

February 2026

60p

FREE Digitally!

FOLLOW US on
FACEBOOK

Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownshill Newsletter

HILLTOP
RECYCLING
SUCCESS!

See Page 6



THANK YOU to all those driving and parking considerately in Eastcombe during this extra busy time while Tesco is closed.

The Lamb Inn car park is available for customers of Eastcombe Stores—please **do not park on the white lines by the bus shelter**, or opposite the entrance to Fidges Lane. **THANK YOU.**

The hilltop pays tribute following the tragic fire at Brimscombe.
See PAGE 7.



LOVE YOUR PUBS! The early months of the year can be a tough time for local pubs — but you can help.



After the buzz of Christmas, January and February can be the quietest months for many hospitality businesses. Rising energy bills, business rates and running costs mean that many pubs are struggling to keep their doors open.

Hundreds of pubs close every year in the UK, almost one a day in recent times. Once a pub is gone, it's often gone for good — and with it goes a big part of the local community.

Our pubs are more than a place for a pint. They're where friendships are made, stories shared, events hosted and neighbours come together. They lie at the heart of so many communities.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Pop in for a drink — even a soft drink counts
- Meet a mate at the pub instead of staying at home.
- Support your pubs' events and activities, even if it's just sharing/liking posts on social media. Watch the shanty singers at The Lamb Inn on Wednesday afternoons, or enjoy coffee there on a Wednesday morning.



Every visit matters. Every drink helps. Even a quick stop makes a difference. Let's look after our locals this February and keep them open for the months — and years — ahead.

[The Lamb Inn, Eastcombe](#)

[The Ram Inn, Bussage](#)

[The Old Neighbourhood, Chalford Hill](#)

[#SupportYourLocal](#) [#UseItOrLoseIt](#) [#CommunityPub](#)

RACE NIGHT FUNDRAISER FOR ERIN'S WISH

Saturday 7th February

7pm
at



Eastcombe Village Hall

Entrance £5, payable by **cash** on the night.
There will be 8 races and a raffle.

Bring your own drink and nibbles. Please bring cash: entrance, the raffle and all betting will be **CASH ONLY**.

Hopefully, the race night will be great fun as usual, whilst raising money for SUDEP via Erin's Wish. We hope to see as many of you as possible on the night.



Fun
Quiz Night
In

Eastcombe

28th February 2026
Eastcombe Village Hall
7pm

£7.50 Per Person for
teams up to 6
including a
Ploughman's Buffet
(Bring your own drinks)



Tickets available at Eastcombe Stores
from February 10th

To receive a **FREE** digital copy of the newsletter every month, please contact eastcombeandbnews@gmail.com. Printed copies, 60p each, are available from Eastcombe Stores, Frith Community Café & Chalford Parish Centre.

Please send items for the March newsletter to eastcombenewsletter@btinternet.com by **NOON on 17th February**.

BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT PARISH COUNCIL NEWS: EASTCOMBE WARD

www.bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/ Contact the Clerk: admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk

Lack of mobile signal in Eastcombe: The Parish Council believes that the Atlas Towers questionnaire does not address the concerns and angst of parishioners. A working group is targeting a response for February to produce a suitable questionnaire. We encourage ALL parishioners who have anxiety for a tower/s in the parish to attend the parish meetings.

Blanket reduction of speed limit - 20mph timing lies with GCC to advise. This was raised at the January PC meeting with County Councillor Gary Luff. We are waiting response.

Condition of road network: installation of patrol/warning lights outside the school in Eastcombe. A copy of the report undertaken and issued by Highways some 18 months ago has been requested. We anticipate an update from Highways at our next meeting.

If you feel there is a significant issue with the road surface anywhere in the parish, please go to '[Fix My Street](#)' and raise the concern - details are on the website. **This is key to bringing about a change to the road condition in the parish**, so please take a few minutes to raise awareness of potholes etc. Cyclists especially are prone to the dangers of deep potholes.

