

# Shirenewton Parish Magazine February 2022



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## **SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE EDITORIAL INFORMATION**

Published: by The Church of St. Thomas à Becket Shirenewton

Editor: Bill Clark 01291 641783 email: [parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com)

The cost of the Magazine is £1.50 per issue/10 issues for £12.

Copies are delivered free by local distributors to those who have pre-paid.

Monthly copies are available at the Church.

Previous editions of the magazine are available online on the Church website at [www.shirenewtonchurch.info](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.info).

**To order your regular copy, contact Aileen Doggett  
01291 641459**

### **Advertising Rates for Commercial organisations**

Full designated page for 12 months £120

Full page 12 months 10 issues £80

Half Page 12 months 10 issues £40

Quarter Page 12 months 10 issues £20

**Advertising for Local and Charity organisations is free.**

Editorial policy is to print what you provide, space and technology permitting. The views expressed are those of the contributor.

**Preferred Document format is an MS Word document attached to an email. Preferred Advert and Photograph format is JPEG attached to an email**

**Many thanks to Terry Walters for his kind permission to use his photograph on the front cover**

**Deadline for February 2022 issue is  
9:00 a.m. Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

## FROM THE VICARAGE

Julian E LI White

So, how was Christmas for you?

Yes, doesn't that seem like a long time ago now but this is the time to reflect on how our church rose to the occasion – particularly in these uncertain Covid influenced times.

It was good to be back in the realm of something approaching normality and I thank all those who gave so much to stamp the season with a clear Christian message.

I am grateful to Graham Lambert who contacted me to report on the success of the Carols around the Christmas Tree venture at which £316 was raised to benefit the work of Medecins Sans Frontiere. In a letter of thanks from MSF wrote *'Support such as this is what allows us to respond swiftly during an emergency...we can respond to epidemics, conflicts and disasters at a moment's notice, so a huge thank you!'* This, surely, is a fine example of Christianity in action, by the community. After almost two years, it is good to see people mingling once again (albeit with restrictions) and are pleased that the church has played their part in this process.

In a continuing spirit of optimism, we look forward with anticipation to arrangements for the summer fete. At the time of writing we await a preparatory planning meeting for this and trust that those who have been involved in previous years – along with fresh faces – will rise to the opportunity presented. This is a significant undertaking in our year where community concern is paramount.

We trust, now that restrictions appear to be receding, that people are more inclined to avail themselves of the social opportunities at hand and to enjoy fellowship which has been curtailed in the last couple of years.

Those of you who might be ecclesiastical groupies will doubtless be interested to learn that we now have a new Archbishop of Wales. The Most Reverend Andrew John is in office. He has served as Bishop of Bangor for thirteen years and succeeds Archbishop John Davies who held this role for the past four years.

And so we face the new year unfolding before us. Every year I am optimistic at this point in time (sometimes with regrets later!) as it seems to hold the promise of fresh beginnings. I wish you all sincere blessings for the duration lying ahead.

Julian White  
(Rector)

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If you could spare a few hours here and there then we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Sally Saysell on 01291 641369.



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## CHILDREN IN NEED



School Council organised some fun activities for this charity event including cake decorating, Pudsey paintings and posters, designing a Pudsey outfit, Disco Gymn and a Joe Wicks workout - we raised £281.50 for this good cause.

## DELVE & DISCOVER



Classrooms were transformed before Christmas to winter wonderlands, santa's workshop and nativity stables as part of our delve & discover introduction to their December topic learning. The younger children were thrilled that Santa found time to send them personalised video recordings too!

## WINTER FAYRE



We enjoyed a covid-safe outdoor Christmas market in December - the weather was kind to us with only a few spots of rain at the very end! Thank you to the Drama Queens who provided some entertainment, helping us make a £1900 profit for school funds.

For more information about our school, please visit our website:  
[www.shirenewton.merseyside.sch.uk](http://www.shirenewton.merseyside.sch.uk)

## CLEARWELL CAVES



Darbarth Reception and Blyddyn Un (Y1) enjoyed a fun trip to Clearwell Caves on Monday as part of their Christmas topic and were thrilled to find Santa in one of the caves!

## COMPETITION WINNER

Llwygyfarchiadou to Tairn (Y6) for producing the winning entry of the Heddli Bach's "Stay Safe at Christmas" poster campaign.



## SHIRENEWTON W.I.

### Paint On Me Pottery

A New Year, new found creative skills. Gail and Kazzie from Paint On Me Pottery in Chepstow led our January meeting and helped us to get the New Year off to a fresh start. We had a really fun evening painting our designs onto either plates, mugs or ceramic hearts. Even those of us who are



'artistically challenged' were pleasantly surprised by what we produced at the end of the evening, thanks to Gail and Kazzie's encouragement and advice. We are all looking forward to seeing the 'finished' results once our artwork has been fired.

The room was unusually quiet as we concentrated so hard on the task in hand. It is always the sign of a good meeting when no one wants to pack up at the end of it.



Our next meeting will be on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>

February at 7.15pm at Shirenewton Recreation Hall. Our speaker will be Angela Gray. She has studied Egyptology for many years and her new talk will be on Ancient Egyptian Jewellery.

If you would like to join us, then please contact Jane Butterworth at [janeb247@gmail.com](mailto:janeb247@gmail.com) or Diane Ashton Smith (01291 628838)

Jackie Broughton

## PARISH MAGAZINE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

It's that time of year again when you are requested to pay your annual subscription for the ten copies of the parish magazine which will then be delivered to your home throughout 2022.

We are pleased that we have managed to keep the annual subscription for 2022 at £12.00 per annum, the same price as last year.

A payment slip with advice about who and how to pay, together with an envelope addressed to the person who delivers your magazine, is included in each of your copies this month.

Thank you for your continued support of our parish magazine.

Aileen Doggett

[aileendoggett@btinternet.com](mailto:aileendoggett@btinternet.com)

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## **Shirenewton Community Council**

### **Extracts from the minutes of the January meeting**

**Councillor Vacancies:** No applications received for two current vacancies in the Shirenewton and Mynyddbach wards. Any further vacancies will not be advertised by Monmouthshire County Council as we are now within six months of the 2022 elections.

