

Village News

in Swindon Village, Cheltenham

Your local newsletter sponsored by the Parish Council and delivered by volunteers.

April 2026 Edition No.522



APRIL

Thursday 9th Nominations for Parish Council elections close

Monday 13th Parish Council meeting.
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

Saturday 18th Swindon Village Society. 9.30am
A visit to Cirencester guided by John Heathcott.
Meet in the Village Hall car park.

Friday 24th Annual Parish Meeting. 7.30 Swindon Village Hall

Sunday 26th Litter Pick. Start 10.30 Village hall

MAY

Thursday 7th Polling Day

Monday 11th Parish Council meeting.
7.30 Swindon Village Hall, bar area.

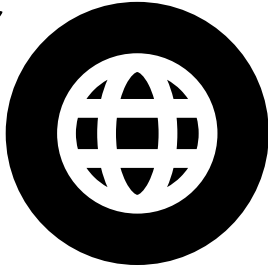
Wednesday 20th Swindon Village Society. 7.30pm
A talk by Paul Murphy about Amy Johnson. Britains most famous pre war female aviator who lived in Stoke Orchard
Visitors Welcome - £3

Sunday 31st Litter Pick. Start 10.30 Village hall

A Connected Community!



Using your phone's camera to hover over each QR Code square below for direct link access.



Parish Council Website

For full, detailed information from and about the Parish Council visit www.swindonparish.org.uk



Parish Council Facebook Page

A public page for live information and news updates from the council:
www.facebook.com/swindonparish



Swindon Village Facebook Community Group

A private group for the discussion of local issues, sharing and requesting help in the local community.



Anti-Social Behaviour

If you have any concerns about anti-social behaviour do not hesitate to contact the police.



Ring 101 (you may be charged for this phone call)
email101@gloucestershire.police.uk
<https://www.gloucestershire.police.uk/ro/report/>

NB: Get an INCIDENT REPORT NUMBER and let the parish know about it. If the police are not made aware of the problem THERE ISN'T A PROBLEM.



A Note From The Editor

Last year a lovely friend bought me a pretty notebook and suggested that I start a gratitude journal alongside her. She is still going strong albeit a monthly entry rather than the daily one we both started with. I sadly crashed and burned after three weeks. It wasn't that I wasn't grateful; I am very happy to count my blessings. I just felt that writing that I was grateful for a beautiful blue sky multiple times wasn't quite the point of the journal.

Looking back a year later, I have a different opinion. Why shouldn't I feel grateful for the same small things on a daily basis? The blue sky isn't less welcome each time you see it. So, maybe it is my view point that needs to be changed.

My Nan, Evelyn lived in a tiny cottage in Leckhampton. Her kitchen was in a lean to next to the back door. My Dad built an enclosed porch to link it to the house without the need to go outside to cook. She had no bathroom and the high level cistern toilet was in a small, brick shed at the bottom of the garden. Bathtime for her was in an iron bath in front of the coal fire although in later years she would visit us for baths. She never complained about any of this but loved the visits when the hot water came out of a tap and not from multiple kettles she'd boiled and carried through.

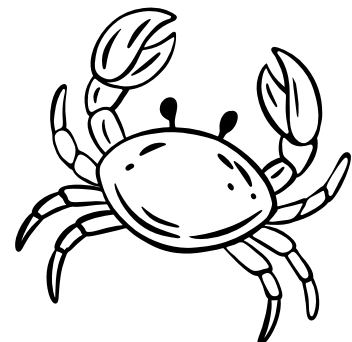
These days, we take things like hot water systems for granted. I really enjoy my morning shower, but from now, I will feel grateful every single time. I just won't be writing it in my journal!

Karren

Another quiz from the brilliant Fiona!

One word in each answer represents an example of a sidekick, the final one with a touch feminism!

1. Which is the only day of the week named after a female?
2. Which battle was named after a town a few miles away from where it was really staged? The actual town is called "Battle".
3. Who played Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter films?
4. What bird's scientific name is *Erithacus rubecula*?
5. What animal is the symbol of the US Democratic party?
6. Which King sealed the Magna Carta?
7. Who won two golds and two silvers (for GB) at both the 1980 and 1984 Olympics?
8. What word describes a ceremonial performance of music, drills, and displays by armed forces, most notably (perhaps), annually in Edinburgh?
9. Who had a hit with *Someone You Loved* in 2019?
10. What was the name of the Orangutan in Clint Eastwood's films?





