

Spring Magazine March 2025

Chilcompton Matters

... because it does

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No to Redrow

Food For Thought

Spring into a
new Lifestyle

Walking on
Sunshine

Local Choir
makes a record

Something
New.....

Reporting on our Winter Events

Events - Interviews - Lifestyle - News - History - Sports - Nature

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Have Your Say



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Farming
Matters



Plus all our regular features and lots more

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Front cover photo courtesy of Pete Sinclair — The Aurora over Chilcompton

Welcome...

...to the 2025 Spring edition of Chilcompton Matters.

Who will rid of us of these turbulent developers? Sorry Shakespeare, but 66 houses? And more? It would totally damage our identity as a village. The deadline has passed but still write in to Somerset Council if you have objections, it could yet make a difference. Also join CARO (Chilcompton Against Rural Overdevelopment) see page 4. We have to be strong. We love our village, we are a village, we are not a town.

On the plus side there are daffodils coming out and lots of new activities in the village; Zumba with kids, that has to be interesting (page 19), and walking football for us oldies, which I assure you is fabulous (page 67). Meanwhile the playgroup looks for continued support (page 24) and there's a recipe to try on page 56. Also do check out the upcoming events in the summer on the PEG page. Let's hope the beer festival uses glass rather than plastic cups this time - we do love a souvenir. Lots to do for all ages.

It's been a decade of Chilcompton Matters under the guardianship of the Parish Council - small celebration on page 58.

The Parish Council is always looking to determine the needs/ desires of residents so do please enter your thoughts in the survey at the centre of the magazine. Completed surveys can be pulled out of the mag and dropped off at various locations.

Big, big cheers and approval to Tracey Withers for great ideas, inspired desktop publishing and patience. Huge pat-on-the-back for Mike Hughes, 80 last month don't you know and still keeping the advertisers cheerful. Thanks to all the contributors, distributors, advertisers and everyone else who makes this digest possible.

*Bendice tu corazon
(bless your heart)*

Malcolm Rigby
parishclerk@chilcompton.org

When Will It Ever End....?

Rich Morgan gives us a CARO update in light of the application to build 66 new houses in Chilcompton.

Most Chilcompton residents will by now be aware of the planning application submitted by Redrow to build up to 66 houses on green fields to the south of Broadway. Application 2024/2281/OUT was submitted to Somerset Council on 20 December 2024, with a closing date for comments of 28 January 2025.

Despite the fact that most of us were unaware of the plan until after the Christmas period, it is a measure of the strength of feeling generated that 65 of us found the time to submit objections. The Parish Council decided unanimously at the Planning Meeting on 22 January to recommend refusal of the application, to the relief of the 37 members of the public who attended to voice their concerns.

The proposal is of course not a new one. In November 2021, Mr Conor Flanagan of Black Box Planning Ltd. joined a Zoom meeting with Chilcompton Parish Council on behalf of his clients Redrow to sound out the feeling in the village about their project to build an initial tranche of 49 houses on the Broadway site. This would be just the first phase of a total development of 150 houses, starting in the field opposite Parsonage Lane and running along behind all the existing homes on the south side of Broadway as far as the homes opposite the Somerset Wagon. In March 2022 Redrow flooded the village with glossy brochures about their plans, and then everything went quiet for more than 2½ years, until the current application was submitted.

We should be under no illusions that if permission is granted to build these 66 houses, this will not be the end of the matter. Eventually, a development nearly twice the size of the failed Gladman proposal of 3 years ago will fill in the precious green fields along the western end of the village, changing the rural nature of our community forever.

For those questioning this stance in the light of the undeniable shortage of houses in the country as a whole, I would like to make these points:

- Chilcompton has done far more than any comparable village in Somerset to fulfill its housebuilding requirements. The 70 houses allocated in Mendip's Local Plan in 2014 have been surpassed many times over, with over 180 permissions granted so far.
- The updated Local Plan Part 2, in recognition of this, allocated no new development areas to Chilcompton. The Redrow application site falls outside Chilcompton's development limits.



- The B3139, the main road running east-west through our village, is extremely busy. Data from the Speed Indication Device situated in Broadway showed a total of 298,875 vehicle movements just in the eastward direction in a single month, September 2023. That is nearly 10,000 vehicles passing the proposed site entrance in one direction in a single day. It is worth pointing out that Redrow vastly underestimate this figure. The vast majority of these vehicles, moreover, are travelling in excess of the 30 mph speed limit, with the top speed for that month registered at 75 mph.
- The infrastructure of the village was not designed to support even the current population of around 2,200 residents. The village school is oversubscribed, and will be flooded with requests from residents of the hundreds of new homes currently being built around the White Post area to the east of Chilcompton. The doctor's surgery is understaffed and oversubscribed.
- Employment prospects in Chilcompton are limited. The Mulberry factory just up the road from the development site was formerly the largest employer in the village, but has recently scaled down its operations. A search of vacancies at Mulberry showed just 2 jobs at the Chilcompton site. So occupants of the proposed 66 homes will have to travel to work, and with the very limited public transport available, most will have to drive. This will mean a large number of cars heading out of the site on to an already very busy road, which has already seen more than its share of fatal accidents.
- Many of the objectors mention the disastrous flood of 2016 and the fears held by many Chilcompton residents that any further development of the upper slopes will lead to more flooding in the lower village.
- The proposed site consists entirely of green fields, and is home to vast range of wild flora and fauna which will inevitably be displaced.

Many of the objections to this application mention the threat that the development would pose to the rural character of the village. This should not be underestimated. Approaching the village from the west along the B3139 one passes a row of houses and gardens on the left, with a succession of fields lined with hedgerows and beautiful trees on the right. This is the Chilcompton I have known for the 35 years I have been lucky enough to live here, and this is the Chilcompton I wish to help preserve. The Redrow proposal is a development too far, and must not be allowed to happen.



Rich Morgan
Deputy Chair, Chilcompton Parish Council and CARO spokesperson



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Chilcompton Open Gardens Trail Sunday June 22nd 11am-5pm Save the date

Arrangements are getting on well and we are pleased to say we now have 14 diverse gardens that will be open on the trail through the village including the school and the newly redeveloping kitchen garden at the Redan. It should be really interesting to see them all.

Thank you so much to those that have agreed to open their gardens. We are really looking forward to it but as you might imagine we still need volunteers to help out on the day and leading up to it to help set up, sell tickets and serve refreshments. If you could spare an hour or two it would be greatly appreciated, and you would still get to see the gardens too.

If you are willing to offer help please contact lynne20thorne@hotmail.com

Potholes

After months of reporting, this one on The Street was eventually repaired in January. Sadly, the ones around it were left. Both Bakers Lane and The Street are in a bad way.

To report a pothole go on someset.gov.uk/roads



Finance News

The Parish Council decided at their January meeting to increase the village precept for the year 2025/26 to £77,000.

The change is to take into account, with the usual costs, expenses for the youth club (£8,500), new equipment for all ages at the Old Rec (£25,000) and the devolution of responsibilities/powers/charges from Somerset Council (£5-10,000). The latter figure is indeterminate because the PC does not know what roles it has to take-over and how much it will cost; it may well be much more in which case reserves might be needed.

The village precept is but a small part of the Council Tax, and the Somerset Council element remains capped by national government, but the PC is determined that the village should not suffer a reduction in services. The areas of devolution are issues like public waste bin emptying, footpaths, hedges and possibly others.

Despite the increase, the cost per household remains less than many other villages in the county.

Philip Holme, Parish Councillor

CHILCOMPTON LITTER PICK

Weekend of 15th/16th March 2025

Pickers & Bags available at the Village Hall

9am on 16th October

Leave picked bags at the tree in car park



HELP KEEP OUR VILLAGE TIDY

Get Involved

All villagers are invited to attend the Parish Council meetings, to make an observation or just to view the machinery of the most local tier of government.

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm at the Village Hall. If you would like to put some information up on the village website, contact the Parish Clerk by email: parishclerk@chilcompton.org or ring 01761 232974.

Website: www.chilcompton.org

Parish Council noticeboards are by the Coop, by the Village Hall, on Bowden Hill and at the bus stop by Church House.

Feedback

What are your views on the magazine? The team that put it together is always looking for your comments, be they good or bad. Is there something missing? What could be done better? Please let us know.

County Council: Telephone 0300 123 2224

Something Old, Something New....

A new and inspiring idea is finding its feet with the help of Chilcompton based seamstresses Sue Harris and Bridget Broadbank.

After a visit to a catwalk Charity show with a difference in Wells, Sue and Bridget were inspired and decided that they could create their own scaled down version for a local charity.

Utilizing preloved wedding dresses and using their imagination, enthusiasm and skill they have given these dresses a new life with each one being embellished with its own unique theme.



The work and thought which goes into each dress is enormous therefore Sue enlisted the help of local artists and the Holcombe Craft Group.

They now have five completed dresses which have been

displayed and modeled for various Wives Groups, collecting any donations for the local Dorothy House along the way.

After experiencing one of the shows, I was truly inspired. These dresses are works of art completed with love, expression and skill, themes include **'Singing in the Rain', 'Butterflies', 'Buttons and Bows', 'Christmas' and 'Let it Snow'** with a few more being worked on as we speak.

What a great idea, taking beautiful white wedding dresses that are often only worn once and then discarded to sit unloved in storage somewhere and using them as a blank canvas on which the creative process can flow. This new project encourages people who enjoy being creative to work together, producing a work of art. This then continues as the revamped dresses are displayed catwalk style so people can appreciate the visions created. Finally, a collection is made for a local charity after the show, as all materials and embellishments are donated by the team. All the profits made go to our local Dorothy House.

Happy recycling, happy crafters, happy charity.

If you would like more information on this project,
please contact Sue on 0772 020 5772

Tracey Withers

The Chilcompton Parish Events Group (PEG)

The Chilcompton Parish Events Group, known for short as PEG, was formed from the group of villagers that worked to provide the successful events to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III in 2023.

It's been a six months where PEG members feel they have been beaten back by the weather a little. Initially the Chilcompton Village Jumble Trail's first attempt at taking place got washed out and postponed, however a second attempt, co-ordinated and run by Kate Gouldman, delivered a great success as the weather was kind. Look out for more info on future Jumble Trails.

The celebration at Christmas time was also a victim of inclement weather and had to be cancelled as it was felt that the safety of the people attending should be paramount.

In brighter news the puppet show 'Johnny G' put on for young local families went very well with 46 families attending, lots of positive feedback was given. It was great fun (I attended with my grandsons and they had the best time). Johnny G kept the children engaged for a couple of hours, laughing, playing games and dancing. There was also an interval where the children could buy snacks and drinks and run around the hall. Finally all the children went home with a small balloon animal; happy and content.

The Remembrance Day event went very well with many attendees experiencing a moving service followed by a cup of tea and slice of cake at the Village Hall.

More Events Planned for this year

**Saturday
October 4th
Table Top
Sale**

**Johnny G
childrens event
Saturday 28th
June 2pm to
4pm**

**Monday 5th May
VE Day 80th
Anniversary
Commemoration
of WW2 2pm to
4pm Village Hall**

The aim of the group is to provide a range of events and activities for the villagers of all ages and they would love to hear from people with their ideas and also if they would like to join the group. Please ring Lesley on 01761 233838 to find out more.