### **Planning applications considered in January:**

#### **DM/2021/01976 The Hollies, Usk Road, Earlswood**

Council noted the application for Alterations and extensions to existing dwelling

Recommendation: Objection – due to insufficient detail on exterior finishes and colours and a bat report is requested with more detail.

### **Other items of interest**

#### **Police Report**

Police Inspector Nikki Hughes provided an overview, with regards to trialing a slimmer report, inviting smaller engagement groups online and/or offline and welcoming local priorities from Councillors. A 92% reduction in anti-social behavior was reported.

Priorities discussed –

Motorcycle overtaking on double white lines – Nikki Hughes agreed to report back on equipment available and proposals.

Potential for a 20mph Launch campaign to promote police enforcement, Nikki Hughes agreed to liaise with “Go Safe” colleagues and Community Officer and to liaise on a social media campaign.

#### **Footpath Update**

It was noted at the Community Council Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022, that work had started and good progress was being made, on both the footpath from Earlswood Road to the Recreation Field and the footpath from Earlswood Road to Newton Manor.

The resurfacing and new steps work, to make the footpaths more pedestrian friendly, has now been completed. Below are some photos so that you can see what has been achieved.



## Update on the Recreation Field Hard Path Project

Councillor Williamson has been working with Rachel Carter, the Local Places for Nature Officer at One Voice Wales to complete a Heritage Lottery Expression of Interest Application. Two drafts have been completed and feedback on the second has been received from Ms Carter. Councillor Williamson will complete a third draft and upload it to the Heritage Lottery portal.

Councillor Williamson has also located a Pembrokeshire based organization who can provide advice on the creation of bog gardens, such as the one in Shirenewton's plan. He will be contacting them to see what assistance could be offered.



## **Extracts from County Councillor Louise Brown's monthly report:**

### **County Councillor Brown advised the following:**

#### **Economy and Development Special Select Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2021**

There was a special select committee to consider the implications of the Welsh Government (WG) response to the consultation on Monmouthshire's RLDP high growth preferred strategy. The implication being that no new sites would be required on the basis of the likely amount of windfall sites and planning sites from the current LDP. The concern being about the need for more affordable housing.

The Planning Inspector decides on the acceptable level of growth for the RLDP when it eventually comes before him or her and the inspectorate is independent from the Welsh Government Officers. However, there is a risk that the plan could be found to be unsound if the MCC RLDP high growth strategy is continued with and the planning inspector decides to agree with the Chief Planning Officers' recent consultation response, as opposed to have a more independent view.

The Cabinet Member indicated that there was a need within the next few months to attempt to negotiate with the Welsh Government Minister, as the consultation response was from WG Officers and there was agreement about the need for more affordable housing. However, there is still a requirement for the RLDP to be in line with the National Future Wales Plan- 2040 which does not see Monmouthshire as a high growth area.

In my opinion, the report seeks to justify and defend the current RLDP high growth strategy and not deal with the gap between that and the Welsh Government Chief Planning Officers consultation response to MCCs preferred high growth strategy .

The following link provides the report and the meeting can also be watched:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=137&Mid=5243>

## **County Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2021**

At the County Council on the above date the Cabinet Member gave a statement on the impact of COVID-19 on schools in Monmouthshire at item 4. There was also an answer at item 6c from the Cabinet Member for infrastructure and neighbourhood services on the rollout of the 20mph zones, firstly, in the pilot areas and secondly, for other areas in Monmouthshire including the ones in the Shirenewton Ward:

A MCC press release on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December, stated that:

".....The other 20mph zones agreed for this financial year are in Devauden, Mathern, Monmouth including Wyesham) Mynyddbach, Shirenewton and two parts of Chepstow (Mounon Road and the town centre). The 21-day consultation for the Traffic Order for these will commence in early February and, provided there are no objections raised that cannot be resolved, the 20mph zones will be implemented in March 2022. Monmouthshire County Council is also proposing to make the Raglan and Tintern trial 20mph zones permanent, a move widely supported."

It remains to be seen if MCC can keep to this postponed timetable for our area, although Mark Hand from MCC has indicated that he appreciates "...the timetable has slipped but please be reassured we remain committed to delivering these projects."

The County Council reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=143&MIId=4729>

**Dates of next meetings: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 7.00 pm and Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March** by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall, if possible, or by a remote meeting if government coronavirus restrictions still apply.

**Find more information in draft copies of the minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous, approved minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's website [www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk](http://www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk)**

**Contact the Clerk – Natasha Jones, Squirrel's Gate, Devauden, Chepstow NP16 6PE**  
**Tel: 01291 650133 Email: [shirenewtoncc@gmail.com](mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com)**

## Christmas Time around Shirenewton Church

Many thanks to everyone who supported a busy round of village events. We started off with our annual 'Advent Fair' on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Dec which this year we were able to hold in the Church Room and, by buying cake, mincemeat and marmalade, we raised over £700 for Danilo and his village in Burkina Faso via CompassionAid

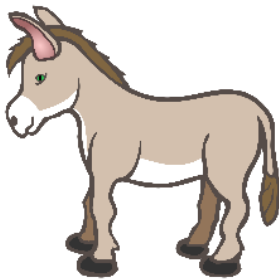


Jane and I would like to thank Julie and Mark from Earlswood for donating a beautiful homegrown village Christmas tree, and to thank the SCC for their contribution towards the village Christmas celebrations. We were lucky to have the local lumberjacks volunteering to put the tree up in the TA carpark which they did with ease and elegance. Hmmm. And they helped to string up the lights, which did work. Eventually. Thanks to the other willing workers who were busy inside the church decorating it with greenery, tartan bows and candles. It looked beautiful and smelled of pine and Christmas. The weather continued to hold fair for us for the 'Carols Around the Village Christmas Tree' on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>. The Chepstow Town Band was great and I don't think our singing would have been nearly as brave or as lusty without our local silver band. The collection plus the monies from our 'Come and Praise Carol Service' on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> resulted in us sending £316.00 to 'Medicine sans Frontieres'.

And the 'Walk-About Christingle' on Christmas Eve was great! It was a quite different service, all outside and people were able to visit the Kings and the Angels, the Shepherds, and the Innkeepers as they made the short journey to Bethlehem, from the Church Room porch to the veranda of The Chantry, making their own Christingles as they travelled. And it was made even more special by the presence of two lovely donkeys! Many thanks to Avis and

her family who brought them down to take part in our nativity. We have sent £203 to 'The Children's Society'. And the donkeys kindly left me a small donation which will improve my roses.

