

Shirenewton Parish Magazine



September 2025

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JOHN SAYSELL 1950-2025



Hundreds turned up to say goodbye to John Saysell on Wednesday 13 August 2025 – one of the largest gatherings at a funeral in the village – a real testament to John's popularity and contribution to the village. The Church was full; the Saysell Centre Hall which John built was full, and a hundred more were gathered in the Churchyard outside Shirenewton Church for the funeral led by the Reverend John Waters and followed by burial in the Churchyard and then to the Shirenewton Recreation Ground and Hall and marquees and straw bales to remember John. Food was prepared by Lucy Moles and her team from the Huntsman Hotel, all arranged so carefully and appropriately by Beryl Saysell who wanted a village reception the way John would have wanted it. So many people were there with memories of John for his friendship and conversations over the years in the village and alongside walls that John was building or repairing and work to houses in the village. John was so skilled in his work. John's work on the Saysell Centre, which bears his name, was outstanding. The hall looks as if it could have been part of the original thirteen century church. It is quite an exceptional extension to a Grade 1 Listed Building and at the centre of the village and a venue for many village activities. John's work will remain at the heart of the village. It is fitting that John's resting place is within sight of his hall. Not many people rest in peace in front of a building they have built. A unique and appropriate honour for John.

STUART JAMES, BRIAN JONES, NAYLOR FIRTH

Sadly, since the last magazine issue we have had to say goodbye two more of Shirenewton's well known long standing residents, Stuart James and Brian Jones, and also Naylor Firth, an Itton resident, well known to many in Shirenewton for his talks on many subjects. All had big send offs with many villagers present, and will be greatly missed.

SPREAD THE WORD!

One of the hardest things we are asked to do, as Christians, is to spread the word! For some reason, we find it difficult to talk about our faith, let alone try to convince anybody else. Well, here's an easy way we can do just that.

If you know someone who says to you, "I sort of believe in God, but I don't go to church, because it's stuffy/boring/too formal/doesn't seem relevant/ everyone is so OLD " – then you can say to them:

"Actually, we have something different you might like. It's an evening with some sweet treats, lots of chat and laughter, some music and a lively discussion about something in the Bible? If that sounds good to you, or at least you're curious, you can go down to Saint Christophers at 7.00 - 8.30pm on any Sunday. They're a very friendly group, and more than half are under the age of 40!"

(Oh, btw, it's called Puddings and Bible Study and you could even give it a try yourself! Or how about mentioning it to your children and grandchildren who no longer go to church?)

From September there is also going to be something specifically for young people – aged 10-18. It will be more interactive with games as well as discussion. Sundays from September 21st at 5.30-6.30pm.

For more information, see the posters or contact Zoe and Barney 077545 306229 or severn.wye.mal@gmail.com

Hilary Hillier
SWMA Lay Co-chair



CLOCK UPDATE



As many of you will know the village's war memorial clock on the church tower has been having mechanical issues of late and hasn't worked for over a year. The Community Council (who have always been responsible for the maintenance of the War Memorials) initially sought a quotation from one church clock company to repair it but appeared reluctant to proceed, perhaps feeling that the village lacked the enthusiasm to justify the quoted cost of £25,000. The bellringers, however, wondered if this might not be the case. We sought a new quote from the esteemed Cumbrian Clock company and kickstarted the fundraising of the required £22,000 with a sponsored bike/ringing tour of local churches, raising an impressive £4000. It appeared there was a lot of local enthusiasm for this project, given the clock's importance as a War Memorial!

Whilst considering plans for a further summer fundraising campaign, we were approached by a collection of very generous donors who offered to fund the remainder of the bill to get the clock back in full working order!

Armed with this great news we returned to the community council hoping to get the work started. There was some initial unease from councillors about the worthiness of the Cumbrian Clock Company. Thankfully contact from local dioceses has reassured the council that a company whose works have included Big Ben, Canterbury, Salisbury, Durham, Hereford and Worcester Cathedrals and multiple National trust properties are worthy of this council contract.

There has now been confirmation from the community council that the order is due to be raised imminently (and hopefully before this goes to print), so we anticipate the work starting within the next few months!

Thanks again to all the generous donors who have provided the funds to get this work started, and we will keep you up to date with the project as it progresses.

Bob Millar, representing the Bellringers.



SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 7th July 2025

Public Participation Glynis MacDonald and Bob Millar

Bob & Glynis confirmed that the money to repair the clock as quoted by The Cumbria Clock Company has been raised, with many thanks to the community and generous donations.

Bob explained the quote was valid for 6 months and would expire in August.

It was mentioned there is a waiting list with the company, and although a repair before Remembrance Sunday would be nice, it is probably unlikely.

Bob discussed the nuances of the contract and requested that SCC take over the contract as they have custody of the Memorial Clock and also takeover the funds.

Cllr Martin stated that to take over the contract, SCC would have to show due diligence, this included acquiring references, transferring the quote to SCC and also being aware of who donated (a council requirement confidentiality being noted). Full faculty approval is required.

Cllrs thanked Bob and Glynis for coming and agreed to have 2 Cllrs in a sub committee to manage clock affairs, congratulating them and Mike Penny (who was unable to attend) on their hard work, dedication and achievements for the Memorial Clock.

Items for Planning – DM/2025/00754 Little Cherry Orchard Chapel Lane Earlswood - Proposed extension to dwelling with hard and soft landscaping.

Not to be confused with the stately Cherry Orchard, this site lies off Chapel Lane just past Little Bushes. Councillors can see the property in detail on Powells' website:

[Cherry-Orchard-Farm Earlswood Brochure.pdf](#)

The site is limited to the existing house and its immediate curtilage though the farm itself comprises some 23 acres. The house dates back to the beginning of the last century and has been extended over decades since. Currently it is a brick 1960s 2 storey house containing 3 bedrooms, kitchen, lounge/diner and sitting room – essentially a 2 up 2 down dwelling.

The house sits back from Chapel Lane and overlooks the Castroggi brook and Wentwood Forest from the front. The main entrance is at the rear. The proposal is to add a 2 storey extension across the back, with new entrance porches in the right-hand end and in the new rear elevation. The front elevation will have two gables with 2 storey windows and a central section similarly equipped with 2 storey windowing. The remaining wall elevations will be dressed in stone and timber cladding (not specified). Existing windows are to be replaced though sizes will largely remain other than on the southwest elevation. Parking is not shown though there is mention of a carport and courtyard. The new volume, allowing for the removal of the existing single storey front elevation and attached store shed, is stated to be 121% of the original.

Summarising the applicant's Planning Statement:

The existing dwelling is coated in a non-breathable cementitious render which is painted pink, which is now in poor condition and harming the existing structure by preventing moisture from escaping.

This render is to be replaced with a breathable lime render finished in white, save where there is an existing stone finish. A stone finish will be applied to the gable projections and as a low-level band all around the property.

Above the stone banding will be vertical timber cladding (species & board spec TBC) weathering to a silver tone blending into its surrounding context. The porches are to be oak and stone in a nod to the old property. The roof will be covered in slates as existing.

Windows are to be black sleek frames. Rainwater goods will be black.

The bat survey considers the site to be of limited ecological value for bats, and no roost was located. Bat and bird boxes are to be provided though no details are given.

The immediate curtilage of the house is to be hard and soft landscaped but no details of the soft landscaping are given; likewise, car parking and a proposed car port are not detailed.

Councillors will note that whilst parts of the original dwelling date back to the early 20th century and might be considered to be utilitarian and of little architectural interest, the house sits discreetly in our typical local countryside. Councillors may therefore wish to consider whether the proposed elevations and the mass of the proposed building works transform the appearance and character such that none of the original house will be recognizable and neglects any connection with its countryside setting and traditional Monmouthshire architecture.

SCC OBJECTS to this application on the grounds that :

The proposed mass of the design and in particular the excessively prominent gables the ridges of which are as high as the main roof ridge along with the 2 storey windows between the gables impose an uncharacteristic dominance over the open countryside and would be

clearly visible from the public highway and beyond, contrary to Policy H6, as also is the immense increase in size. The proposed gable windows and the windows in the wall in between bear no resemblance to the existing house and fail to match patterns of openings. The original form of the dwelling is unrecognisable.

Insufficient details are given in regard to the external timber finishes including paint colours, foul water drainage, ecology enhancement measures, landscaping, external lighting, parking and carport. Although the Planning Statement refers to car parking and existing outbuildings none are shown within the application site. The site plan will need to be revised to include the parking area, carport and outbuildings needed for the residential use of the house.

There is no detail of the proposed access gating or its location nor what entrance widening requirement might be needed to enable vehicles to wait off the public highway whilst the gates are operated. There is a public footpath along the access which needs to be kept open at all times and there are no proposals as to how this would be achieved.

Subject to the revision of the site plan as above, there is no provision for outbuildings necessary for the enjoyment of the property.

SCC reserves the right to make additional comments when these further details are provided.

Cllrs voted unanimously to object. Action: Clerk to notify Planning officer.

Audit: Clerk confirmed submission of audit information and Audit notice currently displayed.

Traffic order - Notice of Intention to make a permanent order for speed restrictions: Notice taken as read, 40mph speed limit on B4523 Chepstow to Mynyddbach, no comments to MCC from SCC.

Traffic Incidents: It was agreed to minute traffic incidents and near misses.

Near miss on Gaerllwyd Junction 27th June – 3 cars, and 2 pedestrians.

Near miss cyclist and HGV 29th June

Serious RTA life changing injury at Coppice Mawr 29th June.

ANPR: Cllr B attended on-site meeting with Gwent Police and discussed the following:

The proposed camera location 'on lamppost by Upper House opposite the entrance to Redd Landes'.

Electrical voltage in the lamppost checked and meets the needs of the camera.

Camera will be mounted high up on the lamppost and will be pointing up the hill towards Earlswood.

*Camera will be in passive mode and record number plates of passing vehicles and will be accessed if there is an incident in the area.
It will not record speed.*

The camera is one of 20 going out to 20 Police Forces in the UK and they are being funded by NFU

The next step will see Police doing door-to-door canvassing to measure resident reactions to the proposal.

