The Athelney Magazine



Covering the church parishes of Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Stoke St Gregory

March 2025

Who's Who

Details of other roles can be found on the website, athelneybenefice.com/whoswho

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Churchwarden	Vacant	
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School Room Bookings	Pat Sollis	01823 490750, pat.sollis1@btinternet.com

The Athelney Bulletin

As well as this monthly Athelney Magazine, there is a weekly publication available online and in each church. The Athelney Bulletin is emailed out each weekend and printed copies can be found in readiness for Sunday worship. The bulletin contains all the readings for each Sunday and also news and notices of upcoming events. If you would like to receive this bulletin in your email either contact vicar@athelneybenefice.com or complete the form on the benefice website, athelneybenefice.com/signup



Coffee, Tea and Fellowship across the Benefice

Each month there is a pattern of gatherings, featuring tea, coffee, cakes and conversation. All are open to all. All are wonderful opportunities to chat and all the cakes are guaranteed to be of a very high standard.

You can find the coffee mornings here:



Burrowbridge

1st Saturday of each month, from 10am to 12pm in church.
Free to all.

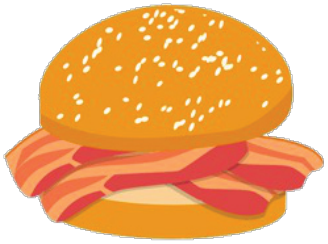
Lyng

Lyng Big Bart Breakfasys are held monthly on the third Saturday of the month, 10.30am.

North Curry

Wednesdays at 10am in church.

Stoke St Gregory



The Levellers meet at 2.30pm every third Tuesday in the Williams Hall. A time of conversation and fellowship, often with a visiting speaker.

Thank you to everyone who helps with these events

To Submit Copy

Copy deadline is **14th March** for the April Magazine; Please note: July and December are double months.

Please send **content** in an email attachment (ideally a Microsoft Word document) to **magazine@athelneybenefice.com**. Please add "CONTENT" to the subject line. If you are sending content pertaining to more than one thing, please send separate attachments and for each item, making it clear in which edition it is to appear. Please use 12-point Arial font and ensure that it fits into a maximum of 2 A5 pages where possible. To check this set your word document to be in landscape orientation with 2 columns. ***If none of this makes any sense, please just write it out long hand and put it through the vicarage door…***

To Subscribe

Subscriptions run from May to April each year.

Please pay your deliverer the £8 requested. After due consideration, we have realised that the BACS approach to subscription is currently too complicated to administer. If you have already paid using this route, then your subscription will have been accepted, but for the future, please only use the direct payment to the person who delivers your magazine.

Thank you!

To Advertise

If you wish to advertise in the magazine, please contact us via email using this address: magads@athelneybenefice.com

Prices are for 10 editions of the magazine Full page £75, Half page £45, Quarter page £30. One off (single edition) adverts are £10 for up to one full page.

To Contact

Any questions please send an email to magazine@athelneybenefice.com and we will respond as soon as possible. Please use the group emails provided rather than sending things direct to one person.

The Athelney Benefice



It's never too late, you know

It's nothing new to be old and look back on your youth. In Plato's *Republic*, written 2,400 years ago, Cephalus talks about how old age has freed him from the anxiety resulting from desiring pleasures that the youth often enjoy. He then explores what "the youth" get up to, and it's not particularly different from today, or last century, or … well, pick a timescale: partying, drinking, you can fill in the gaps. I have absolute confidence in pointing out that every one of us reading this was at some point a child, a teenager and a young adult (unless, by some chance you are not yet past any of those ages, of course). We each have our memories and we each of us at some point realise that those days are gone. For some that is a matter of grief and for some a deep relief. I attended the Friends of North Curry School Quiz recently. Our team was doing well until us oldies hit the buffers on the topic of current music. Not a clue. hey ho.

It's a well known feature of our church congregations that they are growing old with us. The trend in rural parishes in particular is for younger people to be less present. Across the Athelney Benefice our Sunday Schools are a thing of the past and it is very common for there to be no children in our services. Understandably we are concerned about this. We speak of family life in our Christian faith, and families feature a lot in the Gospels. There are many passages when a child is mentioned (e.g. Mark 10:13-16) and in Acts Cornelius's whole family are baptised (Acts 10:48). Family life is key to who we are and faith is not reserved for the older ones among us.

