



November 2022

Village Views

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF ACTON BURNELL, PITCHFORD, FRODESLEY, RUCKLEY AND LANGLEY

WELCOME

As we reach the end of another momentous year, we would like to take the time to thank everyone who has helped to keep Village Views going for another 12 months. From the financial support provided by the Parish Council to our loyal advertisers, from our contributors to the volunteers who take the time to make sure a copy of Village Views gets to every household in our community – we are grateful for your support, time and energy. And most of all, thank you to all our readers!

Here's to a 2023 which will hopefully see calmer, happier and more peaceful times for everyone.

Chris Harrison, Karen Fisher, John Glover, Rachel Johnson and Lois Johnson

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The council met in September. Papers and draft minutes are available at www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings/parish-council-meeting-31

Following changes to the requirements and guidelines, Councillors attended Code of Conduct refresher training session, also in September.

Our clerk, Anna Morris, is taking maternity leave (congratulations on the arrival of baby Joss!) and we are pleased to welcome Sharon Clayton as our locum clerk. Sharon is available on the same phone number as Anna, **07842 324809**, and at the same email address: clerk@actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk.

We have the Jubilee tree planting to look forward to and, with a suitable site found so far only in Acton Burnell, those with land in the other parishes are again requested to consider setting aside patches of land, preferably adjacent to existing footpaths, where trees could be planted. Please contact the clerk.

Older model defibrillators at Pitchford, Ruckley and Frodesley have now been replaced together with updated cabinets at all three locations and the cabinet at Acton Burnell.

On the highways front progress with Shropshire Council regarding traffic calming, particularly for Frodesley, where a mirror is being sought, is very slow but is being pursued by the Parish Council and by our Shropshire Councillor. Additional issues which have been raised are:

- The need for appropriate signage and road marking at the King Street crossroads in Berrington.
- Installation of road markings/white lining and perhaps signage on the bend at the Royal Oak in Pitchford.
- Improvements to the visibility of the sign at the turning for Acton Burnell off the A458 on the approach from Shrewsbury at Weeping Cross. The turning cannot be seen at night and the sign is currently obscured by tree branches.

The new on-line reporting system for highways issues (potholes, signage, etc.) which is available at www.fixmystreet.com seems to be working well.

More widely, Shropshire Council has issued a Winter Wellness Guide for carers which can be found at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/24506/winter-wellness-guide-for-carers-2022.pdf> Although aimed at carers as the title suggests, the document provides much useful information for everyone as we head into winter along with links and contact information regarding Covid vaccinations, cost of living issues, self-care, etc.



LOCAL ROAD CLOSURES

From Monday 3rd November to Friday 9th November the road at Harley Bank will be closed overnight for carriageway repairs. It is planned for the road to be closed from 8.00pm to 6.00am.

On 6th December the road will be closed for one day only at the Hughley junction on the B4371 at Presthope. This is to enable tree pruning to take place.

SEVERN HOSPICE 'LIGHTS OF LOVE'

Each year Severn Hospice decorates its Christmas tree in the grounds of the hospice at Bicton Heath with 'lights of love' as an act of remembrance for loved ones. For the first time since 2019, the public is invited to join Hospice staff, volunteers and service users on 4th December at 4.00pm to celebrate this moment. Readings, musical interludes and singing will make this a moment for reflection.

If you wish to dedicate a light to a family member or friend, please go to www.severnhospice.org.uk/lights-of-love/ where you will find details of how to register. Please do this before 11th November. You will also receive a star to hang on your own tree. You can also call **01952 221351** for more information.

The page also includes details of how to make a donation to this worthwhile cause.



The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be 18th January 2022.

Please contact villageviews@hotmail.com with any news or villageviewsadvertising@outlook.com to place an advert.

Brownies

1st Dorrington & Leebotwood Brownies

Dorrington Village Hall

6.30 – 8.00pm, Thursdays in Term Time

Brownies is for girls aged 7 - 10 years old, we play games, make friends and have fun doing crafts and outdoor activities.

If your daughter would like to join us now or in the future: Go to the 'Girlguiding UK' website, click on the 'Register your daughter' option, then go to 'Register Now', simply enter your daughter's details and we'll get in touch with you.

If you would like to speak to someone, give us a ring and we'll tell you more.