The drop kerb to the green: Partial funding has been promised from GCC Councillor Gary Luff. We are seeking additional matched funding to fully support the installation works. We will hope to begin work soon.

PC meetings take place 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Bisley Village Hall. All welcome.

Colin Clifton, Chair, Eastcombe Ward: colin.clifton@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk



Have you ever considered becoming a school governor?

The Governing Body of Eastcombe Primary School needs additional governors and would love to attract the skills and experience of people from our local community.

School governors are volunteers who work together with the Headteacher to help deliver the best education possible for the pupils at the school. You do not need to be a specialist in education. Much of the role is about exercising common sense, whilst working together with a small team in the best interests of the children. The role covers a diverse range, from helping identify the schools' key priorities and how to deliver them, helping to set and maintain school policies and ensuring money is wisely and appropriately spent.

Most importantly, the governors are there to question and challenge the school leaders on the standard of education provided, working with the team to ensure all pupils have the best opportunity to learn in a safe, happy environment.

If you are interested in becoming a governor or would like to find out more, please contact Giles Webber at chair@eastcombe.glos.sch.uk

OAKRIDGE CRAFT GROUP



Are you a keen maker of things fabric, wool, cotton, paper, pencil, paint? Maybe you have projects that have been sitting in the closet in need of a dusting off to get finished?

Oakridge Crafters are meeting at Oakridge Village Hall on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, alternating between the afternoon (14:00) and the evening (19:15).



We would love for you to bring your project along and share knowledge and ideas over a cup of tea while working towards project completion!



To cover costs a contribution of £3 would be appreciated.

Please contact me (paulinelindeque@gmail.com, 07802-613965) for more information.

EASTCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warmest New Year greetings from all at Eastcombe Primary School.

Prior to breaking up for the Christmas holidays we had a fantastic last week at school with the children taking part in a range of fun, craft activities, performing in a fantastic whole school Nativity and lots more.

Years 1 and 2 in their D & T lesson investigated the purpose of windmills. They were given a design brief on building their own windmills and experimented with making their structures stable before creating the sails. Once tested, they had fun decorating their structures.

Hedgehog class finished their Antarctica topic with a talk from Rod Rhys Jones, who lives locally and worked in Antarctica as a surveyor, helping to map parts of the continent. During the talk, Rod shared lots of photos of his Antarctic trip, including views of the landscape, their Antarctic base and a photo of 800,000 penguins! He also shared a picture of Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave stone. The children had learnt about Shackleton in their English lesson when we read the ICE TRAP story. Rod



also shared some of the equipment he had taken with him on his trip, including his boots, gloves, and a fossil which they found in Antarctica, to help prove the Pangea 'one continent' theory. It really was a lovely way to finish our topic. Thank you, Rod.



HELP KEEP A COTSWOLD TRADITION ALIVE!

Ragged & Old Morris are looking for dancers and musicians to keep the ancient tradition of Morris dancing alive.

We meet at Bussage Village Hall every Wednesday between 8pm and 9.30pm during the practice season and dance at local pubs, fêtes and festivals during the summer months.



Drop in to one of our regular practices to see what we do and who we are.

CHALFORD PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Chalford Parish Centre, 50 Geralds Way, Chalford, GL6 8FJ; 01453 887204
info@chalford-glos.gov.uk www.chalford-glos.gov.uk. [Facebook](#).



World Jungle February Half Term Extravaganza: The World Jungle holiday play sessions are always extremely popular, providing exciting and engaging activities. The next session has been confirmed for **Friday 20th February at Frith Youth Centre, 2pm until 4.30pm**. Booking is not required but parents will need to stay. This session is free to attend! Please see the poster (right).

Christmas Card Collection: We were inundated with cards and would like to thank everyone for donating. Thank you to our volunteer Hilary Burgess who kindly dropped these off at the Cobalt Medical Charity in Cheltenham. Donated cards will be sorted and upcycled by volunteers into new greetings cards to raise vital funds for the Charity.

