



# The ARCH Messenger

*To show our love for God and You  
March 2021*



Abbots Morton, Rous Lench, Church Lench & Harvington  
[www.archbenefice.org.uk](http://www.archbenefice.org.uk)

ARCH Benefice: parishes of Abbots Morton, Rous Lench, Church Lench and Harvington

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Office hours: 9.30am to 9.30pm Monday-Thursday, Saturday;  
day off: Friday; Sunday afternoons: quiet space  
*Urgent pastoral matters – any time*

## Readings

7 <sup>th</sup> March	Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19:7-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
14 <sup>th</sup> March	Exodus 2:1-10; Psalm 34:11-20; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7;
Mothering Sunday	Luke 2:33-35
21 <sup>st</sup> March	Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-13; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33
28 <sup>th</sup> March	<i>Liturgy of the Passion: Mark 14:1-15:47</i>
Palm Sunday	
1 <sup>st</sup> April	Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14; Psalm 116:9-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26;
Maundy Thursday	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
4 <sup>th</sup> April	1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Psalm 118:14-24; Acts 10:34-43;
Easter Sunday	Mark 16:1-8
11 <sup>th</sup> April	Exodus 14:10-30, 15:20-21; Psalm 133; Acts 4:32-35; John 10:19-30
18 <sup>th</sup> April	1 John 1:3-7; Psalm 4; Acts 3:12-19; Luke 24:36b-48
25 <sup>th</sup> April	1 John 3:16-24; Psalm 23; Acts 4:5-12; John 10:11-18

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## Thought for the month

### *All the ingredients for a great soup!*

Even with all restaurants and cafes closed people can still visit takeaways. You will know of many heart-warming initiatives that support the vulnerable, including the Harvington Support network, and collections for the food banks including those at Caring Hands and All

**Saints' Evesham Parish Church. All these initiatives are very much appreciated.**

People still get hungry so I am pleased to lead a team of soup makers, soup transporters and soup servers every Sunday. *Sunday Soup* started at the end of November and the team operates whatever the weather. The idea is simple: each week a kind person makes a nourishing, freshly-cooked, home-made vegetable soup. This is placed in a transportable soup kettle and driven to All **Saints' Church in Evesham where it is given out in closed cups with a bread roll** (kindly donated each week by Waitrose) and serviette in a takeaway bag. We have served over 200 portions so far and the great thing is more than 20 people across the Vale of Evesham have already been involved. Some people are shielding and happily make soup. Others are happy to drive or be outside **as we give out the soup. Di Bennett and All Saints' Evesham PCC have been very supportive and cash donations, including start-up funding from Pauline Bamber in Church Lench, have made this truly a team effort – a huge 'thank you' to everyone involved.**

The conversations we have are as important as the nourishment; they have helped a homeless man find support and offered prayers for a man recently bereaved. *Sunday Soup has been a recipe for feeding all Jesus' sheep, just as He encouraged us in John 21:17. Everyone is welcome and it's the highlight of the week.* For more information please contact me, Revd Chris, on 07977 072105.

*Chris Sheehan*



*Stop date for next issue: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March*

## Rector's Corner

Midweek Holy Communion (BCP): *Replaced by recorded midweek reflection*

Tuesday prayers:  
Benefice prayers: *Suspended until further notice*  
Home Communion:

Daily prayers: via Zoom – contact me for details  
8.30am and 6pm (e-mail [rector@archbenefice.org.uk](mailto:rector@archbenefice.org.uk))

Men's Night *No meeting this month due to Lent*

## From the Registers

### *Church Lench*

15 <sup>th</sup> January	Funeral	Beryl Dickens
15 <sup>th</sup> January	Funeral	Richard Dickens
10 <sup>th</sup> February	Funeral	Margaret Stanley

## Pastoral Calls and Contacts

During the pandemic, I have made phone calls to people who I thought needed a call and to those who were brought to my notice. If you know of anyone who could do with a call or help for any reason, please let me know. I am NEVER so busy that I cannot fit in a call to someone who needs it. If you want to get in touch, please do – **it's good to hear from you and I love a chat!**

*Richard Thorniley*

## A course for Lent

The North Avon Group is offering a four-session course running through March in Lent, written and trialled by Revd Doug Chaplin who is the Diocesan Lay Training Officer.

What is the course offering? The four sessions aim to help people connect the liturgy (*the worship of the people*) of the Sunday Communion service with **Monday to Saturday's daily life and the church's call to mission in the community.** Along the way it encourages us to deepen our understanding of the liturgy – why is the service shaped as it is, and what are we invited to take away?