Last month North Curry was filled on a Sunday morning as we baptised Arlo, and his whole extended family came along to be part of it. A fabulous, uplifting and enriching moment: to share the Eucharist with so many and to have a church so busy with the voices of little ones. Such joy. We are a long way from that happening every Sunday, and perhaps it isn't even what everyone desires in their worship. Being able to offer worship and experience of faith to all ages, however, is where our life as a community of Christians must lie.

How do we go about it? How do we re-enliven our church communities with younger people? As always, it depends. Some churches do indeed have active younger congregations and there is much to learn perhaps from their experience. We also have our own opportunities to develop, however. We are active and engaged with both our local schools, for example. They join in with Festivals such as Christmas and Easter, and we visit the schools to share bible stories through "Open The Book". They visit the church to explore, and that all helps. But there is more to what we desire than that. Family life is more than special events and collective worship. Family life is where we need to focus and share our faith.

Most of us are family people, and so we understand the pressures on families to be all placed and doing all things for their children. We need to (and can) engage at this level of basic family life, offering family-focused worship (and not necessarily on a Sunday morning, either!). We need to (and can) create times of social gatherings that provide both physical and spiritual sustenance. We can feed one another with cake as well as prayer, and we can do it in ways that bring people along to a faithful gathering, where "Church" is seen not as a rather strange and complicated moment in an old, cold building, but as a bouncy castle outside the church in the summer sun. We need to (and can) organise fellowship and spiritual nourishment for younger parents as they come to terms with being mums and dads, and with all that brings (do you remember being a young parent?).

Arlo's baptism (and the many more we conduct across the benefice over the weeks and months) was just the beginning of a life as part of a Christian family and community. When we welcome families with open arms we need to do so not out of despair that we need younger people, but out of our delight at being able to share the Good News that Jesus guides us in our families and can enrich all who join in.

Over the coming Summer months we have opportunities to welcome families into church: for the Music Festival Family Worship (22nd June, by the way), and to show how families are an expression of harmony in our world and also other forms of engagement—currently in the planning pipeline—with younger people, meeting them "where they are" in their faith journey. These are small steps along the path that emerges before us as we wander together, in Christ and through Christ, in faith.

We may well be well advanced along the road of life, but we can hold out our arms and welcome those who are just setting out, and say to them: let's wander together.

Sometimes I write benign pleasantries, other times I share what has been getting under my skin a little more. If you would like to respond to either, I am always interested, please let me know what thoughts in you my words elicit. vicar@athelneybenefice.com

Martin's Musings

A monthly observation on life



All through my childhood my mother was always encouraging my siblings and me to 'make good use of our time'. Well, being very fond of my mother and not wanting to disappoint I did my best. For myself it usually meant gardening or housework.

I seemed to spend long hours during the school holidays weeding or pruning (visiting those wonderful institutions, garden centres, with all those lovely plants and cakes wasn't on the cards as they hadn't yet been invented) or inside, hoovering dusting and polishing, which probably explains why housework is now low on my list of priorities. At least, that is my excuse and I'm sticking to it!

Luckily, I was spared cooking as mother, bless her, was no cook. Half an hour in the oven at top temperature and out it came. How we survived childhood without food poisoning was just down to pure luck! Once, when mother was still at work I tried to boil some cabbage. I sliced and washed the leaves, placed them on top of each other and poured into the pot and boiled. When I thought it was done, an hour later (I did have to top up the water) it emerged unique in culinary history: a cabbage cake! Mother just smiled sweetly when she saw it, thanked me for my efforts and opened a tin of baked beans!

Now all this effort is based on a diabolical idea which rejoices in the wonderful title THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC. Yes it really does deserve capital letters. For this idea is simple. Being being a liberal catholic I can safely disclaim all responsibility, but for those of you who follow this barmy idea, my dears, this appalling notion is that no moment in the day should not be spent in good, honest hard work. PHOOEY!



Now happily in retirement I fill my day with as little as possible. Yes, there is my lovely ministry in the benefice, but I regard that as a really enjoyable hobby, so it never seems like work to me. The poet once wrote these beautiful lines. 'What is this life so full of care, that we have no chance to stand and stare'. Well, you must decide for yourself, but I fully intend to do a lot of staring in my final years.

Open yourself afresh

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells



Did you ever wonder where the term 'Lent' comes from? The word is a gift from our Anglo-Saxon past. It means 'lengthen', a naming of the longed-for reality of this time of year when we become aware that, at last, the short days of winter are coming to an end, the nights are drawing out and the days are getting longer, they're lengthening.

