

FECKENHAM

A photograph of a road lined with yellow daffodils in bloom, with trees in the background. The daffodils are in full bloom, with bright yellow petals and green leaves. The road is paved and curves to the right. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky.

NEWS

April 2026

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

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Feckenham News in April

Dates for your Diary

April

1st	S and B Gardening Club
2nd	Parish Council Meeting
8th	Readers Group
17th	FeckenOdeon 2
20th	WI
25th	Feckencodeon

May

3rd Annual PC Meeting

Lunch Club in April will be held on 14th instead of the 7th due to the Easter Bank holiday and staff holidays.

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

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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Photo: Courtesy of Julian Bull

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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

You may be wondering what's going on with our local post box on the "bulge" at the corner of Turton Gardens. It turns out that we shall be without our postbox for a number of weeks while our new solar-powered postbox is installed. The new look is going to be similar to the two centuries old traditional one with innovations somewhat altering the iconic look. The new design with solar panels on the top of the postboxes powering a digitally-activated drawer, allowing customers to deposit small parcels. Items as large as a shoebox can be posted. It also features a barcode scanner, which opens a drop-down drawer. Royal Mail customers can use the service using the Royal Mail app, can request proof of posting, and tracking of their parcel.



the village towards Alcester. What an amazing and eclectic stock there is to see. It's been there for six or seven years already!

Next, I went for a bike ride in the sun. What a joy seeing blossom emerging and the trees coming into leaf. I belong to a ladies' cycling club. Four of us headed to the Pantry at Rush Farm in Stockwood. Look for the sign on the left as you drive along Earls Common Road towards Inkerrow. What a delightful place! Good coffee, excellent cakes and organic produce to buy and an ethos that cares for the environment.



Isn't it strange that one can live in an area for many years and not be aware of local businesses. I visited two this week. First was to Tinks Trove on the Saltway going out of



Letter to the Editor

Dear Feckenham News Editor

I enjoyed reading John Fletcher's memories of life in Feckenham in the 1960s, many of which I shared. John mentioned Chester and Phyllis Smith, proprietors of the garage. I thought your readers might like these two photographs (if usable) of Chester and Phyl outside the garage. They lived in the house to the left of the garage, next door to Mr Peake's amazing bird garden.

"Fill it up Phyl!", was the cry when we drew up to the pump in my Dad's old Morris Minor. In those days we wouldn't dream of doing it ourselves; self-service was unheard of.

Happy days.

Harriet Stewart-Jones
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EASTER WEEKEND

Open all Day Good Friday to Easter Monday
Egg Hunt in the garden 3pm on Easter Sunday

Tuesday, 7th April - in the Bar from 8pm - Free

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

Thursday, 16th April - 7pm

CHARITY QUIZ

Thursday 30th April - SPANISH MENU

www.roseandcrownfeckenham.co.uk

Feckenham Wake Update



You probably know by now that 20th June is the date for this year's family friendly festival of fun (ok too many f's..)

What you may not know is that we are ringing the changes this year with new attractions, a revised layout and even live music late afternoon/early evening.

I would like to thank in particular our new committee members Kay Ramsden and Tom Mayo for stepping up and offering their time and ideas. Thanks also to Feckenham Charities and to the Parish Council for donations towards our purchase of a couple of new pagoda style marquees.

Last but not least we will need some additional volunteers this year to help with new attractions. Watch out for a Facebook post from Maggie Stephens who will be co-ordinating volunteers. All aspects of the Wake are delivered by volunteers to benefit the village, so please consider helping us on the day with a couple of hours of your time.

Julian Bull



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SOLAR FARMS

As we reported in March, The Roundhill Solar Farm planning application has been withdrawn. This means that the associated applications for a major cable route running approximately parallel to Moors Lane and along Rockhill Lane have also been withdrawn.

However, as we go to press news has arrived of plans for a large solar farm to be situated on the outskirts of Redditch. Although the main facility would be outside the Parish the intention would be for the connecting cables to be routed into the National Grid switching station at Feckenham. We await further details.

