

Shirenewton Parish Magazine



December 2025

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THE ARCHBISHOP'S ENTHRONEMENT

Our bishop, Cherry Vann, was enthroned as Archbishop of Wales at St Woolos Cathedral, Newport, on Saturday, 8th November. (She will also continue as Bishop of Monmouth).

The Archbishop was greeted at the entrance to the cathedral by a young member of the Choir at the font in the oldest part of the Cathedral, where Gwynllyw (Woolos) founded his church in 5th century.

The oaths of office were taken using the Monmouth Archbishops' Bible used at the enthronement of all previous Bishops of Monmouth who have become Archbishop of Wales - Edwin Morris, Derek Childs and Rowan Williams. Cherry was enthroned in the Archepiscopal Chair in front of the High Altar.

Once formally pronounced as Archbishop, Cherry was visibly moved by the warmth of the applause and cheers from the large congregation, which went on for several minutes. She then gave an address, based on a poem "In search of a round table" (see the box).

Attending the service were clergy and lay representatives from across Wales, as well as representatives of the [Church of England](#), the [Church of Ireland](#), the [Scottish Episcopal Church](#) and the Archbishop of Uppsala, representing the [Porvoo Churches](#), an ecumenical fellowship of European Anglican and Evangelical Lutheran churches.

The music for the service was led by the Director of Music, Tom Coxhead, and the Cathedral Choir and included The Call of Wisdom by Will Todd, composed for the Diamond Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. A Welsh-language Kyrie composed by Paul Mealor, was sung by the young Welsh bass-baritone Owain Wyn Rowlands. The former Royal Harpist, Alis Huws, also took part. Hymns were sung in a mixture of Welsh and English (a bit of a challenge for those of us who are not Welsh speakers, but we gave it a good go!)



Prayers were led by pupils from schools in Cardiff and St Davids. The service concluded with an Act of Commitment to the mission of the church and with a chorister asking the Archbishop if she will promote the wellbeing and unity of the Church and be a Good Shepherd to her people after the example of Christ.

The Cross of Wales, a processional Cross given by The King as a gift to the churches in Wales for its centenary, led the procession into the cathedral.

Originally from Leicestershire, Cherry was ordained as a deacon in 1989. She was then among the first women to be ordained as a priest in the Church of England in 1994. After serving in various roles in the Diocese of Manchester, including as chaplain to the deaf community, she served as Archdeacon of Rochdale for 11 years before being consecrated as Bishop of Monmouth in 2020.

SERVICES AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH

Sunday 30 th Nov (1 st Sunday in Advent)	10.00	No service at Shirenewton Group Eucharist Service at Mathern Church.
Sunday 07 th Dec (2 nd Sunday in Advent)	10.00	Morning Praise with Hymns
Sunday 14 th Dec (3 rd Sunday in Advent)	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
MONDAY 15 th Dec	6.00PM	Community Carol Service
Sunday 21 st Dec (4 th Sunday in Advent)	10.00	Carols and Communion
WEDNESDAY 24 TH Dec	11.30PM	Midnight Mass for Christmas
THURSDAY 25 TH Dec	10.00	Christmas Morning Family Service
Sunday 28 th Dec	10.00	No Service at Shirenewton Group Eucharist Service at St Pierre Church

During January the regular Sunday Morning Services at Shirenewton will take place in the Church Rooms on the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th January 2026 at 10AM.

All are welcome to join us and enjoy refreshments and fellowship after Sunday Morning Services.

Information of services at the twelve local churches that make up the SevernWye Ministry Area (MA) can be found at: www.severnwyema.co.uk and elsewhere in the magazine



An extract from "In search of a Round Table" by Chuck Laythrop

Concerning the why and how and what and who of ministry, one image keeps surfacing: A table that is round.

It will take some sawing to be roundtabled.

Some redefining and redesigning, some redoing and rebirthing of narrow-long Churching can painful be, for people and tables.

It would mean no daising and throning, for but one king is there and he is a foot washer, at table no less.

And what of narrow-long ministers when they confront a round table people,

After years of working up the table to finally sit at its head

Only to discover that the table has been turned around?

They must be loved into roundness,

For God has called a People, not 'them and us'.

'Them and us' are unable to gather round; for at a round table there are no sides and ALL are invited to wholeness and to food..

Roundtabling means no preferred seating, no first and last, no better,

And no corners for the 'least of these.'

Roundtabling means being with, a part of, together and one. It means room for the Spirit and gifts and disturbing profound peace for all.

You can still watch the service in full by going to the Church in Wales website, under News. The video of the service can be found by scrolling down the page.

Advent Fair

Sunday 7th December 11:00 - 12:00

In the Church Room

Hand crafted Christmas goodies

Cakes, Biscuits, Mincemeat, Jams, Jellies and Marmalades,

A raffle. Coffee and mince pies.

The money raised will go to

Médecins sans Frontières



Carols Around the Village Christmas Tree

With the Chepstow Town Band!

Sunday 7th December at 6.30

'The Tredegar Arms' Car Park.

The Cash Collection will go to:

Ty Hafan Children's Hospice & St David's Hospice

Bring a torch, some gloves, a warm hat. And loud voices!

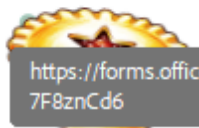
If it's raining, we will head up to the candle-lit church.

The Tredegar Arms will be open for drinks and mince pies afterwards.

You are invited to our first...

Community Carol Service

**15th December 6:00pm
at Shirenewton Church**



<https://forms.office.com/r/7F8znCd6>

**Shirenewton Primary School's Pupil
Leadership Team and
Rev Zoe would like you to join us for
some carols, with refreshments
afterwards.**

**Our School Choir will also be
performing**

**If you would like to join us, please scan
the QR code or click on the link
<https://forms.office.com/e/Fw7F8znC>**



MOTHER MARY ...

I wonder what comes to mind when we picture Mary?

We might think of "Mother Mary, meek and mild".

And yet we may be familiar with Mary's Song, known as The Magnificat, which is essentially, Mary glorifying God after he has sent his messenger to her to tell her all about the upcoming role he has chosen for her, in the life of the coming Messiah.

She is to be His mother - to carry Him and birth Him. She will one day soon, hold God in her hands as a fragile baby. I'm sure all sorts of things must have been going on in her head and her heart when the angel brought her that message.

But, my brothers and sisters, meek and mild she was not!!

The Magnificat is a song of defiance and triumph, a song of courage and faith in God overthrowing the powerful, lifting up the lowly, casting down the proud from their thrones. Mary's song is actually understood by many to be the epitome of revolutionary.

At various points in their history, it's reported that the governments of Guatemala, India, and Argentina banned the recitation of the Magnificat, when they feared being overthrown by the populace. The Magnificat's message was considered too empowering to the impoverished masses, and its message of God's preferential love for the poor was seen as risking inciting social unrest.

All because a young woman, of no special fame, of no status or power in semi-rural Nazareth, was chosen by God to bring his Son into the world. And she sings about it.

And her song is so moving, so powerful and so pure, that it gets remembered in the gospels, it gets recorded for posterity, and it is so central to our understanding of God that it gets repeated in churches for millennia afterwards even today, either said or sung. Mary's very words, the song of a frightened but brave faith-filled young woman, echo in our buildings still today.

So as Christmas approaches, we remember not her meekness or her mildness, but her courage to take on the task, her tenacious faith in God, her proclamation of his commitment and care for us, no matter how lowly and humble we may be. He notices, he cares, and he gives us the most wonderful gift - Jesus - only through the faith and courage of a young woman, who we remember especially at this time of year. Mother Mary, strong, courageous and ready for her almighty task.

We pray, whatever your tasks are this festive season, you may know Mary's strength, courage, and faith, and that the joy of the Christ-child may be yours and to all those you love this Christmas.

Every blessing, Zoe and Barney

THE MAGNIFICAT

*"My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.*

*From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name.*

*His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.*

*He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their
inmost thoughts.*

*He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.*

*He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors."*



SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 3rd November 2025

Items for Planning – DM/2025/01297 Removal of condition 1 relating to planning app 2298A (Occupation of the dwelling by a person employed, or last employed locally, in agriculture and is to be permanently attached to Cass-Troggy Castle Farm, Wentwood).

This application relates to a bungalow adjoining Cass-Troggy Castle Farm which sits to the west of the Buckwell / Usk Road junction at the foot of the Forest in Pen Y Cae Maur. Sales particulars of the farm including the site of the bungalow, can be viewed at Newland Rennie WWW.

