

The Magazine for the Parishes of Alfrick with Lulsley, Leigh and Bransford, Leigh Sinton and Suckley

THE PARISHES OF ALFRICK w LULSLEY, LEIGH & BRANSFORD, SUCKLEY

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Please send in articles for the Sphere NOT LATER than the 12th of the month.

All material published in The Sphere, including adverts, editorials, articles and all other content is published in good faith. However The Sphere accepts no liability for any errors or omissions and does not endorse any companies, products or services that appear in the publication.

From Rev Anne.....

What a strange year... as we came out of the long dark days of a wet winter we went into lockdown. Spring, sprung, full of lovely warm days which so many of us surrounded by beautiful countryside were able to enjoy. Blossom on the trees and the farmers working long into the night. Summer followed with some of the hottest days on record, rich and colourful displays of garden flowers; veggie patches with their abundant produce and trees bearing fruit. Restrictions have been gradually lifted giving back some family and social interaction at a distance and with a mask. We move into the Autumn when the fields are harvested and the apples picked. What awaits us amidst the rumblings of a second wave? Lockdown Christmas as we go back into winter? Who knows, but what we do know is we can give thanks for all God's amazing created world which we witness all around us – from the rolling hills and bubbling brooks to the fields of golden corn and hedgerows full of berries; and as we look upwards to daytime skies of blue with fluffy white clouds (there are days of just grey) and nightime skies full of stars upon which we gaze with cosmic wonder.

Unfortunately, annual harvest suppers or other such gatherings cannot take place this year, but we can still enjoy John Betjeman's Diary of a Church Mouse. Betjeman whose unforgettable poems on landscape and suburbia, desire and death, faith and doubt, helped to establish him as a beloved voice of our nation.



Hope you enjoy.....

Here among long-discarded cassocks, Damp stools, and half-split open hassocks, Here where the vicar never looks I nibble through old service books. Lean and alone I spend my days Behind this Church of England baize. I share my dark forgotten room With two oil-lamps and half a broom. The cleaner never bothers me, So here I eat my frugal tea. My bread is sawdust mixed with straw: My jam is polish for the floor. Christmas and Easter may be feasts For congregations and for priests, And so may Whitsun. All the same, They do not fill my meagre frame. For me the only feast at all Is Autumn's Harvest Festival, When I can satisfy my want With ears of corn around the font. I climb the eagle's brazen head To burrow through a loaf of bread. I scramble up the pulpit stair And gnaw the marrows hanging there. It is enjoyable to taste These items ere they go to waste, But how annoying when one finds That other mice with pagan minds Come into church my food to share

Who have no proper business there.

Two field mice who have no desire To be baptized, invade the choir. A large and most unfriendly rat Comes in to see what we are at. He says he thinks there is no God And yet he comes ... it's rather odd. This year he stole a sheaf of wheat (It screened our special preacher's seat), And prosperous mice from fields away Come in to hear our organ play, And under cover of its notes Ate through the altar's sheaf of oats. A Low Church mouse, who thinks that I Am too papistical, and High. Yet somehow doesn't think it wrong To munch through Harvest Evensong, While I, who starve the whole year through, Must share my food with rodents who Except at this time of the year Not once inside the church appear. Within the human world I know Such goings-on could not be so, For human beings only do What their religion tells them to. They read the Bible every day And always, night and morning, pray, And just like me, the good church mouse, Worship each week in God's own house, But all the same it's strange to me How very full the church can be With people I don't see at all Except at Harvest Festival.

From the well-known Harvest hymn: All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love.

Harvest blessings, and may we continue to reap the good things in these difficult times.

Our Church continues to be alive and active but due to COVID-19 our buildings must remain closed except as previously mentioned.

However, our worship, prayers and praise, alongside reflections and our care for each other continues. And so (until we meet again)May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us evermore. *Amen*

Even though we are not able to meet with you in person the clergy are available at the end of a telephone line so please feel free to contact us:

Rev Anne Potter (Team Vicar) 01886 832355 revannepotter@gmail.com
Rev Jen Denniston 01886 853280 jendenniston@gmail.com
Rev Becky Elliott 01886 812451 revredeccaelliott@btinternet.com

If you have an administration query please contact Alison Khan on 07984 748059 or leighrectory@outlook.com Please contact Alison if you would like to receive a regular weekly pew sheet by email.

For those of you with computers, IPads or other such 'modern technology' the team is continuing to find creative ways of offering worship through our YouTube: wwrt live stream as well as keeping you informed through the website: www.wwrt.churchinsight.com and A Church Near You

Churches together in the Teme Valley invite you to... Virtual Video Evenings with Charlie Mackesy







