

The
Parishioner
YARPOLE LUCTON CROFT BIRCHER BICTON

April 2026

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And all our regular features





Thanks to the following for their photos:

Front cover: Jennifer Banks – Sweet Chestnut at Croft. See opposite page*

This page: Brian North – Fallow deer stag in Oaker Copse, Bircher Common

Keith Smith – Goldfinch at Bircher

Carol Clare – Daffodils at Westbank on Turnpike Lane

Louise Hodgetts – Blue tit at Mulberry Meadow

FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Welcome to the April edition of The Parishioner.

It has been a sad start to the year in our parish with several deaths to announce including a much-valued member of our newsletter team, Jim Ainsworth. We send our heartfelt sympathies to Val and we know how much he will be missed by family, friends and our newsletter team.

Jim has made us all laugh with his articles for many years, and his many fans will be pleased to see that Val has come up with a new one which we believe has never been printed before. You will find this on page 42.

The announcement of all the deaths in our parish that have come to our notice can be seen on page 11 .

We are very grateful to everyone who contributes towards our printing costs. If you have not done so recently, please do consider making a donation. There is further information on how to do this on page 35. A year's supply of The Parishioner (10 copies) costs each household just under £10.

Finally, in an attempt to help some of our regular contributors who have struggled with our deadline, we have taken the decision to delay this by a couple of days. From now on the final deadline for any items sent in to The Parishioner is the 12th of the previous month.

Hetty

*Jennifer Banks is the daughter of Sue and Keith Smith. Apologies that, owing to an oversight on my part, one of Keith's photos was wrongly attributed to his daughter last month. We are delighted to have one of hers on the front cover this month – Ed

To send in articles and news items, please e-mail us at:

newsletter@yarpole.org

Or leave in the box at the shop

**The deadline for all submissions is
THE 12th OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH**

There is no newsletter in January or August

ADVERTISEMENTS

**To place a commercial advert in The Parishioner, please email
newsletter@yarpole.org and we'll send you more information**

Prices start at £5 for a 1/8 page ad

We also print small ads for parishioners for which we suggest that a small donation is left in the yellow collection box in the shop.

Audio version of The Parishioner

The Parishioner is also available by email in audio files for parish residents with sight problems. If you'd like to receive it in this format, or know someone who would, please let us know at newsletter@yarpole.org.



WhatsApp

Stay in touch: Yarpole WhatsApp Group

Share local information & news, relevant to our community, via the Yarpole Whatsapp group. We now have 175 members! To join send a message with your mobile number to: Katie Daniels **07786 515922**



WhatsApp



Calling Facebook Users

To get Yarpole news on Facebook, search for 'Yarpole Community'. See what's on! See what matters in Yarpole! Contribute to the page. Like us and become a friend.



Yarpole Welcome Packs

If you are aware of new residents who have moved to the parish, or if you have recently moved yourself and haven't received one, please get in touch with Sue Langley:

susanmarylangley@gmail.com.

Don't miss out on what's happening!

To be added to the events mailing list, email events@yarpole.org.



HOME CLEANING SERVICE

Standard house cleaning- mopping, hoovering, dusting, bathrooms, toilets, kitchen.
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- Office Cleaning

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Flicks and Food



Benedict Cumberbatch, Ncuti Gatwa, Allison Janney

15

The Roses

A modern reimagining of the 1989 classic *The War of the Roses*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Olivia Colman. A picture-perfect couple's marriage spirals into a fierce, darkly comedic battle for their dream house after his career tanks and hers soars, igniting a tinderbox of hidden resentments and competition.

**Yarpole Parish
Hall**

HR6 OBL

Saturday

11 April

7.30 pm

Tickets

Standard: £5.00

Under 18s: £4.00

Enquiries: 01568 780250

This is a Flicks & Food event. Food £9. Film £5. £14 for food and film. Food at 6.30pm, film at 7.30pm. Food must be booked in advance by phone - 01568 701996 or 07531 599700.



Information and Tickets at www.artsalive.co.uk

**FLICKS
IN THE
STICKS**

WHAT'S ON

WHAT'S ON

Police Community Support Officer meetings



Our local (Leominster) PCSO Steph Harper aims to visit the Gallery Café every 5 weeks on a Friday at 11.00. Her next visit, all being well, will be on 17 April. Join her in the café for coffee and chat.

Pete Lloyd

COMMUNAL CRAFTERS

Next meeting:

Monday 13 April — 1.30 - 3.30 pm
Bring your own project

At Yarpole Parish Hall, Green Lane, HR6 0BL

Cost: £3 towards the hire of the hall

We are a friendly group of crafters of all abilities who meet once a month to craft together and learn new skills

NEW MEMBERS VERY WELCOME!

Please contact Sue Beagley on 07816 060746
or email suebeagley@aol.com for info.

Come and

Be Still

Some music, a reading, a prayer and time for your own quiet reflection.

Monthly, on the first Wednesday, 5.30 - 6 pm.

St. Leonard's Church, Yarpole.

All are welcome



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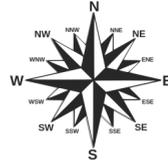


WHAT'S ON

WHAT'S ON



★ **New Term - New MD**
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Love To Sing Choir
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something amazing!
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7:15-9:15pm (Adult Choir)
Refreshments included
St Leonard's Church, YARPOLE
£5/ session Contact details
07915886265 or fb page



Walking Group

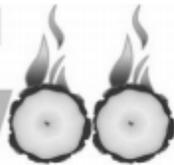
We meet regularly on the 2nd Friday
and 4th Sunday of every month,
normally at 10.30 by the church.

April walks: Fri 10 & Sun 26

All are welcome to join our walks but
please phone to check details, if you
are not on the email list.

Contact: **Viv 01568 782271** or
seiftonbatch@gmail.com

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WHAT'S ON

WHAT'S ON

Spring Plant Fair

In Aid of Charity

29 April 2026 10.30am- 4.00pm
Garnons Estate, Byford, Hereford, HR4 7JX

A special day for gardeners!

