

ENMORE GREEN COMMUNITY NEWS

Spring - Summer 2026



CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	1
Donkey Field Community Orchard	4
Enmore Green Community Field	5
Friends of Breach Common	6
Shaftesbury Home Grown	7
St. John's Church	8
The Friends of St. John's	9
St. John's Churchyard	10
St. John's Church Hall	11
Motcombe and Enmore Green United Charities Fund	11
The Church Tent	12
Felix Duke of Edinburgh Community Service	13
Coffee Companions	14
The Rose - The Final Chapter	15
Forthcoming Events	15
Advertisements	16

Editorial

This is the Spring/Summer edition and at this stage – early April – we don't know what the weather will bring; will it be a brilliant May month, a scorching summer or just rain at Wimbledon. Hope you enjoy reading this edition with some new contributors. Our Coffee Companions article highlights one of our smaller groups but truly there is something for everyone in our lovely hilltop town.

Our Shaftesbury Arts Theatre has an exciting theatre programme throughout the year but alongside it are the regular groups that encourage people to join in.

- Dance Events
- Film Society
- Music and drama group

And then we have our own special Shaftesbury Fringe Festival 17- 19 July.

The schedule is already packed with truly something for everyone of every age. Why not go on their website and check it out. I understand it's not too late to take part also.

Details of both these can be found 'online'. This statement can be annoying if you don't have a computer or the latest mobile. Don't be afraid to ask someone – preferably a young person – to show you how to do it or tell you about it. Don't miss out. (see our article from Felix)

It is good to be as upbeat as one can but we do live in worrying times with decisions being made that have consequences for us all. We cannot ignore what is happening and cannot tell how these events will affect our lives. What we can do is to remain optimistic and thankful for what we have.

Jo Churchill

Donkey Field Community Orchard

WASSAILING

After cancelling October's Apple Day celebrations because of foul conditions we determined to Wassail in January "whatever the weather" and our pop-up bar functioned famously under a pergola which Chris heroically sourced for the afternoon. It provided the shelter we needed and, amazingly, didn't blow away! Mulled cider consumption was hale and hearty and, at a safe distance, a crackling fire burned warm and bright.

When it came to the actual wassailing, that being the blessing of orchard trees with cider and toast, a modern twist was introduced.

A goodly number of orchard folk had gathered and, suitably fortified, dispersed up and along the slopes to deliver food and drink for the orchard spirits as usual. All the while, from his Sentry position beneath the tall crab apple halfway up the main path on the right, Cliff repeated a rhythmic, ritualistic drum beat which fitted the occasion perfectly.

With toast wedged in branches and roots splashed, normally Cliff leads a double rendition of the Wassailing Chant. However this year we used technology to democratise proceedings - no leaders!

Sue kindly provided paper photocopies of the Wassailing Chant but unfortunately rain made these impossible to keep dry and in one piece. Instead, we WhatsApp'd it to everyone with a mobile phone.

Picture quite a grotty Sunday afternoon halfway down Church Hill early in the New Year with darkness fast approaching. A crowd of people standing, heads bowed, chanting, a constellation of many illuminated screens. There was indeed a kind of magic in the air. Let's hope it does the trick!

WINTER WORK

Winter work is complete. Our small team of volunteers has been ably assisted for a second year by students from Clayesmore School. Thanks to them, and to Mr King for organising tools, minibuses and accompanying teachers throughout the Autumn and Winter Terms.

Since December we've been concentrating on making sense of tangled undergrowth and an overgrown hedge below the Playing Field entrance off The Butts. I always press the point that until quite recently, before the plastic age, wood products were essential for everyday life. Hence, it's enormously satisfying to explain the whys and wherefores of coppicing before watching these young people cut hazel, process it into different lengths and thicknesses, then use faggots, stakes and binders to construct a couple of short sections of 'dead hedge'.

Enmore Green Community Field (School Playing Field)

For a change we would like to ask for readers' help with this section in the next newsletter.

Do you have memories of the Playing Field you would like to share?

Perhaps you had sports lessons there as a pupil of St John's School on Church Hill or have other interesting memories of the Field. Many of us will remember the Platinum Jubilee Sports Day in 2022, a wonderful afternoon of races that ended rather abruptly in a heavy rainstorm. If you have anything to share, please get in touch using the details below.

For new readers, the playing field is one of the green spaces nestled together in Enmore Green. It stands between the Donkey Field Community Orchard, St John's Church and the Allotments. All very different spaces but all adding to Enmore Green's distinctive open feel and sense of community.

