

March 2026

60p
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Eastcombe, Bussage & Brownshill Newsletter



FANCY GROWING YOUR OWN?
See **PAGE 7**



WHAT'S ON on THE HILLTOP?
SEE **PAGE 8**

SPRING ARRIVES IN
21 DAYS!

Eastcombe's Swifts Update:
See **PAGE 4**

POTHOLES!

ONE SMALL PRIORITY FOR HIGHWAYS...
ONE BIG PROBLEM FOR LOCAL DRIVERS!

Frustrated with the state of our roads? REPORT IT!

The more reports, the more likely that problems will be repaired.

Report individual potholes via www.fixmystreet.com, giving the exact location of the problem and providing a photo if possible.

YOU CAN ALSO:
Contact Gloucestershire Highways ([Contact us | Highways](#)) and/or

Contact your local councillors. Councillors are working hard to get our roads fixed, and the more parishioners who voice their concerns, the more they are able to push for change.

Contact info@chalford-glos.gov.uk (Chalford Parish), admin@bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk (Eastcombe Parish), clr.martin.brown@stroud.gov.uk (Stroud District Council), Gary.Luff@gloucestershire.gov.uk (Gloucestershire County Council)






A MORNING for WILDLIFE!

20th March, 11am-2pm, at Chalford Parish Office, Gerald's Way, Bussage

Join Minnie's Wildlife Rescue & Hedgehog Hospital for coffee, cake and a table top sale, all in aid of the hilltop's very own wildlife rescue.

Fantastic raffle prizes: a hedgehog house, a bird house, a lovely foodie hamper of goodies, a bottle of whiskey, plus lots of bottles of wine. There will also be a teddy tombola for the little ones, with adults and kids clothes, gifts and toys on sale.

Come & chat to Debby and her small team of fabulous volunteers about how Minnie's helps wildlife from the hilltop and beyond.

EVERYONE WELCOME!






CHALFORD MARKET
CRAFTY & DELICIOUS @ CHALFORD

Chalford Market is back!!

Sunday 1st March
Sunday 29th March

10am-1pm

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

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

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: The working group has agreed that the priority for mobile signal coverage is Eastcombe. A project meeting with Atlas Towers identified a suitable location for a mast. The land owner has been contacted to request their potential support. Atlas Towers are providing detailed data including a CGI image of what the mast might look like in this location. Our questionnaire together with a short outline of the background for a mobile mast is ready, awaiting data from Atlas. We will issue the questionnaire as soon as we can.

Condition of road network: At the time of writing, we are due to attend a joint meeting between ourselves, Chalford Parish Council and Highways together with our County Councillor on February 16th - I will report the outcome of this meeting in the next issue. There are several common concerns that Chalford PC and we will address to Highways. Many of these have been previously identified here. If you feel there is a significant issue with the road surface anywhere in the Parsh – please go to 'Fix My Street' and raise the concern: Fixmystreet.com. **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.

If you would like to **become a Parish Councillor** to support our community, please contact Heather, our Clerk, or any of the Parish Councillors to find out more.

PC meetings take place 7.30pm on the first Wednesday of each month at Bisley Village Hall. **Public representations are usually heard within the first half hour of the meetings and you do not have to stay for the whole meeting.** All are welcome.

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

CHARITABLE PUNTERS SUPPORT ERIN'S WISH

About 50 local people came together on 7th February for an evening of frolics and fun, with a Race Night in Eastcombe Village Hall.

Organiser Emma Taylor did a terrific job with excellent support from local businesses for race sponsorship and raffle prizes. The race programme was run in a very professional manner by the MC, dressed in his snazzy waistcoat and the tote team did a great job in adding to the excitement. All in all, a great evening's entertainment which raised a significant amount of money for a very deserving cause.

To find out more about the charity or to donate, visit [Erin's Wish Facebook page](#) or the SUDEP (Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy) [website](#).



EASTCOMBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We were proud to support [#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek](#) on 9th to 15th February. Started in 2025, it takes place every February to raise awareness of children's and young people's mental health. This year's theme was 'This is My Place', encouraging self-acceptance and belonging. We reflected with the children on well-being by taking a Well-being Walk around the local area to remind us of our place in the natural world and the benefits of fresh air and exercise. We also held a special 'This is My Place' Mental Health Assembly and had a Comfy Clothes Day - being comfortable and cosy is important for our mental well-being. If you are worried about your child's mental health, come and talk to us; our door is always open.