YOUR COUNCIL TAX BILL

Residents will have received their annual Council Tax demands. It might not have escaped your notice that the Parish Council's share of the payments (the precept) has increased this year. This is because the costs of running the Council have increased, the costs associated with the Council's statutory obligations have risen and there has been a need to set aside money for large capital projects. If you'd like to know more about the Council's finances please feel free to contact the Clerk.

It's worth pointing out that the only paid position associated with the Council is that of the Clerk. Councillors are not paid and do not claim any allowances.

SPEED BOLLARDS

Some years ago the Parish Council, supported by County Councillors, organised the installation of traffic calming bollards on the B4090 through the village. These "Jison Satellite and Milestone Islands" (as they're officially called) proved to be successful at encouraging drivers to slow down. The striped poles/bollards have now become faded and it has been decided to refurbish them

by the purchase of new "jackets" which fit over the existing structures. The Parish Council had intended for the work to be undertaken by the Parish Lengthsman but it now appears that only County Highways staff will be permitted to do the job. We await a starting date,

UNITARY COUNCILS

At the meeting on 5th March the Council was informed that it had been asked to comment on the configuration of the new unitary authorities. The Council felt that there was very little information on the role Parish Councils would be expected to play in the new set up - and that decisions had already been made at higher levels. It was felt that there was little point in a consultation exercise at this stage in the process.

NEXT MEETING

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 2nd April at 7.30pm in the back room at the Village Hall. The first part of the evening will be taken up with the Annual Parish Meeting during which progress reports will be presented. 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



feckenham-parishcouncil.gov.uk

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 April 2026

3rd April	2.00pm	Good Friday Service	Rev Fiona Carter
5th April	10.30am	Easter Eucharist	Rev Linda Nicholas
11th April	10.00am - 12.00pm	Messy Church (Sat)	Rev Fiona Carter
12 th April	10.30am	Family Service	Rev Fiona Carter
19th April	6.30pm	Evensong	Rev Fiona Carter
26th April	10.30am	Morning Prayer	Phil Tricklebank ALM

Drop in (in church)

Wednesday 8th April and 22nd April at 10.30am - 12.00pm.
All are welcome (coffee and cake)



Coffee Stop

Tuesday 14th April at 2.00pm to 3.45pm.
Take a break before or after school. Toys for children.



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

Reverend Fiona Writes... Easter: A Story that still chnges lives

Easter sits at the very heart of the Christian faith. Even for those who only occasionally attend church, it remains one of the most familiar and deeply loved seasons of the year. The flowers return, the days grow longer, and churches are filled once more with light, music and hope. Yet Easter is far more than a welcome break from winter, or a date marked by chocolate eggs and family meals. At its core is a story that continues to speak into our lives today.

The events of Holy Week take us on a powerful journey. From the joy of Palm Sunday, when crowds welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, through the sorrow and silence of Good Friday, to the astonishing joy of Easter morning, we are reminded that life is rarely straightforward. The Easter story does not shy away from pain, loss, or uncertainty. Instead, it meets them head-on and offers something profoundly different: hope beyond despair and life beyond death.

On Good Friday, Christians remember the crucifixion of Jesus. It can feel uncomfortable to dwell on suffering, and many would rather move quickly on to Easter Day. But the cross speaks into the realities of human life. It reminds us that God is not distant from our struggles but knows them from the inside. Grief, injustice, fear, and loneliness are all present in that story. For anyone who has experienced loss or hardship, Good Friday quietly says, "You are not alone."

Easter Day, however, does not end in sorrow. The empty tomb stands as a

powerful symbol of renewal and possibility. The resurrection is not simply about what happened long ago; it is about what continues to happen now. It speaks of fresh starts, of forgiveness, and of the belief that even the darkest situations are not the end of the story. This is why Easter has endured for centuries and why it still matters today.