As well as naming what we're seeing, Lent has its meaning within the life of the Church. Its season of 40 days is a time of preparation for the coming of Easter, our annual celebration of Jesus rising from the dead. It reflects the 40 days that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after his baptism. So, for much of Christian history it's been a time of prayer and fasting - the origin of our 'giving something up for Lent'.



Lent developed from the practice of the early Church. Back then, as still happens today, converts entered into the faith through baptism. The main time that baptism took place was Easter Eve, the night before Easter Sunday. Lent marked the final, intensive 40 days of preparation experienced by those to be baptised (known as catechumens) in readiness for their embarking fully on their new life with Christ.

The time to get ready for Lent is now. This year its first day, Ash Wednesday, falls on the 5th March. There's so much we can do to bring this season home into our hearts. Why not join your church's Lent Group? Read one of the Lent books available at this time of year? Take something up? Commit to a regular time of prayer? Find out about getting confirmed? Lent is a rich gift to us to go deeper into our Christian life. As the days lengthen and the light comes, I encourage you to use this time to open yourself afresh to the one who comes to us afresh with new life at Easter - the risen Lord, Jesus Christ himself.

DIOCESE OF Bath&Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

(Find out more about our Benefice Lent Group on page 19)



Burrowbridge

Reminder!

We need to hear you! On 11th March

We have some money to spend! It's not a huge amount but Burrowbridge Parish Church has around £13,000 in its accounts that needs to be spent as soon as possible. That's good to hear, right?

Now the background story. Burrowbridge Primary School closed on 31st March 2012 with only twelve pupils on roll. It was a very sad day for so many people in the village and beyond, but the economics and practicalities of providing education for such a small number of children made it unfeasible to keep the school open. The sorrow remains so to this day in the village. Suddenly the sound of children was gone from the day to day life.



The school site was sold and the proceeds and some eventually made it to the PCC of St Michael's Church in Burrowbridge. The church only received the money some time after the school closure, once the whole process was completed and the Diocese had decided how to handle matters, but, twelve years from the closure we really do need to find a suitable reason to spend it.

The money was given to the church (who continue to act as trustees for the amount) on the understanding that it would be used for the *educational benefit of children living in the Burrowbridge parish, and to be spent within the parish itself*. This is not as easy as you might think. The money won't go far on its own, and so we need to consider either how to spend it wisely as it is or to work on a larger project that is "seeded" by the £13,000.

The first step is therefore to do some research as to who can get involved and (most of all) what is best for our children. To this end, we are arranging a public meeting on **March 11th at 7pm in the Coronation Hall**. Anyone who lives in or has a positive and practical link with Burrowbridge is invited to attend. Most of all, if you are a parent or carer of a child who lives in Burrowbridge, we urge you to come along. We would particularly love to hear from the children themselves.

At this stage the meeting will be about sharing ideas. Clearly we need to be creative and wise about how to spend this money, so please don't expect an immediate solution on March 11th. But, please do come along and be a part of the beginning of this initiative.



The Churchyard



Last month we explained how the wall at Burrowbridge was about to be repaired. This month we turn to look at the churchyard as a whole.

It is a smallish churchyard, but we are making more space available having removed a lot of elders and levelled the ground along the eastern margins, as shown in the photograph above.

Thank you to Martin Keswick for doing this great job of flattening the ground. It will enable us to use this region of the churchyard for burials.

The churchyard is a beautiful place to rest and reflect. With the Mump in the background and when to sun shines on the green grass and mossy path, you can feel that God is near. Thank you to all who maintain the grounds.



Coffee, Cakes and Conversation…

St Michael's feast of cakes and more happens every first Saturday at 10.30am, all first Saturdays through the year!

All welcome. A great place to catch up with people.



Lyng

The Big Bart Breakfast

The third Saturday of the month in Lyng is fast becoming a day of joy and expectation. We've had two Big Bart Breakfasts now (January and February) and the next, March 15th is already being planned. The monthly event is a fund raiser for church funds and the past two months have helped enormously, raising £256 towards the repair of the clock.

In fact, it's more of a brunch than a breakfast, with the first serving at a very relaxing 10.30am–such a civilised time to eat. For £10 you get a Full (like, really full!) English: eggs, bacon, sausages, beans, tomatoes, hash browns, mushrooms, black pudding, tea/coffee, juice, toast. Or any permutation of those items. All served with a smile!

The conversation is lovely and the venue delightful. Lyng Village Hall may be petite, but it is a lovely place to meet and natter over a plateful.