Planning permission was granted in 1967 for the building subject to an agricultural tie. The condition is set out in the applicant's submission to MCC:

Condition 1 is unreasonable and therefore ultra vires. The condition reads "The proposal is permitted on the understanding that the dwelling will be occupied by a person employed, or last employed locally, in agriculture as defined under Section 221 of the 1962 Act or is in forestry and the dependants of such persons and is to be permanently attached to Cass-Troggy Castle Farm, Wentwood".

Circular 5/68 – Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions Although Circular 5/68 was issued in 1968, it was likely to have been drafted and consulted on during 1967 at the time when Application No. 2298A was being processed. It marked one of the earliest attempts to codify principles for imposing planning conditions. It emphasised that conditions must be:

• Necessary • Relevant to planning • Relevant to the development • Enforceable • Precise • Reasonable

These principles later became known as the "six tests" and were formalised in Circular 11/95. This Circular considers Agricultural dwellings between paragraphs 102 and 105. Paragraph 103 states that it should not be necessary to tie the occupation of the dwelling to workers engaged in a specific farm. There is a sound reason for that, as the present case demonstrates. When permission was granted, there was no dwelling at all on the farm holding. That of itself would have been reason enough to grant permission, but the need in 1967 was more pressing as the farm at the time was a Dairy Farm. In 2011 dairying was discontinued and the farm became arable. The dwelling was rented to a long-distance lorry

driver between 2015 and 2022, when the farm was managed by Richard and Andrew Willett from off-site. Because of the wording of the condition, the dwelling must remain unoccupied because the nature of the farm business is such that there is no imperative for a worker to be on-site to look after livestock. This has resulted in a ludicrous Catch 22 situation - the condition requires the occupant to be employed at Das Troggi Farm, yet there is no call for a worker there because the nature of the business has changed and it has been demonstrated over the years that the farm can be run perfectly adequately from elsewhere in the locality. Not only is the condition unreasonably restrictive, it would lose its physical link to Cas Troggi Farm if the holding were absorbed into another farm business.

Paragraph 36 of 11/95 confirms a condition as unreasonable if puts a severe restriction on the freedom of owners to dispose of their property. Tying the dwelling occupation to Vas Troggi Farm does just that and so is unreasonable on this count as well. Circular WGC 016/2014, as advised in Development Management Manual - Revision 3 - May 2025, repeats and confirms that advice.

Councillors may consider that the applicant misinterprets the condition, in that the condition is attached to the site and does not require the occupier to be employed on the farm itself.

Agricultural ties do not prevent the disposal of the property though they will affect the market value. The applicant has not provided any evidence of marketing to support his contention that the property is unsaleable nor that the tie puts a severe restriction on freedom of disposal.

It remains MCC policy not to permit new building in the open countryside. A condition similar to that imposed in 1976 can still be imposed. The 1967 consent allowed the development only because the farm needed accommodation for a farm worker and the condition was relevant and necessary to protect the open countryside against unrestrained residential development. The wording is precise and enforceable, and Councillors may conclude that it was and remains reasonable.

Given the scarcity of farm forest and local business worker accommodation in our area, Councillors may wish to give MCC their full support to refuse the application. On a previous application MCC updated the condition and this has been included in the recommendation below if Councillors agree.

Recommendation: SCC objects to this application on the grounds that:

1. The 1967 consent allowed development only because the farm needed accommodation for a farm worker and the condition was relevant and necessary to protect the open countryside against unrestrained residential development. The wording is precise and enforceable. It remains MCC policy not to permit new buildings in the open countryside. A planning condition similar to that imposed in 1976 can still be imposed.
2. No evidence has been produced of any restriction on the disposal of the property. The condition attaches to the site and does not require the bun

galow occupier to be employed by the adjoining farm, and the applicant's interpretation of the condition is with respect misplaced.

3. Given the scarcity of affordable farm forest and local business worker accommodation in this area and that the bungalow sits at the foot of Wentwood Forest, SCC would be glad of MCC's support in upholding the condition or a modern equivalent in the following terms:

*The occupancy of the dwelling shall be restricted to those: a) solely or mainly working or last working on a rural enterprise in the locality where there is/was a defined functional need; or if it can be demonstrated that there are no such eligible occupiers, to those; b) who would be eligible for consideration for affordable housing under the local authority's housing policies; or if it can be demonstrated that there are no persons eligible for occupation under either a) and b); c) widows, widowers or civil partners of the above and any resident dependent's. **REASON:** To meet the needs of other rural enterprises or persons seeking affordable housing in the locality if it is no longer needed by the original rural enterprise in accordance with Technical Advice Note (TAN)6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010).*

Cllrs voted unanimously to object to this matter.

Memorial Clock Repair – It was confirmed that Cumbria Clock Company have removed the clock for repair and will keep SCC updated.

Planters and verges – Cllrs resolved to go ahead with works as quoted and request the works are completed within 28 days.

Budget – Cllrs discussed budget, **Action** Clerk to update and resend

Memorial Path & Wreaths, both have been completed in advance of Remembrance Sunday.

Noticeboard Mynyddbach – Cllrs resolved to go ahead with the original quote to ensure continuity of design.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT NOVEMBER 2025: County Councillor Brown advised:

Cabinet on 15th October 2025

The Cabinet meeting gave feedback from the performance and overview committee. The other reports were the whole authority preventative health strategy for supporting resilient, healthier communities, the Connect to work supported employment programme and the 2025/6 financial revenue update.

In term of the revenue update the following were noted:

That Cabinet note the forecast revenue budget overspend of £533,000, representing a forecast 0.2% variance against the approved budget for the year.

That Cabinet note the budgetary risks that are inbuilt into this forecast, namely:

The volatility of demand for high-cost services, particularly in Adults & Children's Social Care.

Higher inflation levels currently being experienced than originally budgeted for.

The risk of further non-delivery of the £10.7m of budgeted savings targets, with services currently forecasting 92.1% delivery.

The trend of reducing debt recovery, particularly within Council tax and Social Care where there has been a slowing down in collection rates, and where there are increasing numbers of discounts and exemptions being awarded.

The potential impact upon the Council's financial resilience from the forecast increase in the cumulative school's reserves deficit that is being carried on the Council's balance sheet.

That Cabinet notes that confirmation has been received for funding related to the increased cost of Employers' National Insurance Contributions, resulting in a funding shortfall of £811k or 24% compared to the actual cost increases.

The Council will use its contingency budget of £850k to address this shortfall, as reflected within this forecast.

That Cabinet note the forecast increase in the deficit on cumulative schools reserves as outlined in Appendix 4 of this report of £2,835,000. This would result in school balances ending the financial year in a deficit of £6,926,000, with eighteen of thirty-five schools forecast to be in a deficit balance.

The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/jelListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MIId=6107>

County Council on 23rd October 2025

The County Council had a number of questions from the public questioning the RLDP including one from Richard Liddell with concerns about the impact on the green wedge for Pwllmeyric of the Mounton Road site. The Council considered the Governance and Audit Committee Annual report, and the main part of the meeting was taken up with discussing the RLDP.

I asked for an early vote on the RLDP due to infrastructure concerns, in the hope of having the potential numbers to defeat it, but unfortunately that did not happen. I expressed strong concerns about the Mounton Road development due to its proximity to the High beech roundabout causing further traffic congestion there and blocking the free flow of traffic.

The RLDP was discussed prior to this time at the Place Committee and in the minutes for full council on the 23rd of October I said:

"There were 320 objections to the Mounton Road site, Chepstow, the highest number in this consultation. This site is promoted by Barwood Land who specialise in planning primarily for residential and the site is sold on with planning for a profit. They are not a Building company, which is an important consideration for the viability of the site as it would be passed onto another site developer. In comparison, the alternative Chepstow site has a direct Building company interest and on a traffic light basis the alternative site does better. Neither Chepstow sites should go forward due to traffic capacity concerns, but the Mounton Road site is madness due to its closeness to High Beech roundabout."

I also argued in the full council meeting about the master plan for the site as it adds an extra triangle square near the junction of St Lawrence Road and the roundabout for cycle crossing. Whilst I got included extra land for future improvements to High Beech on the Mounton Road site. This will be undermined by the fact that the masterplan will add extra blockages to the free flow of traffic to and from the roundabout as there will be an access to and from the site, a crossing, a cycle crossing and the extra triangle square may lead to only one lane rather than two as you approach the roundabout from St Lawrence Road.

