

HighworthLINK

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Hope

I write this article on the day the Pfizer vaccine has just been announced as 90% safe and the stock market has gone crazy, British Airways stock rose by 30%.

On the 'hope index' where do we stand for next year: a reduction of the virus, agreement on climate control, recovery of the economy, no lasting effects of this last year for education? What is the basis of our hope?

Everyone is gathered for the school nativity play. One boy, desperate to play Joseph, has actually been cast as the inn keeper, so when Joseph and Mary arrive at the inn, our hero, chosen as the inn keeper but who really wanted to be Joseph, answers the door and says: *'She can come in, but not you, I wanted to play Joseph'*.

Jesus is about to enter our world as a baby and offering only himself. What hope does that bring? Reviewing our current issues, don't we need a



scientist to control the virus and bring us to net zero carbon emissions, or a banker to raise the economy for the future, or a teacher to prepare our children for the future?

Hope is, of course, located in science, money and education; but what has struck me over the last months is the temporary nature of everything I tended to place my hope in, what I really wanted was for my heart to be full of hope.

Jesus came offering himself, his human life bringing the hope of forgiveness from the past and his eternal life hope for the future. It seems odd that we still

celebrate the birthday of someone born 2,000 years ago. Perhaps it's because all those years have been full of people who knew the baby to still be alive, bringing the kind of hope that is located in hearts and minds and not just our material world.

Rev Geoff Sowden

Illustration: Sharon Perris: www.sharonperris.co.uk

LINKmagazine

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Publishers: The Leadership of Highworth Churches Together

Editor: Sarah Gardiner
E: editor@highworthlink13@gmail.com

Production: Stables Studio
T: 01793 764768
E: graphics@stables.co.uk

Advertising: Debbie Hodgson
T: 01793 764768
E: deb.hodgson@tiscali.co.uk

Highworth Distribution:
Clive Hall T: 07801 365282
E: clive7045@btinternet.com
Peter Croton T: 01793 762025

Villages Distribution: Keith Ratcliffe
T: 01793 861122

Treasurer: Terry Williams

Highworth Link,
c/o Lighthouse Bookshop,
40 High Street, Highworth,
Swindon SN6 7AQ
Tel: 01793 764768

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May be published in the magazine and/or the web. Make clear any limitations you have about what, how and when we may publish your contribution.

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Make sure you are writing for a general audience, not just your own organisation. News stories should not

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We reserve the right to edit contributions and to not publish any contribution or advertisement that is either unsuitable for our format or is inconsistent with our editorial policy.

Deadlines:

1st of the month before publication – news, articles, advertising, what's on and letters.

Citizen of the Month for December: Tony Brewster

'Bringing the People to the People'

Even if you don't know Tony Brewster you might recognise his name and tag line which is the title of this article. For the last 15 years he has been involved in selling advertising for the Link magazine and although his name may have been written small on the publishing information page, this does not reflect the bigger picture of close calls and medical emergencies which have shaped his life.



Born in 1942 and raised in Dorking Surrey, Tony describes a happy post-war childhood as one of four children born to hardworking parents. He speaks proudly of his father who, despite contracting Polio as a child and subsequently losing the use of a leg, worked as a cartographer and tended his 200 foot garden and that of his neighbour plus an allotment. Tony and his brother and two sisters had to muck in and help which he remembers as great fun and which taught him to make do and mend, an experience, he says, he wouldn't change for anything.

After leaving grammar school he found a job as an instrument maker in the electrical industry. It was during this time that his first life-changing event happened. Whilst helping at a jumble sale, he dropped a very heavy 12v car battery on his foot. A damaged nerve created a delayed reaction resulting in Tony having an epileptic seizure at breakfast time the following morning. The fact that he had a spoon in his mouth at the time saved his tongue from serious damage. He subsequently suffered severe and frequent attacks which eventually reduced with the help of medication and allowed him to return to work. For safety reasons, however, he was prevented from working on the production line and became a supervisor instead.

In 1973 Tony met Carole, his future wife, at a

dance. He was determined to put a ring on her finger and they were married within the year. In 1980 and now a design engineer, he chose to relocate with his company to Swindon rather than lose his job. With their two young children, Paul and Mandy, the family moved to Highworth. Tony was able to commute to his job in West Swindon having regained his driving licence after being free from epilepsy for two years.

One day, experiencing a bad headache, he drove home but blacked out. His car narrowly missed a concrete bollard and clipped a lorry. Amazingly he was not too badly injured and the wait to regain his licence "taught me patience" he says. The rest of Tony's working life was punctuated by redundancies and further health issues. However, his biggest trauma was a fall on Highworth podium in 2012. He had just turned round from talking to a friend when he tripped and fell. He woke up in hospital to discover he was paralysed from the neck down. Staring at the ceiling, he saw a series of images. The first was of Douglas Bader who had lost his legs in a flying accident but returned to flying, then pictures of that year's Paralympian athletes and finally an image of the Crucifixion. Needing comfort, he asked to see the hospital chaplain and told him what he had experienced. Placing his hand on Tony the chaplain urged him to sleep. The next morning some feeling had returned to his toes and thankfully over a period of time he recovered enough to start walking again.

Some seven years before this accident, and after leaving his final job, he had met up with Brian Freeman, a friend from Highworth Community Church. Brian told him he was in the process of resurrecting the Link magazine and needed someone to sell the advertising. "You could do that!" he said, persuading Tony to take on a

rôle he has fulfilled until April this year. After being involved not only in the advertising side but the distribution of the magazine, finding printers and organising items to be passed onto the editor, Tony decided it was time to go. "It just felt right," he says. He now has more time to enjoy doing jigsaws, learn magic tricks for the amusement of his grandson Reggie and others, organise his garage and "mess around with electronic music." "There is a purpose to my life as there is to everybody's", he says, though he's not sure what it is. Whatever the answer, his quiet faith and resilience of spirit seems to have helped him triumph over considerable adversity.

The rest of our team had this to say...

Tony is a dedicated Highworth Link man who always keeps a few spare copies about his person to thrust upon unsuspecting members of the public who dare venture into the town. He has worked tirelessly for the magazine over the past 15 years or so, from handling advertising and distribution, being webmaster, guardian of the biscuit barrel and tea boy amongst many other duties performed from his eyrie in the Link Office.

Tony is probably one of the most positive people I know; a great communicator, a man of faith and tenacity. A man who won't let a steep flight of stairs keep him from his civic duty, or a cup of coffee. A man who now owes me a packet of Custard Creams for all the nice things I've said about him!

Simon French

Tony was introduced to us by Phil Baker from Highworth Community Church in 2005. He came with a wealth of experience including good IT knowledge, having taught at Swindon College and experience of newsletter production, having produced them for the Church. He proceeded to juggle a range of tasks for the Link, eagerly getting to grips with new technologies.

At his heart he is a 'people person' who enjoys the banter and cut and thrust of sales as well as meeting new and old visitors to our town. Tony's good humour and positivity, based on a simple faith, is infectious and we have witnessed it seeing him through some of his difficulties. He has been a proactive supporter of The Link from day one and he remains a rich source of advice.

Graham Fry

The Churches of Highworth want to pray for you.

These are challenging times for us all, not only in regard to health, but also in relation to employment, finance, education, and many other areas.

Jesus cares, and we care too.

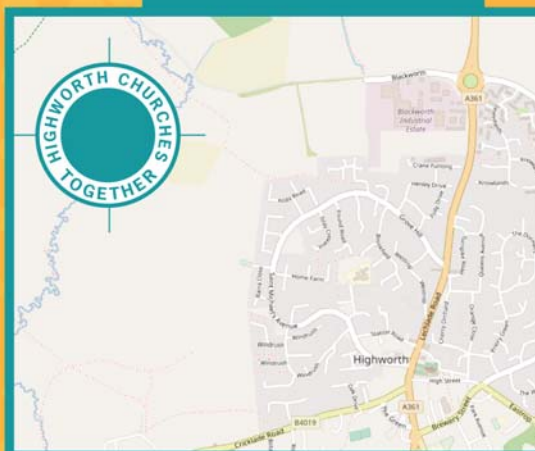
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There is HOPE!



HOPE

for Highworth

Citizen of the Year 2020: Time to Vote

This year the Highworth Link decided to nominate a Citizen of the Month for each issue of the magazine. Now that we have reached the end of the year, we are asking our readers to vote for the person we should elect as our Citizen of the Year.

The choices are:

FEBRUARY: Sue Buttery – Sue lost both her legs, and nearly her life, after being bitten by an insect. Despite this, Sue lost an incredible amount of weight and has fought her way back to pursuing a full and active life. Sue was nominated for her positivity and determination in the face of a life-changing disability.

MARCH: Christine and Rodney Davis – Christine and Rodney have been actively involved in the Lions for nearly 40 years and have helped to raise thousands of pounds to benefit local good causes. They were nominated for their dedicated voluntary work in our community.

APRIL: Rachel Uzzell – Rachel has worked at Highworth Preschool for over 20 years where she is well loved by the staff and children. She was nominated for her years of hard work and going above and beyond in her rôle as Supervisor, Safeguarding and Special Education Needs Lead.

MAY: Marion Wilhams – Marion has been actively involved in Operation Christmas Child for many years. She was nominated for writing thousands of Christmas messages to accompany Highworth's boxes despite being in her 90s.

JUNE/JULY: Highworth COVID-19 Mutual Aid Group – The Highworth Group co-ordinated our community response to the pandemic throughout the lockdowns and the inbetween period, ensuring those isolated had food, medicine and other essential items. Alison, Leanne, Claire and Amy were the face of the group which still continues to operate.

AUGUST: Sharon Willis – Sharon walked the streets as Scooby Do to cheer us up and made and donated loads of soup for free to those in need. She was nominated for her silliness and generosity to others.

SEPTEMBER: Finn Farnell – 5 year old Finn made hundreds of NHS rainbow keychains which he sold raising £1500 for the Great Western Hospital's Childrens' Ward. Finn was nominated for his hard work and his desire to help other children.

OCTOBER: Rosemary Jackson – Rosemary was actively involved in numerous projects round the town and was a very active member of the Highworth Lions and the Lunch Club. In more recent years she was probably best known for organising the annual Easter egg raffle and for buying and training people to use the defibrillators. Sadly, she passed away in the summer but her legacy on the town will long outlive her.

NOVEMBER: Millie Hamilton – 7 year old Millie organised a cake sale and raised £550 for Macmillian Cancer Support. She was nominated for her kindness and compassion towards others.

DECEMBER: Tony Brewster – Tony has been the hidden backbone of the Highworth Link for over 15 years, responsible for the website, organising the annual Christmas Party and the Citizen of the Year, and doing all those little background tasks that are too numerous to mention. He was nominated for his dedication, commitment and cheerful disposition.

Vote Now!

To vote please drop into the Lighthouse Bookshop with your nomination, email the editor: editor@highworthlink.com or send us your vote via our Facebook page. We are also accepting nominations for next year's Citizen of the Month so if you know of someone in our community who deserves recognition please get in touch with their name and why you think they deserve to be nominated.

The Royal Society Young People's Book Prize



Highworth Warneford students have been given the exciting opportunity to be involved in selecting the Young People's Book Prize 2020. Joining with 52 other schools around the country, our student panel from year 8 will review six STEM books which are aimed at young people.

An adult panel of judges, which includes Cressida Cowell, the Waterstones Children's Laureate and author-illustrator of the How to Train Your Dragon books, and former Blue Peter presenter

and author Konnie Huq, shortlisted six books to be considered by the schools' judging panels. Each member of the panel can review each of the six books and then come together to choose the one which they think deserves to be the overall winner. The six books which have been shortlisted can be found here:

<https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/book-prizes/young-peoples-book-prize/>

You can follow the progress of the event on Twitter @royalsociety using #YoungSciBooks.



Lockdown Scouting

In March, with the COVID Lockdown, face-to-face Scouting in Highworth stopped. Between then and September our only Scouting was online. Pretty quickly, all sections provided details of badges and activities that our members could do at home and some provided other opportunities such as raising frogs.



From the outside – the completed den

Camping had to be virtual and, as well as one section's own really successful camp, all our members had the opportunity to join one run nationally by The Scout Association. This featured celebrity Scout Ambassadors (people like Tim Peake, Dwayne Fields and Ed Stafford) and activities such as Whirlybirds (run by the RAF), Rockets (run by Rolls Royce) a virtual campfire and loads more.



From the inside. Testing out the den before sleeping in it. They were visited by a couple of foxes during the night.

Some of our sections ran meetings on Zoom; one of our Beaver Colonies 'Zoomed' with some Joeys (the equivalent to our Beavers) in Australia. Our Cubs made mug cakes, played battleships, escaped from an escape room, worked on the international badge, had a quiz and a guest speaker ran a session on kindness, part of the community impact badge.

