

*Highworth***LINK**

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Ann Ward

February 2022

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A love that will never end

Over the last few months I've been crocheting a gift for a dear friend whose birthday is in the middle of February.

I've known this friend for a long time and I love her very much, but I don't get to see her very often as she doesn't live nearby. When we do meet up a few times a year with our families (in normal times!), we just pick up where we left off. I think about my friend most days and I decided to make something for her because all the while I'm crocheting I can focus my thoughts and prayers and my love for her into that project. To reinforce the message of love that I want to send her, the thing I'm making is a blanket that is covered with little hearts. I'm glad I started making it early as it has taken me longer than I thought it would!

At this time of year the shops are full of things that are trying to make us think about love! However, I hope that if you love someone you

don't wait until February 14th to tell them and I hope that if someone loves you, they let you know it all year round.

Christians believe that every single human being and all parts of the natural world are part of God's creation and that God loves each and every one of us. In the love that Jesus showed to others when he lived on this earth, we can see something of the way in which we are loved by God. We are all special, all unique and all precious to God.

You may have a special person in your life at the moment, be that a partner or a friend, or you may not be in that place right now but please know that you are precious and that you are loved by God with a love that will never end.

Blessings.

*Rev. Rachael Wilson,
Highworth Methodist Church*

Cover: *St Michael's* by artist Ann March. Ann has an exhibition with Richard Harpin from 11th to 14th February (see p.23)

LINK magazine

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No responsibility can be accepted for any error of fact in the magazine or website. Please inform the editor of any errors so they can be rectified.

Contributions:

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.

Email is preferred; otherwise deliver to The Lighthouse Bookshop.

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

exceed 150 words. If it's too long we will ask you to cut it. Articles may be longer but get in touch first to save the annoyance of a rejection. Photographs and advertising artwork should be clear, with good contrast. JPEG electronic format is preferred but we can scan from good quality prints. Make sure any people in photos agree that the photo can be published in the magazine and web. Get parent's consent in the case of minors.

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.

Geoff Sowden retires

Geoff Sowden, Vicar of Highworth, Blunsdon, Sevenhampton, Hannington and Inglesham has retired.

Geoff Sowden has begun a well-earned retirement from his ministry as Vicar of Highworth and surrounding villages. Over his 19 years of service, he became a humble, leading figure in our community where he experienced both the joys and tragedies of family life. Geoff always demonstrated what Christian service to his local community really means.



Through times of great joy and great sadness, in periods of peace and in times of turbulence, he cared for, visited and has been a friend to so many people. He demonstrated his love, commitment and service by doing what Jesus said; preaching the gospel and caring for our fellow citizens who need a hand, are voiceless

or in difficulty.

Geoff has left thriving Churches in the parishes he served. Under his leadership, St Michael and All Angels Highworth was refurbished and transformed inside to be a beautiful setting for events from weddings to craft fairs and concerts, as well as a wonderful place for regular Church services and private prayer.

He also leaves behind a legacy of encouragement and teamwork, always valuing the gifts that others may bring. He played a key rôle in the

development of Churches Together in Highworth, working closely with our civic leaders and supporting the communities in the villages.

We send every blessing to Geoff and his wife Muriel in their retirement together and future new home.

Geoff was interviewed by our Editor

What have you enjoyed, what are your favourite memories?

I have loved being part of the community of Highworth, knowing so many people waving to them from my bike, blessing the Christmas tree lights on the Podium and other community events.

Working with the other Churches has been a joy, establishing our joint work in the town: our schools work, the Christians Against Poverty debt centre, the Link magazine. I am proud of the fact that the four Churches are increasingly known as 'the Church in Highworth'. I remember Bishop Mike Hill of Bristol coming to share his faith with all of us one weekend. We had breakfast at The Highworth, tea in Church and a pig roast after a service at the Rec, where he prayed individually for almost 200 people.

I am glad to leave a legacy of different teams and wonderful people taking forward the good

news of Jesus Christ, whether in worship services inside Church or in serving the community.

Sharing in the lives of so many families over the years for baptisms, weddings and funerals has been a privilege and a challenge to remember all of their names!

What have you learnt?

It is God's Church and not mine, a difficult lesson to learn when you are full of ideas and expect them to happen quickly. But then I have discovered that God has always provided the gifted person at just the right time. St Michael's would not have been re-ordered without some amazing volunteers with the vision, gifts and commitment.

What have you found hard?

I have found it challenging to keep the balance of worship for those with an inherited faith together with those exploring faith. Over the

years we have tried all sorts of options and may not always have got it right for everyone. However, St Michael's is currently, despite Covid, growing and united in purpose to be the light of Jesus Christ in word and deed for our community.

What will you miss and what memories will you take with you?

Having a pint of the Rev James in the Rose and Crown, people shouting out 'Hi Geoff' as I pass on the bike, playing tennis at the Rec. Memories of bringing up my children here, with the wonderful schools, the girls football team and 'mini man' hot chocolate at Sally's coffee shop.

Every blessing to Highworth for the future.

Highworth poppy project 2022 – St Michael's Church

We are planning a large display of poppies in St Michael's church for November 2022 and are hoping many people in the Community would like to be involved and make poppies to add to the collection.

Do you knit, crochet, sew or craft in any material? Do you belong to a group who might like to be part of this? Could you set up a new group to meet and chat while you make poppies?



All we need is a wonderful collection of poppies that we can use to form a waterfall of red in the church. We can provide patterns if you need them or maybe you have red wool you would like to give to someone else. Please help to make this happen!

For further information, please contact
highworthpoppies@gmail.com

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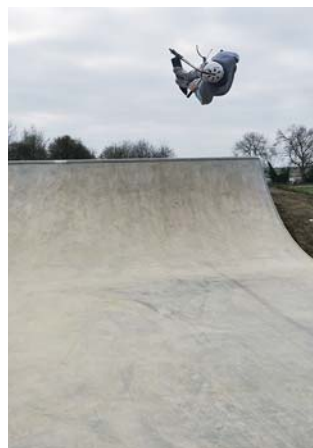
If you take on an employee you will have to consider: Employer's National Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance, Statutory Holidays, Auto Enrolment etc.

If you hire a self-employed worker it could be more beneficial because you will have significantly fewer legal responsibilities. However, this could potentially lead to other problems such as HMRC deciding the worker is an employee and that you have paid them 'wages'. They can demand Employer's National Insurance from you – plus interest/penalties. One of the key employment law factors to consider is: If you closely manage the worker to carry out their work, then HMRC are more likely to class them as an employee. However, if they work under their own control – more like a consultant or expert, they are more likely to be classed as self-employed.

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Highworth's skate park is no longer a dream



Following many years of wishing, hoping and fundraising, our skate park, located at the Lower Rec, is now a reality. Completed ahead of schedule in under six weeks by specialist contractor Maverick Skateparks, the handover to Highworth Town Council took place in early December. It was great to see it immediately being enjoyed by wheeled sports enthusiasts.

'SN-SIX WHEELED SPORTS', the committee that coordinated the fundraising and commissioned the design, would like to thank all those who have supported the project over many years. Special thanks go to the many Highworthians who have made donations to the building fund as well as to a number of organisations that provided significant financial support: Highworth Town Council, the Freke-Norton Trust,

Community First, Highworth & District Lions and the Unite Union at BMW. We also thank Mayor Richard Williams for choosing the project for his fund-raise during his term of office.