Sam (and his mum) are doing a fantastic job organising our Blue Peter Club which is much loved by the children who attend. Their most recent activity was to plant some seasonal bulbs to take home but they also did some planting for outside their classrooms. This brought a smile to everyone in this gloomy weather! Thanks to Sam and club mates!



Children had great fun making and flipping pancakes to celebrate Pancake Day on 17th February; just one of many activities the children get involved with in our Wrap Around Care After School Club. Other craft events include making Valentine and Mother's Day Cards, Easter Baking and Film Night. If you would like to find out more about our Wrap Around Care offer please contact the office for details.

INTERESTED IN LOCAL HISTORY?

Join the **Eastcombe & Bismore Local History Group** on Facebook.



WHAT'S ON at CHALFORD SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB?



- **1 & 29 March: Chalford Market 10am-1pm**
- **20 March: CSSC walk and lunch 10am (booking required – please contact 07527 947615)**
- **20 March: PCSO at Community Coffee Morning**
- **7.30pm: Singo Bingo - back by popular demand!**
- **21 March: Open Mic Night, contact Andy Bainbridge 07814 632819**

EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL UPDATE

The Trustees are delighted to inform you that we have agreed a new 35 year lease with the diocese. This means we can embark with confidence on several long-term upgrade projects as and when funds permit.

You will recall that I advised that Broadband would be installed in November - I should have qualified that by saying this would be EE/BT/Openreach dependent! Frustratingly, due to many, many false starts, an underground connection to the hall is now scheduled for installation on February 21-23rd. Subsequently we will be connected to broadband within a few days of the network connection. This should future protect us for ultra-high speed broadband. I really hope we achieve our objective this time.

We have been reviewing our policy documentation and guidelines to ensure we are working to the latest legal and best practice requirements. These guidelines and operating documents are 'live' and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

I'm very pleased to announce that Teresa Drover has now taken on the role for hall bookings. Please contact Teresa for all future bookings on teresadrover@hotmail.co.uk

For regular users of the Hall: Gerry has organised repair to the dry-stone wall, thermostats, and some electrical concerns. The task of hall maintenance is manifold and never ending - huge gratitude to Gerry. Watch out for new noticeboards.

Finally, the Hilltop Film Club is providing a great source of entertainment. I'm sure there are still a few places left for membership - we look forward to greeting you at future showings.

Colin Clifton - Chair, Eastcombe Village Hall.



DISTRICT COUNCIL NEWS

Council Tax and Rents: on February 19th SDC will consider these recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee:

- Council Tax to increase by 2.99% to £250.35 p.a. for Band D. Note this is just SDC's levy; the County Council portion of your bill is larger; your bill also includes the Police and Crime Commissioner's portion and the Parish Council precept.
- Council Tax support scheme (discount from council tax to help the least well off) to continue, offering up to 100% support for eligible claimants.
- Social and affordable rents for council tenants to increase by 4.8%. *All these increases must be confirmed by Council.*

Stroud District Council's **Culture Grants** are now open - offering up to £2,000 for arts and culture projects in the district, with a focus on young people/future generations. Applications welcomed from early career artists, students, arts, culture and community organisations, and charities based in Stroud district. Deadlines run throughout 2026: 2nd March, 1st June, 25th September. www.stroud.gov.uk/culture-leisure-sports-parks/culture/culture-grants-2026/

Museum in the Park: A lovely exhibition is on now until March 8th - Rob Race's moving creations, toys for all ages: <https://museuminthepark.org.uk/a-moveable-refreshment-works-old-and-new-by-robert-race>

Have your say on the **reorganisation of local government** (including replacement of Stroud District Council). The Government is consulting whether existing councils in Gloucestershire should be replaced by one or two new 'unitary' councils. www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-gloucestershire until March 26th. SDC prefers one new council, mainly because the proposal for two would mean economic inequality between the two new areas, with Stroud joining Gloucester and the Forest of Dean in the poorer West; and because of problems splitting current county-wide services including social care, health and education.

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

Raising funds for The Door Youth Project

Songs for the Soul

Friday 20th March 7:30pm (Doors 7pm)

With performances from:
**Whiteshill and Ruscombe Community Choir
& The Wednesdays Singing Group**



Tickets: £10 (under 11's and carers free)
Available from The Choirs, The Door Shop
& thedoor.org.uk/songs



St LAURENCE CHURCH

StLAURENCESTROUD.UK
Find us on socials @StLaurenceStroud
THE SHAMBLES, STROUD, GL5 1JL

Beginners welcome



Crib Social

Tuesdays @7.30pm

Contact John
CSSCCrib@gmail.com

CSSC
Chalford Sports
& Social Club

BISLEY-WITH-LYPIATT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

We are delighted to be able to inform you of the dates for the visit of our French friends from Plessala, Brittany: **11-14th July 2026**.



