volunteer paths warden, Paul Furey has given a huge amount of time keeping them as clear as possible. Paul understandably has now decided he would like to pass the baton to someone else. Volunteers receive training from WCC and they also provide insurance. If we do not get anyone volunteering the paths will deteriorate. If you are interested, then please contact the clerk.

UNITARY COUNCILS

Redditch Borough Council will cease to exist in 2028. Feckenham parish council is likely to

continue but will come under a Unitary Authority. It is not yet clear if the Parish Council will have additional responsibilities and powers under the new regime. The government will announce the final structure in June this year.

In the meantime the Government has launched a consultation on the two proposals that would reshape how local services are delivered across Worcestershire. Feckenham Parish Council has been invited by Redditch Borough Council to contribute its views. The proposals include Transforming Worcestershire, supported by five district and borough councils, which would create two unitary authorities—one for the north (Bromsgrove, Redditch, Wyre Forest) and one for the south (Malvern Hills, Worcester, Wychavon)—and One Worcestershire, submitted by Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council, which would create a single unitary authority for the whole county. The consultation runs from 5 February to 26 March, with a final decision expected in July. Further information and links to respond are available at www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk and on the Government consultation website. Residents who wish to comment may also do so at the Feckenham Parish Council meeting on 5 March.

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 5th March 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.

feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk



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Church Wardens - Vacant.

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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 March 2026

1st March	10.30am	Communion Families welcome	Rev Fiona Carter
8th March	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Linda Nicholas
15th March	6.30pm	Evensong	Rev Fiona Carter
22nd March	10.30am	Morning Prayer	Phil Tricklebank ALM
29th March	10.30am 10.15am	Palm Sunday Eucharist from the car park for procession	Rev Fiona Carter

Drop in (in church)

Wednesday 11th March and 25th March at 10.30am - 12.00pm.

All welcome (coffee and cake)



Coffee Stop

Tuesday 10th March at 2.00pm to 3.45pm.
Take a break before or after school. Toys for children.
All 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)

Local contact: Phylis Mott, Feckenham. Tel 893898

Feckenham Village Christmas card and other charitable giving

The church is delighted to report that thanks to the generous donations received, both for greetings in the card and other donations, £1,355 was sent to Shelter to help support their work with homelessness and we have had a letter of thanks from them.

The Church funded the cost of printing the card and our thanks to Gilly for arranging all the greetings on it. In addition, the Church has always made donations to other Charities to demonstrate God's love with generosity and acts of kindness. In 2025 donations were made to The Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army, Crisis, and the local Charities, Nightstop, Acts of Kindness (Redditch food bank) and Where Next. The amount we can give depends on the level of general fund donations we receive.

In addition, £690 was sent to The Leprosy Mission in October, from the net proceeds of the concert organised by Clare Furey.

The Church has also supported the Make Christmas Special Toy Appeal with over 50 new toys being collected in Feckenham and taken to the distribution "shop" in Redditch Town Centre. In 2025 this Appeal supported 1,520 children from all areas of Redditch, urban and rural, a 47% increase on the previous year. It is led by the churches in Redditch and supported by all the churches in the surrounding area plus support from Kingfisher Centre Management providing the retail unit free of charge, Redditch Borough Council and Corporate partners such as Tesco & Coffee

#1 acting as donation hubs.

Feckenham village church continues to be a collection point for the Redditch Food Bank, with regular deliveries to the Food Bank of the donated food. The church is open every day to enable this to happen.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to any of these charitable giving appeals.



Hudson Slater arriving to join the Messy Church session



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.

The Children's Society

Children's Society Collection Boxes

The boxes are due to be opened in **April**. If you have a box, please pass it to Mary Smith, the box co-ordinator. Boxes can be handed over to Mary at a church service during March/April or at the Church Drop-in on the morning of Wednesday 25 March 2026. Alternatively she can be contacted on 07748 185166 to arrange collection or drop off. In addition, Jo Warrilow has kindly agreed that boxes can be dropped off at her house (Timber End Cottage) at the beginning of April. Many thanks in advance.