Police hoping to complete by end of July. **Action: Gwent Police**

Email from Mr & Mrs Brabon regarding Planters: possibility of putting 2 planters in Mynyddbach, Triangle opposite Hall looking untidy, **Action: Cllr C Martin offered to visit the proposed sites and find out who owns them prior to getting permissions. Clerk to contact MCC regarding the Triangle and verges.**

Multiple emails regarding Manure pile near play area in Shirenewton. Clerk has reported issue to NRW and Environmental Health.
Action MCC & NRW

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT JULY 2025

County Councillor Brown advised:

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee- 10th June 2025

The meeting considered various reports including the Welsh Language Annual Report 2024/25, Public Protection Performance Report 2024/25 and Registration Services Annual Report 2024/5 covering the registration services for births, deaths and weddings. The reports and questions asked can be found and watched at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=305&Mid=6164>

People Scrutiny Committee – 17th June 2025

The People Scrutiny Committee presented 2 main reports. The first on the Audit Wales report on hospital discharges Gwent wide and provides delayed discharge figures for the different health boards with recommendations for improvement. The second report being on Play assessment.

The link to the meeting can be found here.

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=304&Mid=6148>

Cabinet on the 25th June 2025

Cabinet reports covered the feedback on the Performance and Overview Committee, the Call in on the letting of the former Abergavenny Library, the Strategic Risk Assessment and Nature Recovery.

Following the Call in on letting of the former Abergavenny Library for a 30-year lease at £6K a year (£500 per month) as a Mosque and community centre the Cabinet accepted its original decision, despite the Council's own budget paperwork showing a reasonable market rental achievable of £20K to £25K per annum, with call in concerns on the legal duty of best value.

The Call in details of the Special Place Scrutiny Committee on the 11th of June 2025 can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=303&MId=6383>

The Cabinet reports for the 25th June 2025 can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=6103>

County Council 26th June 2025

County Council on the 26th June 2025 covered reports on Licensing and Gambling Policy issues, appointment to outside bodies and the Shape and Leadership Structure of Monmouthshire County Council. There were 2 motions one on prosecution or fining of the registered keeper of a car who throws litter and the other on Magor station. There were a number of questions on the agenda. In relation to the Chepstow area, this included one on the weight limit for HGVs on the Severn Bridge and another on the High Beech roundabout. I asked about Home to school transport and SAC which covers the agreed syllabus for RVE in schools.

The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=143&MId=6081>

Public Services Scrutiny Committee – 7th July 2025

This committee provides reports on the Adult Mental Health Services with a specific focus on Suicide and Care for People in the Community with Dementia.

The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=260&MId=6312>

Special Performance and Overview Committee on the 9th July 2025

The special meeting covers a review of the process and decision making involved in commissioning Care Contracts in the South of the County, following concerns by care providers and residents of a change in providers.

The report can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=305&MId=6381>

Police report: The graph shows five recorded incidents in June 2025 relating to Shirenewton and broader community.

Incidents of note;

Ambulance requesting assistance for a missing person

Abandoned vehicle in the woods

A road traffic collision on the B4235

Ambulance were called to attend the Huntsman hotel regarding the welfare of a hotel resident. The male was not in the hotel when ambulance arrived. Police were called to aid in assisting and conducting an area search in locating the male.

The abandoned vehicle relates to a vehicle that has broken down in the Coppice Mawr woods area that was suspected abandoned. After officers enquiries it was revealed the vehicle was awaiting recovery. The vehicle has now been successfully recovered.

The road traffic collision on the B42345 is a motorbike rider who has come off and has some life changing injuries. The rider was conveyed to the Southmead Hospital Bristol and conveyed by ambulance. The road was closed for a short duration of time and a social media post was published regarding the closure to make people and residents aware at the time of the incident.

There are no further incidents of note. There will be more speed monitoring taking place in the upcoming weeks/ summer time.

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 4th August 2025

Items for Planning – 2 Items.

DM/2025/00897 Little Cherry Orchard Chapel Lane Earlswood - the reconfiguration and rewilding of agricultural land to become residential curtilage. The demolition of numerous derelict, dangerous outbuilding structures. The construction of a carport, cabin and storage building. With associated hard and soft landscaping.

Councillors will recall considering the proposed extension to Little Cherry Orchard during the last meeting, when SCC resolved to object to that application on the grounds that :

The proposed mass of the design and in particular the excessively prominent gables the ridges of which are as high as the main roof ridge along with the 2 storey windows between the gables impose an uncharacteristic dominance over the open countryside and would be clearly visible from the public highway and beyond, contrary to Policy H6, as also is the immense increase in size. The proposed gable windows and the windows in the wall in between bear no resemblance to the existing house and fail to match patterns of openings. The original form of the dwelling is unrecognisable.

Insufficient details are given in regard to the external timber finishes including paint colours, foul water drainage, ecology enhancement measures, landscaping, external lighting, parking and carport. Although the Planning Statement refers to car parking and existing outbuildings, none are shown within the application site. The site plan will need to be revised to include the parking area, carport and outbuildings needed for the residential use of the house.

There is no detail of the proposed access gating or its location nor what entrance widening requirement might be needed to enable vehicles to wait off the public highway whilst the gates are operated. There is a public footpath along the access which needs to be kept open at all times and there are no proposals as to how this would be achieved.

Subject to the revision of the site plan as above, there is no provision for outbuildings necessary for the enjoyment of the property.

SCC reserved the right to make additional comments when these further details are provided.

The application now presented for consideration relates to land adjoining the main application site, principally the field between the public lane and the house, the access track and the series of agricultural outbuildings leading up to the house.

Councillors will note the applicant seeks consent inter alia, for:

Carport - Since the applicant site is not part of the original site it cannot be assumed that the carport is to serve the house (note proposed cabin also). If it is, the site plan should be revised to include the earlier site.

The carport is a 1½ storey building some 6m x 6.3m and 6.4m to the roof ridge and comprises a double bay open fronted garage with a room above having 2 dormer windows, a side window and 2 Velux windows. There is in addition covered storage to the side measuring 5m x 3m. The upstairs room is accessed externally, not internally. The framework is to be oak and external walls appear to be timber clad but no other detail as to the roof and other external materials, colour, or finish is given. Whilst the carport is set into rising ground it will still be visible from the public lane and beyond.

Cabin - The proposal includes a 3-bedroom single storey building with kitchen/lounge and bathroom. The Design Statement (DAS) says the Carport and Annex (sic) have been designed in a traditional format and using natural earth tone materials to blend into the natural environment (but no further detail as to materials colour and finish are given), and that the configuration for the Annex was designed to accommodate the family while future house renovations were to take place. There is no commitment to remove the cabin when its stated function is fulfilled, nor to restrict its use to the occupiers of the house. The location of the cabin/annex appears to encroach on the public footpath. No details of its services (foul and surface water drainage and electricity etc) are given.

Change of use to residential land - The farm sits on some 23 acres of land. The area comprised in this application appears to include only the field between the house and the public lane plus the access track and the approach to the house. The DAS says the proposal is to bring this portion of the property within the residential curtilage, though Councillors will note that the application is not linked to the house application as such. The field is to become a wildflower meadow which the applicant proposes to retain in perpetuity. It is not suggested that it will be used as garden and Councillors may therefore question why a change of use to residential land is needed.

Agricultural land is classified by grades according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on agricultural use for food production. There are 5 grades of land numbered 1 to 5, with grade 3 divided into two sub-grades. The best and most versatile land falls into grades 1, 2 and sub-grade 3a and is the most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs, and hence deserves to be retained for agriculture. The applicant has not provided a grade assessment.

Councillors will note there will be a permeable track all the way across the field, giving access beyond, and a branch off serving the house. No details of the construction of the track or width are given. It is proposed to erect a gated access in the form of a pair of 5 bar gates hung on pillars faced with natural stone. No sight lines are shown nor is public access to the footpath shown to be preserved.

Recommendation - SCC objects to this application on the grounds :

It should be considered as a combined site with planning application DM/2025/00754 with which it is inextricably linked.

There is lack of clarity whether the cabin (also referred to as an annex) is a new build on its own site or an annex to the main house. Even if it is an annex to the main house, then SCC objects on the grounds that the annex is fully self-contained, shares no facilities with the main house, is situated on a site separate from the main house, and thus is a new build in open countryside without justification, contrary to MCC Policy S1 and to national planning policy and guidance within Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 6. Whilst there is some detail on the external finishes, colours and materials, the application form does not clarify which buildings these relate to and further detail is needed.

The applicant's explanation that the annex was designed to accommodate the family while future house renovations were to take place does not address that this is only a temporary need nor the size of the family to be accommodated for whom a modest mobile home or caravan would usually suffice. If MCC were to give consent despite SCC's objections then SCC requests a condition requiring the annex to be used only by a single family occupier of the main house, be removed after 5 years and the land restored to agricultural.

The siting of the annex appears to encroach on the public footpath, and a revised plan should be submitted taking account of the Footpaths Officer's comments.

Given that it is enclosed on 3 sides, the carport is in reality a garage with a room over. The number of windows for the room denote uses beyond storage. The roof ridge at 6.4m is similar to that of the proposed main house extension (DM/2025/ 00754) and equally as dominant over the field in front as well as the public highway and visible to the forest beyond. It is not a traditional Monmouthshire farm or domestic building, is uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape and along with the annex (whether permanent or not), associated curtilage, drive and parking would significantly adversely affect the open rural character of the area.

The application fails to clarify whether the carport is ancillary to the main house (which is not included in the applicant site) or to the proposed annex. Whichever it is, SCC objects on the grounds that if the cabin/annex fails to achieve consent and unless there is a condition limiting the "carport's" use to ancillary to the main house, the "carport" has no justification and would be in breach of Policy S1 and TAN 6.

The application shows that numerous outbuildings are to be removed and that one of them is to be replaced but no details of the replacement are given.

There is a new track all the way across the field, giving access beyond, and a branch off serving the main house but no details of the construction of the track or width are given. It should be routed to the field edge to avoid cutting across the field.

It is proposed to erect a gated access, but no sight lines are shown nor is public access to the footpath preserved.

