The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter – October Edition

Kingsthorne, Much Birch, Little Birch, Aconbury & Wormelow

OCTOBER 2026

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Read about the recent informative Parish Dutchy Walk on Aconbury Hill on page 7

Gardening Club Annual Show, Saturday 5th September

The Annual Garden Show this year was a very successful community event held on a sunny day following recent rain. Its 34 entrants created a magnificent display of flowers, vegetables, fruit, domestic items, and handicrafts.

The Club extended its gratitude to the judges, whose expertise and professionalism ensured the Show's success.

Additionally, Friday's children's workshop,led by Jackie Yates, produced vegetable monsters and plate gardens that were entered into the Show alongside other youth submissions.

The number of children's entries were sadly significantly down this year - which is a shame, so we hope that next year we will see a rise in numbers by adapting the classes to be more accessible to our young gardeners.

Continued on page 2.

Jobs for the garden in October

What a difference a couple of good storms of rain can make. Suddenly the lawns are green again and springing in to rapid growth and we now have to wait until either the dew or the wet grass from a shower dries so we can get the mower out and keep control of our lush green sward. We are advised not to water lawns in drought as it is a complete waste of water. This was proved recently with an experiment. On a parched lawn, a ring of stones was laid out about 30cms in diameter. For 21 days 1 litre of water was poured over the small section of lawn within the circle, each day. At the end of the period the lawn inside the circle was still as parched as the area outside it. Abracadabra – the magic of rain.

Jobs to do:

- Alpine troughs will benefit from being placed under cover or against a wall in rain shadow away from prevailing wind.
- Check that greenhouse heaters are in good working order (in case we have a winter!!).
- Remove saucers from under containers and pots and raise them off the ground with 'pot feet' or wooden batons.
- It is a good time to lift and divide large clumps of perennials.
- Lift and store dahlia tubers.
- Mist house plants.
- Remove larger figs which are unlikely to ripen leaving only pea sized fruit. Protect these from frost to ripen next year.
- Harvest main crop potatoes (if not already done), pumpkins and marrows.
- Keep harvesting apples, pears and grapes.
- In sheltered plots sow broad beans at end of the month. They must be hardy e.g. The Sutton or Aquadulce.
- Plant out Spring Cabbage.
- Drain hose and roll up.
- Divide rhubarb.
- Plant garlic.
- Provide fresh water for birds in regularly cleaned bird baths.
- Chop up windfall apples and pears and place on bird table(s)
- Remove fruit nets. If you have a fruit cage, remove the 'roof' net just in case we have snow.
- Remove excess fallen leaves from ponds to prevent the buildup of too much decaying organic material in the water.
- Clean out and re-hang nesting boxes.

There is a debate as to whether we should be feeding birds at the present because of a "new" disease that may be passed on at feeders. If the feeders can be cleaned and disinfected regularly, it may be ok to feed them.

Derek Scrivens

Gardening Club News

Annual Show – continued from page 1.

Show winners this year were:
Llewelyn Sutton Cup : the Headley family with Tim producing 45 entries by himself ! The Harold Salisbury Shield : Des Wathen; The Selby Lloyd Shield: Tim Headley; The Horticultural Shield: Tim Headley; The David Enoch Cup: Des Wathen; The John Bryant Rose Plate : Des Wathen; The Rose Bowl : Tim Headly; The Floral Art Shield: Wendy Fowler; Domestic Plate to Kate Yeates; The Wilson Cup (Handicraft) Anne Harper; Children's Shield, Anne Thomas Trophy and Under 8 Winner - Bea Phelps; Jack Lamberth won the Over 8 cup; Photography Plate was won by Chris Fowler and the Painting Plate by Sally Nichols.

It was great to see new faces from the village, plus visitors from other garden clubs joining us again this year.

Thank you to everyone who entered or helped in any way to make the Show the success it was.

So, now we are looking to next year -put it in your diary now: Saturday 4th September 2027.

Lesley Chapman, Show Secretary

Our monthly events are free to members: £5 for non-members. Refreshments served from 7.00pm.
Usually the talk starts at 7.30pm.

Looking forward to seeing you at our meetings
Lesley - Chair of KT & LB Gardening Club

Contact email: **ktlbgardeningclub@gmail.com**

Follow us on:
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Instagram.com/Kings_thorn_little_birch_gc

Join us at the

Community Café

@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 10 October 2026

10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

14 November

12 December

9 January

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com

A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.

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arts alive FLICKS IN THE STICKS at Much Birch Community Hall

Thursday 15 October - GLENROTHAN 12A

Legendary actor Brian Cox makes his directorial debut in Glenrothan, a heartfelt drama and "love letter to Scotland." After 35 years in the U.S., Donal returns to his family's Highland whisky distillery to reconcile with his estranged brother Sandy. Co-starring Alan Cumming and Shirley Henderson, the film explores family, forgiveness, and home-coming.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 18s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up next month...