Swindon Parish Council

Swindon Parish and Community Website: <https://swindonparish.org.uk>

It looks as if Spring has arrived and, at last, some sunny weather. The Great British Spring Clean has also arrived. Our participation in the event is tomorrow (as I write this, in the past as you read this!).

Over the years that I have been writing these pieces I am aware that there are recurring themes, and litter picks is one of them. Others are (sadly) fly tipping, inconsiderate dog owners and railway bridge crashes. Thankfully we haven't had too many of the latter but, on the 19th March, a bus driver managed to bend his double decker under the Hyde Lane rail bridge.



This could have been a horrific disaster but thankfully no-one was hurt. It seems it is possible to forget that the bus you are driving is a double decker.



Swindon Parish Council

Regarding the planned development of Home Farm along Brockhampton Lane, the developer has asked for an Environmental Impact Assessment screening. This means that the Local Planning Authority (Cheltenham Borough Council) must make a judgement about whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. The developer still believes that it would be appropriate for the development to start before access to the site can be made through Elms Park. This would mean construction traffic using Quat Goose Lane and Brockhampton Lane. I'm sure residents of those narrow lanes would have a view about what constitutes environmental impact.

I notice that surveying is taking place behind my house (between Hyde Lane and Swindon Lane), one of the last open areas of land preventing Cheltenham and Bishops Cleeve becoming one. I suspect more housing development plans will be coming forward.

Local government reorganisation and devolution continues to be debated. The current system of a County Council sitting above Borough or District Councils will be replaced by single tier unitary authorities. There are three proposals on the table.

Gloucester City Council favour a "Greater Gloucester" model where Gloucester City and its environs will become one unitary authority and the rest of the county (like a donut around the city) will be another.

Cheltenham Borough Council favours an east/west split of the county while Cotswold, Stroud, Tewkesbury and Gloucestershire County Council favour keeping the county boundary as the boundary of a new unitary authority.



Swindon Parish Council

The consequences of this change are not entirely clear. It is assumed that some of the responsibilities of the borough/district councils will be passed to parish councils. As we have emphasised before, parish councillors are volunteers, often with full time jobs. Do they have the capacity to take the management of more local assets (e.g. green spaces)? Will additional money be passed to the parishes in recognition of the fact that they have increased responsibilities? There are many unknowns. By the time you read this the consultation will have closed, but who knows what they are voting for and the consequences? Ultimately, the government will decide which model will be adopted.

Speaking of parish councillors, another recurring theme of my ramblings is that we need more councillors. Aside from the devolution debate, housing developments mean that the population of the parish is increasing. We are already short of the councillors we need. Elections are coming up. We need people to step forward. If you want to throw your hat into the ring please get in touch with me.

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place in the Village Hall on 24th April starting at 7:30pm. There will be much to discuss. M5 Junction 10, the nearby Willowbrook development, devolution, Home Farm.... Join us if you can.

I have received a number of applications for my job. I am guessing that some people have fun applying for jobs regardless of their suitability! Hopefully, in amongst them we will find the person that we need. If you are interested in the job let me know.



Swindon Parish Council

Last month I took a gentle pot shot at the banks. Here's another one. A friend has been trying to close a bank account that has been unused for some time. The original signatories are no longer around, so the bank is dragging its feet. Simultaneously, another department of the bank is saying that the account is dormant and that, if something isn't done, they will close it. The bank also writes letters that are in HTML, the language of websites. The code is understood by computers but gibberish to humans. However, there is a reassuring statement in plain English at the bottom of the letter. It states that a Braille version is available.

Shaun Cullimore, Clerk to Swindon Parish Council
parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk

Cheltenham Horticultural Society Spring Flower Show

Sales stalls to include Plants from local nurseries, Garden Equipment. Home made Cakes, Books, Jewellery, Photographic prints and Cards and Locally Produced Jams, Chutneys and Marmalade.

Tombola, Refreshments and Free Parking.