Four Video Talks by Charlie Mackesy

From Atheism to Faith

9 September - Introduction

16 September - Come as you are

23 September - Bullets and Hugs

30 September - What is the Gift?

7 October - What's so good about Friday?

Wednesdays, 7-9 pm Led by Rev Becky Elliott

To register for Zoom please email

revrebeccaelliott@btinternet.com

before Sunday 6 September

If you have a problem with internet access please call Becky on: 07961 053860

FROM THE REGISTERS

BA	PT	TS	MS

Leigh	19 July 2020	Nora SOPER
Suckley	2 August 2020	Genevieve BEAUMONT



WEDDINGS

Bransford 14 March 2020 Gwyn WILLIAMS to Pat ELLIS

Alfrick 15 August 2020 Douglas HAMILTON to Jessica DENTON

FUNERALS

CRALS			
Leigh	27 March 2020	Ann PORTER	Private Cremation
	2 April 2020	Brian Albert COLEGATE	Cremation
Bransford	16 March 2020	Caron BRISLEY	Funeral and Burial
	27 March 2020	Jean Betty DANCE	Vale Crematorium
	7 April 2020	Lilian Margaret DAVIES	Graveside Burial
	17 April 2020	Cecil DEE	Cremation
	24 April 2020	Eileen MONK	Burial
	3 July 2020	Lilian May SYMONDS	Vale Crematiorium
Alfrick	20 March 2020	David SKYRME He	reford Crematorium
	28 March 2020	Brenda Eileen SIMMONS	Interment Ashes
Suckley	1 April 2020	Peggy MERRICK	Cremation
	18 May 2020	David Raymond REYNOLDS	S Burial
	1 July 2020	Pamela Jean COLLINS	Interment Ashes

Services for September 2020

Sunday 6 September

10.30 am Leigh - CW Holy Communion

Sunday 13 September

9.00 am Alfrick - CW Holy Communion 10.30 am - Zoom Service

Sunday 20 September

9.00 am Bransford - BCP Holy Communion 10.30 am Crown East - All age worship

Sunday 27 September

9.00 am Alfrick - Matins10.30 am Crown East - BCP Holy Communion3.30 pm Suckley *Harvest - All age*

Sunday 4 October

9.00 – Leigh CW Holy Communion

3.30 – Crown East All age Harvest

6.00 pm Alfrick - Harvest Evensong





'There will be no 'set' service pattern for the rest of this year. We are taking one month at a time as there is still so much uncertainty around COVID-19 and some of our regular church members are continuing to self-isolate.

Peggy Johnson 1920- 2020

It is with sadness that we have to report the passing of Peggy so soon after achieving her 100th birthday on the 4th August. For many years she was the Editor of the Sphere magazine having taken over from the Revd John Herbert at its inception in 1983. She led the team of voluntary printers, collators and deliverers through from the early Gestetner waxes days in the shed in the Rectory garden until her move to Derbyshire to live next to her daughter Janet in June 2016.

She and husband Eric had retired to Leigh Sinton and both regularly attended the services at St. Edburga's church and entered into all the local activities. Peggy was a stalwart member of the Leigh and Bransford W.I. and supported all the Memorial Hall events. As an ex WREN she took a great interest in the reformed local British Legion and would entertain them with her memories of wartime days. Eric had been the treasurer of the Sphere and Peggy continued as its editor after his death in 2001 even though her eyesight got progressively worse. Many of you will remember her striding along the Hereford Road each morning to the village shop and post office waving her white stick at the traffic as she crossed the Stocks Lane and Malvern Road junctions.

She was very mindful of all the voluntary contributors to the Sphere. From time to time she would arrange a party for them paid for from the magazine's profits. The photograph attached shows Peggy, with Biddy Hood and Geoff Wright inspecting the food provided for one of those parties.

Peggy was a good friend to many of us in Leigh. Each one of us will have our special memories of her.



A photograph of Peggy taken at her 100th Birthday Party

The Brooklands Art Studio



A beautiful countryside garden with connected art studio, facilities, parking and accommodation. The garden and land surrounding The Brooklands has views to the Malvern Hills. There is a public footpath adjacent to the garden and little orchard which leads to a ridge overlooking Leigh Brook. Surrounding fields are home to handsome cattle at certain times of the year!

The studio and facilities with practicality at its core. Artists can use the new art studio with sink, tea & coffee making facilities and WC. Easels are available, but seating is limited so bring your own if possible. There is also ample free parking available on site.

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More details on www.thebrooklandsartstudio.com

Our District Councillors' "View from the Hills"

Another month on and, thankfully, COVID remains at bay in our local area. Thank you to all residents doing the responsible thing and wearing a mask where it would reduce virus



transmission. MHDC's rates of infection and death are amongst England's lowest. Let's keep it that way!

All local councils have been alarmed by Westminster's proposed changes to planning law. These will remove most local control on development, most significantly the requirement for builders to make contributions to local infrastructure. There is a clear probability that villages outside the AONB will lose their rural character, becoming suburbs of Worcester with neither transport improvements nor schools or shops. MHDC will be providing appropriate feedback.

This month is expected to be a difficult one nationally and locally as the furlough scheme ends. Unemployment in MHDC has already increased by 20%. We expect worse, but there is a simple way to help. Get out of the house and shop locally!

We continue to work actively on your behalf. If you need help, we can be contacted by phone, email or via our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/rousewhatley

Sarah Rouse: 01886 833653 sarahrouse72@gmail.com

Peter Whatley: 01886 884126 peter.whatley@malvernhillsdc.net

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Suckley

St John the Baptist Church



Suckley Church Flower Arranging Rota

Please remember that the church is only open on Wednesdays and Saturdays 10.00am to 5.00pm

September: Betty Douds October: Ellen Gwynn





GNS SpaceHive Crowdfunder reached its target!

THANK YOU! We did it! Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme is very grateful to the various councils and councillors and individuals who between them raised nearly £500. So, before long, each Suckley household will have a smart information folder, enabling us all to keep important contact details and information to hand. The *Good Neighbour Scheme* will also be able to fund DBS checks for those GNS volunteers that need them.

Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme says, "Keep alert" and "THANK YOU"!

We're here to help on 01886 840480 and suckleygns@gmail.com on Monday to Friday



9.00am to 5.00pm. It is thanks to the many new Volunteers that a lot of stay-home folk have their *Suckley PO* shopping brought to their door regularly at present. Julian and Mark now have lots of fresh fruit and veg, as well as their usual stock. If you would like an order delivered or put by to collect, please phone the GNS on

Monday to Friday for delivery after 5.00pm the next day. *Knightwick butchers'* meat orders deadline is 1.00pm on Tuesdays!!

01886 840480 between 10.00am and 1.00pm

Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme (GNS) is available to Suckley residents, and our volunteers will try to help if someone is in need of assistance. In these present challenging times, it could be that someone would appreciate a phone call, maybe for advice, or even just a friendly chat on the phone. Several volunteers have been trained by **South Worcestershire Citizens Advice**, and all our regular volunteers have been screened by the **Disclosure and Barring Service**. So please be alert to those living nearby, and if you feel it appropriate remind them that the **Good Neighbour Scheme is here to help on:**

01886 840480 and suckleygns@gmail.com

Suckley Community Car Scheme

This voluntary service covers all residents of Suckley who need transport to local medical appointments, or to take or collect prescriptions to or from Knightwick Surgery. Drivers are: Caroline Mitchell: 884070; Rosemary Harward: 832289; Jill Hammonds: 884221 Please start phoning from the left and give as much time as possible.

Our drivers reserve the right to refuse any request that they think to be inappropriate.

Suckley Village Hall News

We are delighted to say that our little Art Group has felt able to return to the Hall and we have been enjoying our weekly meetings. Not a great deal of painting has been done as yet – far too much news to catch up on, but it is lovely to be together again.

We also welcomed the Keep Fit Group back in August and Alfrick WI will be using our Hall for their September and October meetings before returning to their usual home in Alfrick for November.



Small, careful steps towards some sort of normality but very welcome nonetheless.

Carol Boughton





longer read their Sphere!

There is an obvious need to grow the digital competency of those in our villages who are losing touch with both local life and their families because they don't have access to digital communication. Our church services have needed to become available online and our congregations both real and virtual are missing the 'particularly

vulnerable' and the 'elderly' who are the most likely to be feeling lonely and become isolated from their usual life by their lack of digital skills.

Step one is to persuade more people to become confident in helping someone with no previous digital experience. The most important qualification is patience! The 'Buzz' expression is to become a *Digital Champion* - the training for which is useful in itself and costs nothing - all DIY in one's own time. Have a look at LearnMyWay (below) and consider doing the training anyway - it really is very useful!!

https://www.learnmyway.com/files/resources-for-digital-champions.pdf

Each of our villages needs more 'teachers' to help our isolated-at-home-elderly engage with your much valued online services.

Any unwanted old iPads will be useful - so our team of digital champions needs a 'bank' of them to lend out.

Could you help someone else access the invaluable resources only found online? Do you have an unwanted iPad that you could give to our lending bank of devices? Yes? Please contact Suckley Good Neighbour Scheme now! Anne Lewis

suckleygns@gmail.com 01886 840480

Suckley Parish Council

The next meeting will be on Monday 14 September at 7.15 pm.

It will most likely be a Virtual Zoom Meeting. There is always time at the beginning of the meeting for parishioners to make a short address to the Councillors for discussion in the meeting.

DIANA TAYLOR Clerk to Suckley Parish Council, 9, Lambourne Avenue, Malvern WR14 1NL Tel: 01684 569430 E-mail: dtaylorsuckleyclerk@gmail.com

Keeping in Touch

This time there's more about the early days of the present theatre, and also some news about theatres in and beyond our area.

It was a big change from the old "tin shed" moving into our purpose built building with so much room and space and great times ahead. Naturally over time things have changed a lot. A great deal of behind the scenes work has been done, and is still being done today!

One of the things we have to remember is that when the theatre first opened we had spent all of our money, so we really had nothing spare left at the time. Luckily for us after the first play presented in the theatre was sold out it brought much needed cash in to start and help us move forward.

On the stage we noticed was the grid had not been built high enough. You will probably not be aware that there is a metal steel frame that supports all of the mechanics of the stage. Nothing was allowed to be fixed to any part of the overall frame of the building. The grid was made for us by a local blacksmith, and put up on the stage. This allows the curtains, all the lighting and scenery/screen etc to be supported. Somehow we didn't get our measurements quite right, so at the top of the proscenium arch (where you can see the masks in the auditorium about the arch) we had to install a false arch to bring the sight line down and hide all the workings, lights curtain tracks etc. Once noticed, we set about having the frame raised, and this was achieved in the first year. This gave us much better height and allowed us to position lighting and scenery as well as the cinema screen in a better position. Additionally over time, we've managed to become much better equipped with our lighting system. It's highly sophisticated and

well covered compared with some larger theatres in this area! We also have a great team able to update as we go along and we are always trying to improve and keep up to date as we can.