Discover beautiful, interesting and unusual plants, meet producers of garden-related products, while exploring the rarely opened, beautiful Garnons Estate woodland and kitchen gardens (Sorry, no dogs except assistance dogs)

Lunch and refreshments on sale all day. (Reg Charity no 1167802)
All proceeds to The Cart Shed

Tel: 01544 318 231

Entrance £8.00 per person.

www.thecartshed.co.uk



Arts Society Lectures

Lively and interesting illustrated lectures on arts-related topics at Ludlow Assembly Rooms, 2.15pm on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Lectures from nationally recognised experts take about one hour.



Next meeting on **Wed 15 April 2026**

Lynne Gibson

Death by Wallpaper: Colourful Stories of Chemical Pigments and Dyes
Visitors are welcome, paying £8.00 on the door. Membership, which buys you eight lectures and reduced fees for outings and study days, costs £45.

More information: <https://www.theartsocietytemevalley.org.uk>

For help with transport contact:

Membership Secretary Jeff Walker on **01694 781489**



Bin it? No way!

First Saturday of the month 10.00 - 12.00 (last repairs).

Next session: 4 April

Online bookings open two weeks before: <https://leominsterepaircafe.org.uk>

Leominster Community Centre, Church Street, Leominster, HR6 8NJ

Refreshments available

Mechanical, household, electrical, toys, furniture, sewing repairs & tool sharpening

For more information email: repaircafeleominster@googlegroups.com

Or find us on Facebook.



Orleton and District Gardening Club

Start preparing NOW for the 45th ANNUAL SHOW



on Saturday 15th August at
Orleton Village Hall



OPEN CLASSES - Anyone can enter

Including: **HEAVIEST MARROW COMPETITION - START SOWING NOW!**

Who can ferment the best cider? Challenge your friends and neighbours.

OTHER OPEN CLASSES

Alcohol-based Cordial; Heaviest Potato; Longest Runner Bean; Most Amusing shaped Vegetable or Fruit
JUST 10p PER ENTRY

Save the Date - Saturday 15th August - staging 10 - 11.30 am, viewing 1.30 - 3.30pm

For more details and show rules see **SHOW SCHEDULE** at

www.orletongardeningclub.co.uk



Priors Arts

Vikings at the Priory:

30 & 31 May, Leominster Priory

A weekend of action-packed, family friendly activities in and around Leominster Priory, celebrating Anglo-Saxons and Vikings in Herefordshire.

- 3pm Sat and 3pm Sunday: Battle on the Grange! Viking re-enactors clash with Saxons defending the town
- Living village: demonstrations of Viking/Saxon life, arts and crafts

Free exhibition inside the Priory 10am - 4 pm

- The Raven, a full size Viking ship
- Get a close look at the (replica) Herefordshire Hoard of treasure discovered in 2015
- First viewing of 'Hereford Gospels Today' on loan from Hereford Cathedral
- Plus many other presentations and displays from professional artists, local schools and community groups on the themes of treasure and 'Revealing our Roots'

'Vikings at the Priory' runs from 27 May to 22 June with many free activities and paid events around Leominster. For the full programme listing, visit www.priorsarts.org.uk.

EVENTS DIARY FOR APRIL

Events this month

Date	Venue	Event	Time
Wed 1	St. Leonard's	Be Still	5.30 - 6.00 pm
Thurs 2	The Bell	Quiz (6.00 pm for food)	7.00 pm
Tues 7	Parish Hall	Parish Council meeting	7.00 - 9.00 pm
Fri 10	Various	Walking Group	10.30 am
Sat 11	Parish Hall	Food and Flicks	6.30/7.30
Mon 13	Parish Hall	Communal Crafters	1.30 - 3.30 pm
Mon 13	The Bell	Fish and Chips Monday	
Tues 14	Gallery Café	Tasty Tuesday	1.00 pm
Fri 17	Gallery Café	Police Community Support Officer meeting	11.00 am
Fri 24	Parish Hall	4Cs	11.00 - 12 noon
Sun 26	Various	Walking Group	10.30 am

Regular Weekly Activities

Date	Venue	Event	Time
Mondays	Parish Hall	Move it or Lose it!	11.00 - 12 noon
	Parish Hall	Zumba	6.00 - 7.00 pm
Tuesdays	Parish Hall	Move it or Lose it! (no class 31 March)	11.00 - 12 noon
Wednesdays	Parish Hall	T'ai Chi (no class 1 April)	10.00 - 11.00 am
	Parish Hall	Art Group (no class 1 April)	2.00 - 4.30 pm
	St. Leonard's	Birchpole Singers	7.15 - 9.15 pm
Thursdays	Parish Hall	Pilates (no class 2 April)	10.45 - 11.45 am
Fridays	Parish Hall	Bowls	7.30 - 9.30 pm

Please note that all classes are cancelled on 31 March and 1 & 2 April owing to a brownies' residential.

See 'What's on' pages for more details of events

Check www.yarpole.org for up to date information and any changes

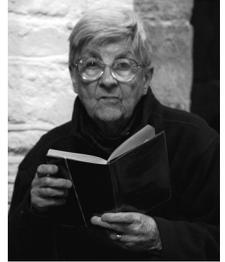
LOCAL NEWS AND NOTICES

Goodbye to five residents of our parish

The newsletter team is saddened to have to announce the deaths of five members of our community.

Audrey Bott

We were very sorry to hear of Audrey's death on 28 February. Audrey was a terrific force for good in the parish, and among her many contributions to our community she was one of the first editors of the newsletter, carrying out this role for many years. She will be very much missed.



Jim Ainsworth

We are also extremely sad to have learnt of the death of a member of our newsletter team on 3 March. Jim has been our eagle-eyed proof-reader, with Val, for many years, as well as producing the articles that have amused us all so much. He will be very much missed by our team, and of course the whole community.

Patrick Faulkner

We would like to extend our sympathies to the family of Patrick Faulkner of Bircher Common, who was our local deer warden.

Reg Ruell

We are also very sorry to have to report on the death of Reg Ruell of Ladymeadow Farm and would like to express our condolences to his family.

John Hargreaves

And finally we were very sad to hear just before going to press of John's death on 14 March, just a few weeks after that of his wife, Dorothy. John and Dorothy lived on Bircher Common for over fifty years. He was a keen supporter of village activities and volunteered in the shop for years. We send our sympathies to their three sons.

We hope to be able to carry obituaries in future editions of The Parishioner.

Thanks to Brigit Graham for the photo of Audrey prompting at Sue Russell's production of The Wind in the Willows.