The Design and Access Statement shows the proposal is to bring this parcel of land, currently part of the original farm, within the residential curtilage but does not clarify whether it is the main house curtilage being referred to and this application is not linked to DM/2025/00754. The field is to become a wildflower meadow which the applicant proposes to retain in perpetuity, but no establishment or maintenance proposals are offered. The applicant has not provided an Agricultural Land grading. As the residential curtilage would take in the whole field, the open aspect of this exposed land and the proposed track and inevitable domestic paraphernalia would be detrimental to the rural character of the area and would be contrary to MCC's policies LC1 and LC5.

SCC reserves the right to make additional comments when it is provided with these further details.

Cllrs Voted unanimously to 'object' to this application.

DM/2025/00902 Gaerllwyd Farm -

Change of use of the field from agricultural to equine. Installation of permeable hard standing (492.78 m²) and concrete stable base (90.49m²) with L shaped low profile horse stable block erected (61.34 m²) This will be used for horse turn out, vehicle parking/turning and horse stabling.

Councillors will be aware that this application is submitted by fellow Councillor Geoff Todd.

The application is in regard to a field at the Gaerllwyd Crossroads. The B road to Usk forms the northern boundary and the road back to Shirenewton forms the west and southerly boundaries.

The application is for change of use from agricultural to equine, with construction of an L shaped stable block and hard standing. The entrance to the field is on the junction and the hard standing of some 500sqm will enable vehicles to pull off the road and turn to exit forward. There is some ranch fencing to secure the horses during vehicle movements. The stable block rear section is 11m x 5m (including the roof) and the 2.6m L extends some 6m. The roof ridge is 3m. Whilst the stable block is sited alongside the B road it is effectively screened from it by hedging.

Rainwater will be harvested from the stable roof and a full SUDS application is in process.

MCC Highways has expressed concern that the field gate should be set back some 6-12m from the highway to allow vehicles to pull off the highway or leave before having to open/ close the gate, and to form the access a short distance further south from the road junction for greater safety.

Recommendation: No objection subject to satisfying MCC Highways first objection.

Cllrs voted unanimously 'no objection' with Cllr Todd abstaining.

Action: Clerk to notify Planning

Memorial Clock Repair and contract with Cumbria Clock

Company: 3 references received, Cllr Todd to follow up with CCCo. Due Diligence completed. Faculty not required. **Resolved** to continue, with fail-safes as discussed. SCC to pay and reclaim associated VAT.

Grants: Resolved to make grant payments as discussed and within budget constraints (see table below) Cllrs wished all applicant's well with their projects. **Action** Clerk to initiate payments as agreed.

ANPR: Awaiting news from Gwent Police.

Traffic events: Cllr Todd reported 6 x traffic loops in the area, and C Cllr Brown confirmed she would this share data when made available. **Cllr Todd** requested traffic loops for Village.

No speeding events reported.

Cllrs Reported 3 Road signs requiring repair, Earlswood sign near Tredar Arms, Shirenewton sign at crossroads – (missing) & Redhouse Lane sign (off Crick Rd). **Action: Clerk** to notify MCC on My Mon App

Hay-cutting of Earlswood field – Resolved to cut.

Street Lights Ditch Hill – Cllr brown confirmed that MCC had been in touch, and the streetlight was reported as not working, due to its location (active school route) it is a legal requirement. Lamppost set to come on from Dusk till 12 midnight. Cllr Brown requested MCC notify local residents. **Action MCC**

Fencing quote for play area received, awaiting additional quote from local carpenter, plus quote for play area benches and notice board. **Action – Awaiting 2nd quote**

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT AUGUST 2025

County Councillor Brown advised:

Place Scrutiny Committee 10th of July 2025

The meeting covers reports on a car parking review which gives information about the use of the current car parks and makes recommendations for more investigations. The flooding strategy with a final draft report includes the flooding risk for Mouton Brook. It is intended to have a consultation on this flood strategy from the 1st of August for 8 weeks hosted by MCC Let's talk and drop-in sessions at the Community Hubs- Chepstow library from 9am to 5pm on 10th of September and a similar time at the Caldicot library on 11th of September.

The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=303&MId=6167>

Grant Applications 2025/2026

| Organisation | Amount Requested | Project Total | Project details | Amount £ Granted |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Shirenewton WI | £50 | £400 | Towards costs of speakers | £50 |
| Shirenewton Church | £1,100 | £3,500 | Towards maintenance of churchyard and grounds | £1,000 |
| Shirenewton Church | £750 | £3500 | Assist with Church Fete costs | 0 |
| Shirenewton LCC | £1500 | £5500 | Towards print costs & production of parish Magazine. | £500 |
| Shamble | £100 | £387 | Towards printing of promotional materials, posters, maps & high viz vests | £100 |
| Community Cinema | £2400 | £3700 | Set up costs and licences of community cinema | 0 |
| Shirenewton Historical Society | £250 | £700 | A3 Printer and Portable PA system | £250 |
| Totals | £6150 | £17,187 | | £1,900 |

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee on 15th of July 2025

The Committee considered various reports including the Revenue and Capital monitoring report which included the final revenue and capital report for 2024/5. A summary of this report was given in the recommendations to Cabinet, as follows:

RECOMMENDATIONS (to Cabinet):

That Cabinet recognises:

- A gross revenue budget surplus at outturn of £1,239,000 prior to transfers to reserves, representing a 0.6% variance against the budget.

- After accounting for approved transfers to/from earmarked reserves of £742,000, the final net surplus stands at £497,000, which will be added to the Council Fund.

- The surplus reflects a significant improvement of £2.83 million compared to the previous financial update. This positive variance is largely due to an unbudgeted grant of £1.19 million from the Welsh Government in March 2025, alongside favourable service budget positions resulting from effective budget recovery actions.

- The Council's continued financial discipline, combined with late grant funding has enabled the replenishment of reserves in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

- Despite the positive outturn, significant cost pressures remain in Social Care, Additional Learning Needs, Waste, Passenger Transport, and Homelessness/Housing, with a combined overspend reported for the year of £4.6 million. While some of these were addressed in the 2025/26 budget, these areas continue to pose financial risks.

- An increase in school reserve deficits of £3.19 million during the year, resulting in a cumulative year-end deficit of £4.09 million. Fifteen schools were in a deficit balance at year-end. Several schools continue to face structural budget challenges, which are being addressed through recovery plans.

- Total capital expenditure for the year was £48.81 million, with a gross underspend of £2.73 million, primarily due to underspends in Infrastructure and Property Maintenance and the receipt of additional unbudgeted grants that have offset core budgets.

- Capital slippage requests total £25.03 million, which includes £1.3 million that can be allocated out of the underspend achieved and will be repurposed to create a capital contingency budget for 2025/26 to mitigate scheme risks or address emerging capital priorities.

- There are early indications of cost pressures against the 2025/26 revenue budget, exceeding the £850,000 contingency held. Prompt mitigation by services will be required to ensure a balanced outturn position is achieved.

That Cabinet approves:

- The strategy to replenish reserves as outlined in Section 7, including the allocation of the £497,000 year-end surplus to the Council Fund.

- The use of £3.68 million in capital receipts to fund eligible revenue expenditure under the Welsh Government's "flexible use of capital receipts" direction (Appendix 3).

-The capital slippage requests of £25.03 million (Appendix 1 - Section 4), acknowledging the factors that delayed project delivery.

-The capital budget revisions detailed in Appendix 5, reflecting finalised grant funding awards for the year.

The full report details can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=305&MIId=6157>

Special People Scrutiny Committee on 16th of July 2025

The report covered the review of the Housing Social Support Grant of £3.4 m from Welsh Government. It details the number of applications with identified need capacity gaps. In 2024/25 there were 403 homeless applications and 160 in temporary accommodation. The full report can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=304&MIId=6392>

County Council on 17th of July 2025

The full Council considered various reports including the Chepstow integrated transport project and the report of the Strategic Director Children, Learning and Economy Annual report.

The Chepstow integrated transport project proposes changes to the train station area including space for one or two buses, as well as toilet improvements to the station itself. The proposal will be looking at extending the Monmouth to Tintern bus to the station and to investigate the possibility of extending the C1 bus service to provide a connection from the existing bus station to the station. There is also a proposal to have traffic lights at Hardwick Terrace, this is where there is difficulty getting back onto the A48 from the Marks and Spencer side of town.

The Strategic Director Children, Learning and Economy annual report details the surplus of places for Chepstow school and the primary schools in the Chepstow area, details of which can be found on pages 41 and 42 of the report. The report states that "Currently there are a significant number of surplus places within the Chepstow cluster. The primary sector has 249 surplus places within the primary schools(18%) and is projected to increase..."

There was also a motion on home to school transport and a number of questions asked at full Council. The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=143&MIId=6336>

People Scrutiny Committee on 22nd of July 2025

The above committee considered reports on the receipt of Petitions on home to school transport from Mathern Community Council Area and St Arvans, the County of Sanctuary Strategy, the Strategic Equality Plan 24/25 and Adult Services Inspection Report.

The County of Sanctuary report stated there was no financial cost or risk.

This point was questioned, and the response from a Council Officer indicated that the Council does receive grants from the Welsh Government and the Home Office.

In terms of the Strategic Equality plan 24/5 this was seen in need of an update in view of the Supreme Court judgment of a man being a biological man and a woman being a biological woman.

The Adult Service Inspection report in 2022 identified 23 areas for improvement with 3 areas still require improvement including the co-produced outcomes for carers, contingency planning and risk management. The reports can be found at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=304&Mid=6149>

Joint Public Services Scrutiny Committee on 28th of July 2025

The meeting was to discuss the Neville Hall hospital proposals and the latest stage of the Clinical Futures Plan. The concentration on Nevill Hall was due to finding RAAC in the roofs and the need for investment as a result. The report and the meeting can be watched at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=260&Mid=6406>

RLDP

The Place Scrutiny Committee on the 25th of September 2025 is due to consider the Replacement Local Development Plan and should be published about a week before that date.

Action: Clerk to share **RLDP** Agenda 18th September when available to see what areas may be affected. (Contact Hazel Ilett should Cllrs wish to attend)

Clerks report as circulated and taken as read.

