



5 ALIVE!

**December 2025/
January 2026**

Merry Christmas

**News from
Buckland Dinham, Chantry,
Great Elm, Mells with Vobster and
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FROM THE EDITOR

WOW! What a year. Not so long ago the whole future of 5Alive was up in the air because its income didn't match its expenditure. Now the bank balance is not only positive but it's also growing slowly. Having said that I don't want to give the impression that everything is OK for the long run so keep the cash coming!

Meanwhile a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has put their hands in their pockets so far. There are too many names to include here, and I won't even try but you know who you are – we are SOOOOOO grateful.

I hope you have the happiest of happy Christmases and the best New Year you've ever had. *Peter*

JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

A REALLY CHEERFUL JOTTING to start with a hearty thank you to all who so generously supported my two garage sales which resulted in £88.06 going to Chantry church and £108.50 to Dogs' Trust. Well worth while. Thank you everyone!

As I write this (not in the stable yard!) we seem to be in the throes of a rainy and gloomy autumn. But what a year it has been harvest. Officially a "mast" year but not just beech mast – every fruiting, nutting and berrying tree and bush has excelled itself. Most of us are tired of offering each other baskets of produce, and the frugal among us with time and energy have larder shelves stocked with jams, chutneys and bottled fruit. And how much more flavoursome the fruit picked from the trees in ripe perfection than the perfect supermarket warehouse-ripened specimens. They may not look so perfect but what does appearance matter?

Some ten years or so ago, horrified that one third of farm produce went to landfill if it didn't confirm to supermarket standards of visual perfection, I was fired by the idea of selling imperfect goods of a market stall and working up to first one small shop and eventually a chain of shops called "Wonkeys". I visualised such shops becoming nationally popular – "get it at Wonkeys", rather like the 1930s entrepreneur (what was his name?) who started with a market barrow and ended with a national chain of shops with his slogan "pile it high and sell it cheap".

I even negotiated for a partner for financial backing, but such enterprises also involve also sourcing the goods, transport, storage, volunteers, premises and so on. Then came Covid and lockdown and my endometrial and long treatment. By the time that was all over, I was past 90 and had "run out of steam". Thankfully, nowadays much imperfect foodstuff is used by charities offering free meals or in schools, care homes and food banks. But it isn't just food that gets discarded. Clothing and footwear with the slightest imperfection is swept off the production line, kitchen ware, china, cutlery too. Why this emphasis on perfection nowadays? Nothing in the world is perfect. And wouldn't it be boring if it were? What would we have to grumble about?

Editor: Peter Corbett mellsmag@hotmail.com

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Deadline for FEBRUARY 2026 is JANUARY 16th

but do check!

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CONTACTS

Mells Group of churches is currently in a vacancy.

Church laymen and women Church wardens	Parish council chairs and clerks
Buckland Dinham Jenny Waller, 07887 556936	John Reckless 01373 461841 Diane Sleigh 07907 156735 clerk@bucklanddinham-pc.gov.uk
Chantry Hazel Tovey 836384 Valerie Rawlins 836252	
Great Elm Sally Rosa 07833 900947	
Mells/ Vobster Hilary Ingram 01373 311073	John Earl 01373 812450 Joy Book 07704 584953
Whatley Mrs K Gay 836175	Andrew Bramston 01373 836513 Rachel Nash clerk.whatleyparishcouncil @gmail.com

Roman Catholic Services

Mells: Sundays at 11.30am Frome: Saturdays 5.30pm.
Wednesdays 11.30am Sundays 10.00am

And we, as humans, are all flawed in some way, too. Oh dear! I've come over all philosophical. It must be because we are in the season of Advent where we wait patiently and contemplatively of the joys of Christmas miracle. And that reminds me of Christmas puddings. In years gone by I used to mix mine in a huge glazed bowl belonging to a Victorian jug and bowl washstand set. On "stir up Sunday" (the Sunday before Advent) I would invite the congregation home to coffee and a stir-and-wish of the pudding before filling the basins as gifts to friends or for later celebrations during the year as well as for Christmas.