Thursday 19 November - TUNER 15

*Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted) - for further info or to book tickets please email **muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097***

For further information about films and screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

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Local Information

Little Birch Parish Councillors

- Cllr Steve Coles
- Cllr Tom Palfrey
- Cllr Chris Atkinson
- Cllr Nick Deacon
- Cllr Kate Dillon

Molly Walters (Parish Council Clerk)
✉ lbpcclerk@gmail.com

🌐 www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org

Footpath Officers

For any queries about footpaths contact:

Little Birch & Aconbury
Chris Fowler
☎ 07931 292998
Email chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk

Much Birch and Kingsthorne:
David Irwin
☎ 07766 135068
Email david.irwin13@btinternet.com

Photography Group

We're a friendly local group with a common interest in photography.
Come and join us:
Contact Sally Nichol for more information
☎ 07803 032928
sally.nichol@btinternet.com

Table Tennis

Come and join us to play
on the 1st Tuesday of the month!
Little Birch Village Hall 7pm to 9pm
Only £3 which includes refreshments!

Contact
Patricia Kelly
☎ 07890 480576

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

- Lesley Chapman (Chair)
- John Ellis-Braithwaite (Treasurer)
- Cathy Ellis-Braithwaite (Secretary)
- Sarah Jones (Hall bookings)
- Kate Dillon (Parish Council Rep)
- Jane Bolam (Drama group)
- Tonya Barnett (Drama Group)
- Paulette Traynor (Committee member)

The Birches Newsletter Editor:
John Ellis-Braithwaite
Email editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

Local Social Media Groups

Find out more in these groups:

Facebook

Much Birch Parish Group
Little Birch Parish Group
King's Thorn & Little Birch Gardening Club

Instagram

King's Thorn Little Birch Gardening Club

Art and Craft Space

Have an art and craft afternoon away from the hustle and bustle of life every Thursday
at Little Birch Village Hall!
2pm to 4pm

Bring your WIP or PhD in whatever art and craft you are working on – or start something new!
Only £3 which includes refreshments!
Contact Sally Nichol
☎ 07803 032928
sally.nichol@btinternet.com

An article from Revd. Mark : Virtue – a lost way of living?

Hi everyone.

Today, I want to think about an old phrase that turns up in the Book of Common Prayer. This Anglican liturgy was devised by Thomas Cranmer in the 1540s as the standard worship for all churches in England, following Henry VIII's split from the Church of Rome.

It has a particular "flavour" and was revised in two great revisions, 1662 and 1928. In the intercessions (prayers of the people), we cover a number of subjects, including praying the following:

"And grant unto his whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under him, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue."

"His whole Council" refers these days to Parliament, though when Cranmer wrote it, he was thinking about the ministers who supported the King in running the country. Note, though, the end word "virtue". It proposes a "goodness" of public life, that we should work for that which is good across the community. Not only are we setting out to deter wrongdoing – and that would have looked very different from our current day with village stocks and such like- but also promoting the "good" life.

There is something that is quite reassuring about that, such that we should work for not just ourselves and our families but our communities as well. A challenge all those years ago to our relentless pursuit of individualism and the current diminution of "society". Cranmer was on to something here, and we do well to remember it and put it into practice.

Revd Mark

Church Services in October

Services for October:

Sunday 4th October (18th Sunday after Trinity)

9.15 a.m. at Much Dewchurch – Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Holy Communion

Sunday 11th October (19th Sunday after Trinity)

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Holy Communion

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch – Morning Worship

Sunday18th October (St Luke's Day)

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch – Morning Worship

3.00 p.m. at Little Birch – Harvest Festival with Guest Preacher Dean Sarah Brown from Hereford Cathedral

Wednesday 21st October

6.00 p.m. at Much Birch – Harvest Festival with the Much Birch School Children's Choir

Sunday 25th October (Bible Sunday)

4.00 p.m. at Much Dewchurch – Harvest Festival

Mel's Musings

I scribed this a few weeks ago and as I sit here with the clouds gathering and the temperatures a lot cooler I think back to when I originally wrote it:

I am sat here with most of the doors and windows open and have realised that I have been breathing in very smoky air for at least the last hour or so. The Little Birch Facebook page has comments from local people experiencing the same and I realise that another fire, but much closer to us, is ravaging our beautiful countryside due to this extended drought and heatwave. I go upstairs and realise that we have no view – is it a heat mist or smoke? It definitely smells like smoke and the wind has picked up and is coming at us from the south west from the direction of Wales where there are meant to be fires.