Carol Service' on Sun 19<sup>th</sup> resulted in us sending £316.00 to 'Medicine sans Frontieres'.



So many people helped and supported our services and our fund raising in December - and who knew that those donkeys would help to raise the profile of the area to Posh Village Status as noted last week in the national newspapers.

Thank you also to everyone who continues to leave bags of food under my veranda for the Food Bank in Bulwark. It is hugely appreciated, and it continues to be greatly needed. Happy New Year. Glynis



# *SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY*

*Registered Charity No. 1090167*

We had a change of plan for our December meeting because of the increase in the number of covid infections. We had planned to have our talk at the Church Room, the topic of the talk was 'Geology and Scenery' given by Naylor Firth and then we were going to proceed into the church to view the heritage boards, that had been completed during the first lock-down and back to the Church Room to celebrate the society's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our first Christmas meeting was held in St. Thomas a Becket Church to we thought that would be appropriate for this occasion.

Unfortunately, it was not to be. As we thought it would be more sensible to hold our meeting on 'zoom' instead because of the upturn in the covid numbers. Despite the change, we had a good meeting, Naylor's talk took us around the world while sitting in our own home, America, Japan Italy we had an excellent insight into how the earth is formed and how volatile the construction. We will plan to hold our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary later in the year when things settle down again.

The February's meeting will take place on 'zoom' and will be on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, at 7.00pm the speaker will be Richard Clammer and the title of the talk will be 'The Matthew'.

We are hoping to meet in person at the Church Room for our March meeting which will be on Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm the speaker will be Jonathon Jenkins who will give a talk entitled 'The Lent Lilly'.

*Shirenewton  
Local  
History Society.*

*Walks in and  
around Shirenewton*

Six Historical Walks  
around Shirenewton



Shirenewton Local History Society



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## FROM THE REGISTERS

It is with great sadness that we report the death of John Eede on 20<sup>th</sup> October at the age of 81. He was well known in the community through his work on the Community Council and his involvement in local golf clubs, and he will be sadly missed. The funeral was held at the church of St Mary's, Chepstow on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

## CHURCH SERVICES ON ZOOM

Some services will be available to join via Zoom, if you cannot attend in person. Please contact Gilly Lambert (see contact list) if you would like to be included on the distribution for Zoom service invitations.

### **Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in November:**

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Angharad Thomas | 2. Penny Thomas     |
| 3. Cheryl Lloyd    | 4. Rebecca Halliday |



**Eileen O' Dwyer**

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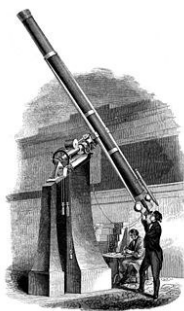
## STARGAZING



The constellation of Orion the Hunter lies directly to the South in the evening. Four bright stars represent his shoulders and legs whilst a further three form his belt. The reddish star at the top left is called Betelgeuse and is one of the larger stars that can be seen. It is a red super-giant star and is destined to blow up as a supernova.

If it were to explode today, it would become as bright as the Moon. The bright white star at lower right is called Rigel and is a blue super-giant. This is an extremely powerful star but at great distance, and is at least 60,000 times more luminous than the Sun. Most bright stars have Arabic names. Very old star names originated among people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula more than a thousand years ago. Some are later Arabic translations of ancient Greek names. Betelgeuse is an Arabic name meaning the "hand of Orion" whilst Rigel translates as the "Foot of the Central One".

The Moon is full on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February. The brilliant planet Venus can be seen early in the morning on the south-east horizon. NASA has some beautiful images relating to astronomy on the internet at [apod.nasa.gov/apod/](http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/).

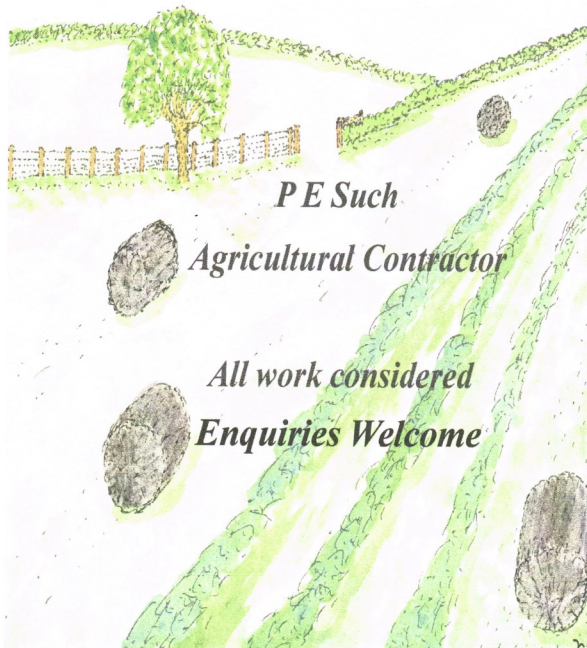


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## ***Gardening Corner***

Happy New Year to you all. Hopefully you had a great holiday period, even if the New Year celebrations were curtailed somewhat. Ours didn't go quite according to plan as our hosts for Christmas day were impacted by Covid just before the big day, which meant that we spent the time 'home alone'. One of our son-in-law's and granddaughter's tested positive just a few days before, but that's life. Our experience thus far, was very minor in comparison to many other families. Although very mild on occasions, the weather wasn't exactly brilliant as we continued to receive day after day of wet and grey which meant suitable days for getting out in the garden were limited. It did mean that I could get on and catch up on several 'cleaning up' jobs, not to mention future planning for when things do improve. I did manage to get most of the hedges cut for example, as I have mentioned previously, we must have well over a mile of hedges as they are all (but one) double-sided. This can be quite daunting when you first start, but fortunately not all of the hedges involve having to clear away the cut material, which often takes as much time as the cutting in the first place. There is still time to cut your hedges, and evergreen ones can be left until March if necessary. I try to avoid cutting this late if I can, as the first birds to nest will be well on with the process, and I try to avoid disturbing them if I possibly can. That said, a small hand-held hedge-cutter will in no way disturb birds as much as say a machine flail cutter. As the soil starts to dry out a bit I will make a tentative start on some of the jobs that need to be done on the raised vegetable beds and the flower borders. I did manage to get nearly all of the dahlia tubers dug before the hardest frosts arrived, although you do need a light frost or two to kill the top growth off first before you dig them up. The tubers have been stored in the smaller of the two greenhouses, as this has a bubble wrap inner liner to help keep it frost free. Normally, we would then split the tubers up in spring, throw away the diseases or rotting parts, and then re-pot in fresh compost, to get them on growing ready for planting out when the last frosts are gone. However, this year I intend to try growing them differently in that we will start them into growth, and then take cuttings which, once rooted, will be potted on. We will then use these instead for growing outside during the summer.