WHERE: Pittville School, Albert Road, GL52 3JD

WHEN: Sunday 12th April 12.30 to 4pm

ADMISSION: Adults £2.50 Under 16's Free

www.cheltenhamhorticultural.co.uk





St. Lawrence's Church

St. Lawrence's Church

Chatterbox

Every Tuesday

10.30am to 12noon



Pop in for coffee/tea and biscuits
and a good old chat about
anything and everything.

Everyone's welcome, old or new. (It's free!)

St. Lawrence's Church is part of the

 North Cheltenham
Team Ministry

Enquiries about baptisms or weddings

If you would like to enquire about baptism (also called christening) or would like to book a wedding in St Lawrence's church, please contact Karen in the Team Office on **01242 244373** or **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

You can contact the Team Vicar, **Rev. Jacqueline Henson**, by email: **revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com** or by phone: **01242 220053** or via the office as above.



St. Lawrence's Church

RECTORY REFLECTIONS - REV JACQUELINE

In my garden is a large apple tree. During the summer months, its foliage is a dark green and the small apples that survive the squirrels and the wind slowly grow. As summer becomes autumn, the leaves turn russet, and the weight of the fruit pulls down the branches and collecting apples becomes a daily job. During the winter months, the bare branches and dark bark are unremarkable, host to a couple of wood pigeons, biding its time till the days grow longer and warmer weather beckons new growth.

And then the magic happens. Over several days, white blooms emerge from their buds and delicate flowers hang from burgundy and lime green fronds. The insects attract a host of birds and from dawn to dusk the whole tree is alive with their presence. Then, the white blossom turns a delicate halo of pink. Looking up through the branches, the sunlight renders the blossoms translucent and luminous against the blue sky and its beauty is breathtaking.

Inevitably, after a few weeks, a wind blows the petals across the garden and shoots of dark green leaves appear in their place. And the cycle begins again.

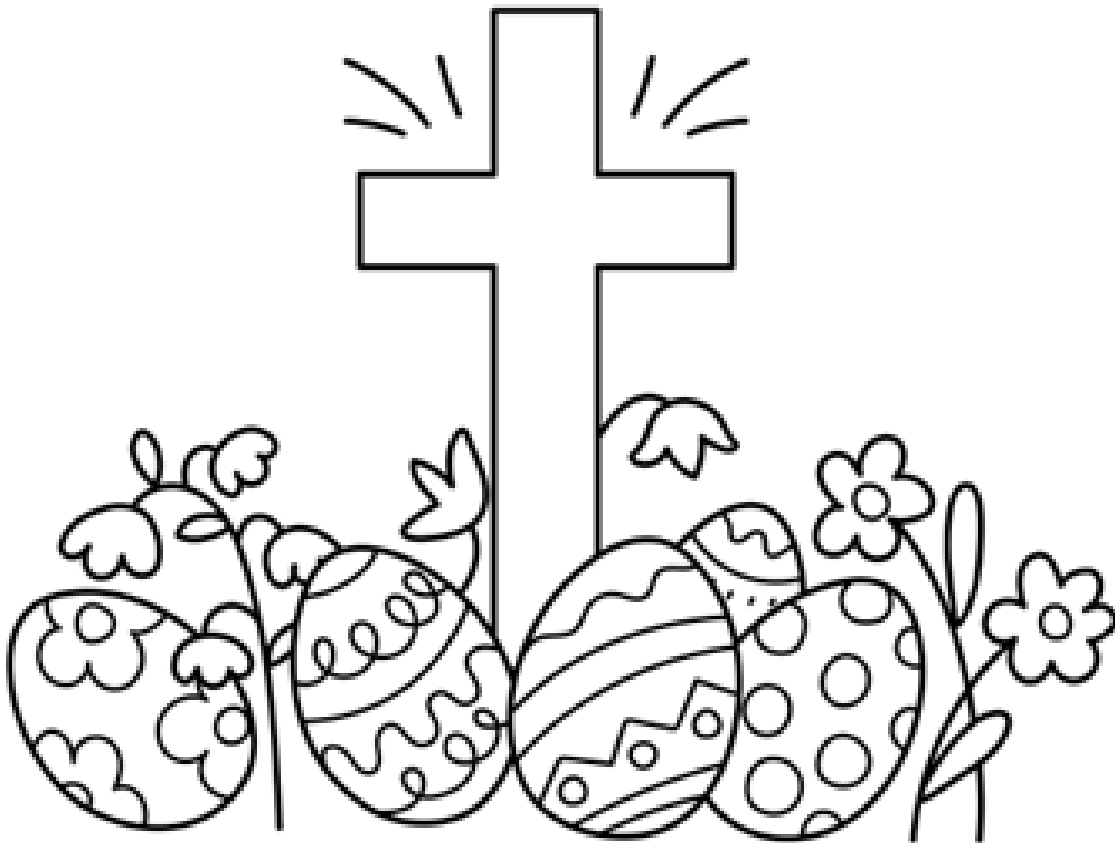
This month, the Church celebrates Easter and we think about the transformation from Good Friday when Christ was crucified to Easter Sunday, when he rose again from the tomb. Jesus was distinctive in his time because of the way he transformed people by healing, listening to them and teaching them about how God loves everyone.