Once the funds were secured, the Town Clerk and her team made a huge effort to complete all of the due diligence necessary to be able to place the contract and drive the project to completion before Christmas, so kudos goes to them too.

Our skateboarders and other wheeled sports practitioners will no longer have to travel out of the Town to enjoy their sport and we trust this new facility will be appreciated and enjoyed by many.

SN-Six Wheeled Sports Committee



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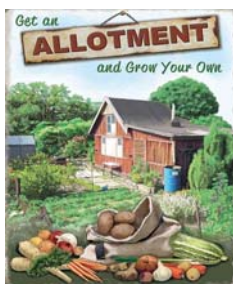


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From the allotments



They say, "If February starts with cloud and rain, then winter is almost over, especially if there is a westerly wind. However, if the wind is easterly at the beginning of the month, then winter will be here for some weeks to come".

February can be one of the coldest months of the year so I've started to use this month to get organised before the seedling madness of March.

Clean out old seed trays, pots and trowels, spades, forks, etc. Ideally this should have been done months ago, but if you didn't (like me!), here is our last chance. Sort out your seeds and plan a drawing of your patch/plot including rotation and positioning. My plan rarely goes to plan, but I do try!

If you are struggling to get seeds or seedlings

then join our Facebook page, 'Highworth Rec Allotment Group'. With 81 members, we have a lovely mix of generous people who will quite often give away surplus seeds and seedlings either for free, or swapsies.

Jobs to do in February, from 'Allotment month by month' by Alan Buckingham

Harvest - Cabbages, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, kale, leeks, celeriac, parsnips and swede

Sow - seeds indoors, broad beans, brussels sprouts, globe artichokes, kohlrabi, leeks, lettuces, onions, peas, radishes, rhubarb, salad leaves, spinach and tomatoes

Plant - shallots and garlic

Chit - seed potatoes

Dig - over your plot, add plenty of well-rotted organic material

Cover - seeds beds with polythene or cardboard to warm up soil

Happy gardening!

Sam Daniels



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Forget Me Not Memory Café

The Highworth Forget Me Not Memory Café has been growing in numbers again! From our new home at the Highworth Community Centre it has been such a joy to host our café once again.

We welcomed lots of new people at the October and November in-person cafés and even more joined us in December when we then reverted to Zoom for our Christmas café.

In the run up to Christmas, we had so wanted to get together in person, but we made the difficult but wise decision to keep everyone safe and meet back up on our screens once again. We had a fantastic attendance with several new attendees as well as by people we hadn't seen since moving to the Community Centre.

Music remained central as we shared recordings from Highworth Silver Band, who had originally planned to be there in person. Twice now we have invited the band to the café and each time Covid has got in the way; third time lucky we hope! It was great though, to hear from both the Highworth band and the Wantage Silver Band. Chief elf Rachel led a festive singalong of Christmas songs and carols from down the years and it was lovely to see so many singing together in their homes. Kevin was, as ever, our fabulous quiz host.

Ruth had dropped off festive activity packs to everyone. Many created Christmas tree decorations with the materials and shared them on the screen. We had some great discussions around Christmas memories and toys with Ruth who also shared ideas on things to keep us active. We also challenged everyone to take photos of their Christmas experiences and winter gardens for us to share together next time!

A big thank you to everyone who was part of our 2021 cafés both on Zoom and in the room. We

loved sharing fun times with you all!

Thanks once again to our kind supporters: Home Instead, Dumbledart's Bakery, Highworth Lions, Highworth Bowls Club, Julie from the MHA

Community, Helen and Karen from Swindon Alzheimer's Society, the team at Zurich Community Trust and Simon French for our invitations and posters.

Of course, a big shout out to our wonderful team of café volunteers. Let us know if you would like to join our team! If you run an activity or musical group, we'd love to have you at our future cafés so please do get in touch.

By the time you read this we hope that we'll be back at the Community Centre. When we are, we're hoping to be able to provide transport to the café within Highworth and the surrounding areas. The Highworth Lions Minibus has very kindly been made available to us together with their volunteer driver, so please do let us know if lack of transport has been keeping you from attending the cafés.

Get in touch to be added to our email list to keep up to date with our future café plans. You can also follow updates on our Facebook group and page and keep a look out for our posters in and around the High Street.

We look forward to many more fun memory cafés with you all this year! Bingo, crafts, interactive games, chair exercises, quizzes and lots of musical cafes are coming your way in 2022 and if we haven't made it back into the room just yet, we'll see you on Zoom!

From all the team at Highworth Forget Me Not Café; keep safe, keep smiling and keep watching this space!

E: forgetmenot.highworth@gmail.com
or call Ruth on 07970 543423



A productive year for the Community Speed Watch team

During 2021 the Highworth Community Speed Watch team reported an incredible 8365 vehicles for speeding on the roads of the town. 482 drivers chose to break the town's speed limits by more than 150% (45mph+ in a 30 limit; 60mph+ in a 40 limit).

Now we are in 2022, many will be looking for opportunities to do something new. By volunteering to join the friendly and successful CSW team, you would be helping make Highworth a safer place for residents of all ages, from children walking to and from school to our more elderly residents who may take that little while longer to cross the road. Each new team member makes a real difference and can literally save lives.

The only requirements are that you are over 18, can stand for the duration of an hour session

and can read the licence plate of a passing vehicle. The team uses WhatsApp to communicate so having a mobile phone on which it is or can be installed would be ideal. You would be expected to do a minimum of just one hour a month at time you choose to fit around your life. Even the busiest people can make a small commitment that will make a huge difference.

Take the first step to help reduce speeding in our beautiful town by emailing highworthcsw@gmail.com.

The team would like to thank residents for all the support they have received and will continue to drive down speeding in Highworth.

Highworth Community Speed Watch team

Handy volunteers needed!

Nick Parker-Ellis, site manager at Westrop Primary and Nursery School, is looking for volunteers to help around the school site. Ideally, you'll be a handyperson who can help with tasks such as changing lightbulbs, fixing taps, gardening and litter-picking. Volunteers will need to commit to a couple of regular hours a week.

For more details, please get in touch with Nick.

E: premises@westrop.swindon.sch.uk

T: 07763 739791

Highworth Historical Society

Our talk on **Wednesday February 23rd** is the one that had to be cancelled in October. John Snook will be talking on 'Last Orders'. This is a look at the Swindon Pubs which have closed over the years. Many of these had a long and very interesting history. Fingers crossed that we make it this time!

As usual, the meeting is held at St. Michael's Hall, Lechlade Road. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30 start. Visitors are always welcome, £3 at the door. If you need further information please contact Chris Suter on 01793 764811.

Highworth Chatty Crafters

Our first two monthly meetings in November and December 2021 were successful. As a group, we have many varied crafts to share and enjoy. Apart from bringing along our own work, members have been shown how to make fabric brooches, embroidered Christmas tree decorations and beaded stars/snowflakes.

We are a sociable group and welcome new members. We meet on the first Thursday of the month (10am-2pm) in the church room which is located in the grounds towards to the rear of St Michael's Church. A monthly fee of £5 covers hall hire, tea, coffee and biscuits. If you knit, crochet, sew, embroider, etc, come and enjoy a chat and some company. For more info. call 07729 030688.

Sue Dobbs

Scouts Christmas Post

Thank you to everybody who supported this year's Christmas Post.