We had watched one of the gardening programmes where a seasoned grower of dahlia's said you should never use the old tubers, because the results are never as good. The new plants derived from taking cuttings always proved to be much brighter and deeper in colour than the tubers. To prove the point, they showed a few flowers derived from a tuber grown plant and some from one raised by a cutting. The difference between the two was amazing as the former were a pale, washed out colour, whilst the latter looked as though they were a completely different variety.

Unfortunately, because of the continuing wet weather, we didn't manage to get the gladioli corms dug, so I'm hoping to complete this task in the next few days as dry weather has been forecast. I like to move the gladioli around in the garden if I can. The main reason being that the new season corms develop on top of the old, so if you leave them in the ground for several year's they rise higher in the soil each year and this results in the plants being so top heavy, they easily fall or blow over in the wind when the flowers develop. As with dahlia's, they are easily killed by a hard frost as well, so always best lifted if at all possible. We like to grow these for cut flowers in the house and for the local shows, but they are not easy to sell. The usual response from potential customers is that the blooms are 'too big' and we 'don't have a vase big enough'! We think they are a stunning cut flower with instant impact. If you have roses, then now is the ideal time to prune them. We grow mainly English roses from David Austin, which tend to be very easy to prune and generally result in a summer long display of gorgeous scented blooms. Established shrub roses for example should just have their height reduced by half first and then all you need to do is remove any dead, dying, weak or diseased growth. Although many 'sages' recommend cutting to an outward facing bud amongst other things, David Austin claim there is no evidence to support this view. So just cut in half wherever that might be.

Talking of cut flowers we have both been pleased to see the support growing (no pun intended) for home grown flowers, rather than those imported from around the world. This does of course mean that purchasers (and of course growers) have to adapt to the seasons. Now many UK based growers can achieve excellent results throughout the year, simply by using unheated greenhouses and tunnels. The varieties and quantity of home-grown flowers has increased immensely as the slogan 'Grown, not flown' has started to impact the market. So, rather than fly roses and other exotic species half way around the world, where growing practices are definitely dubious (using vast quantities of irreplaceable underground water, gallons of pesticide etc.) to say the least. What is wrong with home produced daffodils in December. I'm sure it will take some time for the market to adapt to more seasonal produce (including vegetables and fruit), but it is something we should all be thinking of. Some of you may have seen a programme on (I think) channel 5 before Christmas which briefly looked at the 'Billionaire flower market'. I guess this market will never disappear, but to spend something like £25,000 for flowers, just for a 50<sup>th</sup> birthday bash with some 30 friends does make you wonder, not to mention the eye watering amount to decorate the lobby of a five-star hotel, for Christmas. Pretty well every flower and the supporting material used, will have been flown half way around the world. Like our food, there for late spring.

Obviously, we can't do much about the weather, and the generally mild weather has meant that we have been eating fresh cauliflowers every week, but the purple sprouting has run to seed and now is out in flower! I thought I had planted a mix of over-wintering varieties of cauliflower (I had mixed a couple of packets together to hopefully extend the harvesting period), so was amazed that many started cropping earlier than expected. I then found I had mixed the seed up and had mixed one packet of late and one packet of summer cauliflower, but the result has been great. No doubt the milder weather generally will have helped, but it has given me the idea to start mixing further vegetables seed together in an attempt to achieve similar results. Normally I plant onions and garlic outside. The garlic go in during October as the bulbs require a cold period to achieve their best results. After giving this some thought, I realised of course that most of these crops originated in warmer climates, and although they require watering, they do not like being drowned, so this year I have planted all of the garlic, and will plant half of the onions inside the tunnel. I have always struggled to know what to plant in the one long bed because the garden is on a slope and the tunnel has been put up across it. This has meant the top bed is quite close to the tunnel cover and so restricts the height of what can be grown. Garlic and onions therefore seem to be an obvious choice, but time will tell how successful this will be. The tunnel, because of its size can get very hot, but garlic is ready for harvesting in June, and onions need the sun and dry to ripen so hopefully this will all work out! Most of you won't have a large tunnel to play around with, but you can still try amazing results in a small greenhouse or by using larger cloches that are easily available. To help save electricity this year, I am not going to turn on the main heating bench in the small greenhouse until either the end of February or mid-March. Instead, I have bought a small propagator just for those crops that I need to get an early start with. This will include the large exhibition onions, early greens and broad beans, as well as some of the more hardier flower seeds. I do have other exhibition seeds to grow too, such as leeks and standard onions, but these are really best left until at least the end of this month through to mid/late February. Any earlier and the plants are likely to run to seed and spoil. Not what you want for exhibiting in the local shows! As I'm looking out of the window, the sun has now come up and starting to melt the hard frost. Time to get the secateurs out and finish off those roses whilst I can. Happy gardening until next month, best wishes, *Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



## FAIRTRADE NEWS January 2022

The current impending disaster that is climate change requires action on the level of the individual but, in my view **demands** action on a governmental level.

It is really encouraging to read that UK annual spending on ethical products surpasses £100 billion for the first time, as lifestyle changes linked to Covid and the climate crisis stoked demand for plant-based foods, second-hand clothes and furniture, and greener gadgets. The value of the 'green pound' surged by nearly a quarter to £122 billion in 2020, according to a new Co-op report. That total was bolstered by £57 billion of ethical savings and investments. The retailer's ethical consumerism report, which is a barometer of the extent to which consumers' shopping habits reflect their concerns about the environment, animal welfare and social justice, also found more shoppers were boycotting brands on ethical or social concerns. These businesses suffered a £3.9 billion loss of sales. Fairtrade food sales were **up** 14%.