Contact: Ruth Lawrence (Brownie Guider)
07830 815071
dorringtonbrownies@gmail.com



COURSES FOR TEENAGERS

An on-line course for teenagers, 'understanding your feelings' has been created to help with the rise of mental health problems in young people as a result of the pandemic. The course is pre-paid and has been locally funded. Use the access code DARWIN18 to create an account at www.inourplace.co.uk.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD SOLIHULL APPROACH

inourplace NHS

Solihull Approach

presents

Two online courses exclusively for teenagers!

Understanding your brain
(for teenagers only!)

and

NEW Understanding your feelings*
(for teenagers only!)

*Includes the emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

inourplace.co.uk FIND OUT MORE...

Do you live in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin?

1. Visit www.inourplace.co.uk
2. Enter Access Code
3. Begin learning

Access Code: **DARWIN18**

PREPAID Locally funded

CONCORD COLLEGE

presents

Legends and Dreams

Saturday 19th November 2022
7.30pm
THEATRE SEVERN

In aid of Rotary Charities, Shropshire Federation of Women's Institutes and The Anthony Morris Foundation

For more information and to book tickets please visit www.theatresevern.co.uk or call 01743 281281

Concord College

CHRISTMAS

GIFT AND FOOD FAYRE

❄️ Food & Festive Delicacies
❄️ Christmas Gifts
❄️ Guided Tours of the Campus

❄️ PLANET DOUGHNUT ❄️ RADBROOK SPICE ❄️
❄️ DARWIN'S CREPES ❄️ TOOT SWEETS ❄️ KOTATSU ❄️
❄️ AUTHENTIC HOGROASTS ❄️ TROPIC SKINCARE ❄️
❄️ LITTLE SHOP OF JOY ❄️ NEALS YARD
AND MANY MANY MORE! ❄️

SUNDAY 27TH NOVEMBER

1.30PM - 4.30PM

CONCORD COLLEGE
Acton Burnell Hall
Acton Burnell, Shropshire, SY5 7PF



What's on



5th / 6th November

Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre hosts its Frost Fair at its centre in Craven Arms. Open from 10am to 4pm. Come along to take a look at a wide selection of handmade crafts and Christmas gifts.

11th November

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall. Doors open at 7.30. Well-behaved grown-ups, kids and dogs all very welcome. Come along to meet old neighbours and maybe make new friends.

19th November

Concord College students present 'Legends and Dreams' at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury. Performance in aid of The Rotary Club charities, Shropshire Federation of Women's Institutes and the Anthony Morris Foundation. Tickets available from www.theatresevern.co.uk and by calling **01743 281281**.

27th November

The Concord College Christmas Gift and Food Fayre is open to the public from 1.30pm to 4.30pm, offering food and festive delicacies and a range of gifts from artists and local producers. Guided tours of the College campus will also be available.

3rd December

Christmas Fayre at Pitchford Village Hall from 10am to 12pm. A chance to do some Christmas shopping, and to enjoy a raffle and refreshments.

3rd December

Much Wenlock is given over to Christmas fun, frolics and shopping for a day. Around 150 stalls offer a wide range of food and gifts, alongside a variety of performances and entertainment. The event opens at 10am and closes at 6pm with a candlelight procession and carol singing in the Square.

Parking is very limited – please go to www.wenlockchristmasfayre.org.uk/parking-at-much-wenlock-christmas-fayre/ for details on car park availability and park and ride arrangements.

3rd December to 2nd January

Enjoy 'Attingham makes Christmas' at Attingham Park. The Mansion will be welcoming visitors to two floors filled with inventive Christmas trees and decorations. Out of doors there will be a Christmas tree trail to follow. In order to manage visitor numbers, both National Trust members and non-members will need to book in advance. Tickets will be available from mid-November. Check the website at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park for more information.

4th December

Christmas Fair at Condoover Hall, hosted by JCA Adventure. Open from 11.30am to 3.30pm.

9th December

If you know a little one with additional needs, you may be interested in Santa's Quiet Grotto at Dobbie's Garden Centre. From 2.30pm. Tickets £11.99 available by calling **01743 874261**.

16th December

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall. Everyone welcome. Doors open at 7.30pm. Mulled wine and mince pies on the menu to celebrate the Christmas season.

18th December

Festive Guided Tour of Pitchford Hall at 11.00am to include the Great Hall, the drawing room, the Priest Hole room and Princess Victoria's bedroom. Tickets £25 including mulled wine and mince pies. Please go to www.tickettailor.com/events/pitchfordhall/783818/ to book your tickets.