We were a little nervous having not run it in 2020 and, while sales of stamps held up fairly well, deliveries of cards were quite substantially down. However, we still delivered 3,368 cards around Highworth. This means we will have raised just over £1,000, which was worth all the

effort of lots of people in the group.

As always, we are really grateful to Malcolm, Val and all the volunteers in The Lighthouse Bookshop for selling the stamps for us.

David Roblin

Terry's Christmas trees

Rotarian Terry Williams from Swindon North & Thamesdown Club would like to say a big thank you to everybody who bought Christmas trees or some mistletoe from him this year. Over £1300 was raised and will be used to support local charities and organisations over the coming months.

Support local artists

Local artists Ann March and Richard Harpin are holding an exhibition at the Council Community Room, Gilbert's Lane, Highworth, from **Friday 11th to Monday 14th February 2022**. Open daily from 10am to 4pm.

Do pop in and show your support!

Save the date: WrdeUp!

We're delighted that WrdeUp Music Festival will be back this year on **Saturday 9th July**. Pop the date in your diaries!

Highworth Community Cinema – February film

23 Walks, Friday 25th February, St Michael's Hall

23 Walks is a complex, tender and heart-warming comedy drama about finding love later in life. Dave (Dave Johns) and Fern (Alison Steadman), two older strangers, have been bruised by their individual circumstance. They meet walking their dogs in a North London park and romance blossoms over the course of twenty-three walks together. But neither has been completely honest and their future together may be threatened by their withheld secrets.

According to Alexa Dalby (Dogandwolf.com) this is a heart-warming film that will greatly appeal to an older age group and to dog lovers for the cute dogs, though it should not be restricted to them. It has much worthwhile to say about everyday life and the hidden difficulties and vulnerabilities of starting new relationships at an older age.

Films start at 7.45pm. Doors open 7.15pm (Cert 12A, 102 mins)

There is no membership fee. Admission £5 on the door which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

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An update on Highworth's Old Golf Course

By the time this edition of The Link Magazine reaches your doorstep, Swindon Borough Council's full sitting will have voted upon whether or not to pass their 'Local Plan to 2036' to the Government-appointed Inspector changed, or unchanged, from its original form. As a consequence, we will know by now whether or not SBC has decided to listen to, or ignore, more than 4,600 Highworth and wider Borough residents who have made their views very clear indeed on SBC's intention to allow one third of the Old Golf Course to be built upon.

Whatever one's personal views, an unassailable fact is that a majority of residents answered a survey; submitted more Local Plan consultation responses than ever before recorded by SBC; completed an online petition with more responses than ever before recorded by SBC; distributed thousands of leaflets and flyers; put up hundreds of posters and banners and held vocal protests at SBC-led planning events; all in opposition to SBC's plan.

The Action Group for Highworth's Old Golf Course met twice with Mr Justin Tomlinson MP and lobbied both our own HTC Councillors (who unanimously opposed the inclusion of the Old Golf Course site in SBC's Local Plan) and wider SBC Councillors up to, and including, both the Mayor of Swindon and the Leader of the Council and, of course, the Head of Planning, Councillor Gary Sumner.

Little more could have been done to ensure that SBC fully understand the strength of opposition to the plan to build on even a part of

Highworth's Old Golf Course. As an issue, this has certainly galvanised our lovely Hilltop Market Town like few issues before.

Aware of this feeling, and in a significant change from his previous position (as reported in the December Link), our MP Justin Tomlinson has responded to the Action Group with this statement:

"For me, the key issue is the overall number of houses already being built/being proposed for Highworth. The cumulative total of these developments in my mind are more than Highworth's 'fair-share' therefore the additional Highworth Golf Course is too big an ask. Both myself and Cllr Steve Weisinger have made this point to Cllr David Renard (SBC Leader), who alongside the petition raised etc., has promised to urgently review. Kind regards, Justin"

We will know by now whether, in the run-up to this May's key SBC elections, Swindon Borough's councillors chose to listen to, or ignore, our MP, our Town Council and an undeniably large number of their voting Borough residents. At time of writing, we sincerely hope that it was the former of these two choices.

Action Group for Saving Highworth's Old Golf Course committee

MP Justin Tomlinson comments on the campaign on page 40 (Our Reps section)





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"I was a money launderer"

It happened right under our noses. While we were grappling with what the lockdown meant in March 2020, Iain Gray, proprietor of Highworth Hardware, was busy laundering our money. He took home his takings every day and kept it in separate plastic bags for three days, before washing the plastic notes and coins, ready for re-use.

These were uncertain times with lots of public health warnings but very little real evidence of how the coronavirus was transmitted.



The day after the lockdown was announced and traders closed their stores, Iain went home and thought, "What can I do?" Next day he was delighted to hear that hardware stores were exempt from closure which was just as well because we then embarked on several months of DIY jobs and gardening at home. Yet he was quite anxious about picking up the virus until he erected a screen across the counter.

Highworthians took to the streets, lanes and tracks for exercise. For many, it was a welcome time to catch up on long neglected tasks and to enjoy the outdoors in what turned out to be an abundantly sunny springtime. Meanwhile, Iain kept his shop open on reduced hours. Oh boy, did we need him!

Starting in computer repairs, Iain had a long history in hardware, 19 years in stores at Wroughton and Shrivenham, before setting up in Highworth with both hardware and gardening supplies. It's a veritable Aladdin's cave of items carefully curated by Iain using his wealth of experience. He's learned that the more items he has, the better the chance of a sale. "If I have the time I can sometimes help customers to repair something," he says. That's something you won't get in the big chain stores.

Iain has noticed trade is on the up, although many have tended to shop earlier in the day during the pandemic. It's hardly been worth staying open after about 3pm, although I noticed shoppers calling after 3pm while Iain told me about his pandemic experience. "I might have to extend a bit soon," he observed. But many High Street traders are not rushing to resume their former long hours. Office workers and employers have learned there are unexpected benefits of home working and local traders are reaping the rewards of slightly shorter hours. When Iain started out as a sole trader, he usually worked seven days a week, but now he's down to three as he employs Sarah Wild to extend service to six days a week. "Work's not everything" he says.

Although Iain has taken some flak from a few impatient shoppers, his expanding base of loyal customers are full of praise for this bustling local hardware store. "Sarah and I thank everyone who us supported us over these four years," Iain says.

His advice to others in small business? Avoid debt and plan for your VAT and tax liabilities. Don't take all the profit; keep a reserve in your business for a rainy day.

Article and photo: Adrian Young

Dear Editor,

I was very interested to read the musings by G R Umblar in the December/January issue, as the "theft" of community land has annoyed me for many years.

Why should homeowners be allowed to increase the size, and therefore the value of their property by stealing the important green spaces around our town? Perhaps this could be taken further and the Town Council asked for a response? Was the land sold? If so, how much has been raised over the past 10 years, and to what causes have these funds been allocated? If not, what action is the Town Council now going to take?

Anonymous

'Musings' by G R Umblar

When did GPs' receptionists get medically qualified?

After a fall in the garden and three weeks of pain in the shoulder, a caller to the surgery was advised to go to the pharmacy for advice and over the counter medication and offered a Physiotherapy appointment two weeks hence ... No offer of a qualifying call by triage personnel was made...