Great! But a drop in the ocean. A very large ocean. And yes the ocean is only made up of drops. BUT we need governments to set the agenda. International companies have no ethical imperative (unless it is a B corp). Their job is to maximize profit for their owners and/or shareholders and minimize tax and they lobby politicians to improve their chances. As I have stressed before, supporting Fairtrade is a way to help producers out of poverty but it also enables them to cope better with the effects of climate change : environmental sustainability is a key criterion for the award of the FT mark. Practical Action, a charity founded on the principle of local solutions to poverty has developed an innovative idea called Pfumvudza.

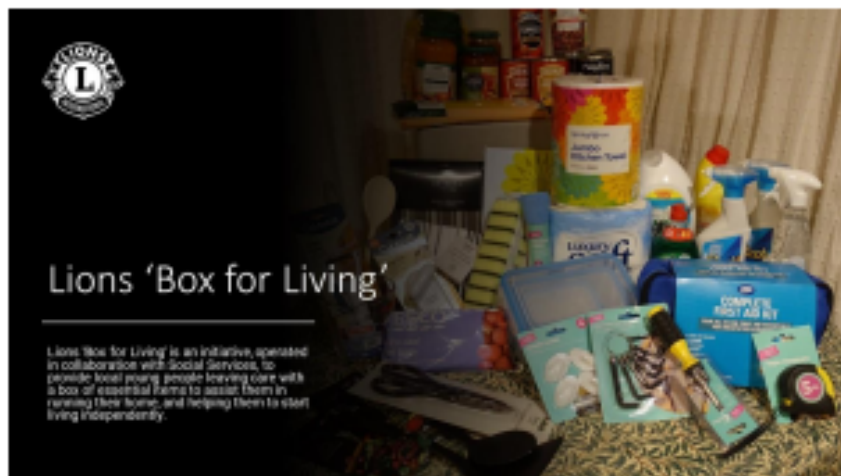
Zimbabwe's agricultural sector is predominantly smallholders- small family farms, the vast majority making a living on 1-2 hectares (the average English farm is 87 hectares) and reliant on rain-fed agriculture. Climate change is altering the weather patterns, and they are becoming less predictable and more extreme. Low rainfall, drought and cyclones have led to severe hardship.

On the basis that a family needs one bucket of maize per week to provide their staple diet, a simple model was developed. To fill one bucket with shelled maize would require 56 cobs weighing 300 gms each. If each plant produces at least one cob, 56 plants are required. Pfumvudza is a sustainable farming technique that involves planting in small pot holes that trap water. The addition of compost and ground cover mulch ensures the soil is well fertilised and also helps retain moisture. At just **16m**(28holes = 56 plants)**x39m**(52 rows) (half the size of an Olympic swimming pool) the plot is small enough to prepare, to manage with mulch, to weed and even small enough to water by hand if necessary. Each plot has the potential to feed a family for a year and a second plot can be used for cash crops such as sorghum, millet beans etc

FT products are available from Traidcraft (or me!) and Ethical Superstore, amongst other outlets.

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## 2021 'Box for Living' appeal

Every year at the run up to the festive season we run our main appeal. Last year we donated £3,000 to two food banks in our area. This year we are focusing on young people who are leaving care at the age of 18.

Lions 'Box for Living' is an initiative, operated in collaboration with Social Services, to provide local young people leaving care with a box of essential items to assist them in running their home, and helping them to start living independently.

This is a terrifying experience for many youngsters who have no experience of living in the wider world. They have no family to support them and no frame of reference for how to embark on setting up and running their own home. It can be a desperately lonely and scary experience.

Please help us in this effort. We aim to provide around 20 'Box for Living' at an estimated cost of £100 each. It has been a difficult couple of years for many of us but whatever you can donate to this appeal will help enormously.

**DONATE HERE>** <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/boxforliving>

**Alternatively**, cheques made payable to **Chepstow and Caldicot Lions Club**, can be sent to:

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## Nerys's Natty Nosh

### *Soup of roasted cauliflower leaves and stalks.*

#### *Ingredients*



Whole cauliflower  
Vegetable stock  
1 clove of garlic, crushed  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
2 tablespoons of butter  
1 tablespoon Olive oil  
Fresh herbs, such as parsley, chives, or chervil.

#### *Method*

Preheat the oven to 200C Gas 8.  
Toss the cut-up cauliflower with a generous

amount of olive oil.

Spread on a baking sheet and roast for 12/ 15 minutes until the outer leaves are charred.

Remove from the oven.

Heat the vegetable stock.

Put the cauliflower, garlic and herbs in a food processor and add a little stock. Purée and add more stock until you reach the consistency you desire.

Reheat the soup before adding the butter and Parmesan.

Season to taste

I served mine with some herbs and a cheese and ham frittata.

**Roquefort** is a flavourful ewe's milk blue cheese and is France's second most popular cheese. According to The Telegraph, eating **Roquefort cheese** could help to prevent cardiovascular disease due to its anti-inflammatory properties. Research has also found that this strong **cheese** is great for gut **health** and slowing down arthritis and signs of ageing, such as cellulite.





## **Cream of Celery Soup with Roquefort.**

### **Ingredients**

Whole bunch of celery, sliced  
1 large onion, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 low salt chicken stock cube  
100g Roquefort (use according to taste)  
300 ml milk

### **Method**

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic. Cook with a tight-fitting lid for 3 minutes. Add the celery. Replace the tight-fitting lid and continue cooking for 8 to 10 minutes until the celery is soft.

Add the stock cube and milk.

Continue to simmer the soup for 10 minutes.

Add the Roquefort, (use less if you find it overpowering)

Heat through.

Allow to cool slightly before liquidising. The soup will be very hot so do be careful.

Season to taste.

Can be served as an amuse bouche or at lunchtime.