As this includes the French Fête Nationale on 14th July, we will be doing our best to make sure the visit is a particularly memorable one. As usual, we will be seeking hosts to provide accommodation for our visitors during their stay. We always look to ensure visitors and their hosts are well matched and can communicate adequately in French or English (or a combination of the two!). This might sound a little daunting if your French is a bit rusty, but don't let this put you off as some of our French visitors speak some English and it is surprising how just a little knowledge can go a long way. Whether by hosting or taking part in the visit's social events and trips out, the more people involved, the better.

If you would like to take part generally, or host, please contact Paul: paulhunt284@gmail.com

This year, the **Association's AGM will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 17th March at Bisley WI Hall**: if you are already a member or interested in joining, please come along to meet existing members and others who are interested in joining and to learn a little more about us. Membership costs £5 per annum for a couple/family membership, and just £3 for individuals.

John Hughes & Paul Hunt, Joint Chairmen

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 swops
- Community Support Officer visits
- Book Swops

Contact Josie for further info via clubs social media or website

Chalford Sports and Social Club

OPEN MIC

Night!

Come along for a fantastic night of music!

Everyone Welcome

Sat 21st March

7:00 PM

For info contact Andy Bainbridge 07814 632819

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

THE TETBURY FLOWER CO

Speaker: Rachel Poole
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

A book fell on my head.

I only have my shelf to blame...

EASTCOMBE SWIFT PROJECT UPDATE

Last summer, Thomas Keble Year 11 Employability Skills students were pro-active in learning about the Swift and its fight for survival. This concluded with 10 'Swift bricks' being fitted on the new Thomas Keble buildings. Pupils were able to put on their PPE, work with KIER construction and help cement the bricks into place. What a legacy to leave, as the pupils moved onto their new colleges and post 16 providers.

The new cohort of Y10 pupils have also embraced this project and during their lessons have had many sightings of Swifts. They plotted these sightings and 'screaming parties' on the RSPB sponsored SwiftMapper app and also used the Merlin app during structured walks to Eastcombe, Bisley, Nailsworth and, to top it all, – Swifts Hill at Slad.

After February half term, pupils will be linking again with KIER construction to help site seven new double swift boxes, funded by a grant from BisCAN (Bisley, Eastcombe & Oakridge Climate Action Network). The boxes will be situated on the sports hall and a 'calling' CD system installed. Gill Stacey of the Stroud Swift Group helped us to find the most suitable places for the boxes.

We cannot wait for the return of the Swifts this year, making their 6000 mile migration from Africa, and hope they choose to nest with us at Thomas Keble.



Mrs Parfitt Year 10/11 Employability Skills

The next Bisley Parish Local Nature Action Plan meeting will be held on Monday 9th March, 7-8pm at The Lamb Inn, Eastcombe. All welcome. For information on previous actions see <https://bisley-with-lypiatt.gov.uk/local-nature-action-plan/>

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)

Eastcombe Village Day: We are looking at some options for a day of fun and enjoyment for all ages during the summer months. There is an encouraging level of interest and support for this. Once we have more definite plans we will let you know. If you would be interested in helping, please do get in touch.

Peter Scott: peterhscott@btinternet.com

To join the EVG mailing list, contact cissons52@gmail.com

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

Calling Local Businesses: Help our gardens shine & raise money for local & national charities ☀



The annual **National Open Garden (NGS)** event returns to Eastcombe & Bussage in early May, welcoming around 600 visitors each year to wander, admire, and be inspired by our village gardens.

We're looking for a few small local businesses to sponsor this much-loved community weekend. It's a great opportunity to support a local (and national) event, while putting your name in front of hundreds of residents and visitors.

If would like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact Glen on 07879 398839—and help us make this year's event flourish.

EASTCOMBE WI

At our February meeting we were welcomed by Jackie, who introduced our speaker, Lorraine Godsell.

Lorraine comes from Leonard Stanley, where her family have farmed for many years. Originally a dairy farm, as with so many they had to diversify, and they became cheese makers. Starting with cheddar, they have produced a range of cheeses, and Lorraine is the maker. Apart from the cutting of the wheels into portions, the whole process is by hand.