Police report – No report received. Clerk noted Parish magazine requested up to date information for contacting police, awaiting correct information from PCSO T Wall.

Meetings attended. Cllr Butterworth confirmed attendance at a recent Welsh water meeting. The sewer (and its overflowing issues) that serves Shirenewton was discussed & Welsh water confirmed they are sealing areas where fresh water is ingressing the sewer and appear to have moved away from the plan to prevent rainwater from residences, entering the sewer.

Councillors agreed the date of the next meeting on **Monday 1st September 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

Vacancy on Shirenewton Community Council

Shirenewton Community Council has 2 vacancies for a Councillor in the Shirenewton and 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. 2 seats for Co-option are now 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

Holy Communion in the Welsh language



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

**9:30am on the second
Saturday of the month
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Zoepimentel@cinw.org.uk



HIRE OF THE SAYSELL CENTRE, CHURCH ROOM

Glynis MacDonald has decided to stand down from her role as booking secretary for the Saysell Centre Church Room.

This was a job Glynis has done for well over a decade and the Church Council thank her for such committed service over so many years. We are most grateful to Will Smith-Haddon who has agreed to take over the role.

The Saysell Centre is a valuable community resource in the centre of the village and is available to hire on a regular booking basis or for one-off events.

All enquiries should be addressed to Will on 07977 281147 or by e-mail at: churchroombooking27@gmail.com

SERVICES AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH IN SEPTEMBER

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 31 st August | 10.00 | 5th Sunday of the month. Group Service at Shirenewton Eucharist with Hymns |
| Sunday 7 th September | 10.00 | Morning Praise with Hymns |
| Sunday 14 th September | 10.00 | Eucharist with Hymns. Service to be Taken by Bishop Cherry Vann of Monmouth, Archbishop of Wales |
| Sunday 21 st September | 10.00 | Eucharist with Hymns |
| Sunday 28 th September | 10.00 | Eucharist with Hymns |

All are welcome to join us and enjoy refreshments in the church rooms after Sunday morning service

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

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in July:

1. Julian Cornwell
2. Maureen Moody
3. The Montague grandchildren

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SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our last meeting of our 2024/2025 year saw Prof Ronald Hutton give an excellent talk on the 'Great Civil War, this speaker always draws a crowd and the Church Room was full.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday, 10th September, Archive Meeting

Tuesday 30th September

Tuesday, 28th October

Our meetings are held at the Church Room, unless otherwise stated, we start at 7.30pm.

Archive meetings start at 2.00pm – 4.00pm and everyone is welcome, Drop in session.

FROM OUR ARCHIVE

September Book of the Month from our Archive is: '*Silures, Resistance, Resilience, Revival*' Ray Howell

Photographs from our archive of the Village fete. What year? Do you know anyone?



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



Harvest Thanksgiving Service 10:00 Sunday 5th October

Come and join us at an all-age service to celebrate our many blessings from a fruitful year.

At the service we will collect offerings for the **Chepstow Food Bank.**

Suitable donations include:

- Tinned and dried goods
- Feminine hygiene products
- Toiletries
- Food which can be prepared with little energy required

No fresh food or produce please.

Severn Wye Ministry Area
Our services for September 2025

| | 7 th September | 14 th September | 21 st September | 28 th September |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Trinity 12 | Trinity 13 | Trinity 14 | Trinity 15 |
| St Mary's Priory, Chepstow | 8.00 Morning Liturgy (non-Eucharist) | Said Eucharist | Said Eucharist | Morning Liturgy (non-Eucharist) |
| | 11.00 Sung Eucharist | HARVEST FESTIVAL AT 10AM | Sung Eucharist | Family service |
| | 18.30 | Taize service | | |
| St Christopher's, Chepstow | 9.30 Said Eucharist | Combined service at St Mary's Priory at 10am | Eucharist with hymns | Said Eucharist |
| St Peter's, Newchurch | 17.30 Eucharist with hymns | | Café church | |
| St Tewdric, Mathern | 9.00 Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns | Morning Prayer |
| St Peter, St Pierre | 11.30 Morning Prayer | Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns |
| St Andoenus, Mounton | 10.15 Eucharist with hymns | Morning Prayer | Eucharist with hymns Morning Prayer | Morning Prayer |
| St Thomas a Becket, Shirenewton | 10.00 Morning service (non-Eucharist) | Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns | Eucharist with hymns |
| St Arvan, St Arvans | 10.00 Sung Eucharist | Sung Eucharist | Sung Eucharist | Sung Eucharist |
| St Deiniol, Itton | 11.30 | HARVEST FESTIVAL | | Eucharist with hymns |
| St James, Devauden | 9.00 | | Family service (non Eucharist) | |
| | 16.00 Family Eucharist | | | |
| St Mary's, Penterry | 11.30 Harvest Eucharist with hymns | | | |
| Holy Cross, Kilgerrwg | 11.30 | | Eucharist with hymns | |
| Youth @ St Christophers | 17.30 | | Youth service | Youth service |
| Saints @ St Christophers | 19.00 | Puddings and Bible Study | Puddings and Bible Study | Puddings and Bible Study |

FROM THE REGISTERS

The funeral service of Lionel John Saysell (1950 - 2025) took place on Wednesday, 13th August at St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton. The Reverend John Waters officiated.

The funeral service of Stuart Alan James (1951 - 2025) took place on Tuesday, 15th July at St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton. The Reverend Zoe Pimentel officiated.

The burial of the cremated remains of Terence Arthur Walters (1938 - 2025) took place on Saturday, 2nd August at St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton. The Reverend John Waters officiated.

The funeral service of Margaret Elsie Horton (1935 - 2025) took place on Friday, 22 August at St Thomas a Becket Church, Shirenewton. The Reverend Zoe Pimentel officiated.



Thank you, Sally!

Following our successful collection earlier in the summer, after Sally stood down as warden, we will be formally marking the occasion on **Sunday 21st September** with a presentation and reception in the Saysell Centre after the 10:00 service.



All are most welcome to join us for this happy occasion!

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

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secondary school level
to postgraduate
and
music theory, piano and strings
tuition

07906 195098

rachelcross.co.uk

rachelecross6@gmail.com

Chepstow Priory Friends

AGM and Social evening

Saturday 20th September 11.30 – 1pm

At St Mary's Priory Chepstow



11.30 AGM meeting and discussion (inside)

12.30 Bring and share lunchtime social. On the grass behind the church if fine. Inside the church if not -

All welcome who would like to support St Mary's Priory!

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The Tredegar Arms (The Square, centre of Shirenewton)

Great House Farm complex (off Old Road), Earlswood (north)
[repair.decrease.fussy]

Earlswood Hall
(Earlswood)



(House half way between Blethyn Close and the School in Mynyddbach)

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25 places of world significance within 25 miles of Shirenewton

7. The Railway

On the 27th September 1825, 200 years ago this month, the *Stockton to Darlington Railway* opened and became the first modern railway line in the world. All the celebrations will show a picture of Skerne Bridge, the world's oldest railway bridge on that line, but within 18 miles of Shirenewton is a railway bridge still in use of the same age – the Bassaleg Viaduct at Newport!

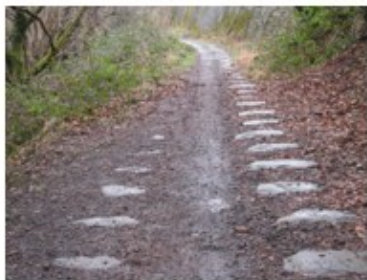


Skerne Bridge, Darlington 1825
World's oldest railway bridge and still in use.



Bassaleg Viaduct, Newport, South Wales 1826
Also still in use (for freight trains).

Of even more significance, however, is that one of the most important railways in world history is within 25 miles of Shirenewton at Abercynon in the Taff Valley, the southern terminus of the Merthyr-Abercynon Railway, also known as the **Penydarren Railway** – and it's 20 years older than the world's first public railway between Stockton and Darlington! Nowhere in the world history of railways is so significant as this railway within 25 miles of Shirenewton.



Merthyr Tramroad (built 1802) and a stretch next to Brunel's Taff Valley Railway (1841)

In 1800, the three largest iron works in the world were all at Merthyr Tydfil: ‘Cyfarthfa’, the largest in the world; ‘Dowlais’; and ‘Pen-y-Darren’; and also the ‘Plymouth’ Iron works. Access to the upper part of the 1794 Glamorgan Canal to Merthyr Tydfil was dominated by the *Cyfarthfa* iron works so the other iron works constructed a tramway from their works, by-passing the upper reaches of the Glamorgan Canal which was congested with *Cyfarthfa* barges, to a point 9 miles further south at Abercynon. The tramway was built between 1800 and 1802 by George Overton under the supervision of Richard Hill of the *Plymouth* Iron Works.

In 1802 the Cornish engineer Richard Trevithick, the pioneer of high-pressure static steam engines, built a high-pressure static steam engine to drive a hammer at the *Pen y Darren* Iron Works. In 1803 Trevithick mounted the steam engine on wheels and turned it into a locomotive – the world’s first steam engine railway locomotive was built in Wales – 28 miles from Shirenewton, and tested within 25 miles. The proprietor of the *Pen y Darren* Iron Works, Samuel Homfray, was so impressed with Trevithick’s locomotive that he challenged Richard Crawshay, the proprietor of the *Cyfarthfa* Iron Works, (6th richest person in Britain at the time), to a bet of 500 guineas that Trevithick’s locomotive could haul 10 tons of coal along the Merthyr Tramroad from Pen y Darren to Abercynon, 9.75 miles.

On the 21st February 1804, 221 years ago, Trevithick’s locomotive, built at Pen y Darren, was successful in hauling 11 tons of coal, 5 wagons, and carrying 70 passengers along the 9.75 mile tramroad from Merthyr Tydfil to the Navigation House (which is still there) by the Glamorgan Canal Basin (which is no longer there) at Abercynon at an average speed of 2.4 mph. Trackways and tramways have existed for hundreds of years but what we describe generally today as ‘railways’ are ‘*railways on which self propelled locomotives haul the load*’ rather than horses or static engines and by that definition the very first modern railway began less than 25 miles from Shirenewton with the very first locomotive hauling a train in 1804 and this event revolutionised communications, industry, society, and thought across the world. It was a remarkable event with enormous worldwide significance.