In our busy and often uncertain world, Easter offers a moment to pause and reflect. It invites us to consider what needs renewing in our own lives: relationships, faith, hope, or perhaps simply the courage to begin again. The message of Easter is not that life will be free from difficulty, but that love and hope are stronger than anything that seeks to overwhelm them.

Our churches mark this season with special services, music, prayer, and celebration, but Easter is not confined to a single Sunday. Its message carries forward into everyday life — into acts of kindness, care for neighbours, and the quiet determination to believe that goodness still has the final word.

Whether you come to church regularly, occasionally, or are simply reading this magazine out of interest, you are warmly invited to share in the Easter story. It is a story of light breaking into darkness, of love overcoming fear, and of hope renewed — a story that continues to change lives, perhaps even our own.

May this Easter bring you peace, joy, and the promise of new beginnings.



EASTER LILIES

A reminder for anyone who would like to make a donation towards Easter lilies in memory of loved ones, to be included in the floral decorations in church for Easter Sunday to please 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 everyone and we look forward to seeing the flower groups displays of lilies and spring flowers filling the church once again!

Margaret and Marg Co-ordinators.



**Join us on Saturday 11th April
10 - 12 at St John the Baptist Church,
Feckenham**

**We will be finding out about
Jesus through craft,
food and our celebration time.**

**Messy Church is for everyone,
just turn up and join in.**




ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETINGS

will be held in St John the Baptist Church, Feckenham

on Sunday 3rd May 2026 following the 10.30 am Eucharist

For the election of **two** churchwardens, **two** representatives to the Redditch & Bromsgrove Deanery Synod and **two** representatives to the Parochial Church Council.

The Meeting will consider reports on the Electoral Roll, Proceedings of the Parochial Church Council, Activities of the parish, the Redditch & Bromsgrove Deanery Synod and the Financial Statement for 2025.

The formal notice of the meeting will be displayed on the church door for at least two Sundays before the Meeting.

Ian Hunter

PCC Secretary)

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. Alternatively she can be contacted on 01527 550826 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, next to the village car park) at the beginning of April. Many thanks in advance.



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This summer Swansbrook Radio will celebrate 10 years on the air. We pushed the big red button at The Wake in 2016 and since then we've been a fixture - broadcasting 24/7, 365 days of the year (366 in leap years).

Our weekly programmes have just clocked up 500 editions. If you were to be foolhardy enough as to want to listen to the full catalogue of Ian Bellion's "Happy Hour" it would take you 21 days without a break. We're not suggesting that you do such a thing - that way madness lies - but our entire 10 years worth of output is available for you to delve into through the "On Demand" page of our website at swansbrook.com

HOW TO MAKE WHOOPEE?

How should we celebrate our big anniversary? Should we have a big on air party? Should we have fireworks and a regatta on the waters of the Swansbrook? Should we get wildly drunk and disgrace ourselves over the airwaves? All of these things may well happen - but we think that the best way we could celebrate would be by introducing some new voices, new producers or new organisers to add to the mix and to ensure that the station continues to serve the village in years to come.

GET IN TOUCH

So, if you have ideas, want to appear on the air, want to produce shows, want to write scripts - or help us run a radio station - now's your chance! All it takes to set the ball rolling is an email to radio@swansbrook.com - we'd love to hear from you and welcome you as part of the team.

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

Feckenham WI

Our March meeting was a sociable craft and natter session (or just natter!). It was a lovely opportunity to find out more about each other, our skills and what we're working on. We also discussed our upcoming meetings and the new membership year ahead, looking forward to our AGM in May.

Our April meeting is a trip to Kington & Dormston village hall for a quiz with other local W.I. groups.

Our subs are due at the end of March - it's £47 for the year, which equates to just £3.90 per meeting and 4 W.I. Life magazines. Anyone interested in joining should contact Jen Cary jen@thecarys.co.uk 07773 883 039.

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WHAT'S ON IN

theWV
INSPIRING WOMEN

Next Meeting: Monday, 20th April

QUIZ NIGHT

at Kington & Dormston Village Hall

Contact jen@thecarys.co.uk for details
or call 07773 883 039.