A few years ago we updated the cinema screen, projection equipment and sound system, and also our satellite receiving equipment for when we have the live streaming from around the world. The screenings/cinema now has excellent equipment to give the best picture and sound we can in our building. Much work has been done behind the scenes to make sure we keep abreast of new and better equipment throughout the theatre. If you've been past the theatre in recent weeks, you may have seen some activity within the theatre. This is our hard working team who are currently busy updating our two dressing rooms. They are being fully refurbished and altered to ensure we have better rooms for our own actors and visiting companies. The works are quite large and will take a few weeks. At least the current situation is allowing the team not be as restricted as they would have been if the theatre were open as normal.

Other activity is from *Ludwig Theatre Arts*. They have used the theatre for quite a time now, and have theatre classes for young people, quite separate from our own youth theatre. Now they are back in the theatre for eight sessions over the coming month with much work being needed to enable this to happen. Suffice to say that the utmost responsibility has been taken by following very strict guidelines.

Updates from theatres around the West Midlands

Birmingham Hippodrome: "unlikely to open before February 2021 at the earliest" and there's no hard and fast date, it could easily not open even then.

Malvern Festival Theatre: following the re-opening of the cinema at the end of July, plans are now in place to open the theatre on 15 September.

The Courtyard, Hereford: uncertain as to when they can open.

Market Theatre, Ledbury: unknown when they will open.

Artrix Bromsgrove: sadly went bankrupt after the enforced closure due to Covid-19. Bromsgrove Council purchased the assets of the closed venue, and there is now someone interested in reopening the building as a theatre once more. However due to current restrictions there can be no date yet for that to occur.

Tenbury Cinema/Theatre: were very badly affected by flooding in February this year. Most of the lower floor level had a significant amount of water in it, damaging the seats, and also flooring, plus the box Office and Studio. Much work is being done to bring it back to life, but like the rest of us no date can be programmed as yet.

COVID Corner

To mask or not to mask: that is the question.

religious gatherings etc. So, the message is:

Last month the importance of that little "+" in "1 metres +" was highlighted, and why it does not mean we can now all stand just 1m away from each other, but that if we are not able to remain 2m away from each other then masks are needed to add extra protection. Since then two new and helpful studies have emerged which confirm the importance of that little "+". In fact, it may even be that "5 metres +" might be sensible indoors.

The first study

https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.08.03.20167395v1.full.pdf found that Covid-19 virus could be cultured from the air sample at 4.8 metres from a patient. The conclusion is that social distancing alone at 2 metres indoors will not protect from infection.

The second study

https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.08.11.20145086v1.article-info found that a person standing 2m from someone coughing without a mask is exposed to over 1000 times more respiratory droplets than from someone standing 5cm away wearing a basic single layer mask.

More and more news articles highlight the danger of Covid-19 spreading indoors in nightclubs,

To keep yourself safe - wear a face covering when mixing indoors with those outside your normal group.

Richard Lewis

Article removed because of fake news

Many thanks to Richard Lewis who spotted that the article purporting to come from The John Hopkins Hospital was a scam. Apologies to all concerned.

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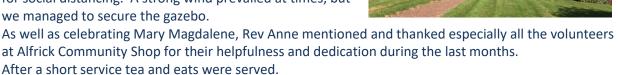
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Alfrick with Lulsley St Mary Magdalene, Alfrick

Thanksgiving Patronal Service Sunday 26 July

This was a delightful service taking place in the churchyard for social distancing. A strong wind prevailed at times, but we managed to secure the gazebo.



Thank you to all who baked cakes and made sandwiches for this lovely occasion. HC/DS

Church Cleaning Rota

Please remember that the church is only open on Wednesdays and Sundays 10.00am to 6.00pm

September	2	Mrs Davies & Mrs Fishwick	October	7	Mrs Morpuss & Mrs Sirrell
	9	Mrs Mansell & Mrs Collins		14	Mrs Fowler & Mrs Agnew
	16	Mrs Jeffery		21	Mrs Hood & Mrs Skyrme
	23	Mrs Cooke		28	Mrs Davies & Mrs Fishwick
	30	Mrs Crisp & Mrs Crumpton			

Community Choir

As I write this in late August, we're taking a short break from our weekly online choir rehearsals. Our plan is to re-start, in some form, at some time during September. By the time you read this, we may have made an announcement on our website here: alfrickcommunitychoir.com



Since April we've made sixteen online rehearsals, which are all available to watch later. If you'd like to see one of these, just get in touch and we'll send you the link to a recent one.

Alfrick Educational Charity



This was created out of the sale proceeds of Alfrick Primary School and has now been in existence for over 30 years. It provides grants for educational purposes to residents of Alfrick, Lulsley and Suckley and for schools serving the children of those Parishes. The Trustees will consider applications from students attending further educational courses during the academic year 2020/21 and are under the age of 25 at the start of their course. Also, grants are available for projects by those schools serving these

parishes where there is no other source of funding available.

Students wishing to apply for grants should apply in writing (not by email) not later than **30 September 2020** to the Clerk: A. G. Duncan, Bewell, Alfrick, Worcester, WR6 5EY.

Alfrick & Lulsley Community Car Scheme: This voluntary service covers all residents of Alfrick & Lulsley who need transport to local medical appointments, or to take or collect prescriptions to or from Knightwick Surgery.

Drivers are: Pam Lowe: 833362; Ro Morpuss: 832622; Hilary Simmons: 832611 Please start telephoning from the left and give as much time as possible. Our drivers reserve the right to refuse any request that they consider inappropriate.