St. Leonard's Church and Community Hub

Our church and community hub is a superb venue for your next celebration or special event – whether it be for an exhibition, an illustrated talk, a musical soirée, a family gathering, a special anniversary or a public event.

With flexible space, outstanding acoustics, an atmospheric setting and superb support from a team of volunteers, it is a unique location for you.

For booking enquiries email us at : yarpolechurchbookings@gmail.com

LOCAL NEWS AND NOTICES

Jobs with The Parishioner

We are delighted to announce that Annie and Trevor Millard have kindly offered to join the distribution team and work with Nic to deliver the newsletter to all the local distributors across the parish.

We are still looking for someone who could help deliver the Parishioner to households in and around Lucton. This would be a shared task and would only have to be done every other month.

If you live in the Lucton area and could spare a couple of hours just five times a year, please email us at newsletter@yarpole.org for more information about the role.

Mowing of the Verges

Last year the PCC took on the maintenance of the verges on the approach to the church and we have had lots of positive comments. In no way does this under-estimate the work of the volunteers, but allows us to keep the verges tidy without risking the safety of our volunteers.

Could you help with the cost? Would you consider making a contribution to this additional expense?

Donations can be made in cash using the left-hand box at the bottom of the café stairs. A cheque can be placed in the post box to the right of the Vestry door, cheques made payable to Croft with Yarpole and Lucton PCC.

A donation can be made direct to our bank account, details as follows:
A/c name – Croft with Yarpole and Lucton PCC; Sort Code 40-52-40; A/c no. 00013394.

For the month of April, we will set aside all contributions received on the contactless device by the exit door for the mowing of the verges, so if you want to use this method you can be assured it will be spent on the maintenance of the verges.

Thank you

Sue Smith – Treasurer – Croft with Yarpole and Lucton PCC



LOCAL NEWS AND NOTICES

Birchpole Singers' Success

The Birchpole Singers, together with my other two choirs, Love To Sing and Love To Sing Junior, enjoyed a fabulous day at Worcester Creative Arts Festival which saw them celebrate their 75th Diamond Anniversary!

What a joy it was to enter a large choir of 40 people ranging in age from 7-90. We entered two categories – Diamond Anniversary Class For Choirs and Open Class For Large Choirs.

We walked away with a Gold and two Silvers! Not a bad day at the office at all!! Everybody who came gave all they had and more! They looked amazing, sounded fabulous and most importantly, had an awesome time, full of love, laughter and singing!

We also had excellent feedback, for example:

'Some really impressive singing and holding the pitch in acapella intro before the piano entry. The enjoyment of all performers comes through in the way the ensemble comes together so tightly. This is community music-making at its absolute finest. Keep going – the world needs your singing!'

The experience is one I know everyone will always remember and what an opportunity to sing together in front of judges and get such great feedback.

All choir members truly are amazing with their ongoing belief and trust in me, their commitment to show up week after week and embrace my latest ideas and run with them. I feel so lucky to have this privilege of sharing my love for music and spreading and growing every single member's love and knowledge of music!

New members are welcome to come and join our amazing Choir. You can just turn up on Wednesdays at 7:15 - 9:15 at St. Leonard's, or contact Hayley (MD) 07915 886265.

Hayley Osborne

Gym equipment proposal for the community field

Would exercise equipment for adults be a good idea on the community field? Being outdoors and exercising improves your health! And meeting up with others encourages us to exercise more – and it is enjoyable!

Contact the clerk to the Parish Council on clerk@yarpolegroupparishcouncil.gov.uk with your thoughts and suggestions – thank you.

Anna Morley

Please see photos for both the above items on page 43

LOCAL NEWS AND NOTICES

Vacancy

The Parish Council is looking for a new councillor
to represent Croft & Yarpole Parish.

No previous experience needed – just an interest in the community.

Applications will be considered at the next meeting.

For more information or an informal chat, please contact
Mrs Maggie Brown.

Email: clerk@yarpolegroupparishcouncil.gov.uk. Phone: 07398 222 310



The Bell is looking for front of house staff.

We are unable to employ anyone below the age of 16 due to the legal requirements
surrounding youth employment.

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chairman@themortimercbs.org



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YARPOLE COMMUNITY SHOP

April 2026



Advance notice of shop AMM 2026.

This year's Annual Members Meeting of the Yarpole Community Shop Association will be held on Thursday 18 June at 7pm in St. Leonard's church. All are welcome but a reminder that only shareholders can vote. Shareholder applications are available in the shop and new shareholders are very welcome.

Audrey

Sadly Audrey Bott passed away recently. Audrey has been a tireless contributor to village life for many, many years and was a keen supporter of the shop going back to the very early days. She continued to volunteer in the shop up until very recently. She was always very clear about how valuable she had found it to be volunteering, especially following her own loss some years ago. She will be sorely missed but we, along with many others, are really grateful for everything she has done for so long for this community.

Post Office news

Stamp prices are sadly rising again on 7 April — it will now cost £1.80 (it was £1.70) for first class post and 91p (it was 87p) for second class post — so buy your stamps before the 7th if you can! A reminder there is no afternoon collection from the Post Box at the bottom of the village. The Postman empties the postbox and collects the mail from the Post Office all within an 11:00 - 11:30 window.

Going away

Some talk is turning to holidays in the summer and for those of you considering a holiday abroad remember that the Post Office in the shop is able to exchange sterling for euros — and vice versa. We also stock the multi-currency cards which you can load up prior to travelling and they then work in the same way as a debit card. The advantages are that your money is more secure as it is PIN protected and also you don't incur the fees that can be applied when using your normal card abroad. Call in to find out more! The PO counter is open every day (except Sunday) from 09:00 - 12:00.

Time to tidy?

With the onset of spring a sense of having a sort out and perhaps a clean through can occur. Apart from, of course, stocking a wide range of both mainstream and more eco-friendly household products did you know that you can also get your dry cleaning done courtesy of your local shop? Bring it in by a Wednesday morning and it will be returned to you the following Wednesday — what could be easier? From duvets, quilts and blankets to jackets, dresses and skirts no item is too large or small so save yourself a trip and use your local shop for yet another service.