It has been challenging. We weren't used to 'virtual' Scouting and we found it difficult to adapt. We are all Scouts though so we persevered and found ways to make it work. Feedback shows that while some families were not in a position to join in, those that did really benefitted and they really appreciated our efforts.

Scouting face-to-face again

During September, Highworth Scouts were approved to restart our face-to-face meetings. We do now have additional Scout Association rules designed to keep us 'COVID-Safe' and, with a limit of 15 youth members attending our meetings, some section members are having to meet fortnightly. Others are running two meetings (each catering for half their members) each week. Additionally, we are unable to Camp/sleepover, we can't use the minibuses and we must keep the hut scrupulously clean. Scouts (aged 10-14) and Leaders must also wear masks when meeting indoors.

Cubs have been meeting outside since mid-September with two programmes running each week. They have been cooking over open fires, walking around Highworth on a photo trail (finding locations from pictures) and a multi-activity trail around Badbury Clump woods.

Both Scout troops have returned, with one troop enjoying cooking pancakes on gas stoves while the other troop practised navigational skills in readiness for their Expedition Challenge badge which took place the first weekend of half term.

The Beavers and the other Cub Pack plan to restart during the next half term. Let's hope we can all get back to normal very soon.

Scouts Expedition Challenge badge

Nine Scouts undertook the two-day expedition. The first day started and ended at Inglesham, walking to Snowswick, Buscot and Lechlade and then following the Thames Path back to Inglesham.

The first section was difficult navigation so we spent a lot of time trying to teach the Scouts about compass bearings. They arrived at Snowswick about an hour later than planned with the leaders pleased they had been able to take time to teach the youngsters and hoping it didn't go in one ear and out the other!

The Scouts then made good time for the rest of their hike. They stopped to cook a hot lunch in Buscot before continuing their journey. Much of the day was cloudy with the occasional light rain until about 3.15pm when the Scouts arrived at the penultimate check point, St John's Church, Inglesham. The heavens opened just as they were getting their waterproofs on. Some of the Scouts had a whale of a time being big kids and checking whether puddles were too deep to walk through.

The second day of their hike went from Inglesham back to Highworth via Hannington, a shorter walk today and generally much nicer weather.

The leaders checked how much the Scouts had learned the day before, giving each an individual navigation task to complete. For today's hike the



Checking the navigation!



End of day 1 and still able to smile.

Scouts were split into two groups and each set off for the day. The Scouts did this second day completely on their own, working well in their teams and achieving their goals and learning valuable lessons. When they went wrong, they knew where they were and (mostly) knew where they were heading for. Both teams made excellent time and the leaders met them in Pentylands park just as the heavens opened again. After heading inside, there was time for a little more tuition before sending the Scouts home an hour earlier than expected.

The leaders are extremely proud of all the Scouts and what they achieved during their two-day, 24km expedition. They started the weekend unaware that they were going to be on their own (no leaders) so it was a little surprise for them. Feedback has been positive, for example one Scout "had great fun and despite the challenging mud and weather couldn't wait to tell her friends that she had completed the challenge".

Here's to the next one. Hopefully the weather will be kinder.

You can find out more about Highworth Beavers, Cubs and Scouts at <https://www.highworthscouts.org.uk/>.

Currently there are spaces available for 10.5-14 year-olds in our Friday Scout Troop. But get in touch to add your child to our waiting list today.

Cathy Mollart

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday was a muted affair this year with no parade or crowds lining the street. Instead, residents were asked to stay away from the Church and War Memorial and to watch the proceedings as it was streamed live over the internet.

Inside the Church, Rev Geoff Sowdon spoke of hope in the face of the uncertainty we are having to live through. Charles spoke of the Battle of Goose Green, a tiny settlement on the Falkland Islands where in 1982 the British parachutists engaged the Argentinians who surrendered the next day. Emily led the prayers for all those who have fought or died or been affected by war, violence and conflicts past and present.

Outside at the War Memorial, the flags were lowered, the trumpet blown, the names read out, and the wreaths laid. But the community feel was missing as the few souls present covered their mouths with masks and socially distanced, to sing the National Anthem quietly.





Second 'Tommy' given a Permanent Home

Two years ago, Highworth purchased two 'Tommys' for the town in order to commemorate the end of the First World War.

One 'Tommy' was installed on the Podium next to the memorial to Rex Warneford. The other toured the schools before being stored in the Visit Highworth bank vault.

Shortly before Remembrance Sunday, the second 'Tommy' reappeared in the churchyard looking down towards the base of the War Memorial. Alongside it a new brass plaque had been installed stating simply but poetically:

"Our 'Tommy'. Alone I stand, my head bowed low, remembering comrades who died long ago. Highworth Remembers".



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Christmas in Highworth, 1860-1879

The two local papers, The Swindon Advertiser and The North Wilts Herald, both reported Highworth events at this time and had 'correspondents' in the town. The North Wilts reported the smaller towns and villages more fully than the Advertiser.

The first item is however earlier and is from the Reading Mercury of 1839.

Annual Christmas Ball in Highworth:

This took place at the Swan Inn Assembly Rooms. (This was a coaching inn in Sheep Street, now a hairdresser and offices). We learn that it was attended by the greatest proportion of wealth and respectability in Highworth and its vicinity. The ball room, on the first floor, was tastefully decorated and had a massive, brilliant chandelier.

Dancing started at 10pm and went on until the early hours. A sumptuous supper was always provided. Praise was given every year, except for once. The young men complained that there was a lack of eligible young girls!

Sunday School Treats:

Each church in the town organized these for their own members. They gave tea and an entertainment; magic tricks were popular. The children then went home with a bag of sweets. The Primitive Methodist children also had an orange.

Adult Entertainments:

These took place over the Christmas and New Year period. The largest event was held in the school hall. The Town Band usually organized it and provided the music, although there was a piano for solo songs. All the items were from the townspeople. Songs, poems, comedy turns and small drama items. The paper printed the whole programme with the names of the performers. Over the years, a large part of the entertainment seemed to be by the, very large, Hulbert family (Mr Hulbert was the owner of the Brewery).

One evening was not the usual success. The weather was bad and there was "disorderly conduct from some young men at the back, and as the policeman



Carols on the Podium, Market Place.

Led by Salvation Army Band, 24th December 1994.

(usually the case when he is wanted) was minus, there was some little trouble in keeping order."

The policemen at this time would have been Sgt. David Waters and PC William Bushnell.

St. Michael's Church Decorations:

These were always described in great detail and they did sound very lovely and elaborate.

One year however struck a sour note. They were described as "very inferior ... scarcely worth even a passing remark." Mrs Langtry however was praised highly for her decoration of the font, ... artistically decorated in a manner quite new to Highworth and showing considerable taste." I wonder who wrote this article!

The next week saw a letter from a parishioner, no name given, saying that the decorations had 'never been more admired by the town.'

St Michael's held two services on Christmas Day, with the afternoon one being fully choral.

The Primitive Methodists toured the town singing carols a few days before Christmas. On Christmas Day itself they played instruments and sang carols starting at 4am from the Market Place. Not popular with everyone!

The Rifle Corps:

They held their annual prize meeting over the Christmas period. It seems a rather strange time of year as almost every year there was wind, rain or fog. It did seem to provide an excuse for poor shooting.

The men and their friends would assemble at the butts at about 10am for the competition. In the evening, the competitors sat down to a supper, usually at the Red Lion in Sheep Street. After the meal there were toasts, songs were sung and the Highworth Band played. The individual scores were read out and everyone received a prize. The prizes were donated by the tradesmen of the town and appear a strange mix. Beer and spirits featured widely.

One year, Sgt Baughan was the highest scorer, winning a half ton of coal, a bottle of rum and 5/-. Last in the list was Pvt. Packer who went home with a pipe.

Town Charities:

During the seventeenth and eighteenth century many wealthy inhabitants left money in their wills to provide for the poor. This was often used to buy land which would give rental income over the years.

Several of these provided for gifts of food, clothes or money annually at Christmas. In one year, bread and beef was given to 330 poor families. The amount of beef varied between 2 and 14 pounds per family.

31 men received a suit of clothes and 45 widows and widowers received 5/- each.

Swindon Police Court:

The first one after Christmas was a busy one and there were always a few Highworth men there charged with being drunk and disorderly, usually on Christmas Eve. There was a standard fine of 5/- plus costs of 7/-. Failure to pay meant a month in Devizes Gaol.

Assaulting a police officer meant a higher charge and/or prison. Often the man's employer came to court to say how his behaviour was generally very good and he was a solid worker.

The police did seem to try and keep the men out of the court by getting friends to take them home quietly. They even took them to their home themselves. One policeman offered to take the man up to the bedroom. The wife was having none of that and said to leave him on the hall floor, "He's nothing but a nuisance in bed when he's drunk."

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The Country Market in Highworth



For more than 100 years a network of about 250 Country Markets across England and Wales have been selling homemade baked goods, preserves, garden-grown fruit and vegetables, plants and handmade crafts.

Visitors to these markets can buy a variety of produce; almost anything local and seasonal that can be produced in a domestic kitchen or garden. Alongside the homemade goods, many Country Markets also sell meat, fish, dairy goods, honey and eggs from local producers. Country Markets operate as a cooperative and all producers have to meet the standards laid down by the national organisation.

There has been a Country Market in Highworth variously over the years, subject to the enthusiasm of local producers and support of customers. The current group of producers has held a monthly, and sometimes fortnightly, market in Highworth for quite a number of years in the Community Room, adjacent to the Council Offices in Gilberts Lane which leads from the High Street to the Library and the Post Office. It has also had a stall in the Highworth May Fair markets along the High Street, which have always been well-supported. This year, following the restart of the Saturday Highworth Market after the COVID-19 suspension of that market, Country Market has had a stall in the Saturday Market about fortnightly. Presence in the Saturday Market resulted in Country Market being 'discovered' by more customers. Country Market's presence in the Saturday Market has finished for this year with the onset of wintery weather, but continues in the Council's Community Room in Gilberts Lane.



Specialities of the Country Market in Highworth include: local honey, a wide range of jams, marmalades, chutneys and other preserves; fruit pies and a wide variety of cakes "like grandmother made", and savouries mostly sized for the single or elderly person.

The most popular items sell quickly, so it is often a case of "the early bird catches the worm"! However, orders can be placed in advance (07919-400059) and the ordered produce is then reserved until after 11am. Additionally for sale there are plants in season and handmade crafts including cards, jewellery and knitwear.

Country Market is grateful to the Lighthouse Bookshop and the Visit Highworth shop for displaying its posters prior to its market days. Confirmation of its market days is also posted on the Highworth Online Facebook.

Country Market in Highworth welcomes enquiries from potential new producers. If you are interested then visit the next market and discuss what the implications are.

For more information about Country Markets visit: <https://www.country-markets.co.uk/> Forthcoming dates are: 5th and 19th December and 30th January and 27th February.

Ross Gregory



From the Lions Den

December is usually a busy month for the Highworth Lions but this year our only definite activity is our Gift Voucher scheme for the Elderly.

We have been running this type of event for many years. When I joined the Lions in 1981 we used to go around the streets collecting food donations from houses, take them to the Silver Threads Hall, sort them into carrier bags and then deliver the bags of assorted provisions to people who were nominated by the various Clubs and organisations for the Elderly in the Town and area. We next went on to buying a fixed amount of Christmas-themed provisions which was delivered to those who had completed an Application Form in the LINK (remember the canvas life-time bags with the Lion's Logo on them? We have still got some if you want one). Then we went over to delivering Vouchers, first from the Co-Op and now from Tesco. Last year we delivered 285 Vouchers; much easier than delivering bags of food!

The Charity Shop window has been repaired and, hopefully, the shop will re-open soon and comply with the current COVID-19 restrictions. We are hoping to help Father Christmas again this year,

COVID-19 restrictions permitting. It will be a different format from previous years, so keep an eye open for announcements in the Charity Shop and on Social Media.

We have also signed up with AmazonSmile, so if you are buying anything from Amazon, log onto AmazonSmile, select Highworth and District Lions Club on the drop down menu, and go ahead with your purchase. The selection, price and everything is the same as the normal transaction, but Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to us. You don't have to pay the extra. So give it a try, it won't cost you anything but you will be making a donation to the Highworth Lions.

Grants during October were:

Visit Highworth Ltd.	£250.00
Wiltshire Bobby Van	£200.00
Friends of Angel's Orphanage	£200.00

The next Lion's Den will be in February, 2021 and we hope that by then life will be getting back towards normality. In the meantime, have a wonderful Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Rodney Davis, Highworth and District Lions Club

'British School' building to be sold

The old 'British School' building in Brewery Street is to be sold. It was erected in the 1850s as a school for nonconformists which operated for some 20 years. The building has since had many uses and for the past 40 years has been the home of Vorda Pre-School.