13th January

The first Pub Night of 2023 at Pitchford Village Hall. Come along and banish the January blues with a drink! Children and well-behaved dogs welcome. Hot dogs on the menu!

FLICKS IN THE STICKS

Coming soon to a village hall near you.....

Eric Ravilous – Drawn to War, showing at Ryton Village Hall (**01743 718237**) on 11th November at 7.30pm. A PG film looking at the life and work of a British landscape artist who was killed in a plane crash while on commission as an Official War Artist in Iceland in 1942.

The Phantom of the Open, showing at Cound Guildhall (**01743 761257**) on 18th November at 7.30pm. The true story of a crane operator who manages to gain entry to the 1976 British Open, despite never having played a round of golf. Starring Mark Rylance, this has a 12 rating.

Fisherman's Friends – One and All, screening at Cardington Village Hall (**01694 771295**) on 7th December at 7.30pm. A sequel following the continuing adventures of the group as they reach the heights of performing at Glastonbury to the problems of that tricky second album and a divisive tour of Australia. Carried a 12A rating.

The Railway Children Return at Cardington Village Hall (**01694 771295**) on 4th January at 7.30pm. A PG film which traces the story of a group of WWII evacuees who are sent to Yorkshire, where they are taken in by Bobbie Waterbury, played by Jenny Agutter, reprising her role in the original film. An enchanting and heart-warming film for the family.

For more information and to book tickets, please go to www.artsalive.co.uk/films/, or call the numbers shown above.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE AT PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

Pitchford Village Hall is holding a Christmas Fayre on Saturday 3rd December 2022. Doors open from 10am-1pm, so please come along and do some of your Christmas shopping!

There will be various Christmas stalls and a raffle. Bacon butties, mince pies, tea and coffee will also be available throughout the morning.

Some stalls are still available, so if you would like to book a table please call Bridget Thurgood on **01743 719417**.



MESSAGE FROM **COUNCILLOR DAN MORRIS** SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOR BURNELL

A couple of topics that highlight the pressures on the finances of Shropshire Council (SC).

Inflation and rising demand's new pressures on council's budget

Inflation and rising energy costs, alongside growing demand for council services – particularly for children's social care and safeguarding – are the main reasons for a predicted overspend of at least £4.1m at SC this year. Each quarter SC examines its budget against spending, and in the 1st quarter it highlights that inflation is adding an extra £5 million to the costs of running services while extra demand for council services, which is also predicted to increase further as more people face cost of living pressures, is adding almost another £7 million.

SC is no longer receiving any money from Government to offset the impacts of COVID in spite of the fact that some services are still experiencing knock-on effects from the pandemic such as more demand for social care, reinforced by extra pressures on the NHS. This, coupled with growing costs in children's social care in particular, is forcing the predicted overspend this year up between its best case scenario of £4.1m and worst case of £18.8 million. Just as households face very big increases in costs, SC is also facing a really tough year with rising fuel and contract costs.

The SC council leadership will be focusing its efforts to significantly reduce any overspend. A sign of the growing pressure on services, which remain affected by the impact of the pandemic, is that the number of children in care in April 2022 was 53% higher than in April 2020 and is up 21% year on year. Such placements, that help ensure children are kept safe, can be hugely expensive for councils.

It is likely that the council will need to sell off more capital assets. This will include reducing its number of offices, such as its Mount McKinley offices on Shrewsbury Business Park by next April [2023]. This is just one of several measures the council will be bringing forward to help offset the pressures from inflation and greater demand for services.

Update on the discussions which continue on the future operation of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

The future of Acton Scott Historic Working Farm is still currently being discussed by the estate's owners and SC, which has operated the visitor attraction under a lease agreement for the past 40 years. The review is wide-ranging as both parties wish to be thorough in their evaluation to achieve a positive and fair outcome for Acton Scott Historic Working Farm.

The working farm museum was the vision of Thomas Acton who established a museum demonstrating farming techniques at the turn of the century before the advent of the internal combustion engine. Visitor numbers peaked at around 45,000 in 2009 with the advent of the BBC's 'Victorian Farm' television show and have now fallen to 20,000 visitors per annum. There is a current operating deficit of £168,000 per annum, the Shropshire taxpayer has been subsidising the running costs of the farm at a cost of £8.40 per visitor.