Readers Group

The Safekeep by Yael van der Wouden

There were mixed opinions about this book. The consensus was that the first half was rather slow but when we reached the second half and the "big reveal" it took off. Most of us weren't put off by Chapter 10 which the author and our host warned us about. You'll have to read the book to understand this enigmatic message!

Set in the early 1960s in the Netherlands, we didn't warm to the characters - perhaps the author's intention. At the heart of the book was the central character's isolation and reaction to loss as well as the position of a daughter caring for a mother whilst her brothers left the family home. We learned a lot about what had happened to property owned previously by Jewish families. A new insight for many of us.

Craft and Natter



This group has been set up for people who would like to share a craft, craft with others, just come along and watch or, maybe, have a go at learning something new. We meet up on the second Tuesday of each month in the Rose and Crown bar from 7pm would be lovely to see you. Don't be shy!

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I've been persuaded to briefly return to being Newshound to interview and welcome to the village Alex Richardson and Philippa Rowley. They moved into Number 6 Alcester Road in early November, and managed to decorate and unpack just in time to welcome their beautiful first child, Edith, in early January. They brought with them their dog Frank, a sandy-haired Vizsla, and their two cats; a white one called Stuart and a black and white one called Antony. Alex is from Webheath and is 36. He's a self-employed financial advisor, specialising in tax and pension planning. He used to play cricket and now enjoys golf. Philippa is from Kinver and is 34. She is a solicitor specialising in contentious probates. They chose to make their family home in Feckenham because it's beautiful, the countryside is so lovely and they wanted to live in a village with a great community with good pubs. Since they arrived they've been struck by how welcoming and friendly everyone has been and they are looking forward to joining in more with village activities.



If anyone else would like to put a little piece in the Feckenham news about either moving to the village or a significant life event, you can either submit it yourself to the editor (details on the front cover) or you can contact the Editor and she'll arrange for someone to come and interview you. If anyone would like to take on the role of Newshound, you would be very welcome. Please contact the Editor for details.

70th Wedding Anniversary Congratulations

Many congratulations to Pat and Carol Onions who celebrated their 70th (Platinum) Wedding Anniversary on 11th February. This is a truly wonderful & quite rare achievement. The occasion was celebrated with a cake at the Family Service on 8th February and captured in the attached photo. There was more cake and flowers at the drop-in in church on the actual day and the bellringers rang a celebratory quarter peal before Evensong on Sunday 15th February.





NO OFFENCE INTENDED

I Swear is the powerful true-life story of Tourette's Syndrome campaigner John Davidson, in a funny, moving and life affirming account of his life, from adolescence to adulthood. The film delivers hilarious and poignant details, exploring Tourette's, a condition that remains largely undiagnosed and misunderstood. John finds inspiration in the kindness of others to discover his true purpose in life. (UK 2025)

This BAFTA and Oscar nominated film contains very strong language.

I SWEAR (15)

Friday, 13th March at 8pm



BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!

The Ballad of Wallis Island is a British comedy drama which follows Charles (Tim Key), an eccentric lottery winner who lives alone on a remote island. Charles dreams of getting his favourite musicians (Tom Basden and Carey Mulligan) back together. His fantasy quickly turns into reality when the bandmates (and former lovers) accept his invitation to play a private show at his home on Wallis Island. Old tensions resurface and the ensuing chaos threatens to turn a dream into a nightmare. (UK 2025)

THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND (12A)

Saturday, 28th 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

ARE YOU RECEIVING US?

We're often asked why Swansbrook Radio's programmes can't be on the "ordinary radio". Why can't people pick us up on their transistor or valve wirelessly on the long, medium or short waves or even on the new fangled FM and DAB frequencies? The answer, as with so many things in life, is concerned with money and good old British awkwardness.