Our thanks got to everyone in the Lyng congregation who are making this happen. And long may it continue!



Lyng Church Clock Fundraising

If you drive along the A361 past St Bartholomew's it will seem as though you're experiencing a local Groundhog Day, with the time fixed at ten minutes to five. No: time does not stand still in Lyng, but the church clock does.

Repair have been scheduled to happen soon, but we are still seeking to raise funds for the work, rather than using our reserves. We need £2,500 to cover the costs. Our recent Big Bart Brunch was one such event and over £100 has been added to the balance, so that's a start… However, a great deal more is required. So, here are a few events that will happen over the coming months. Please do join us in whatever ways you can and be part of the fundraising initiative.

Lyng Parish Council

The Parish Council meets every 2 months, usually on a Thursday evening, at Lyng Village Hall. Members of the public are always welcome to attend.

The next Parish Council meeting will be Thursday 13th March 2025 at 7.30pm (revised date). The agendas and minutes of previous meetings are published on the parish website: lyngparish.square.site



The parish clerk, Mrs Helen Barrington, can be contacted via email lyngpc1@outlook.com or Tel: 01823 490391



Jumble and Tumble

If you can bear it (groan), bring your Teddy to church on **Saturday 3rd May** and be prepared to throw him/her from the church roof–with a parachute, promise! With sponsorship, of course…

Also that day, in church, we'll be holding a good old-fashioned jumble sale.



North Curry

200 CLUB

The 200 Club still has room for one more! Players must be 18yrs+ to join. Only £18 per year (£1.50/month). Prizes each month £30/ £20/ £10. Proceeds for churchyard maintenance.

To sign up, contact Sue Bethune on 01823 490179. Cheque payments to North Curry PCC, Standing Order/ BACS payments to North Curry PCC, Account No: 00514650, Sort Code: 30-98-45.

Please note that the North Curry PCC recently decided that the annual "Christmas Bonus Prize" would no longer be offered. The bonus of Christmas 2024 was the one to be awarded.

Winners
Sun 2nd February

1st Rosemary Woodgate.
2nd Joan Ryan
3rd Harvi Kalsi

North Curry Coffee Shop

From Tuesday 4th March, we will be returning to our usual opening hours of 10 am to 4.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday, with last orders at 4.15 pm.

We continue to serve our highly popular homemade soups, so come in for a warming bowl of delicious soup or a jacket potato or sandwich, followed perhaps by a slice of one of our famous home baked cakes. And our cheese scones are considered by cyclists to be the 'best in Somerset'! We also sell a variety of lovely local art, crafts, cards and jewellery.

As ever, we are always looking for new volunteers so if you would like to join our friendly team, please email us at coffeeshop@northcurry.com or call us on 01823 491414. It's a great way to meet people while helping the community and raising money for your chosen charity. We're very proud to have raised over £250,000 for charities and local good causes since opening in 2006.

We look forward to welcoming you.

NORTH CURRY COFFEE SHOP

Talking Cafe

Village Hall, North Curry

Greenway, North Curry, TA3 6NQ

When?

3rd Friday of the month



2pm - 4pm

somerset village & community agents
part of CCS





WHY POP IN?

Talking Cafes are great if you are looking for help and advice on important issues such as:

- caring for another
- housing
- health
- finance
- help with food/cooking
- adult social care
- children's services
- feelings of loneliness and isolation
- anything else that is worrying you.



Meet your local Village Agent and other support services.

www.somersetagents.org/talkingcafes

Funded by: Somerset Council, NHS Somerset

Provided by: CCS people · place · enterprise

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Parish Council

Greenway Speedwatch: The North Curry Community Speedwatch Group can now monitor traffic in Greenway. The Police have given Speedwatch an authorised site to operate from in Greenway. Now we need local volunteers to help us… could one of those be you? We have had many complaints about speeding on Greenway, so hopefully that means there will be plenty of volunteers! Please contact the Parish Clerk and she will put you in touch with the team.

Dog Fouling: We have had reports of dog-walkers being spotted failing to pick up after their dogs. Dog fouling is not only an offence subject to fines but also poses health hazards to humans (particularly children!!) and other animals. Please pick up after your dog before a child potentially does. On a similar note, we'd like to remind dog-walkers using White Street sports fields to keep dogs on leads, stick to the edges of the fields, and not allow dogs on the sports pitches.