Doug recently piloted and subsequently revised the course with a group of over 30 Readers. Here are some of their comments:

*'It gave me a lot to think about and digest.'*

*'I got a lot from the course and can see its potential in our parish.'*

*'It's been good and really informative.'*

*'Thought-provoking.'*

*'The course gave me an insight into parts of the liturgy that my mind had slipped over before.'*

Each session includes a PowerPoint presentation offered over Zoom. Handouts **will be available via a booklet into which one can write one's own notes.** The sessions last about 90 minutes, nearly half of which is spent in breakout rooms. We will offer sessions during the day and in the evening so that you can choose which you prefer.

Please get in touch with me, Richard Thorniley ([rector@archbenefice.org.uk](mailto:rector@archbenefice.org.uk)), if you want to sign up and know some more.

Collections – please keep helping local needs

*PLEASE REMEMBER OUR NEIGHBOURS IN NEED*

We are continuing to look for cleaning items, toiletries and similar, rather than food, as this is what our local food bank has requested. If you can, please drop your items into church on a Sunday or Wednesday and they will be delivered to Caring Hands in Evesham.

## Notices

Heating oil delivery dates for the ARCH buying group

Evesons Fuels: 01905 775920

Thursdays: 11<sup>th</sup> March, 8<sup>th</sup> April, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> August  
*Phone your order to Evesons by 5pm on the preceding Monday*

### Get creative, offer HOPE in your local churchyard!

#### Get creative

The artist Sir Antony Gormley, creator of the *Angel of the North* and **other statues, has invited the nation to be 'A Great Big Art Exhibition'**.

He suggests that we might put up pictures or art installations in our windows and gardens for the enjoyment of your neighbours.

Your local church is inviting you to put up a temporary art installation, subject to editing or moving if required, in the churchyard.

The installation will remain in place until May. Why not visit the website [www.firstsite.uk](http://www.firstsite.uk) and get some inspiration?

#### Offer hope

A tree is being set aside in your local churchyard for you to write your hope(s) for 2021 on a card and hang them up. The cards can be signed or anonymous, and will need to be weather-proofed if they are to be up for any length of time, and .

Our local churchyards are a community space which we can all use, apart from – ***and here's a strange ancient rule that always makes me smile*** – only the parish priest is allowed to graze his sheep there.

This could be a useful pub quiz question...

This parish priest and your local church councillors are happy for you to display your art creations and hopes for 2021. So do join in. Check your local Facebook, e-mails and websites as ideas may be supplied.

*Richard Thorniley*

## A rainbow through the rain

An article in the *Church Times* took me back to a hymn I'd not sung for many a year with its wonderful opening line, '*O Love that wilt not let me go*'. This is the only sort of love which really counts; it's the one we recognise in our own loved ones, in parents who loved us into life, in friends who mean the world to us – and, of course, in the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is one year ago that we first went into lockdown. Perhaps you can recall what you were doing when life was more 'normal'. I remember going for drinks with neighbours the weekend before it all happened, when Covid seemed something quite distant. Now there are few of us who have not been affected one way or another. We know people with Covid, we know people who have died from Covid, and all of us are living with the consequences of Covid.

Lent takes us back to Jesus' forty days and nights in the desert. It seems to me that we are living our own wilderness experience in a way we could never have imagined. For Jesus this was a time of struggle: as the Psalm 23 puts it, he walked through the valley of the shadow of death. Yet he was held in a love which would not let him go, and emerged from it to a ministry which was to turn the world upside down in faith, hope and love.

Whatever else is lacking during this time of wilderness, one thing not absent is loving kindness. We've seen it in NHS workers, teachers, neighbours and many others. In practical down-to-earth ways we have seen and experienced living examples of 'love that wilt not let me go'.

George Matheson, who wrote the hymn, had his own wilderness experience. 'Something happened to me, which was known only to myself, and which caused me the most severe mental suffering. The hymn was the fruit of that suffering', he says, and then he wrote these beautiful lines:

*'I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
and feel the promise is not vain  
that morn shall tearless be.'*

Tracing the rainbow through the rain... Isn't this God's tenacious love for us, stronger than we can imagine, mirrored by our human experiences of being loved? We've surely had plenty of rain lately, but, you know, I've seen the odd rainbow too. Hold on to such precious glimpses of glory!

*The Venerable Robert Jones, Archdeacon of Worcester*

## One year on...

It was just over a year ago that the WHO discussed the coronavirus that was starting to spread around the world. None of us could have foreseen the devastating effect on our world, with over 80 million people infected and nearly two million deaths. How has the pandemic challenged our faith, as we look back over the last year?

Firstly, it has forced us to face up to the *reality of our situation*. We cannot underestimate the health, social and economic effects of the virus on our lives, churches and communities. We have learned how to do church online, but the future shape of church life is uncertain!

As the apostle Paul writes, ***'We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus'*** (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

The pandemic has challenged so much of what we take for granted, but also demonstrated that God is alongside to help us in these circumstances.