Hedgehog-Friendly Highworth tip of the month

If you didn't make a resolution this year, it's not too late; perhaps it could be to help hedgehogs! You could create a hedgehog highway or leave out water in a shallow dish. There are lots of easy ideas at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk.

Glasses found

A pair of purple and black glasses have been found outside 70 Priory Green. Call 01793 764156.

Pets' Corner



Name: Archie

Age 16 and a bit

Breed: Jack Russell mixture

A bit about me:

I have lived in Highworth since I was adopted at the age of 3. I have watched my "mum" grow from a child to a competent and confident young woman and I know I am her favourite. I still enjoy a plod around the old golf course now and again. I don't have the speed I used to so have given up chasing cats and other pet animals. I really enjoy spending the day in bed, looking forward to my evening meal of home-cooked food, which I'm sure has kept me going for so long – and I can still bark very loudly!



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Arts Section *Compiled by Iain Barnwell*

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Highworth Concert by top UK Classical Guitarist

Lovers of classical guitar will be in for a treat on Saturday 5th February when top UK classical guitarist Raymond Burley will be performing in concert at the Highworth St. Michael's Church.

Raymond is one of Britain's most experienced guitarists having performed solo concerts, concertos, on film scores, radio, television and in virtually every possible guitar ensemble combination.

As a soloist he has toured extensively throughout the UK, Europe, the USA, South America, Canada and the Far East and has appeared many times at London's Wigmore Hall, the South Bank Centre's Purcell Room and Birmingham's Symphony Hall. Raymond has also worked with many of England's foremost



orchestras including the BBC Symphony, the Philharmonia, the English Chamber Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic.

The concert will also be featuring the popular local guitar quintet 'Strike a Chord'. Tickets are £8 (£5 for under 16s) and will be available on the door. The concert starts at 2.30pm and doors will be open from 2pm.

All monies raised from the concert will be denoted to local Highworth charity Friends of Angels Orphanage, which for the last 11 years has

sponsored a family of originally 20 homeless children.

For further information contact Colin Curtis
T: 07756 642616.

Highworth Link Editor – is this you?

We are looking for someone with editing skills and a passion for community affairs to take the helm of this thriving and popular magazine.

The Editor will need to respect the ethos of the publishers, Highworth Churches Together.

Once established, the paid rôle takes about 15-20

hours a month. We'd like to begin the handover in the Spring so we will need any applications by 13th February.

If you are interested please contact Matt Ford on 07712 521046 or for more details or email him at mandkford@gmail.com



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Fairford Choral society review, December 2021

It was splendid to be part of an appreciative audience at the Fairford and District Choral Society carol concert on 4th December, and particularly so after a year's gap due to the pandemic.

The evening was so warm and welcoming, despite the social distancing and mask limitations to which we have now become so strangely accustomed. In a well-chosen programme complete with excellent soloists, the audience was treated to Haydn's short St Nicholas Mass followed by a delightful selection of Advent and Christmas Carols.

Haydn is thought to have composed the 'Missa Sancti Nicolai' for the Feast of St Nicholas on the 6th of December 1772 as a seasonal 'thank you' to his employer, Prince Nickolaus Esterhazy. The Fairford choir, conducted by music director Marysia Gorska-Saj, and uplifted by the support of organist Robin Baggs, delivered this whole lyrical work with a lightness of tone and diction aptly suited to the festive occasion.

The professional SATB quartet was made up of conservatoire undergraduate Matilda Wale, recent graduates Nicole Boardman and William Pearson, plus Gloucester Cathedral Lay Clerk Nicholas Perfect. The ensemble created an excellent blend of song and, together with the

choir, highlighted the warm harmonies and lyrical legato lines of this delightful, lilting 'Mass in six-four time'.

After a short interval, the choir treated us to a balanced and enjoyable selection of Advent and Christmas carols, each thoughtful and reflective in nature. The carol choices gave us chance to enjoy the unique voices of each of the soloists, soprano Matilda and tenor William ably fronting Darke's lovely 'In the Bleak Midwinter' and the rich mezzo of Nicole in 'A Maiden Most Gentle'.

Of all the carols performed, I most enjoyed the choir's rendition of 'A Spotless Rose' by Herbert Howells. With a fine contrasting verse sung by bass soloist Nicholas, I thought the choir here demonstrated not only a particular clarity of diction and variety of dynamics, but also created a touching warmth of sound in its middle range; a quality I had also glimpsed on several occasions in the homophonic sections of Haydn's Mass.

Following two lively John Rutter arrangements, the concert drew to a close with well-loved audience carols. Despite the inevitable challenge which singing 'Ding Dong Merrily' in a mask brings (!) it was altogether a welcome evening reminding us of the true spirit of Christmas amidst these uncertain times!

Janice V. Thompson

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What marquee is suitable for my event?

It all depends on what you're doing! Small heavy-duty gazebos are a popular option for smaller gardens and patios where you're looking to extend your inside space.

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We also have a huge stock of clear-span structures made from metal frames and then covered in PVC.

These are super practical, interchangeable and very easy to dress, although offer a different look and feel to traditional tents.

What other services do you offer?

As well as hiring marquees, through our main company we provide all event services. We have lighting, heating, staging, bar units, decoration, entertainment options and event staff to run your event; to name just a few!

How do we book?

Just reach out to us; we normally arrange a site visit to view the space and listen to your needs, then simply send an email quote over for you to decide if you want to go ahead. We're offering a 10% discount to all Highworthians so just make sure you mention 'Highworth Link' when inquiring.

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Ann March and Richard Harpin hold joint exhibition

Both Richard and Ann are members of Highworth Artists' Society. A full-time artist, Richard paints exclusively in watercolour. He likes to have a theme for his paintings and has developed the 'Aunty Vera', 'Toy Wars' and 'Craftsmen' collections. Richard also enjoys working out perspective and lighting and is happy to undertake commissions.

Ann produces work in several mediums, primarily watercolour and pastel, but also pencil, pen and ink and oil. Her subjects are wide ranging, including wildlife, landscape, boats, architectural and floral.

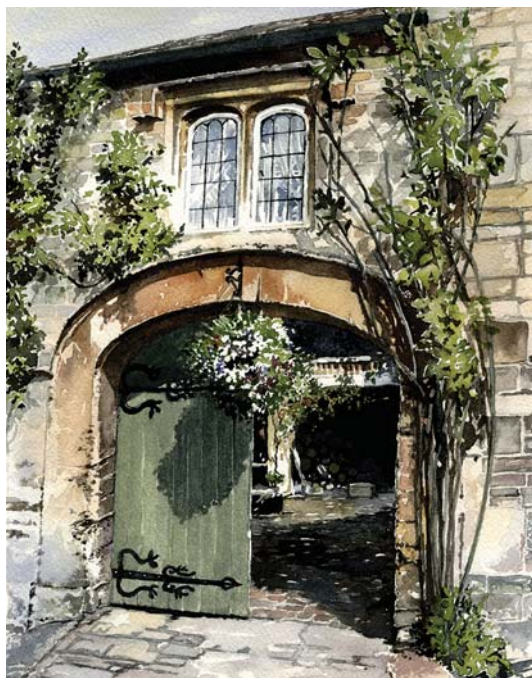
This will be Ann and Richard's second joint exhibition in Highworth, the first was in 2017. After the difficulties in the past couple of years they are keen to get back to exhibiting and hope that they will get many visitors to their new show in the Community Room of the Council Offices, Gilbert's Lane in Highworth from **11th to 14th February 2022**. The show will be



'Tour de France' by Richard Harpin

open from 10am to 4pm daily with free entry, and there will be homemade cake and tea or coffee available.