I used to boil them in the huge cast iron ham boiler in the Aga oven to save steamy saucepans. In earlier years, my Dad used to lift this out of the oven when we boiled a whole ham in cider and honey when we were a large family household. It weighed heavily, filled. Nowadays I can barely lift it when empty and am never likely to use it again – likewise the big cast iron casserole pot, embossed with the pre-1950s sloping Aga logo. I am amazed at the prices these items cost in Aga supply shops but if anyone is interested, I would be happy to accept a token price and the knowledge of a good home for my trusty pots. I need the space and one less problem for my executors to dispose of. So many people locally have Agas, Rayburns, Esse cookers. Anyone interested? Do get in touch.

I had a lovely surprise encounter recently down in my orchard. I hadn't been down there for several weeks owing to the uninviting weather and lack of energy. The latter is my own fault. I have been warned by the lovely Dorothy House Home Hospice care not to work beyond the limits of the strength maintained for me by the steroids I have been prescribed. But I have seriously over done things in an excess of zeal whenever I feel fit to do something and am now learning to pace myself and actually managing to say "no" at times. But I stray – sorry!



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The encounter in the orchard. I took Ebbie down with instructions to go and explore while I sat on the nearest seat in a rare spell of sunshine. Suddenly Ebbie came running back as a flash or pale fawn leapt across her and disappeared down to the orchard. A surprised Ebbie started from the vision to me, obviously saying "Ooh! There's someone else here too. She jumped right over me. She does move fast. Shall we go home now?" Then I remembered that last year a small deer took up residence in the orchard and reared her fawn there. I was touched and delighted to think that she might have returned this year, exploring the ground for the same purpose. Anyway, Ebbie and I will not be going down to the orchard for a few weeks anyway so as to leave her in peace, just in case.

Once again, I have strayed from the churchyard but there really isn't much to report from there until our wonderful annual display of snowdrops, including the special new varieties kindly donated by Ellie appear in the New Year.

Meanwhile I hope everyone has a lovely, joyful Christmas shared with friends and family in warm and comfortable surroundings and that no-one spends it alone, unless from choice. And I know that none of us, amid the hustle, bustle and stress that the season so often brings, will lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas so that we will each find a while to rejoice quietly in the Christmas miracle and perhaps say, as my dear Mum used to do, "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" God bless, Love and all Christmas blessings! See you in February. *Hazell.*

BUCKLAND DINHAM

CHURCH NEWS

The Remembrance Sunday service was well attended, and it was so nice that both retired and serving members of the armed forces added to making this a very memorable service.

The December and January services at St. Michael's will be as rota. We look forward to seeing you all at the Carol Service on December 21st at 6.00p.m with a choir from Norton St Phillip.

Coffee Mornings A surprise awaited those coming to the November coffee morning. After many years of fundraising for the repair of the Lych Gate we received a grant from the Church Building Council of £250.00 for scaffolding to make it safe, whilst we wait for permission to start work. Many thanks to Rob Waller for all his work in trying to get this actually done.

The next coffee mornings will be on December 20th and January 17th, 2026.

A big thank to all who continue to keep St. Michael's a welcoming place for the whole village.

RACHEL CLARKE, 1945-2025

On Thursday October 30th, 2025, a burial service took place in St Michael's Church to give thanks for the life of Mrs Rachel Clarke. The service was rung in by ringers from the Corsley team and *streamed live to Rachel's family in the North of England and Australia.*

Rachel's coffin was covered with flowers of her favourite colours of pink, blue and white. Behind the coffin, letters made from white chrysanthemums, spelled out the word 'Granny'.