Secondly, alongside the fear and uncertainty of this year, we have also learned to find *new faith and hope in Jesus*. **The experience of Jesus' death and His resurrection provides a pattern for us in facing the future, 'so that His life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you'** (2 Corinthians 4:10-12).

**During the season of Lent, as we anticipate the events at Easter, it's good to focus on the promise of sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As we consider our present struggles, are we ready to surrender them to Jesus? May the hope of Easter Day take us forward into the coming year.**

*Revd Canon Paul Hardingham*

Little old lady seeks handsome young man...

An advert appeared in a student newspaper, 'Sweet little old lady wishes to correspond with good-looking university student – especially a six-footer with brown eyes, answering to initials J.A.D.' It was signed 'his mother'.

## When your prayer is not answered

*'Three times I asked the Lord about this ...BUT...'* (2 Corinthians 12:8). Paul is talking about one of the most mysterious and one of the most baffling aspects of prayer – when God does not say yes.

On the face of it, Paul's prayer was very modest. For some time he had been troubled by 'a thorn in the flesh'. But in spite of this great servant of the Lord praying earnestly three times that the thorn would be removed, God did not answer as Paul expected. A number of things in this passage (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) are very helpful to all of us in the matter of prayer.

First, although God's answer was not what Paul asked for, God did answer him. God is never indifferent to the prayers we utter from the depth of our heart. Unlike the idol Baal in the Old Testament story about Elijah (1 Kings:18), the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is not on a journey, nor is He busy elsewhere, nor is He sleeping. He hears our prayers and our cries when we come to Him in our need and pain and distress.

Second, although Paul did not get the answer he wanted, God made him a wonderful promise. He said, *'My grace is sufficient for you'*. This was not what Paul asked for, yet what a promise it was! God effectively said, 'I will not take the thorn away – but my daily grace is all-sufficient.' In spite of the thorn, Paul will triumph. When God gives us all-sufficient grace, it will take care of everything in our lives.

Thirdly, Paul learnt that God's wonderful grace meant that in his weakness *'the power of Christ'* would be with him; the power that would make him effective and fruitful in his ministry.

Fourthly, this experience taught Paul that he could be *'content with weaknesses and insults'* because it was for Christ's sake, and when he is weak in himself, he is strong in Christ.

So what about unanswered prayer? Unless our prayer was selfish and not for our good in the first place, God does answer our cry. When the answer is not what we expected, it means that our loving Father has something for us even better and more important than what we asked for.

*Revd Dr Herbert McGonigle*

## Zoomed out?

**'You're still on mute!'** If you've used Zoom over the past year, you'll be familiar with this cry! After a day on Zoom, the last thing we often want to do is use it for a chat with friends or a church service on Sunday! Now this reveals a wider problem that we face. We know that staying connected in the pandemic is hard. **When we're tired and busy, it's easy to stop connecting with others, which would encourage our faith or wellbeing.** This might also include not sending a text, Facebook comment or phoning somebody up.

Remember what Paul says, **'For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do'** (Romans 7:15). **It's often easier to avoid connecting with God and others,** when this would be good for our sense of value, purpose and identity. Certain patterns of behaviour can make us feel safer, but in reality they prevent us from living our lives fully as God intends.

Paul adds, **'What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!'** (Romans 7:24,25). Through the death and resurrection of Jesus we have the freedom to act differently. Lent is an ideal time to develop new habits, especially when we are tired or anxious. It may involve spending less time on Facebook, turning the TV off to call a friend who we need to catch up with, or getting up a bit earlier to spend time in Bible reading and prayer.

**Let's keep reminding ourselves that 'God is bigger than Zoom' and make sure that we don't get disconnected! Let's be committed to doing the right thing,** rather than simply the easier thing.

*Revd Canon Paul Hardingham*

Things we would not have known without Sunday School

When dropped, offering money always rolls to the other side of the room.

With your eyes closed for prayer, anything can happen in a room full of pre-schoolers.

Squash and song motions do not mix!

## Psalm 121: the God who knows and cares

A man asked a friend about the two greatest problems in the world. The friend responded, *'I don't know and I don't care!'* *'You got them both!'* the man replied.

Psalm 121 presents a God who both knows and cares about our problems. As the first Song of Ascent (Psalms 120-134), it was used by pilgrims going to the great festivals in Jerusalem. Just as this road was full of dangers, Psalm 121 speaks to our problems and set-backs, whether illness, family or work issues, or fear.

Where do we look for help? *'I lift up my eyes to the mountains...My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth'* (Psalm 121:1-2). The hills speak of a Creator God, who is bigger than our troubles, for whom nothing is beyond His reach.

What is His care like? It is constant: *'He will not let your foot slip – He who watches over you will not slumber'* (Psalm 121:3). God is never off duty in His care, as we are constantly His concern.

It is close: *'the Lord watches over you - the Lord is your shade at your right hand'* (Psalm 121:5). God is not watching us *'from a distance'* as the song says! His care operates at close quarters, to take the heat out of situations or when circumstances are dark and uncertain.