Tracey Withers



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Let's start a conversation

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SJP Approved 03/07/2023

Updated: 18/01/2023

Swinging

A new inclusive swing has been installed at the Old Rec by the Parish Council.

The HAGS seat has been specifically designed to cater to children with disabilities. With a focus on safety, ease of use and comfort, the Mirage swing seat provides an inclusive swinging experience for children of varying abilities.

Coming soon to the Rec is a new track around the extremity with a surface suitable for wheelchairs, prams and running. Also, a boules pitch.

In addition the Parish Council is battling with forms that will hopefully free up 106 funds, from previous housing developments which will enable them to purchase new equipment for all ages. The process is slow so watch this space but don't hold your breath.



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THE REDAN KITCHEN GARDEN

Visitors to The Redan will have often admired the stunning kitchen garden which was developed a few years ago.

More recently the garden hasn't been quite so productive, needing a bit of care and attention to try to restore it to its former glory. That's where Toni, Heather and Lynne, keen local gardeners, are channeling their efforts. The new year saw them clearing the garden and planning the growing season ahead. Working with The Redan head chef, Rhys, they will be growing herbs, vegetables, flowers and fruit that can be used in the kitchen to produce wonderful dishes. They also want the garden to look good, attract a range of pollinators and where possible grow heritage varieties.

We are keen to involve the local community with this project as we recognise the benefits of working together in a garden environment. If you would like to join us please get in touch, email

lynn20thorne@hotmail.com. As the year progresses, we will post updates on Facebook and Instagram, together with when we will be at the garden.



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Sing Your Heart Out **First Album for Chilco Choir**

The local ladies singing group 'Sing Your Heart Out' has had a particularly exciting autumn and winter season, full of musical milestones and festive cheer.

The choir has been working hard during their rehearsals, culminating in a remarkable achievement: the recording of their very own album in mid-November. Working alongside the talented Jordan from Cobra Recordings, the group had the privilege of recording their album in the stunning surroundings of St John's Church. This unique experience was both challenging and rewarding, and the choir members are eager to share the final result with the community. The album features a carefully selected mix of the choir's favourite songs, showcasing their diverse musical range and harmonious sound. The group is excited to announce that the album "Our Favourites" will be available mid November on your chosen music streaming platform, offering everyone the chance to enjoy their beautiful music.

The festive season also brought plenty of joy to the 'Sing Your Heart Out' calendar, with several performances that truly captured the Christmas spirit. One of the standout events was their charity performance for Root Connections, which raised much-needed funds for a great cause. The choir also brought the magic of Christmas to the community with their performance at the Candlelit Carol Service at St John's Church, a tradition that has quickly become a firm favourite on the choir's yearly schedule. Looking ahead, 'Sing Your Heart Out' is excited to continue sharing their music with everyone in 2025. The choir is currently looking for new members, particularly in the Alto section. Anyone interested in joining this friendly and welcoming group is encouraged to contact Musical Director **Viv Moon on 01761 232490** for more information.

As the choir's journey continues, they are thankful for the support of their audience and are eager to bring more uplifting performances to the area. The future looks bright and they

can't wait to share their music with even more people in the coming year. For those interested in hearing their beautiful music, keep an eye out for the release of the album, which promises to be the perfect soundtrack for the year ahead.



Sophie Andrews

Meet the Redan Team

Ella Love (right) is a supervisor at the Redan Inn and has been there for a few years working her way up. Ella is very efficient and hardworking, she is fantastic with the guests and the locals and there aren't many people in the village of Chilcompton she doesn't know. It has been Ella's dream to be in Chilcompton Matters since she was young, so when she's working in between her uni course, pop in and say hi. Dilly (left), who is Ella's younger sister works part time at the pub whilst she is at college. Again, Dilly is fantastic with the guests and knows all the locals. When they work together, it's usually a fun, hectic shift.



Choirfest Success

Midsomer Norton was alive with the sound of choral music on the afternoon of 12th October 2024 as a packed Midsomer Norton Methodist Church was ringing with over 200 local choristers who were attending the first local Choirfest. As the audience came in the church reached its capacity and the afternoon's singing began with

'Westfield Voices' who organized the event. Our local choir 'Sing Your Heart Out' also took part and wowed the audience with their outstanding performances of 'One Voice', 'It's Raining Men' and 'Jai Ho'. A total of seven local choirs took part. As a final song Westfield Voices asked the audience and all choir members to sing together in solidarity to 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. This was a great success and everyone in the church seemed very uplifted and moved at the end. The admission to this event was free of charge with a collection bucket for the Guide Dogs charity. Over £1,000.00 was raised

from the donations on this afternoon and Westfield Voices stated that they were "immensely proud and humbled by the support and generosity of the people who attended this event." Plans for another event this year are underway, **watch this space.**





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Simply Dance

Zumba with Kids

Having been doing Zumba for the last eight years, I decided to take the plunge over the summer and become an instructor and share my passion.

My goal is to create a community-focused environment where everyone feels welcome. I want to help others get fit whilst having fun.



Something a little extra special with this class; as a mum of two and someone who helps run a playgroup, I know how tough it can be to find time to keep fit around raising children. That's why I've made sure that with my Zumba classes, you can bring your children along — no need for extra childcare. But the classes are aimed at the adult.

Whether you're new to Zumba or a seasoned pro, all ages and abilities are welcome. I offer fitness variations to suit all. Classes run Thursday and Friday, from 9:00am to 9:45 at Chilcompton Village Hall (term time). You can drop in or block book for a discounted rate.

Let's get fit together while having fun – and don't forget to smile.

Some quotes from some of our members:

"Thank you for yesterday I was buzzing when I got home 😊, I didn't think I'd be able to do it 😊 xx"

"This class is so amazing and supportive, you don't need to be super fit or fit at all or have any coordination (I'm both incredibly unfit and have no coordination) and I love it. I've lost weight and my stamina is improving. Totally recommend it."

For more info, email: zumbawithbeth1@gmail.com Or visit my Facebook page "Zumba with Beth".



Indoor Bowls

Contact: David Rogers
01761 233142

Indoor bowls is good exercise, you meet other people, make new friends, it is warm and dry, anyone can do it, so why not give it a try. We meet every Thursday at the village hall at 2pm.

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Do Something Brilliant Today



Norton Radstock u3a provides social activities, learning, entertainment and mutual self-help for retired and semi-retired people of any age in the local area. It is run by volunteers for its membership and is part of a UK-wide movement of over 1000 charities that encourage members to share their skills and learn for fun.

Many are attracted to join by the special interest groups held across the area (art, birdwatching, chess, ukulele, poetry, guitar, solos, walking, wine appreciation groups etc), as well as the main group coffee mornings and the monthly guest speaker talks held at the Somer Centre, Midsomer Norton. Members say, ***“it’s a great place to make new friends”*** and they come from Chilcompton, Coleford, Paulton, as well as Midsomer Norton and beyond.

Come and try for free, introduce yourself to the friendly Meet & Greet team. There are lots of fascinating monthly talks. Prospective new u3a members are welcome to come along to one speaker meeting or coffee morning for free. More people living in Chilcompton are invited to join the next monthly speaker meeting or coffee morning - make new friends and extend your interests.

Speaker meetings: 1.45pm, 2nd Monday of the month. Coffee mornings: 10.00am, last Monday of the month.

See the Norton Radstock u3a website norrad.u3asite.uk for more details of groups, events schedule and how to join. Email: enquiries.nru3a@gmail.com

The Singing Guitars (a local U3a group)

The Group had a successful 2024 performing at local events, raising a significant amount for a number of different charities. We were very proud of our efforts and enjoyed bringing music to so many people, including those in care homes and day centres.

We have just started rehearsals for our forthcoming gigs in 2025, and we now have a few vacancies. We rehearse every Monday morning in Chilcompton Sports Hall from 10-12.30pm, and most of our concerts are in the afternoon. If you can play guitar that would be good, however if you would like to join the group as one of the singers that would also be good, and we would love to hear from you.

Anyone interested in joining the group should contact the Group Leader,

Charmain Gay, on 01761 232785 or 0789 005 1169.

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COMPLETING THE TEXTILE TRIANGLE



The crafties of this village should be more than satisfied as we are buried deep within the Bermuda triangle of fabric. Down at Manor Farm there is the renowned Midsomer Quilting (covered in our Spring 2018 issue), there is Rosecraft on the High Street in Midsomer Norton and completing the triangle is Wheeler Fabrics in the Chilcompton storage depot on the road towards Wells.

Life and business partners, Sam Wheeler and Catherine Harrison, came to the area about ten years ago from Wales, where they left a

successful, and still running, high street fabric shop in Machynlleth. Sam has been selling thread since he was six and Catherine has always been interested in design and sewing. Initially they found a small base on the Mendip Self-Storage site in which they intended to run an online fabric business.

But news got out that textiles were about. Catherine explained: "So we decided to do an open day in March 2019, basically opened the warehouse doors and we were serving customers from the minute we opened until the end of the day. We were absolutely packed all day. People were saying when are you going to do the next one, we did three or four more, one all weekend. We were just astonished how many people there were."

So, by 2021 they got a bigger premises on the same site and opened full time to the public. Catherine said: "We do a little bit of everything; dress making fabric, craft making fabric, furnishing fabric and then haberdashery as well; needles, threads, tape measures, scissors also upholstery foam, and the made to measure service."

Their specialty is clearance fabric which allows them to sell it on to customers at a discount. The location means that punters don't have to lug a large roll of fabric through a town to a car.

In the last year or so, within the same shop, Wheeler Fabrics have taken on board the Organic Textile Company which sells organically and sustainably produced fabrics, such as material made from the waste of banana farming, largely from India. Apparently, this is increasingly popular with designers and TV production companies.

Meanwhile Catherine said that she is very pleased with their Chilcompton site and they have no plans to move elsewhere. She said: "There are so many craftie creative people out here and it's nice that people don't have to go up to Bath or Bristol if they want fabric."

Malcolm Rigby

Chilcompton Playgroup



Come and join us at Chilcompton Playgroup on Tuesday mornings during term time from 9am-11.30am in Chilcompton Village Hall.

There is tea, coffee, hot chocolate and squash available for adults throughout the session and a healthy snack is provided for children. Each session is £2 per family and we can take cash or card.

Playgroup is a great opportunity to meet new friends for both children and adults. We have an array of toys, stories and songs.

We are hoping to recruit a few more committee members in order to secure the future of our well-loved playgroup. If you would like to join the committee or just help out, please come and talk to us.

For more information visit our website:

<https://chilcomptonplaygro.wixsite.com/chilcomptonplaygroup>

Or Visit our Facebook page "**Chilcompton Playgroup**"

Friday Club thanks Marlene Pickford

It is now over forty years since Marlene Pickford started a coffee group for the over 50s which affectionately became known as Friday Club. Throughout this time Marlene has organised the volunteers who help either taxi members to the club or make the refreshments and provide the very much anticipated cake. She also kept the accounts and handled all the administration for the club. Marlene started the club whilst still working and in latter years has taken a more visible role. Although Marlene has decided to hang up her administrative "apron" she is still very much a part of the group, not only still volunteering to taxi and make refreshments but to also join the group for the occasional cup of tea.