The service, designed by Rachel herself, was conducted by the Reverend Pauline Reid. Hymns were *Love divine All Loves Excelling, Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, One More Step Along the World I Go and The Lord's My Shepherd.* At the end of the service the coffin was carried out to a recording of the great hymn *Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer.*

Scripture readings were John 6:35-40 read by Mark and 1 Corinthians 13 read by Elspeth. Nicolle read the poem *The Life that I Have* by Leopold Marks.

The Eulogy consisted of a recorded message from Emma, Anne's daughter-in-law, in Australia. In a moving tribute, Emma paid tribute to Rachel's unfailing love and support for her family. In her address, Pauline reflected on how the reading from Corinthians was perfect for Rachel as a description of what love really means.

Rachel joined the Young Friends community in 1960 and was a member of CND, memorably leading her classmates in a walkout to join the CND march in Swansea at the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. This commitment to peace and tolerance, along with a strong sense of responsibility and the need to help others, stayed with her throughout her life.

Rachel enjoyed the company of children and taught at Bath School for Girls, where she is still remembered.

When her sons emigrated to Australia, Rachel enjoyed visiting her family there and was a much-loved grandmother and great grandmother, never forgetting birthdays and Christmases. Her connection with her sisters remained close, with weekly Zoom calls during Covid and letters when she became ill, and she described her marriage to Ken as '30 years of love'.

Pauline acknowledged that there is no sticking plaster to fix the pain of losing someone so loved, and that it will be hard for her family to learn to live without her but she reminded us that God weeps with us and comforts us in difficult times. We know that love is stronger than death, and Rachel's love will continue to sustain her family in the years to come. Donations were made to Dorothy House. Rachel was buried in the churchyard close to her home. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband and family at this time. *Jenny Waller, Churchwarden.*

BUCKLAND BUDDIES

We meet at the Jolliffe Arms for our Christmas meal on Friday December 5th at 12.30 for 1.00.

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Mells Group of Churches

December 2025

7 th December	14 th December	21 st December	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	4 th January 2026
Chantry	11.00am Toy & Carol Service Barry Davies	11.00am Matins Hazel Tovey	10.00pm Midnight Mass David Gatcliffe		
Great Elm		9.30am Holy Communion Rev. Robin Isherwood	5.00pm Carol Service Lay led		
Mells 10.00am Group Service Holy Communion David Gatcliffe	6.00pm Carol Service Martin Weymont				
Whatley	9.30am Morning Prayer Hazel Tovey	5.00pm Carol Service Richard King		09.30am Holy Communion Martin Weymont	10.00am Group Holy Communion Catherine Llewelyn- Evans

Mells Every Wednesday at 09.30, Matins/Morning Prayer, in St. Andrew's, Mells

Great Elm At 7.30am on Wednesdays Richard King leads a prayer session

Mells Group of Churches

January 2026

	4 th January	11 th January	18 th January	25 th January	1 st February
Chantry		11.00am Matins Hazel Tovey	11.00am Holy Communion David Gatliffe	11.00am Matins Val Rawlins	10.00am Group Holy Communion Service Martin Weymont
Great Elm			9.30am Holy Communion Robin Isherwood	9.30am Informal Service Richard King	
Mells		9.30am Holy Communion		9.30am Morning Prayer	
Whitley	10.00am Group Holy Communion Service Catherine Llewelyn-Evans	9.30am Matins Hazel Tovey			