It is continuing: *'the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore.'* (Psalm 121:8). God's care is all encompassing, through life and eternity. We are not immune from difficulties, but in the bigger picture God will use these in His eternal purpose for our lives. The psalm is fulfilled in Jesus, who has secured eternal life for us.

So let's trust His care for us, and not be like the lady who asked, *'why pray when I can worry?'*

*Revd Canon Paul Hardingham*

### Cats and dogs

Dogs believe they are human; cats believe they are divine.

Behind every cat that crosses the road is a dog saying, *'Go on, you can make it.'*

## How to deflect those staff appraisals...

*Happily, the Church of England still retains some singular parish clergy. Take the parish of St James-the-Least, whose elderly Anglo-Catholic vicar, Eustace, continues his correspondence to his nephew Darren, a recently-ordained low-church curate...*

My dear Nephew Darren,

So, your vicar has introduced staff appraisal for all the officers at your church, including yourself. It seems a very dangerous innovation; ministry is only successful when parishioners have no idea what the clergy get up to.

I imagine he will look at the number of services you take in a year. Funerals can only be increased if you resort to murder, which is likely to be frowned on – although I have been sorely tempted during endless church council meetings. Perhaps if you take a flask of water wherever you go and if you find a baby unattended, you could resort to a spontaneous baptism. That would get your numbers up, even if returning mothers may marvel at the highly localised and brief shower that seemed to have taken place over the pram.

Visiting targets are easily increased. Compile a list of when parishioners will be out and call on those days; a card through their letterbox will prove to your vicar that you were there. Should they happen to be in, mention that you are collecting for the organ fund and they will immediately excuse themselves for an important appointment. You are then free to move on to clock another visit.

Your vicar is also bound to want to see the congregation increasing. This is not sustainable, and you should put a stop to such ambitions at once. All you have to do is to approach your friends at the local football club and bribe them with your homemade beer to come along to church several Sunday mornings in a row. If you give them enough beer BEFORE the service, they will make just enough muted disruption as to leave your vicar a bit rattled and thinking that **perhaps, after all, 'less' is 'more' when it comes to the congregation.**

But whatever you do, make sure that you never preach a better sermon than he does. **You don't want anyone thanking you at the door for your 'so interesting sermon' in front of him, when they have been sleeping through his sermons for years.** If you offend the vicar this way, he will take swift revenge, and ask you to organise the parish summer fete.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

## On the perils of church cleaning

*Another double-bill of Uncle Eustace's letters...*

My dear Nephew Darren,

I must begin with a confession. I know it is wrong of me, but last Wednesday I coveted your modern, purpose-built, user-friendly worship centre. Your concrete cube may have the aesthetic charm of a suburban bus shelter, but it is clean, bright and does not have the propensity for sheltering dead animals in dark corners.

March at St. James the Least brings an annual event I dread: Boon Day. There is a certain irony in the ladies of the parish – who without exception employ dailies to do all their domestic cleaning and dusting – getting together to wash, polish and scrape 12-months of accumulated dirt from the church interior.

**Miss Pemberton's over-enthusiastic use of bleach when cleaning the sanctuary floor in the Lady Chapel makes one feel one is entering a public lavatory rather than a house of God.** Books, service sheets and collection plates have all been so efficiently tidied away that it will take months before one can find anything. Just as archaeologists date various layers of a dig from the artefacts they recover, the ladies cleaning the choir stalls have determined precisely when the tenors changed from spearmint to peppermint chews during the sermon, as they shovelled through 52 Sundays-worth of lost mints.

Our great moment of crisis came when Lady Dawes decided to clean the statue of St. James the Least, standing in his niche above the high altar. An eight-foot, 50-year-old step ladder and an 18-stone, seventy year-old dowager are not an ideal combination. St. James had stood on his plinth, unmolested, for the best part of 500 years, two fingers held in a sign of blessing. Until last Wednesday.

**For Lady D's last flourish, removing the cobwebs from St. James' head, caused her to lose her balance.** She grasped for something for support, failed, and hit the floor still holding one of our saint's two fingers. He now stands with only one finger raised to the congregation in a far from saintly gesture. A little judicious application of glue will be necessary before he makes his true intentions clear.

And so we now live in a state of uninhabitable order and hygiene. Within a month, the skills of mice and men should hopefully return us to our preferred ambience for Christian worship.

Your loving uncle,  
Eustace

Harvington  
**St James' Church**

PASTORAL SUPPORT NETWORK

As a new year gets under way we are still dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. I know that times are difficult for everyone, both in practical terms and because of the restrictions in our contact with friends and family, and I hope everyone is weathering the storm. We all have to take care to keep ourselves safe, network volunteers included, but the team are happy to help where they can, so if you need shopping, help to get to an appointment, small jobs around the home or simply a friendly chat, do get in touch with us on \*\*\*\*\*.