Friday club has offered friendship and support to countless villagers over the last forty years. Without Marlene's vision this may never have happened. On Friday 31 January 2025, the current members thanked Marlene for all she has done to bring villagers together.



Bridge Decorations



Chilcompton Matters - Advertising

The Chilcompton Matters magazine is produced in the form of an A5 size booklet twice a year, in Spring (*deadline mid February*) and Autumn (*deadline mid August*). For each edition 1,050 copies are printed and distributed throughout Chilcompton.

Advertisements can be accepted in the following formats, costs are per issue.

- **Full page - 'portrait' - in B&W / Greyscale £66 or including Colour £132**
- **Half page - 'landscape' - in B&W / Greyscale £33 or including Colour £66**
- **Quarter page - 'portrait' - in B&W / Greyscale £17 or including Colour £33**

Prices Static for ten years

Advertising charges have remained the same for a decade but as you can see from the next issue, Autumn 2025, they have generally gone up by 10% We hope you won't find this too unreasonable. It means that hopefully we will be able to have more colour pages in future issues. B&W adverts will, of course, still be available.

If you would like to advertise or you would like further information, please email Mike at mike.hughes10@outlook.com. In order to assist the publication of the magazine, please inform us of your intention to advertise as soon as you can.

Thanks go to all who advertise in the magazine, their continued support enables us to produce Chilcompton Matters for the benefit of everyone in the village.

Chilcompton Gardening Group

We are pleased to be able to offer another year of very varied and interesting speakers, together with four local visits, and an exciting garden trail within the village.

Our programme for 2025

March: Visit to Kapunda Plants (*Hellebores*) in Bath and 'Tales from the Potting Shed'.

April: Gardening without plastic.

May: Gardening Club plant sale and climbing plants and their care.

June: Visit to 'Somerset Lavender' at Faulkland, Chilcompton Village Garden Trail and making the most of your greenhouse.

July: Visit to Kilver Court, Shepton Mallet and All year round colour.

August: Visit to The American Museum and Garden, Bath.

September: American Museum garden and plant highlights.

October: Intro to forest gardening.

November: Wild Oak Wellbeing with mulled wine and mince pies.

Hellebores



Kilver Court

You do not need to be a Chilcompton resident to join the Club. We welcome members from all the surrounding towns and villages, so if you are new to the area, or just looking to meet new people and do something different, do come along to one of our meetings.

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Membership is just £8 per person for the whole year, and guests are always welcome at £3 per visit.

Contact me on 01761 233017, or visit the Village Hall Website, Chilcompton Past and Present, or our Facebook page.

Judy Youngs - secretary



Council Matters

Welcome to Parish Council section of the latest village magazine

The last Parish Council meeting saw us debate one of our most important decisions, the village precept; that is the amount that is collected from your council tax bill that comes to the Parish Council and is essentially our annual income. This money is what we then use to fund our activities across the village from cutting grass to paying the clerk's wages and everything in between. We have raised the precept again, and once more that increase is above inflation. This isn't a decision that was taken lightly, we are conscious of the financial pressures that everyone faces. You will probably be aware that Somerset Unitary Authority remains in a difficult financial position, consequently over the last 12 months a number of services that they have traditionally provided are being discontinued or devolved to Parish Council level; that process will likely continue over the coming 12 months. This is one of the main reasons while we feel our precept increase is the right thing to do, we want to be able to accommodate services that we think are important to the village if and when Somerset will no longer fund them. In spite of the increase in the precept, Chilcompton is still not the highest when compared to other villages in the old Mendip area, or indeed close to it.

One of those areas that we are looking to support is the mobile youth club that operates at the Village Hall on a Wednesday evening. The number of participants is growing and we believe that this service is vital for the children and young people in Chilcompton and one we are keen to support and help grow.

Another area where we have spent some of our precept is the Old Recreation Field; the debate a year ago about the old rec demonstrated what a great asset it is to the village and how much it means to so many of us. We have in recent years spent money to improve the facilities on offer there and plan to continue to do so to make the rec an even more important asset to the village.

We have also purchased new waste bins for the village, although the unitary authority that currently empties them have indicated that this will not continue, so this is one of those items that I mentioned above that we may have to inherit.

After a relatively quiet period for most of 2024 with regard to planning applications for large scale developments in the village, we have recently seen a renewed outline application for sixty plus houses to the south of Broadway. The large attendance at the planning meeting where we considered this continues to demonstrate the opposition to such development in the village among most parishioners. While we have objected to the proposal a sense of realism means that we have added an addendum to the rejection stating that while we object to the application, if passed we would expect to receive 106 monies related to the new houses, in this case specifying traffic calming measures.

Traffic issues within the village remain a concern for many. The Traffic Subcommittee continues to meet to discuss solutions; we have adopted the Twenty's Plenty campaign for the village and that will be rolled out over the coming months. The subcommittee will look at what else could be achieved. If you have any suggestions please forward them to the clerk, although given my earlier comments over lack of funding, any large

Jon Pike, Chair of the Parish Council

The Monday Night Tea @ St John's

This group is a welcoming space for parents and children to connect, share, and support one another. Organised through the Church, the group meets for dinner on the second and fourth Monday evening of each month in the Church Hall. These gatherings provide a relaxed and family-friendly environment where members can enjoy a meal together, build friendships, and strengthen their sense of community.



We currently have a group of between 20-25 adults and children meeting regularly, at Christmas all families brought a dish to make up a fabulous Christmas dinner.

For more information about the group call or message Dan on 07717131157.

**Chilcompton Annual
Parish Meeting
Village Hall
Tuesday 15th April 2025
7:30pm
All villagers Welcome**

***Chilcompton Society
Annual Flower Show
Village Hall
Saturday
6th September 2025
2:15pm***

Obituaries

The following villagers', former residents and friends have died in recent months:

**Brian Broome (94), Felicity Redmond Lyon (91)
Doreen Davis, Kathleen Attwood (98), Basil Banwell (98)
Tracy Ann Person, Colin Morris, Roy Durbin
Sharon Atwell (nee Higgins), Jon Wood, Liz Renton**

We send sincere condolences to their families and friends.

If anyone has been inadvertently omitted, please let us know and they will be included in the next newsletter. 01761 232774

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The Coleridge Way

The I that glanced the Hills,
strode where he strode.
And Wordsworth walked,
his sister too and friends;
To look at the faraway hills
and pray to the swirling sky.
I and we, the land, are one.

The poets walked these paths
dreaming of that sacred self.
And fixed their eyes
On the horizon bright,
blind to the uneven ground,
they stumbled and fell.

And a different man stood up,
indifferent to the stars.

Ignoring the windfree kiss,
he measured his treadful step.
To the march of his kindred drum.

The poets are mute.
Silenced by the howl
of the tyrants chant.
Capture the wind!
Chain it to the hoisted flags.
The paths of the poets
are barred and closed.

For we ignored the Mariners' cry!
Those stanzas bright and bold.
We believed in us too much!
Dead it hangs around our necks

By Andrew Morris

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HISTORY CORNER

It was 130 years ago in November 1894 that Chilcompton parish council came into being, but the election of councillors was somewhat different to the inclusive, secret ballots of today. Villagers had little say in the matter and women, none at all. A few worthy (wealthy?) men were chosen to nominate a few candidates, who in turn were elected by a show of hands of those present.

The following is from the minutes of 1st November 1894:

The Parish Councils Act having been passed by Parliament, Mr. Percy Horne of Downside College addressed a public meeting in the parish school room, (**stone built meeting room behind Shell House Farm**) chaired by Mr. Coles. The residents at the meeting then chose by a show of hands 13 of their number, who were given the task of selecting 5 names as candidates to put forward for election to the council. The following day, Mr. Horne presided over another meeting with Gilmore Solicitors of Bristol advising on the legal requirements of the Act.

On 4th November the Election meeting was held. Mr. T D Tilbrook was elected acting chairman (pro tem). Candidates handed in their nomination papers; they were questioned by those present before voting by a show of hands proceeded. After 15 minutes the chairman announced that five had been elected.

On 13th December the first parish council meeting took place. The declaration of acceptance of office was signed by all councillors (**still signed today**). J T Bown was elected chairman and G J Powell vice chairman. The council's first task was to appoint an assistant overseer (clerk) at a salary of £18 per annum. There were five applications, and Charles Bown was appointed.

Early tasks were as follows: Obtain copies of standing orders. Advertise for applications for allotments. Ask the Highways Board to repair St. John's Path (**The Pitching**) and provide a fence by the waterside, as several people had fallen in the stream.

The clerk, after only 10 weeks, resigned and Harold Robbins was appointed.

To write to Farmer Catley requesting two fields for allotments (Claypit and Furlong) adjoining existing allotments. Write to the Highways Board to repair the roads. River from The Britannia Bridge to the first weir to be cleaned out. Employ a mason to repair and clean the drinking water well in St. John's Path. Blocked drains at Broadway and Parsonage Lane are causing flooding.

1897, clerk resigned and Mr. J J Pearse appointed at £21 per annum (**he stayed in post until 1927**).

Write to the Lord of the Manor (**Lord Bath**) for permission to alter the village Pound into a suitable place for stacking stones for use on the village roads. Roads are potholed and a disgrace.

1903, a water supply is needed from Midsomer Norton or Clutton councils.

1904, difficulty getting exemption certificates from the Education Committee for children who are needed for labour. Pollution in the valley stream.

In 1907 Councillors were elected to the council, but no business was done as all refused to sign the declaration of acceptance. (**No reason was given**)

Although the parish council elections have progressed, the issues encountered 130 years ago seem very familiar today.

Marlene Pickford



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Chilcompton Youth Club

The Chilcompton youth club, held in the mobile bus at the Village Hall car park every Wednesday, is designed for young people aged 11-19. Time: 19:00-21:00.

Offering a range of experiences: getting involved in cooking delicious dishes, participating in engaging group sports, exploring creativity through arts and crafts, fun games, receiving a safe space for support and advice with any issues they may be facing, also taking part in thought-provoking discussions.

Recent activities have included stencil spray art, pom-pom making, football, corn hole, Fajita's, gyoza's, scones, and life skills such as safely cooking over an open fire. Special events like Halloween activities, pumpkin carving, mental health awareness, effects of social media and staying safe online have been just some of the highlights.

Upcoming events will feature stir-fry, pancakes, curry-making, staying safe and knife crime awareness, anti-bullying workshops, rocking painting, basketball, team challenges, football, board games and much more.

The Chilcompton youth club is the perfect space in the heart of community to get outdoors, try new foods, make new friends and have a fantastic time.

All the activities are planned around what the young people have asked for. If there is something else you would like to do then let us know.

Just come along and join us – any questions please call Faith Carpenter the new Senior Youth Support Worker on 07483 152592



Have your say in the Parish Health and Well-being Survey

Chilcompton Parish Council has received a small grant to carry out a well-being survey of those who live in the parish. The grant has been awarded by Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) via the Somerset Council Public Health Programme to reduce health and well-being inequalities in Somerset. The aim here is to find out how connected parish residents feel to their community and then see what support there might be for developing projects to help increase social connections and activity, and improve their well-being.