Mells Every Wednesday at 09.30, Matins/Morning Prayer, in St. Andrew's, Mells

Great Elm At 7.30am on Wednesdays Richard King leads a prayer session

Hardington Vale Church Services Dec 2025 – Jan 2026

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Monday 1 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 3 Dec	8.30 am 5.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hamington, Morning Prayer Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 4 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 7 Dec 2 nd Sunday of Advent	9.00 am 10.30 am 11.00 am 6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Informal Breakfast Rode, Holy Communion Laverton, Holy Communion Rode Chapel, Meeting Place
Monday 8 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Tuesday 9 Dec	11.00 am	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Holy Communion
Wednesday 10 Dec	11.00 am 5.00 pm	Tellisford, Holy Communion Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
Thursday 11 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 14 Dec 3 rd Sunday of Advent	10.30 am 11.00 am 11.00 am 1.00 pm 6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Holy Communion Laverton, Matins Buckland Dinham, Iona/Taise Service Rode, Outdoor Nativity Norton St Phillip, Carol Service
Monday 15 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 17 Dec	5.00 pm 6.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 18 Dec	6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, Silent Prayer
Friday 19 Dec	8.00 pm	Tuckers Grave, Carols
Sunday 21 Dec 4 th Sunday of Advent	10.30 am 11.00 am 3.40 pm 6.00 pm 6.00 pm	Norton St Phillip, HC Laverton, Carol Service Rode, Carol Service Buckland Dinham, Carol Service Farleigh Hungerford, Carol Service
Monday 22 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Tuesday 23 Dec	5.00 pm 7.30 pm	Tellisford, Nativity Norton St Phillip, Carols round the Green
Wednesday 24 Dec CHRISTMAS EVE	1.00 pm 5.00 pm 11.00 pm 11.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Crib Service Norton St Phillip, Crib Service Rode, Holy Communion Norton St Phillip, Holy Communion
Thursday 25 Dec CHRISTMAS DAY	9.00 am 10.30 am 10.30 am 11.00 am	Farleigh Hungerford, Holy Communion Norton St Phillip, Family Service Rode, Family Service Laverton, Holy Communion
Sunday 28 Dec	10.30 am 6.00 pm	Rode, United Holy Communion Buckland Dinham, Iona/Taise Service
Monday 29 Dec	9.00 am	Norton St Phillip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 31 Dec	8.30 am 5.00 pm 6.00 pm	Hamington, Morning Prayer Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer Tellisford, Evening Prayer

Version: 20 November 2025

Hardington Vale Church Services Dec 2025 – Jan 2026

DATE	TIME	SERVICE
Thurs 1 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 4 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Informal breakfast
	10.30 am	Rode, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Holy Communion
	6.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Meeting Place
Tuesday 6 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
	11.00 am	Rode Chapel, Ecumenical Holy Communion
Wednesday 7 Jan	6.00 pm	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
	6.00 pm	Tellisford, Evening Prayer
Thursday 8 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 11 Jan	9.00 am	Rode, Informal Breakfast
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	11.00 am	Buckland Dinham, Iona/Taisé Service
Tuesday 13 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 14 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	11.00 am	Tellisford, Holy Communion
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
Thursday 15 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 18 Jan	9.00 am	Farleigh Hungerford, Morning worship
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, CHRISTINGLE
	10.30 am	Rode, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	11.00 am	Buckland Dinham, Holy Communion
Tuesday 20 Jan	9.00 am	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 21 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
	6.00 pm	Tellisford, Evening prayer
Thursday 22 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer
Sunday 25 Jan	9.00 am	Rode, Contemplation and coffee
	10.30 am	Norton St Philip, Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Laverton, Matins
	6.00 pm	Buckland Dinham, Iona/Taisé Service
Tuesday 27 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Morning Prayer
Wednesday 28 Jan	8.30 am	Hemington, Morning Prayer
	5.00 pm	Rode Chapel, Informal Prayer
Thursday 29 Jan	6.00 pm	Norton St Philip, Silent Prayer

Version: 20 November 2025

The January meeting will be an American Supper in the Village Hall on the 6th from 7.15 p.m. With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Jill Wright.

NEXT WALK SUNDAY JANUARY 25TH 2026

Meet at the Buckland Dinham church lychgate at 10.00 am.

£5.00 per person to go towards 5Alive magazine and repairs to the lychgate.

Book through Buckland Dinham Community WhatsApp group under 'Events'.