T shirts at the NRM at York showing the world's first steam locomotive.



The railway tracks at Merthyr Tydfil on which the world's first steam locomotive ran on 21 February 1804.

At the National Railway Museum in York T shirts are on sale showing the progression of locomotives from the world's first steam locomotive, Trevithick's Pen y Darren locomotive in 1804 (which ran within 25 miles of Shirenewton), to the Japanese Shinkansen 'bullet trains' 160 years later and the French TGVs.

Soon after this event Richard Trevithick teamed up with John Uppeth Rastrick to build early steam engines at the foundry at Bridgnorth and this included the 'Catch me who can' engine which they put on a circular track in central London in 1808 to increase interest in steam locomotives. Trevithick and Rastrick's joint work is recorded on a monument in Bridgnorth. John Uppeth Rastrick went on to design and build Chepstow Bridge in 1814-1816. All the iron for Chepstow Bridge was cast at the Bridgnorth foundry and was taken by boat down the River Severn and up the River Wye and assembled where it is today!

The monument to Trevithick and his 'world-historic' Pen-y-Darren locomotive is at Penydarren between Merthyr Town Centre and Dowlais on the line itself (see the actual rails at the foot of the monument). Although this monument is 27.8 miles from Shirenewton, outside of our 25-mile subject area, one third of the 9.75 miles of the track from Merthyr Tydfil to Abercynon, on which this world first, historic journey was achieved, is within 25 miles of Shirenewton!

Next month – 8. I K Brunel's 'Bridge to India' (4 miles East of Shirenewton)

John Burrows

MYNYDDBACH/SHIRENEWTON AND THE BOMB

Last month, August 2025, it was time to remember the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the terror of the atomic bomb which has cast a shadow over the whole world ever since and we pray would never be repeated. The centre of Hiroshima is 5,917 miles from here but there was a man from Mynyddbach, Shirenewton who was in Hiroshima the day the first atomic bomb was dropped. Ken Brown who lived at School House, School Hill, Mynyddbach, and a regular at the Carpenters Arms, was a Japanese Prisoner of War working in the docks at Hiroshima on that fateful day. The Docks were less than 4 miles from the centre of the blast. Barrie Morris told me that there used to be some text in a frame on the wall at the Carpenters Arms recalling Ken Brown's presence in Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. JWB

Penycaemawr Chapel Harvest Festival

Sunday 28th September

at

3.00p.m.

A warm welcome to everyone

Caldicot Food Bank Donations

Our Harvest display will include a small amount of fresh produce but will largely be a collection of long life food items (examples below) which we will donate to the Caldicot Food Bank.

If you would like to make any donations, please bring them along to Penycaemawr Methodist Chapel either on Friday 26th between 5.00 and 6.30p.m. or Saturday 27th between 2.30 and 4.30p.m.

..or you could come along to our Harvest Festival with them.
All donations will be gratefully received. Many thanks.





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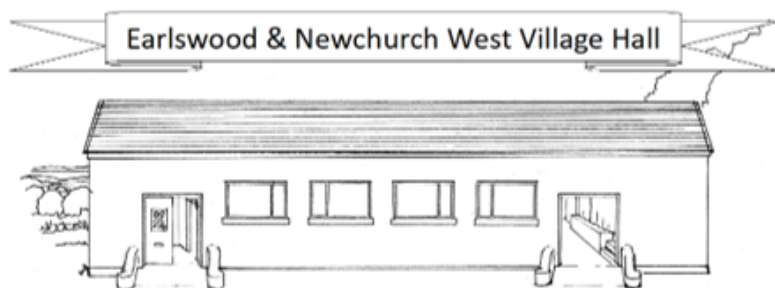
SEPTEMBER

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday 1 st 7.00 p.m. | Shirenewton Community Council meeting Shirenewton Recreation Hall |
| Thursday 4 th 7.45 to 9.00 p.m. | Ministry Area Prayer Group St Andoenus' Church, Moun-ton |
| Wednesday 10 th 2.00 p.m. | Shirenewton Local History Society Archive Meeting Shirenewton Church Room |
| Thursday 11 th 7.15 p.m. | WI—Flamenco Dancing Shirenewton Recreation Hall |
| Thursday 11 th 7.45 to 9.00 p.m. | Ministry Area Prayer Group St James's Church, Devauden |
| Friday 12 th 7.00 p.m. | Concert St Peter's Church, St Pierre |
| Thursday 18 th 7.45 to 9.00 p.m. | Ministry Area Prayer Group St Peter's Church, St Pierre |
| Saturday 20 th 11.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m. | AGM and Social Evening St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow |
| Sunday 21 st 11.00 a.m. | Thank You party for Sally Saysell Shirenewton Church Room |
| Sunday 21 st 2.00 p.m. | Gig in the Garden The Chantry |
| Thursday 25 th 7.45 to 9.00 p.m. | Ministry Area Prayer Group St Christopher's Church, Bulwark |
| Friday 26 th 7.00 p.m. | Harvest Service St Peter's Church, Newchurch |
| Sunday 28 th 3.00 p.m. | Harvest Festival Penycaemawr Chapel |
| Tuesday 30 th 7.30 p.m. | Shirenewton Local History Society meeting Shirenewton Church Room |

OCTOBER

| | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 5 th 10.00 a.m. | Harvest Thanksgiving Service St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton |
| Saturday 18 th 6.30 p.m. | ShAMBLE Shirenewton and Mynyddbach |
| Sunday 19 th 6.30 p.m. | ShAMBLE Shirenewton and Mynyddbach |
| Tuesday 28 th 7.30 p.m. | Shirenewton Local History Society meeting Shirenewton Church Room |

severnwyema.co.uk



Christmas Market Stallholders Wanted!

Saturday 29th November, 10.30am - 1.30pm

After the success of last year we're keen to find even more talented local makers. Whether you produce local food, craft jewellery, paint, or something else, please get in touch!

- ❖ Refreshments available
- ❖ Six foot table: £10

Enquiries: 07889 762 840 / chair@earlnew.com

Upcoming Events

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Saturday 9 th November | Remembrance Sunday |
| Saturday 29 th November | Christmas Craft Fair |
| Saturday 13 th December | Xmas Quiz |

Visit www.earlnew.com for more information about the Hall & facilities.

We have a mailing list! Email info@earlnew.com to join!

I hope everyone had a good summer break. In techie land there has, as always, been a lot happening. This month I'm going to cover my phone disaster, AI, and the UK's recently introduced Online Safety Act.

Firstly, my phone. Just before leaving for Spain (literally the day we were due to catch the ferry) I had a complete disaster, I woke up to find my phone non-responsive. Most apps weren't working and everything which did work took a long time to process. This happened to coincide with the BitDefender subscription expiring overnight. I'd already decided that the (vast increased from last year) cost of BitDefender Mobile wasn't worth it and had decided to let the subscription expire. Now, it may have been pure coincidence (and I intend to do some research when I get the time) but, the same night my subscription expired, the phone became non-responsive. Deleting BitDefender made no difference.

This created a massive problem for me. It wasn't as if I had the luxury of time as I need my phone (Google Maps) for the trip across Spain and because, everything I do is based around my phone as, when I'm travelling, it's not always possible to get the laptop up and running. So, having checked that the phone was backed up via my Google account (s) and checking that WhatsApp was backed up, I decided that the only option was a factory reset. This I duly undertook and, on arrival at our apartment in Spain which has high-speed internet (about 4x the speed of Mynyddbach), I attempted to restore the phone.

What I learnt is that the WhatsApp restore process worked well and Google restore process didn't fully work. Not all apps were backed-up and, most of those that were backed up, required me to log-in again. Note also, that, thankfully, I had my iPad with me (on which I was logged into my Google accounts) which made my restoration of my Google accounts on the phone straight forward. Furthermore, the backup didn't preserve my home and other screens layout and app groupings. I wish I had taken screenshots of my layouts, apps, etc. to give me a picture of my phone's previous state. I'm about 2 months in and still trying to restore my phone to its previous state.

This is an Android phone (not sure how iPhones backup works and whether the restoration process is better – I suspect it is), but lessons: (i) make sure that the phone is properly backed-up; (ii) don't expect the standard Google restore to be 100%; (iii) make sure you are logged into any google accounts on another device before resetting the phone, (iv) remember that your phone is increasingly your life. I have 2FA (two factor authentication) on a lot of business accounts which relies on an app on my phone! Without that app I'm locked out of a lot of my business accounts.

Over the next few months I intend to research (i) the BitDefender issue, (ii) whether there is a better Android back-up option than the standard Google back-up, and (iii) whether having a back-up phone on constant

standby (into which I can simply slip the sims) is a better option. I will report back.

Moving onto AI. Everyone will have noticed the new AI summary at the top of the Google search screen. Some will find it annoying, but many rely on it – this reliance is not a good idea! These summaries are generated using Google's Gemini AI tool. There are several problems coming to light.

Firstly, many people are simply reading the AI summary and not going back to the source of the information. The Times reports that "Authoritas has tracked the impact of AI Overviews and found that when they appear in a search, the rate at which users click through to listed articles reduces by between 40 and 60 per cent." So, this in itself, is highly disruptive to the SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) industry which works on getting websites up the Google rankings. That may not rank high up on your list of concerns but, what should rank higher up is the fact that people are relying on the AI summaries which themselves are increasingly inaccurate.

I've previously referred to so called, 'AI hallucinations', whereby AI models make up stuff and present it in their results. These include references to non-existent legal precedents, scientific papers, and "facts" which are plucked out of thin air. The Times article notes that one of the more notorious Gemini hallucinations was its suggestion that a user add non-toxic glue to pizza sauce to help cheese stick better. Obviously, these models are constantly evolving but there is still a fairly high hallucination rate which, in some tests on ChatGPT (a Gemini rival) came in as high as 48% - meaning that nigh on half answers contain incorrect information.