The Pre-School have now sadly closed and the

United Reformed Church, who own the building, have decided to sell it. At the time of writing, the selling arrangements had not yet been made, but if any local organisations might be interested in trying to acquire the building and would send me an email (bryanek90@gmail.com), I will put them in touch.

Bryan Elkington

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Great News! Funding package secures future of Highworth Recreation Centre

There's good news for Highworth Recreation Centre as a £145,000 funding package has been agreed to secure the future of the centre and to ensure ongoing delivery of the benefits it brings to people's health across the region.

The funding from Highworth Town Council to the tune of £115,000, topped up with £30,000 from Swindon Borough Council, acknowledges not only how locals cherish their local centre, but how often they use it and the difference it makes. Since award-winning social enterprise and registered charity Halo Leisure took over its management it has seen a staggering rise in usage and last year, ahead of the pandemic, recorded more than 23,000 visits to group exercise classes, more than 25,000 gym workouts, more than 24,000 public swims and 600 kids every week enjoying swimming lessons. Halo Leisure and Highworth Recreation Centre Board of Trustees thank the partners for their much needed support at this challenging time.

"Highworth, like every other leisure centre across the UK, has faced an enormous challenge this year," says Cllr Paul Newton-Smith from Highworth Town Council.

"It has, as a result of COVID-19, been forced to go into lockdown to protect visitor's health, while knowing those same visitors (and they saw over 170,000 visits to the centre last year) rely on it for their physical and mental wellbeing, something that is so important during health crises like the pandemic. As a Town Council we felt it imperative to support such a valuable community asset."

Centre Manager Martin Suter said, "There has been some speculation over the future of the Centre recently. The Centre had healthy participation figures and was performing well before the pandemic. I would like to reassure all customers that the Centre is open, safe, clean and ready to welcome them for a gym workout, a group exercise class or a swim in the pool."

Halo Leisure were quick to respond to the lockdown, offering virtual exercise sessions and a wealth of bespoke lockdown advice online, but

they knew that the usual seven-day-a-week schedule of all-age physical activity was impossible to replace on a virtual basis and that exercising with the guidance of fitness professionals and alongside others supports people in a lasting way. They also know their centre is home to children's sports activities and swimming lessons, clubs like Slimming World and Weight Watchers, the place to go for sports teams and for social activities like a local tea dance.

"The benefits of this Centre are greater than the sum of its parts and the industry as a whole has continued to call for public investment, pointing out that for every pound invested in sports and leisure now, there is a fivefold saving to the public purse in terms of health benefits," Suter told us today. He says Halo Leisure and the Highworth Recreation Centre Board of Trustees take their hats off to the local Town Council and Swindon Borough Council for recognising that and allowing the thousands of people who come into the centre to have confidence in its future.

"We know the tough times aren't over and have worked hard to ensure this is a safe place to work out and wind down. We are determined to help preserve people's sense of wellbeing, build children's confidence and help promote healthy living as the area works through this second phase of the pandemic and looks forward to a more positive, healthy 2021".

*Jade Fields,
Marketing & Communications Officer,
T: 01568 618169,
www.haloleisure.org.uk,
Halo Support Centre, Lion Yard,
Broad Street, Leominster HR6 8BT*





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878 Highworth Squadron starts afresh...

After so long away from activities, 878 Highworth Squadron has never been more eager to return to our home in Newburgh Place. However, our building can often be missed by passers-by, due to its humble exterior and its position, hidden away from view.

The town of Highworth has been home to 878 Squadron for almost thirty years, so it seems fitting that our building be due for an upgrade. Thanks to the MOD, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCA) has been able to begin refurbishing the building inside and out. This work has already begun and is being eagerly watched from afar, by both cadets and staff.

The external structure of the building will remain much the same, only with a fresh lick of paint to brighten the compound slightly! Meanwhile, inside, the flooring and classrooms are being ripped out and completely renovated, ready for our cadets to get back to training as soon as possible.

At the end of such a long break away from cadets, this was the most exciting news for the



whole 878 family. At the beginning of this year, we could not be sure that we would be able to keep the building that has been our base for such a long time. Now, knowing that the squadron is here to stay, we can look forward to the future and plan our return to face-to-face activity.

Here's to another sensational thirty years!

Cadet Sergeant Anna Talbert, 17

To find out what other activities cadets get up to, search '878 Highworth Squadron RAF Air Cadets' on Facebook or visit '@878Highworth' on Twitter and '@878highworthsqn' on Instagram.



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What will 2020 be remembered for? For each person the year will have had different personal achievements and challenges but, underpinning it all, will have been a global pandemic which has provided immense trials but also heart-warming triumphs like the awesome Captain Sir Thomas Moore's sponsored walk.

The pandemic also reminded us of the importance of checking in with others, of talking to allow us to share our emotions and experiences and to give support to each other so we can all feel part of a community and be connected to each other.

As we move towards the end of the year our thoughts may turn towards how we will be able to celebrate the festive season with those we love.

Christmas may be a wonderful time of year for some, but it's also a time when feelings of loneliness, depression and anxiety can be overwhelming, not least because of the pressure to be happy and merry. For many people struggling to cope, we'll be the only lifeline open when many other services are closed.

Last year, Samaritan volunteers answered over 10,000 calls for help on Christmas Day. We want everyone to know that we understand that picking up the phone can be one of the hardest things to do if life is a struggle but calling could be the one thing to save or change someone's life. Samaritans are here to listen and every call we answer could be the call that ends with someone finding the strength to keep going.

No matter what the struggle may be, Samaritans are here for everyone who needs them this Christmas and every single day of the year.

Anyone can contact Samaritans for free any time from any phone on 116 123, even a mobile without credit, or email jo@samaritans.org

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bryanelk90@gmail.com
www.highworthurc.org.uk

Highworth Methodist Church

Vicarage Lane SN6 7DG

'Our mission is to love, worship and serve God, whilst individually we aim to know Him and make Him known.'

Meets Sundays, 10:30am and 6pm

highworthmethodistchurch@gmail.com
www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk

St Michael's Parish Church

Vicarage Lane SN6 7DG

'A vibrant Anglican church with a passion to help people on their faith journey.'

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office@stmichaelshighworth.co.uk
www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk

Highworth Community Church

Warneford School, Shrivenham Road
SN6 7BZ

'We love to be together, laugh and learn together, and serve together. We are a church with a life full of God and a heart reaching out to people.'

Meets Sundays, 10:15am

admin@highworthchurch.co.uk
www.highworthcommunitychurch.org

Bringing cheer to Swindon seniors this Christmas

2020 has not been the year we all wanted or needed, but Home Instead Senior Care Swindon are looking to bring a bit of cheer to the winter months with their 'Be a Santa to a Senior' campaign! The campaign will see the local home care company collaborate with local schools, businesses and organisations in order to gift local seniors with cards, crafts and activities this holiday season.

The company has already joined with nine local schools and various individuals for the initiative but are actively encouraging more local schools, businesses and organisations to take part. Whether you write a letter, make a Christmas card or craft a Christmas gift, all participation will be gladly appreciated by local seniors this Christmas!

This year has seen many seniors having to isolate or shield due to the ongoing pandemic with many not being able to see their family and loved ones for many months. Home Instead caregivers have continued to care for their elderly clients in the comfort of their own homes throughout the nationwide lockdown, providing services such as companionship and specialist dementia care, but are aware that other seniors are not so lucky.

The company is looking to bring a smile to the face of local seniors this year throughout their Christmas campaign. They will be sending 'Santa-grams' from local school children to elderly people in the Swindon area, bringing them wishes of a 'Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year' from those within their local community.



Home Instead team members, Robyn Taylor and Toby Kirk, participating in the 'Be a Santa to a Senior' campaign last Christmas.

School children have been asked to create Christmas cards, letters or crafts for elderly local people this December which will be delivered to them in envelopes. The 'Santa-grams' will be isolated for the appropriate time before being delivered contact-free to local seniors, ensuring the campaign is COVID-19 secure.

Home Instead is encouraging local businesses and organisations to make donations in the form of puzzles and activities that can fit into an A4 envelope to keep elderly people occupied this Christmas. Donations will be collected in the last week of November and delivered to seniors by Santa's Elf in the second week of December.

If you are a local business, organisation or school and would like to get involved with Home Instead's Christmas campaign, please ring 01793 988537, visit <https://www.homeinstead.co.uk/swindon/>, or email Rachel at: rachel.jannaway@homeinsteadswindon.co.uk for more information.

Southfield Junior School are looking for co-opted governors

We are looking to appoint a co-opted governor to join our enthusiastic and strategic academy committee.

Our governors come from a range of different backgrounds, skills and experience but all share a common interest of wanting the best possible education for the children in our school. This position is perfect for a member of the community who shares a passion for continuous development and strategic planning.

We would be delighted to hear from anyone who:

- Is interested in children's education and the performance of the school
- Is community spirited and would like to represent the community
- Is able to work well as part of a team
- Has an enquiring mind and the confidence to ask questions and debate issues that affect the school
- Can consider matters objectively and make informed judgements

If you are interested in this opportunity, please browse our school website:

www.southfieldjuniorsch.co.uk to see if we are the right school for you or call us on 01793 762210.

Mrs Williams (Head of School) will be delighted to speak more about the opportunity and answer any questions you have about the school and the rôle.



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† Source: LaingBuisson, Dentistry UK Market Report, 5th ed. If you require verification please email marketing@bupadentalcare.co.uk

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Sport *Compiled by Jason Daniels*

If you have a sport story email jcdsport12@gmail.com



Peter (No 271), in the club's earliest days

A Gentleman Runner

This year the Highworth Running Club lost one of its founding members, leaving everyone in our running community deeply saddened.

With pandemic restrictions at their peak on the day of his funeral it simply wasn't possible to overwhelm the crematorium with our attendance as would and should have been the case. Instead we had a socially-distanced gathering outside his house with a running entourage following the hearse as it left Brookfield; our farewell to a beloved friend and gentleman.

Peter O'Brien was the first person I met when I walked through the doors of the Vorda building back in 1996 and his greeting, one that I can only describe as suave playfulness, put me instantly at ease. It was clear straight away that Peter's passion was not only in social running but also in competition and he took great interest in how club members got on in races, often imparting both praise and encouragement to do better.

Having occupied all of the rôles on the

committee at one stage or another, Peter's contributions to the club went beyond normal expectations as he garnered relationships with governing bodies and neighbouring clubs to forge the best profile for the club he loved. The Wickstead Wander, our annual cross country fun run, was one of his most recent contributions which he pioneered over many conversations with both Wickstead and Eastrop Farm to find the best and most challenging course; one of his many legacies he leaves us with.

The 'few' ring binders his family passed on to us turned out to be a treasure trove of well-documented minutes, newsletters, photographs and press clippings dating back 36 years to when the club was formed this month in 1984 and which we'll endeavour to upload the best of to our website. As an avid reader of the Highworth Link (he often used to nudge me to make sure I promoted our races), thank you Peter for everything you did for our club, you will be missed more than we would ever have been able to tell you.

Jason Daniels (Chairman)

Highworth Town Football Club



Another 3 points for the Reds

Ashley Edenborough found the only goal in the match against Winchester City after 83 minutes to put the town 7th in the Southern League, Division One South. At the end of October, eight games provided four wins and a draw to put the town in the right half of the table. With plenty of fixtures played over November and more to play in the run up to Christmas, have the Worthians maintained their solid start?

Derek Lloyd. Photo: courtesy of Facebook
W: www.highworthtownfc.com

30 Years of Wrag Barn Golf Club!

There was a huge turnout for the 30th Anniversary golf competition on 10th October.

Everyone was eligible to play and the format was a two ball Texas Scramble which sees pairs choosing the better positioned of the two driven balls, the ball in the worst position moved to the position of the better ball with the format continuing for each shot. We had all sorts of combinations: husbands and wives, friends, fathers, sons, daughters and pairs who'd never met but wanted to join the celebrations. The field was so large that the final entries were playing up the 18th hole when the sun was going down.

The new 'normal' COVID regulations made it safer to avoid presentation gatherings but didn't detract from the extraordinary results which were Andy and Riley Banks finishing runners up with a score of 64.2 just behind overall winners Richard and Lewis Ward with a net score of 62.2. Both Father and Son teams are already huge parts of the Wrag Barn Community. Richard ran the Junior Section for 12 years, unconditionally giving his time and wisdom which yielded fantastic results. So many Juniors have gone on



Lewis and Richard Ward



Riley and Andy Banks

to work in the golf industry or maintain a low golf handicap while pursuing a different career. Richard's son Lewis was Captain of the Junior Section in 2017 and, after all their hard work, it's wonderful to see them have time to play golf together with such impressive results.

Andy and Riley Banks have social media platforms (Instagram '@father_son_golf' and their own YouTube channel) to inspire so many with the candid stories of their journey. They record the lows in as much detail as the highs which provides inspiration and support to other golfers. Andy never forgets to record how much he enjoys spending so much time with Riley during his formative years.