Jon & Rowena



GALLERY CAFÉ



April 2026

Tasty Tuesday will be on TUESDAY 14 APRIL at 1.00pm

Chilli and Jacket Potato with Dressed Green Salad

Followed by Chocolate Brownie and tea or coffee

Please book by 3.00pm on Friday 10th April

Please inform us of any allergies; we are happy to cater for individual needs where possible. To book please email: gallerycafeyarpole@outlook.com, call the café during opening hours on 01568 780594 or drop in to see us in person. There will be a booking sheet on the tall cupboard

Happy Easter from all at the Gallery Café

We are looking forward to the better weather and even sitting outside with our coffee!

Look out for Easter treats and always good company.

The Gallery Café is open every day except Sunday, so you can meet friends, old and new, and enjoy our excellent cakes, scones and lunches

A volunteer is needed to help on Thursday lunchtimes: 12 - 2.00

Please get in touch! gallerycafeyarpole@outlook.com

Thank you to all the people who support the Café

Gallery Café Opening Hours

Monday – Wednesday 10.30 - 12.30 for drinks & cakes

Thursday – Friday 10.30 - 3.00, serving lunch 12 - 2.00pm

Saturday 10.30 - 12.30 for brunch

For enquiries/bookings, drop in to see us in person or

email gallerycafeyarpole@outlook.com, or phone 01568 780594 (opening hours only)

Check www.yarpole.org or <https://www.facebook.com/GalleryCafeYarpole/>

SHOP AND POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS

	Shop	Post Office
Monday - Friday	9.00am - 5.00 pm	9.00am - 12 noon
Saturday	9.00am - 1.00 pm	9.00am - 12 noon
Sunday/Bank Holidays	closed except for pre-ordered newspapers	

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CHURCH MATTERS

In this season of Easter, it seems appropriate to ask the question of what is Easter about? I am sure most of us are familiar with the Gospel accounts of the trial, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, but do we understand what that actually means?

Easter takes place in springtime, when we have lived through the darkness of winter when the trees and plants seem dead and there is little sun to warm us and give us a sense of life. But when spring arrives the trees and plants are re-born and what seemed dead is now alive again. The world is resurrected, just as Christ was resurrected at Easter.

Christ's disciples knew Jesus when he was alive, but experienced the darkness of his trial and death on the cross. For three days, the world must have seemed like the worst kind of winter for them, one they did not expect to end with a spring-like resurrection. We have the advantage through the Gospels of knowing that Jesus was resurrected, coming back to life in true glory, just as the blossoms on the trees and the flowers burst into life, with vibrant colour and scent.

What does this tell us about the world we live in? At this time there is much darkness and suffering in the world, with wars raging, natural disasters, political instability and the rise of extremism and hate. It may seem like there is no hope of a return to light. But there is hope, if we put our faith in God and the resurrection. The resurrection shows us that we have reason to hope in a number of ways. Firstly, the death of Jesus shows us how much God loves us. Jesus as the son of God willingly gave his life for us, not only did he suffer the terrible pain and humiliation of the crucifixion, but he also took all of our sins from us, taking the punishment, so that we do not have to. That he would do this amazing thing, tells us how infinite is God's love for us. Secondly, the resurrection of Jesus tells us that Jesus has not left us, he is with us in spirit always and one day he will return to us in person. We are never alone. He is always by our side. Thirdly the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, shows us what the future holds for us if we have faith and follow the word of God. We too will be resurrected when we leave this life and will be with God in his kingdom, experiencing the spring-like rebirth into everlasting life.

Dear Lord, help us to have faith, that when we are in the darkest of times the light of your love will prevail. Help us to recognise that we can be beacons of light in the darkness, by caring for those around us and sharing the love that you give us with others. Amen

Jane Higgins – Local Minister

Go to <https://www.hereford.anglican.org/news/parish-newsletter/>, the Diocese of Hereford's website to see the Dean of Hereford's Easter message.



Many warm sentiments have undoubtedly been expressed following the passing of our dear Audrey Bott. Audrey was an outstanding volunteer in her time for the shop, café and as SLM's long serving treasurer. Her contribution to village life is immeasurable. Personally, as a newbie Yarpolian and SLM trustee, her sage advice to me was always very much appreciated and honestly given. She was a diamond and is already greatly missed.

The café extension project survey was very successful in gauging people's views of the project, as well as in seeking feedback generally on our café service. There was a total 65 returns and the headlines are

88% (57) supported the project

9% (6) did not support the project

3% (2) did not express an opinion on the project.

The overwhelming support for the project was very gratifying and the feedback on our café service expressed overwhelming praise for our staff, the quality of cakes and the ambience of hosting the café in our beautiful church. It is clear that Jackie and her team are doing a great job. But we are not complacent and suggested improvements from those surveyed included:

- Improving the quality and range of coffee provided by investing in a machine that serves a broader range of coffees and drinks (*NB we are already investigating this option*)
- Improving the heating in the café especially on cold winter days (*NB the café has underfloor heating but we recognise that it can be cold at certain times so we have already purchased 1 of 2 additional heaters for use during cold spells*)
- There were comments suggesting broadening the range of food options e.g. hot savouries, pies, light lunches on other days, low sugar/wholemeal snacks for diabetics

There was very little negative feedback but regarding the project two people commented that it was *'far too costly and ambitious'* and *'far too ambitious and costings ridiculous, scale down the plans and get back to reality.'* In SLM's defence a significant part of the projected costs are due to us having to comply with specifications set down by the diocese regarding design of the additional balustrade and screening off of one archway. Also, the National Churches Trust, from whom we hope to receive support funding, insists on a conservation architect being involved at a cost of £6,000+.

Please note that all the 65 responses are now available in the café for you to scrutinise at your leisure.

By the time you read this article the troublesome macerator pumps for the toilets will have been repaired. To be fair, the toilets were installed in 2009/10 so they have lasted well over the last 15+ years. That said, we apologise for the inconvenience caused by the toilets being out of action for several days and thank you for your patience and understanding.

Gordon Ewing – Trustee

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PARISH HALL

April 2026

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Jan Tandy – Lottery Administrator

Parish Hall activities are listed on the Events Calendar (on page 10 this month). To make a booking please contact Dave Bradford on 07974 193294 or parishhall@yarpole.org or go to www.yarpole.org and click on 'Church & Parish Hall bookings' to book online.

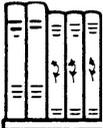
If you are interested in joining one of the classes please email Dave, who will put you in contact with the class organiser.