For more information call Ann March on 07786 242283.



Lacock Archway by Ann March

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Lions' Den, from Highworth & District Lions Club

The members of the Highworth and District Lions Club hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year, despite the tweaking of the Covid restrictions at the beginning of December.

It's been a busy December again for the Lions Club, helping Father Christmas in his sleigh, delivering gift vouchers and delivering food to the Food Bank as well as all the other bits and pieces we have to do. We are pleased to report that we collected £1525 on the five outings we did with Father Christmas. Thank you for all your support during 2021.

January is usually a quiet month for the Lions, but we have to plan ahead for Service and fundraising activities during the coming year. The two main events in the Highworth calendar for the first part of 2022 are the 'May' Fair on the 30th April and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the 4/5th June. We plan to be involved in both of these events.

We had hoped to host another Prostate testing session again at the May Fair, but the Charity concerned, the Loganberry Trust, are unable to give us a firm reply owing to the commitment of their medical staff to the NHS and the uncertainty relating to Covid. Other events

are being planned, so check your social media and other outlets.

Don't forget the Whist Drives at the Council Offices on the 9th and 23rd of February.

Donations for November and December were:

Social Care request - £207.50

Royal British Legion - £250

Shelter Box - £505

Gift Vouchers for the Elderly - £3,912.28 (including expenses)

Swindon Food Bank - £400

Fatboys Cancer Charity - £200

Highworth Skate Park - £1000

Westrop School Football Kit - £295

E: highworth@lions105sc.org
W: www.highworthlions.org.uk
T: 0345 833 9831

*Rodney Davis, Secretary,
Highworth & District Lions Club*

Swimathon returns!

After a two-year break due to Covid, The Rotary Club of Swindon's charity Swimathon is coming back.



It's on **Sunday 22nd May 2022** at Highworth Recreation Centre.

The Swimathons are fun events organised by us specifically for people who want to raise funds for a charity of their choice. The Rotary Club set up and run the Swimathon and there's no charge to enter.

Swimmers of any ability aged 8 and over can take part. The idea is that friends, family members and colleagues enter as a team and collect as much sponsorship as they can and then

swim in relay for an hour.

It's not a marathon or a race. Above all, it's a means for people to raise

money for a charity of their choice. We will give prizes to the three swimmers with the most sponsorship.

The Swindon Food Collective, the independent food bank currently feeding over 6,000 people a year, one third of whom are children, in Swindon and district, has been chosen by us to be the main beneficiary of Swimathon 2022.

For more information about Swimathon 2022 visit www.swindonnorth.org.uk

Helen Browning's Organic

Helen Browning 60 is chief executive of the Soil Association – the charity that looks after the way we eat, farm and care for the natural world. She lives on a 1300 Church of England tenanted organic farm in Bishopstone, Wiltshire with her partner Tim and George a retired greyhound.

When did your family start farming? I've no idea! I do know that my grandfather was both farming and trading horses for the milk floats in Gloucester and Birmingham, and four of his nine sisters farmed together near Malvern. They were wonderful folk, and inspired me hugely. So I have always thought of myself as coming from a long line of farmers.

Did you grow up on the farm and has it always been in your family roots? My father moved to Eastbrook, where I still farm, in 1950, taking a tenancy from the Church of England. So I grew up here, and then took on the management in 1986.

Are there any differences between the farm now and the farm growing up? Well, it's still a very mixed farm, as it was when I was growing up here, but in other ways it's very different. For a start, it's now all organically managed, so no artificial fertilisers or pesticides; we have added new enterprises, like my fabulous British Saddleback pigs and more recently, lots of fruit and nut trees; and we don't just farm but sell our food to people both directly and through supermarkets; and we also run the village pub, with it's own little hotel, right in the middle of the farm... so people can come to experience what we do, tour the farm and eat the produce! So it's a busier place that when I was growing up, employing over 60 people, and focussed on enabling wildlife to thrive and giving animals a good life.

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Helen Browning

From Highworth to the Philippines

The Philippines is a Christian majority country in Asia and just a week before Christmas, as millions were preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus, a tropical cyclone made landfall causing massive devastation.

Typhoon Odette (Rai) has claimed the lives of over 400 Filipinos and around four million people have been affected. Many have lost homes and livelihoods or been left without electricity, food, and water.

Heart for Philippines, a UK charity based in Highworth, has been working alongside the Swindon Filipino Association to raise funds for the victims of the typhoon. We are providing packages for needy families who have lost everything to assist them as they rebuild their lives.

Our work is made possible through donations. If you would like to support needy Filipino families



at this time, please visit www.heartforphilippines.org or find us on Facebook.

Thank you for your support!

Heart for Philippines, UK Charity No. 1193858

Successful Christmas Fayre for Swindon Cats Protection

Many thanks to everyone who supported the Swindon Cats Protection Christmas fayre at the Council Rooms in December.

We made an amazing £881.14 on the day and it was great to see so many people.

Cheryl, Swindon Cats Protection



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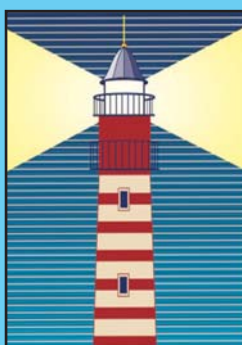
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Swindon Croquet Club



Four festive finalists

December's inaugural 'Tinsel and Sausage Sizzle' tournament at the Swindon Croquet Club was a roaring success. Members, resplendent in festive hats and outfits, enjoyed several games of Golf Croquet and were treated to (non-alcoholic) mulled wine, chocolates, mince pies and hot dogs. Sandra Jerram, Martin Briggs, Colin Bailey and David Acheson (pictured L-R) progressed to the final with the pairing of Colin and David securing victory. As always, Chairman Clive Smith organised the event with a high level of efficiency and his wife Sharon did a superb job, preparing and serving all the refreshments. Everyone expressed gratitude regarding their efforts.

The Club is always keen to recruit new members, limited play continues through the winter months so,

if you are interested in giving the game a try, please email us as free trial sessions are available.

Beverly Briggs

E: Swindon.croquet@outlook.com

Highworth Running Club

The last time we held a race in the town was 2019! 2020's Race was cancelled for obvious reasons and 2021's was still prohibited due to related and necessary restrictions. But 2022 looks, at time of writing reasonably promising so the club plans to hold its 5 Mile Road Race on **Sunday 10th April**, with the now 'all too familiar' caveat that Boris could pull the rug from under us. Laces crossed! The one-lap circuit is a popular feature in the county's running calendar for serious runners, beginners and everyone in-between with the infamous Eastrop Hill greeting everyone with a mile to go.

If you are interested in taking part, please do take a look at our website where details and a link to online entries can be found. As this is the first race we've held in three years we're expecting it to be even more popular than before so to avoid disappointment, please enter in advance as we do have a limit to how many can join us. If in need of a little advance preparation then the club run sessions for



Our Springtime Road Race is back, we hope!

beginners and experienced runners every Wednesday from the Brewery Street car park, 6.30pm to 7.30pm and we would love to see you.