POPPY APPEAL RAISES RECORD AMOUNT

A big thank you to all those who contributed to the Poppy appeal door to door collection this year

We raised in total £375.73 which is Buckland Dinham's record so far. On top of that The Bell raised £38.62 so all in all a very good amount. Susie Hicks and Adrian McCabe.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Don't forget the Christmas Tree Light Up on Friday, December 5th at 5.30pm. Local craft stalls, sweet treats, raffles, tombolas and Christmas games. Entry free but please bring an item for the Fair Frome Food Bank.

Gifts for the church hamper raffle can be left either in kitchen area of the church or with Debbie Carey or Sara Corbett.

LATEST FROM THE VILLAGE WEBSITE, Bucklanddinham.org

NEW: We have new tabs for 'Projects' and 'Village Help' and extended news items e.g. 'Fireworks'.

NEW: a new-look Resources with map locations



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Don't forget that information on the village Facebook and WhatsApp groups is on the website under Groups, Clubs and Classes and we have a list of village-based businesses under the Resources tab. Sign up to 'Alerts' - you won't be inundated but get one or two emails a week.

VILLAGE INFORMATION HUB

Do you know anyone in the village who needs help using computers or smartphones? Do you need information, guidance and support - finding out about village resources, buses, doctors etc - but don't have the technology? Are you someone who could provide that help? If so, contact John in the Comms Group on website@bucklanddinham-pc.gov.uk and we'll try to get you together!

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Mondays – Pilates for Cyclists – 6.00pm
Tuesdays – Chair Yoga – 10.00am
Wednesdays - Pilates - 9.30am
2nd – Buckland Buddies - 7.30pm
5th – Christmas Fayre – 5.30pm
9th – Lunch Club – 12.00
14th – Iona/Taize Service – 11.00am
20th – Coffee Morning – 10.00am
21st – Carols in the Church – 6.00pm
23rd – Carols Around the Village
28th – Iona/Taize Service – 6.00pm

EVENTS IN JANUARY

Mondays – Pilates for Cyclists – 6.00pm
Tuesdays – Chair Yoga – 10.00am
Wednesdays - Pilates - 9.30am
6th – Buckland Buddies – 7.30pm
8th – Parish Council Meeting – 7.00pm
11th – Iona/Taize Service – 11.00am
12th – Amenities Group – 7.30pm
13th – Lunch Club – 12.00
14th - Comms Meeting – 7.00pm
17th – Coffee Morning – 10.00am
18th – Holy Communion – 11.00am
21st – T, T and T Meeting – 7.00pm



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AND FINALLY ...

...a massive thank you to everybody who turned out to clear the fallen leaves and other foliage and the mud from the stretch of Lower Street which is prone to flooding. BRILLIANT!!

CHANTRY

The annual Toy and Carol Service will take place on Sunday December 14th at 11.00am. As usual we are asking for donations of children's toys and games.

You have always been very generous in previous years, and we are hoping that this will continue this year. Your gifts are distributed by the Salvation Army to families who may not have anything otherwise. The difference this year is that Major Sheila has requested that all gifts are left unwrapped. This enables them to see what gifts they have without having to unwrap and re-wrap. Some wrapping paper would be appreciated. I know that you will all do your best as you always have so thank you in advance.

The Christmas Eve candlelit mass will be at 10.00pm, I have been informed that this is midnight in Bethlehem, and it will be followed by drinks and mince pies. We look forward to seeing you all for this beautiful service.

We will be preparing the church on Tuesday 23rd and will be glad of any help with decorating and placing the candles etc, we will be at church from 2.00pm,

Maintenance

Date	Flowers	Cleaning
06-12-25	Advent no flowers	Sue
13-12-25	"	Dolly & Val
20-12-25	"	Clare
23-12-25	All help needed	

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27-12-25	Val	Sonia
03-01-26	Hazel	Sue
10-01-26	"	Dolly & Val
17-01-26	Laureen	Clare
24-01-26	Val	Sonia
31-01-26	"	?