Parish Hall future dates

11 April Flicks & Food – The Roses

3 June Parish Hall AGM

27 June Summer BBQ and Ceilidh



Don't forget that books can be taken out from the Parish Hall Library whenever the building is open for an event. Just sign your book out in the register and there is no time limit. DVDs and blu-rays of recent Flicks films are also available to borrow.



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PARISH HALL

April 2026

Our vibrant Parish Hall provides a venue for a range of community events, regular classes and private functions for all ages. It is able to function due to a small team of dedicated volunteers both on the Committee and our Friends who support the Hall. We do need new Committee members to help us ensure the smooth running of this vital space, as a couple of long-standing members, including our Secretary, are stepping down.



We are a friendly Committee who support each other to provide the community with this invaluable resource. If you are new to the Parish it is a great way to get to know people. Whether you have time, skills or simply wish to support our community we'd love to hear from you.

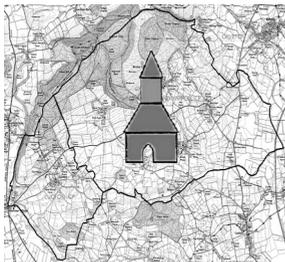
We are looking for someone to take over the post of Secretary in June. You do not need experience, just to be computer and internet capable and have a willingness to muck in! You will have lots of support.

Could you lend a hand? If you'd like to help please contact Amanda on 01568 701996 or email parishhall@yarpole.org for an informal chat before taking any decision.

The Parish Hall is an important part of the community. The Committee meets around every three months, so nothing too onerous! We would really welcome new Committee members to join us.



The old Parish Hall – thanks to Living History for permission to print this photo



Yarpole Group Parish Council

As announced in The Parishioner last month, the March meeting took place one week later than usual, due to the Herefordshire Council Summit on the evening of 3 March.

Members noted with regret Cllr Bott's resignation on 16 February. Audrey joined the council in May 1994, the centenary of the formation of Parish Councils. Earlier in February she advised the clerk *'I am pretty certain I am the longest serving councillor, of which I am quite proud.'* The Parish Council expressed its gratitude for Audrey's dedicated service to the Parish Council and the wider community. Her death on 28 February, was also noted. Audrey's funeral will take place at St. Leonard's Church, on 31 March at noon.

Official Notices of Vacancy were posted on 5 March, and if an election is not called by 25 March, applications will be invited for co-option. There will then be **two vacancies on the Parish Council**. Residents interested in making a difference in the Parish are encouraged to contact the clerk for further details.

Is your property at risk of flooding? The Parish Council received 50 Aqua-Sacs provided by Herefordshire Council. Lightweight and easy to store, when submerged in water for 5 minutes they absorb about 13 litres creating an instant, self-inflating "sandbag". Only six have been requested – would you like a share? **Be prepared!**

Following a request in last month's edition, several residents kindly volunteered to 'adopt' a grit bin. After careful consideration, the Parish Council decided to thank these public-spirited individuals and ask that they simply notify me if extra grit is required or if a bin becomes hidden by vegetation. This approach is more straightforward for everyone.

Painting posts and railings in the centre of Yarpole was discussed. Would you like to be involved in this? Let me know!

An offer from Herefordshire Council to remove the litter bin at Rosebank lay-by for a 6-week trial period was accepted, to monitor whether littering levels change during this period.

Community Meadow. It was agreed to make enquiries about the cost of installing a water supply. Gardening work is due to be completed in March, delayed by rain over the winter.

Grants are available from Herefordshire Council for improvements to drainage (maintenance of existing assets and creation of new assets) as well as Lengthsman works, and improvements to the Public Right of Way network. Projects are being considered and will be discussed at the April meeting.

Do come along to a meeting or contact the council with questions or concerns. Upcoming scheduled meeting dates are 7 April, 5 May (Annual and Scheduled meetings of the Parish Council), and 2 June normally at 7pm at the Parish Hall.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk. clerk@yarpolegroupparishcouncil.gov.uk 07398 222310



Since I last wrote for the Parishioner in January's edition, there have been two full council meetings at Herefordshire Council. Both of these have had a financial focus. In February we met to set the revenue and capital budgets where we had to tackle the consequences of the government's funding reforms which have left Herefordshire Council with a £30 million shortfall for the 26/27 financial year. The revenue budget addressed this through a combination of spending controls, efficiencies and (unfortunately) tax rises. This is the single biggest savings target we have had to make in a single year and is greater than any in year total during the austerity years of previous governments. It is clear from the government's 'fairer funding' review that they do not recognise the financial pressure of delivering services in rural areas and nor are they interested in listening to the feedback they have received from rural counties. I try to avoid politics in this column but this financial settlement really is a hammer blow to our county. You only need to look across the border at Shropshire or Worcestershire, where they are raising council tax by 9% and applying for tens of millions in emergency government help, to see the consequences of what happens if we are not realistic about the challenges we face and confront them head on.

The Capital budget is a little different and we have utilised this to borrow for investment in areas that reduce revenue pressures, address a strategic requirement or offer genuine opportunity for economic growth. That is why we have allocated £2 million for flood relief, £5 million for road resurfacing, £10 million for education, and fully funded the first phase of the Herefordshire bypass (amongst other things).

As you would expect I spend a large amount of my time as a councillor dealing with highways-related issues and the current pothole pandemic is no exception. Our roads, like every county across the country, have taken an absolute battering from the wettest start to the year on record. Balfour Beatty repaired 3000 potholes in the last month alone and have six teams out trying to keep on top of the backlog. Despite this I remain concerned about the quality of the repairs being done and I have raised this with our Chief Executive. There is no point in doing substandard repairs which don't last and simply result in the same pothole being reported a few weeks later and having to be repaired again. I will keep pressing on this point.

The full council meeting in March was held to formalise the council tax, parish precept increases, fire service and police levies for the year ahead. These were supported by all but two councillors present.

I am delighted to report that despite the budgetary pressures, Herefordshire Council will be continuing to support parish councils via the Lengthsman Scheme, Drainage Grant and Public Right of Way Grant in the year ahead. Together these grants represent nearly £1 million of financial support which allows parish councils to deliver work on the local highway network using local contractors and funding from Herefordshire Council.

As always if you have any concerns, issues or would just like a chat then please do get in touch.