Successive governments, for reasons best known to themselves, have made it virtually impossible for small radio stations to broadcast in the old fashioned way. To do so we would be required to stump up well over £1,000 per week for what's known as a "Restricted Service Licence". There's no guarantee that an application would be successful as OFCOM considers that the Redditch area is "already well served". OFCOM hasn't granted a single long term local broadcast licence to a community station in this area in living memory.

So... the only way we can broadcast legally is over the Internet where the only licence we need is one to cover the copyright fees on the music we play. We also pay for the transmission technology we use and for cloud storage for our programme archive.

It's a very different picture in most of the rest of the "free" world where local stations are the mainstays of their communities. Every small town in the USA (for example) has its own FM station largely staffed by volunteers. In times of trouble when phones and Internet go down they're invaluable sources of information and of real value to their communities - we can but dream!

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.

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WHAT'S ON IN

FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA
"SOMETHING OLD,
SOMETHING NEW,
SOMETHING BORROWED"

BACH: BRANDENBURG CONCERTO No 5
GREIG: HOLBERG SUITE
JOHN DENVER: ANNIE'S SONG
RUTTER: SUITE ANTIQUE
RUTTER: FOLK SONG SUITE

Saturday, 7th March at 7.30pm
Book online at feckhall.org
or in person at The Village Shop



Feckenham Cricket Club proudly present



Feckenham Village Hall, High Street, Feckenham B96 6HN

Saturday 14th March 2026

Doors open 7.30pm – Band start at 8.30pm

Tickets £10 in advance, £13 on the door

Tickets Available from Feckenham Cricket Club, Mill Lane, or
telephoning 07980309844

JUST SOME THEATRE presents

LIVE
8.00pm



Eyes DOWN

MURDER! MAYHEM!
and real games of BINGO!

Sunday, 22nd March at 7.30pm
Book online at feckhall.org
by phone 0333 666 3366
or in person at The Rose & Crown
or The Village Shop

Feckenham READERS GROUP

Wednesday, 11th March - 7.45pm

This month's book:

FIFTY FIFTY

By Steve Cavanagh

Information: 01527 892285



West Mercia POLICE

CRIME PREVENTION IN FECKENHAM

In the light of recent incidents in the Parish you
are invited to meet your local policing team on
SATURDAY 21st MARCH - 10am - 2pm
at FECKENHAM VILLAGE HALL

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, 3rd March



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

MORTON HALL GARDENS

A Talk by Oli Johnson
Wednesday, 4th March - 7.30pm
Stock & Bradley Village Hall



Feckenham Parish Council MEETING

Thursday, 5th March - 7.30pm
Feckenham Village Hall
(Back Room) All welcome
Meetings include a Public Forum where parishioners can bring matters to the attention of the Council and ask questions.

CRAFT AND NATTER

on the 2nd Tuesday of each month
in the bar at the Rose and Crown
from 7pm

You can come along with your craft,
watch others - or have a go at learning
something new

THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

I blink. I twitch. I jump. I click. I whistle. I shout.

I SWEAR



FeckenOdeon 2 Friday, 13th March at 8pm 15

THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND ^{12A}

TOM BASDEN - TIM KEY - CAREY MULLIGAN



FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 28th March at 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

theWWI INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 16th March

CRAFT & NATTER SESSION

8pm - Feckenham Village Hall

Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details

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

Many thanks to Shirley Harman for these brilliant blasts from the past demonstrating how the Village united against the powers that be! Here uniting to save a tree in the newly built carpark. Always a new battle to fight!

Feckenham's tree campaign



Workman spare that tree! (From left) Mrs Ruth Jones, Mrs Shirley Harman and Mrs Phylis Mott oppose the bulldozers.

