

The New Times

July 2020

The Parish Magazine of Llantilio Crossenny,
Llanvetherine, Llanvapley and Penrhos



***Find out the prize winners of Llanvapley's
ScareCovid19-Crow competition!***



and find out why Sam is smiling..

Photo by @chipnmoo

From the Vicarage

Easing from Covid-19 lockdown and church opening Many of you will have heard on the news that Welsh churches have been able to reopen from Monday 22 June, for private or personal prayer only.

Regrettably it isn't as simple as just unlocking the doors and leaving the buildings open. The conditions for reopening, even for private prayer, are stringent, and the plan and risk assessment for each church has to be approved by the archdeacon. Opening hours have to be decided, along with identifying volunteers to open/close, supervise, monitor distancing, and frequent cleaning, as well as setting out one way circulations, taping off areas, and providing hand sanitizers. The Church in Wales recognises that not all churches will be able to reopen, and there is no compulsion to do so. No communal worship of any kind is allowed.

We have been able to communicate by open emails between us and the churchwardens, and the consensus is that it will not be possible for any of our churches to meet the conditions required to open for the time being. We ask for your understanding and continue in hope and prayer that the requirements might become less onerous before too long. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts or concerns please do let your churchwardens know.

We will let people know how we're progressing via the four parishes website www.llantiliogroup.info. Further information is given as links below.

All blessings from Heidi and Andrew

<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/news-and-events/churches-can-re-open-private-prayer/>

https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/documents/861/Reopening_churches_-_guidance_v5_-_Final.pdf

https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/documents/848/Part_2_-_Risk_Assessment_180620.docx

Some Thoughts on Lockdown

So..... by kind permission of the Welsh government, we are now allowed back in church again - but mind! only one at a time, under supervision, and for private prayer: praying together is forbidden, I imagine even with the supervisor. I know it's all very sensible and cautious, but it's odd to have religion back under state control again. *[but please see From the Vicarage above: Ed.]*

I have so much missed going to church. I haven't been inside one since February 26th, Ash Wednesday. I have missed the clink of the heavy latch on the big oak door, opening onto a space that is always such a different temperature from the temperature outside; the peace and stillness of that space, which somehow absorbs the background of organ voluntary and whispered chat in the pews, and is still there, all the while, undisturbed ; the comfortable awareness that people one has known and loved, and people, long gone, whom one never knew, have come here in their time,

and are somehow still here in God's house, among the great clouds of witness to his never-failing concern for his creation.

God's house. It is indeed God's house, the place we go to, with the express purpose of finding him. But St Paul did have a point, of course. Preaching in Athens, he told his hearers

*God who made the world and all things therein,
dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . for in him
we live and move and have our being*

Now Paul's message is not, as at first sight it would seem to be, that God is absent from temples, but that he is everywhere, and that we can find him anywhere. The Psalmist sang

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills
From whence cometh my help.*

A nineteenth century hymnwriter wrote

*Nevermore thou needest seek me
I am with thee everywhere
Raise the stone and thou shalt find me
Cleave the wood and I am there*

A twentieth century versifier enthused

*One is nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth*

Fair enough, that last one; but, surely, not **nearer**, but just as **near**'.

Our God is everywhere. I haven't found that, during lockdown, God has gone into lockdown too, just because I couldn't get to a church. So, church is an optional extra, is it, for those who like that sort of thing? Well, I suppose so, for those who really mean it when they say they go out and commune with God in nature etc. etc. But, for me, contemplation of the much-loved outline of the Skirrid Mountain isn't enough; nor the procession of marvellous flowers and scents in our garden, this wonderful springtime, just ended. For me the Christian experience has to include people, and best of all, people, with music somewhere about. For I see Christian life as a great sharing, a sharing of the experience of God with one another. Our Christian experience is lived out in company with others. They aren't often Christian, sometimes not even God-fearing; but, whatever our faith, we're all in the same boat, tasked with making best use of the gifts that we've been given, at birth and since.

Contemplation of the world around us, as it is, can sometimes make us

wonder whether things will ever be the best in the best of all possible worlds; and one often needs reassurance that faith, and hope, and even love, are not just wishful thinking, and the Christian gospel anything more than Karl Marx's 'opium of the masses'. For me, being in church, in company with other like-minded seekers, and surrounded by the clouds of witness of those past generations, is where such doubts can, more often than not, be resolved. They don't always choose the hymns I like best; the cold can chill to the core, and banish almost any other thought; I can catch myself wool-gathering during the sermon, along with the best. But always there is the sense of having shared, of having been part of a community, of travelling hopefully, that makes it so very worthwhile, just being there.