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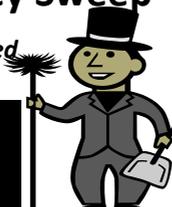


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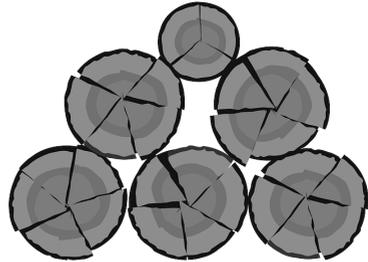
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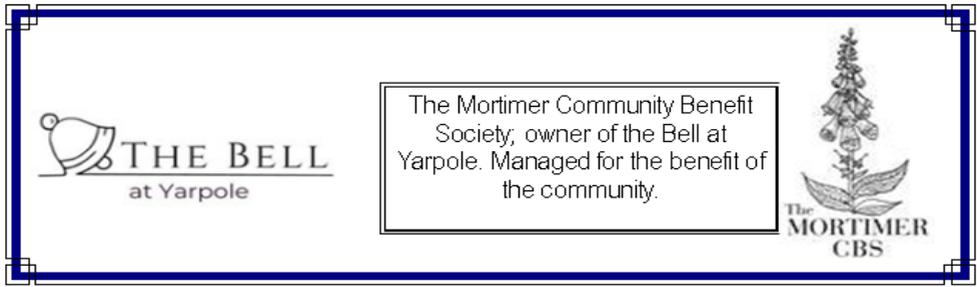
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The Story of our Chef. He came. He left.

At The Bell, we did what all hopeful country pubs do – we put up a “Chef Wanted” sign and waited for fate (or at least someone with knives and a vague plan).

And then, remarkably, he arrived.

No fuss – just a man who walked into the kitchen, took one look around, and quietly got to work. Within hours, chaos turned to order. Cupboards were tamed, fridges made sense, and the spices – previously living a free-spirited existence – were alphabetised like they’d joined the civil service.

By the end of Day One, the kitchen felt...competent. By Day Two, he’d produced a menu that was simple, brilliant, and actually doable. We liked him. We liked his menu and we wanted to try his food.

And then he left.

We’re still here, of course, though somewhat bemused.

We are very grateful to everyone who helped us cope: our staff, our volunteers and you, our customers.

Would you consider joining the committee? I am told that running a pub is relatively straightforward.

Easter at The Bell

Join us over the Easter weekend – we’ll be open for lunch on Good Friday and the whole Easter weekend including Easter Monday. If the sunshine makes an appearance, why not relax in The Bell’s garden and enjoy a leisurely meal in the fresh spring air?

Fish & Chips Monday – as the first Monday of April is the Bank Holiday, Fish & Chips Monday will now be on Monday, 13 April.

Quiz Night Returns

Don’t forget – The Bell Quiz takes place on Thursday, 2 April. Gather your friends, form a team, and put your knowledge to the test for a lively evening of fun. You can now book directly from the website. 6pm for food. 7pm for just the Quiz.

We look forward to welcoming you and sharing this exciting new chapter at The Bell.

Use Local. Or Bye Bye Local.

Julian Stokes

Yarpole Men's Shed



YMS at work in the village. When you live in the Yarpole parish it could be easy to take for granted the amenities we have; St. Leonard's Church, the community shop, the Gallery Café, The Bell pub and the Parish Hall. However, without the teams of volunteers that run them we would have none of these and members of the Yarpole Men's Shed are very active in providing support to these local organisations.

Recently, we had a request from the Parish Council to have a look at the railings alongside the stream at the bottom of Green Lane. The supporting posts had tilted and, as a result, joins in the railings had come apart. Could this be a job for the Men's Shed? We surveyed the site; this involved three people, a discussion on possible options and a decision of 'Well, we could give it a go.' Within two days it was done; railings rejoined. I won't bog you down with too many technical details about the work; suffice to say it involved a big hammer, a big wrench and the efforts of several Sheddors. The Shed in action for the community!

Interested in joining us? Membership is open to men residing in Yarpole Parish and surrounding areas. Whether you are interested in helping with community-based projects, just socialising or feel you would like to get involved in developing the group's activities, we would like to hear from you. Here's how to find us:

On email: yarpolshed@gmail.com

At our Shed: Our Shed, located behind The Bell, is open every Wednesday from 10.00 am to 11.30 am. Shed members meet here to work on one of our current projects or to just get together for a cup of tea and a chat.

At a social evening: We meet at The Bell on the third Thursday of each month at 7.00 pm. This is a good time to come along, meet some of us and find out more about The Men's Shed.

Trevor Edwards



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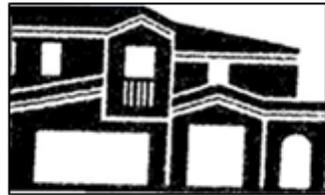
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Could you, or do you know someone who could benefit from the Good Neighbour Scheme? Please get in touch – 07885 525776

Let us know if you need a YPGNS fridge magnet

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

MIOLI continues to be a very popular village activity, with sessions under the direction of our qualified leader, Kath, each Monday and Tuesday at 11.00 till 12 noon in the Parish Hall, followed by tea, coffee and cake.

Fun, company, exercise, and all the health benefits they bring are available on your doorstep – our members highly recommend it!

If you'd like to join us, ring Anna on 780321, and leave a message. Or just turn up! Men, are you listening? Our 6 men need your backup. Try us!

WHAT'S ON AT 4Cs

4Cs offers Company, Chat, Coffee (or tea) and always CAKE.

Join us on the 4th Friday of each month, 11.00 till 12 noon, at the Parish Hall, for a varied series of speakers.

24 April – Clare Powell's rearranged talk on Living with Dementia.

22 May – Coffee Morning; come and chat in good company.

Need a lift? Ring Avis on 780874.



News from the Leominster Area Branch

Giving a helping hand to wildlife at Leominster Cemetery

The weather was kind to us that Sunday morning in late February as members of the Leominster Area branch of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust met at Leominster Cemetery with the goal of putting up eight bird boxes. We had previously selected trees which were close to shrubbery (hiding places and food sources for the birds) and away from the paths, to minimise any problems from bird droppings. We are very grateful to Weobley High School for making these sturdy boxes which we hope will soon be occupied.