This survey is for parish residents only and is anonymous. It can be filled in by a household or each member separately. You can fill in this paper version, add additional pages if you wish, or if you prefer you can go online and do it. Scan the



QR code or go to: <https://forms.office.com/e/P3JE3VBwBV>

Please complete the survey by **6 April** and drop the paper version in one of the boxes which can be found at: Holy Cow, Co-op, The Redan, The Somerset Wagon, The School, Sports Club.

The survey should take no more than 10 mins to complete.

1. Please state if you are filling this in: as an individual ☐ as a household ☐

2. Please state your age bracket: 11 and under ☐ 12-18 ☐ 19-30 ☐
31-45 ☐ 46-65 ☐ 66-79 ☐ 80 and over ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

If you are filling in as a household please tick all ages that apply.

3. Gender. *Please complete only for the person filling in the survey*

Are you a Woman ☐ Man ☐ Non Binary ☐ Prefer not to say ☐

4. Do you take part in any local groups in the village? *eg Youthclub, Sports activities, Social clubs, Church. Sports Club?* if yes please specify which ones.

5. If no what were the reasons? *tick all that apply*

Cost ☐ Accessibility ☐ Clash with other activities ☐ Not of Interest ☐
Don't know what activities are available ☐ Other: ☐

6. Have you attended one off events in the village in the last 2 years *eg. the Coronation* - if so which ones?

7. If no what were the reasons? *tick all that apply*

Cost ☐ Accessibility ☐ Clash with other events ☐ Not of Interest ☐
Don't know about them ☐ Other: ☐

Part 1 of 4

8. Do you feel it's easy enough to participate in activities in the village?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

9. If no, are there any other activities you would be interested to participate in?

10. Would you be willing to help set up or run new activities?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

11. Would you like to see activities or events that attract a wider age group?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

12. Are there events that have taken place that you didn't know about until afterwards?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

13. If yes which events were they?

14. Do you have access to the internet?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

15. Do you use the Parish Council website? www.chilcompton.org

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

16. If no, what are the reasons?

17. Which Social media pages do you use? *tick all that apply*

Chilcompton Past and Present facebook ☐

Chilcompton Sports Club facebook ☐

Chilcompton Parish Council facebook ☐

Nextdoor App ☐

Instagram ☐

Other: ☐

18. Do you find the Parish Magazine 'Chilcompton Matters' useful to find out what's going on in the village?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

Part 2 of 4

19. How do you find out what's going on the village?

20. Would you like to see an online Parish 'What's On' list for events that are open to all?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

21. Would you be willing to help set one up or run it?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

22. Do you feel you have enough social contacts in the village to avoid feeling lonely?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

23. Do you feel you would need help in finding out how to ask for support if you are struggling with loneliness or mental health issues?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

24. Would you like to see a village community well-being group?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

25. Would you be willing to help set up or run one?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

26. Do you use local businesses? *tick all that apply*

Co-op ☐ Local trades people and services ☐ Petrol Station ☐

Cafe ☐ Pubs ☐ Others.....

27. Would you like to see more environmental and green projects in the village?

Allotments ☐ A Community Garden ☐ Bulb planting group ☐

Green socialising spaces ☐ Others.....

28. Would you be willing to help set up or run any green projects?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

29. Do you use the Old Rec?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

Part 3 of 4

30. If yes how often, and for what purposes?

31. If not what are the reasons?

32. Would you like to see more equipment for other ages and sports in the Old Rec?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐

33. If yes what would you like to see?

34. If no what are the reasons?

35. If there was one new additional or improved thing you would like to see in the village what would it be?

36. Is there anything else about village life you would like to comment on?

37. Please **submit this survey by 6 April**. Once you have completed it you can put it in one of the drop boxes, which can be found at: Holy Cow, Co-op, The Redan, The Somerset Wagon, The School, and the Sports Club.

The survey is anonymous but if you would like to offer some support please leave your email.....
or send an email to survey@chilcompton.org

The survey results will be collated by the Parish Council to inform an action plan for future funding applications for developing potential new projects or initiatives which can improve the well-being of Chilcompton parishioners.

THANK YOU!
Part 4 of 4



For Art's Sake

Are you starting the new year and looking to explore a new hobby. Look no further

than the Chilcompton Art Club. We welcome artists of all abilities, from absolute beginners to seasoned practitioners. Our warm and inclusive environment ensures that everyone feels at home and inspired.

Our vibrant club is based at the Chilcompton Sports Club, a fantastic venue with ample parking and excellent disabled facilities, making it accessible to all. We hold sessions on Wednesday and Friday mornings, from 10:00am to 1:00pm, giving you plenty of time to immerse yourself in your creative projects.

Whether you enjoy painting, drawing, or any other form of visual art, you'll find like-minded individuals to share ideas, tips, and encouragement. Our friendly community is always ready to welcome new members, so why not join us and unleash your inner artist? Annual exhibitions at the Chilcompton Sports Club and Wells Cathedral.

So come along and express yourself at the Chilcompton Art Club.

New members are always welcome.

For more information or to join us, visit our website at www.chilcomptonartclub.uk or find us on Facebook.

You can also contact Nigel Punchard at secretary@chilcomptonartclub.uk.

CARERS INFORMATION DAY

If you are worried about someone's memory, or are caring for someone with dementia, then this event is for you! Expect talks from therapists, Stone King Solicitors, Alzheimer's Society and local support organisations.

Join ReMind UK and many collaborators for an information day to find out more about dementia.

Book your place today:

✉ info@reminduk.org

☎ 01225 476420

Tuesday 18th March

10am - 1pm

**Chilcompton Sports
(Bennell site on Wells Road)
BA3 4EY**



ReMind^{UK}
Getting ahead of dementia

Mendip Brass Band

Since the last publication we have played at a number of events. We did our usual visit to Writhlington Flower Show, there was a very good crowd and we played through our summer list.

The following week we played indoors at Clare Hall, Ston Easton. It was very cramped for room, but we managed. The staff seemed to enjoy the music and I THINK the residents did too. Then in September, we had a new venue, the village fete at Hinton Blewitt.

December brought the carol services; the band went to Hinton Blewitt again for their outdoor carol service on the Village Green.

Next, we played at Kilmersdon church and were joined by the pupils of the school. We played carols and Christmas music at Norton Hill Station and also at three churches; Radstock, Chilcompton and Ashwick. Christmas Eve found us playing at the top of the village including The Redan and The Somerset Wagon, both packed with customers.



Jenny Gould

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Friends of Somer Valley Medical Group

2024 was a busy year. The Practice Merger led to the joining of the Friends of St Chads/Chilcompton and Friends of Somerton House. With the former being a registered charity it added to the complexity.

The Charity Commission were helpful, as were B&NES Lottery Licensing Dept, but Barclays Bank delayed us for 5/6 weeks. It is all now completed (I hope) and we can get on with what we are really here for.

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Raffle this year. Thanks too to the patients who volunteered with selling, and to the local businesses who sponsored prizes. I am sorry if you didn't win a prize, but as one of our members said to a buyer, "in fact we all win, because the money goes to buy surgery equipment to help all of us."

Our 100 Club has now been rechristened the 200 Club in anticipation of more people joining from the larger patient base. We are not there yet, but we are committed to reviewing prize levels every six months to make sure prizes keep up with subscriber payments.

In the last six months or so, we have bought the Practice a new defibrillator to replace the one we originally purchased many moons ago. The old one could not be serviced as parts are no longer supplied. We have also bought Wheelchair Weighing Scales. The nurses find these very helpful, and they can save a patient having to trek to Bath to be weighed.

We were planning to buy a Dermatoscope (a piece of kit which examines skin lesions and transmits suspect images to RUH). However, when I told a lady about this plan one Raffle day, she took the thought home with her. The following week, she phoned and said she wanted to donate the whole amount. At not far short of £1,000 this was an amazing gesture, and we are all exceedingly grateful to our anonymous donor for her generosity.

Earlier this month representatives of our committee and Hope House Surgery met with a representative of the Integrated Care Board to offer our input into the NHS 10-year improvement plan which Lord Dharsi is currently preparing. In February, a Governor of the RUH is visiting us to hear feedback on RUH services. I can give them 11 out of 10 to the support they gave me personally last year, but I am sure he needs to hear the good and the not so good. Please feel free to email/phone me if you have feedback or questions for him.

Health talks 2025 – work in progress. Finding highly qualified medics to come to Norton and give their time and expertise for free is not easy. The Cardiologist, Dr Khavandri, who spoke to us in October was excellent. Tough act to follow.

If you would like to volunteer to join in our efforts, know any speakers who may be available for a Health Talk, or simply want to join the 200 Club (£12 p.a.) please contact me.

jsattlerevans@btinternet.com or 232244.

Jenny Evans (Chair)

Don't Panic Stay Calm

There is no requirement that defines the facilities or level of detail that a Parish Council needs to have in a Crisis Management Plan. However, Chilcompton Parish Council has such a plan and it is periodically revised. Following the most recent review, the Council has assessed its ability to provide emergency services and has determined that the plan that was in place for some time included very significant expectations that could not be met so that plan has now been retired.

The previous plan was very well researched and documented, however it laid unrealistic and unachievable expectations upon the Council and others. The Council does not have the skills, training, resources or experience to deal with many aspects of the former plan and it never has had. Furthermore, the plan calls for access to material assets that do not exist and such resources are unaffordable in the current financial climate. It is also noted that the plan was not utilised in any crisis and in relation to the pandemic, it simply said to do what governing bodies required and that was what was done in Chilcompton without any further guidance. We believe the community managed the pandemic very well under the circumstances - people were very generous with their time and resources and helped out others where they could.

Because unachievable commitments were set out in the plan, in the event of a widespread crisis parishioners may have certain expectations which could not be fulfilled. Such expectations could result in very considerable confusion and exposures in the event of a crisis that was not supported by government services. Subsequently, the former plan has been replaced.

The bases of the new brief plan are as follows. The plan will be made available on Parish Council media platforms and hardcopies will be available on request from the Parish Clerk.

1. *The Emergency Services must always be the primary and ongoing contact point during any emergency or crisis.*
2. *Each householder should carefully consider how they would react in an extended crisis. Think about things like staying warm, providing light, having a few items of non-perishable food that do not need cooking and fresh water supplies and keeping in touch with others. Also include sufficient supplies of medication and pet nutrition needs.*
3. *As Chilcompton residents always do, take community responsibilities seriously. When you have taken care of your own needs and those of your family, do what you reasonably can to help others.*

Finally, always remember that the emergency services, including social care, are highly staffed, trained and equipped to deal with any crisis. The chances of them being totally unable to assist for an extended period in a crisis are extremely remote indeed.

<https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/>



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Traffic Matters

The Parish Council's Traffic Sub-Committee is continuing its efforts to improve road safety in the village, with a particular focus on reducing speed and addressing dangerous traffic hot spots. Somerset council have sadly confirmed they are no longer able to provide a SID programme due to a lack of funding. The council will advise and support the existing use of SIDs with guidance on how they can safely be managed (due to work on the highways). We will be discussing options to have them moved to different areas of the village working with the council to determine safe positions for this to happen. In the meantime, the committee has been actively involved in discussions concerning the proposed planning application for a development of 66 houses on the Broadway edge of the village. This proposal has raised significant concerns about road safety, particularly regarding the access point for the new development. The planned access is suggested in a staggered location near the junction to Parsonage Lane, a location already known to be hazardous due to poor visibility, particularly when approaching from the Wells direction, and high traffic volumes.