Jason Daniels

W: www.highworthrunningclub.co.uk

Wrag Barn Golf Club

I'm thrilled to report that Christmas was celebrated in true Wrag Barn style last year. We were able to share some delicious lunches and evening parties with so many friends and neighbours that you'd have been forgiven if you thought that life had returned to normal. None of these parties happened during a pandemic without acquiring the art of preparing for the worst whilst hoping for the best which was made even more apparent when our head chef was called up for jury service during the two busiest weeks in December.

Thank you to all the team who as always went the extra mile and to all the volunteers who planned competitions and made sure that so many people had a wonderful time. The first major golf competition in December was the Greenkeeper's Texas Scramble, which raised a 'thank you' to all our greenkeeping staff who fed us mince pies and mulled wine (pictured

top right) after a very early shotgun start for 120 golfers. The winners this year were Daniel Gray, Jason Varney, Liam Wheelstead and Ryan Wellstead (bottom left).

Next up was the Ladies Christmas Lunch, 'Mother Christmas'. Margo Campbell and her Elf, Jac Brownsell organised a day full of fun and laughter with singing, a quiz, Secret Santa and a 13 hole golf competition which was won by Hope Jack (top left). The final competition was the Robbie Roberts Bottle Bash in memory of a past captain and friend to all; again the format was Texas Scramble and the winners were Mark Bird, Kelvin Dell, Richard Luce and Rick Oliver with Robbie's wife Carole Roberts presenting the prizes (bottom right). The team which came second called themselves 'The Dream Team' where Hope Jack, Tracey Judd, Jan Young and



Back in full swing

Alison Talbert were captured on camera (middle picture).

We are now looking forward to the rest of 2022 and a year of social and competitive golf at Wrag Barn, with an ongoing plan of improvements to the course. For more information, please visit our website.

Verity Manners

W: www.wragbarn.com

Highworth Town Football Club

WINNERS



Magnificent maiden medalists

Highworth Town's first team sat 9th in the Southern League Division One table as Christmas arrived with 26 points from 17 games. Impressive performances, namely a 1-0 win against previously unbeaten Frome Town and 1-1 draw versus 3rd placed Sholing, were the highlights in a tough period that saw three defeats a win and a draw in five fixtures.

Some long away trips await us so if anyone would like to travel with us to Plymouth Parkway, Barnstaple Town or Lymington Town please do get in touch. The club's Women's Team travelled to the Wiltshire Football Association's Headquarters to play in a six team tournament organised by Melksham's WFC and came away with their first tournament win.

Well done to Becky and the Girls.

Derek Lloyd & Fraser Haines

W: www.highworthtownfc.com

Photograph courtesy of Facebook

Highworth Walking Football Club

December saw the return of HWFC's popular 'Christmas Cup' held at Supermarine's superb Swindome. Such was the demand for places it was decided to split into two weekends with the Over 60's on the first weekend followed by Over 50's on the second. Some 36 teams enrolled, making it the biggest single-day walking football tournament in the country, a tremendous achievement for a relatively small market town like Highworth! The Over 60's fought a tough tournament winning a tricky first game against Oxford United 2-1, both Highworth's goals coming from Kevin Turner. This was followed by two disappointing draws against Havant & Waterloooville (0-0) and Exeter (1-1) with Mel Miller scoring the equaliser. Needing to win the final group game by two goals in order to go through as best runners-up, Highworth squeezed a 2-0 victory thanks to goals from Alan Clark and Kevin again.

The semi-final against Godalming saw Highworth move up a gear and a 'Kev double' secured their final place against fellow Wiltshire side and tournament favourite Calne Town. Showing what can only be described as their best performance of the year, Highworth exuded determination and domination, a very rare right-foot goal by Kev being followed by a more trademark left-footer as Highworth won the final with a convincing 2-0 victory.



Christmas Cup winners 'sleigh' the rest

The following weekend saw the Over 50's tournament play out and, having emerged top of their group, Highworth were confident of setting up a final with old rivals Weston-super-Mare. However, both lost 0-1 in the semi finals, leaving Keynsham and Birmingham's Messi's Diamonds contesting the final which, after an entertaining 0-0 draw, led to Keynsham winning with a nail-biting penalty shoot-out.

If you are interested in playing either competitive or just social walking football, the

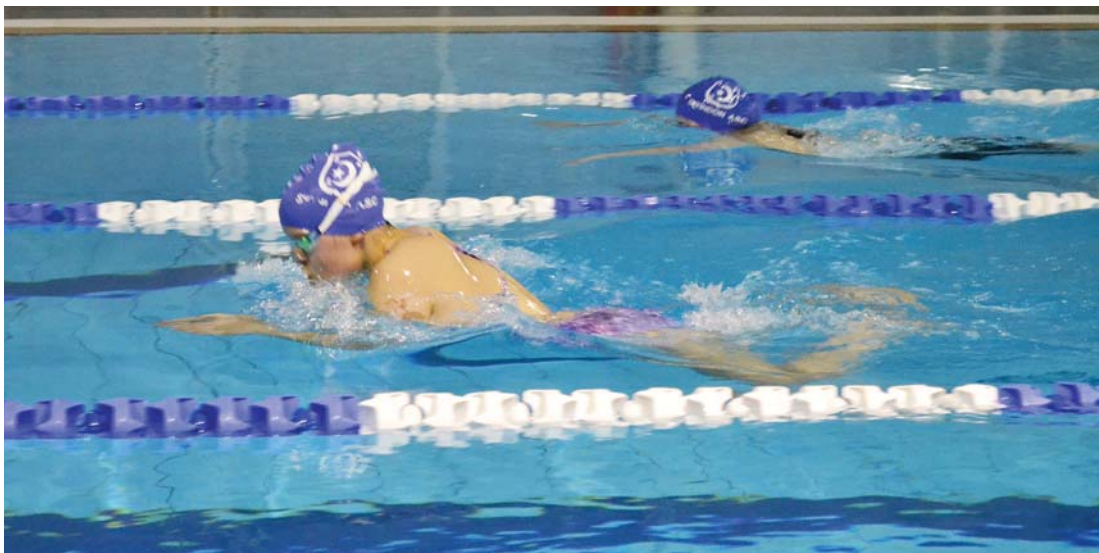
club's men's sessions are held on **Thursdays and Sundays 11am to 12pm** and ladies' sessions take place **Sundays 10am to 11am**, all at Grange Leisure in Stratton with an additional **Friday session between 11.30am and 12.30pm** held at the Highworth REC. Please contact Graham Seeley via phone or email for more details.

Jason Daniels on behalf of Kevin Turner

M: G. Seeley 07769 703 703

E: highworthwfc@gmail.com

Exciting new chapter for club swimming in Highworth



2022 sees Highworth Amateur Swimming Club joining forces with Swindon Amateur Swimming Club. This will see some exciting opportunities for swimmers in Highworth and the surrounding areas.

Swimming is an important life skill that everyone should learn, it is also a great way to keep fit and healthy, make new friends and of course, have lots of fun!

As of January 2022, Swindon ASC will be running the following sessions at Highworth Recreation Centre:

Tuesday:

19.30 - 20.30 Junior Swim Coaching & Lifesaving
20.30 - 21.30 Adult Swim Coaching*

Thursday:

19.00 - 20.00 Junior Swim Coaching & Squad
20.00 - 21.30 Senior Swim Coaching & Squad

Sunday:

14.30 - 15.30 Junior Swim Coaching & Squad
15.30 - 17.00 Senior Swim Coaching & Squad

Note: the 'junior' swim sessions are for swimmers who have achieved stage 7 standard or above.