The playing field is the only level sports fields on this side of town and its value was recognised when the Town Council voted to give the field protected status with a Deed of Dedication. This was aided by the charity Fields in Trust which started out as the National Playing Fields Association. Their cause for the past 100 years has been to protect parks and green spaces that are at risk from development and local authority budget cuts. Currently just 6% are legally protected across the country. Find out more at www.fieldsintrust.org

It is the perfect place for sports, games and picnics. As the weather improves it will come into its own so please use and enjoy it. But no dogs please, to keep it safe for everyone to enjoy.

The field is owned by the Town Council and its management is overseen by a committee of local residents who welcome new members. If you would like to join the committee, to book the field for an event, or would just like further information, contact Jo Churchill on 01747 850432 or jo.churchill@enmoregreen.co.uk

Kate O'Farrall. Committee member

Friends of Breach Common

Well, it's Spring again no tulips from Amsterdam for us. Oh No! We have a plethora of snowdrops, bluebells about to flower in drifts, wild garlic and millions of nature woodland plant seedlings showing their heads.

The apple saplings given to us by Joe Hashman are budding up nicely but it will be a while before they bear fruit. Won't it be lovely to have apples aplenty to harvest with our blackberries. Maybe we should have a competition when the tune comes – Best Breach Common Pie Contest! I, for one, am happy to be a taste tester.

There is a small area where we have self seeded raspberries. We are hoping for fruit this year, their third, but not holding our breath. If no fruit this year we may well remove them as the Common is definitely not their natural habitat.

With the winter storms, which brought very strong winds, and an enormous amount of rain, we spent quite some time keeping the paths clear of fallen branches and trees. We have also put some effort into keeping said paths wide and traversable by removing bramble runners. The amount of sloppy mud we worked in meant that we walked home afterwards splattered in mud from our hairlines to the tips of our boots with huge grins on our faces – or that may have been just me!

It was quite a shock when after last summer's drought and the ponds completely dried out. However, it gave us the opportunity to carry out some renovations. The ponds are now almost overflowing and teeming with wild life.

We are planning to carry out a newt survey along with a bat survey. Both are carried out at night and we'll be helped by Darwin Ecology. I'll let you know the results. I'll also try to include a picture of the state we'll be in after an evening of stumbling about the Common after dark. Vampire bats aren't indigenous to Dorset are they?

For a long time, we have wanted to open up a view of Duncliffe Hill as there used to be in the 'old days'. This has taken a while to come to fruition due to not wanting to chop down trees, skip and jump and pick wild flowers (ref. The Lumberjack Song). We have finally managed it after a storm decimated a huge willow. You'll find it on the western edge of the Common, unfortunately downhill (and back up again) but it's well worth the effort. A group from Clayesmore School helped coppice some hazel and clear the brambles. We laid the boundary hedge, dealt with the willow and built a solid bench with the logs.

TA DA!! We give you Duncliffe View our newest area.

Last week we had a site meeting with Mike Cummings from Darwin Ecology. Mike is one of our staunchest supporters and shares his knowledge of

conservation, maintenance and regeneration of wildlife habitats. After inspecting ponds, open areas, scrub and paths, he sat on the bench at Duncliffe View and said 'Great'. Happy Days

I've had a couple of people say 'I got lost' or 'I got turned around'. This along with us Friends calling areas by different names has led to us working on an updated map. This will include paths, areas, ponds, all with names. Once completed, we will post it on the Noticeboard which can be found by the Lily Pond next to the lane. Hopefully we can print some small copies out for those of you who may need one. At least no-one, to my knowledge, has stumbled out of the Common having spent the night with the bats and newts!

Well, that's it from me . The sun is shining and Spring is in full swing.

Happy Days are Here Again!

(ref 1929 song composed by Milton Ager Lyrics by Jack Yeller)

Fran

Shaftesbury Home Grown

Our produce has kept us going amazingly well through the winter months, giving us salad and spinach (in the polytunnel), celeriac, kale, leeks, beetroot, and carrots amongst other things. Most of it is now finally coming to an end, so we are starting to sow vegetable and flower seeds in the greenhouse and the polytunnel and even planting seedlings out in the field in the hope of another bumper harvest this year. After a few days when we were lulled into thinking summer had arrived we suddenly found ourselves back in winter-like cold, even lighting the chimenea to warm us up during our coffee break. Fortunately the hens are not fazed by the weather and are laying again like mad in the longer days. We have several new volunteers which is wonderful and means we can keep on top of preparing and planting more than we have been able to for a long time. We are a sociable, cheerful group! It seems that now with the current dire situation in the world people are starting to realise more and more the importance of growing our own food and becoming more self-reliant and locally based.