St. Lawrence's Church

We are all called to carry on this work; to be transformational in our communities – to come alongside those who might be struggling, who carry emotional burdens or who need an attentive ear. We live in a world where success is measured through material possession and disputes are resolved through violence. Perhaps as we celebrate Easter, we might think about how we can help to transform and bring new life to our corners of the world by loving our neighbours, whoever they are. When we change the conversations to ones of joy and good news, we will change our outlook to one of positivity and hope. And that is transformational.

Wishing you a very happy Easter!





The Swindon Village Society

Our February talk was by Tony Condor who told us about Gloucestershire's inland waterways. It would seem that in the late 1700s and early 1800s canals were the big thing. Everyone with an inland manufacturing plant wanted to move their product to either where it would be used or off to London or the southern ports for export. The roads were not in great condition, horse transport was slow and could only deal with small quantities at a time. Then someone came up with the idea of canals. All they needed were lots of money and effort to construct but then your investment could generate high levels of payback. So canals took off and they were dug or planned all over. Gloucestershire was no exception. We already had the River Severn but it could hardly be considered a reliable means of transport given its rather erratic flow in the Southern reaches and the need to fight the current further North. The target for those with goods to export over this side of the country was Bristol, a very useable port. Gloucester was also developing as an industrial base and wanted part of the action. Hence the idea of the Sharpness Canal which allowed Gloucester to become a port and distribution hub. And so there was something of a frenzy of canal planning and building. Even lesser towns such as Newent and Dymock wanted part of the action. And all went well until someone got another idea and invented the train, when over a short time canals also came to look slow and difficult to use. However, many survived for many years while others saw only a few years of effective use.

These days there are still useable canals in the country and the county but they are mostly in recreational use. As a regular walker I am often coming across good stretches of canal but also short unused sections out in the countryside now long forgotten. As a walker canals are useful. They are flat, often with a good towpath to amble along, but best of all they tend to have a pub every few miles. Not that I ever go in them but just stand there admiring them from the outside. Honest!



The Swindon Village Society

This was a very good talk on a subject that still can be seen and used in the county.

In April we will be heading off to Cirencester with John Heathcott who will tell us something of the history of this very historic town. If you are not a member but would like to join us on the visit send me an e-mail. The address is barry_simon@hotmail.com. If we can fit you in we will be happy to do so. We may even be able to offer a lift.

The July talk will be on the Gloucester/Warwickshire Steam Railway. In September we will hear about Snowhill Manor. Visitors or new members are always welcome.

I will just mention that I am typing this on Gold Cup day. In the race before the Gold Cup there was a horse called Swindon Village. He was doing well when I first saw him on the television but I think he finished 75th. Good job I did not know of him before the race; I would be a tenner down now.

Barry Simon

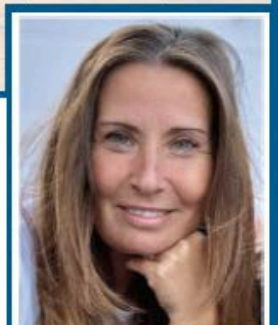
Personal Development & Wellbeing Coach

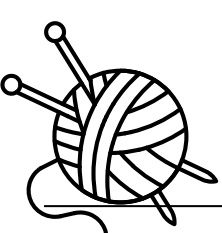
I am passionate about my business and have dedicated over 10 years to research, studying the subject and working with clients of all ages. I also work with young people, helping them to understand themselves better, control their emotions, and lead a healthy lifestyle. I keep my clients accountable and motivated by providing exercises and tools to manage stress levels, emotions and behaviour.