A further problem is the GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out) issue. AI models are increasingly drawing their input from not the hard facts, but reports of those hard facts. So, for example, information on Government stats is not generated from the stats themselves but reports of the stats which themselves are generally pushing a particular agenda whether that be political or otherwise. This is part of what is known as AI model collapse. The other part is that the models also rely on their own inaccurate outputs.

As a The Register article explains: "In an AI model collapse, AI systems, which are trained on their own outputs, gradually lose accuracy, diversity, and reliability. This occurs because errors compound across successive model generations, leading to distorted data distributions and "irreversible defects" in performance. The final result? A Nature 2024 paper stated, "The model becomes poisoned with its own projection of reality."

Clearly, I could go on forever, but, if you to remove the AI summary from Goggle just add '-ai' to the end of your search.

Finally, the implementation of the long awaited UK Online Safety Act. Initial results are in. Adult sites are reporting up to a 50% reduction in UK based traffic based on the first couple of weeks in August. The corollary is that VPN downloads are reported to be up 1,400%. No big surprise there. Now ministers are talking about banning VPNs which are vital for cyber security and businesses. You really couldn't make this stuff up. Everyone, apart it would seem the Government, could have predicted this (and, indeed, I did in this very publication) and the fact that tech savvy teens would find a way to bypass the age verification systems the government has mandated.

Anecdotal evidence also suggests that, while the major corporate operators of adult sites, are implementing age verification, the smaller specialist sites, which are typically based overseas anyway, are ignoring it. What is the government going to do about these smaller operators? Start producing a block list of sites not accessible from the UK and updating it monthly/weekly/daily? Going down that path is a massive step towards censorship 'Chinese style'. The simple fact is that it is a unholy mess. Everyone who understands almost anything about how the web works, knew this and predicted the mess. It will be interesting to see how it plays out.

Safe browsing

David Cornwell

Webmaster

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

CONCERT AT ST PIERRE CHURCH

WITH

CHEPSTOW MALE VOICE CHOIR

Guests

LENA & CERI

(DUETTISTS)

And

CLIVE LEWIS

(CORNET)

Friday 12th September 2025 at 7 p.m.

TICKETS £10

(All proceeds in aid of St. Pierre Church)

BUMPER APPLE CROP

Autumn is fast approaching and the indications of a bumper crop of apples. Producing apple juice is one way of using excess fruit. Up in Earlswood I have a high capacity mill and press to make cider and perry on a commercial basis. I also make apple juice for personal consumption. To prevent a large loss of useful fruit I am willing to provide a milling and pressing service **free of charge*** to anyone who wishes to make their own juice (or attempt cider). These are the requirements:

You will need to collect apples. Eating apples are best for juice – too many cookers will make the juice acidic. The press has a minimum capacity of 40Kg – this equates to about 7 builders (yellow) buckets filled with apples. This will produce approximately 20-30 litres of juice, so you might wish to form a small consortium with neighbours and friends. Best to collect fruit so it can be milled and pressed within 48 hours. Fruit should be of a quality you would consider to eat.

You need to have containers for the juice. If contemplating **apple juice** to be stored at room temperature you will need to subsequently pasteurise this by heating to ~70°C preferably in a narrow neck container (heating in an open saucepan will result in a stewed apple flavour). Suitable containers could be screw top glass wine bottles (750 ml) and there should be plenty of empties in Shirenewton! Just wander around the evening before refuse collection and make sure they have tops. Details on pasteurisation can be found at <http://www.ciderworkshop.com/juicepasteurising.html> - look under "scratter".

Alternatively for **apple juice** you can use 1.5 - 2.0 litre plastic bottles with screw tops (as used for bottled water or pop) and freeze them. Thaw as required and keep in a refrigerator at 4°C as consumed – even at this temperature fermentation will begin so after a few days you will get a slight fizz (a fermented food –all the rage).

For **cider** glass demijohns or plastic tanks are suitable but these must be able to be sealed from the air and able to be fitted with a fermentation lock. Fermentation should be unheated (e.g. stored in a garage or out-house) and can take up to 4 months to complete.

You will need to get the fruit, containers and your team to me sometime in late September, October or November and please warn me in advance of your intention.

Keep safe.

Mike Penney. 01291 650653.
michaeldpenney @ gmail .com

* Donation to the upkeep of the bells in Shirenewton church would be appreciated but not obligatory.




ST WOOLOS SINFONIA
CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Chamber Music - Carols - Readings

St. Deiniol's Church

**of Itton, near
Chepstow**

NP16 6BR



**Sat 13th December 2025
7 pm**

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

**Proceeds in aid of the church
www.stwoolossinfonia.com**



THE BELLS



The Ringers on Tour at Freiston

On Friday 28th June the intrepid Shirenewton bell ringers headed to the Lincolnshire Wolds. The Summer Tour is traditionally a weekend event headquartered around a campsite as a base (and hopefully near a pub), allowing more distant towers to be sampled than possible on a single day trip. With local knowledge from ringers from the Lincolnshire Guild (ringers tend to be a friendly lot) a suitable pub with camping in the field behind had been identified and booked – The Red Lion in East Kirkby. Starting on Friday late afternoon, with just 3 towers on that day's itinerary, an advanced party headed to the Collegiate Church of The Holy Trinity at Tattershall. One of the many benefits of ringing is to visit unexpected architectural gems and this was definitely one. Described as Lincolnshire's grandest perpendicular church, its massive construction was an early indicator of the wealth of this region in medieval times (and more of this to come). The six bells are rung from the ground floor at the west end of the nave with a massive draft of rope, but our ringers rose to the challenge no doubt assisted by the experience of handling Shirenewton bells when we ring from the nave at Christmas, New Year and Easter. One thing we noticed on entering the church was that a lot of the furniture and fittings of the church were covered in drapes. The local lady guides explained that Holy Trinity is a very important place for bats, with no other site in Lincolnshire known to support as many species, including breeding populations of Soprano, Pipistrelles and Daubenton's bat. The church has been part of the National Bat Monitoring programme (NBMP) for many years, with bat counts dating back to the 1980s. They also explained that King Charles had visited the church and had rung a bell – a skill I was unaware he possessed and not supported by a subsequent Google search. Maybe the ladies confused ringing with chiming – easily done by the uninitiated. Next we visited nearby Coningsby perhaps better known for its RAF connection and as home to The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. We rang the six bells and then moved onto our last tower of the day at Old Bolingbroke an experience particularly enjoyed by one of our ringers Sam Bolingbroke. Henry IV (Henry Bolingbroke) was born in the castle here in 1337. Much later the castle was a Royalist base in The English Civil War and was besieged by the Parliamentarians in 1643, and when the Royalists surrend-

ered the castle was destroyed. The remains are situated just south of the church. The oldest bell of the six in the church is dated 1604 so could have sounded during the siege! We then headed back to The Red Lion for a convivial evening in our own dining room at the back of the pub.

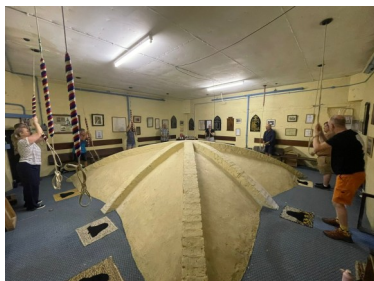
Saturday was the main Tour date with 10 towers organised - all six bell rings. We started at Spilsby then headed to Halton Holegate then towards the coast at Wainfleet, south of Skegness. Essentially now we were visiting villages and churches strung along the A52 heading south towards Boston. Having rung at Friskney and Wrangle we had worked up an appetite and thirst ready for our lunch stop at The Bricklayers Arms, Old Leake. After a leisurely lunch we headed to the local church at Old Leake and thence to Leverton, Butterwick, Freiston (housing the oldest bell of the tour dated 1410) and finally Fishtoft, just outside Boston. There had been more architectural gems during the day but the best was still to come. Back at camp nibbles and drinks were consumed followed by an excellent BBQ to round off the day.

For Sunday we were to visit St Boltoph, Boston known locally as The Boston Stump to ring for service. This is a truly awe inspiring Grade 1 listed building. It is the widest parish church in England, has the tallest to roof, and also one of the largest by floor area. The tower, which houses 10 ringing bells and a further 15 chiming bells for the clock, is 266 feet 6 inches (81.23 m) high, only surpassed in height by towers (not spires) of cathedrals (Liverpool, Lincoln and Westminster). The wealth to build such a structure in medieval times was channelled through the church from donations and from *indulgences*. For those not familiar with *indulgences* these were



The Boston Stump schemes used by the Catholic Church at the time by which the *indulgence* (permit) was issued to reduce the amount of punishment after death one had to undergo in purgatory for (forgiven) sins. Initially this would involve in life a charitable work or pilgrimage, but the system became corrupted for money- raising on a substantial scale. The reaction to this pre-paid fast-track to heaven ultimately led to The Reformation. Licences to issue indulgences were issued by the Pope, and have an interesting link in Boston to Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's famous chief minister. In 1515, not too long after he arrived back in England from Europe, Thomas Cromwell was called upon to sort a problem the Guilds of the town of Boston in Lincolnshire were having with Pope Leo X: he was threatening to not renew the licence. These Guilds and thence the church received large sums of money from the people of the town and fen lands who wished to pay for the certain safety of their souls in heaven. Cromwell managed the task, and his skills in negotiating with the Papacy were

brought to the attention of Henry VIII who wished to apply these skills to a personal problem (Catherine of Aragon). However, I digress. Having been met by two local ringers we climbed 198 steps to the ringing chamber. The vaulted ceiling of the tower visible in the church protrudes into the chamber, so that the only way to cross the ringing chamber is around the periphery. Ringers stand with backs against the four walls in a square, unlike the normal "ringing circle". With local help we manage to ring all 10 bells to various methods and patterns. Before leaving it was possible to go further up the tower to the parapet and appreciate the stunning views. After our visit we headed back to camp for breakfast, then we decamped and set off back to South Wales. In the evening held a post-Tour celebration was held in glorious sunshine courtesy of Mike and Pip Penney.