The road in this area is notoriously busy and has been the scene of several near-misses and accidents. This includes a fatal road traffic collision in 2022, which sparked a local campaign calling for urgent traffic calming measures. The Traffic Sub-Committee has raised these concerns in detail at the most recent Parish Council meeting, stressing the dangerous nature of the proposed access point.

Additionally, the committee questioned the accuracy of the traffic statistics submitted as part of the development application by Redrow Homes. The data, which forms part of the justification for the development, is either outdated or, at worst, inaccurate when compared to more recent data collected by the Traffic Sub-Committee using the Smiley Face Boards. The Sub-Committee has been actively monitoring traffic patterns in the area and believes the figures used in the application do not fully represent the current situation on the ground.

As always, the Traffic Sub-Committee urges residents who haven't done so yet to sign the village's petition for increased road safety. The more voices raised in the conversation, the stronger the case for safer roads and effective traffic management in the village.



<https://www.change.org/p/implement-speed-control-measures-in-chilcompton-village>

How to...retire

You get old and then you give up work. Easy? Perhaps not.

A quick look at the last census reveals that a quarter of the village's population is over 60 so quite a lot of us are doing it. As a matter of dubious interest, that percentage falls almost as low as 5% in certain parts of Taunton whereas in areas of Minehead it reaches almost 50%. What that tells us about Minehead, begs the question. Recently, I said to a good friend: ***"You could watch paint dry on a wall, you could."*** He replied: ***"Nah, mate, you don't need no paint."*** But there are other extremes, like those who have to be busy all day every day. Probably the same people who used to own Filofaxes in the 1980s. Those who brush their teeth in the morning and then tick it off the list.

In between are the retired folk who like to have one thing on their calendar for each day, but the completion of that one occupation becomes the whole focus of the day and nothing could possibly disrupt it. In reply to a suggested outing, they will suck in their lips, shake their heads, and then blow out air in an exaggerated manner, steupsed indeed, before declaring: ***"Sorry, sunshine, I've got pot noodles making down at 11.00 on Wednesday the 14th."***

In the old days, matters were simpler. You retired at 65, collected your gold watch on the Friday, whilst people in the background muttered 'good to see the old goat go', and then by Tuesday you'd died of boredom by sitting in front of a television that was probably just showing the testcard. The government had been very astute in choosing a retirement age in which no one got any retirement and there were no moving pictures. Nowadays, with people living for 30 years after they retired, everything is more complicated. First of all, the government has to find enough money to pay for us oldies so that each generation has to pick up a bigger and bigger bill. (I'm approaching political minefields here; like the cost of social care, the fact that 80% of NHS money is spent on the over 80s, and the decision by children to send aged parents to a nursing home as soon as they can't manage the stairs. So I will veer off sideways towards activities). Secondly, we have to find things to do with all this free time.

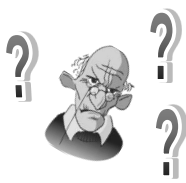
Golf? Gardening? There are some that would prefer to work. The absolute bottom line is, of course, daytime television. I mean who doesn't love the beautiful blandness of 'Escape to the Country'? For the more well-to-do pensioner there is Sky sports where you can watch young people doing what you want to do – run around.

My particular personal pension plan (pppp) is to get lost in streams of consciousness a la the modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Could you in fact drown in a stream of consciousness? Sartre or Kierkegaard could maybe answer that. The idea is to avoid being pigeon-holed as demented because you are already known as that bloke who always talked pretentious rubbish in the first place.

The other day there was the suggestion that the family should go together to Centre Parcs. I WhatsApp back that I'd prefer to deep fry my testicles with petite friture. I think it's working.

However, there are lots of advantages of being retired. Did you, for instance, know: that if you are over 66 you can officially wear long johns without a licence and there is a chip shop in Lyme Regis that gives you 10% discount. Spanish for retirement is jubilacion.

Next time: How to...make a meal with baked beans instead of pomegranate molasses.



Surprises on Your Doorstep:

Continuing the series of treasures/treats just outside the village, Malcolm Rigby visits Ham Wall Nature Reserve where the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has just been celebrating 30 years.



www.deepreality.co.uk

If we have visitors, our 'go-to' place has always been Glastonbury Tor; it's iconic, involves a sharp walk and you can normally be guaranteed a bracing wind and a fine view at the top. But just underneath it is a nature reserve that you might find interesting.

When the RSPB took over the Ham Wall site north of Glastonbury back in 1994 there was, of course, the small matter of restoring a semi-industrial devastated landscape into the beautiful sea of reeds that you see today but there was always one central aim – to bring back the Bittern.

As Steve Hughes, the Site Manager, said: "The big driver for this was the Bittern, that was the big target species we were trying to get, the whole site was designed with Bitterns in mind. The idea was that if we get it right for Bitterns, we'd get it right for lots of other things as well. That was a long process, an awful lot of research went on, nationally, about what Bitterns needed. Despite that they took an awful long time to get here and it was quite frustrating, people were wondering whether it was ever going to happen."

Bob Buck, former policeman, and Pete Wood, former engineer, have each been working as volunteers on the reserve for quarter of a century. Bob proudly produced his RSPB Avocet badge which recognizes his 25 years of service during which time they have planted more than half a million reeds. He describes the initial scene as looking like the Somme with ten foot craters where peat had been removed. At the end of the century the Bittern was on the verge of extinction. In 1997 there were just 11 booming (mating) males, now there are twice that number on this site alone, 50 in Somerset and 239 in the UK.

Bob said: "So they've gone from the red list to the amber list. Absolutely the result of this reserve, if we hadn't planted the reeds, done what we have, this wouldn't have happened. This reserve was designed specifically to make an optimum habitat for Bitterns and it's done its job. But it was ten years before I even saw one, I thought they were like griffins, mythical beasts.

"The reason is that it took that long for the whole reserve to get into balance, the water quality improved and it starts from the most microscopic of plants and invertebrates, then you go up through the food chain to the fish and that's what the Bitterns eat.

"In every sense this reserve is a success, it's a success because we've done what we set out to do and it's a success because people come; we do guided walks, butterfly walks, on Saturday I'm coming down to do pond dipping."

Pete said: "What it's done for me is make me more observant of what's around, I have expanded my knowledge of wildlife in general. When I do a walk I have a very full folder; all the insects, the mammals and their scat, you don't see them very much but you see what they leave behind. The majority of people come and they go away thinking 'well I've learned something today' and that as far as I'm concerned is the satisfying part. You want to be outside, doing something useful, trying to change the world a little bit."

2008 is seen as the turning point for Bitterns and since then the graph has flown up and up but they are not the only success story. In 1997 Marsh Harriers were down to one breeding pair in the UK and this year at Ham Wall alone there were seven nesting attempts and three definite nests.

The Bearded Tit is another small victory, these long-tailed birds (with moustaches really not beards) who love to fly over reed beds, are also now more numerous.

Then there's the Great White Egret which used to be a subject for twitching. Steve said: "They've started to colonise the UK but this seems to be an area they've really homed in on. There are Night



Bittern, Sandie Andrews

www.saimages.co.uk



Bearded Tit Sandie Andrews



**Marsh Harrier
Sandie Andrews**

Hérons, Cattle Egrets, all kinds of things that used to be considered exotic but are now turning up and breeding and becoming more commonplace. It's the quality of the habitat and the size of the place.

"I've never taken what I do for granted, I'm very lucky and privileged to get the opportunity to do this for a living. So, I don't mind the rain or snow, bring it on really." Perhaps most importantly: "We have brought the Bittern back or played a huge part in that."

A longer version of this article first appeared in the Somerset Life magazine. **Malcolm Rigby**

Chilcompton Lives – Roger & Linda Mansell

Roger and Linda moved to Chilcompton in October 2023. One of the reasons they chose their new house in Montsurs Close was to be near fields as they had been used to it at their previous house in Hayden where they had lived for 20 years. However, this was not the first time they had lived in Chilcompton as, in 2002, they lived in a flat above the hairdressers at 21a Wells Road.



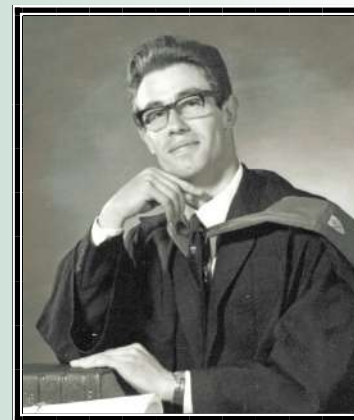
Roger was born in Moreton-in-the-Marsh hospital in 1944 and lived in the village of Blockley nearby. Roger's parents were Ludwig and Daisy. Ludwig Mencsell was born in Berlin in 1905 where he worked as a bank clerk. In 1939, in the lead up to what was to become WW2, Ludwig was able to leave Germany and travel to England. As a Jew Ludwig's timing of leaving Germany was crucial to avoiding what happened to many German Jews. In England Ludwig found refuge in a Kitchener Camp near Sandwich and joined The Pioneer Corp. Ludwig changed his name to Louis Mansell and was naturalised in January 1947. He worked at Doughty's as a welder and also degreasing pit props.

Roger went to Primary School in Blockley but had to cycle 6 miles to Chipping Camden Grammer School. At senior school he excelled in sports, playing football, cricket and



cross country running. Roger also ran for the county of Gloucestershire. In his teens he obtained a glider pilot licence with the Air Training Corps.

Roger went to Aston University where he studied Pharmacy and, after graduating in 1967, completed an apprenticeship with Boots the Chemist based in Stratford-on-Avon. He used to commute to Stratford on his motorbike and at the time was friends with John Surtees. He used to hold the motorbike of the famous racing driver. Roger was with Boots from 1967 to 1987 and was based in various branches eventually managing the Guilford and Exeter branches. The latter was where he met his first wife.



In 1986 Roger was approached by the Clements sisters from Radstock and in 1987 he bought Clements chemist. He remembers Gladys Clements being quite stern and he worked with Alan Starr when he first took over. In 1988 Roger first met his future wife, Linda at Clements as she worked there as a Dispensing Technician.

Linda (Cottle) was born in 1951 in Paulton and lived in Writhlington with her parents and brother. Her father was a carpenter at Prattens and her grandfather was a miner in Clandown. Linda went to Radstock St Nicholas Infant and Junior School and remembers with fondness Miss Garrett and Mr Dando.

In 1962 Linda went to Midsomer Norton Grammer School at Norton Hill. Linda was in the Brownies, Guides and went to the Youth Club. She also played Netball, School House Hockey and Athletics. She left school in 1967 and worked at Edwards and Adams Chemist in



Mansbrook House, Midsomer Norton, as an in house Dispenser. In the late 1960's there was a flu epidemic and the chemist opened on a Sunday to provide medicine. This was well before flu vaccinations and was mainly for painkillers. The queues were along the street and everyone was very patient and grateful.

Linda studied at Brunel College in Bristol to qualify as a Dispensing Technician. She had four children with her first husband and lived in Westfield.

Linda was also Dinner Lady at Westfield School and worked in playgroups. She qualified as a playgroup leader following a course at Radstock College. In 1988 she worked part-time for

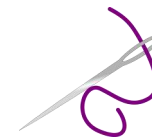
Roger at Clements. Linda also worked at Timsbury Pharmacy, Lloyds Combe Down where she became a Registered Pharmacy Technician with the Pharmaceutical Society GB and then Lloyds in Paulton.