**We generally suggest a contribution of 45p per mile towards our volunteers' petrol and running costs.** However, we appreciate that for some this may be a stretch, especially in the present circumstances. Thanks to some very generous donations, we have been able to build up a small hardship fund, which we will happily use so that no-one need feel deterred from asking for help.

Wishing everyone a better 2021;  
**here's hoping things look up very soon. Stay safe**

*Wendy and Konrad Monks*

**HARVINGTON EMERGENCY FUND**

*If you are in need, or know of someone in need*

**St James' Church is managing an emergency fund on behalf of the community to support people who are in need. If you know of someone, a person or family, who is in need or if you are that person or family and need an emergency helping hand, please get in touch.**

Contact \*\*\*\*\* and we will offer what support we can.

*Richard Thorniley*

# Harvington

## GARDENING TEAM

Spring is coming, bringing another season for our loyal gardeners to care for the St James' Church gardens. Joy and Julian are the two people now in charge; they have continued to work throughout the winter cutting the hedge and reducing its height and have also put up 12 bird boxes.

Please do join the team on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> March when they will be working from 9.30am to 12noon with a coffee break around 11am, conforming to any Government rules that apply at that time. An extra pair of hands are welcomed by the team for any period during the morning.

If you have any questions, please ring Joy or Julian on \*\*\*\*\*.

Clive Allen

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### It happened in March...

300 years ago: on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1721, Johann Sebastian Bach dedicated six of his concertos to Christian Ludwig Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt. They are now commonly known as the *Brandenburg Concertos*.

150 years ago: on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1871, the first international rugby union football match was held in Edinburgh. Scotland beat England 1 – 0.

Also 150 years ago: on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1871, the Royal Albert Hall was officially opened by Queen Victoria.

75 years ago: on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1946, Heathrow Airport was opened as London Airport. It was renamed Heathrow in 1966.

40 years ago: on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1981, the first London Marathon was held.

10 years ago: on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011, the great Tohoku earthquake and tsunami **took place, shifting Japan's main island, Honshu, 2.4 metres to the east. 15,897** people were killed, 2,533 went missing and nearly quarter of a million were made homeless. Three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant went into meltdown, leading to the second-largest nuclear accident in history.

## Harvington First School News

We continue to support all our children's learning through a remote learning provision as well as 'face to face' learning in school for those who cannot remain at home. We recognise how challenging this is for everyone but children, parents and staff are all showing the very best of our school values **by persevering with the changes, respecting each other, trusting everyone's** decisions, being thankful for our friendships and achievements and hoping that a better time is coming soon. Our school is very grateful to be part of this supportive community and we are very proud of how our children and their families are coping.

Our learning is continuing in the most usual of ways possible and our way of looking after each other too. Our Charity Ministers have created a fun quiz to **raise money for our chosen school charity this year: Acorn's Children Hospice.** Our Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister have also created some wellbeing resources and a video for the children to enjoy too. We have a section on our website with other wellbeing thoughts and ideas, with an adult section too. We have also created a fitness map where children are invited to tour our school (virtually) and participate in a range of exercises, usefully demonstrated by our PE lead teacher via video link!

**In Collective Worship, we are focusing on the Christian value of 'trust' this half term.** The Bible teaches us that God is good, powerful and wise; he loves **everyone more than they can imagine.** *'Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength' (Isaiah 40:31).*

We follow the value of trust in school:

- ◆ We trust our parents and carers to provide us with love, food and support.
- ◆ We trust our friends to be honest and kind to us.
- ◆ We trust our teachers to give us knowledge and prepare us for the future.
- ◆ We trust our village community to work together to keep everyone safe
- ◆ We trust ourselves to be honest and always do our best.

We hope everyone continues to keep safe and healthy

*Helen Fishbourne,  
Headteacher*

## Abbots Morton **St Peter's Church**

### STILL NO SERVICES FOR THE TIME BEING

With regret, there will be no services at St Peter's until further notice.

People are welcome to come into the church for private prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays. However, please don't enter the church if you are showing symptoms of Covid-19 or have tested positive for the virus. Once in the church, you must wear a face mask and observe the rules of social distancing and hand sanitising.

A QR code is pinned on the porch notice board to enable mobile phone users to register with the government's Test and Trace system. When services resume there will still be someone in the church at the start of the service taking names and contact details for the purpose of Test, Trace and Isolate.

*As things change with Covid-19 we will post information on the St Peter's page on the Parish Council's website [www.abbotsmorton.info/st-peters-church](http://www.abbotsmorton.info/st-peters-church).*

### FLOWER ROTA

Those on the flower rota please note that no flowers are necessary for the time being. If you want an update on the situation please call Gill Barker on \*\*\*\*\*.