For more information on booking the Village Hall please visit our website at: www.alfrickandlulsley.org/hall-make-booking/ Please send your queries by email to info@timesaversconcierge.co.uk Or phone: Adrian Biggs on 01905 312456

Table Tennis in the Hall:

This has resumed and takes place on Mondays and Wednesdays starting at 6.00pm, £1.50 each per session. New players always welcome, please bring suitable foot-wear. For information contact: Richard Steele 821777 or Sue Adams 830190



Worcestershire Oval Race Club (WORC):

The club will be back in operation as soon as possible during these difficult times.



Slowly Round the World – Again!

This is another chance to spend an evening with Alan Soper on his Round the World journey last year - including a new film of the trip. This will be in Alfrick Village Hall on Saturday 26 September, starting at 7.00pm. Since the need for spacing puts a limit of 40 theatre style in the hall, this will be on a 'first come, first served' basis. Looking forward to seeing you there.



Alfrick & Lulsley Village Hall - Annual General Meeting Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

All residents of Alfrick and Lulsley are invited to attend this meeting at which the hall management committee will be elected for the next year. Residents over the age of 18 are eligible for election to the committee and to vote. We hope as many people as possible will be able to attend this meeting.

The Bosbury Films

A few years ago we showed three films of past shows staged by Bosbury Players, a group which includes several local actors and singers. During the coming autumn, we plan to repeat this with two or three more, including 'My Fair Lady' and 'Salad Days'. Dates to be confirmed in the next Sphere.

Live stage performance

If regulations and circumstances permit, I am planning to stage a performance of '84 Charing Cross Road' by Helene Hanff, a play which involves only two actors on stage and is ideally suited to selfisolation! This is likely to be in October or November so look out for further detail in next month's Sphere. Alan Soper



Alfrick Players: Rescheduled for May 2021 The Noble Spaniard by W. Somerset Maugham



An incredibly funny period comedy in 3 acts.

Elaine Kite is the Citizens Advice Community Liaison Volunteer for Alfrick, contact 01886 884435, or email: elainekite@btinternet.com Elaine can discuss your enquiry, clarify your concerns and refer on to CAB for specific advice. So do please get in touch.







Alfrick and Lulsley Community Shop

What an exceptionally hot month August has been so far, though I write this as the heat wave has broken with tremendous thunderstorms! Meanwhile, volunteers and staff have kept cool in our lovely air-conditioned shop, which has been doing a brisk trade in ice creams and cold drinks for



visiting walkers, cyclists and locals alike. We usually have freshlymade sandwiches and cakes available, plus instant hot drinks,

to take away, so our visitors can make picnics for a day out. We love meeting families out in their walking gear and cyclists who are "refuelling" to keep up their energy levels on long rides. It's certainly a bumper year for many vegetables and fruits and we are most grateful for donations from local people which have been much appreciated by other customers. Many varieties of plum, beans and courgettes seem to be most common, and this complements our lovely range of organic salad leaves, herbs and vegetables from The Fold, Bransford, as well as our regular supplies of fruit and veg. And don't forget, we always have either fresh fish or freshly frozen in stock.

You may notice some new faces serving you in the shop! It's been great to welcome a number of new volunteers who have joined the team during the lockdown and, thanks to our volunteers responsible for training, have been able to gain the skills needed to shadow others before being let loose on the public! And all the time observing social distancing.....well done and thanks to our wonderful trainers! We are still operating under Covid restrictions, of course, but will keep our systems under review. At time of writing this, we allow a maximum of two customers into the shop at a time and payment is still made through the window by the till. We are hoping that the summer has a long way to go yet so that we can make the most of warm, dry days (thunderstorms excluded!) and our customers don't have to get wet outside! I'm sure we'll come up with some new ideas as and when necessary.

You can keep up to date by visiting our Facebook page: Alfrick and Lulsley Community Shop, or phone the shop on 01886 832862.

Best wishes from us all at your community shop.

Vicky Gatley, volunteer

WORCESTER FOODBANK NEEDS YOUR HELP TO HELP OTHERS

Coronavirus emergency list (Non-perishable foods are welcome, including bars of chocolate)

Tinned potatoes Smash Sponge puddings UHT 1 litre fruit juice Cooking sauces for rice and pasta Coffee (small jars)

1 litre UHT milk Sandwich paste Rice pudding, tinned custard Cracker biscuits Peanut butter Tinned spaghetti, e.g., Hoops,

Fray Bentos meat pies etc Jam etc.

Tinned fruit - single fruit such as oranges, grapefruit etc Tinned meat - ham, spam, corned beef,

Extras: Tomato sauce, Brown sauce, Mayonnaise, Cooking oil

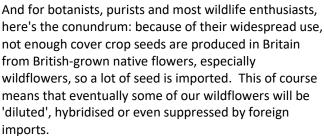
Shampoo, Deodorants, Washing Powder (small), Toilet Rolls, Shower gel/soap for men, Anti-bac Spray, Shaving foam and razors, Nappies sizes 5 and 6.

Please place your food donations, wherever they have been purchased, into the basket outside Alfrick and Lulsley Community Shop from where they will regularly be taken to the Foodbank.