In their 25th year they have a new cheese, called 'Cows are Out', and we were honoured to be the first to taste it. We also tasted a range from cheddar to oak and beechwood smoked, through single and double Gloucester, with chives and a Cheshire style. The cheeses are matured between 3 months to 4 years for a Parmesan-type cheese. All are delicious and available at farmers' markets, Bisley Farm Shop and even Gloucester Services, plus they even have a vending machine at the farm gate at Church Farm, Leonard Stanley, GL10 3NP. A very enjoyable talk. She was thanked by Margery.

We then conducted our business schedule with GFWI events and our own: Craft and Scrabble on the 24th and Lunch Club on the 27th. Olive gave news of the visit to the Missing Link of the A417, and asked for cakes to be made for the Open Gardens. The committee agreed that our 2026 charity should be Allsorts and we will be organising a fundraising event. A trip to Chavanage House has been scheduled for 17th June.

Our next meeting is on March 17th and our speaker will be from Tetbury Flower Company. See poster on Page 4 for more details.

St Michael's & All Angels, Bussage

Services this month are:

- **Sunday 8th March: Holy Communion, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 15th March: Mothering Sunday, 9.30am**
- **Sunday 15th March: Cafe Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm (see poster on Page 8)**
- **Sunday 29th March: Palm Sunday, 9.30am**

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

In the third of our cake trilogy, Kathy Eccott shares her recipe for

LEMON CURD MADEIRA CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- 175g butter/soft margarine
- 100g caster sugar
- 5 level tablespoons lemon curd
- 3 eggs
- 225g self raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Rind of 1 lemon, grated



METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 160°C (fan oven).
2. Cream butter & sugar together.
3. Add the lemon curd & beat well.
4. Beat in eggs.
5. Fold in the flour, salt, baking powder & lemon rind.
6. Spoon into an 18cm loose bottomed cake tin.
7. Bake for approximately 1 hour until firm & golden.
8. Cut when cool.



NEW NOVEL FROM LOCAL AUTHOR

Brownhill author, Sarah Edghill, is publishing her eighth novel on 17th March. This one is a quirky rom com and has been described as ideal for fans of Bridget Jones.

The Accidental Agony Aunt tells the story of Connie, who's great at giving advice, but terrible at taking it. Stuck in a dead-end job, living in a shabby house-share and dating a man she doesn't *really* love anymore, her life is falling apart. But when she helps out her best friend, then offers a few pearls of wisdom to a social media influencer, everything changes.

"This was such a fun book to write," says Sarah. "Most of my previous books have been slightly darker and dealt with domestic dramas and family tension. Here my main character is in her twenties and her life is turned upside down when her informal advice service goes viral, messages flood in, social media follower numbers skyrocket and strangers hang on her every word. As her job, friendships and reputation start to unravel, she has to decide what really matters. Is it the online fame she never asked for, or finally finding the courage to take her own advice?"

Sarah's ninth novel, *The Favourite Child*, will be published in September, and she is also working on a three-book series about a group of villagers who club together to save their local pub from the clutches of an evil property developer. Watch this space!

The Accidental Agony Aunt is published by Bloodhound Books and available through Amazon on <https://geni.us/AgonyAunt> (as both a paperback and an eBook). Prior to publication on 17th March, the eBook can be pre-ordered for just 99p. Signed copies will also be available at the Middle Hill Farm Shop.



BISLEY MARKET
PRE MOTHERS DAY SHOPPING EVENT

8TH MARCH
W1 VILLAGE HALL GL6 7AX
10.30AM TO 1.30PM

LOCAL PRODUCE
CRAFT STALLS
GIFTS
REFRESHMENTS

(FREE ENTRY)
DOGS ON LEADS WELCOME
RAFFLE ON THE DAY
STROUD WOMENS REFUGE

Never bin batteries or electricals

recycle your electricals

Every week
11 million
FastTech items are binned when they could've been recycled

recycle your electricals

RECYCLE EVERYTHING!
Most items can now be recycled, including electricals.
To find out where to recycle items locally, use the Gloucestershire Waste Wizard:
www.gloucestershirerecycles.com/waste-wizard/

The Band and Songwriter project for young people aged 8 to 17
At Maidenhill School 30th-31st March 1st-2nd April 2026

BANDIT 39
Sonnet

Final performance
Thursday 2nd
At the Stroud SubRooms
Doors 6:30pm
show 7pm
Live streaming available too!