The alternative site for housing is the Bayfield site which Barratts Redrow are interested in but the planners are arguing that this does not have capacity for a hotel and care home, only residential development. I also expressed strong concerns about the Shirenewton site due to infrastructure concerns over both sewerage and water in full council and extracts of the minutes of the Place Committee on the 25th of September for full council (appendix 10) say as follows:

"Councillor Brown questioned whether public engagement has been meaningful, noting that most responses resulted in "no change needed" and doubted whether the inspector would have time to consider all responses. Officers stated that all responses are recorded and will be considered by the inspector during the public examination, and changes could occur at that stage if warranted...."

Councillor Brown commented that the Shirenewton site is unviable due to the sewage issue and referenced conversations with Welsh Water about how additional houses would exacerbate the issue whereby raw sewage overflows from manhole covers and is managed by the placement of straw bales. She also highlighted the frustration of residents who had spent considerable time taking part in the consultation exercise and that it appeared they had been ignored."

Following an extensive debate on the RLDP at the full council and it being put to a recorded vote, Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

For: 22

Against: 22

Chair with the casting vote: For

That Council:

Approves the Deposit RLDP Consultation Report and the RLDP, as amended following public consultation, and associated documents prior to its submission to Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decision Wales (PEDW) for independent examination.

Delegates authority to the Chief Officer for Place and Community Well-being and the Head of Planning, so that either in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader, may:

a. make any minor changes to the Deposit RLDP and associated supporting documents, prior to submitting the documents to Welsh Government and PEDW, and

B. make any changes to the RLDP on behalf of the Council as requested by the Inspector (s) during the Examination.

The reports and debates can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=143&Mid=6084>

Below is an indicative timetable extracted from an email from the Chief Officer for Place & Community Well-Being for the next steps, which may change once PEDW confirms the examination work programme:

Submission of Deposit RLDP to WG/PEDW: By 07/11/2025

Examination by PEDW: Predicted to commence End of January/February

Inspector's Report submitted to Council: Estimated August 2026 (subject to examination length)

Adoption at Full Council: Autumn 2026

PEDW = Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (Welsh Government)).

It is therefore expected that the planning inspectorate hearings will be conducted at the start of next year. As part of the examination, PEDW will contact representors who commented on the Deposit RLDP regarding the process, including whether they wish to attend hearing sessions. The Inspector will decide which comments to hear at these sessions and will consider all representations made to date before determining whether the plan is sound.

Here is a link to the procedure guidance for Local Development Plans which outlines the examination process for you: -

[Local development plan examinations: procedure guidance | GOV.WALES.](#)

This document can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.wales/local-development-plan-examinations-procedure-guidance-html>

Police report – No report received due to a change in SPCO in the area.

AOB

Cllr Butterworth – Meeting with a resident who has very kindly been strimming the green area by The Laurels, Mynyddbach. Discussed the grit bin, road sign and noticeboard. Confirmed a new noticeboard was on the agenda. Clerk will speak to MCC regarding the grit bin and road sign. Cllr Butterworth suggested moving the sign, noticeboard and bin around for better access.

Cllr C Martin - Discussed recent events at The Huntsman and residents' concerns. Police & MCC are aware and in contact.

To agree the date of the next meeting

Councillors agreed the date of the next meeting on **Monday 1st December 2025 at 7.00pm** by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall or remotely via Google meet.

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council

E-mail: shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Mobile: 07410 580961



Would you like to
knit & natter
or
crochet & chatter

whether you would like to learn or
have been twiddling yarn for
years, bring your yarn and come
chat with like minded people

1st and 3rd thursdays
monthly in the Carpenters
Arms at 8pm



**Holy Communion in
the Welsh language**

Cymraeg



*O ddydd Sadwrn Gorffennaf 12fed ac yn fisol bob ail ddydd
Sadwrn am 9.30 y bore, ymunwch â ni ar gyfer Cymun Bendigaidd
yn yr iaith Gymraeg yn eglwys y Santes Fair Cas-gwent.*

**9:30am on the second
Saturday of the month
at St.Mary's Chepstow**
Starting on 12th July

First language Welsh and
Welsh learners, all welcome!
Service sheets will be
bi-lingual. Excellent
opportunity for learners to
practice listening, reading
and speaking skills!

For more info please contact
Zoepimentel@cinw.org.uk



Vacancy on Shirenewton Community Council

Shirenewton Community Council has 1 vacancy for a Councillor in the Shirenewton & Mynyddbach ward

If you think you would like to be a Councillor and are over 18 years of age, contact the Clerk by email at shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

What is a Councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward or parish. They are generally elected by the public every five years. Between the elections if a Councillor seat becomes available it can be filled by the Council Co-opting the applicant onto the Council. 1 seat for Co-option is available.

What do Councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. **Decision making** – Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
2. **Monitoring** – Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
3. **Getting involved locally** – As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:
 - Going to meetings of local organisations
 - Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community
 - Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public

How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about an hour a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a community councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

You will be supported in your role and will be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team. If after reading this notice you are interested in applying, please contact the clerk to the council using the above details.



**Shirenewton
Community Council**

Devauden's Smallest Christmas Tree Exhibition!



The trees will be no more than 20cm tall!

At St James Church

Friday 19th December - Wednesday 24th December

10am – 4pm daily

If you'd like to enter a tree, please email

gav.kenington@gmail.com for details

There will be a small prize for best tree...

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH NEWCHURCH

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER AT 4.00

CAROL SERVICE FOLLOWED BY MULLED WINE

WEDNESDAY 24TH [CHRISTMAS EVE]

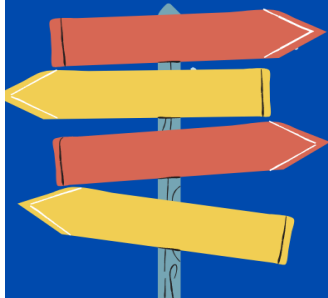
CAROLS AROUND THE TREE AT 4.00

THURSDAY 25TH, DECEMBER (CHRISTMAS DAY)

HOLY COMMUNION WITH CAROLS AT 10.00

The Very Hopeless Camel

- Year 1 and 2 children from Shirenewton Primary School would like to invite the community to watch their performance at St Deiniol's Church, on Thursday 11th December at 10am



CHRISTMAS WISHES

The congregation at St Thomas a Becket church wish all magazine readers a Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

We hope you find the information within this month's magazine on the programme of Advent and Christmas Church services along with the details for the village events raising monies for local, national and international charities, helpful. We look forward to welcoming you as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

The church Council have decided to continue holding our 10.00AM Sunday services during January and February in the warmth of the church rooms that we started last winter.



**Come and join our
Walkabout Christingle!
on Christmas Eve Wednesday 24th December.
Between 4 and 5 pm**

What a lovely way to start Christmas!

Make your own Christingle as you walk the path to Bethlehem.

Meet the kings in Shirenewton Church Room and collect your orange.

Talk to the Shepherds in the Church porch and pick up your candle.

**See the angels under The Chantry veranda
and choose your sweets and your sheep.**



And finally visit Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus in the garage, watched over by two lovely real donkeys! Ahhh!

Cash collection for The Children's Society

Gardening Corner

I got a bit of a shock early this week. I hadn't been down the garden for probably a couple of weeks. Mainly because of the wet weather, but also because I have been busy wood turning, making a final push to get things ready for Christmas sales. The reason for my shock was the fact that our beech hedges, which had virtually lost all their leaves, were now very much green again. This phenomenon, is well known and referred to as Lammas growth (not to be confused with the south American animal!). I have seen it many times in young conifer trees, where the growth stops in late summer, only for new, much shorter growth, to occur in the Autumn. It usually results following a mild, wet period, which we have certainly had in recent weeks. Beech and oak are mostly affected, and the growth is usually a bright green (as in spring), but tinged with reds and orange. Being tender, the cold weather of this week has all but killed this growth off. It doesn't normally impact the plants in the Spring, but if the weather continues very cold, then any new growth will be completely killed, which might check the plants early growth next year.