Thank you! to Pudney Pie Cafe for donating chocolate brownie bites, hot chocolate and paper cups for our Father Christmas event, donations for this raised £31 for the James Hopkin's Trust. We would also like to thank the café for providing shopping essentials, newspaper etc while Tesco Express is closed.

Frithwood Health Walks will be starting up again on Wednesday 4th February. This very popular walk starts at Frithwood Surgery at 10am and finishes at The Parish Centre for a tea or coffee, biscuits and a good chat. If you would like to join the group, booking isn't necessary. Simply meet at 10am on any Wednesday morning.



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

SDC's Environment Committee in December approved the Council's new **Climate and Nature Strategy**, giving equal emphasis to climate change mitigation, adaptation to change, and nature recovery, while ensuring a just transition for all. The strategy can be seen on the council website [here](#). It was also resolved to review the Litter Code of Practice and call on government to make the current voluntary code mandatory (for supermarkets etc.).

Community Services and Licensing Committee in December approved refurbishment and equipment replacement at Active Lifestyles Dursley (formerly The Pulse); and approved receipt (and use) of funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sport for Safer Streets and Graffiti Removal projects.

Council in December accepted the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, recommending increases in councillors' allowances and some Special Responsibility Allowances. Basic allowance will increase from £6,608 to £6,966 in 2026/27, rising annually by £358 to £8,040 by 2029/30. (Although SDC is expected to be replaced by a new unitary council in 2028.) Minor amendments to the Constitution were also approved; and a new Vice Chair of Community Services confirmed – Cllr. James Boyle of Chalford. (I am chair of this committee.)

Licensing Hearings: Four panel hearings took place in December. Hearings by a panel of elected councillors are held when there are objections to an application. Alcohol licenses, with conditions limiting hours, were granted to Standish Gatehouse, Studio 18 in Brimscombe, and Woodchester Vineyard (an extension of hours); a taxi driver's licence was revoked following an incident in which the car left the road. All licensees are encouraged to take part in the 'Ask for Angela' scheme to offer safety to people feeling vulnerable.

Please contact me about any council-related issues:
Martin Brown 01452 770878
clr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk

Frithwood Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Our weekly Health Walks will be **restarting in February, weather permitting**. The gentle walks are about 1.5 miles long and ideal for anyone recovering from illness or surgery, for people wanting to start exercising and for those just wanting a friendly chat while they walk – everyone is welcome. We meet at **Frithwood Surgery at 10am every Wednesday morning**. No need to book, just turn up to join a walk. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided afterwards at the Chalford Parish Centre. **Please come dressed warmly for the February weather and wearing suitable footwear**.

Frithwood Surgery PPG is a registered charity and raises the majority of its funds by running a **100 Club Lottery**. Money raised is used to buy resources for the surgery and run events for the patient community. Lottery Club members pay an annual fee of £24 to join and there are quarterly cash prizes, currently standing at £300. The more members, the bigger the prizes! March will be the **first draw in 2026**, so now is the perfect time to join the lottery.

To participate in the 100 Club Lottery Draw, or to make a donation, please scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/frithwoodfundraising> for payment details.

Alternatively, sign up forms can be collected at the surgery. Cash and cheques are accepted too and can be handed in at the surgery (please include your name and details).

Your help will provide our community with equipment and services that will benefit everyone.

Many thanks for your support.





FRITH
YOUTH CENTRE



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025 at FRITH YOUTH CENTRE

www.frihyouthcentre.org.uk



New heating! A heartfelt thanks to ChalCAN and a special mention to **Andy Williams** and **Richard Dean** who dedicated time and resources to installing a much-needed, brand new heating system at FYC. We'll save energy, money and provide a much more **comfortable space for the community**.

Anti-bullying workshop: What a brilliant Saturday afternoon we had! 25 young people and 15 adults attended an **interactive talk** by a very inspiring 14 year old boy, with mural making, and other **games and activities** to promote **kindness and inclusion**

Thank you to our helpers and talented bakers - Sarah, Claire, Brenda, Sue the soup dragon, Emma, Lucy & all from the Friday Lunch Club, the Farr family, plus Cheryl from the Community Cafe and her top class brownies!