Rev Anne Potter revannepotter@gmail.com

Wildlife friendly gardening and farming - a conundrum for botanists and lovers of native wildflowers - something to mull over

We've all learnt from the media that the use of sprays: fertilizers, and pest and weed killers are very expensive (and they are) and not a good idea for our health and that of the planet. Organic farmers and many gardeners try to avoid them or at least greatly reduce their use. The use of cover crops or green manure is promoted as being very environmentally friendly, especially in farming, often for no-till cultivation, so cover crops are being sown more widely now to reduce the seasonal areas of bare ground between crop seed drillings. Their use has many advantages: management of soil erosion, reduction of soil compaction by heavy machinery, addition of organic matter to the soil, promotion of water retention and soil fertility, weed, pests and diseases suppression, and enhancement of biodiversity and wildlife. The seeds are annuals and are widely available as many different mixes for different soil types and target requirements including summer, autumn, winter and spring cultivation, game and wild bird food crops, and pollinator crops etc. They often include wildflower seeds. Being annuals, cover crops often die off naturally through the winter, are cultivated into the soil, or are sprayed off with glyphosate.



The same applies to the heavily promoted (by conservation and other similar organisations) pollinator seeds for those lovely colourful insect-friendly grass verges, roundabouts, gardens, uncultivated land etc. etc. that can be seen around the country. Garden centres





are full of packets of such seeds, sometimes sold as wildflower seeds or pollinator/wildflower mixes, and I planted a couple of packets of such seeds in the spring. Mostly I had a few undesirable 'weeds' and cultivated garden annuals but very few 'genuine' wildflowers. Pollinators are, of course, in steep decline, so anything to increase their numbers is very welcome and the intention is good. However, It has to be remembered that a number of what we think to be our native British wildflowers may actually have been introduced here by others - travellers, plant hunters, invaders - from foreign parts a very long time ago, so what are really ours? **Carol Bradley**

Alfrick & Lulsley Working Parties

A number of successful working parties were held last winter at the spinney and the pound where we made considerable improvements for wildlife. We plan to hold similar working parties this autumn/winter – Covid-19 permitting. There are plans to plant a hedge around the playing field and a consignment of saplings was delivered from the Woodland Trust in March, too late to plant because of Covid-19 restrictions. They are safely heeled in and I have ordered another 420 plants, all free of charge for community projects. So planting about 200m of hedge will be the key activity this autumn. We already have a list of interested people, but if you haven't been involved so far and would like to be then please contact Derek or Carol on 884372. Dates for working parties will be announced in The Sphere and on notice boards. **Derek Bradley** Parish Tree Warden

Alfrick & Lulsley Parish Council

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24 September 2020 by Zoom

Tales from the Knapp Reserve by Garth

After the virus lockdown was eased the reserve saw unimaginable numbers descend on it especially at weekends causing some problems never imagined before.

When the reserve was closed many visitors who had come for the first time suddenly realised access was not available through the entrance and many attempted the footpath which was eventually mowed to give guidance. This caused so many problems and when the reserve was eventually opened floods of people poured in. These were of course not members and were not familiar with the routes and many following their noses took the well marked path to the footbridge by Papermill Meadow and returned via Old Storridge Lane.

I have been doing my regular weekly butterfly transects passing many visitors and talking to those who looked like they needed help. Except for a few incidents my impression was fairly good with no litter problem and dogs on leads. Children were disappointed of course as access to the brook was eventually denied, but I did come across one youth on a hot day up to his shorts.

Big Meadow with all its flowers was a great draw and some trampling took place, near the edges. In one instance I came across a lady sat on a chair breast feeding her baby and on another a man using a drone filming his wife and son lying in the flowers!

I must say I did not detect any deterioration in the wildlife; the four young dippers would have dispersed to quieter sections as would the kingfishers. In previous years during the school

July Nature Notes

This is the peak time for butterflies and ten species appeared one Saturday late in the month including a silver washed fritillary. One unusual sighting the next weekend was of a male brimstone that eventually settled on a pink buddleia spray. It stayed there for over two hours even sitting through a couple of light showers and very little sunshine. This species does seem to vanish quite quickly at this time of year so it could have been taking on food to see it through the winter. It was so engrossed on feeding, my close passage failed to spook it.

Also while lifting a sheet used to cover timber, a sleeping peacock was discovered and relocated to the wood shed. Was this a temporary sleep because some inclement weather was imminent or was it an actual attempt to go into hibernation? On a walk into the wood one morning I was halted near a small barn by lots of noisy buzzing which I quickly realised it was not the sound of hornets. It was in fact the largest of our bumble bees and the

holidays similar excursions to the brook have taken place where children could visit the countryside and



indulge in a pastime much as I did as a child. After an urgent appeal a number of Trust volunteers gave up their time to meet and greet the steady stream of visitors at the weekend and also do a daily wardening of the reserve giving advice and help where needed.

On the wildlife side the orchids in the meadow appeared, but in much smaller numbers than usual following the very wet start to their growing season. One which seems to be missing now is the early purple orchid not seen for a few years in its usual spot. An unusual flower called the common valerian, but not so common, appeared again but does grow along the track from the footbridge to Old Storridge. A regular, easily seen flower is the nettle leaved bellflower which graced the brook side near Pivany Bridge in one of its usual spots. The tall shepherd's rod or lesser teasel also appeared in a number of places. The butterflies started off somewhat earlier than normal with April having some glorious weather later to deteriorate of course, but there were sightings of a white admiral, brown argus and silver washed fritillaries. Even the elusive purple hairstreak appeared two weeks running on a young oak by the side of the track in Big Meadow.