The ringing room at Boston



Come to the

'Gig in the Garden'

The Chantry, Shirenewton, NP16 6RL
 Supporting 'The St Woolos Sinfonia'
 Newport's very own Orchestra

Sunday 21st Sept 2025, 2pm onwards
£10 a ticket

Light Music maybe even some Jazz
 Plus a dainty ploughman
 And a glass of wine

Tickets from Glynis MacDonald 01291 641 818
 or James Leney 01291 641 271
 or online at www.stwoolossinfonia.com





St. Peter's Church
 Newchurch

Friday 26th. September 2025 at 7.00 p.m.
 Admission and quiz entry £5.00 per person

Cheese and biscuits and nibbles provided
 Bring your own drink (alcohol or soft drink)



Do come along and support one of your local churches

Gardening Corner

Clearly, I should not have said anything about moving on. A month or so after writing the July Newsletter, and with just a few weeks left until draft contracts and confirming moving dates, our buyers pulled out, the chain fell apart, and we are all back to square one. Our agent and solicitor both said that this is happening with more house sales. It seems everyone we speak to has either personally or knows someone that has had, the same experience. This has created a lot of needless upset for everyone impacted, not to mention cost. There has been talk about things having to change as literally billions are lost each year, with hours of wasted work. Hopefully, the Government will eventually do something about it and introduce legislation, that perhaps follows similar principles as Scotland.

You won't need me to tell you that, gardening wise, it is proving to be an exceptionally tough year, now through lack of rain. We made the decision early on that we would water the tunnels and greenhouses, but that outside it was every plant for itself. Fortunately, we had sown a lot of vegetables earlier than usual. This was mainly because the weather had been very mild and we wanted the garden to create a good impression, should anyone be interested in buying. We were lucky in that it remained exceptionally mild and of course wet early on, so everything established well. Slugs were an early problem, but we managed to keep on top of them, due to some nightly trips out with a torch and lethal means of control! As I mentioned in the July pages, we were harvesting crops way sooner than ever I could remember in my 60 odd years of gardening. Not only that, but we were also producing some exceptional quality produce, especially when it came to calabrese and cauliflowers. Everyone would have been a winner in the village show! Despite every best effort in the past, most of our vegetable beds now have club root disease well established. This makes all the roots swell up, which in turn badly impacts the growth of the plants. Fortunately, the plant breeders have managed to produce some varieties that are very resistant to the disease, which means that you can grow good crops even in infected soil. The varieties I would recommend are Clapton for cauliflower, Monclano for calabrese and Crispus for Brussel sprouts. There is a red cabbage called Loder, which makes massive heads, but this isn't something we bother with. We do like red cabbage, but the size of this variety is big, and I mean VERY big. The one thing we do miss is not having any varieties of winter cabbage (such as Savoy) or any kales that are resistant. The only way that we can grow these therefore is to find a small part of the garden where we know clubroot has not taken hold. So, you may find the odd plants cropping up in the flower border somewhere instead.

I have struggled for many years to get the amount of produce we grow down to a sensible amount, rather than grow just for the benefit of the compost heap! When the girls were at home, we obviously got through a lot more of everything. Extra produce has therefore either been passed on to neighbours or sold locally where possible – or the compost bin when not. With age creeping on, and now any sale of the house back to square one, I have decided that we need to reduce the size of the active garden

areas down to a more manageable level. I have many tall cloches which are approximately four feet wide by five feet long (and about four feet high). In the past I have planted each with say one variety of a crop so, approximately 10 – 15 plants at the same time. The driver behind this was that often, that would be the number of seeds in the packet. Instead, my intention is to literally only sow say three seeds of any variety at any one time. Three or four varieties will then be planted out into each cloche, but with two or three weeks between each. Hopefully this means that we will keep a nice variety of vegetables coming to the table over an extended period. Interspersed with this will be a more intensive cropping in the large tunnel, where say calabrese will be grown, a dozen or so at a time, so that we can make these into one specific 'ready meal' such as say, broccolli gratin which will then end up in the freezer. I did try growing sweet corn this year the first time for many years. The last time had not been very successful. The corn grew well but was destroyed one night by a group of hungry badgers, who smashed the lot into bits. Garden Armageddon! As an experiment, I grew them in the large tunnel, about nine plants. They grew well and very quickly too. They produced a harvest over three weeks, which for the first time we cooked on the BBQ. I have to say that they were delicious too. With temperatures into the low 30 degrees Celsius outside, I imagine those inside the tunnel well exceeded 40 degrees. There was quite a lot of damage done via leaf scorch mostly through sun scorch on the leafy crops such as brassicas. Watering was also a challenge as usual, especially so with plants grown in containers. I won't go on again about the poor-quality composts again. Regular readers will know that I am not a fan of the 'peat free' composts that are currently being sold. As usual we have lost some plants to rotting due to the compost being waterlogged. Next door to these we had others, where the compost remained stubbornly dry and for the first time ever, we have had our main crop tomatoes suffering from blossom end rot, where the bottom end of the tomato forms a black, rotting area, a sure sign of watering insufficiencies – always on the same plants. As a result, crops on these individuals have been at least halved. These are our 'big mama' variety (please blame the plant breeder for this name – not me!) which we rely on for making passata sauces – a key element of many of our main meals. I would highly recommend this one if you are into making your own meals, be they chilli, bolognaise, bruschetta, or anything else with a tomato sauce base.

We expect to still be here, so *happy gardening until next month, Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



18th & 19th
October
2025 6.30pm



Shirenewton And Mynydd Bach iLlumination Extravaganza 2025 – the latest

What is this 'ShAMBLE' thing again?

Shirenewton and Mynydd Bach iLlumination Extravaganza (or ShAMBLE to its friends) is an annual event in which the residents of the village are invited to decorate their windows at dusk over one weekend in October, with the aim of creating a spectacular outdoor gallery for everyone to enjoy.



Silhouette

Cut out black card to make your design



Large scale

Some years SHAMBLE participants go to town with a design!



Colourful

Tissue paper can be used to create amazingly colourful windows by some SHAMBLE-ers!

Why don't you join in and have a go?



When is ShAMBLE 2025?

The evenings of 18th & 19th October - starting 6.30pm. GET IT IN YOUR DIARY!

How do I take part?

If you'd like to decorate your window, that's great. So that we can include you on our map please follow this link and complete the very simple form:

www.shirenewtonshamble.org.uk Please, please, please register by 30th September as this gives us time to get the **maps** printed. Remember, you don't need to register to walk around the village looking at the windows.



Important information

Please remember to SEE and BE SEEN. Bring a **torch**. **Hi-Viz vests** for adults and children will be available to borrow for the event. You can pick them up from the old telephone box by The Sultan (Saturday and Sunday night), or from the Recreation Hall (Saturday night only). Please remember to return them so that we can use again next year.

Maps will be available to pick up from The Recreation Hall and the old telephone box too (details as above.) We will also publish online.

If you are decorating your window, please make sure it's illuminated both nights from 6pm!



@ShireShAMBLE



@shirenewtonshamble



shirenewton_shamble

OPENING NIGHT REFRESHMENTS SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER 6.30PM

Don't miss the opening night party at the Recreation Hall on Saturday 18th October, where you can collect a map and hi-viz for all the family! AND of course indulge in some lovely home made cakes and a beverage of your choice. We will have a selection of wine, beer and soft drinks available. It's family friendly, everyone is welcome.





MUSICAL DIRECTOR: GRAHAM BULL
CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd & Making Music, and is a
Registered Charity (no. 112798)
www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk

CHEPSTOW CHORAL SOCIETY 2025/2026

CCS closed a memorable 2024/25 season at the end of June 2025 with a lovely "Summer Celebration" concert featuring a whole range of varied music followed by drinks and refreshments. We now look ahead to our new season which will commence at the Chepstow School and Leisure Centre complex, commencing **Wednesday September 3rd, 7.30pm.**

The Society will be joining with Monmouth Choral Society- at their invitation- for a truly memorable evening with a performance of Sir Edward's Elgar's choral masterpiece *Dream of Gerontius* on Saturday November 22nd.

*Future dates – Christmas Music from Chepstow CS, with Alison Wray (soprano) – **SUNDAY DECEMBER 14th** St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow --3.00pm*

SATURDAY MARCH 21st 2026 – SPRING CONCERT WITH CCS ORCHESTRA, St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow –"Venice to Vienna" ---music from Vivaldi, Albinoni, Mozart and Schubert! – and also with full vocal quartet who performed at St Mary's Tidenham Concert on June 14th. A treat and date to put down in the 2026 diary!

As always, CCS, like all smaller choral societies, welcomes new members. Choral societies cannot survive without singers, and like all societies, we especially welcome tenors and basses!

Please contact Marjorie Duerden for further information – 01291 623310 (bduerden@doctors.co.uk) or access the CCS website (details above). **THIS IS YOUR** local Choral Society –do come and join us!! Marje Duerden

SINCE 1861

TREDEGAR ARMS

SHIRENEWTON



Now Open
Wednesday to Sunday
12pm to 11pm
tredegararms.com
01291 783600

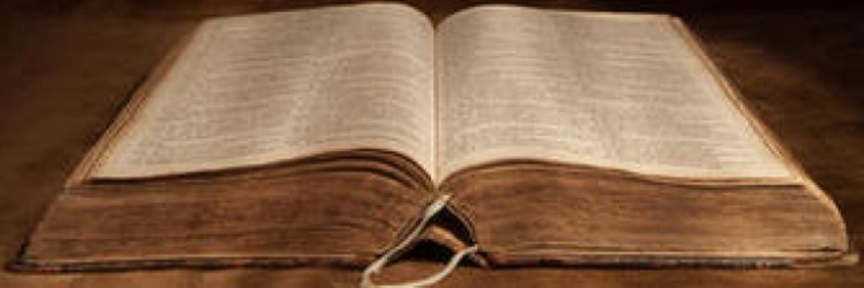
Severn Wye Bible Study Group

We are a small group of Christians enjoying a warm and nurturing fellowship together. We read scripture and talk about what it means and how we can apply it to our daily lives. We are learning together and there is no such thing as a silly question. If you're even a tiny bit curious, come along. Give it a go....you may love it as we do!!!!