### GREAT BIG ART EXHIBITION

St Peter's churchyard is being made available as a community space for people to take part in sculptor Sir Antony Gormley's exciting *Great Big Art Exhibition*. Sir Anthony is urging people to display their own artwork in front windows, on doors, balconies and gardens to, as he put it, 'counter the gloom of the Covid pandemic'.

All ideas are welcome and you can use the churchyard if you wish but the Parochial Church Council (PCC), as custodians, have the right to edit or move pieces if necessary. Please bear in mind the need to avoid the conservation area at the far end of the churchyard. All installations will be taken away around the May Day Bank Holiday. Have fun!

# Abbots Morton

## VESTRY REPAIRS

A structural engineer has examined the vestry at St Peter's after the appearance of substantial cracks in the vestry walls, both inside and outside. The problem has been caused by rainwater draining off the vestry directly onto the ground, softening the subsoil. The PCC is now asking the church architect to draw up a specification for repair works and a possible extension to the French drainage system to extend around the eastern side of the church.

## VILLAGE HALL

([www.abbotsmorton.info/abbots-morton-village-hall](http://www.abbotsmorton.info/abbots-morton-village-hall))

At the time of writing, the village hall remains closed in line with Lockdown 3. If there is any change to this position under any new national restrictions, please read the Covid-19 update on our webpage on the Parish Council website at [www.abbotsmorton.info/abbots-morton-village-hall](http://www.abbotsmorton.info/abbots-morton-village-hall).

## AGM

Please join us at this year's Annual General Meeting which will be via Zoom on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm. **If you would like to 'come along' please send an e-mail to our Chair, Melanie Clarke, at \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*\*\* and she will send you the link to the meeting.**

## Wedding receptions

Depending on what restrictions may be in force later this year, we are looking forward to two wedding receptions at the hall. One is on the weekend of 6-8<sup>th</sup> August and the other the weekend of 22-24<sup>th</sup> October. Both weddings are postponements from last year and we wish both couples successful events.

## Do you want to hire the hall?

The hall is available for hire for a range of activities but is limited to a maximum of 20 people at the moment. If you are thinking of an activity or a small event, please do call our Bookings Officer Colin on \*\*\*\*\* to discuss the possibilities, which will depend on Covid-19 regulations.

Our hire rates are unchanged:		<u>Local</u>	<u>Non-local</u>
WINTER ( <i>Oct to end March</i> )	Daytime (9.00-19.30)	£8.50 per hour	£11 per hour
	Evening (19.30-24.00)	£11 per hour	£13.50 per hour

# Abbots Morton

## VILLAGE HALL (CONTINUED)

### EasyFundraising and Amazon Smile

As more and more people make online purchases, the village hall is benefiting from those buyers who are registered with Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile.

Our 23 EasyFundraisers have now raised £732.04 for the village hall. Thank you so much to them...and if you want to become our 24<sup>th</sup> EasyFundraiser simply search for *EasyFundraising* in your web browser and follow the prompts. Please put *Abbots Morton Village Hall* as your good cause

Amazon Smile customers have also raised £30.86 for our funds. You, too, can support the hall by visiting the webpage [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk) and following the prompts. Thank you

## ABBOTS MORTON PARISH COUNCIL

There are currently two vacancies on the parish council. Join us and be an active member of the community, assisting with crime and safety, planning issues, the environment, highways and local services.

The council meets approximately six times per year with meetings lasting around 1-1½ hours. The position is unpaid and voluntary, but some expenses such as training are paid for by the parish council.

There are up to four vacancies on the parish council. To join, you must:

- ◆ be over 18 and on the electoral register, or a resident of the parish, or live within three miles of the parish as the crow flies, or own a business in the parish
- ◆ be able to attend evening meetings every other month
- ◆ have an interest in local issues
- ◆ have a desire to improve the quality of life in the parish
- ◆ be able to represent the views of local people

For further details contact the Parish Clerk, David Hunter-Miller, on \*\*\*\*\* or [abbotsmortonpc@gmail.com](mailto:abbotsmortonpc@gmail.com).

# Rous Lench

## St Peter's Church

### ST.PETER'S REPAIRS

Work has progressed well at St.Peter's over the last 2 months. Repairs have been made to the roof to make the church as watertight as possible and protect the church against wet and dry rot. The vestries have been stripped and some rafters and woodwork will be replaced and the roof retiled. The vestries will then need to be left to dry out which could take about a year. Due to more problems being uncovered, the cost of the vestry roof repair work has risen by 25% but the PCC are managing the budget closely and hope to have sufficient funds to complete the first stage of the work. Future funds will then hopefully be obtained through grants and fund raising events.