Drain Covers & Rubbish: Please watch out for drains being choked by debris, particularly after recycling collection day if items are blown out of bins and onto roads. If you see any recycling that may have been blown or dropped, please pick it up and dispose of it appropriately, this helps both to keep drain covers clear and working and our Parish free of litter!

Dates for Your Diary: Saturday 15th March from 10am–12pm: defibrillator (AED) training, FREE to attend at the Village Hall; Saturday 29th March from 10:30am: community litter pick event, meeting outside the Village Hall. Litter pickers and hi-vis are provided, but please bring a warm coat and sensible shoes

Oxen Lane Updates: Following the Parish Council meeting on the 12th February which included Somerset Council Planning Officers, the Parish Council will be adding an 'Oxen Lane updates' section to the website where you can find the most recent monthly update from Somerset Council. These updates will also be shared on Facebook. If you aren't able to access these online, please visit the Parish Office during opening hours and the Clerk can print a copy for you.

The Parish Council Office

Wednesdays 10:00am – 1:00pm and Thursdays 1:00pm – 4:00pm
Phone: 01823 490136 or email: parishcouncil@northcurry.com.
Please check the notice board, website or Facebook for the Council's diary. Council Meetings are the second Wednesday of each month with any extra planning meetings as needed on the last Wednesday of the month (both in the Meeting Room, Village Hall at 7:30pm).

North Curry Village Choir

Spring Rehearsals 2025

Resume on

Thursday 9th January, 8.00 pm

North Curry Village Hall

Our main work will be

Mozart Requiem

Our next concert is

Saturday 10th May 2025

New Members Welcome

If you would like to join us, or discuss the possibility, please contact our Choir Secretary by phone or Website Contact Form

Tel: **Barbara Lancey on 01458 252657**

Website: **www.northcurryvillagechoir.org**



The North Curry School Worship Warriors

On Friday 7th February, North Curry Primary School celebrated Number Day by dressing as a Number. We dressed as a number to raise money for the NSPCC. We managed to raise £86.

On Thursday 6th February, two of our Octopus Class children represented the school at a 'Look who's talking' competition at West Buckland school. They had to recite a poem off by heart and do a presentation on a subject of their choice for no longer than four minutes. We did very well but unfortunately we didn't win.

Next week, we are looking forward to our well being enrichment week. On Thursday we are having a rotational activities day where the teachers are organising lots of different well-being activities for us including Lego, a spa experience, aerobics and yoga. We will share some photos and information about what we did next time.



Lent Group

In Lent we journey with Jesus on the difficult and thorny road that leads all the way to the cross on Good Friday—and beyond—to the transformation of Easter Day. God invites us to bring to him our own journey through everyday life. In the disappointment of daily setbacks and the pain of deeper hurts, we discover that God is present with us. And God promises a future where all things are healed and made new. **Living Hope, our lent group theme this year** offers us the opportunity to deepen our hope in God and be part of what God is doing to bring hope in the world.

The readings and reflections explore how we can have hope in times of frustration or uncertainty; the hope found in joining with others; the invitation to notice signs of hope around us; the courage to face reality and pursue a hopeful future; and the ways God transforms death into life at Easter.

The group meets every Tuesday during Lent, at 3pm. Find out more—venues etc.—contact The Vicar.

LIVING HOPE

North Curry and District Amateur Gardeners

Gardening Through The Ages – Claire Hart

Friday 4th April 7.45 for 8pm at North Curry Village Hall: Claire Hart will give us an entertaining talk about gardening through the ages, and will show how things have changed and developed over the years.

We are enthusiastic gardeners from North Curry and nearby who meet on the first Friday from September to May at 7:45pm in North Curry Village Hall. Invited speakers entertain us on a variety of gardening- related topics. Refreshments and a chat round off the evening.



There's something for everyone with an interest in gardening and plants.

New members and visitors are always welcome (membership £12 annually, visitors £3.00/visit).

Need more info? Telephone Sue on 01823 491658 or email northcurrygardeningclub@gmail.com

Church Cleaning Day–29th March

After the great success of last time our beautiful Parish Church again needs your help with some regular maintenance/cleaning.

March 29th - 10am to 12 noon, and 2pm to 4pm

There are a variety of jobs to suit all ages and abilities! Dusting, polishing, tidying, gutter cleaning, ivy removal, bench cleaning…

Mothering Sunday posy making too!

Useful equipment to bring are gloves, dusters, long-arm dusters, brushes, sprays, secateurs, spades, ladders.

Why not make it a family affair, and let's all help to get the whole building sparkling and ready for Easter.