Roger currently has Alzheimer's Disease and Linda cares for him. He has recently taken up playing the piano something he learnt to play as a child. He has two children from his first marriage and was a member of Wells Rotary.

If you have enjoyed reading this article and would like to share your memories or know someone who may please contact Mike Newman on 01761 233838 or contact the editor.

Mike Newman

Embroidery Group



Embroidery Experience classes started again for the 12 week course on January 16th. Anyone wishing to join us, we meet on a Thursday morning at Chilcompton Sports Hall at 10am to 12.30 am.

Pat Ardron

Then & Now

The Old School House, Chilcompton



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Sue on 07925 326 789

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Wednesday Walkers

Another good year of walking, if a little wet and muddy for 20 regulars, (always room for more) who look forward to warmer and dryer days this summer. The usual Christmas meal at the Horse and Jockey was much enjoyed; we ended our walks with welcome refreshments at Ashwick village hall and Radstock at the Swallow café and spent time looking around the old church at Holcombe. So not just walks, but food and history too.

Contact: Marlene Pickford

On 01761 232774. or
marlenepickford2@gmail.com

Golden Hour Club

About 20 members enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Old Down Inn in December and following the AGM in April will look forward to another year of music, singing and talks. Everyone is welcome to come along.



New members or visitors are always welcome.

Sylvia Rogers 01761 233142



Chilcompton Wives

We are all looking forward to the lighter nights and brighter days of Spring. Our last meetings of the Winter were a visit by a 19 century surgeon with all the equipment ready to do any amputation necessary and an alternative Musical Nativity. 2025 started with a nostalgic look at local life with Alan, followed by the 'Swan Lady' of Wells and John Dando with his talk on the outside Privy. Among all this we hope to have a meal and a game of 'Play Your Cards Right' We do try to have a wide range of entertainment.

If you would like to join us at any meeting you are most welcome. We meet in the Sports Recreation Hall on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 2.15 p.m.

For further information contact:

Bridget Brookbank 01761 232039 or Maureen Evans 01761 233266



Spring in England



I'm writing this on a day in early January when a layer of snow covers Chilcompton. I'm quite lucky as I have escaped this white landscape with a visit to my daughter in Kenya where we're basking in 26C warmth. But I know there's snow on the ground at home as I have a doorbell with a camera, and that shows me what's afoot.

Spring may feel far away just now, but a camera in the back garden reminds me of the containers I planted up with spring bulbs a couple of months ago. Two of them I layered with tulips, mini daffs and crocus. I understand this process is called a 'lasagne'. This is my first attempt, and I'm curious to see how successful it will be.

Thinking of crocus did any of you take up the offer of free crocus corms in the Autumn? These were provided by one of the local Rotary Clubs, which had 4,000 to give away. In total there were two million being donated so there should be a beautiful purple carpet of crocus blooming in many communities across Great Britain and Ireland thanks to 'Purple Crocus Corm Planting' to raise awareness of the Rotary fight for a polio free world. I planted 100 in my front lawn and am looking forward to the 'show'.

Spring is a delightful symphony of rebirth that sweeps across the countryside and urban landscapes alike. From March to May, the country transforms into a vivid tapestry of colours, scents, and sounds that rejuvenate both nature and spirit.

English gardens burst into life with tulips, bluebells, and cherry blossom, painting a colourful picture. The wild garlic which borders many of our local roads is a lovely sight and also a fabulous springtime ingredient. It grows in abundance and is easy to recognise, so can be foraged and safely enjoyed at home. It has a punchy flavour similar to regular garlic, but not as strong, and it's delicious in pesto, whizzed into a sauce for steak or fish, or added to pasta dishes. Those of you with access to the internet can find some recipes here:

<https://www.olivemagazine.com/recipes/collection/wild-garlic-recipes>



Of course, we can't speak of an English spring without mentioning its unpredictable weather. The season is famous for its blend of sunshine and "April showers". These rains, while sometimes inconvenient, do of course play a crucial role in nurturing the emerging flora.

Despite the frequent rain since moving to Chilcompton from Surrey two years ago, it has been a wonderful transition for me. So many new friends and such beautiful countryside.

And so much more to look forward to this year. **Let's raise a glass to the prospect of a sunnier summer.**

Valerie Jackson



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Farming Matters

We farm in Stratton on the Fosse but also rent land and buildings from the Waite family at Rookery farm in Chilcompton. The Padfields have been farming in the area for four generations and were primarily dairy farmers but in 2000 we ceased milking cows and concentrated on rearing beef cattle and growing arable crops.

The arable crops that we grow are mainly wheat (used for bread / biscuit making or animal feed) and barley (used for beer / whisky and animal feed). We also grow other crops in the rotation such as linseed, beans, red clover grass and oilseed rape. In fact, most oilseed rape is used in cooking oils and spreads, but we grow a variety which is used in industrial processes and used in the manufacture of printing inks, lubricants and slip agents. The linseed and beans are sold into the human consumption market if we reach the standards required and if not, they are included in animal feeds rations.

We are a LEAF (Linking Environment & Farming) Demonstration farm which means that we host visits to farmers and other interested parties to explain how Integrated Farm Management works in practice. This is using traditional farming methods but with a balance to nature and the environment as well as embracing modern technology.

An example of this is that we haven't used insecticides on the farm for eight years and we try to avoid the damage caused to crops by predators by planting companion crops which grow with the main crop and act as a distraction to the predating insects. Also, by planting grass margins around the fields, the aim is to create a habitat for hoverflies, ladybirds, ground beetles as well as other beneficial insects to keep aphids at bay.

This style of farming maximizing crop diversity, reducing the disturbance of the soil (less ploughing), keeping the soil covered and growing crops all year round and integrating livestock is now more commonly known as Regenerative Agriculture.

Livestock such as cattle and sheep play a very important role in stimulating growth of plants as well as returning much needed nutrients through their urine and poo. On the outskirts of Chilcompton there is a pig farm (which no doubt you can smell from time to time). We purchase some of the slurry from this farm and along with farmyard manure from our own cattle we can apply this to the land to keep the soil in good health. This in turn dramatically reduces the amount of man-made fertiliser we have to buy in which makes up to 65% of our carbon emissions on the arable business. Most farmers are looking at lots of ways to reduce fertiliser applications as they are not only expensive but also, they are an energy intensive process and so by utilising animal manures and growing nitrogen fixing grasses and crops we can reduce our reliance on them.

Like many farms we have diversified over the years from agricultural contracting to livery yards, workshops, growing seasonal cut flowers, a hospitality venue, pop up café for the community and we have recently received planning permission for a secure dog field which should be opening in late spring/early summer.

<https://facebook.com/fossefarm>

Jeremy & Sue Padfield

Food For Thought...

Seasonal, Balanced, and Budget-Friendly: Feeding a Family the French Way



Anne-Claude Mills

Feeding a family without breaking the bank is no small feat, especially when you're cooking for many mouths. As a mum of six, I've learned that the key to making it work lies in simplicity, balance, and a touch of French practicality. Growing up in France, food wasn't just about sustenance; it was about connection, tradition, and embracing the seasons. That's the philosophy I've brought into my own kitchen, and it's one I'd love to share.

In France, eating seasonally is second nature. Markets burst with fresh, local produce, and menus shift with the seasons. It's not just a cultural habit; it's an economical one too. Seasonal produce is often more affordable because it's abundant and doesn't incur the costs of long-distance transport. Right now, spring is a wonderful time to enjoy fresh asparagus, leeks, rhubarb, and strawberries. By focusing on these ingredients, I can create meals that are not only nutritious but also cost-effective and bursting with flavor.

Embracing seasonal eating doesn't have to mean rigid meal planning. A quick look at what's on offer at your local market or grocery store can inspire dishes that celebrate what's fresh and in season. From simple soups to vibrant salads, the possibilities are endless and delicious.

One of the best ways I've found to encourage my children to eat a variety of foods is to involve them in the cooking process. Whether it's washing vegetables, cracking eggs, or stirring batter, there's always a job for little hands in the kitchen. Not only does this make them more likely to try new ingredients (raw or cooked), but it also teaches them valuable life skills and gives us quality time together.

Baking is a particularly good way to start, as it's tactile and rewarding. One of our family favorites is yoghurt cake—a simple, versatile recipe that even the youngest can help with. It's made with ingredients you likely already have in your kitchen, making it as budget-friendly as it is delicious.



Hugo and Louis

While I try to steer clear of ultra-processed foods about 80% of the time, I don't aim for perfection. Growing up in France taught me that balance is key. We enjoy a bit of everything in moderation, from buttery croissants to fresh fruit, without guilt. This balanced approach not only keeps meals enjoyable but also ensures that I'm not overwhelmed trying to achieve an unattainable ideal.

Homemade snacks are a game-changer for saving money while feeding a large family. Instead of buying individually wrapped treats, we bake our own—cookies, muffins, and of course, our beloved yoghurt cake. It's quick to whip up, endlessly adaptable (add lemon zest, berries, or chocolate chips!), and always a hit with the kids.

Yoghurt Cake

You will need:

*1/2 cup of plain yoghurt
1 cup of sugar
1 1/2 cups of self raising flour
1/2 cup of vegetable oil
3 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp baking powder*



Preheat your oven to 180°C (350°F).

In a bowl, mix all the above ingredients.

Pour into a greased loaf tin and bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown and a skewer comes out clean.

Feeding a family well doesn't have to mean spending a fortune or spending hours in the kitchen. By eating seasonally, cooking together, and embracing balance, we can nourish both body and soul while keeping costs low. So why not head to your local market, grab some spring produce, and bake a yoghurt cake with your little ones? You might just discover a new family favorite—and save a few pounds along the way.

If you have enjoyed this article and would like to hear more from Anne-Claude you can find her on Instagram: [@mamaninthecuisine](https://www.instagram.com/mamaninthecuisine).

10 YEARS OF RANTS AND PANTS

2025 marks the tenth anniversary of the village magazine being under the guardianship of the Parish Council. 2025 also happens to be a square number, the square of 45 – but few people seem to be impressed by that.

Previously the 'newsletter' had been run by The Chilcompton Society for 36 years through 70 editions, so we have some way to go to impress.

In that first edition of September 2015 we commemorated the forgotten soldier Captain William Hollwey, curiously left off the war memorial, and declared our intention to provide more reading matter. The length of the publication went up by 50% to 36 pages but, of course, has since doubled again.

By the second issue, thanks to a reader's suggestion, we had renamed the magazine 'Chilcompton Matters...because it does'. Always a little corny but we still like it.