If you are interested in finding out more about us and what possibilities there might be for expanding the use of our land, do contact me - Helen English on 07789 845498.

St. John's Church

The Jackdaws are not happy. Their peace was shattered in early March when scaffolding was erected all round the Church. Our local roofing company, Vertigo, (see Advertisers) is undertaking the repairs needed for the roof. Then there will be the replacement of the gutters and hoppers and renovation of the windows. This exterior work is scheduled to be finished by the end of May. The building will then have to dry out before we can start on the interior. This will give us vital breathing space to do more fundraising. We thought we were there but No. The government has removed the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. This was a scheme where Vat would be returned when repairs were carried out on listed buildings. Even for a small church like St. John's, this will add another £15,000 to the cost of the repairs. Essentially, the amount quoted for the interior repair work needed. Everyone had worked so hard to raise the amazing amount of £70,000 but we can't stop now.

What is a listed building? It is the guide lines from English Heritage on the importance of each building. Many of our churches are listed Grade I which causes major problems as everything has to be checked against Heritage standards. St. John's is a Grade II which basically means we are not as important as others. A precis of their opinion is stated as

- A simple but robust village church in the Neo-Norman style popular c. 1840, picturesquely set on a steep hillside

The most important factor of this Scheme was that it was fair to all. It didn't matter whether your repairs were for a Church/Cathedral of national importance or a small rural church, the statistics were the same. There is going to be a replacement scheme – some time soon (!) – but it will no doubt need us to jump through hoops to get a look in.

If anyone has any good ideas for interesting fund raising event, do let me know.

Jo Churchill



St. John's Church
Our Fundraising Appeal Scan the QR code
if you would like to donate to the Appeal.

The Friends of St. John's

What do the Friends do for St. John's? What don't they do is probably the answer. The Friends answer the call whenever it comes. It was one of the first to come forward with a £5,000 pledge towards the Appeal when it launched in April last year. There was then a delightful Afternoon Tea in the garden of David and Elaine Wynn-Mackenzie's home which was also for the Appeal.

For many years now, the very small Friends' committee have run the refreshments at the annual '*St John's in the Town Hall*' event. All these proceeds are given directly to the Church.

The Friends purchase the Christmas Tree that goes up on the Green for the ever popular '*Carols round the Christmas Tree*' and David and Elaine liaise with Shaftesbury Town Council for the siting of the Tree. As a side issue they also collect, install and decorate the 6' Christmas Tree in the Church.

Very importantly, The Friends have supported this very newsletter right from the beginning and pay for the printing of the three editions a year; helping St. John's to reach out to all the Enmore Green Community.

Our membership fees bring in c £1,000 a year; it would be wonderful if we could increase the number of Friends. It costs from £15.00 per year to belong with the knowledge that you are helping both church and community to survive.

Elaine Wynn-Mackenzie, Chair Person

From: David Wynn-Mackenzie, Treasurer

Did you know that the community of Enmore Green has its own website? You can find it at <https://www.enmoregreencommunity.com/>.

This newsletter also gives you that link. If you go there you can read this newsletter and its past editions. But the website also features the Donkey Field, Community Orchard, Community Field, old and recent photos of the village, as well as Church News and much else besides. It would be good to make this a "go to site" for any matters of community interest.

If you have anything to add, or any updates or other offerings of interest, please let me know via David.wynn-mackenzie@talk21.com

P.S The website also has the Application Form for the Friends!

St. John's Churchyard

As this newsletter goes to print, the primroses are at their peak. Spread over the upper churchyard like a carpet and year on year moving into the lower churchyard and down to the entrance and along the cremation spaces. After all the winter rain and now March sunshine, the camellias have also blossomed. During 2025 it became apparent that the brambles had spread and were choking the flowers and plants struggling to get through. Joe Hashman from the Orchard advised us to trim back the entire area in November and, if necessary, again in January. Brambles do provide food and shelter to animals and insects but need to be controlled. This has worked very well indeed and we had a lovely show of snowdrops and daffodils in February.

We also abide by the Salisbury Diocesan regulation banning artificial plants and flowers. Remembrance Day and Christmas wreaths are an exception but are removed by the end of January each year. There is the thought that plastic flowers/plants will last longer but they quickly deteriorate as well as being toxic to animals.

We are grateful to everyone who helps to keep our churchyard a delight to visit and find peace in the surroundings.