I had gone down the garden to pick some veg for dinner and to determine what jobs I really needed to get on doing. With it being so wet, most of the outdoor jobs, which need getting onto the ground, will now have to wait. This is a pain, as it means the planned, early cleaning of the beds, both flower and vegetable will now have to wait, probably until early Spring now. As with last year, it will compress the time that I have available to do this work, but clearly there is nothing we can do about it. My attentions are therefore turning to other things, with the annual or bi-annual hedge cutting being top of the list of 'to do' jobs. With it having been so dry this summer, growth hasn't been quite so luxurious as previous years. I always try and cut the hedges as early as I can. This means that everything looks much tidier for a longer period of time, and makes the hard work feel more rewarding! The other reason is that, with mixed hedges, the growth tends to be softer in later summer than later on in Autumn or Winter, which means cutting with hand held hedge cutters is not quite so hard going on the arms. I tend to suffer with very bad 'pins and needles' after using any powers tools, such as chainsaws and hedge cutters, despite taking all the necessary precautions to try and prevent problems, but after over 50 years using these machines, I guess any side effects are inevitable. Suffice to say I am not looking forward to cutting the almost mile length of hedges that we have here. Unfortunately, all but one of the hedges is not accessible to a tractor mounted machine, so looking for a contractor is not really a viable option. A quick look inside the tunnels and greenhouses, did focus my mind on how much needed doing there. With a quick list of jobs made mentally, I decided to start there and then. The sun was shining (at long last), it was bitterly cold outside, but was really pleasant inside. First job on the agenda was to start clearing away the older crops and harvest any final crops that remained. I grew squash inside the big tunnel, as an experiment, and there was room available. A bit like Triffids, they had taken over half the tunnel and the squash themselves grew enormous. The heaviest thus far exceeded 4 kilo




HOMECARE

Eileen O' Dwyer

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07795 689791

grammes, but there are bigger! So I think you could say that they were a success, but probably almost too much. One squash lasts almost a week. Nice though they are roasted, there is a limit to what even the most hardened squash eater could manage! The crop is now all gathered in, and stored for the winter. They should keep until the Spring, especially if it remains on the cold side. All the plant material was added to the compost bin, which was then topped off with some old cabbage leaves, and then some of the woodchips/sawdust from the turning activity. The latter gives the heap the much-needed carbon to balance the nitrogen (the green matter), for a successful heap. We picked the last tomatoes and peppers last week, so they are the next to be cleared away. I am weeding each bed as I go, some of which will be added to the compost and some not, depending whether the weeds are pernicious (couch grass) and or have seed. These will be destined for the bonfire. I did experiment with growing some Brussels sprouts in the tunnel as well, and this has also proved successful. The sprouts are now fattening up, and the plants avoided being completely ruined by caterpillars, so this will be repeated next year.

As the crops mature and are picked, I try to select what opportunities there are for saving seeds or bulbs for starting next year's crop. Broad beans have been drying in the big greenhouse, and I have sown some of these to provide an earlier crop next year. These early beans are worth a punt. The crop may not be so big as later spring sown seed produces, but they are a welcome addition to the meal table, and they also miss being smothered by the horrible black bean fly, which often smothers plants produced from later sown seeds. Whilst sowing these, I also filled up pots with compost, and planted up the shallots, and garlic bulbs which I'd saved. These benefit from a cold spell, but they will all remain inside the greenhouse until probably early March, when they will be planted out. This may well be inside one of the tunnels. I have found that they can be ready for harvesting then by late May or early June at the latest, which allows them then to be harvested and immediately replaced by tomatoes and peppers, which will have been growing in large pots in the warm

Value of the Month

Pride



Remembrance Parade

Diolch yn fawr to members of Y6, Scouts groups and the local community for taking part in the Remembrance Parade. The children did an excellent job of representing their school and clubs.



Year 3 - Week ending 7th November 2025

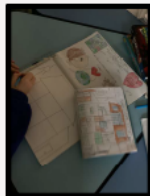
Year 3 kicked off their topic with an inquisitive walk around the Caerwent ruins, an important part of our Cynefin. They were wondering why Romans would choose to settle in Caerwent and the children blew staff and helpers away with their questions and wonders. They will be using this to focus on their learning over the next half term.



Year 4 - Week ending 24th October 2025



After lots of planning, designing, learning and collaborating....Year 4 finally built their eco homes. The children worked hard to create their eco homes using lots of recycled materials. They each included different features that make an eco home such as solar panels or rain water collectors



Newsletter

Year 5 - Week ending 24th October 2025



After eight weeks of creativity, collaboration, and determination, Year 5 presented their Lion's Roar projects. From their very first brainstorming sessions, to refining prototypes, researching existing products, and preparing presentation boards- every step was packed with learning and excitement.

For the grand finale they presented their work to parents, Mr. Penn, and each other. Along the way, they developed valuable presentation skills, tackled challenges head-on, and grew immensely as a team.



Year 6 - Week ending 17th October 2025

Year 6 had a very busy week!! Working with Year 5 they completed their first read through of their Christmas play, Archibald's War.

As part of their topic work on WW2, they began research into specific areas. When researching online they ensured they were using safe and reliable sources.



Children in Need

On Friday 14th November pupils came into school in non uniform and lots of Pudsey paraphernalia to support Children in Need; they looked fantastic! So far we have raised £239.50, diolch yn fawr



SHIRENEWTON VILLAGE
CHRISTMAS MARKET
SENDS A BIG THANK YOU!

Our Christmas Market on Saturday 22nd November was a great success with lots of lovely stalls, our ever-popular café with delicious coffee & cakes, and a fantastic turnout on a cold & rainy day.

A big thank you to everyone for all their hard work organising, setting up & clearing away.

Beryl, Sarah, Caroline & I would like to thank everyone concerned in making it a great community event.

Special thanks to Emma & Zak for all the work involved in setting up & running the pop-up café, also thank you to all the cake donators, stallholders, clearing up helpers, raffle donations & to the village for their support. I would also like to thank Marion for putting up the huge banner for us as usual & for all her help on the day. Apologies if I've left anyone out!

Shirley



PLENTY TO DO IN SHIRENEWTON!





greenhouse.

You won't need me to tell you what damage has been caused locally by the latest storm, particularly in Monmouth. Our hearts go out to all those affected, especially at this time of year, and who now need our help. We have lived in this area for well over 40 years and we cannot remember Monmouth flooding to the extent it has this time. Minor incidents yes, but this was unbelievable. Christmas will no doubt be cancelled this year for many of those affected. We wish you all a good Christmas and New Year, but spare a thought for others, and lend a helping hand if you can, for anyone that needs it.

As usual, happy gardening until next time, Steve and Felicity Hunt.



A Second Slice of the Shambles Cake Quiz

For those of you with a sweet tooth and a quizzical nature here is another set of Bake Offs.
A Baker's Dozen in fact.

- 1 No, no, no, not moth cakes!
- 2 It's the way they crumble ?
- 3 You'll love this piece of festive wood.
- 4 Cooked twice in the French sense.
- 5 Sounds like an Austrian fruity poodle.
- 6 An acid-rain sweet treat.
- 7 Gravel buns are daintier.
- 8 A bath time item fit for a queen.
- 9 Please cook this northern town pudding properly.
- 10 Go away, buns!
- 11 Spirited but bad tempered.
- 12 No meat in these seasonal veggie goodies.
- 13 "Run, run as fast as you can.
You cant catch me!". "I certainly can!"



Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in November:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Cynthia Smith | 2. Michael Baker |
| 3. Claire Lewis | |

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

Well, it's been an interesting year in techie land. I don't intend to make this month's article a retrospective but, as I do from time to time, I'll revisit some of the stories I've mentioned with 'interesting' updates.

The first story is the farewell most of the world said to Windows 10. How long have I banged on about Windows 10 being at end of life in October '25? Certainly, more than a year. Well, it seems that the good folk at our beloved Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) are not readers of this august publication as it is report in The Register that has just finished a £300million + project to replace all its obsolete Windows 7 laptops with, wait for it, yes, you guessed correctly, now obsolete Windows 10 laptops. You can't make this stuff up!

Remember the 20th October? We do in the Cornwell household. It was the day when my wife woke up to find that her precious and much loved Duolingo wasn't working. Calamity! In fact, much of the internet had stopped working. This included banks, social media, government services, online shopping, etc. In the end this was traced to a DNS error in AWS (Amazon Web Services) , and, once resolved, the services slowly came back to life and all was peace and calm and foreign languages in the Cornwell household.

Few understand how fundamental DNS is to the smooth operation of the internet. DNS (domain name server) is the 'postal' system of the internet. If I gave you the following string:

2001:0db8:85a3:0000:0000:8a2e:0370:7334 – how many of you would recognise that that is an IPv6 IP (IP = internet protocol) address?

When you type, for example, www.amazon.co.uk into your browser, the internet has no idea who or what the 'human-friendly' website address means. So, the first thing it does is visit your default DNS server (determined by your ISP) and get a translation to a 'computer-friendly' IP address. The website loads and you happily browse away. Of course, it's not that simple there are various levels of DNS servers and tens of thousands of servers that handle public queries, so it can take up to 72 hours for a new domain name or change to propagate around the system.

So, if one of the major roots of the DNS system goes down, so does the internet. You can type www.duolingo.com as often as you like but, if the DNS servers aren't there to direct your browser to a 128 bit long hexadecimal digit arranged in eight groups of four digits, it isn't going to work. This also explains why recovery takes time. The fix has to propagate around the system.