We would like to thank everyone for their help in 2025 and wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year

FRIENDS OF CHANTRY NEWS

A huge thank you to all those who came to see James Hornsby act out his one-man play 'Great Expectations'. James certainly went beyond "expectations" and performed a faultless one-man act of the gripping epic Dickens' classic. Before he left, we asked him if he would return, and to much appreciative applause he said he would like to perform 'Dracula' next time. Watch this space for details but provisionally October 31st 2026. It will be at a slightly later time to allow for "Trick or Treaters" families to get home and babysitters in place, so the parents don't miss out. It will suit older teens and adults.

DECEMBER

December 4th Quiz night. Whatley and Chantry. 6:00pm social hour before quiz at 7:00pm. Holy Trinity Church Chantry. Teams of four to six people. £1 per person on the night.

December 14th Toy service with Christmas gifts for disadvantaged children. Details from Dolly 11:00am. Holy Trinity.

December 18th Thirsty Third Thursday. Last of the year... if you haven't been, now is your opportunity for some convivial banter, excellent beer, wine, gins, sausage rolls and snacks.



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Anna Hammond
BA DipArch MSc ARB
e: annahammond@ymail.com
m: 0772 941 1360
t: 01373 834439



December 21st. Christmas Community Carol singalong. 6:00pm Holy Trinity church. Everyone welcome. Bring bells and tinsel and wear your festive jumpers and hats to get in the mood. If you have any festive treats do share those too! If the weather is favourable, we will start singing outside so come dressed appropriately. We will start with a few carols on the green outside the old George pub so bring a lantern or torch and wear something reflective. Hot soup will be waiting in church! If you'd rather go straight to the church, we will meet you there at 6:00pm.

December 24th 10:00pm (midnight in Bethlehem) Don't miss our coveted, "Midnight Mass", candlelit service. Stay for mulled cider and mince pies. Even if you are not a regular churchgoer but want to take part in this beautiful service, you are welcome. Firepits await you and lead you past flaming torches to the entrance decked with Christmas décor and then inside to the candlelit church. The tree twinkling in the semi-darkness begs you stay and share the true spirit of Christmas with others.

GREAT ELM

GREAT ELM CHURCH NEWS, DECEMBER

Monday December 22nd, 10.00am. Decorating the church for Christmas. Please come and help decorate the church in readiness for the Carol Service. Please bring any greenery, berries or flowers you might have. Coffee, cake and cheery company for the helpers.

Christmas Eve, December 24th Carol Service at 5.00pm

Christmas is rushing upon us and preparations are in hand for our Carol Service.

Readings and Carols with the retiring collection to be shared between Julian House and Children's Hospice South West. Afterwards there will be mince pies and mulled wine in the Village Hall. Please do join us and being along your family and friends.

JANUARY

Ahhh, the New Year, 2026. Full of promise. Let's see what it brings.

Nothing specific in the calendar to announce but looking forward to some works being completed and maybe our advertisement for a new vicar finding a candidate.

COFFEE, KATE AND CHAT

The November "Coffee, Kate & Chat" morning raised £138 for Village Hall funds. Many thanks to all the cake makers.

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MELLS WITH VOBSTER

BENJAMIN FELIX STEEL, OCTOBER 4TH 2001 – OCTOBER 10TH 2025

Family and friends gathered at St Andrews Church on Friday November 7th to celebrate Benjamin's life. The Reverend Peter Godden took the service and spoke to a church that was full to overflowing.

Daisy Steel, Ben's mother, read the eulogy followed by readings from Benjamin's father Jonathon, siblings Jack, Joe, Poppy and Jasmine, and uncle Timothy followed finally by grandparents David and Charlotte.

These readings and poems gave heartfelt memories and reflections of a really cool son, brother, grandson, nephew and friend who will not be forgotten

Donations were taken for Mind and Ebony two charities close to the family's heart

After the service there was a private committal, and Benjamin was laid to rest in the St Andrew's Churchyard. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this time. RIP

CATHERINE JADE HOLLEY, FEBRUARY 1ST 1977 – OCTOBER 9TH 2025

Family and Friends gathered at St Andrew's Church on Monday October 27th to celebrate Catherine's life, with the Reverend Martin Weymont taking the memorial service and speaking to a church that was full to overflowing.