Fundraising concert: A lovely bunch of humans, known as '**Casual 6'**, heard about our **funding challenges** through the community grapevine and kindly **donated** as a result of their charity concert. We will spend it wisely. Perhaps it's fitting to source some musical instruments for our young people. The **Chalford & France Lynch Garden Trail** team also kindly made a donation to FYC back in July. Donations go directly towards developing and **supporting our local young people**.

We are truly grateful to our community.



FRITH
YOUTH CENTRE

HEALTH & SAFETY VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Have you worked in health & safety?
Managed a community building? Or just
love a good old policy and procedure?!

Tasks

- > Conduct regular building checks
- > Help devise procedures



Commitment

1 hour a week or 1 hour a month...
whatever you can give



If you can help, please email:
admin@frihyouthcentre.org.uk
(Many other volunteering
opportunities available too!)

**Community
Coffee Morning**
Fridays 10am-12 noon

Everyone is welcome to join us for a cuppa and cake.

Each week we shall also have a theme of:-

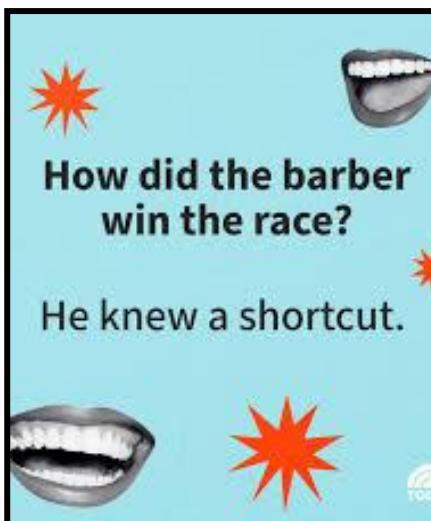
- Jigsaws,
- Social Walk & Lunch
- Community News
- Gardening - seed swaps
- Community Support Officer visits
- Book Swaps

Contact Josie for further info via clubs social media or website



How did the barber win the race?

He knew a shortcut.



Eastcombe WI Meeting
Tuesday 17 February 2026
From 7.15pm—9.00pm
Eastcombe Village Hall



ARTISAN CHEESE
CHURCH FARM LEONARD STANLEY
2001
GODSELL'S
HAND CRAFTED
FREE RANGE AND GRASS-FED
USING MILK FROM OUR OWN COWS

Speaker: Liz Godsell
Visitors always welcome

For further information contact
Jean Buxton 07817 441363 email jeanabuxton@hotmail.co.uk
or
Jackie Harris 07840 244803 email jaquieboyd@hotmail.com

WHO'S WHO on the HILLTOP? We asked Alistair Noble...

The first haircut I ever gave didn't happen in a barber shop. I was 12 years old at home with Dad, with a pair of clippers from Argos and a lot of concentration.

My Dad was disabled and struggled to leave home, so we improvised. I was young, nervous, and determined not to mess it up. I didn't know it then, but that small act gently planted a seed.

Years later, I now live in Bussage and run my business: Mobile Barber Stroud. What I've learned is that many people don't want a busy salon. They need convenience and to feel considered, and that's why I go to people instead. Kitchens, living rooms, offices, MOT garages, scout huts, care homes - you name it!

Since moving to Bussage in the summer of 2024, the warmth of the village and the wider community has genuinely enlivened me. I've taken my service where it's most useful, working with local charities, care homes, individuals, and places like Brimscombe Mill, where I offer pay-as-you-can haircuts. I believe that dignity should never depend on fixed prices.

When I'm not cutting hair I'm writing songs, walking our greyhound Blake, or working on creative projects with my partner Lucie, who works at St Rose's School.

If you spot a white Smart car with orange logos, that'll be me. Please do say hello. It's always a pleasure meeting new people.