SC is aware that people place a lot of value on Acton Scott Historic Working Farm and it is recognised that it has its importance socially, educationally and in terms of the visitor economy. SC wants to reach a workable solution with the estate and explore all possible options in doing so. But SC, as alluded to above, is facing many additional pressures on its budgets. Regrettably the operation is no longer considered to be financially viable for the council. Discussions are still ongoing.

If there are any issues you feel I can help on, please do not hesitate to contact me by email

dan.morris@shropshire.gov.uk, by mobile on **07902 408400**, on facebook **dan4burnell** or Twitter **@dan4burnell**.

Dan Morris

COST OF LIVING HELP AND INFORMATION

Predicted rises in the cost of living over the coming winter mean that many people will be worried about paying their bills and putting food on the table.

Information on a wide range of sources of assistance and advice can be found by going to the Shropshire Council 'cost of living help' webpages at

www.shropshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living-help.

You can also find information on income support, assistance with energy bills, childcare, transport and household costs on the government website **<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>**.

Citizens Advice also offers information via their website at **www.cabshropshire.org.uk/home/cost-of-living-help/** and can provide individual advice on their free advice

line. Call **0808 278 7894** Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm to talk to an advisor. Citizens Advice can also give you access to a specialist debt advisor to help with money worries. Call **01743 280 019** Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm for free, impartial and independent advice.

For information on energy costs, and suggestions on how to cut your heating costs and create a warmer home, you can contact 'Keep Shropshire Warm' be calling **0800 112 3743** or email **advice@mea.org.uk**.

Shropshire Larder can provide information on accessing food banks and community food projects, and also has links to other organisations providing help and advice. You can find their website at **www.shropshirelarder.org.uk**.

AND THE WINNER IS....

Lucy Stekic was the very worthy winner of the Pitchford Village Hall Annual Onion Competition with a whopping 1566g entry. Congratulations, Lucy!





NEWS FROM PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

UPGRADING AT THE VILLAGE HALL

After many months of begging, bashing, smashing, banging and cleaning, the Hall's refurbishment is now complete, the latest aspect being the new kitchen. Structural problems revealed only once the work started made costs rise and hearts wobble, but we now finally have a fully appliance and fitted kitchen to be proud of and more importantly, one which will be a major attraction for potential users of our facility.

UP-COMING PUB NIGHTS

October's pub night was a lovely evening aided and abetted by the supply of hot dogs organised by Pitchford's newest residents, Peter and Stasha, which seemed to go down well judging from the many that were sold! Many thanks to them for a wonderful debut to their new community!

November's event will be on the 11th November and will be a normal pub night evening with just drinks but no food on this occasion.

In December, we are having our what is by now, traditional Christmas evening with not only decent beers and other drinks, but also mulled wine and free mince pies. This will be on the 16th December which is a week later than our usual timing of the second Friday of the month.

January's event will be back to that second Friday, on the 13th and will have a repeat performance by Peter and Stasha and their hot dogs to warm up the depths of winter!!

As usual, we hope to see as many of you as can make it to join together for a few hours of chat and drinks in our pub evenings and as you will know by now, all are welcome including kiddies and hounds.

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

The Village Hall's Committee are organising a Christmas Fayre at the Hall on Saturday 3rd December, with doors opening at 10.00am and shutting around 1.00pm. Stalls offering goodies for stockings and other gifts will be available for you to browse and there will be tea, coffee, mince pies and bacon butties to keep you satiated! There are some tables still available and if you want to book one to sell your wares, please contact our Fayre Organiser, Bridget Thurgood, on **01743 719417** or email her on **bthurgood2@btinternet.com**. Prices for

tables are £15 for a large one (6 x 3ft) and £10 for a small one (4 x 3ft).

Finally for all these events, please remember that they are, as always, 'cash only' events!

AGM

We normally have our Annual General Meeting in January but last year we decided to change this to a date in March with a final date yet to be decided. This will be made available via Village Views and the Acton Burnell Community Facebook page in February. This will be a public event for all interested in attending and there will be an opportunity to ask questions should you have any.

HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE HALL

We are looking to put together a history of the Hall. We know it was put up in its present location in 1926, but even then, the building was much older and was taken down from another location and repositioned in Pitchford. Over the years, it has served the community well and was during the middle of the 20th century, much more integral to the population of the area than perhaps it is now. We are therefore asking if anyone in the local area or further afield have any photos of events held in the hall, stories connected with it, anecdotes or anything about the people who have run the facility over the last 95 years or so. We are planning a 'get together' for anyone with such information or documents at the Hall sometime in March and further details will be provided in the February edition of this newsletter and on the various Facebook pages. If you want any more information or want to email anything you have prior to that event, then please contact Mike Price whose details are at the end of this article. We would love to put this together in a future article for this newsletter or on another medium where it will be accessible to the area.