Catherine's life was described in a humorous at times, but always heartfelt in the eulogy delivered by Paul, her partner in life. She grew up in Buckland Dinham, went to school and college in Frome and then went on to study BoS in Geography at Coventry University. She first met Paul in 2003, and they started building Barley house at Great Elm in 2005.

Catherine was well known and loved in the village through her time working at the Talbot and volunteering at the village shop as well as her other work in a very varied life, as was shown by the numbers at the service

Suffice to say that she always kept a brave face through the hard times in her life, and she will be greatly missed by all who knew her. After the service there was a committal at Great Elm Churchyard. Our thoughts are with Paul and their son Jonathon and their extended family. RIP

PAUL JAMES STURGESS, SEPTEMBER 18TH 1954 – SEPTEMBER 30TH 2025

Paul lived at Yew Tree Cottage, Mells Green, for a number of years and loved his time in the village. He was a very private person but would always pass the time of day and help anyone who needed any advice on their garden. He was an expert horticulturist who had exhibited at Chelsea and worked around the world

His life was celebrated in a service at Mendip Crematorium on October 16th, where tributes were given by family and friends

"High upon a fertile hill a midday sun was higher still. The wheat was ripe, the soil so dry as we drank the landscape, you and I". He will be greatly missed. RIP

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**MELLS PARISH COUNCIL (FULL MINUTES CAN BE FOUND AT
MELLS-PC.GOV.UK)**

Notes of Mells Parish Council held in the Barn on Tuesday November 11th 2025

SOMERSET COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cost-of-living support available for Somerset residents this winter: Somerset Council is again distributing funds to provide immediate, practical help during a time when many are



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facing financial hardship or support for older residents and those with disabilities. Funds are available for **Free School Meal vouchers** during school holidays, **food, fuel and essential items** available through an online portal, **emergency grants** for crisis situations, hospital discharge support and council tax relief, **specialist advice and outreach** from trusted partners like Age UK, Citizens Advice Somerset, and SASP and Thrive, **community hubs** offering warm spaces, meals, budgeting support, and more. Support is available both online and in-person. To apply www.somerset.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support or call 0300 123 2224 and ask for 'cost of living crisis support'.

Council Ready for Winter Road Conditions: Somerset Council and Kier Transportation Ltd have completed preparations for the cold season. The council prioritises a precautionary network of major roads, emergency routes and community links. For more information, including a map of the gritting routes www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/gritting/.

MATTERS ARISING

Litter bin by bus shelter: This has now been installed in the bus shelter.

Loose dogs bothering sheep: Signage has been put up and awareness of the issue put on Mells Matter. To be monitored.

Lamp out in Vobster: This has now been repaired.

HIGHWAY AND FOOTPATH ISSUES:

Layby by Vobster bus shelter: Cllr West met Charlie Higgins from Highways to discuss the works. A plan of action has been submitted today for approval and the works will be undertaken once a date has been approved.

PLANNING

2025/1913/TCA: Pruning of sycamore branches – Ems Cottage. Notification only

2025/1845/FUL & 2025/1846/LBC: Like for like replacement of existing ground floor timber windows – Mells C of E Primary School – no objections.

FINANCE - Preliminary budget and precept discussion: Cllr Earl is keen to bring the village up to the standard of other local villages and for the parish council to have the financial ability to fund more projects to ensure the village environment is pleasant for all. This can only be done by increasing the precept quite substantially to bring it in line with other local parishes. An increase of £10,000 to take the precept from £16,500 to £26,500 would place an additional 64p/week (£33.33/annum) on the council tax. This increase would allow the council to contribute to improving the play area, supporting the recreation ground/pavilion more, helping the church, grants for local projects and assisting with the costs of reducing the speed limit in Vobster.