FURIOUS Feckenham residents have accused Redditch council of *welching on a promise to spare a beautiful laburnum tree beside the new High Street car park.*

Hours after hearing a planning mixup means the tree may have to go, over a hundred indignant locals signed a petition in protest — and while several villagers threatened to chain themselves to it to foil the bulldozers, three actually did!

Tree lover Mrs Ruth Jones explained the tree was formerly part of her garden, on the Redditch side of the car park access.

"We accepted losing other trees and we didn't mind when the council decided to fence the laburnum in with the car park.

"But now they've decided to cut it down they're going too far — it seems likely they're giving themselves permission to do something which they wouldn't allow any other developer to do."

Mrs Jones said she'd taken a day off work to watch over the tree — and added that she and several sympathisers might chain themselves to it to protect it.

The problem arose when workmen laying the drive for the car park found three tree roots stuck out too far — meaning the drive would have to be re-routed or the tree removed.

Now Mrs Jones says Mayor Alan Jones, chairman of Redditch's public services committee, has stated the drive will be moved around the tree only if it involves no extra expense.

Otherwise the laburnum will have to go.

Mrs Jones and her husband have offered to pay up to £100 to save the tree, and she told the Indicator the fate of the tree was now in the hands of the county and borough councils.

Another protester, Mrs Shirley Harman, said: "They promised to leave the tree alone, and now they are welching on their promise.

"They promised us a new wall, too — and they've welched on that."

And the spectacular struggle that meant the Village now owns the Square. This article in the Birmingham Post in 1995. (This is difficult to read without a magnifying glass though worth it. Otherwise, find it on line and enlarge the picture on your computer.)

Still waiting for



Ross Reyburn finds Feckenham on the brink of a major victory for the villagers.

In the not too distant future, the green in the Worcestershire village of Feckenham should finally belong to the villagers.

In the Great Feckenham Protest of 1990, villagers made the news when they tore up parking signs on the green.

Originally the green was owned by the Earl of Coventry.

Now Mr Mark Rymel, the man who bought the green and decided on the restrictions, has left the village controversy has ended.

"My ambition was always to have The Square belonging to the village," said Mr. Arthur Newbould, who was chairman of the Feckenham Parish Council for eight years after it was re-formed 12 years ago.

"Rymel bought the green and then introduced a parking system with two yellow lines and a permit system for selected residents.

"For some unwise reason, the county council went along with him. We tore the signs from the ground and I served notice on the county council to withdraw the scheme.

"It was utterly illegal to put signs on the green and the scheme broke the law seven times."

Villager Eric Styler, who lives about 150 yards from the green, was one of those involved in the protest.

"Over 100 were there — I had just had an operation for a hernia so I didn't get involved in pulling anything up," remembers 71-year-old Mr Styler.

The controversy is now over as Rymel left the village selling the green — known as The Square — to farmer Lionel Hill, who agreed to hand it over on condition residents raised money for the Birmingham Children's Hospital.

But unfortunately as the Charity Commissioners, one of the slowest moving organisations in the country, handle the legal formalities allowing a village to own land the deeds have yet to be transferred.

"The village raised the money in



less than 12 months and got £4,000 above the target," said Mr Styler, who is a parish councillor. "Now we are waiting for the Charity Commissioners.

"Feelings were very strong. Someone blocked up a water cock with concrete thinking it went to Rymel's home — in fact it supplied water to the parish church!"

Mr Styler belongs to the oldest family in the village but he and his wife Joy, one of the longest-serving members of the 75-year-old Feckenham Women's Institute, have two daughters but no son.

"The Stylers of Feckenham go back to 1650," he says. "Some of them were poachers and they got transported to Australia.

"Two generations ago there were five sons but the male line is ending. There are other Stylers in the village but they aren't related."

He has been a bellringer at Feckenham Church for 33 years and today a band of 14 bellringers ring the eight bells every Sunday.

The village near Redditch has remained unspoilt since his youth.