Two wonderful stories and worthy winners of the Wrag Barn 30th Anniversary Plates.

Verity Manners

Swindon Croquet Club

Having been closed throughout lockdown, Swindon Croquet Club's members were delighted to resume play in early July.

Regular 'Golf Croquet' and 'Association Croquet' sessions have taken place since then with an on-line lawn booking system and strict hygiene rules implemented in order for the Club to be COVID- safe. Sadly, all league and tournament events had to be cancelled for the 2020 season but the social sessions have been great fun and also fiercely contested!

Two lawns are now closed for annual maintenance and to 'rest' the grass but one lawn remains open through the winter months to facilitate play and everyone is hoping that the Club can operate normally again in 2021. If you are interested in croquet, please do visit our website and get in touch.

Beverly Briggs

W: www.swindoncroquetclub.org.uk

Highworth Walking Football Club

After months of planning which necessitated detailed arrangements to cover COVID protocols, the Wiltshire FA's Walking Football League has finally kicked off.

Played at the Wiltshire FAs new HQ in Devizes, nine teams of Over-50's and six teams of Over-60's



began their mission to become County Walking Football Champions. Highworth Town's Over-50's team started with an impressive 3-0 win over FC Bustards and followed this up with a 1-1 draw against Amesbury Whites, squandering a 1-0 lead in the dying minutes. A clash with fellow favourites Swindon New Boys followed and the 'game of the day' ensued with New Boys scoring a late winner. Occupying mid-table after the first round with four more Matchdays to come means we are well positioned. The Over 60's fared better with a hard fought 2-1 win against FC Old Bustards, Alan Clark scoring a debut goal and Ade Tucker with his trademark power-driver. A disappointing goalless draw followed against Calne with controversy surrounding my disallowed goal.

The team rounded off in style though with a 3-1 win over an impressive Salisbury side; Alan Clark opening the scoring for me to add to, leaving us top of the table after the first Matchday. For more information about where and how you can get involved, from a simple kick-about to competitive action please do get in touch.

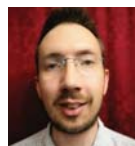
Kevin Turner (Club Secretary) M: 07748 366979

E: highworthwfc@gmail.com



Arts Section *Compiled by Iain Barnwell*

Contact: HighworthLinkArts@gmail.com



Art in a crisis

Art has always been a passion and escape of mine since a very young age. There's always so much beauty in the natural world around us and you will often find me painting landscapes and flowers. I enjoy using a mix of oil and acrylic paint and take inspiration from artists such as Bob Ross and David Hockney. My aim is to uplift and bring joy to others through my paintings and love of colour! These past few years, life has got busier and busier and there is scarcely any time to stop and paint. Then came 2020 and COVID-19 which stopped us all in our tracks.

Finally, I went back to painting. The nation turned to rainbows to spread the message of hope. In this time of crisis and isolation, the arts have become a central part of our lives. We turned to books, films, using music to get by and playing video games to give us the very essence of our shrunken freedom under lockdown. Television highlighted the importance of making art to externalise our emotions and encouraged everyone to have a go to communicate how we are feeling throughout Lockdown. Grayson's Art club was one of my favourites with the goal "To help bring the nation tighter through art, to unleash the collective creativity as we live through unprecedented crisis".

The positive affect of art on our mental health became so clear to everyone watching. We can't lose the arts. We need them. It's now more important than ever to support local artists and venues. I am very excited to have produced a



unique A3 print of a ballerina painting named 'Stage Lights'; professionally printed on Giclée paper. The print lightens up any space, highlights the importance of the arts and brings a reminder of pre-COVID adventures with the arts you may have. Whether it's gigs down the pub, film club nights, flower arranging, dance shows or theatre, there is hope it will return. We must hold onto hope of a brighter time to come when we can enjoy the arts as fully as we used to; the red curtain will rise again!

If you would like a print or to see more of my work, please see my website for more details. Visit: <https://jemmastorey.wixsite.com/jemsart> or find me on: Instagram: [jemjamdolphin](#) Facebook Page: [Jemsart](#)

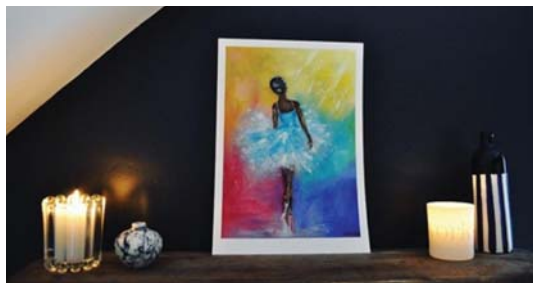


Photo: Ellie Rose Interiors

Jemma Storey

Robin Song for Christmas

Visit Highworth is a treasure trove of artwork. Currently, one particularly eye-catching painting is of a robin by Christine Purdy. Painted on top of the music for 'We Wish you a Merry Christmas' it's almost as if the robin is trilling along to the tune.



"Every so often I scour Pinterest for inspiration," Christine explained. "The idea of painting on sheet music really caught my imagination. I have painted the robin before with slodges of colour round it and I have painted different song birds on sheet music, but this is the first time I have combined the two and the effect is rather lovely.

"I look out for sheet music in charity shops. It is much cheaper to cut the pages out of old music books without having to pay a fortune for each separate song. It makes each painting different and unique. I think about the song and the bird or image I associate most with it. As this music was a Christmas tune, the robin instantly sprang to mind because it's the bird that is most associated with Christmas.

"I cut the music to the required size, then drew the robin in pencil before colouring it with acrylic inks. I really like my wildlife art to have vibrant colours that jump off the page at you. Using sheet music differs from specialist art paper in that the sheet music has quite a shiny surface and so I find the ink goes on well. If I used watercolour it would mean wetting the paper, which wouldn't be ideal.

"The splodges of colour round the robin were created by blowing the ink through a straw. This stage of the process can be quite nerve-wracking as you are never too sure how the ink will disperse and if it goes wrong then the whole piece is ruined; you cannot just start again with

the same sheet music!

"My opinion of the final effect is that it gives an unusual and vibrant twist to an otherwise ordinary painting. I intend to do more of these paintings and hopefully they will evolve with different additions".

You can view more of Christine's artwork at her website www.christinepurdy.co.uk. Her artwork and greeting cards can also be viewed and purchased at multiple locations around the local area including Marlborough, Salisbury, Basingstoke, Lechlade and Wantage. But the 'Robin Song at Christmas' is only available in Highworth.

(See our cover)

HAS Exhibition

The Highworth Artists' Society Autumn Exhibition is still running online at www.highworthartistsociety.com until Sunday 13th December.



Thames Glitterpath by Roger Jones

31 Days of Face

Frankie Williams set herself a month long challenge to create a different 'face' for each day of October.



A Na'vi from Avatar



Venom



Comic Book Art Zombie

Frankie, who spent four years at artistic makeup school, has completed the challenge before but wanted to revive it to give herself something to do in what has been quite a boring year.

"Ever since I was little, all I have ever wanted to be is a make-up artist for major TV shows like Dr Who," Frankie said. "Sadly, I never managed to get a job in TV but I do like to practice my skills now and then.

"This challenge has kept me focused throughout October. Each face can take between one to two hours to create, so it was a big commitment, but I had an idea of what faces I would create before I started so I didn't have to spend time during the month thinking up what face to do next. The hardest part of any face is the eyes. I am quite blind without my glasses on so I always leave the eyes until last. It can also be tricky to achieve perfect symmetry but the face paint is easy to get on and off so if you go wrong you can just remove it and try again.

"My favourite face was 'Venom'. It was tricky to create in the sense that I had to keep my head tilted for hours whilst I applied the makeup but I was really pleased with the effect.

"I was also really proud of the comic book art 'Zombie'. It took over two hours to complete but the effect was stunning. This was the last face I created so I felt like I ended the month on a high.

"I would really like to set myself another challenge for Christmas. I have played with the idea of creating 12 faces based on the 12 Days of Christmas but the later days would be a bit of a challenge in terms of creativity. What could you do for 10 lords a leaping? So I am trying to think of a different challenge. Watch this space".

The full album of Frankie's 31 days of faces can be seen at <https://bit.ly/3nqHArS>.

Sarah Gardiner



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Christmas Trees for Sale, Saturday 5th, 12th & 19th December

Swindon North Rotarian Terry Williams will be selling his home-grown Christmas trees on the Podium in aid of local charities on Saturday 5th, 12th & 19th December from 9am-12noon.



There will be a choice of Norway Spruce and Nordman fir trees. If you wish to pre-order a tree you can contact Terry on 01793 762669 or email him terry.williams1@btinternet.com and you will be able to collect it from the Podium on one of the above dates. He looks forward to hearing from or seeing you.

The new Collection Week for England is 5th-14th December



With Lockdown restrictions being introduced, the planned shoebox collection in November had to be postponed. It is now hoped that Highworth Collection Centre will operate from **Monday**

7th-14th December, opening 9.30am-1pm each day. Please check The Highworth Link Facebook page or call Highworth Methodist Church nearer the time to check for updates in case lockdown is extended or circumstances require Highworth Methodist Church to close.

Full details of what is allowed in the shoeboxes is

available on Operation Christmas Child website, <https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk> or contact Peter 01793 764385. Please be aware that the centre will be adhering to all the COVID regulations regarding masks, social distancing, etc.

Highworth Advent Window Trail, 1st-24th December

Local residents Elaine Graham and Lesley Muir are organising an Advent Window Trail for the first time in Highworth.

For the trail, 24 houses or businesses throughout the town, with windows overlooking the road, volunteer to decorate and illuminate their front window in a seasonal way. The windows would light up consecutively each evening from 1st-24th December. Once lit on their specific date the windows then remain lit between the hours of 5-9pm each evening up to and including 24th December so, by Christmas Eve, there are 24 different windows to see and enjoy as you walk the trail; a great way to get into the Christmas spirit.



If you would like to register your interest to decorate and illuminate an Advent Window please email Elaine Graham on elaine_graham@hotmail.co.uk to receive further details and a registration form.

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CHRISTMAS SERVICES

HIGHWORTH CHURCHES TOGETHER

Sunday 20th December: 5pm Streamed Carol Service.

ST MICHAEL'S HIGHWORTH

Sunday 6th December: 3pm Christingle in Churchyard

Thursday 24th December: 3pm Nativity in Churchyard

Thursday 24th December: 11.30pm Christmas Holy Communion (pre-booked seats only)

Christmas Day: 10.15am (live and streamed service at www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth)
All Age Holy Communion (pre-booked seats only).

Sunday 27th December: 10.15am (NO streamed service) Said Holy Communion

HIGHWORTH COMMUNITY CHURCH

Christmas Day: 10.30am Christmas Service
(live streamed service at www.highworthcommunitychurch.org)

HIGHWORTH METHODIST CHURCH

Christmas Day: 10am Christmas Day Service
(Live and via zoom at www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk).
Please check that we are able to open by visiting our website.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST HANNINGTON

Sunday 20th December: 4pm Carol Service (pre-booked seats only)

Friday 25th December: 10am Holy Communion (pre-booked seats only)

Sunday 3rd January: 11am (Plough Service)

ST JAMES' SEVENHAMPTON

Friday 25th December: 9am Said Holy Communion

ST LEONARD'S BLUNSDON

Sunday 6th December: 4pm Christingle in Church (pre-booked seats only)

Friday 25th December: 10am Family Holy Communion (pre-booked seats only)

ST LEONARD'S STANTON FITZWARREN

Sunday 13th December: 11am Family Christingle service.
Join in on Zoom and make your Christingle with us in your own home.

NOTE:

All services are subject to current Government lockdown guidelines at the time. To ensure Government guidelines are met some services can only be attended if a seat has been prebooked first. Face coverings must be worn in Church. Hygiene and social distancing guidelines must be adhered to. Hand sanitizer will be located near the main door for use on entering and exiting the Church.

Janet Mary Francis, 1943-2020

Janet Francis was born on the 16th July in 1943 at Tetbury, Glos and grew up at Cirencester where she had a happy childhood.

She went to the local grammar school where she excelled at languages. In fact, it was these skills that got her her first job at Cheltenham GCHQ. Later it was in Cheltenham that she met her future husband Arthur at a dance.

The couple had two sons, Clive and later Neil. Clive's learning difficulties soon became apparent and went on to become a great challenge for them.

As Clive grew up, Janet had to always be there to care for him, so it was difficult for her to resume her career. She joined the Highworth Division of the St John Ambulance which she thoroughly enjoyed and she later became the superintendent of the Division.

After Clive and Neil moved away, Janet and Arthur had more freedom. She took on various part-time jobs, developed new interests and continued to be involved in the community.

Janet was a Link distributor for many years and became the Highworth Citizen of the Year in 2003. She was also a secretary of the Highworth Festival for several years. At the 2000 festival she organised a wedding dress display in St Michael's Church. Wedding dresses worn by several Highworth ladies over the decades were displayed.