Much of the ground was carpeted in primroses but we noted that there were only a few clumps of snowdrops at the far side of the cemetery. We will try to add some more of these early flowers and we earmarked a sunny bank near the road for crocus naturalisation. This should encourage more insects for the nesting birds as well as providing extra spring beauty for people visiting.

For those of you interested in birds, we are organising a led walk around Bodenham Lakes on 12 April at 10 am. The numbers will be limited so please book using our email:

leominsterbranch@herefordshirewt.co.uk

Priority will be given to members of the Wildlife Trust and parking charges will apply.

Diana Emes, Communication Secretary

Donation Reminder

If you have not already done so, please consider making a donation to the newsletter using the box below if required. This can be done in the following ways:

- By post, cheques made out to Yarpole PCC, to Adam Scott, Undercroft, Green Lane, Yarpole, HR6 0BJ.
- Handed in at the shop in an envelope marked Adam Scott (cash or cheque). (Or use collection tin).
- By bank transfer – to CAF Bank, sort code 40-52-40, account 00013394, Croft with Yarpole & Lucton PCC, reference DP.
- Give to Morwenna Lloyd if you live in Lucton.

Many thanks from the Newsletter Team

The Parishioner – donation to printing costs

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THE CURIOUS GARDENER

Spring returns

The past winter feels like one of the darkest and most wretched I can remember. The rain has been relentless, world news has been too dreadful to contemplate, and so many friends have died. But at the time of writing in early March, even while world leaders attempt to start WW3, I look at the garden and my heart begins to lift. The precious treasures that have been hiding all year under the pergola have almost overnight started their annual spring performance.

Let's start with my all-time spring favourites: wild violets. Their perfume is impossible to describe, and on a warm, still day it fills the air. The flower stems have a funny little loop at the top, like a shepherd's crook, and in spite of their tiny stature and delicate appearance they're remarkably tough. They make excellent ground-cover and the purple flowers last well in water, though even an egg-cup is too big to display them properly.

A little further along is a wide clump of Cardamine quinquefolia. A relative of our native Lady's Smock, it appears from nowhere all of a sudden, with the spikes of pink flowers unfurling at the same time as the bright green leaves. It's an enthusiastic spreader: last year I dug up chunks from around the edge of the clump to show it who was in charge, but it must have carried on spreading under the soil even while it was apparently dormant, because this spring it's even bigger than it was before. I guess I'll need to be more ruthless this year.

Soon the Cardamine will be joined by wood anemones, *Anemone nemorosa*. We've got several cultivars in different places in the garden, but under the pergola we have 'Vestal', whose double flowers are like little white pompoms. One year part of the clump seemed to have sported, producing greenish, extra-large, distorted flowers. I can't say they were very attractive, and I was glad when the following year they seemed to have disappeared.

Then last of all come the precious Trilliums. Alas, unlike all the other spring flowers under the pergola, they don't want to spread. We planted three of each type and fifteen years later we've still only got three of each. The books say they need moist soil (yes), well-drained (definitely not) and full of leaf mould (no, it's just full of rose roots). Maybe that's the problem.

All of these plants, with the exception of the violets, will disappear underground as soon as they've finished flowering, and each spring they surprise and delight me with their reappearance. Their determination to live is so heartening, and in this uncertain world that's just what we need.



Sue Russell



ORLETON AND DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB



Melcourt Peat-Free Compost

In February we welcomed Richard Cave, Technical and Sales manager of Melcourt Industries Ltd. This is a small company of 22 people situated on the Gloucester/Wiltshire border and was set up by the proprietors of a sawmill in Bishops Castle, Shropshire and Forest Products, Cumbria in 1983.

Garden compost forms a small part of Melcourt's range. It produces bark products for landscaping, play areas, equestrian purposes and biofiltration. Wood is taken from forest to sawmill for processing and the bark is then graded depending on its future use. The very fine particles, fines, were waste products initially. Stockpiles of fines coincided with the peat extraction debate and it was realized that they could be mixed with composted bark to provide a renewable and consistent product, low in nutrients therefore versatile.

Coir is added to hold moisture and is carefully sourced from central India to avoid salt contamination from coastal sites. It is washed to remove the pith using monsoon water collected in a lagoon and exported in compressed bales.

In 1995 the first peat-free compost was produced for landscapers and growers and the Sylvagrow range for gardeners was produced in 2013. Other ingredients include green waste, a base fertilizer, soluble lime, controlled-release nitrogen and a wetting agent. Green waste is variable in quality and therefore Melcourt uses only one source, in Hampshire.

Melcourt trials its products regularly to ensure consistency and tests against a peat-based mix. In order to find an alternative to coir, interesting experiments have been conducted using dried sphagnum produced commercially in the UK. Peat-free composts have been criticized for their lack of water retention but Richard explained that it is a question of management, watering little and often and adding feed slightly earlier than required for peat-based products. Usefully bags are date stamped.

Melcourt's Sylvagrow products are endorsed by the RHS, approved by the Soil Association and have received a Royal Warrant. They have received 23 *Which?* Best Buy accolades since 2013. Richard's informative and interesting talk ensured that his audience are unlikely to view this product as 'just' a bag of compost.

Ghislaine Arundale

Tuesday 28th April

Professional organic horticulturist **Nicola Hope** will present a talk entitled
Tales from the Potting Shed.

She has been involved with many well known gardens including Highgrove.
At Orleton Village Hall. Doors open 7.15pm for 8pm start. Non-members welcome at
£2.50 per person which includes tea or coffee. Annual Membership £15.00

www.orletongardeningclub.co.uk

Poor Law Records from Bircher

Account of the Temporary Disbursements for the use of the Poor & other purposes of the Township of Bircher Rich^d Bridgewater Overseer Commencing 1st Day of April 1799 as follows (cont)