ITEMS TO REPORT / ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

Plaque for lock up: The parish council were supportive of the Mells having one, but as they do not own it they would not contribute to the cost.

Car parking: This is a continuing problem and several suggestions were put forward for where a more central car park could be situated.

Gate off in Vobster: Clerk to report to the Mells Park Estate manager.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday December 9th, 2025, at 7.15pm in the Barn.

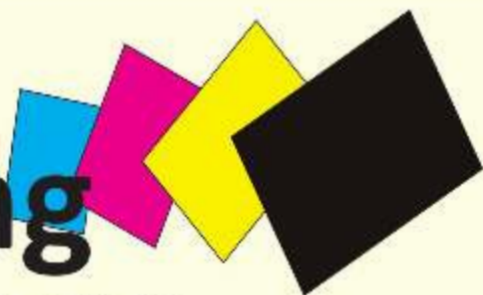
Joy Book, Clerk to Mells Parish Council, email: clerk@mells-pc.gov.uk, tel: 07704 584953

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Christmas Opening Hours

	Shop	Post Office	Cafe
Christmas Eve	8am - 1pm	9am - 1pm	Closed
Christmas Day	Closed	Closed	Closed
Boxing Day	9am - 4pm	Closed	Closed
Saturday 27 th December	8.30am - 4pm	9am - 12pm	Closed
Sunday 28 th December	9am - 4pm	Closed	10am - 2pm
Monday 29 th December	8am - 5pm	9am - 1pm / 2pm - 4pm	10am - 2pm
Tuesday 30 th December	8am - 5pm	9am - 1pm / 2pm - 4pm	10am - 2pm
New Years Eve	8am - 1pm	9am - 1pm	Closed
New Years Day	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 2 nd January	8am - 5pm	9am - 1pm / 2pm - 4pm	10am - 2pm

We would like to thank you all for your continued support. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from us all at Mells Village Shop and Cafe.

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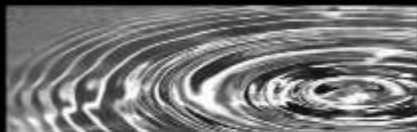
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COFFEE MORNING: Saturday December 13th, 10.00am – 12noon.
Bring your local historic photos and cuttings to share. We are making an album.

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NEW YEAR'S DAY WALK Thursday January 1st 2026, 11.00am
Meet at St George's Church, Whatley at 11.00am. Approx one and a half hour walk. Decent walking boots. Dogs welcome - please bring a lead.
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COFFEE MORNING Saturday January 10th, 10.00am – 12noon.
2ND MONTHLY POP-UP PUB EVENING AND SKITTLES Saturday January 17th 6.00pm-11.00pm

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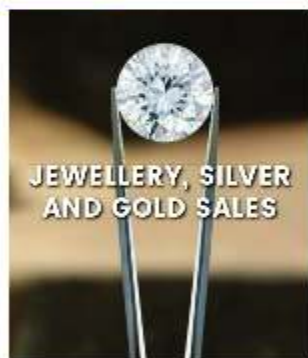
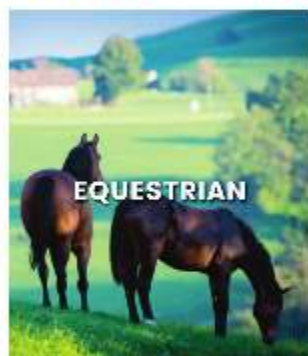
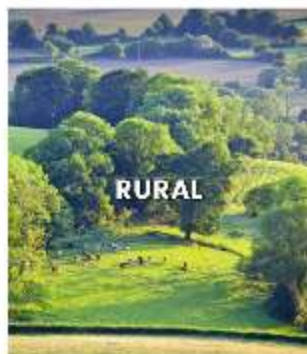
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