Janet enjoyed playing the piano for the residents of Newburgh House and joined the Merry Bells



who used to entertain at various venues.

Janet also worked as a 'logger' at Swindon Crown Court and was the clerk of South Marston Parish Council as well as a Secretary for the Highworth United Charities.

She joined the Highworth Historical Society and the Family History Research.

Later, as Arthur's health declined, she became his carer and continued to be involved with Clive who was cared for at various homes.

Arthur sadly passed away in 2010. During the next few years Janet's health deteriorated and she was cared for at a Care Home in Trowbridge in order to be near Neil and his family.

She was proud of her family and two granddaughters Josie and Aisha. Josie got her first job as an archeologist a few months ago and is now on working on Iron Age and Roman sites.

Janet passed away on the 17th September and her funeral was held at St Michael's Church on Tuesday 6th October. Neil said "I will always remember Mum as a determined but kind mother, always trying to do the right thing and help other people.

"It is right that she is back in Highworth to be with my Dad and be at peace in a place where she lived for over 50 years and where she had so many fond memories."

Mair Huband



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Pat Willis, 1953-2020

Pat Willis was a Londoner, born in Peckham on the 11th November to Jim and Sheila Willis. He had a younger brother, Terry, and the two lads had a happy childhood. Pat especially got up to mischief.

In 1970, Pat's father was fortunate to inherit a house in Bideford from a lady who cared for him as an orphan from the age of 9 years during the war. This was an immense change for Pat as a child from South London to move to rural Devon.

A decade later, when visiting friends in Highworth, Pat met Fran for the first time at a local pub. The couple married in September 1985. Fran already had two daughters, Alison and Claire, from a previous marriage. Later, Gemma was born, thus completing their family.

Over the years, Pat had a variety of jobs including selling men's clothing, jewellery and insurance to driving milk tankers and HGV's.

Sadly, in October 1986, at the age of 32 years, he was forced to retire due to ill health. Until his heart attack in 1995, Pat was able to do some



voluntary work which included setting up Highworth and District Neighbourhood Watch. He also helped the Youth Offending Team and Victim Support. He loved this as it helped the younger generations.

Pat helped on the front desk at the Highworth Police Station and at Gablecross when he was able to. He even managed to arrange a

quiz night at the Goldfinger Tavern

which raised money for the Air Ambulance.

Sadly, Pat's health continued to deteriorate over recent years which made him very tired.

His final two days were spent at the Great Western Hospital where he finally passed away on Sunday 14th June with Fran and Gemma at his side. His funeral service was held on the 1st July at Kingsdown Crematorium. A special poem which was written by Pat himself as a love poem to Fran, simply called 'Ode to Fran', was read.

Pat will be missed by all his family and friends and will be remembered for his kindness and his friendly disposition despite his ill health.

Mair Huband

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Using our cars less to slow climate change

Do you remember those days during the first lockdown and how quiet the roads were? One benefit of the situation was how many cars were not used and the improvement in air quality. Unfortunately, as lockdown was eased the use of the car slowly went back to pretty much pre-lockdown use.

This month we look at the impact of the conventional car (with a petrol or diesel engine) on the environment and how we can try and reduce this. Then a little about electric cars. We will not be quoting many statistics and targets, just a simple, hopefully thought-provoking, article on what we can all do to help. This is the 7th part of a series of articles about what we can do as individuals about climate change. These articles have been written by readers of *Ripples Community Magazine* for Fairford and Lechlade and *Highworth Link Magazine*.

It is just so easy to use the car isn't it? Try and ask yourself the question every time; "Could I leave it at home?"

The best options for reducing our carbon footprint

In our November article about energy decisions, we offered the best options for reducing our carbon footprint from the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions (via the BBC). Their table shows the average reduction per person per year in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, with use of cars at the top.

Live car free	2.04
Battery electric car	1.94
One less long-haul flight per year	1.68
Renewable energy	1.6
Refurbishment/renovation	0.895
Vegan diet	0.8
Renewable-based heating	0.64

Evidently, as we move towards more electric cars emissions will be reduced, but the jury still seems to be out on the environmental impact of their battery. However, there is still plenty we can achieve by using our cars less – **now**.

Perhaps it is worth reminding everyone of the effects on our health of poor air quality; the higher incidence of cancer, heart disease and obesity.

Using the car can sometimes be a very emotive matter, especially between those who try to minimise its use and those who would not think of not using it. So without huge fanfare, here are a few suggestions to use it less.

The school run

Schools encourage pupils and parents to walk to and from school. Parking and safety are often top considerations. For some, walking is not possible but if you live where there is an option, why not just leave the car at home for one day a week? That is an automatic 20% reduction. Or park away from school and walk the last bit. Also, when you use the car just look at the children in the car and remember it is their future you are helping.

Shopping

Again, try to leave the car at home wherever possible and practical. A real irritant to those who care about the environment is the people who use the car for a short journey, for example just to get their morning paper. This is exacerbated during the winter when the car is left running to defrost the windscreen and windows.

What else can we do?

Many of us use the car without thinking. It is near the house, easy to use and takes less time. It does require some thought, planning and more time to use it less. Increasingly we hear the argument about being too busy, rushing around and not having the time. Well, the time is now if we want a future.

RAC offers ‘11 ways to reduce your driving emissions’ and Lookers offer ‘Driving tips to lessen your carbon footprint’.

You could car share where possible and limit your speed and avoid excess acceleration or braking. Have you seriously considered facilities and opportunities nearer to home?

Using the car less and walking (or possibly cycling) has a positive effect on your health. Although you are more exposed to air pollution, the Government has stated “for most of us the health benefits of walking and cycling far outweigh the risks of roadside exposure to air pollution.”

Do you sometimes leave the car running? When this happens often it is in built up area and sometimes, amazingly, near schools. This increases air pollution in areas where it is probably already poor.

We are often told to use public transport more but that is sometimes difficult and it may not always be sensible during the COVID-19 pandemic. While Fairford and Lechlade have relatively few bus services, Highworth is fortunate to have one of the best bus services around if you need to go to Swindon. The No 7 bus goes to and from Swindon every 12 minutes on weekdays.

Electric cars

The government is consulting on ending the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars and vans by 2035, or even sooner. It looks like electric or hydrogen cars will be our only options. Given the average life of a car is about 12 years, 2035 is not far away at all, which is why car makers are now scrambling to tool-up for electric production. But is that the answer? The only feasible alternative to electric cars at present is the hydrogen-powered car. But their development lags far behind electric.

Before you commit to an electric car, think about:

Do the reduced carbon emissions when running outweigh the carbon emissions and other environmental impacts of making electric cars? An article by RAC ‘Are electric cars really better for the environment?’ concludes: “As electric cars become more widespread, cleaner energy generation, better recycling schemes and improvements to battery technology are all needed before we feel the full benefit of their green potential.”

How will the electricity you use for your car be generated? We are quickly moving towards renewables replacing fossil fuels. Indeed, the National Grid says “2019 was the cleanest year on record for the UK as, for the first time, the amount of zero carbon electricity used by the UK’s homes and businesses outstripped that from fossil fuels for a full twelve months.” You can support that change by ensuring you buy electricity from suppliers who pump renewable energy into the grid.

What about the air we breathe? As well as reducing climate change, cutting carbon emissions from cars would radically improve air quality and reduce diseases of our respiration and circulation systems.

Is an electric car cheaper? It just might be, but it's a balance between high up-front costs and lower operating costs. RAC’s article ‘Electric cars – a definitive guide and tips for buyers’ offers a steer through the main issues.

Sources

- Centre for research into energy demand solutions: www.creds.ac.uk
Lookers: www.lookers.co.uk
RAC: www.rac.co.uk
UK Government: www.gov.uk

Actions	Examples using conventional cars
AVOID it (completely)	Sell your car and walk, cycle and take buses instead – a big ask for most, especially in a rural area
REDUCE it (do it less)	Combine shopping trips
REPLACE it (find another way)	Drive to Highworth then take the bus
OFFSET it (find a way to absorb the harmful gases emitted)	Support a charity that increases and maintains woodlands, such as Woodland Trust and National Trust.

Thanks to David Roblin and Adrian Young for researching and writing this article.

Dear Editor

I've read with interest the recent articles about Climate Change in the Link; the articles appear well-researched and contain detail about both causes and suggestions for personal action to address the concerns. One thing that I implemented this year was to reduce my consumption of meat by having two vegetarian days each week. I am pleased to say that, at many levels, I feel better for it!



As well as acting personally and locally, I heard about a scheme through which I could help others to recycle. Link readers may also be interested to support the innovative Tearfund 'bin-twinning' scheme. Through donating £45, a recycling bin can be twinned with a start-up social enterprise in a poor neighbourhood in Africa, Asia or the Caribbean. These are places where rubbish hasn't been collected, plastic pollution occurs and where rubbish is typically burnt. The social enterprises employ local people to collect and recycle as much as possible; they thereby help to prevent waste-related disease, clean-up communities and protect the environment. Donors to the scheme receive a sticker to put on their bin to show that it's twinned with an overseas project. Mine is twinned with a project in Uganda.

If a Link reader is interested to know more, they can visit www.bintwinning.org

Best wishes, Val Savill

Can you help to deliver the Link?

The Highworth Link has always been incredibly lucky to have scores of volunteers to help deliver our little magazine to homes in Highworth and the surrounding area every month.

Many of these volunteers have delivered for over a decade but whilst we at the Link are very grateful for their support we don't want our volunteers to put themselves at risk.

With winter approaching and the number of COVID-19 infections rising, we at the Highworth

Link are hoping to put together a 'task force' of deliverers who would be willing to pick up deliveries as and when needed at very short notice to ensure that magazines continue to reach homes over the last weekend of each month, come what may.

If you can spare time at the weekend and would be willing to deliver our magazine then please contact Clive Hall on 07801 365282 email: clive7045@btinternet.com or Peter Croton on 01793 762025.



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Dear Highworth

My dad, Josh and myself would like to thank everyone for all the lovely cards flowers and messages of condolence we have received in the recent passing of my mum Liz Shurmer and then my sister Sally Shurmer so suddenly after mum.

The kindness and generous donations that have been received are overwhelming. Thank you to AJ from the Saracens for everything and Hayley Matheson for organising the Go Fund me page. A big thank you also to Justine from Highworth Flowers for the beautiful flowers at both funerals and most of all to everyone that lined Sally's funeral route to pay their respects to her. It was absolutely amazing and such a fitting send off for a larger than life Highworth character. We just couldn't believe it when we saw it. It shows how much she was liked and loved.

They are both missed so much.

Alf Heather Josh and family's xx

The Highworth Link would like to wish all of their
readers and advertisers a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year

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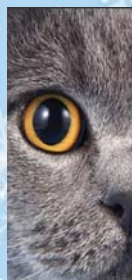
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End Polio Now campaign



Members of the Rotary Club of Swindon Old Town had planned to celebrate World Polio Day at the end of October throughout Old Town. However, the restrictions of Coronavirus meant that it had to be postponed. All was not lost though with the help of the Rotary club of Swindon a photoshoot in the Town Gardens was arranged.

Through its End Polio Now campaign, Rotary International has been instrumental in helping to almost eradicate the disease. It was once prevalent throughout the world, causing paralysis and death. Through a programme of vaccination, often carried out under dangerous conditions, the disease is now almost wiped out.

"It's been an incredible achievement," said Ray

Norman, President of the Old Town Club, "with the help of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation the funding raised by Rotary members all over the world has paid for a long-lasting campaign to the effect that polio now only exists in two small pockets in the world."

Our picture shows Old Town Rotary members Ray Norman (President), Melodie Beevers and Steph Trinci, along with Debbie Vincent (president) and Jan Blankenstein from the Swindon Rotary Club. They have arranged to have some special purple crocus bulbs planted in the Town Gardens to commemorate the event. "Hopefully when they come up in the Spring, they may also mark the beginning of the end of the coronavirus as well," said Ray.

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Virtual Santa vs Rudolph run

Brighter Futures and The Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix have launched a virtual Santa vs Rudolph run for 2020, letting you run when and where it suits you.

This Christmas, The Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust's charity, Brighter Futures, in partnership with Swindon Phoenix Rotary Club, is bringing back the hugely successful Santa versus Rudolph Run that started in 2019.

The event takes place from Saturday 28th November until Boxing Day (26th December 2020) and you can take part by running, walking or jogging a choice of distances on the route of your choice.

You can choose three, five or ten kilometres distances, all while dressed in your best Christmas outfits. The only question is whether you will be team Santa or team Rudolph.

All funds raised will be donated to Brighter Futures and the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. Across the Trust, the money will be used to improve the hospital environment, fund ground-breaking research, support the development and training of hospital staff and provide state-of-the-art equipment.