Alistair Noble

www.MobileBarberStroud.co.uk & 07710 952 269



ALISTAIR NOBLE

Eastcombe Baptist Chapel

A service is held at 10.30am on Sundays at the chapel in Dr Crouch's Road, Eastcombe.

EASTCOMBE VILLAGE GROUP (EVG)

The annual **Eastcombe Village Quiz** will be held at Eastcombe Village Hall on Saturday 28th February, starting at 7pm, with Scott Sissons as quizmaster. A ploughman's supper is included (bring your own drinks), and cakes. Tickets, priced £7.50, will be on sale in February. Teams of up to 6, and everyone is welcome.

Future Events: your ideas please!

At our meeting on 12th January we discussed ideas for events in the coming year.

The **Wine Walk** will be in late July or early August. We are looking for 5 hosts; if you are interested in being a host, please contact me.

We are also looking for ideas and suggestions for an **Eastcombe Village Day** to provide fun and enjoyment for families and villagers of every age. Some suggestions have been made and we are very happy to consider others. What would you enjoy? Music and dance with local performers, food and drink, games and activities for all age, competitions, bingo, a beetle drive, a bouncy castle, a village picnic, tea and cakes and a murder mystery trail have been suggested.

Ideas welcome, and if you would like to be part of the team of volunteers, please let me know.

Peter Scott: peterhscott@btinternet.com

Contact csissons52@gmail.com to join the mailing list.

Follow [Eastcombe Village Group](#) on Facebook.

EASTCOMBE WI



Our meeting in **November** was mainly our AGM. The new committee had been confirmed and our new President is Jackie Harris. Pauline was thanked for her service in the post, and was presented with a poinsettia. Various reports were given. Our trading stall raised over £85 and £78 was sent to Gloucester Hospitals for the needs of patients. Jean A reported on the knitting for premature babies, which included 256 jackets and 145 blankets. A letter of thanks was received from the hospital. Various local and Gloucestershire events were flagged. We then held our Annual Auction and raised £127.50.

Our **December** celebration was dinner at The Ram Inn and over 20 Members enjoyed the great hospitality and food.

Our **January** meeting is on the 20th and our speaker will be from the Allsorts Charity. A report will be in the March Newsletter, along with February's Report.

February's speaker will be from Godsells Dairy. A must for cheese lovers and visitors are welcome. **SEE POSTER ON PAGE 4.**

St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Services this month are:

- **Sunday 8th Feb: Holy Communion, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 15th Feb: Morning Prayer, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 15th Feb: Cafe Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm (see poster on Page 8)**

On other Sundays are services in different parts of the Benefice. For full details please visit

facebook.com/BisleyBeneficeandFriends/ or join our mailing list by contacting pewslipsbisley@hotmail.com.

For weddings, funerals & baptisms, contact Revd. Sue Murray: vicar@bisleybenefice.org.uk

COOKERY CORNER

This month, Lynne Rhodes shares her recipe for

BANANA & CHOCOLATE CHIP CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- 6oz (170g) margarine
- 8oz (225g) sugar
- 3 beaten eggs
- 2 large bananas, mashed
- 1/2 tsp vanilla essence
- 10oz (283g) self-raising flour
- 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1/2 level teaspoon salt
- 2oz (55g) chocolate chips



METHOD:

1. Melt margarine and sugar on low heat.
2. Take off heat and put into mixing bowl. Add beaten eggs, vanilla essence and banana.
3. Add all dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly. At the last minute, add the chocolate chips.
4. Put into a lined round cake or a loaf tin and bake in oven at gas mark 4 or 180 degrees for 1 to 1.25 hours. Cool in the tin and wrap in foil.
5. For the chocolate top: melt 5oz (140g) chocolate with 1oz (30g) butter. Spread onto the cake.
6. Enjoy!

I just finished a book about anti-gravity.

I couldn't put it down

Social Walks & Lunch

Join us for a walk throughout local countryside.