Diddie Morton-Holmes

01793 680330 / 07787 712165

wellbeing@diddie.co.uk / www.diddie.co.uk





Marle Hill WI

Marle Hill WI met on Monday 2 March where we had a very interesting speaker who is an adult tutor. She told us about what subjects she had taught over years - from Music to cooking and the various establishments she had taught in. From schools to prisons. She then handed several members small hand bells and after a practice run and with her conducting (with a wooden spoon) Jerusalem was sounded out.

Do come and visit us and have some fun and 'me time'

Visitors are welcome. We meet on the 1st Monday of the month (unless it falls on a Bank Holiday then we meet the 2nd Monday of the month). we meet at St Nicholas Church Hall at 7:30pm

Sue Davies, Marle Hill WI



Ying Gibb Dip.FHP

Registered Foot Health Practitioner

Home Visits

Nail trimming	Nail Problems
Ingrown toenails	Fungal nail
Corns	Calluses
Athletes foot	Cracked heels
Diabetes foot issues	Verrucas
Foot care advice	

Ph 07478939108

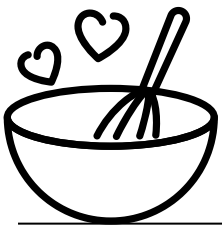


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Cook with Dawn

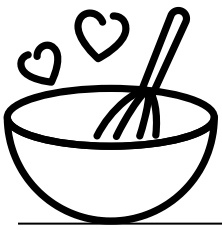
Easter has arrived, so we are treating ourselves to a nice leg of lamb for Easter Sunday and left overs for a quick midweek meal.

Quick lamb and lentil stew

Ingredients...

- Cooked lamb cut into chunks
- Spray oil
- Ground black pepper
- 4 shallots halved (or a large onion cut into wedges)
- 200g chestnut mushrooms, halved or quartered
- 1 garlic clove thinly sliced
- 4 rashers back bacon or medallions, fat removed and sliced
- 400g can green lentils, drained and rinsed
- 300ml boiling lamb or chicken stock
- 300g cherry tomatoes
- 1level tbsp cornflour
- 3tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- Seasoning, salt and pepper
- New potatoes, sliced carrots and chopped spring greens





Cook with Dawn

Method

1. Using a deep frying pan with lid, spray the pan with oil and heat to medium.
2. Season lamb chunks with plenty of black pepper, add to the pan along with the shallots, mushrooms, garlic and bacon. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring often until shallots are soft and turning golden.
3. Add the lentils and stock, bring to the boil. Then cover and simmer for about 10 minutes.
4. Add the cherry tomatoes, cover pan and simmer for 5 minutes more.
5. Mix the cornflour with 2 tbsp of cold water to make a smooth paste, add to pan along with 2 tbsp parsley and keep stirring until the stew thickens, (a few minutes).
6. Scatter over the rest of the parsley, season to taste.
7. While the stew is cooking, boil the new potatoes, carrots and spring greens until cooked.
8. Serve the lamb and lentil stew with the new potatoes and veggies... beautiful...

And as always ... enjoy!



Hello Gardeners, Spring is in full flow now. I've loved seeing the Spring colours around the village, in particular the Magnolia Trees and Daffodils on Church Road!

This month is a perfect time to do a lot from seed, even if you don't have a greenhouse. This is my first full year having a greenhouse to start seeds early and it definitely can give you up to a month's head start on a lot of things. I like to keep my articles universal though and hence you can sow the following seeds directly into the soil outside this month.

Runner Beans are a family favourite in our garden, easy to grow and always produce a surplus. 'Moonlight' is our favourite variety, it has white flowers, is self-fertile and grows up to 3m tall! Last year we bought a Metal archway to go between two of our raised beds and the Runner beans loved climbing it, making it super easy for us to reach up and pick the pods! Be sure to wear gloves though, as I discovered last year, they can be a mild irritant for sensitive skin when raw. As they are very vigorous though, make sure you space them at least 45cm apart but not far from a tall support.