Michelle Leighton, Community and Events Manager for Brighter Futures, said: "We are really pleased to launch the new event and to have found a safe way for people to take part, have fun and raise some money. Since the pandemic began, all charities' income has been heavily impacted and every single penny raised will help to save lives locally. This year we are aware of how much local running club members have been missing races since the pandemic started so we are offering a bit of local rivalry. Make sure you upload your run via Strava afterwards and your club could be in with a



chance of winning. We will compile and publish a weekly leaderboard with one club crowned champions of each distance on Boxing Day. We hope to see just as many, if not more, of you take part this year and we would like to thank the whole community for their continued support."

Darren Crannis, President of The Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix, said: "I'm absolutely delighted and excited to be part of this great partnership between the Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix, Brighter Futures and Wiltshire Air Ambulance. Our first festive event working together in 2019 was such a great success raising over £14,000. I'm extremely proud of the people of Swindon for supporting us and I know this will continue with our Virtual 2020 festive run. Our organisers have worked tremendously hard to ensure we can continue this great event in a safe environment and I'm so proud of all who have helped. I've entered with my family and I look forward to seeing the photos and videos of our virtual runners taking part in a safe way."

For more information about how to take part in the race or any other fundraising for Brighter Futures, please visit <https://www.brighterfuturesgwh.nhs.uk/>

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T: 01793 764664
E: highworth.funeral@midcounties.coop



Highworth Library

Highworth Library staff would like to wish our customers and all Highworth residents a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

It has been lovely to see some of you visiting over the past few months. We work hard to ensure the library is a safe environment for both staff and our customers and we are grateful to those who are complying with new procedures to make this work.

As we are following Government guidance, services and opening times do keep changing.

To keep up-to-date with our current opening hours and services you can either:

Follow Swindon Libraries on social media

Check on Swindon Borough Council's website:

www.swindon.gov.uk/libraries

Read our blog:

www.swindonlibrarieswordpress.com

If you have an enquiry, call us: 01793 463500 or email: highworth.library@swindon.gov.uk

Opening Arrangements:

In December we are hoping to remain open for Click, Call and Collect, reservations and returns only.

Books can be ordered online at

<https://bit.ly/30IMJct> or by calling the library. You will need your library card and PIN. Staff can also pick out books for you if you don't know what to read or you can book a 15-minute browsing session.

You will be called once your books are ready to collect and others can collect the books if you are shielding. Previous books can be returned during collection. The Library has a one in one out system and masks should be worn. Books will be issued for six weeks. There is no access to toilets. Computers can now be booked for use, but there is no printing or scanning available at this time. Slots are limited to 45 minutes, starting on the hour. Call Highworth Library on 01793 463500 to book.

Our new opening times are: Monday 10am-2pm, Tuesday 1pm-5pm, Thursday 10am-2pm

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For four years we have been collecting unwanted adult bikes, no matter their condition, to fix up and distribute to asylum seekers at 'The Harbour Project' in Swindon.
www.harbourproject.org.uk

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The men and women who have already received bicycles have been incredibly grateful, but there are many more we would like to help.

**Please ring Richard on
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to arrange a collection. Thank you**



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Poetry Corner

Deserted City by John Williams

*I walk the wide street
An eerie silence pervades the air
A blood stained jacket once worn
Now stained with anger, emotion and torn
Smoking rubble that once stood proud
A covered body soon for a shroud
A child's toy whirrs and winds
Once a joy to an innocent mind.
Wild dogs howl as if to say
This city was once so gay
Smell of anger in the air
Echoes of the past fade away.
Will this be an end of strife
City o City come back to life*

*The sun shines as a stage light
Power, focus, bright.
Chair in the sun
Fades to a dirty brown
Creates in me a little frown
Dancing beams cross the sky
Fluffy clouds scurrying by*

*No thought for us with our worries
Shadows of the day runs into light
Source of life returns with light.
Renewed*

*Chaos stems from a visible calm
A rose twists out of bloom
Earth parched from the licking flame
The mouse enjoys the last nibble
Dance of a fly fades away
Eyes don't see what's ahead
Hearts heave heavily on the landscape
Stars twinkle with a hue of fire
Will the earth be renewed in time
Humans walking, loving, hating,
Showing anger, berating
People seeing others as they are
Not as shades of colour
With constructs in their minds
Believing its reality
All in the head
Nothing outside to ease the dread*

HS2 or a High Speed Waste of Money by Robert Stredder

*Thousands upon thousands of people
Should drop everything
And drive, walk, cycle, canoe, hitch, run
To the Coln Valley, West London
Or the Chilterns and save the Beeches,
Ash, Oaks, Sycamores, Birches, whatever and
SAVE THE THOUSANDS OF TREES
That are going to be destroyed...
forget the other issues
Stuff the pandemic applauding themselves
CND Trident,
Take the knee because they will all follow and win and
Boris and his gang are going down the river*

*The NHS should have the £100 Billion in costing
Its killing me, killing you, and killing the trees,
CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE BIG ISSUE*

*The Trees are the very things that could save us all
Clean us... the rich oxygen... the very air we breathe
Surrounds the trees of the lovely forest*

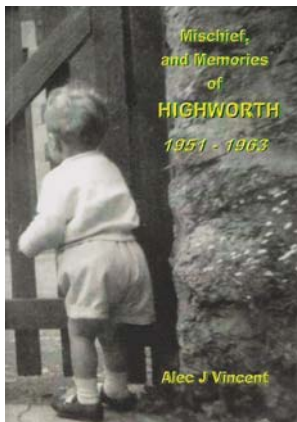
*And stop THIS HIGH SPEED LUNACY
You can't really want to go to Birmingham,
Manchester and Leeds faster and faster and faster,
can you?
20 minutes plus quicker and cause such devastation..
You want to go slower... notice things...
For goodness sake anyway why the speed?
They'll be nothing or little to do when you're
there anyway ... help woodland birds and animals
to survive
Have a home ... don't rip their world apart.
Only the horrible stupid people support HS2...
They'll lose The next election anyway...
We can't afford it
There's plenty of money in this country
But they spend it on the wrong things!
Don't they?*

The Books of Alec J Vincent

Alec is an incredibly modest author who has written five books in the last few years. Two are personal memories from his childhood, which collectively form an important record of social history in our town, and three are fictional tales for young children through to adult. Here is an overview of each:

Mischief and Memories of Highworth 1951–1963

This book begins with an incredibly detailed walk around the shops of 1950's Highworth. It is fascinating to see how much our town centre has changed, and we're given the opportunity to read the descriptions, and recognise the whereabouts, of ghosts of shops past. The book then moves on to other remembrances of many amusing anecdotes during Alec's childhood in Highworth.



"My father was always very busy," Alec explained, "He worked long hours during the week and very often at weekends too. As a child, I never thought to enquire about his life or that of his parents. He died at just 54 years old and then, of course, it was all too late for me to ask. Because of this, I decided to write something about my childhood for my family to read so that when I'm no longer here, my children, and grandchildren, will know something about me and my life.

It's odd, but the things that you tend to remember are always associated with strong emotions. They are generally things that you either really enjoyed, hated or were shocked by. When I wrote this book, I realised it contained quite a lot about Highworth so decided it might well be worth printing and self-publishing. I was born here and have lived in six different houses around the town. We had such freedom when we were kids. We were seldom indoors and expended our energy on the streets and in surrounding fields. We weren't destructive, we didn't paint graffiti or damage property, yet were prone to throwing things like rotten eggs at each other or perhaps throwing cow pats discus style during long walks in the countryside. Of course, we washed our hands in a stream or river, prior to eating sandwiches our mothers had packed into our

duffel-bags. It was a great time to be a child."

Mischief and Memories of Highworth County Primary School 1956-1963

Alec's second book of memories, focuses on education in the 1950s and early 1960s. Inside are more funny anecdotes of his time at school, when punishments were severe and teachers fearsome. But what adds to this book is a variety of wonderful memories, collected from other Highworthians about their school days too.

Alec told us, "When I started to write my first book of Highworth memories, I realised the section on schooling was enough to warrant a separate book in its own right. It was put to one side to complete when the first book was finished."

He went on to add, "I think social history is very important and would have loved to have included more contributions from locals should they had been available. School is such a big part of your life and education has changed so much since those days. I think it's important that today's children have a resource that they can use to look back and find out what it was like for their grandparents."

The White Pond



The White Pond is a time-travelling adventure in which the main character, Callex, lives hundreds of years into the future where schooling is undertaken by droids. He stumbles through a time portal whilst exploring some old ruins and is transported back to the early 1960s, where he meets with a very interesting boy of the same age.

The fictional Wiltshire town he travels to will feel familiar to many Highworthians because it bears many striking similarities to the Highworth of Alec's childhood. The main focus of the story, being 'The White Pond', was inspired by an actual pond that used to lie deep in the corner of a field, in the region of what is now Pentylands Park.

Alec explained, "I remember, as a child, that the pond was surrounded by reeds and bullrushes. It was a great place to collect frogspawn in our glass jars. It's a little

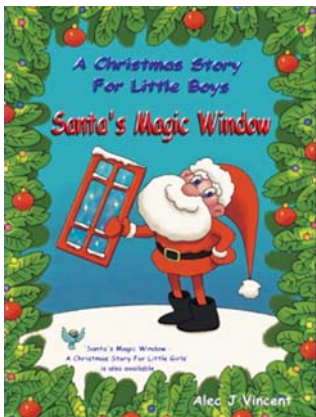
sad that it's no longer there and I hope my story helps to do justice to so many fond memories of wet feet and frogspawn."

The Ghost Who Wasn't

This story is aimed at young teens and above. One of the two main characters, Walter, is snatched from his home during the early 1920s, by a vile and disgusting monstrous being, namely Skreebum, who exists in a different dimension. Walter is forced to become its servant. He is later tasked with returning to the real world with orders to capture another boy to further assist his captor. He is given supernatural abilities to help secure this new unfortunate victim but plans to use the opportunity to escape the vile monster forever.

"I have no idea where this story came from," Alec said, "It popped into my head, so I mapped out the tale, and began to write. My daughter lives up North, fairly close to a seaside town, so I set the story in that area. The other main character, Tom, is persecuted by his father and has few friends and it's he who becomes the target for Walter's dirty deed."

Santa's Magic Window: A Christmas Story



This is a charming tale, beautifully illustrated, which explains to young children how Santa knows if they have been good or bad by viewing them through his magic window.

There are two separate versions of this book; one for little boys and one for little girls. The

story can be personalised by including a child's favourite cartoon character or the like.

Alec explained, "Initially, I wrote this story especially for my youngest grandson, then felt it might be a good idea to amend it accordingly for little girls and to

self-publish the two versions. Because of the colour content, the books turned out to be fairly expensive for me to put into print, however, I'm happy I went ahead with them and very proud of the two versions".

So with five books under his belt, we asked Alec what advice he could give to other would-be authors and what his plans are next:

"I doubt many people realise how many hours it takes," Alec answered, "not just to write a book, but also to edit it over and again. I'm aware my books will never make me rich but there's definitely a certain satisfaction when seeing them in print. I believe that everyone has a story in them. For me, personally, self-publishing was the best way to go as you get to control everything along the way. I originally published my books on Amazon but felt they were soon lost among millions of others on sale so removed them. Some time afterwards, I discovered that someone had translated 'The White Pond' into a foreign language. It was on an overseas website that offered free downloads and it had gained over 1,100 appraisals, achieving an overall rating of 4.5 out of 5.0. There are no royalties to be had on foreign 'Pirate' sites but I was mildly amused to see my book had scored many excellent reviews.

"Eventually, I set up my own website, found a printing company in Swindon and the rest is history. There are many fiddly bits to book writing like working out the margins, paragraphs, text size, etc., and once that's done it's time to get the covers sorted. Some covers I designed and produced myself, others I part-designed, then finished off by paying and working with individual artists advertising on a website called 'Fiverr'.

"I do have an idea for a new book and my youngest grandson has given me a few characters to use so I'll need to start thinking about that. I have a few other ideas of my own as well and I'm sure I'll get round to getting them down on paper at some point in the near future."

Alec's books are available for sale in Visit Highworth and via his website <https://www.ajjvee.co.uk>. He also has a short story, "The Church Ghost" available for free download on his website.

Alec donates 50p from every sale to the Prospect Hospice. "I'll never sell enough books to make massive donations," Alec concluded, "but I know how important 'end of life' care is and every little bit helps; especially at the moment. My father died of cancer and my mother cared for him until the end, but that's not always possible so I feel Prospect Hospice is a very worthy cause."

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'Professor Cassell's Daughter' by Margaret Bacon

I had for years loved books by Margaret Bacon. It was only by chance that my husband, David, was with Simon at the Stables when Margaret Tuckwell came in and was introduced. After she had left, Simon explained that Margaret wrote under her maiden name of Bacon and David realised that this was the author whose books I loved and asked if we could meet. We did and have been friends ever since.