Lunch & refreshments upon your return to the Club:

2 Course Lunch £8

First Walk Friday 27th February
Arrive for departure at 10am



Contact Josie for further information and to book a place. 0752 7947615

KEEP ON COLLECTING!

Another huge thank you to all who have given stamps to the Sjögren's UK charity box in Fidges Lane, Eastcombe. The stamps are sold to dealers and the price received is calculated by weight, with less valuable stamps sold on to the arts and crafts market. The charity gets the best price if the stamp has a 1cm margin.

I do collect all year round and welcome any stamps you can save; I will leave the box at the end of the drive until the end of January. After that, please pop any stamps you save into an old envelope and post them through the front door of Studdridge if you're passing.

Many thanks, Pam Perry

Chalford Sports and Social Club

OPEN MIC Night!

Come along for a fantastic night of music!



Everyone Welcome

Sat 7th February
7pm

For info contact Andy Brinhrd
07814 632819

Social Darts



Every Thursday 8pm
Everyone welcome
No experience needed
No charge



RECYCLING REWARD!

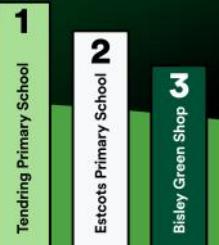
Congratulations to Chalford Hill Primary School, who, in collaboration with Bisley Greenshop, were the 3rd highest volume Terracycle collector school in the country last year!

The school is a collection point for many hard-to-recycle items, including Pringles tubes and Ferrero Rocher packaging, receiving a small fee for these specific items from the firms that manufacture them. Sadly, the number of firms offering this kind of recycling for charity is dwindling, but the poster below tells you what you can still drop off at the school (please do not drop off anything not on the poster!) – and also which items and materials you can now recycle in other local places.

While not everything is eligible for recycling in our fortnightly kerbside recycling collection, there ARE now easy recycling outlets for many materials, including flexible plastics, now easily recyclable at most supermarkets. You can also recycling writing materials at James & Owen, in Stroud, dental products at Boots and blister packets at both Boots and Superdrug.

Thank you to all who continue to donate the specific items on the left side of the poster below to Chalford Hill Primary School, helping to raise funds for the school. Thanks also to Bisley Greenshop for acting as the area collection point for many years.

These 3 schools recycled the most with us:



Save our planet and help raise funds for Local Schools, Playgroups & Environmental Charities.

Collect these items and drop them off at the centres listed below.
Please bag each category separately.



Bisley Greenshop Car Park Entrance
Bisley, Stroud GL6 7BX
2 labelled bins.

Chalford Parish Centre
Geralds Way, Chalford GL6 8FJ
Monday-Thursday (10am-3pm)
Labelled bin inside.

For larger stashes ask staff to store out back.

Chalford Hill School Garden
Chalford Hill GL6 8LG
Labelled bins available.

Drop off outside school hours.

Stroud Valleys Project
8 Threadneedle St, Stroud GL5 1AF
Labelled bins inside the shop.

Not many sponsors are still supporting this fundraiser. Please ONLY give us the few things left in this green box. See alternative recycling options in the red section for things we used to collect.

These items need to be recycled individually.
Please read the detail below.



Roll ons, hair products, toothpaste & brushes to BOOTS



Contact lenses and packaging & old spectacles.
Please take to BOOTS OPTICIANS or SPECSAVERS.



Pens, markers, highlighters, Tippex bottles/dispensers.
Plastic & metal, broken & lids.

Please take to JAMES & OWEN (STROUD)



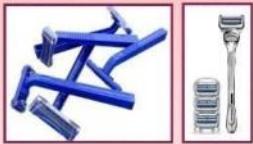
Medical Blister Packs.
Please take to BOOTS or SUPERDRUG



Mixed plastic bags, wrappers, food & cleaning pouches.

Veg, cheese, meat, crisps, nuts, fruit nets, mailbags.