Courgettes are another favourite of ours, they love a sunny raised bed, usually 3 or 4 plants is too much for us to eat as a family, so we give them away in the summer to neighbours and our sharing box at the edge of St Lawrence Court. When sowing Courgettes, make sure you lay them flat, 2-3cm under the soil and at least 90cm apart as they spread very wide! As our summers are getting increasingly hot and for longer (I remember heatwaves from early May last year) they do fruit really well as long as you keep them well watered.

As aforementioned, judging by the heat last year, I also think another piece of advice would be to make sure you have as big a water butt capacity as you can accommodate. I currently have 400 Litres total and that didn't go far last year, only lasting up to 3 weeks in summer. As such I'm about to expand out at least another 200 Litres, by linking new ones up to my existing and possibly new ones too in case we get the same very dry summer we did last year. They help with your water bill too by reducing your drainage costs!

That's all for now, thanks for reading, Dale.

Answers to the Quiz

1. Friday (named after Freyja, Norse goddess of love)
2. Hastings
3. Emma Watson
4. Robin
5. Donkey
6. King John
7. Sebastian Coe
8. Tattoo
9. Lewis Capaldi
10. Clyde

Sidekicks are: (Man Friday, Robinson Crusoe; Captain Hastings, Hercule Poirot; Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes; Robin, Batman; Donkey, Shrek; Little John, Robin Hood; Sebastian the crab, The Little Mermaid; Tattoo, Mr. Roarke in Fantasy Island; Sargeant Lewis, Inspector Morse),
Bonnie

SWINDON PARISH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Footpaths	John Heathcott	527753
Scouts, Cubs, Beavers		info@ 1sv-scouts.co.uk
Rainbow Guider	Hannah Butler	07464 784155
Village Hall Chair	Jana Bridger	07913 911930 swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village Hall Bookings	Jana Bridger	swindonvillagehall@gmail.com
Village News Distribution	Hugh Evans	241678
Play Group	(Playgroup hours)	690479
	For Sept 24 admission	07949 352507
School Headteacher	Geraint Mills	690016
Friends of the School		chairfosvps@gmail.com
Art & Crafts Club	Lynne Mumford	07515 461876
Swindon Village Society	Barry Simon	521723
Mary Godwin Under 5s	(Playgroup hours)	mgu5@hotmail.co.uk
Marle Hill W.L.	Sara Jefferies	07787 485221 / 692500

Please inform the editors of any changes to the contact details for village organisations.

Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th April 2026

Please send contributions to the editors via Karren Parsons
at 29 Dark Lane or e-mail village-news@swindonparish.org.uk

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr. Alison Berry (Chair)	07754 006634
Cllr. James Cornish	07950 196709
Cllr. Sharon Collicutt	07884 184423
Cllr. Natalie Blankley	07725 948935
Cllr. Lynne Allen	07979 890134
Cllr. Tom Harcourt	07963 581371
Cllr. Ruth Hudson	07850 185871
Mr Shaun Cullimore (Clerk to the Council)	07833 089435
	parish.clerk@swindonparish.org.uk

There are currently two vacancies. Please get in touch if you would be interested.

Cheltenham Borough Councillors

Springbank Ward (south of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Peter Jeffries	07717 493686
County Cllr. Suzanne Williams	01242 230648

Swindon Village Ward (north of Tewkesbury Road)

Cllr. Flo Clucas	01242 255844
Cllr. Frank Allen	07402 011272
County Cllr. Ian Cameron	ian.Cameron@gloucestershire.gov.uk

ST.LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

Part of the North Cheltenham Team Ministry

Team Vicar:	Revd. Jacqueline Henson	revjacquelinehenson@gmail.com
		220053
Churchwarden:	Hugh Evans	241678
Tower Captain:	Hugh Evans	241678

North Cheltenham Team Ministry Office 244373 admin@northchelt.org.uk

The office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9.00am to 1.30pm, and on Friday from 1.30pm to 4.00pm.

Outside these hours please leave a message on the answer-phone.

The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors or the Parish Council.