Feckenham Parish Council

Annual Parish Meeting
followed by an Ordinary

MEETING

Thursday, 2nd April - 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.

ERSTWHILE



BORDER MORRIS

Twice monthly Sessions
at Feckenham Village Hall
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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

AN EVENING WITH

HANNAH BRINE

singer, songwriter,
and composer

30th May - Stock & Bradley Village Hall
sbvh.org.uk

LIVE
LOCAL



Feckenham READERS GROUP

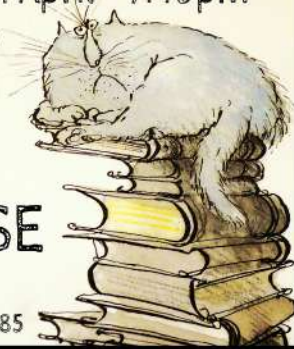
Wednesday, 8th April - 7.45pm

This month's book:

SMALL THINGS LIKE THESE

By Claire Keegan

Information: 01527 892285



Feckenham WAKE

Saturday
20th June

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, 7th April



Stock & Bradley Gardening Club

NUTS ABOUT NARCISSUS

A Talk by Pip Smith

Wednesday, 1st April - 7.30pm
Stock & Bradley Village Hall

Annual Plant Sale
Saturday 9th May 2026
10.00 - 12.00

At Stock & Bradley
Village Hall - B96 6RW



Feckenham's Own...

Listen at
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SWANSBROOK Radio

THE FECKENODEON CINEMA SOCIETY

THE 100 YEAR OLD
MAN WHO CLIMBED
OUT OF THE WINDOW
AND DISAPPEARED



RALPH FIENNES
MARK ADDY

ROBERT
ELMS

ALUN
ARMSTRONG



THE CHORAL

Written by ALAN BENNETT

FeckenOdeon 1 Saturday, 25th April at 7.30pm

The FeckenOdeon Cinemas
at Feckenham Village Hall

Tickets for all shows from The Rose & Crown and Village Shop
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Jessica Byatt: Yoga and Meditation



physical movement, postures, mindfulness meditation and breath control. Today it is popularly westernised to more of a physical practice and perhaps less authentic and more ego focused. Many assume it is just about complex shapes, or touching your toes and being super flexible. Or having a certain body type, be a certain age or gender to practice. Taking us away from its traditional roots of uniting the self. Yoga is accessible for all, including beginners, seniors and those with a disability. It can be adapted to suit the unique needs of the individual. Yoga is a versatile practice online, in person and can be practiced almost anywhere.

Yoga has proven and scientific benefits in supporting us:

- physically, emotionally and mentally
- flexibility, mobility and strength
- posture, balance and alignment
- in the ageing process, chronic pain and injury prevention
- with sleep, fatigue and energy levels
- to balance the nervous system
- with anxiety and depression
- in reducing stress and high blood pressure and more

Yoga is an individual journey that continues off the mat, it has no limitations and can be what you choose it to be.

I moved to this beautiful village 6 years ago and have been your local Yoga teacher at Feckenham Village Hall since 2022. I have been practicing for 16 years and continue to be inspired to help others through yoga.

Yoga in Sanskrit means to yoke, to unite, bring together the body, mind and spirit or connect to the individual self.

Originated from traditions in India over 5,000 years ago, written and rewritten in philosophical texts, and now universally evolved into different styles. Including Hatha, Restorative and Yin, Chair Yoga and more. With components of



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The FeckenOdeon Cinema Society



OUT WITH A BANG

Based on the internationally best-selling novel by Jonas Jonasson April's film in FeckenOdeon 2 tells the unlikely story of a 100-year-old man who decides it's not too late to start over. He climbs out of his care home window and heads off into the unknown.