But why were banks affected by an issue in Amazon? Answer: for the consumer Amazon is a popular shopping portal. AWS is an associate company which is the market leader in providing cloud services to business with over 30% market share and, by itself, a \$100 billion + a year business. Many banks, social media, government services, online shopping and other such online services base their service on AWS.

The above is, in itself, interesting. Mistakes happen. However, it seems my wife may need to steel herself for further Duolingo outages. The Register, reporting on this outage (<https://tinyurl.com/4snj3c4b>), identified concern that there is a 'talent exodus' at AWS. This combined with the recent Amazon announcement that a new round of corporate layoffs (around 14,000 jobs to be eliminated by early 2026), could mean that the institutional knowledge of the 'old hands' is lost and painful mistakes will be need to be re-learned. So, next time there is an outage – remember you read it here first!

Moving onto other predictions I've made In the October edition (written mid-September), I wrote about the so called 'AI model collapse' and how reports that few companies implementing AI had seen any real benefit, was beginning to affect share prices. Early November saw AI stocks lose more than \$820 billion in a week and the 'bells are ringing' on further depreciation. Again, you read it here first!

Finally, last month I explained that the future of scamming was using deepfake AI technology and that scammers would only get more sophisticated. No sooner had my article gone to press than The Times reported on Jill Popelka, the Chief Executive of the cybersecurity specialist Darktrace, and her experience of an attempted deepfake scam.

Apparently, she walked out of her first meeting following the company's takeover by Thoma Bravo, the private equity firm, and saw her team looking confused. They had received a voicemail purportedly from her during the meeting. It wasn't her. A deepfake model had called her team and issued instructions while she was busy. Popelka said: "My voice can be replicated, and even I couldn't tell the difference. These deepfakes create a real vulnerability."

Remember, as we approach the festive period and are full of frivolity and foolishness, think twice before clicking on that link or transferring that money.

Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all my readers and see you on the other side!

Safe browsing

David Cornwell

Webmaster

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

The October monthly meeting saw Sue and John Exton give a talk entitled 'Mari Lwyd', (Grey Mare). The Mari is an old Welsh custom usually brought out in January, the structure consists of a horse's skull decorated with ribbons, it is taken around the village knocking on doors, asking for entry, once you have gained entry, you will find there is usually food and alcohol consumption involved! Sounds a little grim but is a lot of fun! The Extons brought their four Mari's, all have a different personality, everyone found the subject fascinating.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, 25th November, Monthly Meeting, 2.00pm, Church Room
Title Talk: The Morgan of Tredegar House, given by Roger James.

Note: *Our November meeting will take place at 2.00pm, at the Church Room.*

Wednesday, 10th December, Archive Meeting 2.00pm Church Room

Tuesday, 16th December, Visit/talk/tour to St Mary the Virgin, Caldicot. Historically known as Llantony Seconda, the second house of Llantony Abbey. Meeting at 5.30pm.
Afterwards, supper at The Castle Inn, Caldicot.

Saturday, 27th December will see us once again walking up to Grey Hill to see the sun rise on the Winter Solstice. Sunrise 8.10am. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, 14th January, Archive Meeting 2.00pm, at the Church Room

Tuesday, 27th January, Monthly Meeting (afternoon) at 2.00pm at the Church Room. Speaker for the afternoon will be John Burrows with a talk entitled 'The Rise and Rise of Iron'.

Book of the Month: *150 Famous Welsh Americans, W. Arvon Roberts*

Archive of the month: *The society's map collection, 1901 Edition of the Ordnance Survey*

Why not come and check out our range of local history books, documents, tithe and census records and much more. Our Archive Meetings are open to everyone not only members. Check out the dates above.

Christmas services and events 2025**

Tuesday 25th Nov	3.00pm	Advent course	Shirenewton Church Room
Thursday 27th Nov	7.30 pm	Advent course	The Cedars, Chapel Lane
Sunday 30th Nov	11:00 am	Crib Service	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Sunday 30th Nov	11:00 am	St. Davids winter fayre	St. Pierre hotel
Tuesday 2nd Dec	3.00 pm	Advent course	Shirenewton Church Room
Friday 5th Dec	7:00 pm	Christmas Concert with Mathern choir	St. Andeonus Church, Mounon
Sunday 7th	6:00 pm	Carols around the tree	St. Thomas a Beckett Shirenewton
Sunday 7th	11:00 am	Advent fayre	St Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Monday 8th	1:30 pm	Priory Dell Christmas service	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Tuesday 9th	3.00pm	Advent course	Shirenewton Church Room
Wednesday 10th	1:30 pm	Priory Dell Christmas service	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Thursday 11th	7:30 pm	Advent course	The Cedars, Chapel Lane
Thursday 11th	10:00 am	Shirenewton School Nativity Play	St. Deiniol's, Itton
Friday 12th	6:30 pm	Christmas Concert with Ceri & Lena	St. Peter's Church, St. Pierre
Friday 12th	6:00 pm	Carols round the tree w silver band	St. Arvans churchyard
Saturday 13th	4:00 pm	Carols by Candlelight	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Saturday 13th	7:00 pm	St Woolos Sinfonia concert	St. Deiniol's, Itton
Sunday 14th	6:00 pm	Lessons and Carols	St. Tewdric's Church, Mathern
Sunday 14th	11:00 am	Christingle Service	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Sunday 14th	3:00 pm	Golfers Carol Service	St. Peter's Church, St. Pierre
Monday 15th	6:00 pm	Shirenewton Carol Service	St. Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Tuesday 16th	3.00pm	Advent course	Shirenewton Church Room
Tuesday 16th	7:00 pm	Nine lessons and carols by candlelight	St. Deiniol's, Itton
Thursday 18th	7:30 pm	Advent course	The Cedars, Chapel Lane
Thursday 18th	6:30 pm	Cubs' carols	St. James, Devauden
Friday 19th	7:00 pm	Chepstow Pride film night	St. Marys Priory Chepstow
Sunday 21st	10:00 am	Carols & communion	St. Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Sunday 21st	10:15 am	Readings & Carols	St. Andeonus Church, Mounon
Sunday 21st	3:00 pm	Crib & carol service	St Tewdric's, Mathern
Sunday 21st	4:00 pm	Carol Service	St. Peter's Church, Newchurch
Sunday 21st	11:30 am	Advent service	Holy Cross Kilgerrwg
Sunday 21st	3:00 pm	Carols in the pub	Mathern Millers Arms
Sunday 21st	7:00 pm	Carols in the pub	Mathern Millers Arms
Mon 22nd	12:00 pm	Warm space carols	St. Christophers, Bulwark
Mon 22nd	6:00 pm	Nine lessons and carols	St. Arvans Church
Tuesday 23rd	2:00 pm	Mini Saints crib service	St. Christophers, Bulwark
Christmas Eve			
Wednesday 24th	2:00 pm	Christmas Carols	St. Christopher's Church, Bulwark
Wednesday 24th	4:00 pm	Family Walking Nativity	St. Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Wednesday 24th	4:00 pm	Carols and mulled wine around the tree	St. Peter's Church, Newchurch
Wednesday 24th	4:30 pm	Carols by candlelight (ticket only)	St. Mary's Church, Penterry
Wednesday 24th	6:30 pm	Carol Service	St. James' Church, Devauden
Wednesday 24th	9:00 pm	"Midnight in Bethlehem" service	St. Andeonus Church, Mounon
Wednesday 24th	9:00 pm	"Midnight in Bethlehem" service	St. Peter's Church, St. Pierre
Wednesday 24th	11:00 pm	Midnight Mass	St. Arvan's Church
Wednesday 24th	11:30 pm	Midnight Mass with bell ringing	St. Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Wednesday 24th	11:30 pm	Midnight Mass	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Christmas Day			
Thursday 25th	9:00 am	Holy Eucharist with Carols	St. James' Church, Devauden
Thursday 25th	9:00 am	Christmas Eucharist	St. Tewdric's Church, Mathern
Thursday 25th	10:00 am	Christmas family service with bell ringing	St. Thomas a Beckett, Shirenewton
Thursday 25th	10:00 am	Christmas morning family Eucharist	St. Arvan's Church
Thursday 25th	10:00 am	Holy Eucharist	St. Peter's Church, Newchurch
Thursday 25th	10:30 am	Holy Communion (combined with St. C's)	St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Thursday 25th	11:30 am	Holy Eucharist	St. Deiniol's Church, Itton

**For regular Sunday services in December, see the separate schedule

*Not for the faint of heart. A
lover for her own self, but
both itself and friend. And
lover for the sake of
husband and child. And
and it must follow, as the
night the day. Thou canst
not then be called a man.*

Dr Rachel Cross
(DipABRSM, CELTA, LMusTCL,
MISM, BA (Hons), MA, PhD, FHEA)

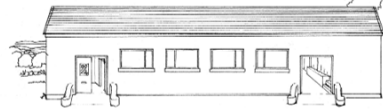
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Earlswood & Newchurch West Village Hall



Xmas Quiz

Saturday 13th December, 6.30pm

Bring your own team or get to know some of your neighbours. Prizes for the best team and best Christmas jumper!