### MARCH 20<sup>TH</sup> – SPRING INTO ACTION FOR THE EQUINOX

In considering Covid-compliant activities for the spring, some of us are contemplating a Sponsored Step Challenge. It would involve a crowd funding page requesting donors to support St. Peter's for collective steps taken over one week or weekend, up to a certain amount, then inviting residents to take to the great outdoors for their daily exercise and rack up those steps to represent something big. Could we manage one million steps between us for St. Peter's?

If anyone would like to be involved, or has suggestions for another activity, please contact Fran Herdman on \*\*\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*\*\*.

### COVID-19 FINANCIAL APPEAL – WAYS TO DONATE

Thank you for continuing to support us – your generosity is greatly appreciated. If you would like to donate to the appeal, please contact our Treasurer Lloyd Wing on \*\*\*\*\* or e-mail [stpetersrouslench@archbenefice.org.uk](mailto:stpetersrouslench@archbenefice.org.uk).

One-off donations: if you would like to donate by bank transfer, our account details are name: PCC Rous Lench, number: \*\*\*\*\*, sort code: \*\*-\*\*-\*\*.

Parish Giving scheme: to donate through the Parish Giving scheme, please call 0333 002 1271 or visit [www.parishgiving.org.uk/home](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home).

*If you are a UK taxpayer, please consider Gift Aid – it makes a huge difference!*

## Rous Lench

### HELP WITH CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE

Thanks to the help of village volunteers, the churchyard is looking ready for the arrival of spring and warmer weather. We will be continuing with the excellent work in 2021 and are planning to improve its appearance even further.

If you have a spare hour or two each month and are up for some fresh air and exercise in a lovely setting, it would be great to hear from you. Please contact Lloyd Wing on \*\*\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*\*\*. Many thanks.

### CHURCHYARD MEMORIAL ROSES

Would you like to plant a rose in memory of a loved one in the churchyard? If so, there is space for a few more roses in the newly-created memorial rose bed. Adjacent to the rose bed is attractive bench seating, providing the opportunity for a few moments of quiet reflection. For more information, please contact Lloyd Wing on \*\*\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*\*\*.

### CARING HANDS

Do not forget that you can continue to leave your donations of canned and dried goods as well as cleaning materials and toiletries when you go out for your permitted daily exercise. There is a yellow box behind the buttress on the left-hand side of St. Peter's that is checked regularly, and all items are taken to Caring Hands in the Vale for distribution to those in need. Please ensure you follow government guidelines and wash/sanitise your hands when you get home after leaving items. Thank you.

### **St Peter's is closed for repairs**

Good news – repairs are taking place at St Peter's.  
Bad news – the church needs to be closed until further notice.  
We will, of course, let you know when we are re-opening.  
Please pray that it all goes well.

# Rous Lench

## SHOPPING ONLINE WITH EASYFUNDRAISING

Thank you to all our supporters for raising FREE donations for St. Peter's in 2020 by shopping online via *Easyfundraising*. In just a few weeks, a handful of shoppers has already raised £29.97.

There is so much we buy online, from groceries to gifts, clothes, insurance and holidays (one day!) so why not do it the *Easyfundraising* way and collect free **donations for St. Peter's every time? It costs you nothing extra** – the retailers make a small donation each time you shop. Thousands of retailers are signed up to the scheme. If you are not supporting us on *Easyfundraising* yet, you can sign up at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/churchofstpeterrouslench/?utm\\_campaign=raise-more&utm\\_content=fdrq21-f1](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/churchofstpeterrouslench/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=fdrq21-f1).

## ROUS LENCH PARISH COUNCIL

Rous Lench Parish Council welcomes all residents to their meetings and invites them to raise concerns or share ideas during public question time at the start of the meeting. Upcoming dates are Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 24<sup>th</sup> May with further dates to be arranged in July, September and November – please see the Rous Lench section of the website [e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish](http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish).

There will be an Annual Parish Meeting (APM) on 24<sup>th</sup> May, preceding the Annual Parish Council Meeting (APCM). At the APM any matter pertinent to the parish and its parishioners may be discussed (as opposed to council meetings where discussion subjects are limited to those matters on which the council has the legal power to act).

We have a vacancy on the council to which we invite community-minded persons to apply. You must be over 18 and on the electoral register OR a resident of the parish OR live within three miles of the parish as the crow flies OR own a business in the parish. It is a voluntary role; free training and support will be given.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings – currently online during the pandemic but usually at Rous Lench Village Hall. If you need further information or would like to get involved, please contact Hazel Robinson, Clerk to Rous Lench Parish Council, on [rouslenchpc@gmail.com](mailto:rouslenchpc@gmail.com).

# Rous Lench

## ROUS LENCH VILLAGE HALL

([www.rouslench.com](http://www.rouslench.com))

### Wanted: new secretary

The Village Hall is in need of a new secretary! Anyone who would be willing to volunteer for this role, please contact the committee at [info@rouslench.com](mailto:info@rouslench.com).