**Cauliflower** is a cruciferous vegetable, a plant family that includes arugula, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, collard greens, kale, radishes, turnips and watercress. It has a rich supply of nutrients comparable to its green-coloured relatives in the cruciferous family. With a nutty and slightly sweet taste, cauliflower has become one of the trendiest vegetables over the last few years, making its way onto restaurant menus and dinner tables in a variety of ways, especially riced versions of the vegetable. Although vividly coloured fruits and veggies tend to be the healthiest, the white coloured cauliflower is a very versatile and vitamin-rich vegetable. It is a great source of vitamin C and folate, and a good source of fibre and vitamin K. It is also rich in phytochemicals and antioxidants, two naturally occurring compounds thought to play a role in preventing chronic diseases.



Steaming and boiling are probably the most common ways to cook cauliflower, but they can leave the vegetable mushy and bland. Roasting, sautéing and eating it raw retain more flavour. The shape of the florets and their mild taste make them perfect for dipping into dressings and sauces.

Cut it up and eat it raw, plain or with hummus or low-fat dressing. Roast the vegetable with a small amount of olive oil or use it in a stir-fry.

Mash cauliflower as a substitute for mashed potatoes.

Pulse cauliflower in a food processor until it forms rice-size pieces and enjoy it in place of white rice.

Use riced cauliflower in place of flour as the main ingredient in a homemade pizza crust.

Top it with breadcrumbs and bake in the oven for a tasty, healthy side dish. **Enjoy!**

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## **Your local RNLI branch needs you!**

RNLI Chepstow Branch has been raising funds for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution for many years. We hold social events such as coffee mornings, quizzes, talks and concerts, which are extremely popular and are good fun. We also run collections at local venues and in Chepstow itself.

But we need new committee members!

Would you be interested in helping us organise and run our events, to help raise money for this extremely worthy cause? If you would like to see what we do, please contact Anne Octon on 01291 641918 or John Gale on 01291 629753 and we'll invite you to our next committee meeting to meet other members and see what you think of our work.

We've started to get going again as restrictions begin to be lifted. We held a garden party in Shirenewton in July which everyone enjoyed and which raised over £500, and then in August a classical concert by the Chepstow trio Two Bows and a Stern, which again was a great success and raised £342. Every penny raised goes to the RNLI.

The RNLI was founded nearly 200 years ago, in 1824. It has over the years saved over 143,000 lives. It is the world's leading search and rescue service. Even at the height of the pandemic last year its crews saved over 10 lives a week. The loss of countless more lives is prevented all the time through its youth training and water safety work.

If you think you might like to be a part of this, please contact Anne or John. We very much look forward to hearing from you.





## SHIRENEWTON CHURCH WEBSITE

[www.shirenewtonchurch.com](http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com)

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and New Year.

Firstly, a word of praise for OpenReach and BT. Just before Christmas our gardener went through the broadband cable with his hedge trimmer. I called BT (our internet supplier) and an OpenReach engineer turned up within ½ hour and fixed it! Apparently, the young lady I spoke to at BT classified it as a broken wire and urgent – clearly my charm worked! So, not only was it fixed within the hour but there was no charge. Happy days.

There was a very interesting article in Wired late last year (<https://tinyurl.com/yk58k69z>) which looks at tracking on Android. This is following Apple's App Tracking Transparency tools introduction early in the year. Apple's tools allow iPhone and iPad owners to stop apps from tracking their behaviour and using their data for personalized advertising. Apparently, since their introduction, almost \$10 billion has been wiped from the revenues of Snap, Meta Platform's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The article explains the problem is that *"The vast majority of apps have third-party trackers tucked away in their code. These trackers monitor your behaviour across different apps and help create profiles about you that can include what you buy, demographic data, and other information that can be used to serve you personalized ads."*

The author goes on to explain: *"Using a box-fresh Google Pixel 6 Pro, I installed 36 popular free apps—some estimates claim people install around 40 apps on their phones—and logged into around half of them. These included the McDonald's app, LinkedIn, Facebook, Amazon, and BBC Sounds. Then, with a preview of DuckDuckGo's Android tracker blocking turned on, I left the phone alone for four days and didn't use it at all. In 96 hours, 23 of these apps had made more than 630 tracking attempts in the background."*

*Using your phone on a daily basis—opening and interacting with apps—sees a lot more attempted tracking. When I opened the McDonald's app, trackers from Adobe, cloud software firm New Relic, Google, emotion-tracking firm Apptentive, and mobile analytics company Kochava tried to collect data about me. Opening the eBay and Uber apps—but not logging into them—was enough to trigger Google trackers."*

As the saying goes, if the software is free you are the product!

There has been no anti-tracking equivalent on Android until now. DuckDuckGo is introducing such an option. Unfortunately it's in beta and there is a waiting list to join. I'm on the waiting list but haven't yet had the call! I'm looking forward to being able to control the tracking.

In other news, WhatsApp is introducing the ability to have all chats disappear by default. In short, its disappearing messages feature, lets users set messages in a chat to automatically be deleted after a set period of time. WhatsApp says users will now have the option to turn on disappearing messages automatically for all their new one-on-one chats, so that all future messages will be automatically deleted from the service. I understand that, currently, there is only the option of having messages disappear after seven days. However, shortly the option of deleting them after just 24 hours or 90 days will be introduced.

Finally, Santander has issued a warning that the so called 'Hello Mum' (or 'Hello Dad') scam has 'skyrocketed' recently. Santander says it has been inundated with reports from customers being caught out by the scam circulating on WhatsApp.

Apparently, parents receive a message from a random number purporting to be a son or daughter who has lost their phone. Once (gullible?) parents are 'convinced' they are speaking to their child, scammers ask them to send money to cover an imminent payment coming out of their accounts. Action Fraud has reported that parents have already lost tens of thousands of pounds to this 'new con'. There is a simple answer if they try this on you: reply with: 'call me to discuss'!

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## **The PT Shed – 2022 Episode 1 – I do solemnly swear...**

...that I am up to some good! (To paraphrase a line in a certain book!).

Happy New Year to everybody! I hope that you, and your families, had a lovely break over the festive period and have had a great start to 2022.

In the previous episode, I mentioned how people can often fall off their New Year's Resolution a few weeks into January. I wrote about mindset plus having a purpose and meaning behind why you are taking a particular course of action.

I want to revisit this a little because I've seen the impact of this in the gym already this year. New people have come in and I've seen them standing around, unsure of what to do. I understand this fully, it can be an intimidating place. It has lots of weird-looking machines that you are never quite sure which way you need to get in or how you use them! The interesting thing here is, when I have offered help and assistance, I have had a range of reactions from gratitude to outright rudeness!