Having the reserve so close to my home was a real bonus during lockdown with it having a good public footpath network.

first one I had ever come across. The queen had chosen an excellent site behind a heavy propped up white paling gate where a badger



would be unable to get at it. Badgers do destroy numerous bees' nests through the summer on their nocturnal travels, together with the wasp's nests they are able to sniff out. What was interesting about these bumble bees was their size and the fact there did seem to be cleverer ones amongst them. The numerous slits of the gate seemed to confuse many of them probably unable to choose the nearest one to the nest as the gate was so uniform along its length. The brighter ones just flew over the top and down behind the gate. Information about this species indicated they appear to be on the decline everywhere so it was pleasing to come across the nest and hope the owner does not get concerned when he takes his **Garth Lowe** tractor out!

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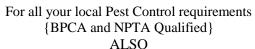
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Leigh and Bransford

ST.EDBURGA, LEIGH

The Churches were allowed to open for private prayer in June and St.Edburga is now open between 10 am and 6 pm on Sundays and Wednesdays.

The clergy Rev Anne Potter (Team Vicar) 01886 832355 and Rev Jen Denniston 01886 853280 are available at the end of a telephone line so please feel free to contact them.





St. Edburga, Leigh Events

CREAM TEAS

Leigh Churchyard Sundays 3-5 p.m. Until August 30th

This will be our final Teas of the season - sadly shortened by Coronavirus. They have been well attended and we have had mostly glorious weather. So on our final Sunday we will not only serve teas, but have a few stalls as well. So come along and see what else there is on offer - it should be fun and you might pick up a bargain or two - a cake, a plant, a tombola prize Do come along & join us. *Jean & the Tea Team*.



The Leigh and District Gardeners' Club

Hello to you all, I hope this entry finds you all in good spirits despite the continuing situation. I had hoped to be able to tell you all that we would be meeting back indoors for our September meeting. Unfortunately, with the understandable restrictions on numbers at Alfrick Village Hall, the committee has decided to cancel all speakers for the rest of this year, with the idea of rebooking them for 2021.

Marian Kent 01886 832537



LATEST UPDATE FROM THE TRUSTEES OF THE LEIGH AND BRANSFORD MEMORIAL HALL SEPTEMBER 2020

FOR NOW AT LEAST - THIS IS THE NEW NORMAL

On Saturday, August 1st the Memorial Hall finally reopened its doors after being closed for more than 4 months due to the Covid-19 lockdown. But no sooner had we reopened than further guidance was issued – putting even more conditions on how the hall may (or may not) be used – in order to address the latest government concerns about potentially escalating the spread of the disease in public places. Although we had previously been advised to reduce the maximum permitted numbers attending an event in the Hall (in our case that number was 80 – down from 310 – based on a calculation that allowed one-metre plus social distancing) the latest guidance means that no event may now have more than 30 people in attendance (unless the hirer operates a rolling one-in, one-out system like shops) and, in future, face coverings must now been worn – with just a few exceptions permitted. We've uploaded all of these latest conditions onto our website: http://leighandbransfordhall.co.uk/wp/additional-terms/

In spite of this I am delighted to say that a number of events took place at the Hall during August. These included 3, two-day summer camps for children, Mothers & Toddlers, weekly dog-training sessions, a child's birthday party and even an evening of Clairvoyance! Our community, I'm pleased to see, is gradually coming to terms with this new normal and taking its first cautious steps towards limited social integration. For our part, the trustees will continue to ensure the building and its grounds are kept as safe as possible. We've installed 'touch free' hand sanitisers; replaced the warm air dryers in the toilets and kitchen with paper towels (together with introducing a secure system for their disposal); installed social distancing and other Covid-19 signage throughout the building and last, but by no means least, agreed a hygiene regime to which all hirers must now comply.

Sadly, we were unable to host any of the 10 wedding receptions booked in between April and August this year and it now seems highly unlikely that the 5 booked to take place during September and October will happen. But we hope for a relaxation of the rules on larger social gatherings and wedding receptions in the New Year. Certainly the majority of our brides and grooms are hoping so too, as most have rebooked their celebrations for 2021 and in some cases 2022.

But, our strong community spirit will, I have no doubt, see us all through these testing and difficult times. Booking enquiries and new bookings are now coming through; our local clubs, groups and societies are consulting about when it might be safe for them to return and families are starting to enquire about birthday parties and other modest celebrations. Your trustees will continue to do everything we can to facilitate that return to a new normal. We're still cutting the grass, maintaining the grounds, cleaning the windows, having the rubbish collected and generally keeping the building in tip top condition ready for your return. We've been here for our community for the past 100 years — world wars couldn't stop us and neither will Covid-19. Remember we're just a click away: www.leighandbransfordhall.co.uk We look forward to welcoming you back!

Leigh & Bransford Parish Council

Bransford Play Area: We are pleased to report that Bransford Play area has reopened. Of course, being an unmanned, outdoor play space, the equipment is not cleaned or sanitised and use it at your own risk. The usual Coronavirus precautions apply, so please follow the guidelines on the posters displayed at the play area and on the nearby noticeboard, do not enter if you are experiencing any coronavirus symptoms and maintain social distancing and good hygiene at all times. We look forward to updating the playground equipment with the s106 funding agreed by Malvern Hills District Council and are on track to start work in mid-October.