Where: Shirenewton Church Room

When: 14.45 Tuesday afternoons

Why: Because it's encouraging, uplifting and good for the soul.



Shirenewton Primary School are currently advertising for two positions. If you are interested in either or both positions, please email shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshireschools.wales or call 01291 641774

We are looking for caring, enthusiastic and positive people to assist and supervise children during the lunchtime and/ or breakfast club, to encourage healthy eating and good table manners, and to enhance the play activities of the pupils.

We're hiring!

BREAKFAST CLUB SUPERVISOR

5 HOURS PER WEEK, 38 WEEKS PER YEAR
DAYS PER WEEK, TERM TIME ONLY

MIDDAY SUPERVISOR

8.75 HOURS PER WEEK, 39 WEEKS PER YEAR
5 DAYS PER WEEK, TERM TIME ONLY

Amazon Smile may be gone but you can still support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions with Easyfundraising!

We have some important news regarding the Amazon Smile program. Unfortunately, Amazon has discontinued this program, which means that we can no longer receive donations through it. However, we have some good news too! You can still continue to support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions by signing up for Easyfundraising. By doing this, you can help us raise funds for our community projects and initiatives, without any extra cost to you.

All you have to do is sign up through our Easyfundraising page at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/chepstowandcaldicotlions> and shop online as you normally would. The retailers you shop with will then make a donation to us, at no extra cost to you. It's as simple as that!

So, if you want to continue supporting our cause, please consider signing up for Easyfundraising today. Your support means the world to us, and together we can make a real difference in our community. Thank you!

The graphic features a man with a beard, wearing a light-colored shirt, smiling while looking at a smartphone. He is also holding a laptop. The background is a solid light yellow. Above the man, the text 'easyfundraising turns your online shopping into everyday magic' is written in a dark teal font. To the right of the text is a small yellow icon consisting of three lines radiating from a point. Below the text, there is a yellow button with the text 'Support us' in dark teal. At the bottom of the graphic, there is a dark teal banner containing the Easyfundraising logo (a yellow sun-like icon) and the text 'easyfundraising You shop, brands donate to us' in white.

easyfundraising
turns your online shopping
into everyday magic

Support us

 easyfundraising You shop, brands donate to us



would you like to
knit & natter



or
crochet & chatter

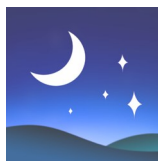
**whether you would like to learn or
have been twiddling yarn for
years, bring your yarn and come
chat with like minded people**



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



STARGAZING

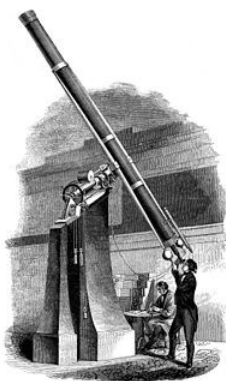


The seven stars of the Plough can be seen in the northern evening sky whilst the “W” of the constellation Cassiopeia lies to the northeast. The constellation Pegasus includes a large square that lies to the south. How did the ancient Greeks manage to see the shape of a winged horse in a square of not particularly bright stars?! The Summer Triangle made up of the bright stars Deneb, Vega and Altair continues to dominate the night sky to the South. Deneb forms the tail of the constellation Cygnus, the Swan which lies pretty much overhead. Its brightest stars form a cross against the background of the Milky Way, a dense band of faint stars from the north-east to the south-west. The Milky Way can be seen particularly well from a dark sight.

The planet Saturn is slightly yellow in colour and is visible to the south-east in the evening sky. Saturn is close to the Moon on the 8th when the Moon is Full.

As the month progresses the rather brighter planet Jupiter can be seen gaining height in the eastern sky. The gibbous Moon (when the Moon is more than half illuminated) is very close to Jupiter on 4th September. This is best viewed later in the evening when they have moved higher above the horizon.

The Autumnal Equinox occurs on the 22nd, when day and night are both 12 hours long. Traditionally farmers working late into the evening to gather their crops are aided by the light of the Harvest Moon – this year this is the Full Moon of 6th October. It’s the closest Full Moon to the Autumnal Equinox.



Shirenewton WI

The hottest day of the year so far saw 13 of our members meeting at the warehouse housing the Newport Medieval Ship, for an onsite tour of the timbers and artefacts discovered in 2002. This was a follow up visit, inspired by a talk given by the curator and archaeologist, Dr. Toby Jones in October 2024.

We were met by two volunteers, Jeff Grosvenor and Mike Rodgers, who gave us a warm welcome with tea and biscuits. We then went off to two groups to be given a fascinating insight into the discovery of this “Great Ship” so classified, as it could carry over 150 tons of cargo. The archaeologists, led by Toby Jones, were able to analyse the timbers to piece together this World-famous archaeological find.



Jeff and Mike talked us through the initial find, which only occurred as the area in which the ship lay was being excavated to a considerable depth, to create the orchestra pit for the Riverfront Theatre and Arts Centre, which was under construction. If the pit had been dug only a few meters away, then the ship would not have been discovered!

We learned that around 100 years of forward planning would have gone into the preparation for building this ship, as the trees would have been planted with a view to felling them when they had reached 100 years old, with over 1,000 trees needed to construct a ship of this size. Carpenters at the ship building site made over 9,000 wooden dowels to attach the frame timbers to the hull planking, with blacksmiths forging approximately 27,000 clenched nails for attaching the hull planks together.

The ship was not a war ship but did have a Swivel Gun and a team of archers, to protect the ship from pirates, who saw the valuable wine cargo as a rich prize. Jeff quipped that, as the 2,000 timbers were placed in a six tonne, custom-built freeze dryer during the renovation process, he thought of them as “Shiver Me Timbers”!

This was a truly fascinating afternoon, with many of the timbers and artefacts on display and with hands on interaction. It is an ideal place for the whole family to visit, with Medieval costumes to try on, a replica swivel gun to use and animated videos of the birth of the ship as well as its Final Voyage.



As part of our A to Z season, 7 of our members went along to the café at Monmouthshire Upcycle Centre in Chepstow, to try a ukulele taster session with Naomi Long, from the Ukulele Club Chepstow. Thanks

to Jean Howe for organising this lovely afternoon which proved to be a very enjoyable experience

Our August meeting was our annual Summer Garden Party, which was kindly hosted by Gill Tayton. The weather wasn't very promising in the morning however, the afternoon proved to be fine, with some sunshine. The Garden Party was enjoyed by all, with good food and plenty of conversation with friends old and new.



Our next meeting is at Shirenewton Recreation Hall on Thursday 11th September at 7:15pm, when we will be treated to a demonstration of Flamenco Dancing. 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).





Eileen O' Dwyer

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FAIRTRADE NEWS SEPTEMBER 2025

UPOV91

This is the agreement entitled 'The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991' I wrote about this in February 2024 but thought it might be of interest to explain in a bit more detail what this international agreement entails and the repercussions it has.



The UK's trade deals with much of the rest of the world - 68 countries, include UPOV91. Countries are either required or strongly encouraged to comply with this law which prohibits smallholder farmers from saving, swapping or selling some of their own seeds. This is less of an issue in the large-scale agriculture of the countries in the northern hemisphere but in the less developed agricultural sector in the global south peasant farmers have traditionally relied on saving seed or finding locally suitable seed. Of course this is less costly than purchasing new, patented seed every year. Sourcing seed locally also reflects the farmers' understanding of local conditions. The restrictions can also tend to promote commercial monocultures, often leading to the spread of disease in the crop.

However once the trade deal is signed UPOV91 is enforceable, with many countries having to pass new laws to prevent the unauthorised sale, swapping or storing of privatised seeds. Failure to comply can result in arrest, fines, or even imprisonment. Cui bono?! Large chemical corporations! Just a handful control the vast majority of seed production – often linked to the pesticides, insecticides, fungicides, and fertilisers that these industrially produced seeds often require. Small-scale peasant farmers can find themselves in a vicious circle of debt – obliged to borrow money to buy seed, often accompanied by the necessary purchase of the appropriate chemicals it requires. Climate change has exacerbated conditions for almost all agricultural production, but these poorer farmers have little to fall back on if their situation worsens. And certainly they have little to no say in their government's trade deals.

Transform Trade, the charity which is the custodian of the now defunct Traidcraft brand is continuing to lobby the government to keep UPOV19 out of UK trade deals. 20,000 people signed their petition. A small effort, but at least an effort!

Apropos of small efforts – Oxfam has postcards (freepost!) to sign and post to Oxfam headquarters to lobby the government to actually DO something about the tragedy in Gaza. (Postcards are on the counter) Marion McAdam 641 316 msm@gmail.com (Unbelievably I can still source Palestinian olive oil, couscous, soap, dates – or go to Ethical Superstore.)

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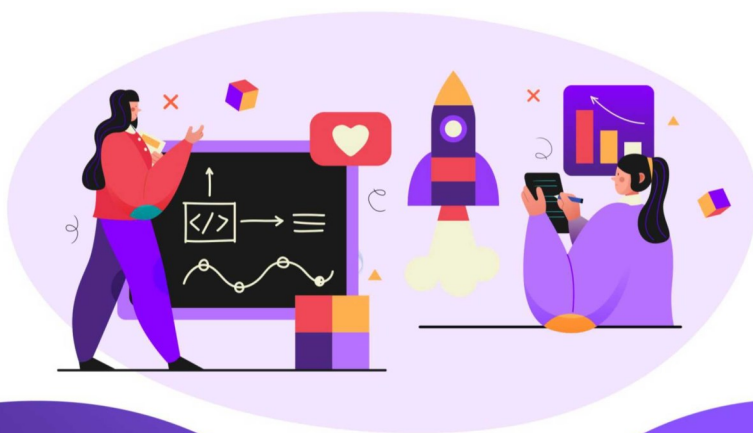
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| Associate Priest | Reverend John Waters | 07836 585 250 |
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| Ministry Area Lay Co-Chair | Hilary Hillier | |
| Ministry Area Treasurer | Kevin Higgs | |

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| 200 Club | Aileen Doggett | 01291 641 459 |

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| Peter Fox MS | 01291 674898 | Peter.Fox@senedd.wales |
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Earlswood Hope Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726
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