VILLAGE HALL WEBSITE

The Committee are keen to set up a website for the Hall. While some of the Team are relatively computer literate, and at least one has experience of running a website in a previous life, we have very little experience in setting up a modern website and we are asking if there is anyone in the area who has some experience in such matters and who might be willing to guide one of us

through the basics of setting one up after which we would be able to manage it 'in house'. If you can spare a little bit of time to give us a 'starter for ten', then please contact myself on jbglover@outlook.com. Many thanks in advance and there may be a couple of beers at pub night thrown in for your efforts!!

TOTE

The end of the year is fast approaching and for all you good folk who are members of our "200" club, or 'Village Hall Tote' as we call it, Jeanette Reaney will be coming round in December to give you a chance to hopefully renew your membership for 2023. For anyone new to the area, or who has been here for a while and wants to join the 'club', it costs £12 per year and every month there are 4 prizes of £50, £25, £15 and £10, the winners of which are regularly posted on village noticeboards and in the ABC and Village Hall Facebook sites. You can pay by cash, cheque or BACS and Jeanette's contact details are below.

CONTACTS

All of our information can be found on our Facebook page, "Pitchford Village Hall". Please 'like' our page to get regular updates! The Hall is open for private hire and if you wish to make an enquiry or indeed have any other questions, feel free to contact either Mike or Chris below:

Mike Price

(Chairman PVH Management Committee):
email: price622@btinternet.com
mobile: **07740 067955**

Chris Jones

(Secretary PVH Management Committee):
email: csjay@btinternet.com
mobile: **07538 744807**

Jeanette Reaney (Tote Organiser)

email: jeanettereaney@hotmail.com
mobile: **07971 780963**

John Glover, Pitchford Village Hall Committee



PRACTICE NEWS FROM MUCH WENLOCK AND CRESSAGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

COVID and Flu Vaccines

This year we will be providing Flu and COVID vaccines in clinics based in William Brookes School. The vaccines will be delivered together as advised by the JCVI. For anyone wishing to have the vaccinations separately, this will be provided towards the end of the campaign in designated clinics. We will be using the Moderna Bivalent vaccine for all those aged 18 years or over, which has action against the Omicron COVID variant. The only exceptions will be those under 18 years of age who will require a Paediatric Dose of Pfizer, and those with true vaccine allergies, who will need referring to a designated clinic in Secondary Care. By the time of reading this some of you may have been contacted by us to book your vaccine, or even had them done. Our vaccine clinic timings are limited by the delivery dates of our vaccines which are beyond our control. We are however endeavouring to hold clinics as soon as possible after each delivery.

For any patients who are unable to leave their house we will be doing housebound vaccines. Our reception team will be contacting those patients who are known to be housebound, however if you are concerned we may not be aware of your circumstances please speak with our reception team. We are lucky to have a very community minded patient population, so if any of you aren't sure if a neighbour or friend needs help to get their vaccine, please ask them and help them out.

Shingles and Pneumonia Vaccines

Previously we have given these at the same time as Flu, however the Pneumonia and Shingles vaccines will now be given in dedicated clinics in the surgery which are being organised by our nursing team. If you are due one of these and not heard from us, then please contact the surgery and our reception team will be able to help.

Communications

We are aware that you are keen to know about these clinics and are going to do our utmost to communicate this across as many platforms as possible, but the best way to ensure you hear from us is to check we have the correct phone numbers and email for you. We will do our best to get information to you as soon as possible and as always appreciate your patience and understanding.

First Contact Practitioner appointments available now

Patients can now access a First Contact Practitioner through the Practice. The First Point Practitioner is a trained Physiotherapist who can assess your condition, advise any short-term treatments, suggest things that may help and, if appropriate, refer you to our local Physiotherapy or Musculoskeletal Clinic if you need a course of treatment. This assessment will be over the telephone or video link. If you were thinking of calling to speak to a GP for the first time about a back or joint problem or something similar, this may be good alternative. Please contact our reception team if you would like to book your appointment with the First Contact Practitioner.