For most people it would be the adventure of a lifetime, but Allan Karlsson's unexpected journey is not his first. For a century he's made the world uncertain, and now he is on the loose again. Fast, funny and explosive! (Sweden 2014)

THE 100 YEAR OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT OF THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED (15)

Friday, 17th April at 8pm



UNITED IN SONG

As WW1 rages on, the Choral Society in a small English town has lost most of its men to the army. The Choral's committee is determined to press ahead with new recruits. They engage a driven new chorus master, Dr. Henry Guthrie – recently returned from a career in Germany. As conscription papers start to arrive, the community discovers that the best response to the war is to make music together. Scripted by Alan Bennett, this heart warming film stars Ralph Fiennes, Mark Addy and Alun Armstrong. (UK 2026)

THE CHORAL (12A)

Saturday, 25th April 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

Feckenham Village Hall

THE PARTY'S OVER - FOR NOW

The Village Hall's season of live shows ended on 22nd March with the remarkable Bingo Murder Mystery "Eyes Down". What a season it's been! Theatre, Big Bands, Classical music and a real live rock star - all live and on stage right here in Feckenham. The Hall's Committee is most grateful to those people who've appeared to lend a hand with setting up and clearing up as well as those who help by selling tickets and publicising the shows. Mention must also be made of the Hall's own team who build the stage, man the bar and do all those things that make the shows possible - some (but not all) of them are pictured below as they prepare to open the doors at the recent Midland Sinfonia concert.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Hall is working on the next season - starting in the autumn. There will be another three Live and Local shows. This Arts Council funded scheme currently serves 12 counties and is now working to book and allocate hundreds of different performances. We'll find out which shows we've got during the summer. The Neil Coley Big Band is already booked to return in December and we're expecting to host an outdoor show some time during the summer. Watch this space for details!

MEANTIME IN BRADLEY GREEN...

Our colleagues at Stock & Bradley VH have one more Live & Local show this season. On **30th May** they welcome singer songwriter **HANNA BRINE and her band** - visit sbvh.org.uk for details.

Draw results

Feckenham Village Hall Improvement Fund
Draw. Carried out on 3rd March 2026.

March:

1st (£25)	30	Michael & Phyllis Mott
2nd (£15)	5	Louise Burn
3rd (£10)	156	Dan & Hannah Harris

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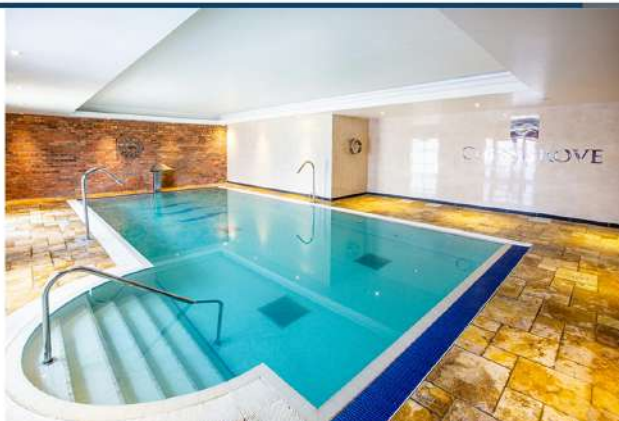
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Village Shop - Alan Slater

On a recent trip to Solihull I was dismayed to see how many independent retail outlets had ceased trading since my last visit there just three years ago. Many of those disappeared businesses had been run by the same families for generations but had no doubt succumbed to the pressures of internet shopping and crippling increases to their business overheads. It is sad to witness the changes that have occurred in recent times to our shopping centres and traditional High Streets that now all appear the same. To my untrained eye, all that's left are rows of hairdressers, tattoo parlours, tanning salons, charity shops and numerous opportunities to buy a coffee. I realise and accept that the face of retailing is changing. After all you can't get a tattoo or get your hair cut by computer but I've always enjoyed a stroll down a high street and browsing in the windows of traditional outlets such as the butchers, ironmongers, outfitters and greengrocers. A recent article in this magazine recalled the numerous shops that existed in Feckenham within our generation's memory but have long gone, We are left with just one..... The Village Shop.