- ❖ Tickets £12.50
- ❖ Curry dinner*
- ❖ Bring your own drinks (glasses provided!)
- ❖ Doors open at 6.30pm, food served from 7pm

Bookings: 07889 762 840 / booking@earlnew.com

* Dietary needs? No problem, just let us know.

Upcoming Events

2026

Saturday 16th May

Plant and Cake Sale

Visit www.earlnew.com for more information about the Hall & facilities.
We have a mailing list! Email info@earlnew.com to join!

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DEFIBRILLATOR LOCATIONS

(Cabinets do not require codes, they are unlocked although they have a key pad)

Carpenters Arms (on the Usk road)
Huntsman Hotel (on the Usk road)
Recreation Hall (Shirenewton village)
The Tredegar Arms (The Square, centre of Shirenewton)
Great House Farm complex (off Old Road), Earlswood (north)
[repair.decrease.fussy]
Earlswood Hall (Earlswood)
Shirenewton School

**The Tin Shed Bar,
The Huntsman Hotel, Shirenewton
- Proudly Presents**

The Third Traditional Shirenewton Festive Sing-Alonga-Santa **BASH.**

**Back by popular demand, after a 12 month
absence . We haven't had this much fun
since last Xmas. A community event
guaranteed to spread goodwill and joy to
you and your kin, this Yuletide!!**

Absolutely no talent or experience required.

Just throw on a
Festive Sweater,
Bobble Hat, & Scarf -
dig out something
musical to hit, blow or
shake and turn up
prepared to SING.



Saturday 20th December 2025

Singing starts at 8:00pm-ish!!

25 places of world significance within 25 miles of Shirenewton

10. *The Crumlin Viaduct over the River Ebbw*



Crumlin Viaduct abutment - remains



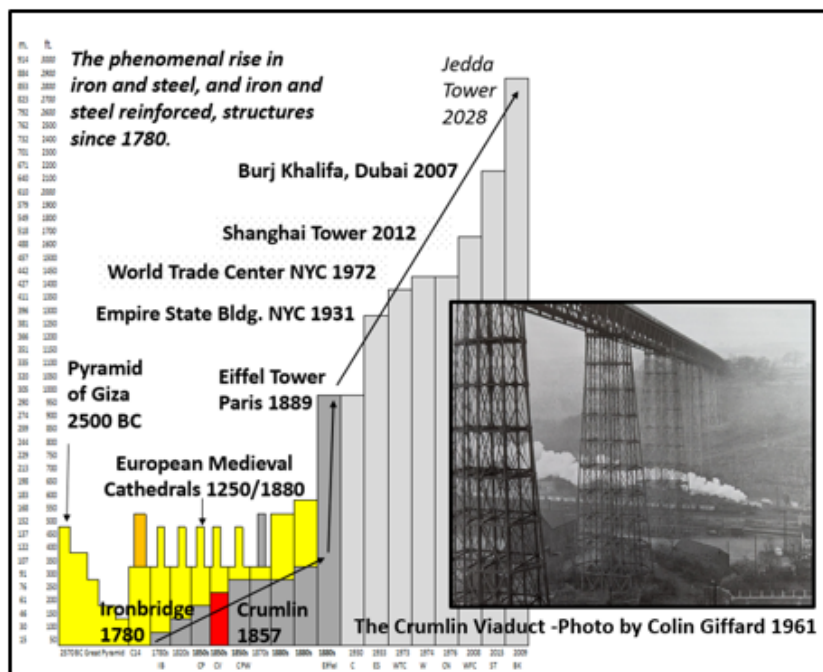
Navigation Colliery from the Viaduct abutment

Seventeen miles west of Shirenewton is a ruin, 200 feet up the hillside, opposite the village of Crumlin in the Ebbw Valley and opposite the distinctive and preserved buildings of the former *Navigation Colliery*. The abutment ruin is almost all that remains of the once mighty *Crumlin Viaduct* of the Taff Vale Extension Railway which was built by Thomas Kennard in 1857 and was finally demolished in 1965. At 200 feet high, it was the tallest iron viaduct in the world and would have been the world's tallest iron structure of any kind when it was started in 1855 but by the time of its completion in 1857 Brunel had started and then completed two cast iron water towers at the new Crystal Palace at Sydenham, London which were 282 feet high. Nevertheless, the *Crumlin Viaduct* was of immense world significance because of the rise of iron and steel in construction in the late C18th and C19th and the *Crumlin Viaduct* was one of the largest and most significant examples of construction in iron at the time.

Within 35 years of the construction of the 200 ft high *Crumlin Viaduct* the staggering 985 ft *Eiffel Tower* was constructed in wrought iron. Steel appeared, and every higher building in the world thereafter would have an iron or steel frame or steel reinforcement in concrete. It seemed that there would be no limit for these new skyscrapers of Chicago and New York in the C20th, and of the even higher skyscrapers of the Far East and Middle East of the C21st.

The tallest building under construction in the world is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and it will be three times the height of the *Eiffel Tower*! It is the story of the rise of iron and steel and the rise of skyscrapers shaping the modern cities.

On this continuum of rising height - from the first iron structure in the modern world, the 40 feet high and 100 feet span of the *Iron Bridge* in 1780 across the River Severn in England to the late C19th 985 ft *Eiffel Tower* then the C20th 1,250 ft *Empire State Building* and C21st 2,717 ft *Burj Khalifa* in Dubai and the 3,037 ft (1,008m) *Jeddah Tower* - the 200 ft high *Crumlin Viaduct* was one of the most significant stages in that progression of height facilitated by iron.



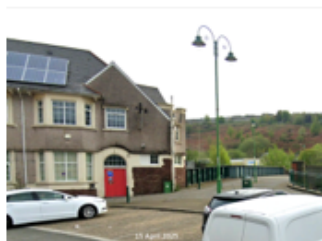
In the last 5,000 years of construction (3,000 BC to 2025 AD) 4,864 years (97% of the time) stone has dominated as the building material of the world's tallest buildings. Only in the last 136 years, since the *Eiffel Tower* doubled the height of the world's tallest structure, has iron taken over and dominated the world's city skylines in the form of steel frame or steel reinforced concrete structures - and iron has only been used for construction in the last 250 years (1780-2030) of world history so the *Crumlin Viaduct* was of world significance at the time, and still is, in the history of the world's transformation by iron.

Even closer to Shirenewton, is *Chepstow Bridge* (also known as *Chepstow Old Wye Bridge*) of 1816 which is an even older cast iron structure and today *Chepstow Bridge (1816)* is the world's largest iron arch road bridge surviving

from the first 50 years of iron construction in world history (1780-1830).

Given how important iron has been to the development of world cities since 1780, and particularly in the C20th and C21st this is a very significant piece of heritage - **a bridge worthy of World Heritage recognition** – an important consideration during the current temporary closure of this Grade 1 Listed bridge. It needs future careful preservation and re-opening for light traffic.

Returning to the Crumlin Viaduct.

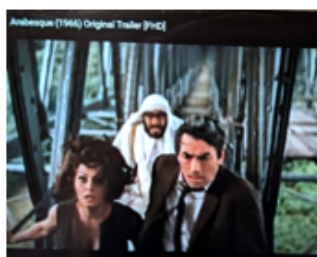


The view today at Crumlin (2025)



The same view in the early 1960s

There was a particularly special view also in 1965 for the film 'Arabesque' (1966) in which Sophia Loren and Gregory Peck were filmed running terrified across the top of the Crumlin viaduct in 1965 after it had been decommissioned and shortly before its demolition! There was a 200 ft drop visible through the girders (and visible on Sophia Loren's face)!



Not much 'acting' needed there!