"There are not the old village families there used to be but nevertheless the newcomers have mucked in well," he says. "In my youth there were ten shops but now we have none."

But the arrival of the modern commuter has meant visually the village looks better than ever.

"It was a farm labourers' and factory workers' village," said Mr Styler. "Most of the cottages were

for rent. The rent was cheap and they never had anything spent on them."

Another village original Jack Summers, aged 77, a regular prize-winner in the Feckenham Flower Show, remembers when the village had two or three butcher shops.

"I'm going back to the 1930s," said Mr Summers, who spent all his working life working for Chloride Batteries in Redditch.

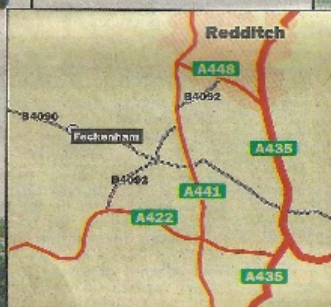
"Nearly every house in this village was a little business. There were two carriers taking eggs and other produce from the village to the market to sell."

While many Midland villages have been wrecked by expansion,



Idyllic setting: Villager Eric Styler, aged

cherished green



People's property: Left, the village green and, right, Paddy McWalter, landlord of the Rose and Crown.



Arthur Newbould feels Feckenham as suffered by having too few new homes.

"We have only had about 16 houses built since the war," he says. "If we had had modest additions of say five or ten houses a year, we would have made the village a viable unit and might have kept the shop and the post office." The former village needleworks factory opposite the village square with its distinctive arched windows and white exterior is now a private residence.

"This is an example of silliness by the planners," he said. "Tilshaw, a firm producing road hazard lamps, used the factory. But

the planners and the overbearing district councillors squeezed them out 30 years ago.

"The firm has about 30 employees in the village. Housewives could come in assembling these gadgets and push off back home to do the potatoes. The firm wanted to expand but the planners said it was bad for the village. "It's a picturesque village — it's quite unique for North Worcestershire in that it has some lovely older buildings yet it isn't a black and white village."

The village has no shops today but there is an old-style village garage, Barretts, the camping, saddlery store, Richardsons, which sells fencing equipment, and two pubs.

Irishman Paddy McWalter, owner of the Rose & Crown pub, has created a beer of his own that he has never tasted.

"I actually don't drink at all but everybody thinks it is great," he says. "I am trying something different — I am buying Bank's keg bitter and putting it on a mixed gas on trial.

"That head would last now until this evening," he adds pointing to the half pint he has poured.

His special looks attractive and it has a woody taste — and doesn't match his draught Bank's bitter.

He is staging a Midsummer Shindig in a marquee at the Crown tomorrow as a follow up to the village's Midsummer Night's Wake held today on The Square with a

traditional fair, followed by a pig roast and barn dance.

The Feckenham Horse Show is also being held today. Tomorrow the Choir of Worcester Cathedral will be at the parish church for a special choral evensong.

Today Feckenham ranks as one of Worcestershire's most attractive villages with picturesque vistas and a wide mix of period properties.

It has an impressive array of Georgian properties and frontages including a splendid vicarage by The Square.

There is an eye-catching village cricket ground circled by a little white picket fence. The wooden pavilion isn't in the classic class but the quaint little white summerhouse style scoreboard catches the eye while the parish church on the hillside overlooks the ground.

The village recreation ground is surrounded by a curious dip.

"When this area was all part of Feckenham Forest, kings used to come up hunting here in the 12th and 13th centuries," says Mrs Elizabeth Aikins, who founded the Feckenham Forest Local History Society five years ago.

"We think the hunting lodge they stayed at was situated at this large patch of ground, which is now the village recreation field.

"Nothing remains of the hunting lodge but the double row of hedges and ditches around the field would have been a palisade. You would only get this for a person of importance."



at the cricket club.