Fortunately the majority of villagers do support us and we are grateful that they do. After all, who wants to get in the car and drive six miles when there is a need for a bottle of milk or half a dozen eggs. Our shop adds great value to our village, so the simple message is... use it or lose it. Our Buying Team in turn adhere to the same principle by supporting local small businesses whenever possible as a large number of our suppliers are based within a 15 mile radius of our village.

Now that Easter is almost upon us, the Shop has been appropriately decorated by Rhian and Lisa so thanks ladies for making the

shop look so appealing. Our champion knitter Margaret Green has also been working overtime to provide a lovely selection of knitted Easter Bunnies that are being sold in support of Project Morogoro, the charity that provides midwifery care in East Africa. Complete with a Cadbury creme egg, they make a unique gift for the kids/ grandkids and all the money raised does go to the charity.



We have recently added to that list by stocking a new range of ready meals produced by the Wyre Food Company. Ideal to freeze or consume on the day. A selection of popular dishes can be found on display at our deli counter. So when you're out of ideas for the evening meal give them a try.

As we are about to enter our busiest six months of the year I unashamedly make my regular appeal for more volunteers, just so I can allow a few of the existing Team to go on holiday. If you fancy doing a couple of hours a week in a very friendly atmosphere then please do call in and have a chat and we will be delighted to see you. No previous experience needed.

We will see you soon I hope and as always, thanks for the continued support of your local shop.

An Organic Allotment by Pete Delaney

The weather in the pre-Spring months has continued to make it difficult to be on the plot and preparing the ground for Spring sowings and plantings. Lots of rain and a few late frosts have set things back and I shall be playing catch up through out this season. In March I was still preparing beds in which I have normally sown early crops such as potatoes and onions. Still, plants usually tend to catch up with the season in the end. I always think of April as the hungry month: as I finish last year's late crops, such as parsnips and leeks, while still awaiting first harvests of this year's new ones, mostly lettuce and other early salads.

As I finish eating last year's parsnips, I begin sowing this year's crop. Parsnips are a fussy germination. The ground should be kept moist but not soaking and the seed doesn't like it too cold. I cover the beds with glass sheets (old windows in frames). The glass keeps the ground and the seed warm and protects the bed from too much rain, so that I am in control of the beds' watering, I am always happy when I finally see the first parsnip shoots.

I sowed second earlies potatoes in mid-March and I shall hope to be earthing up around their heads by the beginning of this month and, by then, I shall have sown my main crop spuds to join them. As I say, I have put them in the ground a little later than usual due to the early season wet conditions. This has also been the case with my Jerusalem artichokes. Broad beans are growing in the pots in which I sowed them indoors and will soon be ready to plant out.

Out on the plot garlic is showing strong and autumn planted romaine lettuce, wintered in a cold



frame will, by the end of the month, have some heads ready for harvest. Although by then I shall have harvested several outer leaves from them.

Also in March I sowed in beds onions and shallots, both of which I have usually already planted the sets in late February. In early April I shall sow in the poly-tunnel in pots or trays, peas, summer cabbage and sprouts and any other brassicas I wish to grow, indoor cucumbers and tomatoes, sweet corn and peppers, courgettes, pumpkin and butternut squash. All to grow on until they are ready to plant into larger pots or prepared beds.

Under a cloche outside I shall sow the first of this year's lettuce and salad leaves such as mustard and with repeat sowings at intervals during the summer. Radicchio I



bring up under cloche cover. It's bitter leaf is a favourite in my salads when the heads have tightly formed in late summer.

In April I also sow runner beans, haricot beans and French string beans. All in pots so as to be ready to plant out in May. Beetroot and chard I sow straight into pre-fed and prepared beds covering with glass or plastic cloche until late frosts have passed.

So altogether there is plenty to do down the plot... and soon I shall be preparing beds for all I have sown into pots this month, and as I say, aside from April's usual busy agenda, there is all the catching up after this season's early wet conditions, and no matter what the weather, the weeds of course are thriving.