Just as we were going to press, a representative from Dorset Amphibian and Reptile Network (DARN) turned up as she had been re-siting the tiles used for our resident reptiles, grass snakes, slow worms etc. to hide under. As explained in our first para, we had blitzed the brambles in November to make it easier for plants and flowers to come through. What we had forgotten is that after hibernation, we had left no cover for them to creep out to the sun and thus be a target from above. We will be cutting the brambles back again in November but only to about 3 ins.

Jo Churchill

St. John's Church Hall

We are very lucky to have a local hall, with outdoor area, right in the middle of our community! It is regularly used for coffee mornings, Bingo sessions and occasional talks or presentations. 25 people can sit comfortably to listen to a speaker or can sit at circular tables to enjoy coffee or a meal. There are two toilets and a hand basin with mirror. The kitchen, which overlooks a well-tended garden, has plenty of crockery and glasses and space to prepare and serve simple meals. There is a refrigerator and microwave. The hall is light and effectively heated when necessary. There are two access doors. Small children, or dogs, can play outside on the grass and the whole area is safely contained by a fence and a gate.

Why not think about hiring the hall for an informal event?! It would be ideal for a party for small children, a workshop for a creative arts group or a summer tea party for old friends! Yoga or Pilates teachers please do consider running classes in Enmore Green! Could we start an occasional toddler group with a parent or grandparent?!

Charges are based on £10 per hour or £25 for three hours. Responsibility for marketing and organising the event would be the hirer's. Please spread the word – let's use the hall and invest in this community asset. Anybody wishing to look around the hall should contact:

Sue Hake on 851 338 or Sally Hobbs on 07889 988 522.

Report on Motcombe and Enmore Green United Charities Fund

The fund was set up several hundred years ago, at a time when the parishes of Motcombe and Enmore Green were administratively linked, and was intended to support the poor and destitute of both parishes. It was based on an original bequest of 16 acres of land for allotments in 1624.

In 2023 because of the lack of truly needy people, the committee decided to deregister the charity with the Charities Commission and use the accumulated funds for charitable projects. The charity has now been removed from the Charities Commission Rolls and the residue of the funds (£29,000) available for distribution. St. John's had received an amount of £7,500 representing a quarter share of the residue and discussions were taking place on how this could be used in St. John's Church Hall. *Diane Whitfield*

The Church Tent

At the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show - 19/20 August 2026

The major Agricultural Show in our area.

Here we go again, in our usual place on the Motcombe Road side, near Gate 2. A large sign points the way.

St. John's is the lead church with a committee of 6 volunteers from the three Church Teams of Gillingham, Shaftesbury and Stour Vale. Also helped enormously by Anna Hardy from the Salisbury Diocese. We assemble two marquees, 14 assorted tables, 56 chairs and all the paraphernalia that goes with providing refreshments for hundreds of visitors during the two days of the Show.

On the Tuesday before the Show, everything is brought together at St. John's Church Hall and then transported to the Showground where another team from Gillingham are putting up the Marquees. Over the period of the Show we have a Volunteer Rota whose members do a split 4 hour stint. And then the USP of the Church Tent – **home made Cakes**. These are supplied by individual churches from the three teams.

Each year, we promote the varied work of the Churches and we have a splendid map detailing the position of each church.

What is the Church Tent for? We offer a warm welcome, somewhere to sit down and tea, coffee and cake at the modest price of £2.00 each (unchanged for the last three years) Our success is because of so many volunteers doing all sorts of jobs. If you are visiting the show do come and see us.

Profits are given to our chosen charities, all connected in some way with churches and farming life. This year it will be

Dorset Historic Churches Trust	Helping all our churches
The Student Fund	Assists with student expenses
Agricultural Chaplains	working with Farmers where they are
One other	to be chosen by member churches

*Jo Churchill,
Church Tent Administrator*

My Duke of Edinburgh Community Service at St John's Church

When I first signed up for my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award, I was uncertain what to expect from the Community Service part having never done anything like this before. I am pleased to report that I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my time with the Enmore Green community.

The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award is made up of four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skill and the Expedition. The Volunteering section is where you give your time to help others and support your local community, running for a minimum of three months. The idea is that you develop personally, pick up new skills and contribute something meaningful beyond yourself. When it came to choosing where to do my volunteering hours, I chose St John's Church of Enmore Green in Shaftesbury. It felt like somewhere I could make a genuine contribution, and the Deputy Churchwarden and all those who volunteer, made me feel so welcome from the very first moment.

What I found was how varied the work would turn out to be. So far I've been something of a computer expert, helping with digital tasks that arguably saved the day! I've distributed this leaflet within the community, been a furniture remover, shifting and setting up tables and chairs for events. I've even been a waiter at community gatherings offering the deliciously created cakes which, of course, I've sampled myself just to be sure!