More Swindon ASC sessions are also available at other pools in Swindon.

**We will be trialling an adult coaching session seeking to provide an opportunity for competent adult swimmers wishing to stay fit but also improve technique and push their goals.*

Highworth ASC has been part of the community for over 50 years, starting soon after Highworth Recreation Centre was built in 1968. In the early years the club only swam in the summer but later were able to swim all year round by using the pools at RAF Brize Norton, Dorcan and Cricklade. In the 1980's, the Club regularly competed in county competitions and the 1990's saw the Club struggle due to lack of available pool time. This changed when the pool reopened with the new roof in 2008, with the club taking part in a small number of local competitions.

Jez Mundy, acting Highworth ASC Chairman said:

"Having tried hard to maintain our independence, we ran out of resources to continue in a viable way. Changes in the format of sessions at the centre and the effects of the pandemic have meant that we were left with much fewer swimmers feeding into the club. This also depleted our volunteer numbers, which are vital when running any type of club.

"We've always been a small but friendly club,

serving the wider community and proudly never turning anyone away. Our members cover a wide area; Highworth, Lechlade, Fairford, Faringdon, Shrivenham and Swindon. The good news is that Swindon ASC is able to step in and take on our swimmers and pool time. They shall continue to offer a home for all those looking to develop their swimming to the best of their ability and the support of a larger club will give the swimmers the opportunity to achieve great things."

Swindon ASC is the oldest swimming club in the area with a rich history. Whether you wish your child to swim once a week or to progress to competition level, you will be in safe and reliable hands with their experienced swimming teachers and coaches.

To find out more please email swindonasc+contactus@gmail.com or visit www.swindonasc.co.uk/

*Andrea Christmas,
President of Swindon ASC*



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United Reformed Church writes for rights

What do Thailand, Israel, Nigeria, Belarus, China, Egypt and Guatemala all have in common?

These were all countries to which cards of greeting and support for bravery went in December. Signed by admiring friends at Highworth URC, they were sent to seven individuals nominated by Amnesty International UK for standing up and sometimes suffering badly in the cause of human rights.

We know that if the cards (which in total can amount to many thousands) get to their addressees they do a great deal for morale. Even if they are stopped on their way then those doing the stopping now know that out there is a great welling of support for those under duress and each year Amnesty can report successes of some released after prior year campaigns.

Keith Salway

St Michael's Church

The Church is open daily for private prayer.

St Michael's recommends the continued wearing of face coverings in Church with social distancing continuing where possible. Hand sanitizer is located in the South Porch for use on entering and exiting the Church.

10.15am Sunday Service:

The 10.15am Sunday Service is being held in Church and streamed live.

1st, 3rd and 5th Morning Worship.

2nd and 4th Holy Communion.

The live service can be found at www.twitch.tv/stmichaelshighworth

Other Services:

1st Sunday of the month at 8.45am:
Holy Communion

2nd Sunday of the month at 3pm:
The 3 – Family Service

Prayers

Tuesday Prayers are held every Tuesday morning at 9.30am.

Friday Blessings are held every Friday morning at 9.15am.

Midweek Church

Midweek Church at St Michael's is a spoken Communion service and is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 11am with the next

service being on **Wednesday 16th February 2022**. Coffee and cake served prior to the service from 10.15am.

Tuesday at St Michael's

Tuesday at St Michael's is usually held on the fourth Tuesday of each month and is a chance to meet up for conversation, craft activities, board games and lunch from 10.30am. The next meet is on **Tuesday 22nd February**.

Saturday Morning at St Michael's

As a family church of many generations, we come together on the first Saturday of each month from 10am to share time like any family. We offer a variety of activities you can join in. Whether it's chilling out together over coffee and the morning newspapers, crafts, challenging others to board games or tucking into a bacon butty or pastries. All welcome.

We remember those who love and miss

Barbara Williams

We congratulate on their Marriage

Joanna Courage and Robert Geary

Praying for the roads in the town:

06-Feb-22 Bute Close and Bydemill Gardens

13-Feb-22 Cherry Orchard and Church View

20-Feb-22 Coffin Close and Copper Beeches

27-Feb-22 Cotswold Way and Crane Furlong

Highworth Methodist Church



Sunday Worship Service Starts @ 10:30 AM

Café Church, Sunday, February 6th

Church with a difference. Seated round tables instead of sat in rows we drink coffee, eat biscuits, watch film clips, discuss faith and sing.

Every Friday 9.30-11am



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Every Saturday 10.30am-12pm



Charity Coffee Morning & Table Tennis

**1st Tuesday 2pm
Afternoon Communion Service**



Next one – February 1st

**2nd Monday 2-4pm
Board Games**



Next one - Monday, February 14th

3rd Tuesday 10am-1pm - Craft Group



Bring a craft with you & make new friends
Refreshments served.

Next one - Tuesday, February 15th

**3rd Wednesday 2.30-4pm – 3Cs
(Coffee, Cake and Chat)**



Next one - Wednesday, February 16th

*For more information about any of these events, please email
highworthmethodistchurch@gmail.com*

Church contacts:

St Michael's and All Angels Vicar: Emily Wright T: 01793 762702

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



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



26/11/2021

*Maureen Trollop. Treasured memories of Maureen - missed every hour of every day.
Forever in our hearts. John, Sara, Paul, Danny, Becky and grandchildren*

10/12/2021

In memory of Rose Jones. From Brian and Benson

12/12/2021

Remembering our beautiful Grandchildren Freya and Matthew. Always loved and missed so much

13/12/2021

In loving memory of Roy and Sheila Johnson

25/12/2021

*Cyril and Barbara Knight. Thinking of you both this Christmas and missing you being here with us.
Love you, Lyn, Ruth, Patrick and all of your family xxx*

12/12/2021

For Linda Drayton. A bright light in all our lives

1/01/2022, 2/01/2022

*In remembrance and always in our hearts and thoughts. Miss you everyday Mum and Dad
(Sue and Ron Keene). Your loving family xxx*

06/01/2022

*Cyril Knight. Thinking of you today Dad on your birthday, miss you, love you.
Lyn, Ruth, Patrick and all of your family xxxx*

30/01/2022

Remembering our beautiful Grandchildren Freya and Matthew. Always loved and missed so much

31/01/2022

David Cox. Remembering a dearly loved husband and father. Shirley, Nicola and Neil

4/02/2022, 5/02/2022, 6/02/2022

In loving memory of Jim Prew. Still sadly missed. From all of the family

09/02/2022

In loving memory of Clive Angood. Loved and missed by Christine and family

14/02/2022

Mona Horn. God bless you Mum, with much love. Marie, Steph and Kate

22/02/2022

In loving memory of Joan Prew. Still sadly missed. From all of the family

*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
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The past 18 months has put more focus than ever on the brilliant staff working at care and residential homes across the UK.

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Supporting the elderly and those with care needs requires a certain level of skills, empathy and knowledge and that's why Swindon's brilliant Ridgeway Rise provides an abundance of extra training for its nursing and caring team.

Everyone in the building is required to complete the mandatory training needed to work in the care industry, but this is just the start of their journey in delivering first-class care to their residents.