John Burrows Next (Feb.2026) 11. Longest under sea tunnel for 100 years

Note: John Burrows will be giving **a talk** on the '**Rise and Rise of Iron**' at the Shirenewton History Society on **Tuesday afternoon 27 January 2025 at 2pm** at the Church Hall, Shirenewton. For those unable to attend an afternoon talk, let me know, and I'll arrange an evening showing of it.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

Monday 1 st 7.00 p.m.	Shirenewton Community Council Shirenewton Recreation Hall
Sunday 7 th 11.00 a.m. to 12 noon	Adent Fair Shirenewton Church Hall
Sunday 7 th 6.30 p.m.	Carols round the Christmas Tree Tredegar Arms car park
Wednesday 10 th 2.00 p.m.	Shirenewton History Society Archive meeting Shirenewton Church Hall
Thursday 11 th 10.00 a.m.	The Very Hopeless Camel St Deiniol's Church, Itton
Thursday 11 th 7.00 p.m.	WI Christmas supper The Tredegar Arms
Saturday 13 th 7.00 p.m.	St Woolos Sinfonia Concert St Deiniol's Church, Itton
Saturday 13 th 6.30 p.m.	Christmas Quiz Earlswood and Newchurch West Village Hall
Sunday 14 th 3.00 p.m.	Christmas Music from the Chepstow Choral Society St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Monday 15 th 6.00 p.m.	Community Carol Service St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton
Thursday 16 th 4.00 p.m.	History Society—St Mary's the Virgin, Caldicot followed by supper at The Castle Inn
Fri 19 th to Wed 24 th 10.00 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Devauden's Smallest Christmas Tree Exhibition St James's Church, Devauden
Saturday 20 th 8 p.m.	Sing-Along-a Santa Bash The Tin Shed, The Huntsman Hotel
Sunday 21 st 4.00 p.m.	Carol Service and mulled wine St Peter's Church, Newchurch
Wednesday 24 th 5.00 p.m. to 5 p.m.	Walkabout Christingle Start at the Church
Wednesday 24 th 4.00 p.m.	Carols round the tree St Peter's Church, Newchurch
Wednesday 24 th 11.30 p.m.	Midnight Mass St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton
Thursday 25 th 10.00 a.m.	Christmas morning family service St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton
Thursday 25 th 10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion with carols St Peter's Church, Newchurch

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER

Saturday 27th
7.00 a.m.

Shirenewton History Society
Walk up Grey Hill—by 8.10 a.m.

JANUARY

Monday 5th
7.00 p.m.

Shirenewton Community Council
Shirenewton Recreation Hall

Thursday 8th
7.15 p.m.

Women's Institute meeting—tbd
Shirenewton Recreation Hall

Wednesday 14th
2.00 p.m.

Shirenewton History Society Archive meeting
Shirenewton Church Hall

Tuesday 27th
2.00 p.m.

SLHS —The Rise and Rise of Iron by J Burrows
Shirenewton Church Hall

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Answers to the Second Slice

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Butterfly Cakes | 2 Cookies |
| 3 Yule Log | 4 Biscuits |
| 5 Apple Strudel | 6 Lemon Drizzle Cake |
| 7 Rock Cakes | 8 Victoria Sponge |
| 9 Bakewell Tart | 10 Choux Buns |
| 11 Brandy Snaps | 12 Mince Pies |
| 13 Gingerbread Men | |

FAIRTRADE NEWS NOVEMBER 2025



Thank you to everyone who came to support the Village Christmas market yesterday; there was a lovely positive atmosphere. Particular thanks go to the organisers: Caroline, Sarah, Shirley, and Beryl (hoping you are feeling much better now!) And of course thanks to Emma and Zak for the refreshments and to everyone who contributed cakes.

I sold quite a few Zaytoun products from Palestine. Many make excellent Christmas gifts : olive oil, almonds, caramelized almonds (fab!), chili almonds, za'atar, medjool dates and olive oil soaps. 'Zaytoun' means olive. Olive trees are hugely significant to Palestinians. Almost all families have trees. A representative of Zaytoun explains how much more difficult it has become recently to export the produce.

Lorries have to make awkward detours and negotiate numerous check points on their way to the port of Haifa; pallets must now be low enough to allow searches by sniffer dogs. For almost a year now Zaytoun has been unable to put the Fairtrade label on its products because there is no authorised auditor in position there. Zaytoun was initially set up in 2004 by a group of friends after a visit to Palestine.

Chocolate plays a big role in Christmas celebrations, from Advent calendars to sweet treats. Prices have rocketed recently – climate change, drought and flood have reduced harvests. Unfortunately the extra money is generally not passed on to workers and producers whose lives are spent growing and harvesting the cocoa beans. There are many chocolate brands who are trying to act ethically e.g. Divine, Tony's and others. Perhaps we should adopt the general principle of buying a bit less, but buying better! Certainly the quality of Fairtrade certified products is consistently excellent.

Ethical Superstore has a huge range of products that contribute positively to the lives of farmers and producers. The whirligig of festive consumption can be a force for good!

I'll be ordering again soon if you'd like anything!

Marion McAdam 01291 641316 msm316@gmail.com

Savern Wye Ministry Area
Our Sunday services for December 2025 – see also the separate schedule of other Christmas events

	7 th December	14 th December	21 st December	28 th December
	Advent 2	Advent 3	Advent 4	1 st Sunday of Christmas
St Mary's Priory, Chepstow	8.00 Morning Liturgy	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
	11.00 Crib service	Christingle service	Sung Holy Communion	Joint Holy Communion at St Christophers 10am
St Christopher's, Chepstow	9.30 Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	
St Peter's, Newchurch	17.30 Holy Communion		4pm Carol service	
St Tewdric, Mathern	9.00 Holy Communion	6pm Carol service	Holy Communion	
St Peter, St Pierre	11.30 Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Morning Prayer	10am Holy Communion
St Andoanus, Mounton	10.15 Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Readings and carols	Joint service in St Pierre
St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton	10.00 Morning service	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	
St Arvan, St Arvans	10.00 Sung Holy Communion	Sung Holy Communion	Sung Holy Communion	Sung Holy Communion
St Deiniol, Itton	11.30	Morning Prayer		Joint service w St Arvans
St James, Devauden	9.00		Family service	
	16.00 Family Communion			
St Mary's, Penterry	11.30 Holy Communion			
Holy Cross, Kilgwrwg	11.30		Holy Communion	
Youth @ St Christophers	19.00 Young saints	Young saints	Young saints	
Saints @ St Christophers	19.00 Puddings and Bible Study	Puddings and Bible Study	Puddings and Bible Study	

Services more suited to families and children highlighted in orange Holy Communion service is also known as the Eucharist. Services without Holy Communion are highlighted in green



Chepstow Choral Society

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Accompanist -- Richard Kubiak

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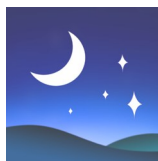
**Sat 13th December 2025
7 pm**

**Tickets (£15, students & under 16
years free) payable at the door**

**Proceeds in aid of the church
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STARGAZING



In the evening to the southeast, the constellation Orion is a glorious sight – three bright stars make up his belt; two stars are his shoulders, and two more make his legs. Orion was the great hunter of Greek Mythology who boasted that he could kill any creature on earth – but he met his match in the scorpion, which stung him in the heel and killed him. The bright blue-white star in Orion's right leg is Rigel, an extremely powerful star but at great distance, it is at least 60,000 times more luminous than the Sun. The bright star at Orion's left shoulder is Betelgeuse (pronounce it "beetle-juice" and you'll be close enough). Betelgeuse has a reddish colour – it is a vast red super-giant star, large enough to contain the entire path of the Earth round the Sun. Hanging from Orion's belt is his sword. One of the stars in the sword appears fuzzy compared with other stars and is well worth looking at through binoculars. This is the Orion Nebula and is a huge cloud of gas and dust. It is one of the most intense regions of star formation visible in our galaxy.

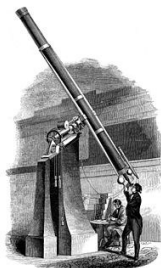
In the evening sky the bright planet Jupiter lies low in the sky to the north-east at the start of December, and is higher and to the east by the end of January.

Saturn is not quite as bright and has a slightly yellow hue. It is in the south in December; as the days pass the planet moves westwards getting ever closer to the horizon.

Jupiter is close to the Moon on 7th December and 3rd January. Saturn is close to the Moon on Boxing Day and 23rd January.

You may see some shooting stars on 13th and 14th December. These are the Geminid meteor shower. They should appear in the eastern sky later in the evening, providing it's clear.

We reach the Winter Solstice on December 21st. The Sun reaches its lowest point in the heavens as observed in the northern hemisphere. This gives the shortest day and the longest night.