Mental Health Practitioner Appointments

We are able offer patients face to face appointments with a Mental Health Practitioner at the Practice. Patients with anxiety or depression and who are not currently being treated by a mental health practitioner, can book in for an initial appointment. The nurse is also able to see patients who are on the waiting list for mental health services but have not yet been seen. Please contact a member of our reception team if you would like an appointment with our Mental Health Practitioner. Appointments are available on alternate Thursdays at Cressage.

Patient Online Access – Update to Services

From October 2022 there will be the facility for patients to book routine Doctors' appointments via Patient Online Access. Patients can book face to face appointment slots or telephone consultations slots online as well as by phone. Please note that when selecting telephone consultations that the location shown refers to where the clinician is based, and patients should not attend the surgery but await a phone call.

Patients with Patient Online Access can also continue to:

- Order repeat medication
- View a summary of your medical records, including immunisation history

To register for online services please see our website:

www.muchwenlockandcressagemp.co.uk or ask a member of reception.

HOW TO GET YOUR COVID VACCINE BOOSTER

Covid booster jabs will be offered to everyone over the age of 50 sometime before the end of the year. Anyone over the age of 5 who has been identified as being at clinical risk, care home residents, and front-line health and social care staff will also be able to access a booster jab, as will anyone who cares for a vulnerable individual or someone with a weakened immune system.

GP surgeries are contacting people to let them know when their age group is eligible for the jab, and in some cases will be hosting vaccination clinics.

To check if you are eligible, and to make a vaccination appointment, there are several routes you can follow.

By going to **www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/** you can find out if you are currently able to access the vaccine, and book an appointment at a vaccination clinic.

If you would rather use a walk-in clinic, you can find details of Shropshire clinics at **www.shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk/your-health/covid/covid-19-vaccinations/drop-in/**. Some clinics are offering first and second doses as well as boosters. Please note that these clinics are only open on specific days – details are available on the website.

Information on availability of vaccination clinics and a booking service are also available via the NHS app. Click on the 'advice' icon at the bottom of the home page and then select 'get advice about coronavirus'. The 'get a vaccine' option will then take you to a page where you can book an appointment or find a walk-in clinic.

If you would rather make an appointment by telephone, then you can call **119** free of charge.

A MESSAGE FROM ACTON BURNELL WI

Acton Burnell WI celebrates its 100th Anniversary on the 10th November and members are looking forward to a celebratory party. We are very sad to say that this will be our last meeting as we are closing down after the AGM on the 15th November, due to lack of membership and shortage of committee members. We would like to say a big thank you to all who have supported our events over the years and all members old and new who have worked very hard to keep us going. We have sadly reached the end of an era but we have many many special occasions to look back on.

DID YOU KNOW.....

Advent calendars were introduced to the UK as gifts from Germany and Scandinavia in the wake of the Second World War, as tokens of friendship. The first calendars were home produced by German Lutherans in the 19th century, and quickly became popular in Europe. Although the first chocolate advent calendar appeared in 1926 in Germany, the first UK version was only produced in 1958, and Cadbury came up with their first example in 1971, but they did not become the norm until the 1990s. Now as well as chocolate filled versions, you can get calendars featuring perfume, whiskey, cosmetics – you name it!

Christmas stockings may now have been largely replaced with Christmas pillowcases or sacks, but Father Christmas originally popped down the chimney to fill children's own everyday socks, stockings or shoes. Specially designed and decorated stockings first appeared in the early 1800s. It is thought the tradition began when St Nicholas left some gold pieces by the chimney of an impoverished family who had three daughters, and one of the gold coins fell into a shoe left there. St Nicholas later became identified with Santa Claus,

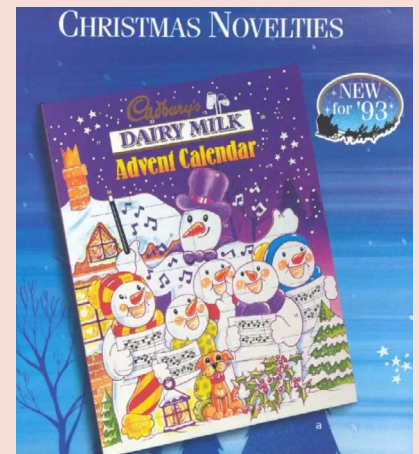
and rather than the gifts being left on St Nicholas's Day (19th December), they became an important part of the Christmas celebrations.