£18 for Adults
£12 for Children and Concessions

Tickets for the final performance available from the Subrooms Box Office

For more information and bookings, contact
Kevin Howlett
on 07827454246
or visit
www.longtrainride.co.uk

longtrainride.co.uk Maidenhill RENISHAW apply innovation

BANDIT MUSIC PROJECTS

www.banditmusicprojects.co.uk/

A four-day song writing and band workshop for students aged 8 to 17.

Supports young people from all backgrounds across the Stroud area, encouraging creativity, confidence and community engagement, with the opportunity to gain experience in musicianship, creative song writing and performance skills.

The next project dates are 30th March -2nd April 2026 at Maidenhill School and the Sub Rooms, Stroud.

See website for more details and to book.

“
"Blossom by blossom the spring begins."
-Algernon Charles Swinburne

VILLAGE HISTORIES... Phyllis Gaston, in her memoir of Eastcombe life in the 1930s and 40s, *Oil, Lamp & Candle*, recalls:

WATER SERVICES – OR LACK OF THEM...

'Of all the utilities, water was perhaps the most critical. Most dwellings had tanks into which rainwater from the roof drained. Some also had underground tanks with pumps placed near the sinks, which, in dry weather, needed supplementing. The lower part of the village relied on the spring. It was used for drinking, but when one family member fell foul of typhus, it was blamed. A notice was put up to advise people to boil it first and it wasn't funny carrying buckets up Spring Hill [*off Wells Road, Eastcombe*].



Wells Road spring

Others had wells. There was one at Woodview [*on Old Hill*] from which Mrs Juggins would collect water for the WI hut in Wells Road, Eastcombe. Those living near the Green got water from the cottage opposite The Lamb. Those living up our road [*Bracelands, above Eastcombe Stores*] had the right to use the one in St Christopher's Cottage. When mains water was first brought to the village, a stop tap was set up opposite the primary school, but there the mains stopped. It was 1948/49 before a full supply was available and this came via the reservoir built at Westfield Barn, on the road to Bisley.

Your wash-house or kitchen would have a brick-built copper with a large iron bowl inside, and with a fireplace under, in which to boil your whites. I can remember my mother slicing slivers from a block of carbolic soap into the copper to produce a lather for the laundry. Then Persil washing powder arrived – a great boon. A 'bluebag' was added to the rinsing water to make the washing whiter (Reckitts was the manufacturers). A lot of things, such as collars and tablecloths, were also starched.

Baths were taken in tin tubs in front of the fire, or you did a halfway up and a halfway down job. Most loos were out in the garden and depending where they were located, some householders had to put on their outdoor clothes before visiting if it was raining. Ours [*at Hilltop, in Bracelands*] was attached to the house and you hopped out of the back door and into the loo but I can still recall snow blowing in under the door as you sat there, and sometimes it was necessary to sweep out the snow first. Originally, newspapers would be cut into squares and hung on a piece of string for a certain function, before Izal squares came in to the shops. The box claimed that they had been impregnated with anti-bug deterrent.'

Footnote: Phyllis does not mention the mains sewer because it did not arrive (through the valley from Bisley) until the early 1950s. Some houses in the village are still not on the mains sewer network.

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 March
2.30pm
EASTCOMBE VILLAGE HALL
BROUGHT TO YOU FROM THE PARISH OF BUSSAGE & EASTCOMBE

Afternoon Tea

Sunday March 8th

In aid of
Stroud Hospitals League of Friends &
Chalford Sports & Social Club

£15 pp members /
£17.50 pp non

To book your place contact
infochalfordssc@gmail.com

CHALFORD MARKET
CRAFTY & DELICIOUS @ CHALFORD

Sunday 1st March
****Sunday 29th March**** Easter following week
Sunday 3rd May
Sunday 7th June
Sunday 5th July

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

Did you spot that February's photo was of Accommodation Lane?

This month, another photo from the local area. Can you identify its location?

The answer will be revealed in the April issue.

WHAT'S ON in March?

1 March: Chalford Market, CSSC, 10-1pm
3 March: Hilltop Gardening Club meeting, 1.30pm, Eastcombe Scout & Guide HQ
8 March: Bisley Market, Bisley WI Village Hall, 10.30am-1.30pm/Afternoon tea at CSSC
15 March: Hilltop Café Church, Eastcombe Village Hall, 2.30pm
17th MARCH: NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
17 March: Eastcombe WI Meeting, 7.15pm, Eastcombe Village Hall
20 March: Minnie's Wildlife Rescue Morning, 11am-2pm, Chalford Parish Office
21 March: Hilltop Film Club, Eastcombe Village Hall, 7.30pm
29 March: Chalford Market, CSSC, 10-1pm