NORTH CURRY F I L M CLUB



On **March 8th** we are showing Mrs Harris Goes to Paris. This is a delightful story of a widowed cleaning lady, played byLesley Manville, who in 1950s London falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, and decides that she must have one of her own. The film is charming and fun to watch.

Village hall doors open at 2:30pm and the film starts at 3pm. We have an intermission for cake & tea (donation requested) and a chat. Entry is £5. Why not come and meet our friendly audience.

On **March 26th** we are showing the highly regarded 2023 film Limbo. Omar is a promising young musician. Separated from his Syrian family, he is stuck on a remote Scottish island awaiting the fate of his asylum request. This is a wonderfully witty and moving film. Definitely five stars.

The Village hall doors & bar open at 7pm, with the film starting at 7.30pm. Also open to guests (£5).

Please see our website for trailers: www.northcurryfilmclub.org.uk or use the QR code.



We also have a Facebook page.

We are looking for help running the club. All offers of help are very welcome. Contact Don on 490 859.

NORTH CURRY SOCIETY

The Taunton Stop Line—Defensive Archaeology, Wednesday 19th March at 7.30pm (for 8pm)

Andrew Powell-Thomas

Somerset's rich military history stretches back to stone age hill forts, castles built following the Norman conquest, and most recently the local Stop-Line structures. Author and historian Andrew Powell-Thomas will talk about these defences built during WW2 to counter Hitler's threatened invasion.

Doors open at 7.30pm for a hot drink and congenial company; the talk starts at 8pm.

Visitors welcome on payment of the £5 guest fee, or you can join as a member for £15, which gets you into our programme of talks for the rest of the Society's year to July.



The Society generally meets on the third Wednesday each month for talks of local interest. A full programme of talks has been arranged for the year ahead, which you will see on the Membership Card that will be available that evening. If you are not yet a member, you'll still be welcome (on payment of the guest fee of £5, or taking out annual membership for £15). Doors open at 7.30pm for a hot drink and warm conversation. Our Chairman Colin Trim (490337) would be pleased to learn about topics and speakers of interest to you.

Pay It Forward for Somerset—a campaign that changes lives

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) is a Somerset charity working to make sure that no one in our county must face hardship alone. They have launched a #PayItForward-Somerset campaign, aiming to raise £25,000 to support vital services that help Somerset residents when they need it most.

CCS people · place · enterprise

Every day, CCS helps people like Amy, whose limited mobility left her without fresh food and the ability to cook for herself. Thanks to the support of a CCS Village Agent, Amy now has access to a food pantry and a home kitchen setup that allows her to prepare her own meals again. And then there's Ed, who was overwhelmed by memory loss and mounting debts. With support from CCS, Ed received help with finances, daily care, and now feels safe at home.

CCS has a team of Village Agents who work throughout the county helping people to avoid isolation, keep warm, put food on the table, find housing, care for a loved one and connect with their community. Last year they supported over 10,000 Somerset residents with all kinds of issues, large and small.

Every pound raised by the Pay It Forward campaign will go towards services like Village Agents and CCS's wider community work, addressing economic challenges, health needs and social isolation.

There are lots of ways to Pay It Forward in Somerset, from making a donation, fundraising eg. holding a coffee morning, or Knitting for your Neighbour. Please visit ccslovesomerset.org/pay-it-forward-for-somerset to find out more and help if you can.

PAY IT FORWARD for Somerset

You can meet your local Village Agent at a Talking Cafésomersetagents.org/talking-cafes/, or request support here: somersetagents.org/

CONGO INITIATIVE

A Benefice Charity



Quite a few months ago I was put in touch with David McAllister, the CEO of the UK part of "The Congo Initiative" ("CI"). David has a background in Congo (he grew up there) and is a passionate advocate for CI. We chatted, ate and drank together (he is great company) and since then I have been seeking ways for the parishes in the benefice to help support CI. You can find out a great deal from their website (congoinitiative.org), but briefly, the function is to support the higher education of young Congolese people in order that they may take active roles as citizens of that beleaguered nation. Governance is fragile in Congo, and there are frequent violent outbursts, a great deal of rape and other horrendous acts across the huge and beautiful nation. Hearing David talk reveals in me just how cosseted and secure we are in the UK. It is important that we find ways to support those far less fortunate.



A Benefice Quiz: Saturday March 15th at 7.30pm in North Curry Village Hall

To secure your team place (teams of six), please contact Jenny Satchwell (01823 490463) Cost: £12/team. Ticket includes buffet supper.