Highways: Thank you to the residents who have kept us informed about ongoing issues with the noisy road surface in Leigh Sinton. The parish council continues to press Worcestershire County Council for a resolution to this problem. We are also following up on the ongoing pavement parking problem with the police and district and county councils, and in the meantime would again urge drivers to ensure sufficient space is left for pedestrians to pass safely on the footway.

Neighbourhood Plan: At its July meeting the parish council passed resolutions protecting the Significant Gap between Leigh Sinton and Malvern, confirming the protection of local green spaces and views in the parish, and supporting the inclusion of a specific site (land off the A4103 opposite Stocks Lane, the MHDC preferred site in the revised SWDP) for any future housing development, helping to protect the parish from unwanted or unsuitable development in the future. The Neighbourhood Plan has now gone to MHDC for informed consultation, the next stage in the long development process that will end with a final public consultation.

Dog Fouling: Thank you to those who have told us about locations where dog fouling is a persistent problem. We have arranged for new signs to be installed in problem areas and where existing signs are faded, damaged or out of date. If you know of any locations that would benefit from a new sign, please do let us know.

Rectory Wood: In the autumn we will need volunteers to help plant 2,000 wildflower bulbs in Rectory Wood. If you would like to get involved, please contact chairman John Sharp on 01684 833844.

In accordance with current guidance meetings will continue to be held virtually for the time being. Residents are always welcome to join us, so please get in touch for details of how to participate. Virtual meetings (subject to change – please see noticeboards and website for arrangements) are scheduled for 22nd September & 24th November at 7.00pm.

1st Leigh Guides



By the time you read this we will hopefully be back to some form of proper meeting.

Assuming the Government will allow us that is. As we are lucky enough to meet in such large open surroundings and with the support of the Scouts we are working towards meeting back on the 10th August.

Over the past few weeks the Guides have been continuing with virtual meetings enjoying making cookies in a mug, Daisy from Rangers ran a fantastic quiz amongst other fantastic things.

As we approach a new term if you have a daughter/granddaughter, aged 10 or over that would like a bit of adventure, make some new friends and have fun, please get in touch - wendy cane@hotmail.com

Here's to another month of getting used to 'normal'
Valda, Wendy, Charley, Ann and Ann

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An Old Swallow Tale

As part of my long running swallow study in our parish every now and then something odd turns up as did this August.

One of my regular sites has four stables near Mousehole set in an L shape with an archway in the corner, three on one arm and one on the other. The story starts a few months earlier when I was trying to catch the adults feeding young in the single stable and one flew in and vanished as soon as I put my net up over the doorway. I forgot about this until I was trying to catch parents feeding again in the middle stable on the left and a swallow appeared over me and flew out through the half open stable door, it was then the saga finally made sense.

At the start of this year the owners decided some hens might be a good idea as with the panic buying because of the virus, eggs became scarce. They used the middle stable to house them and of course shut the top door at night denying access to any returning swallows. It then dawned that this pair of swallows had found their way in by entering the single stable and flying over the arch under the roof and through the empty corner stable, such was their determination to use the same nest again. These birds are very faithful nesters returning if they survive their long migration to South Africa and will then use exactly the same place and nest site. Next problem was how to catch these birds for my study and the answer was to hang the small net over the top half of the door and as soon as one flew in over all the partitions to move a pole with a plastic bag attached and hope they go for the obvious exit and my net. It took 20 minutes before a bird suddenly appeared and luckily got caught. Nor really much of a tale so far, but much more interesting when I processed the bird and saw it had

what looked like a fairly new ring already attached to its right leg. It was a fine male with long streamers, but on looking quickly back in my data book



could find no reference to the number on the ring. The immediate conclusion was it was a bird ringed elsewhere so after all the measurements of wing length and weight I set the bird free.

I then had another 20 minutes in the stable hoping an attentive female might return and I would have the pair. Finally giving up I gathered up my bits and went back to the car. As it is rather rare to catch a strange bird I had one last look at finding out more and to my astonishment I discovered it was first caught nesting here in July 2014 so as it must also have been alive the year before. This meant its age must be at least seven years, just four years less than the record age for this species. The only other time this bird was handled since 2014 was August 2019, but it had most likely been here every year and managed to avoid being caught.

Considering this bird has now flown to South Africa and back seven times it is astonishing! One small observation from this story is how is it the birds worked out a devious route to the old nest, but were unable to work out that during the day they could actually use an open doorway to fly in while the hens were out?

Over the twenty odd years of doing this study for the *British Trust for Ornithology*, a number of interesting observations have taken place. Sadly this year was the worst ever locally for returning numbers of these well loved summer visitors, but hopefully not everywhere suffered, time will tell.

Garth Lowe August 2020

Puns for Educated Minds

 Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'

- o I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says 'Dam!'
- Two Eskimos sitting in a kayak were chilly, so they lit a fire in the craft. Unsurprisingly it sank, proving once again that you can't have your kayak and heat it.
- Two hydrogen atoms meet. One says, 'I've lost my electron.' The other says 'Are you sure?'
 The first replies, 'Yes, I'm positive.'
- What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.



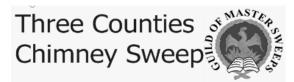
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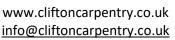
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