And coming up soon, I'll be taking on a brand new role as a stall holder. Each session brings something different, which keeps things interesting and means I'm building a broader set of skills than I had before. That's the point of the award scheme.

What has struck me most is how much St John's does for the local community in Enmore Green. People rely on it throughout the week for connection, support and a sense of belonging. Being even a small part of keeping things running has felt genuinely worthwhile and enriching. I have really learnt how important community and connection is.

If any other young people around Shaftesbury are considering where to carry out their DofE community service hours, I'd really encourage them to consider St John's. The work is varied, the welcome is warm and did I mention the cake?

A huge thank you to the whole community for making my experience so worthwhile and welcoming.

By Felix, Age 14

Coffee Companions

A social enterprise founded by Caroline Billington in 2016, offers people sat in coffee shops anywhere the opportunity to strike up a friendly conversation and maybe make a new friend.

The Reverend Anne Heywood was involved with a Coffee Companions Group in Gillingham and in 2019 approached Jean Parker to suggest a group being started in Shaftesbury. Just 4 people met on a Monday afternoon in The John Peel Café to start with. Several moves later, a permanent home was established at The Royal Chase Hotel. Now there are 30 members and numbers fluctuate each week, Charge is £3.00 for coffee and biscuits.

Jean has a natural talent for bringing people together and making them feel welcome and over the years, has developed other events that members can join in if they wish.

Monday	2.00pm to 3.00pm Royal Chase Hotel Coffee Companions
Tuesday	2.00pm Cinema at The Arts Centre
Wednesday	1st Wednesday 10.00- 12 noon Coffee Morning In St. John's Church Hall, Enmore Green 2nd Wednesday 12.10pm Carvery Lunch at the Kings Arms, East Stour
Thursday	2.15pm to 4.15pm Crafting in The Grosvenor Hotel 3rd Thursday 2.20pm Bingo in St. John's Church Hall
Friday	3rd Friday 10.30am Breakfast at the Salt Cellar 4th Friday 10.00am Breakfast at Skevy's
Saturday	1st Saturday 9.30am Coffee and Cake at St. Peter's Church
Sunday	Last Sunday 1.00pm Lunch at The Grove, Ludwell

More information contact Jean Parker on 074855 80472

The Rose - The Final Chapter

Our Rose now has its permanent home. On Mothering Sunday, 15 March, the Reverend Mary Ridgewell dedicated the wonderful Tower to 'Mothers we have loved and lost'. Small wooden hearts dedicated to individuals were then hung on the rails. We are grateful to Julian Richards for the gift of the Tower. We all then retired from the rain and enjoyed a Cream Tea together. Making it a really traditional Tea Party, Julian had brought a collection of his mother's best china to use.

Sue Richard then told us that, when the Tree and Rose fell, she had taken cuttings and unsurprisingly our Blushing Lucy Rose cuttings had all survived. These will be on sale at St. John's in the Town Hall event on the 25 April. We are considering printing a warning 'that this rose is a prolific climber

Jo Churchill

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 25 April – St. John's in the Town Hall

10.00am to 2.00pm Our annual trip to the Top – Do come and join us

The usual mix of Stalls, Raffles and Refreshments plus a relaxing place to have a coffee and listen to incidental music. Plus a Dog you may want to call your own! If you have any unwanted gifts that would be suitable for the Raffle or the Tombola please let Jo know or leave in the Church.

Friday 26 June – Midsummer Barbecue

Place St. John's Church Hall, Church Hill

Time 6.00pm to 8.00pm

Drinks available / Music Watch the Noticeboard for more detail

The Garden Table will re-open on Friday 1st May

Situated outside the home of Lionel and Sue Hake in the Knapp, Enmore Green. Donations of flowers, plants and vegetable are most welcome.

All proceeds supporting St. John's Church

ADVERTISEMENTS

The Search for Sally King A story of Enmore Green.

£8.00 per copy. Available at our Coffee mornings on the first Wednesday 10.00am to 12noon in St. John's Church Hall, or from The Shaftesbury Museum, Gold Hill.

St. John's, Enmore Green and the Weir Family

The Weir Pulpit and the Enmore Green War Memorial - £2.50

Contact Jo Churchill on 01747 850432

jo.churchill@enmoregreen.co.uk

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Yoga with Emily

If you are interested in booking a class or have questions please email Emily at: yogaemilyshaftesbury@gmail.com or contact her on 07495 379042