This all sets me off thinking. We read, hear and see all these terrible fires around the country and, indeed, around the world and yet because it doesn't affect us directly, doesn't seem real, but suddenly it is real. It may not be dangerously close to us, but some people are and it is not nice. I then consider what I would take if ordered out of our home at short notice. Well the animals firstly and then the OH, only fair I suppose, and then what? I immediately think my purse and passport and of course my copious amounts of medication – need a separate bag for that lot!!! Hang on, the purse is empty and my passport is out of date, so they would be a waste of time. What else. 'Cat food' they are screaming at me, sucking in their fat sides to emphasise the urgency for their supplies to be bagged up. Where are the cat baskets, must find those immediately. I then realise that the back of the car is full of 'stuff' to take to the charity shop to offload, need to empty the car for space to load our items, just in case. Better go upstairs and try and find our bags; it has been so long since we went away can't remember where they have been stored. Need to write a list. I am already exhausted and haven't done anything yet. I listen to the news and realise the wind is bringing the smoke in from Wales, and this fire in highly unlikely to affect us at all. I sympathise deeply with all the unfortunate people that have been moved from their homes or even lost them in these fires, and I am in mourning for all the creatures that have lost their habitat and even their lives. These devastated areas will not be the same for many years.

It only goes to show that no matter how organised a person you are, when something takes you by surprise it can throw you into a complete meltdown of virtual panic and indecision.

Harverst Festival at St. Mary's Church, Little Birch

Our annual Harvest Festival Service will take place at 3 pm on Sunday 18th October.
We will be welcoming the Very Reverend Sarah Brown who is the first female Dean in the 1300 year history of the Hereford Diocese.
Donations of tinned food for the Ross food bank will be most welcome at a time when many families are struggling. Tea and cake will be served after the service and we look forward to seeing you on the day.

Much Birch Parish Council
Details of meeting held on 3/9/26

PARISH MEETING – at the Much Birch Parish Council Meeting held in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 3rd September 2026 from 7.30 pm.

The parish council held their September Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 3rd September 2026. The meeting noted that the much needed resurfacing of Tump Lane had taken place. There was a timely reminder to take care on Tump Lane, and on all roads, as the speed limits are there to try to protect all road users.

The local police officer was in attendance and warned about scams and thefts from vehicles. Report any suspicious activity, and in an emergency ring 999. Ring 101 to report non urgent concerns. Crimestoppers may also be contacted on 0800 555 111

There were no further planning applications for consideration within the parish.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the Much Birch Parish Council will be held on Thursday 1st October 2026 from 7.30pm at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Details of forthcoming meetings are in the column to the right.

Much Birch Parish Council

Councillors

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AW, email: thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703
Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX email: roisinburge@hotmail.com Tel. 01981 540724
Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT email:chris@pickering-grey.uk Tel. 07712 813218
Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AU email: magyeman92@gmail.com Tel. 01981 540840
Cllr David Irwin email: David.Irwin13@btinternet.com Tel. 07766 135068
Cllr Steve Turner The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, Tel. 07768 206296 email:turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Alison Wright email: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com
Much Birch Footpath Officer:
email: MBfootpaths@btinternet.com
Tel. 07766 135068

Dates for the forthcoming meetings:
01/10/26, 05/11/26, 03/12/26
All are in Much Birch Community Hall from 7.30pm.

Full minutes of the meetings can be found on the Parish Council website: **www.muchbirchparish.org.uk**
You can also find us on X (formerly known as Twitter) at https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC and Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish

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Duchy Walk: Aconbury Hill – 25th August

What an amazing turnout! The Duchy Walk on August 25th drew over 50 participants for an engaging evening tour of Aconbury Hill led by Ben Anderson, Head Forester for the Duchy of Cornwall.

Woodland & Wildlife Management:
Ben highlighted key challenges in managing the woodland, specifically damage to saplings and mature tree bark caused by deer and squirrels. A recent survey revealed high populations of Roe, Fallow, and Muntjac deer. To manage these numbers, controlled culling is conducted, with plans to eventually donate the resulting venison to local food banks.

Monument Preservation & Future Plans:
Managing bracken on the hill fort (an Ancient Monument) is another key issue. While traditionally controlled by rolling several times a year, Ben is considering using cattle equipped with electronic collars to graze specific areas. Additionally, in response to walkers noting how wonderful a view across to Hereford would be from the trig point, Ben agreed to explore options for thinning surrounding trees.

The local community is grateful to have access to this beautiful woodland. Special thanks go to Ben Anderson for sharing his expertise and to Alison Clarke for organising the walk and providing refreshments.