The ever-changing landscape of the industry means additional training is frequently needed and with Ridgeway Rise boasting three in-house trainers, all training is completed onsite with no need for external



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companies to be brought in.

Additional training sessions to support residents with specific needs are organised to equip team members in the understanding of symptoms and strategies to manage them in order to provide the best possible care.

Care assistants must also go through their Care Certificate and Ridgeway Rise even has specialist leads in specific areas, for example oral hygiene, to make sure the

highest standard of care is always being delivered with one nurse even becoming a finalist at the Great British Care Awards in End of Life Care.

It can be hard for the individual and their families involved when the decision is made to move from independent living into a care home, but Ridgeway Rise and its brilliant team always go the extra mile to make sure the highest standards of care are delivered and all residents' needs and requirements are met.

From our MP

As we enter 2022, I have been struck by the constructive and highly visible 'Save Highworth's Old Golf Course' campaign.

I have met with representatives of the campaign group who were always well prepared, well researched and presented their case strongly. I have seen the 4,500+ petition and you can't fail to notice the posters proudly displayed across Highworth. The scale of opposition to the proposed houses is clear.

I have previously written about the process for identifying land for new houses across Swindon. This will form a new Local Plan and, once agreed, this will provide full protection to land outside the Local Plan from speculative development. In recent years without a Local Plan, we have seen first-hand how developers have been able to secure new sites across Highworth, with little or nothing the Borough or Town Council can do to either block, or shape these developments.

The vast majority of the draft Local Plan is not contentious and whilst new development is often not welcomed by existing communities, the balance seems to have been struck. Ahead of Swindon Borough Council's crunch meeting on January 20th the areas still for debate are Highworth's old golf course and various proposed developments in Wroughton.

For me, balance is key. We need a Local Plan. Without one we have seen numerous developments across Highworth, in particular along Shrivensham Road. These, combined with the other planned developments through the Neighbourhood Plan, will see Highworth grow by 25% over a matter of years. That is more than enough and demonstrates that Highworth is providing more than its fair share of development for the Borough. So on balance, the additional housing at Highworth's old golf course is too much. Alternative site(s) could and

should be found for the Local Plan.

I have never been an MP who calls for more housing nationally whilst opposing development in my area. Instead, I have sat down with developers to try and shape developments with maximum green space and investment for local communities, rather than just oppose which then inevitably leads to developers winning on appeal and reducing their spend on the community. It has always been about balance and every community in the Borough should play its part equally where possible. Highworth has done so without the need to build housing on a much-loved green space.

Along with Cllr Steve Weisinger, I have made strong representations to Cllr David Renard, Leader of Swindon Borough Council. Proposals for the 350 houses at Highworth's old golf course need to be removed; something Cllr Steve Weisinger will formally press at the January 20th meeting, with my full support. This site needs to remain for the community, solely for leisure use with a long-term, sustainable plan that protects the site both now and in the future.

*Justin Tomlinson,
North Swindon Conservative MP*

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STANTON FITZWARREN

Christmas community spirit

The festive fun began on Saturday December 4th, when, as a village, we coordinated the switch-on of our outdoor Christmas lights at 7pm, followed by a mulled wine and hot chocolate on one of our driveways before walking around the village to take in the twinkling lights. On Sunday December 19th, we were honoured again that Santa decided to travel through our village, handing out a treat to all the boys, girls and adults that came out to see him on his journey. Seeing the faces of the young and old light up never ceases to bring a warm glow to all of our hearts.



We finally came together on Christmas Eve to re-enact the Nativity. Not put off by the rain, villagers young and old, churchgoers and musicians came together to narrate, play key nativity roles and sing carols to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. The mulled wine and hot chocolate warmed us all up and the event raised £100, split between Anna's World Scout Jamboree Fundraising and the Children's Society.

Jayne Price

Church services at St Leonard Parish Church, Stanton Fitzwarren

Sunday 6th February, 9.30am:
Morning praise

Sunday 13th February, 11am:
Family service – Journey on with Paul

Sunday 20th February: No service at St Leonard – we are welcome at the 10am team service at St Margaret's, Stratton

Sunday 27th February, 9.30am:
Holy Communion

The church building can be used for private prayer or quiet contemplation by arrangement with Liz and Roger Hillman (01793 762935) who will organise for the building to be left open for you to visit safely. It is still not possible to be sure of all service times and details in advance so please go to www.stantonchurch.info for the most up to date information.

SHRIVENHAM

Shrivenham Park Golf Club; a look back, and forward

At the coffee and chat meeting in December, Christmas entertainment was provided by the Shrivenham recorder group under the leadership of Stella Tidmarsh. Seasonal music, poetry and prose were on the menu and nibbles were enjoyed by the local residents. This is the Winter style version of the social putting group and is proving very popular. The next meetings are on **11th and 25th February and 11th and 25th March**, 10am to noon. We will then revert to putting and the afternoon session. We welcome everyone for £2 per person, per session, which includes hot drink and biscuits.

'Parkies Pals' also enjoyed a Christmas meeting and will now be meeting every first Monday in the month except on bank holidays.

Every section of the club held festive meals. The ladies had a full Christmas roast dinner whilst the Senior men invited the ladies to 18 holes of Texas scramble golf. The winners were Trevor, Russ and Graham. Runners up were Pete Davis, Andy and Pam. There were numerous nearest the pin prizes on the short holes and these were won by Trevor, Arthur and Graham. At this event the annual prizes were also presented to the men's section.

The club held its annual Christmas Texas competition and 18 teams competed. The men also played their December medal and Alan Brown was the winner, scoring 34 stableford points. The runner up (just 2 points behind) was Chris Spicer.

A full programme of events will be starting very soon, and memberships are soon due for the year. Shrivenham continues to provide reasonably priced golf and many good deals which can be sourced from the golf club on 01793 783853. We are a very friendly club.

One of our members has moved away to Cranleigh to be closer to family and we wish her well as she settles into her new surroundings. We will be thinking of you Jean; you have been a loyal supporter of the club over many years.

An initiative to encourage more girls and boys to come for training during the first four months of the year has been set up by the club pro. The sessions are being held on **February 8th, March 5th and April 9th**, from 11.30am to 12.30pm. They're free and all equipment will be provided. Wear warm clothing and trainers. Learn a new skill in 2022 with your friends or come and make new friends. As always, refreshments are available.

Carole Lee,
cleefairways57@yahoo.co.uk

Snowdrops at Cotswold Farm

Supporting National Garden Scheme (NGS) and A Rocha

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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

BUSES

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

Highworth Surgery	01793 762218
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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PHARMACIES

Highworth Pharmacy	01793 762220
Home Farm Pharmacy	01793 861392
Jones Graham Pharmacy (Shrivenham)	01793 783336

PRESCHOOL/NURSERY

Westrop Nursery	01793 762897
Westgate Nursery	
School & Crèche	01793 861268
South Marston Pre-school	01793 823379

SCHOOLS

Eastrop Infants	01793 763772
Southfield Junior	01793 762210
Westrop Primary	01793 762897
Highworth Warneford	01793 762426

TAXIS

V Cars	01793 701701
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TRAINS

National Rail Enquiries	03457 484950
Great Western Railways	03457 000125
Disabled and assisted travel	08001 971329

OTHER SERVICES

Citizens Advice Bureau	08444 994114
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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