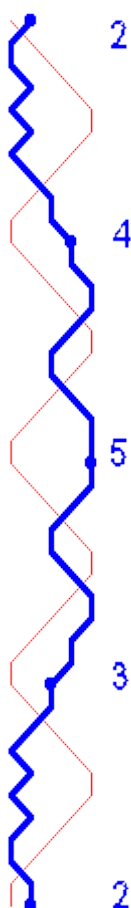


THE BELLS

We rang for Remembrance on Sunday 9th November. Ringing before 11 o'clock was half-muffled. This is when the clapper of each bell has a thick leather pad attached on one side. As the bell swings through 360° one way, the bell strikes as normal with a crisp sharp note. When it swings in the opposite direction the bell strikes with a "muffled" note as the leather pad cushions the strike. This gives a rather haunting sound and if bells were requested for a funeral this is what would be rung. The only time the bells are rung fully muffled (both sides of the clapper padded) is on the death of the monarch. About 10 minutes before 11 o'clock we ceased ringing and the muffle from the 5th bell was removed. The tenor bell was then tolled still muffled until just before 11, when the 5th bell was rung to

St Nicholas

strike exactly 11. We needed to do this as currently the clock is up in Cumbria being restored.



Three of our ringers have progressed with their training, 2 having achieved Level 2 of the "Learning the Ropes Scheme" and 1 having achieved Level 3. It is probably not appreciated in the village that this learning scheme was developed by a Shirenewton ringer (Pip Penney) and is a scheme now adopted Nationally and Internationally. There are 5 levels in the scheme taking the learner to the level of basic change ringer (in equivalence to skiing competence, this would be to a green level). We aim to take our ringers into the red zone – we do not have enough bells for the black!

Preparing for Christmas ringing we are now practising St Nicholas Doubles. Ringers do not learn the sequence of numbers within each row as this would require a considerable feat of memory especially when the method becomes more complex. They learn the pattern of changes. Bell 2's trajectory within this simple method is shown in the accompanying chart by the blue line and this is how ringers memorise the method being run. Note that bells 2 to 5 changing places follows an identical trajectory but they commence changing at a different point within this common trajectory. Bell 1 has a more simple trajectory as shown by the red line. You may wonder how they know which bell to follow in each row, and they do this using an acquired skill called "rope sight". Defined simply

this is the ability to know which place within each row one's bell is together with the bell you are following and which bell is following you. Once this skill is achieved a method can be learnt just by studying the pattern of the "blue line". Written out fully the method shown would achieve 40 different row changes, but for

5 bells the total number of un-repeating changes is 120. So the conductor of the ringing must introduce 3 variation orders (known as "Bobs") to achieve the full 120 changes. This variation order is causing some difficulty at the moment.

Note that over the Christmas period we ring the bells from the nave in full view. We extend this period to New Year and ring the bells half-muffled from 11.30pm until just before midnight to mourn the passing of the year, then un-muffled after midnight for a few minutes to welcome in the New Year. Do visit if you can.

Mike Penney.



Left to Right: Leigh Ayland, Carol Stoker (Level 2)
and Cheri Oliver (Level 3)



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This month, our very own Diana Such introduced us to the wonders of Needle Felting. Diana supplied all the materials and demonstrated how to add coloured felt to the basic shapes, in order to make a variety of items, ranging from Christmas baubles to snowmen to woodland animals and much more.

Our members had an enjoyable time creating some wonderful items, without too many needlestick injuries!!



Our next meeting is at Shirenewton Recreation Hall on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 7:15pm when our speaker will be Angela Gray who will be giving us a flavour of Ancient Egypt with a talk entitled "Tutankhamun's pants!" All are welcome to join us. Please just come along or contact Angela Gray at angela.deepweir@btopenworld.com or Jane Butterworth at janeb247@gmail.com (641704).

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Where: Shirenewton Church Room

When: 14.45 Tuesday afternoons

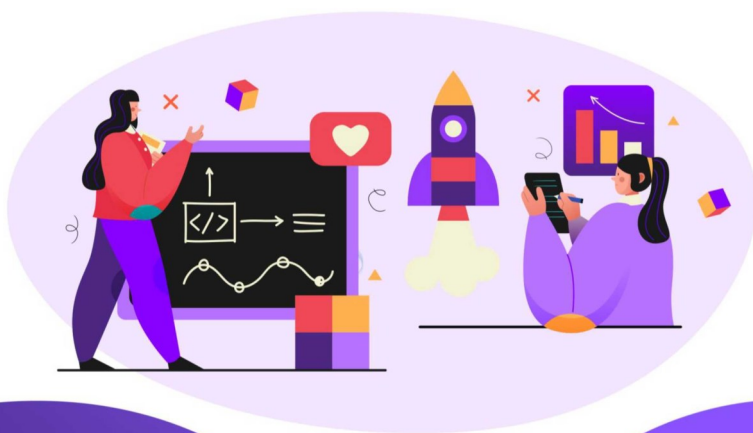
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LOCAL CONTACTS

Severn Wye Ministry Area

Ministry Area Leader	Zoe and Barney Pimentel	severnwyema.co.uk 07754 306229
Team Vicar	Fr Michael Gollop	01291 622 064 frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com
Team Vicar	Reverend Philip Averay	01291 620980 revphilipaveray@gmail.com
Associate Priest	Reverend John Waters	07836 585 250
Ministry Area Leader's Warden	Ros Downes	
Ministry Area People's Warden	David Carne	david-carne@outlook.com 07887 853479
Ministry Area Lay Co-Chair	Hilary Hillier	
Ministry Area Treasurer	Kevin Higgs	

Church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton

Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	07821 725 690
Church Warden	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459
Church Warden	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
LCC Secretary	John Montague	01291 329 481 jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk
LCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
LCC Members	Janet Horton	01291 641 783
	James Leney	01291 641 271
	Wendy Montague	01291 329 481
	Sally Saysell	01291 641 369
	John Burrows	01291 641 845
	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650 521
	James Leney	01291 641 271
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Will Smith-Haddon	07977 281 147 churchroombooking27@gmail.com
Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
Parish magazine distribution	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641 525
200 Club	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459

Ministry Area Council Representative

Wendy Montague 01291 329 481

MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives (as at October 2025)

Shirenewton Community Council

Clerk: Jan McLagan shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Ward

Philip Butterworth (Chair)	01291 641704	philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Catherine Martin (Vice Chair)	01291 329610	cathie.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Gary Mitchell	07979 913555	gary.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Sophie Todd	07766 524709	sophie.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Vacancy		

Earlswood and Newchurch Ward

Ian Martin	07467 176977	ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Geoff Todd	07855 301806	geoff.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk

MCC for Shirenewton

Louise Brown	07598 979719	louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
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Member of Parliament

Catherine Ann Fookes catherine.fookes.mp@parliament.uk

Member of the Senedd

Peter Fox MS Peter.Fox@senedd.wales

Police and SPCO Contacts

In an emergency 999;
To report an incident to the Police 111
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Other Local Organisations

Beavers Julie Hitchcock 01291 650548
Church Fete John Burrows shirenewtonfete@gmail.com
Earlswood Hope Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726
Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall
Chairman Becca Allen 07889762840 chair@earlnew.com
Treasurer Geoff Todd 07855301806 treasurer@earlnew.com

Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel

The Reverend Gordon Gresswell 07570992890

Gaerllwyd Baptist Recreation Association Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA
Beverly Lyndsay 07798 780971

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
brabonnl@hotmail.com

Gwent Wildlife Trust Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Meadows
(previously SAMFAL) 01600 740600

Shirenewton Play Group Beverly Lindsay Shirenewtonplay-group@gmail.com

Shirenewton Primary School

Mr Nick Penn, Head Teacher 01291 641774
shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Shirenewton Toddler Group Sarah Parker 07971 783434

Shirenewton Tennis Association

Andy Orrell shirenewtontennis@gmail.com

Fairtrade Marion McAdam 01291 641316
msm316@gmail.com

Womens Institute (WI) Angela Gray (President)
angela.deepwier@btopenworld.com
Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 01291 641704.

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Monthly copies are available at the Church.

Previous editions of the magazine are available online on the Church website at www.shirenewtonchurch.info.

**To order your regular copy, contact Jane Smith-Haddon
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The editor reserves the right to print free content and free advertisements in black and white and at a size to fit the pagination of the magazine.

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

Deadlines for the 2026 issues are 9:00 a.m. on:

Monday 26th January for the February issue

Monday 23rd February for the March issue

Monday 23rd March for the April issue

Monday 27th April for the May issue

Monday 25th May for the June issue

Monday 22nd June for the July/August issue

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