Please take to LOCAL SUPERMARKETS



NO razors, please sign up to gillette.co.uk/recycle.list for mailback service



All types of single use household disposable gloves. (Not reusable marigolds).
Please take to STROUD VALLEYS PROJECT



Please do not send us: Crisps, nuts or cheese packets. No cleaning, pet or baby food pouches. No fruit nets, veg, meat or fish bags. No mailing or carrier bags, bubble wrap or random plastic sheets.

THE LITTLE FREE ART GALLERY, BUSSAGE

In January, the Little Free Art Gallery acted as a collection point for the creative tribute to Nu and her children, organised by Cotswold Crochet in response to the tragic Boxing Day house fire.

Many expressed their desire to create something for this special tribute, and over eighty crochet flowers were made on the hilltop and brought to the gallery. These will join the thousands that have been made for this special memorial.

Before the flowers left the gallery, locals were invited to stop by and spend a quiet moment if they wished.

The past month has been a poignant reminder that the Little Free Art Gallery is a shared space that exists for everyone in the community, however we are feeling individually or collectively.

January also saw wintry watercolours, New Year messages and pencil sketches from children as young as four at the gallery.

As we move into February, artwork exploring themes of love for friends, family, and loved ones is expected to feature — so why not get creative and bring something along?



Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Find the

#littlefreeartgallerybussage

on

The Avenue, Bussage, off Cowswell Lane GL6 8AT.

What3words///dates.barn.hawks



HILLTOP FILM CLUB

CONCLAVE

Saturday 21st February

7.30pm

at

Eastcombe Village Hall

Delving into the life of the pope and the papal selection process, Conclave explores themes such as power, politics, dirty tricks and blackmail within the Vatican.



GUESTS: £5

MEMBERS: COMPLIMENTARY

ICES: £3

ALL WELCOME!

HILLTOP GARDENING CLUB



www.hilltopgardeningclub.org.uk

We enjoyed our annual New Year lunch at The Lamb Inn, Eastcombe on 6th January 2026. Members were not put off by the frosty weather, and the occasion provided a welcome opportunity to socialise, whilst enjoying the fabulous views from the pub restaurant. A big thank you to the Lamb for hosting us.

Next meeting: Tuesday 3rd February, 1.30pm, at Eastcombe Scout & Guide HQ.

There will be a short AGM, followed by a talk by Robert Bryant on 'Caerhays Castle Garden'. This garden, in south Cornwall, is internationally acclaimed for its collections of magnolias, azaleas and rhododendrons.

WHY GARDENERS SHOULD WELCOME A TOUCH OF FROST

As gardeners, it's tempting to want milder winter days - but should we? Our gardens actually need a period of cold weather for the plants to perform at their best.



Falling temperatures help to trigger dormancy in plants evolved to thrive in our climate, prompting them to die back and conserve energy over the winter months, ready to spring back into growth when winter has passed. Dormancy is part of the plants' normal growth cycle and without it they would weaken and eventually die.

Some plants also require a defined period of cold temperatures to trigger flowering and fruit production the following year. This is known as 'vernalisation'. Warmer winters would affect the productivity of many traditional crops such as raspberries and apples, as well as many cereal crops.

Scientists are working to develop varieties which suit a warmer climate, but don't be too quick to welcome milder winters. Without the cold, many of our plants will struggle to survive, and I, for one, would miss the beauty of a sparkling, frost covered garden.



The Eastcombe Gardener

Attention Walkers

We're expecting lambs soon, so it's important to keep your dog on a lead and under control near our flock.

Loose dogs can really frighten us.

Please be considerate and help keep us calm.



THANK EWE!

VILLAGE HISTORIES... LIFE AS A STONE CRAFTSMAN: PART 3.

In this instalment, Paul Beer tells us about a frosty February in 2018...



From December 2017 to March 2018, we worked on a Cotswold stone roof at Sheepscombe, a job I had priced for Dr Delhanty on behalf of his mother Kate, aged 90. A gifted artist, Kate lived in a 15th century stone farmhouse on a hill overlooking Sheepscombe – the most characterful farmhouse I remember.