### New bar

The NEW BAR project for Rous Lench Village Hall is progressing well and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to the hall as soon as possible.

### Hall hire for private events

Rous Lench Village Hall is available for hire for private events such as parties, anniversaries, receptions, etc. For conditions and prices, please look on our website under the hall hire section, call \*\*\*\*\* or e-mail [info@rouslench.com](mailto:info@rouslench.com).



*...and yet the church mice still put it about that they were poor*

## Church Lench First School News

### Church Lench CE First School Lockdown

**Remote Learning:** we have been open for critical worker families and vulnerable children during the latest lockdown. Our amazing teachers have been planning and delivering lessons meticulously throughout the half term and responding to feedback from children and parents on a regular basis. Children who are in school are following the work set by teachers and our school staff are working on a rota each week to deliver the teaching and learning in the classrooms. Full credit to all of our children and parents who are home schooling, they are doing a fantastic job!

**Laptops and iPads:** We have very kindly been given laptops by members of the community for families who need multiple devices at home. This is overwhelmingly generous and we would like to thank our villagers who have knocked on our door supplying us with laptops and iPads.

**Online School assembly:** Last Friday we set up a school online assembly which was successful for the majority of families who joined. Some had a few technical and signal challenges but we managed to host an assembly for children, parents and staff. It was lovely to see so many smiley faces, celebrate January birthdays, hear from the staff and listen to a few jokes!

I asked families to discuss what they might take in a self-care kit bag to keep them calm and happy. My items consisted of pillow mist spray, a positive quote book, classical piano music and a heat wrap for my shoulders. What would you pack in your bag?

**Photography:** I asked our families during the month of January to take photographs of our beautiful, natural environment and send them in so we can create a collage for the school. I received many beautiful pictures and have included a few of them here.

I hope all our community members are staying positive and strong during these challenging times and send our best wishes from all the staff and children from the school.

*Mrs S Price, Headteacher*



## Church Lench **All Saints' Church**

### LENCHES WI

(lencheswi@gmail.com, [www.facebook.com/thelencheswi](http://www.facebook.com/thelencheswi))

Following the continued Covid-19 restrictions we still cannot hold our monthly meetings in the Village Hall. Our members receive monthly newsletters from our Committee and take part in competitions. We are open for anyone who would like to become a member so please do not hesitate to contact us.

### THE LENCHES CLUB



Hello friends! There's no denying how much we miss you! We look forward to happier times when we can all be together safely and we promise as soon as we have the go ahead, and it is safe for us to open, we will throw open the doors and welcome you all in!

If you would like to get ahead of the rush, we are taking membership payments via online banking. Membership remains at £10 per year and the bank details are name: The Lenches Club; sort code: 30-93-11; account number 00221400.

We look forward to seeing you all as soon as we can. Stay safe!

### SOUTH LENCHES PARISH COUNCIL

#### Vacancy for Parish Councillor

The Parish Council is looking for a person to fill a post on the Parish Council. The Council meet 6 times a year; at present Church Lench and Sheriffs Lench are not represented. Anyone over the age of 18 years can apply. For further information, please contact a member of the Council or the Clerk.

#### Grants for organisations in the parish

Grants will be available for local organisations through the Parish Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April. An application form can be found on the Parish Council website.

For further information on any of the above, please contact the Clerk on \*\*\*\*\* or [southlenchespc@gmail.com](mailto:southlenchespc@gmail.com).

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Kevin took himself off to his study to pray for peace

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### *Key to Church Services*

We are not holding services during the current lockdown. Please check the website for the latest information.



## Covid-19: we are open but...

During the current lockdown, our churches in Abbots Morton, Church Lench and Harvington are open on Wednesdays and Sundays for private prayer and when regulations allow for services (Rous Lench church is closed for repairs).

We have hand sanitiser available and *must ask you to wear a mask when visiting*. Further instructions and floor markings are in each church to enable us all to remain safe.

Churches are available for weddings in an emergency, with the congregation restricted to 6. Funerals are allowed with a maximum of 30 in the congregation if church capacity permits. Please check the government and Church of England websites to see the current regulations which are regularly updated.

Numbers in our churches are currently limited to:

- ◆ Abbots Morton: 20
- ◆ Rous Lench: *closed for repairs*
- ◆ Church Lench: 30
- ◆ Harvington: 30

Sunday services are NOT being held in church at present. Although the government regulations permit us to hold services, the local Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) felt this would put us all at too much risk bearing in mind the high transmissibility of the current variations of the virus. Recorded services are available via the North Avon Group YouTube channel – just follow the links from the calendar on the ARCH Benefice website [www.archbenefice.org](http://www.archbenefice.org).

If you would like further information please get in touch with me on 01386 870527 or [rector@archbenefice.org.uk](mailto:rector@archbenefice.org.uk) or check the website.

*Richard Thorniley*