Feckenham WI

We were very grateful to Feckenham resident, Sarah Bayliss, for leading us in a beautifully relaxing introduction to meditation session for our February meeting. I've never seen the group sit so still, and so quietly for so long!

Meditation is such a broad topic, so in the very limited time we had Sarah for, she just touched on what got her into it and the mental and physical benefits of it. She then led us through two meditations, one a body-scan and the other a mindfulness of breathing exercise. And although some of us have unsuccessfully tried meditation in the past, or were a little sceptical to start with, all of us left the session feeling deeply relaxed and more connected and calm.

Our March meeting (16th) will be much more chatty and physical as it is a craft and natter session. Please come along with anything you're working on or need help with, from a complicated knitting project to just sewing on a button. We'll be in the back room of Feckenham village hall - doors open at 7.45 and we will start at 8pm.

As it is the last meeting of our current programme, next year's subs will be due. These stand at £47 for 12 meetings next



year. For anyone wishing to join, please contact jen@thecarys.co.uk or message Jen Cary on 07773 883 039 for details. You can pay on the night by card, transfer, cash or cheque.

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The orchestra will be fielding additional players for this concert as it celebrates its 30th anniversary.

The Sinfonia is led by Musical Director Shula Oliver-Smith.

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA

Saturday, 7th March at 7.30pm

Please note: Tickets for this concert (£15) are available from The Village Shop and online through feckhall.org only (no telephone bookings).

*(Tickets on the night will cost £17
save money - book ahead!)*



Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund

Draw. Carried out on 5th January 2026.

January:

1st (£25)	127	Martin Strange
2nd (£15)	47	Ashley Beldham
3rd (£10)	22	Bob & Amanda Gordon



DEADLY BINGO

Eyes Down for a Night You'll Never Forget!

Get ready to enter a world of glitz, grime and gripping suspense as Feckenham Village Hall is transformed by Just Some Theatre Company into the delightfully dodgy Stairway To Heaven Social Club – where the sequins are faded, the carpet's sticky... and it's bingo night!

But this isn't your gran's bingo. This is a high-stakes comedy thriller where every ticket holds a secret, every number called tightens the tension and every audience member is part of the action.

The evening kicks off with a classic bingo session - but just when you're settling in for a night of dabbers and double calls... a body turns up. And suddenly, there's more at stake than a jumbo Toblerone.

Now it's up to you and your fellow players to help unravel the mystery. Who's behind the crime? Where did the last caller go? And will you make it out with the grand prize – or your life?

Whether you come for the laughs, the clues or the prizes, "Eyes Down" delivers a night of unforgettable entertainment. So grab your friends, grab your bingo cards and get ready to shout "BINGO!" like your life depends on it – because this isn't just a game anymore.

EYES DOWN

Sunday, 22nd March at 7.30pm

TICKETS (£15) are on sale at The Village Shop and The Rose & Crown.

**Book online through www.feckhall.org
Book by phone on 0333 666 3366**

Please book early! Because of the layout needed for this show numbers will be strictly limited.

This is a professional show brought to Feckenham by Live & Local supported by Arts Council England and Worcs. County and Redditch Borough Councils.

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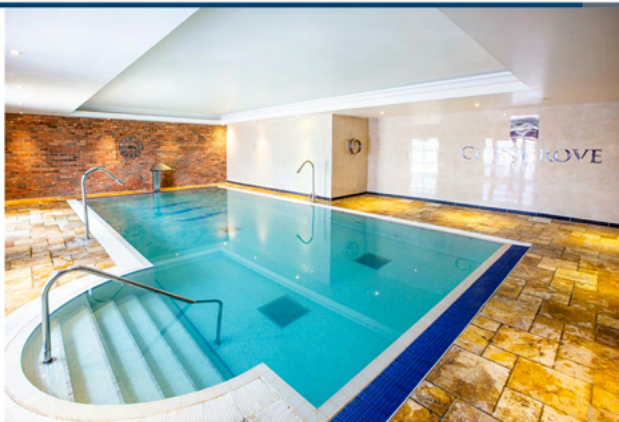
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Village Shop - Alan Slater