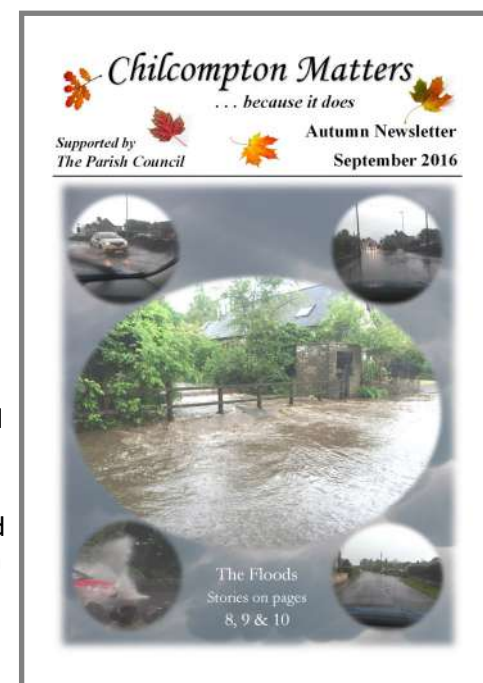
The September 2016 had pictures and stories to cover 'the great flood' of June 17th; I will always remember the woman with a mini-skirt and a handbag who turned up and announced: "Right, what can I do."

By then we were picking up regular contributors like Sue Rankine and her beautifully written gardening advice, the important info from Jon Pike in Council Matters and the sometimes austere poetry of Andrew Morris. Regulars with their guaranteed copy make life much easier. Thanks to Marlene Pickford's History Corner and Jon Crouch's Photos from my Garden, and all the others.

The 2018 autumn issue was illustrated by The Tour of Britain coming through Chilcompton streets and celebrated yet another solid summer of public parties.

The village, and Chilcompton Matters, is all about the people, hopefully this has been reflected in Chilcompton Lives, Unsung Heroes and in many other ways.

The Spring editions, like 2019 and 2021, have on a few occasions provided us with the opportunity to decorate the front cover with idyllic snowy scenes

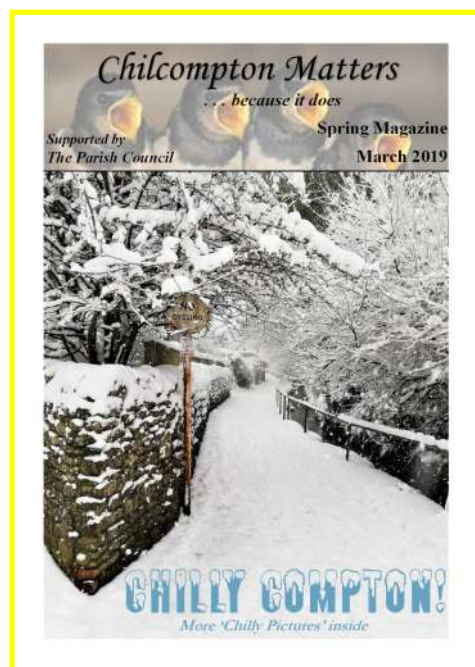




from our village. Being cut off on a 'snow day' and 'having' to go to The Redan, seems like a compulsory part of Chilcompton culture.

There have been campaigning issues like September 2020 when Chilcompton Against Rural Over-development (CARO) was born and people literally took to the streets to get their photos taken with banners, the March 2022 CM that celebrated victory against Gladman, and even the last publication that declared, '20 is plenty'.

Maybe the concerns do remain the same but let's hope Chilcompton Matters is still there in another 10 years to tell the stories and amuse.



Malcolm Rigby

Photos from a Chilcompton garden – Birds of Prey

I, like many, find there is something quite exciting about seeing a bird of prey, and since living in Chilcompton I have been blessed with sightings of quite a range. Trying to get good photos of them has been a challenge. My photographic style is to run off to get the camera whenever I see something of interest. I rarely sit in wait for the right moment to arrive. However, over time the culmination of photos usually turns out to be much greater than I would expect.



The Tawny Owl needs no introduction in Chilcompton. They can be regularly heard calling and grumbling around the village during dusk and dawn. If you hear a growling noise in the autumn, this is when the male is attempting to attract a female. He needs to have a suitable nesting site by this time or he will be unlucky. There are a few owl boxes scattered around the village and as long as the

remaining older trees do not get felled by wind or saw, the population of Tawny Owls should maintain itself successfully. Plus, there is currently a good food supply of Field Mice and Voles, a few Shrews here and there, and plenty of Earthworms, etc.

This young Tawny Owl was a bit lost and discovered that flying is not as easy to control as it first thought. It is common for newly fledged youngsters to be out and about during the day with poor flight skills, and appearing to need assistance. Coming across one, the advice is to leave it alone. Its mother knows best, and will sort it out.

Sparrowhawks



As a master predatory hunter, the Sparrowhawk can appear, snatch an unsuspecting garden bird, and disappear in a flash. They are not that uncommon and will have been seen fairly regularly around the gardens of Chilcompton. The male is smaller than the female and has a grey back and hood. The female is quite a bit bigger and very distinctly brown. Both have a barred front but this is more defined on the female. A male and female will often hunt as a pair. Usually the male will fly in from one direction and as the smaller birds flurry away, the female will come in from the other direction to snatch its unsuspecting quarry. This is a very effective method of hunting. The most likely way to get a good view of a Sparrowhawk is just after an unsuccessful snatch, when they often settle on a nearby structure and appear to sulk. Both of these two photos were taken under this circumstance.

The specially adapted eye of hawks, plus a binocular vision, enables them to have extremely powerful sight. This includes detecting the slightest bit of movement from a great distance. They can also clearly see sideways for miles. So if a hawk starts to circle around a good potential food supply, many more from quite far away are likely to suddenly appear and join in with this circulating flight. Seeing and hearing Buzzards flying around our gardens is very common in Chilcompton. A large and impressive hawk, the Buzzard circles high up overhead on thermals and up-winds whilst searching for its prey. Buzzards

presence is often given away by their distinctive calling; commonly known as mewing. Other birds see hawks as predators and, with great bravado, will fly up close and aggressively mob them until the Buzzards fly off. This picture of a Buzzard also shows a Rook, probably from the Rookery alongside The Pitchings. Large Hawks could easily take out a mobbing bird, but will consider it too risky. Any damage to their flight feathers could restrict their flying and hunting ability, and this could be fatal. Buzzards will prey on small mammals and occasionally birds. Surprisingly, however, their most common food is earthworms followed by insects such as beetles. They will also attempt to go after rabbits and other rodents. I also have a rare (but poor quality) photo of a Buzzard flying over the garden carrying a snake.



Buzzard with Rook

Jon Crouch

News From St John's

I cannot believe that it is now 2025. Where does time go to? In spite of the challenging news stories we hear from around the world, as I write I am full of thankfulness for all the good that we see in our parish. Christmas offered us so many opportunities to celebrate together. **Thank you** for your generosity at the Carol Service this Christmas which enabled us to send a donation of **£447.06** to Crisis at Christmas, the national campaign to alleviate homelessness.

Thank you to the children and their families who gathered for the ever-popular Christingle Service. We all love the candles, the sweets and the oranges, but did you know this service was initially invented to invite contributions to The Children's Society to alleviate poverty amongst children at Christmastime? Our families gave a magnificent **£72.50** to the cause this year.

(PS. **Thank you** to Archer's Marquees who lent us the delightful twinkling lights to decorate the church for our celebrations).

Sadly, it has been a busy winter for funerals and we send our condolences to the families of Basil Banwell, Kathleen Attwood, Mary Hurst, Felicity Redmond-Lyon, and Cheryl Maundrill whose funerals were all held at St John's over the last few months. You will remain in our prayers.

As the Spring approaches we look to happier moments. St John's will host a Marriage Preparation Day on February 15th for couples from across the Deanery preparing to 'tie the knot', and we have no less than seven weddings booked at St John's for the coming year. Do get in touch if we can help you plan a major life event such as this. We will be happy to help. Contact us initially via our website or email:

office@stvigorstjohn.church for an early conversation and to book a date.

New Life Project Update: **thank you** for your support and encouragement helping us raise the necessary funds to update our buildings making them suitable for use for future generations. We are making good progress and hope to replace the old heating system in the hall with air source heat pumps as soon as planning permission is granted. This kind of heating will be cheaper to run and much more eco-friendly. The



hall roof tiles will be the next priority to fix our leaking hall roof and we are awaiting an environmental survey to investigate our bat population in May before we can proceed any further.

Our Church is open every day during the hours of daylight; please do drop in if you would like to spend some quiet time. For regular groups and activities see the list opposite. **Do join us we'd love to get to know you.**

Rev'd Esther Smith

Messy Church at St John's church Chilcompton is a form of church that's great for families. Everyone is welcome. It's a fun, all-age service that involves being creative, playing games, and learning together through stories, singing and prayers. Then, we share a meal together. We aim to meet once a month at 3pm on a Sunday afternoon and aim to get Messy with paint and glue. We have activities and games inside and out, make lots of noise and laugh a lot.



We will begin this year by looking at the life of Jesus and seeing how his life on earth was very different to ours. Then, on 2nd March, we will create a wilderness with creepy crawlies made from clay. On 6th April join in with our Easter Egg hunt and help us to create an Easter Garden. Then, on the 18th May our theme will be Wind, fire and funny voices.

So, if you want something new to try on a Sunday afternoon or, if you want to make new friends or, you want to find out how amazing Jesus is, Messy Church is the place for you.

Groups & Gatherings available at St John's

Root Connections Cookery Club – 4th Monday 10am Make friends, learn new skills and have lunch using seasonal veg. Contact Rachel for more info on 07790580846.

Monday Tea - 2nd and 4th Mondays at 4.30pm: an opportunity for young families to chat and get to know one another over a child-friendly meal. Contact Dan for more info on 07717131157.

Bell Ringing – Monday 7pm. For more info contact Adrian 01761 415950.

Tea & Toast – Thursday 8.30-10.30am. Toddlers and their carers are welcomed to play and chat with toast and a cuppa.

Lunch Club – usually on the third Thursday of each month. Contact Margaret Holcombe on 01761 415085 to book a place.

Our regular pattern of services for both churches:

Wednesdays 9am St John's, Morning Prayer

Thursdays 11am St John's Holy Communion
(Traditional language)

Sundays, 9am. Holy Communion
(Traditional Language)

10.30am Family Service

3pm Messy Church (3rd Sunday)

6.30pm Evening Prayer (4th Sunday only)

Sunday morning Family Service alternates between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer. Children and families are welcome at all services. For full details of services and activities visit www.stvigorstjohn.church

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New Year, New Ideas

Despite what some garden makeover TV programmes would have you believe; a garden isn't a static feature that can be 'done' with a one-off design. Not only does it change with the seasons, but most evolve over the lifetime of ownership to suit the needs and tastes of its owners in the same way that for

many our houses adapt to changes in our circumstances as children come and go and we inevitably get older.

Over nearly 40 years our garden has evolved from half a pony paddock, into productive vegetable garden via sandpits and climbing frames but always allowing space for wildlife. Some of the changes that we have made I have written about here. We replaced our sadly defunct wisteria with a native species hedge back in January 2023 and are delighted with the results. It is already being used as a corridor for birds between a mature pine tree and our bird feeders and it is a joy to see them hopping along it on the way to a ready meal of sunflower seeds. It grew very quickly, and I think that this year it will fulfil its other brief of screening our cars from one of our seating areas.