Margaret told me that in the spring of last year there appeared among her emails an advertisement announcing a competition for a full-length novel which had hitherto never been published in any form. She would normally have ignored it, especially as at the time she was planning to write a non-fiction book. But then she remembered seeing, among her papers, the manuscript of a novel which she had written years ago, long before her first book was published. She had obviously thought it not good enough to send to a publisher. But, with some editing and re-writing, she thought it might be worth entering it.



She then saw that it was to be entered in encrypted form. She had no idea what that meant but fortunately the Graphic Designer, Simon French, had the know-how and encouraged her to enter the competition. It was all a bit of a rush but they sent it off two days before the final date for submission.

To her surprise, she found that she had won the prize which was to have her book, 'Professor Cassell's Daughter' published in paperback and on audio., Simon designed the cover and together they chose a suitable narrator for the audio version.

Margaret knew that long before I met her, I had admired her twelve earlier books, but 'Professor Cassell's Daughter' is a crime story, quite unlike those earlier books. She emailed me to warn me that I would not like this one. She was very surprised that I emailed back, "Sorry to disappoint you, Margaret, but I loved it". I think it was partly because her style of writing does not change, one hears the same voice. Besides, it does have a happy ending.

Beatrice Slinn



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Highworth Churches Information

Hope for Highworth: Email your personal needs or concerns to churchispraying@gmail.com and the church will pray for you.

Saturday Prayers: At 12noon every Saturday until the end of the crisis we will all pray together for the town and the nation. Everyone who is a part of the Highworth Churches will do this wherever they are, many outside, and anyone is free to join in where they are as we consistently pray for hope, wisdom, healing and an end to the troubles.

FROM THE REGISTERS

Remembering the recently bereaved:

Julie Page

LIVE SERVICES

St Michael's Church:

Sunday 6th December:

9am Holy Communion Service

Sunday 13th December:

3pm 'The 3' Family Service

Wednesday 16th December:

11am Midweek Church Holy Communion Service

All services are subject to current Government lockdown guidelines at the time. Please check the service is taking place before attending. In accordance with current Government guidelines face coverings must be worn in Church. Hygiene and social distancing guidelines must be adhered to. Hand sanitizer is located in the South Porch for use on entering and exiting the Church.

United Reformed Church:

Sunday 13th December:

10.45am Morning Worship

Sunday 27th December:

10.45am Morning Worship

Sunday 10th January:

10.45am Morning Worship

Sunday 24th January:

10.45am Morning Worship

Everyone to wear face coverings (subject to health reasons). Please use hand sanitizer on

entry. Only use toilet in vestibule. There will be a plate in the vestibule table for offerings.

VIRTUAL CHURCH SERVICES:

St Michael's Church Services:

The 10.15am Sunday Service can be watched live at www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth or by clicking on the service link on the Church website at www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk. Service sheets, summaries, prayers and blessings can all be found on the Church website. There will not be a streamed Sunday service on 27th December.

Roman Catholic Church:

You can watch a daily Mass live from Clifton Cathedral at 9.30am using this link

<https://www.churchservices.tv/cliftoncathedral/embed#tab-player>

Highworth Methodist Church:

Because of the new Lockdown from Thursday 5th November, the Church will be closed. There will be NO streaming of services on a Sunday morning for the duration of the lockdown.

We hope to be able to hold services again from Sunday 6th December. The Leadership are looking at how these could be 'Live' services. Please visit <http://www.highworthmethodistchurch.org.uk> for updates.

United Reform Church

There is a full list of URC churches offering live and recorded services at <https://urc.org.uk/latest-news/3385-coronavirus-worshipping-digitally>

Highworth Community Church

We are publishing daily encouragement on our HCC YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG1MXSAzh uV0aWk3tYEzyUw>.

Our children's, youth and families work is still active through various media. Contact Jon to see what's happening: 07701 303760 or email jon@highworthchurch.co.uk.

You can also access the **Hope for Highworth YouTube channel** at

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpu76C97aC mAUE_8hfqCXOg



With thanks to all those who have sponsored the floodlighting of St Michael's Church



- Nov 15 Dear Jane, we are missing you as ever on your birthday. All our love, Richard, Emma, Max and Oliver xxx
- Nov 29 Keith Lester – missing a dear loving husband and Dad on your birthday 29th Nov and at Christmas time. Love always, Jackie and Natasha xx
- Nov 30 Elizabeth Shurmer – sending birthday wishes on what would have been your birthday. Love Alf, Heather and families
- Dec 15 Eleven years have passed still the tears remain. Remembering our dear son Michael Page. Love you forever, Mum and Dad
- Dec 17 & 25 Tom Greenwood – much loved and remembered always by Phyll and families, especially at Christmas xxxxx
- Dec 19 12 long years Jonathan, God bless and much love as always, Mum and Paul x
- Dec 24 Remembering Graham Arrondelle. Our first Christmas without you. Our love always, Sylvie and Donna
- Dec 24 Remembering all the happy times we had at Christmas with our lovely Mum and Dad – Tim and Joan Peapell
- Dec 25 In memory of Geoff and Joyce Wright. Much loved. Always in our thoughts. Pete, Denny, Geoffery and Brenda

To sponsor the floodlighting, please collect a form from the Church or from the Lighthouse Bookshop, or fill in the electronic form at www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk If your dedication misses the copy deadline it will always appear in a later edition.

Please send all church lighting requests to St Michael's church office, Vicarage Lane.

Highworth Church contacts

St Michael's and All Angels Vicar: Rev Geoff Sowden T: 01793 765554

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church Priest: Fr Michael McAndrew T: 01793 535089

Highworth Methodist Church Minister: Rev Rachael Wilson T: 01793 764330

United Reformed Church Minister: Rev Robert Jordan T: 01793 513039

Community Church Leader: Matt Ford T: 07712 521046

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The Lighthouse bookshop is well stocked with Christmas cards from various Christian Charities such as Samaritan's Purse, Tearfund, Leprosy Mission and others. We also stock Advent books, Advent Calendars (including the Meaningful Chocolate Co.) and Advent Candles to help with your preparation for Christmas.

Do remember that when you buy charity cards from the Lighthouse you are supporting two charities; the one of your card choice and also Seekers Light Trust (for which The Lighthouse Bookshop is the trading name).

Please note that currently we are working with reduced hours:

Monday-Thursday: 9am-3pm, Friday: CLOSED, Saturday: 9am-1pm. Note that these hours may change after lockdown.



Visit Highworth!

Lockdown means your local independent High Street shops need your support more than ever this Christmas.

Visit Highworth supports in excess of 25 crafters and has many affordable handmade quality crafts, art, photography and cards. Perfect for gifts or as a special treat.

Not sure what to buy? We also have gift vouchers. We will advertise a range of products on Facebook together with prices. Have a browse, contact us if you fancy something and we will be happy to deliver locally or collection by appointment.

All of us at Visit Highworth would like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone who has supported us this year, by making a crafter or artist's day by buying their work and helping to keep our wonderful High Street going. It has been a hard year for everyone but the community we have here in Highworth has really shone through.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Helen

New face at the Rose and Crown



This summer the Rose and Crown has welcomed a new resident to its garden, Lily the Shetland Pony. We asked owner Alicia to tell us more about this adorable new resident.

"Lily loves apples. She also likes leaves from ash trees and the occasional cheeky cider. She is very cheeky and greedy and very loving. Sometimes she can also be a little lazy. She can also be stubborn at times but she is always well behaved.

"Lily loves living in Highworth. Her favourite spots can include visiting the elderly residents in Cobbett Court, catching her reflection in the Co-op window and, of course, the Rose and Crown pub garden. Lily visited the Rose and Crown regularly over the summer months and



most regulars loved to see her enjoying a cider in the sun. She even made a few friends with some of the regular dogs. It was lovely to see that the happiness I get from being with Lily was shared amongst others during these difficult times.

"When Lily is not at the Rose and Crown she lives in a field in Highworth alongside her three other horse friends (roommates) as well as chickens and sheep.

"Lily means the world to me as she is a great help with my mental wellbeing. She is a very good listener and has a calming influence and I would urge anybody to look into animal therapy if they do struggle to reach out to others as an animal will give you nothing but love."

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From our MP

Through my rôle as the Minister for Disabled People, Health & Work, the Prime Minister has asked me to lead on our DWP Green Paper and the National Strategy for Disabled People. These ambitious cross-government programmes are looking to make sure disability policy is prioritised in all departments.

This is vital work. One in five people in the UK have either a disability or a long-term health condition, most developing during their working age. Both programmes will be extensively consulted on in the coming months and shaped by disabled people, disability forums and disability stakeholders including organisations such as Macmillan, MNDA, Scope, MIND, Mencap, Leonard Cheshire, RNIB and RNID; real lived experience at the very heart of our plans.

Firstly, on the DWP Green Paper this will look at Disability Benefits and Employment Support.

As a Government, whilst we have increased support through Disability Benefits by £10bn, we recognise much more can be done to improve the experience of accessing support. The key areas are: access to supportive evidence and appropriate advocacy, improving the assessment process and strengthening Mandatory Reconsiderations and Appeals. By working closely with the NHS, we need to secure better supportive evidence which increases the speed and likelihood of getting the correct level of support right first time. We need to be pro-active; involving advocates who can provide vital support and embracing the opportunities of telephone and video assessments, providing a menu of options for claimants.

On Employment Support, we are proud that 1.3 million more disabled people were in work since 2013; 4.1m a record high. We are ambitious to go further with our commitment for an additional 1m more disabled people in work by 2027. Sharing best practice amongst employers through our Disability Confident scheme and providing financial assistance for technology, travel costs or supporting workers through our Access to Work scheme were key. We need to invest in the Access to Work digital system to provide a faster, more tailored service. Also, as a society we lose 300,000 people a year from the workplace due to ill-health, so we have to be better at providing support for employers where someone is at risk of dropping out of work.

Secondly, on the National Strategy for Disabled People



Photo: Action on Hearing Loss

the Prime Minister has instructed each Government Department to nominate a Ministerial lead and identify policies and priorities that will support disabled people.

I chaired the first inter-ministerial taskforce of these Ministers last week, which included Robert Buckland MP as the Lord Chancellor, who is personally very supportive of this work.

Each department set out their current thinking, policy and spending plans. These will all be published and consulted on with disabled people so they can determine if their priorities and focus are right. Ideas included improved training, guidance and awareness. Also bids in the Spending Review and future Budgets for more accessible transport, housing and services. There was a real commitment for joint working with each Minister wanting to play their part.

When I spoke to a young disabled lad on a visit, he summed up why this mattered so much. I asked what one change he would make if he was the Minister, "I just want to have the same chances my friends take for granted". I am hugely excited by this work, it is a real opportunity to deliver a more inclusive society, unlocking every disabled person's potential as a given.

MPs Office, First Floor, Customer Service Hub,
Orbital Shopping Park, Swindon SN25 4AN
T: 01793 533393

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[Facebook.com/justintomlinsonofficial](https://www.facebook.com/justintomlinsonofficial)
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Extracts of the Minutes of Full Town Council, 20th October

26. CORRESPONDENCE: An email has been received regarding the Visit Highworth Christmas Craft Fair to be held in St Michael's Church on Friday 27 Nov (COVID restrictions allowing). The Council is asked if any Councillors would like to help with marshalling the entrance and exit. Councillors N Gardiner and R Williams have already volunteered. Councillors P Newton-Smith, (Miss) J Murphy, K Saunders and G Evans offered to assist.

29. 20mph SPEED LIMITS: Correspondence from Stratton St Margaret Parish Council and Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council was received asking for the views of this Council in extending 20mph speed limits and zones to more areas throughout the Borough. Councillors debated the request and concluded that they have insufficient information to make a decision, but in principle agree with the concept. This is to be conveyed to the requesting Parishes.

30. COUNCILLORS SURGERY: The Borough Councillors confirmed that the face-to-face Borough Councillor Surgeries are to recommence on Saturday 7 November in the Council Community Room between the hours of 10.00am-11.00am. The other Town Councillors are also available on Saturdays in the Market Square for an informal chat. A sign is to be provided for the Podium to advertise the Borough Councillor Surgery.

31. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: The Church is to hold an invitation only Service and Wreath laying ceremony at the Church, there is to be a maximum of 50 people in the Church, then the Churchyard. There is to be no Parade, and the Service is to be live-streamed. Cllr Saunders has volunteered to carry the Town Council Standard on behalf of Highworth Town Council. Cllr Penny is to ask the Event Safety Advisory Group to contact Cllr Williams.

32. CHRISTMAS LIGHTING CEREMONY– IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19: It is with great regret that the Christmas Lights Ceremony is to be cancelled this year. The Council considers that it would not be possible to ensure Social Distancing at such an event.