At last the rain has stopped, no doubt temporarily, and the sun is out at the moment. Since the start of the new year the weather has been absolutely awful and I'm sure many of you have been going stir crazy not being able to get out of the house. So fingers crossed maybe it's time to put on some warm clothing, sturdy foot ware and venture outdoors for a bit of a leg stretch. There are some lovely walks to be had around our village and Richard Fletcher, a stalwart member of our Sunday volunteer team, has been devising Feckenhams Boxing Day walks for as long as anyone can remember. I asked him to suggest a short circular walk starting and finishing at the Village Shop, something that is fairly easy and can be completed within an hour. This is what he suggests:

Starting at the Shop, head down the Droitwich Road, past the water wheel and turn right into Berrow Hill Lane.

After passing the detached house on your left, turn right onto the bridle path. Follow the path round and down to the Bowbrook and cross on the footbridge. Pass the Old Mill on your right and continue up Mill Lane to the Square. Turn right onto the High Street and then right again at the Lygon Arms.

You will then be back at the Village Shop in plenty of time for a well earned cup of excellent coffee and a slice of delicious homemade cake. If you are walking your dog you will also be welcome and we can also provide a doggie treat for your four legged friend. Richard has also kindly provided a map of the walk and we have copies available in the Shop should you require one.

So no excuses, unless the weather changes again, we look forward to seeing you in the very near future.



An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

At last we are entering the month that has the spring equinox in it. By the end of this month the days will be longer than the nights and all our plant life gets a boost of spring growth.

Hopefully this month will give us better weather than the first half of February's long rain experience. Which made it almost impossible to work the plot. Beds remained undug and I held back on forking compost feed into the soil as all the goodness would be washed out in such a prolonged deluge.

Early plantings such as potatoes, onions and shallots and Jerusalem artichokes are all later than usual as I prepare beds for them. In previous years I usually have them in the ground by this month.



Jerusalem artichokes were a plentiful crop for me again this winter, and a good crop of parsnips. I harvested the last of both of those in mid February. Broad beans are all in pots germinating as I write in February, by early march they

should be breaking soil.

In the greenhouse in March I like to start, in pots, cabbages, sprouts, and other green brassica, to bring on to plant out later in the season. Also leeks in trays, they need a long growing season and I sow peppers early as I find it prolongs the harvesting season later in the year with more time for the fruit to ripen.

Back outside this month I shall dig a shallow trench where I plan to grow runner beans, into which I shall throw

vegetable matter and muck to compost and feed the runner beans when I plant them later in the season. The sooner the trench is started, the more composted the material.

In preparation for cabbage and sprouts I shall make a netted bed, the net to keep out butterflies, I use scaffold netting as it has a tight rough weave that the butterflies cannot penetrate, they will exploit any gap to get in and lay their eggs on the brassicas. The young caterpillars can decimate a crop when the eggs hatch out.

The brassica crop I grow in an area chosen in line with my crop rotations, cabbage, sprouts, cauliflower and all brassicas should not be grown again in the same bed for at least three years. I actually run a five year rotation plan with all crops across my plot.

The non stop job on the plot of course, which I always mention, is weeding. As I mentioned, when the days get longer than the nights all plant life gets a boost, weeds spring up and grow rapidly, so it is the job I try to keep on top of. If I can keep up with em! Good sowing and growing.

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Rob Cole's Gardening Tips - Two Seasons of Interest

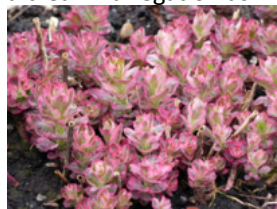
Whether you have a small garden or a large one, it is always valuable to grow plants which have more than one season of interest. This interest can be because of the stem colour, dramatic emerging foliage, the beauty of the flowers, the Autumn leaf colour or the seed heads or fruit which brighten gloomy winter days.