Rob Cole's Gardening Tips - Spring Foliage

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

My first two choices are both *Iris*, a genus more renowned for its flowers than its foliage, but these two both have good coloured foliage in April. *Iris pallida* 'Variegata' has typical leaves, but strongly striped in pale green, gold, and cream. The foliage stands at about 450mm, and the soft blue flowers overtop the leaves to about 750mm.

Iris 'Glory of Amlwch' is my second choice and is a plant rarely offered. I bought ours at Beacon Nurseries in Eckington, Gloucestershire (now closed) in April 2003 and have never seen a plant for sale anywhere since. Its new foliage is a pale creamy yellow, eventually deepening, and ending up green by about July. It is short growing at about 600mm, and has pale yellow flowers. The name, I think, commemorates the village of Amlwch on Anglesey, and I would love to know its origin and raiser.

A number of plants have spring foliage appeal which is transient. One such plant is the Honeysuckle *Lonicera caprifolium* 'Anna Fletcher', which has round leaves through which the stem penetrates (perfoliate). In early spring, before the stems extend, the layers of leaves are close together and give a most unusual foliage effect. Another such plant is *Valeriana phu* 'Aurea' which shines a brilliant yellow in the Spring when its new foliage emerges, but by the time its loose heads of small white flowers appear it is time to cut it back hard and enjoy another round of emerging leaves later in the year.

For a foliage plant, *Veratrum nigrum* takes a lot of beating, and in spring the fresh and pleated leaves are simply stunning. It is very

slow to bulk up for propagation, and even slower from seed - but worth the wait if you have the patience.

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

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NEXT CLUB EVENT – Wednesday 1st April 2026

Our next meeting at the Village Hall is on Wednesday 1st April 2026 and will be a talk by Pip Smith entitled 'Nuts About Narcissus'. He will describe his passion for the Narcissus, giving us an insight into its history, the breeders, the cut flower industry, the various types of Narcissus and ending with some recommended varieties.

The subject for the monthly competition is 'Three Daffodil flowers (the same or different) – with foliage'.

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.



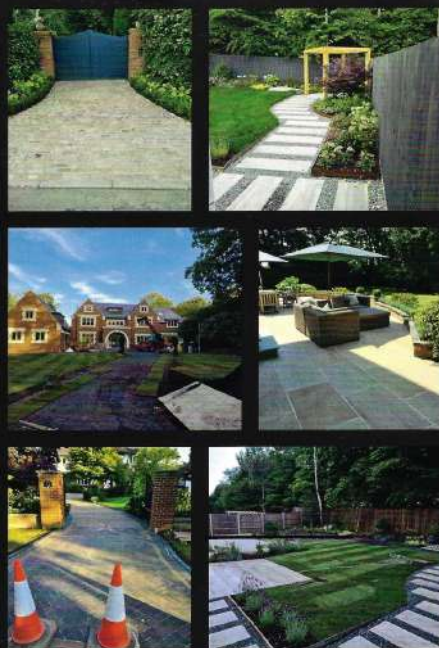
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Feckenham Archive - Marion Chute



Such a familiar photo, kindly sent in my Michael and Phylis Mott. A nativity play from the early 1980s.. Probably all captains of industry now!

Feckenham Cricket Club

Spring is in the air & the smell of cut grass brings the arrival of our summer sport, & as soon as we can see the tarmac through the water on Astwood Lane for the full stretch from School Lane all the way to Rock Hill Lane we know we're through the worst.

In March we held a hugely successful night at the Village Hall with Skabucks playing, it went down a storm & thanks to all who supported from the village.

The clubhouse is slowly going through a refurb & we have been lucky enough to have

been donated two large screen TVs to go with Sky Sports & the upcoming World Cup. Thanks also to all our new members & also all of our sponsors for the coming season, Davros Steel, Badger Windows, the Village Shop, Chessgrove & Serious Sport.

Let the season commence, come & enjoy some occasional decent cricket & the odd comedy roadshow, our bar is open weekends & on match nights and we have food vans every Friday from May onward.

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