 In the coldest winter since 1981-82, snow fell at Christmas, with frost most days and the temperature lingering around zero. We were fortunate that Dr Delhanty was a kind person who suggested that we should not have our lunch in the van, but sit in the kitchen of the farmhouse. Dr Delhanty showed us where the kettle was and gave us a key, telling us to have a hot drink mid-morning and afternoon, asking us to make one for Kate at the same time. At that time it was just our trainee Chris Wood and I working there: Andrew Beer was doing repairs elsewhere and really suffering outside – highlighting how fortunate we were to be working for the thoughtful doctor.

I had worked out that the stone reclaimed from two slopes, combined, would be enough to do one elevation. I worked out the random size for the second elevation, on discussion with the doctor, and he sent in our order to a quarry. He wanted new Cotswold stone 'presents' so the slope on the lane side was reclaimed split stone tiles and on the back elevation we were to use the new, thicker, presents (from the Forest Marble vein, near Tetbury). Stripping the roof off revealed that it was very old, with tons of lime torching under the slates dating back 150-200 years. Dr Delhanty had his own idea about roof insulation and was against fibreglass, which he did not want in the roof. He asked me about quantities and ordered his own sheep wool insulation instead. His reasons made good sense and we complied, although it would be our very first experience of using wool. We replaced many rotten rafters, with new oak sourced by the doctor.

On 22 February 2018 we were working in extremely cold conditions and had to inform the doctor that his mother was seriously unwell. He came and got her into hospital. Around 3.30pm that day snow started falling. We had heard the forecast and fixed tarpaulins over the front roof elevation. Stone tiling was in progress at the time – we had completed the rear elevation the previous week – and it was important to cover the laid stone tiles and also the courses as yet unlaid. That day we both left Sheepscombe with difficulty: the village lies in a sort of basin and all the lanes leading up out are very narrow. We could not return for a week, although Chris attempted twice. A week later, we made it back to the farmhouse and a day after that Kate came home. Dr Delhanty said it was lucky that Kate had gone to hospital when she did, but now he and she were glad to get back to how things were before.

We finished by the end of March 2018. I didn't know it then, but that would be my last Cotswold stone roof.

For more local history, visit www.eastcombearchive.org.uk or join the [Eastcombe & Bismore Local History Group](#) on Facebook.



HILLTOP CAFE CHURCH
Christian worship for those of all faiths and none.
Sunday 15th Feb
2.30pm
EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL
BROUGHT TO YOU FROM
THE PARISH OF BUSSAGE & EASTCOMBE

Londis
Eastcombe Stores & Post Office
Temporary Opening hours during the Tesco Express closure period
Monday to Saturday 6am to 8pm
Sunday 7am - 6pm

A huge thanks so far to all our existing and new customers for supporting your local independent village shop & PO



NAME THAT VIEW!
How well do you know our area?



January's photo was of the waterfall in the woods at Hawley, near the bottom of Fidges Lane, Eastcombe. This month's shot was also taken locally—can you identify the location? The answer will be revealed in the March issue.

WHAT'S ON in FEBRUARY?

- 3 Feb:** Hilltop Gardening Club meeting, 1.30pm, Eastcombe Scout & Guide HQ
- 4 Feb:** Frithwood Surgery Health Walks begin, 10am, Frithwood Surgery, Bussage
- 7 Feb:** Race Night for Erin's Wish, 7pm, Eastcombe Village Hall/Open Mic Night @ CSSC, 7pm
- 15 Feb:** Hilltop Café Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm
- *17th FEB: NEWSLETTER DEADLINE***
- 17 Feb:** Eastcombe WI Meeting, 7.15pm, Eastcombe Village Hall
- 20 Feb:** World Jungle play session, Frith Youth Centre, 2-4.30pm.
- 21 Feb:** Hilltop Film Club, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7.30pm
- 27 Feb:** CSSC Social Walk & Lunch, 10am
- 28 Feb:** Eastcombe Village Quiz, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7pm