One of my favourite shrubs is *Viburnum plicatum* f. *tomentosum* 'Dart's Red Robin' which unfailingly gives a good account of itself throughout the year, but especially in spring and autumn. It is a deciduous shrub with a rather tiered habit. In late May and early June it is covered in flat heads of clean white flowers, which assume a pinkish tinge as they mature. They last for about four or five weeks before falling gracefully. In early September it is clad in a mass of rather pointed red berries which eventually mature to black by the start of November. Not only are the fruits attractive in Autumn, but the leaves turn to a deep, dark, plummy red before they begin to fall in December.



leaves when they are first emerging, classy flowers, albeit soon over, big shiny black seeds which are displayed as the seed pod opens, and good autumn leaf colour.

The variegated form of Loosestrife, *Lysimachia punctata* 'Alexander' is much less vigorous than the straight species (which is often regarded as a bit of a weed), and is especially spectacular when the clumps of new shoots are emerging in Spring. At this stage they are a very showy shrimp pink, only changing to their normal green and cream variegation as the flowering stems rise up. The buttercup-like flowers are yellow and merge nicely with the variegation on the leaves.



To finish, I can recommend another smallish deciduous shrub, *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus'. It has a nice neat habit, and the leaves are tidy and a fresh green. The flowers are rather inconspicuous, but come September they have yielded a mass of pinkish-red fruits which split to reveal bright orange seeds which eventually emerge from the capsule and hang on little threads before eventually dropping to the ground. But it is the autumn colour of the dying leaves in October and November which sets this shrub apart - the colour is the most amazing bright red, completely outshining everything else in the garden.



If your interest is in perennials rather than shrubs, the many species and cultivars of Paeony fall into the multi season category. I can thoroughly recommend *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* (left), *Paeonia tenuifolia* (red), and *Paeonia cambessedesii* (pink) all of which have startlingly maroon





CLUB MEETING – Wednesday 4th February 2026

Our meeting at the Village Hall on Wednesday 4th February was a talk by Diane Clement on 'Alpines in the Wild and Cultivation'. This was a welcome return by Diane who is an active member of the Alpine Garden Society. Her talk led us on three walks in the Swiss Alps, and showed us the wild plants to be found there, many of which have been introduced as familiar garden plants.

NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 4th March 2026

Our next meeting at the Village Hall is on Wednesday 4th March 2026 and will be a talk by Oli Johnson who will give us a talk about Morton Hall Gardens, where he is Head Gardener
The subject for the monthly competition is 'A Flower from a Bulbous Plant'.

ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Our Annual Plant Sale this year will be on Saturday 9th May in the Village Hall, from 10:00am to 12:00 noon – put a note in your diary now !

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 2026. 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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As we glide towards March, the surfboards are out on both the lane and the outfield. Despite it seemingly being a dry winter, until the snow hit us, it doesn't seem to have stopped raining since.

Preparations build up speed towards the season's start at this time of year and on the odd dry day the birdsong fools us into believing we're nearly there. Endless years of working on cricket grounds have taught me that just when everyone thinks we're through the winter there's usually a bite in the tail. I've been to Cheltenham races in snow too many times to be fooled!

The 14th of this month we welcome the highly regarded Skabucks to the Village Hall for ska and reggae covers. Tickets are selling out fast so please get in touch to avoid disappointment.

The league is scheduled to start mid April and the bar will always be open at weekends and from 2.30pm on Saturday games. Why not, when the weather improves, pop down and enjoy a tippie whilst watching some well known and slightly more weathered faces take a walk to the wicket with a bat and then trudge back 5 minutes later, older, more forlorn and undoubtedly wiser for the experience. Our faith grows ever stronger with our kids for the future!

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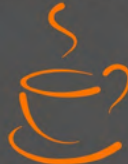
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