Chris Fowler

Much Birch Community Hall

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Contact Sarah Jones on 07947 222 650
Email: littlebirchvh@gmail.com
Website: www.birches.news/lbvh

SHORT MAT BOWLING AT LITTLE DEWCHURCH

We will start playing our indoor short mat bowls at Little Dewchurch Village Hall again on Thursday September 3rd at 7 pm. and every Thursday thereafter. Sessions are 2 hours long with a break for tea and biscuits and cost £5. The first three weeks are free to see if potential new members enjoy the game.

Bowls is a nice, friendly game, a way of gently exercising and there are no age limits, young and old can all play well.

For further information contact John Caton, 01981540415 or just come on the night, everybody is welcome.

Coffee & Books at LB Village Hall

Held in the morning of the first Thursday and third Saturday of the month at 10am

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Book of the month for October

This month I thought I would choose another author because we have several of his books in our collection. Many of you will know and love Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus novels but if you haven't come across them then it's worth a try.

I don't usually go for crime stories but I'm glad I found these. I came to them late and was quickly captivated. They are witty and entertaining. What's not to love?

Inspector Rebus, the hero of the books, and as all the best heroes are, is a flawed character. His relationships, especially with women, are on shaky ground because, to him, his job always comes first. He approaches each criminal puzzle with dogged determination to solve the case. As for his smoking and drinking, he is convinced that he has solved his alcohol problem by only allowing himself so many units per day, but sometimes when the stress is particularly great he will allow himself more, in which case his plan breaks down.

His bosses despair of him ever following instruction, but recognise that he nearly always solves criminal cases so they allow him to continue. Unfortunately this means also that he never gets promoted.

The novels are set in Edinburgh but it doesn't really matter if you don't know the city because the settings just add to the atmosphere of the stories.
I would be interested to hear if anyone agrees with what I write about. I know I have one reader! She knows who she is!!

Jennifer

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- Baby: Nursery equipment, medical devices, prams, cots
- Children: School books, sports equipment,
- Young people: Books/tools for school/uni/apprenticeship
- Adults: Mobility aids, emergency repairs,
- Elderly: Physical aids, wheelchairs, replacement white goods

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PILATES with Alison Allan

Seniors Pilates is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall
Mondays 11.15am to 12.15pm

Join Alison Allan for Pilates – sessions are taught as small group classes and as individual 1:1 sessions.
Pilates is a great way to keep your body feeling agile and energised, The movements focus on posture, alignment, core strength balance and flexibility.

---

tmw Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing

tmw is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall
Thursdays 10.45am to 11.45pm

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Defibrillator Locations

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs are available to use locally in case of sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

- **Allensmore** Locks Garage
- **Backney** on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage
- **Bridstow** on the outside of the village hall
- **Garway** on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub
- **Harewood End** at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.
- **Little Birch** on the outside of the village hall
- **Llanwarne** on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall
- **Much Birch** on the outside of the church hall
- **Much Birch Axe & Cleaver** on the side of the pub
- **Much Dewchurch** outside Steiner School, first building after the church
- **Peterstow** at the Yew Tree pub
- **Sellack** on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)
- **St Weonards** old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage
- **Wormelow** at the Cricket Club &Carrot & Wine shop
- **Wormelow a**lso at the Tump Inn
- **Wilton** on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

International Repair Day 17 October 2026

October is an important month in the Repair Café calendar with International Repair Day, which this year falls on Saturday 17th October, being an annual celebration for everyone who makes repair happen in their community around the world. With volunteer numbers at Repair Cafés globally now exceeding 60,000—repairing an estimated 72,000+ items every month across more than 4,000 repair cafés—this celebration will be particularly significant as it marks its 10th anniversary!

The day is dedicated to highlighting the importance of repair, reuse, and extending the life of the things we own. It shines a spotlight on repairers and everyday people who choose to fix rather than discard, reminding us that repair is not just practical, but a statement about sustainability, creativity, and the value of what we already own.

Being the third Saturday of the month, South Hereford Repair Café will meet on 17th October. You are very welcome to come along to that session (or any of our sessions) to have an item in need of repair assessed by our skilled volunteers. Or, if you prefer, simply drop in, enjoy a coffee and cake in our café, and watch repairs taking place. Of course, if you are interested in joining us as a repairer, a front-of-house volunteer, or in our café, we would be delighted to meet you as we aim to continue growing our team.

We hope to see you at Dinedor Village Hall on the 17th!

www.repaircafesouthhereford.org.uk

Do you have something of interest to the community which you would like to appear in the next edition of The Birches?

The deadline for the November edition is
Friday 16th Ocober 2026
You can contact the Editor at the following email address:
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

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