HIGHWORTH TOWN COUNCILLORS

Council Offices, 3 Gilberts Lane, Highworth SN6 7FB
Tel. 01793 762377 / 763511

TOWN MAYOR & CHAIRMAN

Richard Williams, 7 Park Avenue SN6 7AW
01793 763514 Mob: 07789 781151
richard.williams@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

DEPUTY MAYOR & VICE-CHAIRMAN

Julie Murphy, Rosedene, Inglesham SN6 7RA
Mob: 07803 602568 Mob: 07803 602568
julie.murphy@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Kim Barber, Stable House, Eastrop, Highworth SN6 7AT
Mob: 07881 922861 kim.barber@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Julia Hazel Bishop, Sandstone, 37 Fitzgerald Avenue SN6 7JJ
01793 762807 Mob: 07773 045270
alanandjuliab@outlook.com

Alan John Bishop, Sandstone, 37 Fitzgerald Avenue SN6 7JJ
01793 762807 Mob: 07773 045270
alanandjuliab@outlook.com

Gerry Evans, 1 St Michaels Avenue, SN6 7JZ
01793 764236 gerry.evans@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Nick Gardiner, 12 Coffin Close, Westrop SN6 7HA
01793 226337 Mob: 07392 871243
nick.gardiner@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Paul Newton-Smith, 41 The Dormers SN6 7NZ
01793 764575 Mob: 07939 467907
paul.newton-smith@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Graeme Olley, 97 Eastrop SN6 7PP
Work: 01793 763700 graeme.olley@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Maureen Penny, Squires Court SN6 7FH
07787 977884 maureen.penny@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Keith Smith, Flat, 35 High Street SN6 7AQ
07836 382827 keith.smith@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Kenneth Saunders, 343 Windrush SN6 7EF
Mob: 07576 740274 ken.saunders@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Lynn Vardy, Old School House, Eastrop SN6 7AT 01793 762521

Steve Weisinger, 8 Barra Close, SN6 7HX
01793 764668 Mob: 07791 122843
steve.weisinger@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Simon Wolfensohn, 34 Shrivenham Road SN6 7QQ
01793 763279 Mob: 07736 082552 Work: 01793 765335
simon.wolfensohn@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Alan John Bishop, Sandstone, 37 Fitzgerald Avenue SN6 7JJ
01793 762807 Mob: 07773 045270

Maureen Penny, Squires Court SN6 7FH
01793 861862 mpenny@swindon.gov.uk

Steve Weisinger, 8 Barra Close, SN6 7HX
01793 764668 Mob: 07791 122843
sweisinger@highworthtowncouncil.gov.uk

If you have a story please email editorathighworthlink13@gmail.com

BLUNSDON

Methodist Church and Hall

Blunsdon Parish Council are looking at the possibility of keeping the Methodist Hall as a community asset. There will be consultation soon on the cost this would involve and how much use it would get. For more information please visit: www.blunsdonparishcouncil.co.uk.

Car News

Blunsdon has seen a number of car thefts with scanners being used to pick up signals from keyless remote controls. Owners are advised to keep such keys in 'faraday cage' boxes. Polite notices are also being left on cars which are inconsiderately parked with the warning the Parking Enforcement Offices will start issuing parking tickets to those breaking the law.

Community shop

Blunsdon's community shop is now selling the 2021 Blunsdon Calendar and Blunsdon Apple Juice (just £3 a bottle).

FARINGDON

Faringdon & District U3A: Thursday 10th December

Many of us have watched with interest, glassblowers at work and been fascinated by their work. 'The Wonderful World of Glass,' is a talk given by Dr. Francis Burroughes who has his own collection of glass items to illustrate the history of glassmaking from 3,000 B.C. to the present day. Dr Burroughes is an acknowledged expert who is often asked to lend items and speak about them for television antique programmes. He will give the talk via Zoom. Details can be found online at <https://faringdondistrictu3a.com/>

Script Writing Award for Hannah Westall

Congratulations to Faringdon's Hannah Westall who won the 2020 Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting Award for her television drama script 'Mind The Gap'.

The competition was run by the International Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and was open to all novice script writers outside the US and it can lead to a successful career in television

scriptwriting. 26 year-old Hannah has a first-class Honours in BA Journalism, Media and Cultural studies and an MA in Screenwriting at the London College of Communication. Her winning script 'Mind the Gap' is a crime-drama about the aftermath of a young interracial couple being found dead in South London. Hannah received \$2,500 and should have been flown to New York to pick up the her award at the International Emmy Awards Festival. Unfortunately this wasn't possible due to COVID-19. Instead Hannah celebrated with her flatmates in her rented house in Tooting, London.

"I can't wait to go back to Faringdon to celebrate with my family as soon as we come out of Tier 2 restrictions." Hannah said. "I've been working on this script for two years so it's incredible to get this recognition. We perceive the UK as being tolerant and integrated but there is still such a gulf of understanding between some communities and I think we need to spend time interrogating that. Through the complex relationship of the two main female characters we explore this notion."

Hannah has had a hard year after being made redundant from her Researcher rôle in March and has not been eligible for the furlough scheme. "In March I was feeling very stressed and unmotivated after having to sign on to Universal Credit," she said. "I was worrying about London rent payments and had to move back home to Faringdon over the summer to save money."

Hannah is now working freelance as a Production Assistant for a female production company in Notting Hill, London. She has high hopes that this award will help her to get an agent and pursue a career in writing for the screen, focusing on stories that elevate diverse voices and tackle topics such as mental health.

LECHLADE

Lechlade and District Lions Sow and Reap Project 2021

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on social and fundraising projects. The Lions raise their funds by helping out at events, providing an Open Water swimming event in August and helping Santa in December and the Christmas draw.

Funds help provide pharmacy deliveries, hardship payments, funding school projects providing transport. This list is endless.

This year funding is on hold. The Lechlade Lions "Smile Amazon Project", recently circulated, will help if the community wish to nominate the Lechlade Lions as their charity.

The "Sow and Reap 2021 Project" is a simple concept. We are calling on all gardeners to take cuttings or sow plants and in 2021 sell your spares on to family, friends your community. You can act as individuals, groups of friends, schools or societies.

Every bit raised is yours but we hope that you will see the "Sow and Reap 2021 Project" for the Lions as a worthy cause. As you Reap so you can donate to the Lechlade Lions page on www.virginmoneygiving.com
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-event>.

The Lechlade and District Lions is a registered charity No 1179767

To put this in perspective, a Lion, last year, sold his surplus Chillies and Tomato plants at £3 each and donated £35 to the Lions. If 100 gardeners did the same, it would raise the equivalent of that raised at the Lions Open Water event last year, namely £3500.

Help out with new growth. Consider this as your project for 2021. Have fun, challenge others to raise as much as you and support a worthy cause that serves the Local, National and Worldwide communities.

Lechlade and District Lions.

SHRIVENHAM

Shrivenham Park Golf Club

Here are the results of events played in October, a summing up of a most strange year. Autumnal tints have greeted whilst leaves frustrated players but thankfully our new leaf collecting machine has helped to minimize the disruption which is an annual battle. We thank each and every reader who has supported our club in 2020 and hope to see you again in 2021. At this time of year we play a competition to raise money for the green-keeping team, this competition carries the title of the Jim Howe, a former greenkeeper at the club. The winner this year was Danny Rolls who scored 44 Stableford points, playing off a handicap of three. The runner up was Paul Warneford who



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LECHLADE and DISTRICT LIONS SOW AND REAP 2021 PROJECT

Help raise funds for the Lions to be used for local good causes.

How?

Take Cuttings or Sow seeds.
2021 Sell to Family, Friends, Table Top sales etc.
Have fun and challenge others.
Donate the monies raised via the Virgin Money Giving Page to The Lechlade Lions Charity Reg No 1179767

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com>
www.facebook.com/lechladelions



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achieved 38 points. There were 29 entries which included three ladies. The other ladies in the club supported the amount raised on that day as they haven't been playing trophy competitions this year. The senior men have also played the monthly stableford and first place was awarded to Pete Davis who scored a gross 83 and second was Dave Bannister with a gross 93. Trevor White carded a gross 74 in the October midweek medal.

The ladies have played their final medal and Tracy Hewitt finished with the best score, Debbie Elbourn had the best gross score from all the medals played this year and won the trophy which is played every year and had originally been presented by Mavis Rummig. Debbie also achieved the most number of birdies in the medal this year. Marlborough golf club was the venue for Denise and Carole to play their second round of the Daily Mail foursomes but unfortunately they were beaten by a very good team who deserve to go a long way in the tournament. It was a very pleasant day.

The Angela Bassett club singles knockout has been won this year by Tracy in a very exciting match and taken to the 2nd extra hole by Amelia who shows a lot of promise for the future. The junior girls of Oxfordshire had expected to play at Burford in the Nicola Sparks memorial trophy but unfortunately the relentless rain had other ideas and caused it to be cancelled. This is usually the day when the junior captain is announced for the county and awards are made. It would also have been the farewell day to Heather Slevin our county junior organizer as she has retired from that post and Alison Weir is taking over. We wish them both every success.

Worldwide handicaps commence on November 2nd. Good luck everyone. Lets hope it is the success that England golf expect it to be. Time will tell. Seasons greetings to all.

Carole, E: cleefairways57@yahoo.co.uk

STANTON FITZWARREN

St Leonard's Church

Our vicar Rev. Elveen Mead rev.elveen@gmail.com is keen to get to know as many of us as possible. She hopes to come to our village for an informal walkabout every other week .

In these strange and difficult times it is not



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possible to be sure of all service times and details in advance, but it is planned to hold these services in the church building with all the recommended precautions and social distancing. Please go to www.stantonchurch.info to check for any changes.

Sunday 6th December: 9.30am Morning worship

Sunday 13th December: 11am Family Christingle service. Join in on zoom and make your Christingle with us in your own home.

Sunday 20th December: 9.30am
Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS EVE: NO SERVICE. Hopefully back next year. Check the website to see if something else can happen this year!

CHRISTMAS DAY: NO SERVICE at Stanton

Sunday 27th December: NO SERVICE at Stanton

Sunday 3rd January: 9.30am Morning worship

Sunday 10th January: 11am Family service;
Join us on zoom.

Sunday 17th January: 9.30am Holy Communion

Sunday 24th January: 9.30am Morning worship

Sunday 31st January: NO SERVICE at Stanton

The church building can be used for private prayer or quiet contemplation by arrangement with Liz and Roger Hillman T: 01793 762935 to organise for the building to be left open for you to visit safely.



Festive Fun in the Barn at Stanton Country Park

Saturday 19th December: 10.30am Make your own Christmas Wreath with Jeni. Tuition and all materials will be provided but you are welcome to bring additional greenery from your own garden if you wish. £20 per person

Monday 21st December: Children's magical Christmas workshop. Christmas crafts & story-time in the Barn and a scavenger hunt in the garden to find something to take away! £3 per child. Both events should be booked in advance by emailing: everycloudstanton@outlook.com

And don't forget to wrap up warmly and please look out for our Pop-Up Christmas Shop in the Barn, after **December 3rd**, by visiting our Facebook Page or texting 07796 530 560

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Police	Non-Emergency	101
NHS	Non-Emergency	111
COVID-19 Test Line	Non-Emergency	119
Gas	Emergency	0800 111999
Electricity	Emergency	105
Water	Emergency	0800 3169 800
Pest Control	Non-Emergency	07789 781151

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Stagecoach Swindon	01793 521415
Thamesdown Transport	01793 428400
Dial-a-Ride	01793 616050
Community Transport	01793 617828
Traveline	0871 200 2233

COLLEGES

Cirencester College	01285 640994
New College	0808 172 4445
Swindon College	01793 491591

LAW & ORDER

Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Victim Supportline	0808 16 89 111
Action Fraud	0300 123 2030

COUNCILS

Highworth Town Council	01793 762377
Swindon Boro. Council	01793 463000
Streetsmart	01793 445501

FIRE SAFETY

Home fire safety check	0800 389 7849
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DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS

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Elm Tree Surgery, (Shrivenham)	01793 782207
Great Western Hospital	01793 604020

LIBRARY

Highworth Library	01793 463500
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RECREATION

Highworth Rec	01793 762602
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Home Farm Pharmacy	01793 861392
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National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950
Great Western Railways	03457 000125
Disabled and assisted travel	08001 971329

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Trading Standards (business)	0207 830 6000
Trading Standards (consumers)	03454 04 05 06
Alcohol and Drug Service	01793 695405
Pest Control	08000 988652
Samaritans	01793 537373
Women's Refuge	01793 610610

PRAYER PLACE

The churches of Highworth believe that prayer works both on a national and individual level. If you would like us to pray for something or for you please complete this form and drop it into The Bridge, 8 Sheep Street, Highworth or the church or church office of your choice. Photocopies are acceptable.

I would like to be known as: _____

I would like you to pray for: _____

(Optional) Name _____

Address _____

I would like someone to call on me ☐ (Tick if applicable)

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