David is visiting the Benefice for the weekend of March 15th this year. He will be speaking to us at the Quiz Night being organised for 7.30pm on that Saturday in North Curry Village Hall (details in the box).

He will also be joining us in Stoke St Gregory, preaching during our Eucharist.

Please do consider joining the fundraising quiz and finding out more about howe can continue to support this wonderful initiative in one of the world's most disadvantaged nations.



Stoke St Gregory

A few Updates...

By Revd Simon

There is a lot going on behind the scenes in St Gregory's. Here are a few things worthy of mention…



South Transept

There's a special name for most parts of a church. A transept is the part that forms the arms of a cross. The South Transept in St Gregory's is the one opposite the organ, currently with the chairs stacked and the "ledger stones" leant against the walls. Ledger stones are the the memorial stone often laid in the floor of a church (stay with me…). For some reason, lost in time, the stones were fixed to the wall. We removed from the wall of the transept many months back because they were falling away and taking the wall with them. We have fixed the wall and now the stones are leaning against the wall waiting for permission to fix them in place, making them a feature of the transept–there will be some restoration of the stones as well, making them a feature of the heritage of the church. As with so many church matters, this all takes time because we are dealign with an historic building. The paperwork is quite something (thanks to Steve Loveridge and others for navigating this!).

When all is back in place we can unstack the chairs and go back to using the South Transept as our Lady Chapel. There will be celebration!

Church Path

The church path(s) is a bit of a headache. Half was replaced over twenty years ago with poured concrete. They are sturdy, secure and do not become slippery when wet. The same cannot be said for the other half, which is made from very ancient blue lias and is lethal in damp conditions. It also fractures over time and we have a lot of broken slabs. Together with the slippery nature, this is very unsafe. Two years ago we began the process of finding a way to repair (i.e. replace) the old, cracked stones, assuming it would be straightforward to use more poured concrete. Progress has been



slow since we have been "encouraged" to replace the broken stones with as much blue lias as possible. The planning procedure has required a lot of head scratching (I won't go into details…) and much paperwork between church, diocese and Somerset council but we are hopeful there will be some conclusion to the whole matter over the coming months. As with the South Transept, there will be celebration!

Easter Egg Hunt



To continue the theme of celebration, we will be planning an Easter Egg Hunt for the afternoon of Holy Saturday (19th April). It will held in the churchyard and … there will be prizes! It's a bit of a way away currently. Easter is almost as late as it can be this year (full moons and equinoxes and things… ask me later) so please put the date in your diary and pray for sunshine. Further details will follow in the April magazine. Whilst this is of course especially for our children, this vicar will certainly be amongst those seeking a cream egg or three…

A Shrovetide lunch

Since this mag is a little late to press, I can include an update and a thanks. We had our first Shrovetide Lunch last Sunday. We are finding people would rather not venture out in the dark of an evening and so, rather than the more usual Shrove Tuesday Supper we decided to have a Sunday lunch. , and so have taken this decision. It was a resounding success. The Sunday School Room was packed, and since it was a united benefice worship beforehand, many from our neighbouring parishes also joined in. Our Archdeacon was there too, as he had led us in worship.



It was a lovely time of socialising and sharing, and the food was terrific, as always (with second helpings freely available).

Thank you to everyone who helped: the cooks, the table setters, the washer uppers and all those who just showed up and supported. Funds were raised towards the upkeep of our beautiful church but I'm not sure how much, yet.

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Village Agent

The Somerset Village Agent project is run by the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) and now covers half of the county. The project uses paid, highly trained individuals living in the parish 'clusters' they support. Village Agents help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely residents and statutory and/or voluntary organisations, matching specific needs to the bewildering range of services on offer. We work with people of all ages and deal with a wide variety of issues, although a considerable proportion of our work involves elderly clients and social care.