Why do I mention this? It is because people have gone into the gym without a plan. There isn't any real intent behind what they are doing. As a result, there is aimless meandering and a lack of progress. As humans, we often get disillusioned with a lack of discernible progress, particularly when we treat the process as a form of penance! We also mustn't forget the fear factor as well. The fear of the unknown is a huge barrier for many people and something that I always consider when people are rude to me! I remind myself that their reaction is one born from fear, maybe a nervousness that they have been identified as not knowing what they are doing...and not many people enjoy being on the back foot!

The inevitable result here is that people do not enjoy the gym and end up quitting, often with the refrain of "oh, that just doesn't work for me".

Please note that this applies to all situations, not just the gym! As I mentioned in my last episode, it is not enough to simply "join the gym" or "eat healthier". We need to uncover the true reasons of why we are taking these actions.

Let me ask you. What is the purpose of the action that you are undertaking? What is the desired outcome? Maybe you need to improve your health. Maybe you do just want to feel and look better. Every and any reason is valid, provided that it means something to you.

This is the key point, 'meaning something to you'. It is not for me to say that you need to be healthier/lose weight/eat differently. It is for you to identify that you want to do something. There needs to be a linkage to a greater purpose. For you, when you can identify 'what' you want to achieve and, more importantly, 'why' you want to achieve it; we can start to explore the 'how'. This is a key factor that I put across to anybody that I speak to.

As we think about how you can achieve your goals, we need to consider your own personal readiness, willingness and ability to achieve it. There is nothing worse than something being forced upon somebody because they feel it is the right thing to do. Sadly, this is what we see all too often in January. You will have noticed the multitude of adverts for diet plans, exercise plans etc. Please be assured that these are not a silver bullet.

You can often be ready and willing to make a change. You can sign up to the latest celebrity diet/exercise plan to demonstrate that readiness and willingness, but then find it difficult to stick to it. This can simply be that you don't have the ability to follow that particular plan at this moment in time. One of the common factors with many January 'fads' is they can be hard-hitting and bring quick results. However, they are often unsustainable simply because they are too difficult to adhere to long-term.

I much prefer the gentler approach, searching for the incremental things that are achievable 80% of the time. Is it possible to drink an extra glass of water a day? Most of you would say yes and have confidence you could do so. This is not an unreasonable starting point. After all, most people don't drink enough water (by their own admission). If you were to take something that you had confidence you could achieve 80% of the time and strive to do that, you would soon find that it becomes a habit and second nature. Then you can then layer on other beneficial things that contribute to your bigger goal (e.g. swapping a snack for fruit).

As an example, when I work with somebody, the big change they are often making is to increase their activity. I don't then pull the rug from under their feet by changing their food habits, drastically increasing their water intake, insisting on increased sleep etc. It is really important to gradually seek incremental improvements. If I overwhelm somebody, then they will file everything in the 'too difficult' box and revert to their previous, familiar, comfortable space.

It is like learning to drive a car. When you first sit in a car, you don't learn the intricacies of navigating roundabouts or parallel parking. You learn the basics first. Therefore, please don't expect to go from 0-100 with your health! Start simple and make achievable choices! You may not be ready to go out and walk 6 miles a day, but you may be able to promise yourself you can get out for a 30-minute walk 4-5 times a week.

So, in 2022, spend some time to look in the mirror and be honest with yourself. What do you want to achieve? Why do you want to achieve it? What is the first, simple, step that you can take to get you on your way? If you can look yourself in the eye and say "I do solemnly swear that I can achieve what I've promised myself", then you are on the right track!

As these things only ever work if we all participate, I will tell you what my goals are. For the next month, I am going to ensure consistency of my water intake and complete my training sessions each week. I am also going to focus on working towards my charity activities (walk/run 1000 miles in 2022 along with my wife). That's my commitment to you all and I will report back in the next episode.

In return, tell me what your incremental improvements are that you are going to work on over the next month. I really want to help you all out. You can contact me via email, phone, or through my social media channels. They are all listed at the end of the article. Otherwise, please do not hesitate to stop me and talk to me if you see me around. I love talking all things health-related! I'll usually be in my Optimal Exercise gear and will often be accompanied by Winston, the resident Fitness Frenchie. As mentioned, I would love to hear how you have applied the advice in this article.

If you have any specific topics that you would like me to cover in future articles, please email me at [alex@optimalexercise.co.uk](mailto:alex@optimalexercise.co.uk) or contact me on 07877695510. If you want to see more regular content from me, please follow my Facebook page (Optimal Exercise) or my Instagram (@alexhopkinspt)

Until the next time, stay healthy!

Alex Hopkins – Optimal Exercise

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## THE BELLS, THE BELLS

The Shirenewton ringers had a less to do than is usual over Christmas as there was no midnight mass, so we assembled just for Christmas morning. For New Year we rang either side of midnight, with before having the bells half-muffled to mourn the passing of the year.

The New Year heralded the first of our tours for 2 years due to the Covid restrictions - the Winter Tour. Visiting other churches to ring the bells is a common activity for ringers and the majority of towers welcome visitors. This year we decided to visit Herefordshire in England as the Covid restrictions at the time on gatherings were less onerous than in Wales. So on the 8<sup>th</sup> January bright and early 12 ringers set forth to St Giles, Goodrich to sample the 6 bells within the slender steeple tower. Pre-reformation bells became a theme on this tour the heaviest bell of the 6 was dated 1480. Then we went onto St Mary, English Bicknor another ring of 6. There was then a 30 minute drive to St David, Little Dewchurch (5<sup>th</sup> bell c1350) and from there to St Mary, Tyberton a ring of 5. This was the last ring of the morning so a group photo was taken together with the vicar, although he seemed rather quiet!



Shirenewton ringers in the ringing room at Tyberton.



Then we headed into the Golden Valley for lunch at The Nags Head, Peterchurch which provided us with our own room and excellent food and drink.