Another change that I have written about is letting the 'lawn' grow long (it barely deserved to be called a lawn, more mown paddock remnant). Again, we were delighted with the results, so much more visually interesting for us than plain green grass and so much better for wildlife particularly invertebrates which in turn provide food for birds and small mammals. At the end of the grass is a flower bed we refer to grandly as the 'jewel garden' the name pinched from Monty Don of Gardener's World – but sadly ours is not as successful as his. In spring the tulips are a delight but then it all becomes a bit of an unkempt mess. One or two of the perennials we put in have delivered, but others have either been one season wonders or just get swamped as the tougher plants take over in a competition for sunshine and light. This year therefore we plan to extend the 'meadow' to incorporate the 'Jewel Garden' by removing or transplanting the perennials and sowing a meadow seed mix. We'll leave the bulbs in situ but won't replenish them every year as we have been doing up until now so only those that are happy in the given conditions will continue to grow, it will be survival of the fittest and less maintenance for us. We are anticipating a very different look to this new 'meadow' from the original but hope that over the years the two areas will blend together to form an entity which is pleasing to us and just as importantly to our garden wildlife.

So, is it time to re-design part of your garden? Is there an area which has always been difficult to maintain which could do with a change? Are there plants in the garden that you don't really like but just haven't got round to replacing? Could you do with another seating area so you can just sit and admire your handiwork? It's time to look around and make plans for the future. Happy planning.

Sue Rankine

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‘Walking on Sunshine’

At whatever the speed, it's still the beautiful game – football.

Only ‘invented’ in 2011, walking football is the fastest growing sport in the UK and it's come to Chilcompton on the excellent new astroturf pitch created by the Sports Club. I had to have a go.

The Tuesday and Thursday morning sessions are run by Angelo Ruiz, ex travel agent and ex-casual Sunday league footballer. He said: “We’ve only been here since July when the club changed the tennis courts into a football pitch, we’d been in Midsomer Norton for eight years and we just outgrew it. When this came along we jumped at the chance to move to somewhere bigger, changing rooms, having a coffee afterwards, all worked out quite well. The playing surface is very good, bit slow at first because it’s quite new, we’ve all got used to it now – nice surface.”

The obvious rule difference is that you can’t run, that’s a foul. The temptation to run is huge and the referee blew his whistle at me several times. It’s a gentler game, no tackles from behind or the side, no balls above head height, no contact really.

There are no age restrictions but generally the players are 65 plus with one individual who is over 80. There are people who have had knee replacements, cancer and by-passes. As Angelo said afterwards: “It’s just getting exercise really. People think walking football is slow but it’s quite fast as you found out. It’s also a mental thing, just getting out and meeting new people.”

At 10.00am it’s the gentler game, the walking rules are strictly adhered to and you are only allowed four touches of the ball at a time - if anything it is perhaps a little over-refereed. About 25 men turn up for this and two games are played at the same time. Come 11.00 and there are generally about 12 players for the more ‘lively’ game – still no contact really, but a blind eye is turned to a bit of pace. Take your choice. A great bunch of old blokes with impossible dreams.

Footwear: I wore ordinary trainers and was fine, though I did fall over a couple of times (always my style); several people did recommend proper astroturf boots that can apparently be bought for about £20. I’ll buy some because I’ll be back.

On a Monday evening there’s also women’s walking football.

It’s still football, you get to kick a ball, you still get the elation, you still get the frustration, you still get the exhaustion.



‘And don’t it feel good’

Men, contact Angelo on 07470 259513.

Women, contact Amanda Baccarach on 07752 548073

Malcolm Rigby

Chilcompton Sports Club Update

2024 was another busy year for the Sports Club as we continued to provide a great meeting place for all our sports sides, supporters and villagers.

The Club will be open throughout 2025 for all major sporting events on SKY, TNT and Terrestrial TV in comfortable surroundings.

No membership is required, and everyone is made welcome.

After the successful event in 2024, the Club also are delighted to be hosting again the **Wessex Beer & Cider Festival on 13th June and 14th June 2025.**

The Sports Club would like to thank the trustees, coaches and volunteers who all contribute to making Chilcompton Sports Club a venue to make the village proud.

Club Vacancies

Chilcompton Sports Club currently have job vacancies in the following roles:

BAR STAFF

FOOTBALL FOOD PROVIDER

For further information on these roles or to apply please scan visit

www.chilcomptonspots.com/vacancies or email chilcomptonsportsclub@gmail.com.

Cricket News

JUNIOR CRICKET 2025

FOR ALL CHILDREN 7-15 YEARS OLD

WE WELCOME BUDDING YOUNG CRICKET ENTHUSIASTS TO ENJOY FUN CRICKET SESSIONS.

ALL PLAYING KIT SUPPLIED BY THE CLUB.

SENIOR COACHES FOR EVERY SESSION.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY UNDER 13 AND UNDER 15 LEAGUE MATCHES.

AT CHILCOMPTON SPORTS CRICKET CLUB

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS STARTING ON 15TH APRIL

SOFT BALL CRICKET
YEARS 3 - 5 6.00PM - 6.45PM £2 PER SESSION

U13 HARD BALL CRICKET
YEARS 6 - 8 6.00PM - 7.00PM £4 PER SESSION

U15 HARD BALL CRICKET
YEARS 9 & 10 7.00PM - 8.00PM £4 PER SESSION

For more information, please contact Dave Travis on 07725 458404 or dave.travis@hotmail.co.uk

Senior Section

2025 will be our 11th senior season at Chilcompton Sports Cricket Club.

At the recent AGM Jon Burgess was voted in as the new Club Chairman to follow Clayton Rich who stepped down after over 10 dedicated years in the post.

Indoor nets started in February at Wells Cathedral Sports Hall from 7pm **(New players welcome).**

Outdoor training will start on Thursday 3rd April (6pm start) at Chilcompton Sports Club Nets.

The Saturday 1st XI will compete in Division 4 of the Bristol & District League – First game Saturday 3rd May away to Bristol Sri Lankans at Frys Cricket Ground.

The Saturday 2nd XI will compete in Division 9 (East) of the Bristol & District Division League. First game Saturday 3rd May Home to Timsbury.

The Sunday 1st XI will compete in Division 3 of the North Somerset League – First game Sunday 4th May Home to Fury XI.

The Club Captains for 2025 were voted in at the recent AGM - Adam Deverill (1st XI), Dave Travis (2nd XI) & Henry Purchase (Sunday XI).

Once again, the square continued to improve year on year thanks to the hard work and dedication of Mark Colbourne, Clive Christer and Aaron Stansfield.

Junior Section

In 2025 our popular Junior training sessions will be again held at Chilcompton Sports Club on Wednesday evenings starting on 16th April.

There will be a membership evening held in March to gauge the numbers for the season, details to follow on social media.

We have a group of Level 2 Coaches and helpers led by Kyle Gloudemans and are always looking for parents to help out on the training night.

We had even more Juniors play in the Senior sides in 2024 illustrating our smooth pathway from Junior to Senior Cricket at Chilcompton.

This season we will be running three sides in the Bath & District Youth League. Chili Heat in the U15s T20, Chili Peppers & Chili Fire in the U13s Pairs.

Malachy Love has been selected for the tour of Sri Lanka with the Somerset U15s County Squad and everyone at the Club wish him well. What an amazing achievement by Malachy and a great credit to the Junior Coaches and Senior players at the Club who have helped him along the way.

Dan Rogers also became the youngest Senior Player of the Year in the Clubs history at the age of 15 after a marvellous season.



Malachy Love



Dan Rogers

Main Club Sponsors, Fundraising and Main Contact

Chilcompton Sports Cricket Club would like to thank our main sponsors for their fantastic support – Kelvin & Caroline Parker, Spectrum Form Design Ltd, PG Owen Ltd and Parker Transport/Willmotts.

Our popular Horse Racing Night and Main Fundraising Event will be held at the Sports Club on Friday 11th July from 7pm.

Cricket Club Contact – Dave Travis – 07725 458404 – dave.travis@hotmail.co.uk

Youth Football News

U11 Manager & Coach Wanted 25/26 season

Chilcompton Sports FC are looking to recruit an U11 manager to assist with their well-established team who are currently playing in the Midsomer Norton Youth Football League. The applicant will be working alongside the current team assistant manager and our other 2 squads, meaning there is always help and advice on hand. FA Coaching Level One or above qualification is required, but we are happy to cover the cost of the coaching course should the applicant not have this at present. Further coaching development and support will also be provided by the Club.

To register interest in this role please email Tim Curtis on chilcomptonyouthfootball@gmail.com

U10 Trip to St Georges Park

Managers and coaches for the U10s team have secured two places at the St. Georges Park **All Star Super Cup festival** which is to take place this August.

The festival provides a unique footballing experience to grassroots teams of all abilities, the likes of which are normally only accessible to those at the very top of the professional game. The players will have the chance to walk and play in the footsteps of football icons such as Kane, Bellingham and Hemp. The festival is set to take place at the iconic ground over one day and includes overnight accommodation at the Hilton. A fantastic experience for our young players and their families.



U10/11 Inter-group Support

Four of our U10 players have recently signed on for one of our U11 teams who were in need of strengthening their numbers. These players have shown incredible commitment and development within the club and have progressed through the years since joining the club at Soccer Tots.

Congratulations to the four players and a thank you to the parents who have supported this move for the players and U11s team.

We look forward to hearing more about their journeys in the future.

U13

Chilcompton Sports U13 started the season competing in the MSNYFL (Midsomer Norton Youth Football League) but unfortunately due to circumstances outside of their control the U13 league folded. It was a difficult time for the team, as other local leagues were already established. Thankfully, we were able to get them a place in Mid Wilts League. The team have been working hard to make up time and play as many fixtures as possible. As well as this, the team took on a new manager and coaches, and bid farewell to Johnny who had managed the team for many years. We thank the players and their families for their support and patience while all these transitions took place.



U14

Following on from their league win last season, our U14s teams took the leap and moved over to the Avon Youth League (AYL – Bristol) for the 24/25 season. The team have made a strong presence and are competing well in their division. They have also made it through to the semifinals of the league trophy which will take place on 16th March away v Bristol Rovers Supporters. [We wish them luck.](#)

The Terry Moore Bar

Terry Moore was a crucial member of the Sports Club for many years, contributing hours of his time in all areas of the club and its grounds. He was always seen in his earlier days making coffees and snacks in the café alongside doing the cleaning and clearing jobs no one else would do. He took immense pride in the visual side of the club, and all associated with the site will remember him contentedly cutting the grass on his old blue tractor in all winds and weathers. He was never averse to protecting the site and its property from anyone abusing it or neglecting to take care; he would happily stride out shouting reprimands and rarely would a misbehaving 'young 'un' hang around. When Terry sadly passed away in December 2022, he left a considerable bequest to Chilcompton Sports Club – a place and its people who were as attached to him as he was to them. As a mark of our high regard for him, the club bar has now been named 'The Terry Moore Bar' and a plaque commemorates him and his generosity.



**Youth football
end of season
presentations
9th & 10th May
2025**

Diary Dates:

**AGM
19th June 2025
7:30pm**

**Registration
Evening 11th
June 2025, 6-**

**All events
taking part at
the sports club**



Bottoms Up!

A couple of swans came for a staycation at Manor Farm in October. They had a few days of comfortable R & R before moving on.

The Egret is a common enough sight at the bottom of the village these days. But doesn't it look majestic framed by the autumnal leaves.



Pictures: Pete Sinclair



Winter Scenes

No 'Snow Days', no sledging (yet?) But these splatterings were captured by Jill Marshall, Donna Simmons and Lizzie Morris.