The British eat around 800 million mince pies a year, but the little pies we scoff now are very different to the original medieval pie. The first mince pies contained rabbit, pigeon, partridge, hare and pheasant, as well as dried fruit and spices. Thirteen ingredients were often included to represent Jesus and the twelve disciples. They would have been made in a rectangular shape which was meant to resemble Jesus's cradle. Traditionally, people ate a pie on each of the 12 days of Christmas to guarantee good luck over the coming year. Over time, the type of meat included changed, from game to lamb, veal or tripe, and by the 19th century mince pies were usually made with minced beef. It was not until the Victorian era that all meat was removed and the pies became the sweet treat we love today.

On New Year's Day many of us will be making New Year's resolutions- more in hope than expectation in most cases! – but the idea of a new start in the new year goes back as far as the Ancient Babylonians, who would promise to repay their debts and return any

borrowed items in the hope that their gods would look favourably on them. The Romans had a similar practice, and in the Middle Ages knights would make a 'peacock vow' by placing their hands on a live or roasted peacock to promise to live up to their knightly values in the coming year.

New Year's resolutions appear to have become widespread by the 17th century, and by the 18th century writers were already making jokes about people's inability to keep their resolutions. It is estimated that today 80% of people break their resolutions by the first week of February, and only 8% of resolutions made actually get kept!



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES TO IMPROVE NHS CARE

If you or someone close to you has had experience in the last 12 months of being referred by your GP for tests, diagnosis or treatment, or if you expected or requested a referral but didn't get one, Healthwatch Shropshire would like to hear from you.

By completing a simple on-line form, you can help Healthwatch identify areas which are working well, and those which the NHS may need to improve. All information will be anonymised, and the overall findings will be published. The survey includes questions on health conditions, ethnicity, sexuality, financial security and education, but you can choose not to answer these.

A GP referral can be for a number of reasons, and can include a referral to a specialist, for an MRI, x-rays or scan, for treatment or for tests.

If you would like to take part, please go to www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/have-your-say.

Healthwatch Shropshire is the independent health and social care champion for the local area. It gathers the views and experiences of healthcare users and providers and has statutory powers which can be used to influence and improve the local NHS.

CHRISTMAS HEALTH SERVICE COVER

Most GP surgeries will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and for the Bank Holiday on 27th December. If you have a medical concern during that time, please call NHS 111 by dialling **111** or use the online service at 111.nhs.uk. This service is available 24/7 and can give immediate advice, direct you to a local service, connect you to a nurse, emergency dentist, pharmacist or GP. If necessary, you may be advised to go to A&E and may be given an arrival time to help cut down on the time you may spend waiting to be seen.

If you have a medical emergency, you should dial **999**. Emergencies may include loss of consciousness, repeated fits, chest pain, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, serious burns or scalds, or a severe allergic reaction.

And a reminder that there are defibrillators available for use by the public at Acton Burnell Post Office, Pitchford Village Hall, Frodesley crossroads telephone kiosk and at Ruckly Home Farm. These can be used if you think, or suspect, that someone may be having a heart attack. Call **999** to alert the ambulance service before accessing the defibrillator.



CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

We have just concluded all of our Harvest Thanksgiving services and so it is time to look forward to Christmas.

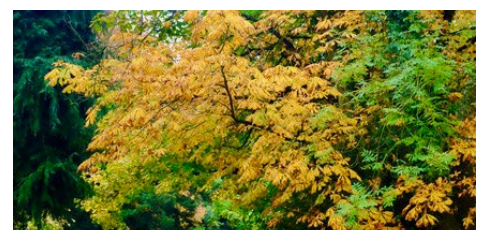
18th December 11.30pm: *Frodesley Crib Service*: 11.30.

18th December 3pm: *Carol Services* at Acton Burnell and Pitchford

Christmas Eve 11.15pm: *Midnight Communion Service* at Conover

Christmas Day 9am: *Christmas Morning Service* at Frodesley
10.30am: *Christmas Morning Services* at Acton Burnell and Pitchford

Geoff Garrett, Rector



KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMUNITY

Don't forget that you can keep in touch with your local community by using Facebook. Just search for Acton Burnell Community, Pitchford Village Hall or Frodesley Community Hub to see what events are taking place in your area. You'll need to join as a member to see who's in the group and what they post on the Acton Burnell page, but this only takes a minute or two.

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