In the afternoon we headed to St Faith, Dorstone, a fine ring of 6 bells (4<sup>th</sup> c1350). These bells had been augmented from 4 to 6 in 2019 and completed only a few months before the first lockdown, hence they had seen little use until our visit. The large ringing room was beautifully appointed and crammed with technical aids including full computer aided simulation and even a built in projector and screen for teaching purposes. Here we managed our best ringing of the day including a course of Cambridge Surprise Minor to impress the locals! Then we travelled down the Golden Valley to St Bartholomew, Vowchurch and thence on to St Margaret at St Margarets, both 3 bell towers. Many ringers would not include 3 or even 4 bell towers on their tours as the scope for change ringing is so limited (6 and 24 permutations respectively). However, often these tucked away churches contain other gems and St Margarets revealed a stunning minstrels galley, one of the very few to survive. At one time St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton would have had such a gallery



The minstrel's gallery at St Margarets

At the conclusion of ringing the band headed back home and in the evening to Earlswood as guests of Mike and Pip Penney for a post-tour celebration.

M.D.Penney.

January 2022

## Are you putting your online shopping to good use?

The **Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot** are raising funds for the local community even during these lockdowns. With us all being confined to home for work and play, most of us have had to utilise online shopping, and this is looking set to continue as the new normal.

The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot serve local communities including our own, and like everyone else have had to modernise through the use of technology. Some of their fundraising used to take place in supermarket doorways, but now a number of online mechanisms support their fundraising efforts.

One such fundraising tool is **Amazon Smile**. Every time you shop online at **smile.amazon.co.uk** Amazon will donate a percentage of the purchase to The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot.

To find out more about this and other ways to support The Lions Club of Chepstow and Caldicot including **Amazon Smile**, **Easyfundraising** and **Just Giving**, please go to: [www.chepstowcaldicotlions.org.uk/page-8.php](http://www.chepstowcaldicotlions.org.uk/page-8.php)



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## LOCAL CONTACTS

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Bill Clark  
Telephone 01291 641783 or email [parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com](mailto:parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com)*

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Ministry Area Leader (designate)	Revd Philip Averay <a href="mailto:revphilipaveray@gmail.com">revphilipaveray@gmail.com</a>	01291 620980
Rector	Revd Julian White <a href="mailto:Jel.white@btinternet.com">Jel.white@btinternet.com</a>	01291 622317
Parish Priest	Revd Nansi Davies CBE	01633 400 519
Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	07821 725 690
Church Wardens – Rector's	Sally Saysell	01291 641 369
– People's	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
PCC Secretary	Vacancy	
PCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
PCC Members	Janet Horton	01291 641 783
	James Leney	01291 641 271
	Frances Gray	01291 622 465
	Paul Morcombe	01291 641 671
	John Montague	<a href="mailto:jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk">jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk</a>
	Wendy Montague	<a href="mailto:wendymontague@hotmail.co.uk">wendymontague@hotmail.co.uk</a>
Gift Aid Secretary	Vacant	01291 641 411
Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650 521
	James Leney	01291 641 271
Sunday Club	Lynn Morcombe	01291 641 671
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Glynis MacDonald	01291 641 818
Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
200 Club	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459

### Church of St Tewdric's Mathern

<b>Secretary</b>	Jen Marendaz	01291 329 422
<b>Church Warden</b>	Elsbeth Morlan	01291 627 538
	Peter Pope	01291 624 453

### Ministry Area Transition Team

<b>(Mathern Group)</b>	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
	James Leney	01291 641 271
	Ros Downs	

### MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives

<b>Community Council Clerk</b>	Natasha Jones	01291 650133	<a href="mailto:shirenewtoncc@gmail.com">shirenewtoncc@gmail.com</a>
<b>Shirenewton Ward:</b>	Hannah Adams		<a href="mailto:hannah.a@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">hannah.a@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
Chair	Philip Butterworth	01291 641704	<a href="mailto:philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
	Keith M Dunn OBE	01291 641152	<a href="mailto:keith.d@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">keith.d@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
	Vacancy		
<b>Mynyddbach Ward</b>	Elizabeth Wixcey	01291641216	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.w@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">elizabeth.w@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
	Louise Brown	07598979719	<a href="mailto:louise.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">louise.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
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<b>Earlswood Ward</b>	Jayne McKenna	01291 691774	<a href="mailto:jayne.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">jayne.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
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<b>Newchurch West</b>	Ian Martin	01291 650014	<a href="mailto:ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk">ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk</a>
<b>MCC for Shirenewton</b>	Louise Brown	07598 97971	<a href="mailto:louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk">louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Member of Parliament</b>	David Davies	020 7219 8360	<a href="mailto:daviesd@parliament.uk">daviesd@parliament.uk</a>

## **Police Neighbourhood Watch Contacts**

**Neighbourhood Police Officer** Matt Scree matthew.screen@gwent.pnn.police.uk  
**Neighbourhood CSO** Andrew Jones Andrew.jones@gwent.pnn.police.uk

## **Other Local Organisations**

**Beavers** Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548  
**Church Fete**  
**Earlswood Hope** Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726  
**Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall**  
Glynis MacDonald 01291 641818  
glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com  
**Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel**  
Avril Smith 01291 627677  
**Gaerllwyd Baptist** Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA  
**Ranger Guides** Helen Cann 01291 6628534 cannhelen@gmail.com  
**Recreation Association** Beverly Lyndsay 07798 780971 beverlylyndsay@btinternet.com  
**Recreation Hall booking** Beryl Saysell 01291 641637 saysellberyl@gmail.com  
**St Peters Church Newchurch**  
Enid Heritage 01291 622708  
enidheritage@gmail.com

## **Shirenewton Local History Society**

Dorothy Brabon 01291 641376 brabonn1@hotmail.com

## **Gwent Wildlife Trust Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Meadows** **(previously SAMFAL)**

01600 740600

## **Caerwent Group Mothers Union**

Treasurer Rosemary Carey 01291 425010 crcandkili@tiscali.co.uk  
Bridget Evans 01291 408125 bridget.caldicot@gmail.com

## **Shirenewton Operatic and Dramatic Society (SODS)**

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Beverly Lindsay Shirenewtonplaygroup@gmail.com

## **Shirenewton Play Group**

## **Shirenewton Primary School**

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Jayne Edwards 01291 641774  
jayneedwards@monmouthshire.gov.uk

## **Shirenewton Toddler Group**

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## **Shirenewton Tennis Association**

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## **Fairtrade/Traidcraft**

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