April	Martha Pitchard, In ^c P ^{er} & Eleanor Nicholas	7	-
	15 Faggots each & down of the same	6	-
11	P ^{er} Rich ^d Childs by Order of W ^m Bruck	1	-
15	Relief for In ^c Griffiths & Wife with	1	-
16	P ^{er} for a summons for In ^c Griffiths	2	-
	for his days work to come to Leominster	2	-
	for Beer & Constable at Leominster to bring him to justice	2	-
	P ^{er} for W ^m Phelpots shroud & funeral expenses	10	6
	for in Cash	4	-
17	P ^{er} Rich ^d Childs when lame with his hand	3	-
18	Relief for In ^c Haynes extra to his weekly pay	1	-
	for In ^c Haynes funeral Expenses	2	-
20	P ^{er} In ^c Haynes funeral Expenses	10	6
23	Maintenance of Martins 2 Boys 2 Days	2	3
24	P ^{er} Expenses for Fall of the Ball 2 Meetings	1	-
26	Relief for Sarah Hill with	6	-
30	P ^{er} In ^c Griffiths for a Journey to Leominster	2	-
	for the Constable to bring him before Justice	2	-
	for Advancement of 2 ^d Drink	2	-
	for Making a shroud & down of the same	3	-
	for Making 15 Faggots for Mary Phillips	2	3
	Carried forward	35	-

This is a page from the overseers' accounts in 1819 for Bircher, kept by Richard Bridgewater, the parish overseer.

Before the Reformation, monasteries made provision for the poor, sick and out of work by providing food, medical help and temporary accommodation. Trade guilds also helped.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s, this responsibility was handed to the civil parishes. Overseers of the Poor, elected by the rate payers, were responsible for collecting the Poor Rate, a tax on property. This was used for 'indoor relief in almshouses and workhouses and 'outdoor relief' (support to people in their own homes) with the aim of helping the 'deserving' poor.

The Bircher records show the following entries: 15 faggots each of firewood for three named 'paupers'; a shroud and funeral costs for Mrs Phelpot; cash for Richard Childs when 'lame with his hand'; beer provided for the constable to take John Griffiths to justice at Leominster (twice);

This system ended in 1834 when the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed, setting up Poor Law Unions who created large new workhouses with much harsher conditions. The sexes were separated and all were forced to work. This system continued for almost a century, then in 1948 when the NHS was founded, many of the workhouses were converted into hospitals.

Thanks to John Hopkins for permission to quote from his article in 'The Pump, the newsletter of the group parishes of Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior', and to HARC for the document – Ed.

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Hop picking at Ladymeadow Farm

Thanks to Yarpole Living History for permission to print this photo



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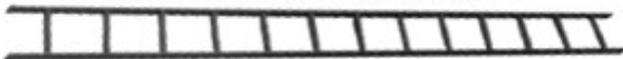
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Water Works

We have a borehole. Not boasting, just saying. Some people might think it a bit primitive, as if we still lived in the 19th century, or were trying to survive off-grid. Why dig a hole in the ground and suck it up through 150 feet of mud and rock, when you could have water piped straight into your home by the ever-popular Dŵr Cymru?

We used to do that but, you may be astonished to learn, it wasn't straightforward. For a start, whereas your meter is probably close at hand, ours was a quarter of a mile away, by the roadside, a foot down at the bottom of a tube under a hedge, which required a torch and a magnifying glass to read. Then, after we'd paid for the water, the pipe went under somebody's land, then under somebody else's, then under a road, then into our garden, and eventually into the house. If there was a leak anywhere, it would be a job to find.

So we had a leak. Or rather, we had a humungous water bill, ten times the usual amount, and realised something wasn't quite right. Welsh Water kindly offered to dig one hole between the house and the distant meter for free. After that, we would pay for however many other holes were necessary to locate the problem. Somehow, possibly using divining rods, they found it in our garden pretty quickly, and stopped the leak. Even better, they accepted that we hadn't been using ten times the usual amount of water, and waived the excess. Makes you proud to be a customer, doesn't it?

That was all very well, but supposing it were to happen again, on somebody else's land, or under the road, and suppose the divining rods were on the blink, then what? Might Welsh Water consider moving the meter on to our premises? Not a chance. So a borehole it was then, eye-wateringly expensive of course, but there we are. We still needed a pipe between the well-head and the house, but we are now self-sufficient in water and able to wave goodbye to water bills for evermore, although we do need to shell out for water-softening tablets from time to time.

But is the water as good? It's much better. Tap water generally has fluoride added to it, along with enough chlorine to wash chickens, and whereas before we didn't even notice it, we now taste that powerful off-putting disinfectant every time we drink some. Any microbes in our water, by contrast, are zapped by UV as they emerge from underground; and the chilled water from our fridge-freezer is charcoal-filtered as well, just in case we get paranoid. It's lovely.

I'm disappointed that nobody can tell us how old the water is – was it last week's rainfall, or last year's, or is it centuries old? – but it's unlikely to be affected much by droughts, which is a plus. The only fly in the ointment is that borehole water is pumped from deep down, so it's fine as long as the pump is working, which is fine as long there isn't a power cut.

When there inevitably is, that's when we crawl to a neighbour, who is still hitched up to the mains, and beg a kettleful of that wonderful Welsh water from their tap

Jim Ainsworth



Thanks to the following for the photos on this page:

Hayley Osborne – Birchpoles at the Worcester Arts Competition

Anna Morley – David and Rob trying out the type of equipment proposed for our community field.

David Cheshire – Bark at Brobury Gardens

Croft with Yarpole and Lucton Parish Church Services for April and May 2026



Date	Service	Church	Time
April 2026			
Wed 1	Be Still	Yarpole	17.30
Fri 3	Good Friday Meditation	Yarpole	11.00
Sat 4	Easter Eve Service	Croft	18.00
Sun 5	Easter Sunday Service	Yarpole	09.30
Sun 12	Holy Communion Common Worship	Yarpole	09.30
Sun 19	Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer Celtic Worship	Yarpole Yarpole	08.30 15.00
Mon 20	Café Church	Yarpole	19.30
Sun 26	Lay led service	Yarpole	09.30
May 2026			
Sun 3	Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	Croft	09.30
Wed 6	Be Still	Yarpole	17.30
Sun 10	Holy Communion Common Worship	Yarpole	09.30
Mon 11	Café church	Yarpole	19.30
Sun 17	Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer Annual Parochial Church Meeting Celtic Worship	Yarpole Yarpole Yarpole	08:30 15.00 16.30
Sun 25	Lay led service	Yarpole	09.30
Mon 26	Café church	Yarpole	19.30

Anyone wishing to contact a priest please phone or email:

**Rev. Matthew Burns on 01568 614399,
teamvicarwest@leominsterteam.org.uk**

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