Tina Talbot is the Village Agent covering Stoke St Gregory, North Curry, East Lyng, Monkton Heathfield and other surrounding villages. She is keen to get to know the community and offer signposting and support to:

- Ensure that people receive the benefits they are entitled to
- Direct people to organisations that can help them
- Ensure people living alone are not forgotten
- Make the local community aware of social problems in their area
- Offer advice, particularly to the elderly
- Locate people who are lonely and need help such as food or local services
- Advise on energy problem and how to save money

Tina can be contacted as follows:

Tel: 01823 331222
Mobile: 07947 902712
Email: tinat@somersetrcc.org.uk

Garden Musings

By Revd Martin Mudie



Many years ago, when driving home from work, my spirits were lifted by sight of a beautiful weeping cherry of the most bright pink which had been planted on a lawn in front of a block of flats. True, the blossom didn't last that long, but while out it was amazing. I have always loved flowering cherries. To me, they seem to be a foretaste of the spring. In Japan, from which many of our cherries come, there is a month-long festival for them when the whole country, over a period of six weeks goes blossom potty. Of course, the individual trees don't last that long, but due to the changing temperatures of the top of the north island and the bottom of the southern islands, they all bloom at different times. I particularly remember a wonderful double flowering almond which usually came into bloom in January of the brightest pink. It really cheered me on a dull January day. I grow a number of cherries in the extensive grounds of Broughton House, by among them I have several favourites. Apart from the Cheals Weeping Cherry, I love the winter flowering one which rejoices in the name of Prunus Subhirtella Rosea, which can flower from November to March. One of my more recent acquisitions is a variegated weeping one which delights in the daft name, I kid you not, of Frilly Knickers! However, even if you don't want frilly knickers in your garden, I'm sure there might be one that takes your fancy. A good tip is to buy the tree in flower as the pictures are not always accurate and try to get it whilst still in bud.

---

theWI INSPIRING WOMEN

Bunty Guildford will be coming to Stoke St Gregory WI to inform us on the use of language with a talk titled **"Be Yourself and Say it with Ease"** on **Tuesday 11th March**.

Sue Dare is giving the vote of thanks, Mary Ginger and Belinda Morgan are the tea hostesses, Janice Pearce will be filling the rose bowl and Kathryn Astin is running the trade stall. It should be an interesting evening commencing at 7pm.

Don't hesitate to come along, it is only £4:50 for a visitor where a warm welcome awaits.Our speakers are always varied, the welcome is always warm, the friendship provides laughs and support. Why not try it for yourself? We meet at Stoke St Gregory Village Hall on the **second Tuesday of the month with the meeting starting at 7pm**. Contact Amelia Holt, 01823 490401 or 07985 317252 for further details.



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Mid-week Holy Communion



There is now a weekly Holy Communion service held at 10am in North Curry Church. It is a said service (no hymns etc.) and takes palce in the Lady Chapel in the church. All are welcome: please just come along if you feel the need.

Rotas

Stoke St Gregory

Readers

Please read both Old and New Testament readings as shown in the bulletin. If changing weeks please advise Jane or Pat

2nd Mar	Simon
16th Mar	John
23rd Mar	Jo
30th Mar	Jordan
6th Apr	Steve

NB: No flowers during Lent

Sidespersons

2nd Mar	Simon & Penny
16th Mar	Barbara P & John
23rd Mar	Alex & Sally
6th Apr	Penny & Simon

Cleaners

2nd Mar	Marilyn & Terri
9th Mar	Penny & Simon
16th Mar	Dave & Janet
23rd Mar	Linda & Janet
30th Mar	Annette & Martin
6th Apr	Marilyn & Terri

North Curry

	Sidesmen	Intercessions	Readers
9th Mar	P. Burgess, J. Dare	D Farnham	Z. Sykes
16th Mar	J. Dare	H. Griffiths	D. Walker, M. Piers
23rd Mar	H. Comrie, L. Farnham	J. Satchwell	C. Trim
30th Mar	L. Paul, T. Jeanes	D. Walker	D. Farnham
6th Apr	Denise Walker, J. Sergeant	D. Farnham	D. Akerman

Services across the Benefice

9th March First Sunday of Lent

8.30am	Stoke St Gregory	Prayer Book Eucharist
9.30am	Burrowbridge	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family worship service with communion

16th March Second Sunday of Lent

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
10.00am	Lyng	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family worship service
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist
4.00pm	North Curry	Evensong

23rd March Third Sunday of Lent

9.30am	Burrowbridge	Eucharist
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family worship service
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist

30th March (5th Sunday) Mothering Sunday

10.00am	Burrowbridge	Morning Prayer
10.00am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.30am	Stoke Baptist Church	Family worship service
11.00am	Stoke St Gregory	Eucharist

6th April Fifth Sunday of Lent

8.30am	North Curry	Prayer Book Eucharist
10.00am	Lyng	Service of the Word
10.00am	North Curry	Eucharist
10.00am	Stoke Baptist Church	Messy Church, starting with breakfast
6.00pm	Stoke St Gregory	Evensong