I suppose almost everyone must be looking forward to the end of lockdown. It will be great to see family and friends again, face to face. The electronic world manages to keep us 'sheltered ones' in touch, but it's not the same. I hope you are looking forward as much as I am to the time when we shall all meet again as friends, in church.

Revd. Peter Cobb

Resources for our congregations

During the period when our churches are closed and services are cancelled you will be able to follow the events of the Christian calendar by using online resources which have been produced by the diocese and locally. The Bishop of Monmouth will be holding a Sunday Eucharist which will be live streamed. The service will be available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/o9DB74PPX9U>



Have you noticed that we have been having rather more visits to our gardens from rabbits during lockdown than we normally would expect?

As many of you know, **Revd. Andrew Dawson has been creating videos** during lockdown in which he gives a Sunday message. These videos have proved popular and an interesting way for congregations to stay in touch. Andrew has explored the idea of putting a whole service online and in June a service of Morning Prayer was created and put onto our website with a link to a YouTube video. Creating videos and putting them online is not a straightforward task and it often takes more than one take to get it right. Nevertheless, Andrew tried out a new idea and asked two people to video themselves reading a lesson from the Bible. The final video with the readings spliced in was very good indeed. However, sitting in front of a camera and speaking to a distant audience is not like reading in church. Here are the accounts from the first people who volunteered to do an online reading.



This is an account of how I made the little video of me reading the New Testament passage for Morning Prayer on June 21st. It's true that we have been seeing a lot of interviews through the lens of a screen since lockdown, and whilst reading a Bible passage shouldn't for me seem like a performance, I have noticed from watching other people how certain things can be so distracting - interesting backgrounds, very animated signers for the deaf, lockdown hair, pets, and what people are wearing!

So, I'm just sharing what I have learned over the years that has helped

me with speaking in public as a naturally shy person! And this has included through singing in choirs, and my Alexander Technique training and teaching that has involved working with performers. I chose my background: cream walls, few beams visible – no books etc, and wore plain clothing. I used the camera on my laptop to film, and through a bit of practising, realised that whilst I thought I was looking at



the potential viewer directly, that's not how it appeared; so I had to make myself look to the right of myself, and then I would be looking directly ahead to the viewer. That was a bit counter intuitive, but I got used to it. I did all the things that I'm sure people know about like reading slowly, so that I was understanding the meaning as I read, and I did practise a few times. There were some words I stumbled over so I had to take my time. Other things that are useful are to just to let your chin drop a little - many of us tend to tighten in our necks when we are about to speak, and that doesn't help the voice. I also try to be aware of the space around me, and what I can hear and see in my peripheral vision, as funnily enough this

gives the body, and therefore the lungs room to breathe, and speak easily. Afterwards, in the spirit of self-criticism, I thought I could have brightened my voice a little more, simply by thinking 'smile', and 'brighten the eyes' - it's all work in progress! Finally, there was the question of how to send such a large file. Here I turned to my 22 year old daughter! She recommended wetransfer.com – I went to the website, and without having to register, it was incredibly easy to select a file, and send it to an email address – in this case Andrew Dawson. The recipient then receives an email telling them they have a file to download. I wasn't sure initially how to do the tech stuff, but actually it was really easy, and I enjoyed it. So, if you're invited to do something like this, go for it!

Jenny Goodwin

As someone who is used to speaking in front of people (usually children sat at desks) I don't have a problem standing up and reading a lesson in church. I don't consider myself to be a polished public speaker but I am getting better! When asked to record myself reading a passage from Genesis I decided to carefully prepare myself by reading the passage a couple of times in order to make sure I understood the meaning of the passage. I tried reading it out loud then when I was ready I sat in front of the camera. Whenever I see myself on screen I am always reminded of the line from Robbie Burns - "*O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!*". Over the years I have tried not to not feel self conscious on these occasions and I think it is best to simply try to 'get on with it'!

I decided to use my iphone and chose to do the recording in what we call the 'play room'. I quietly hoped that people would be impressed by the piano in the background – no I don't play it! I have two computers, one doesn't have a camera and the other is too slow, so it had to be the iphone. I decided to put the words on screen which was to the left of the iphone. This was a mistake. I should have printed out the words because I wasn't looking at the camera. I could have read the lesson from my Bible but it wasn't the same version. Other mistakes – I wasn't sitting up straight. Reading from a screen sounds easy but for someone who has varifocal lenses it is only easy if you put your head in a certain position – the wrong position for the viewer! Other mistakes – a towel was visible on the back of the chair – my lockdown haircut was perhaps distracting and the light from the screen was reflected in the lenses of my glasses. If I was still a teacher I would only award myself 5/10 for my effort, could do better. Nevertheless, I would encourage other people to volunteer. Transferring the file to Andrew was not straightforward but I have now learned about wetransfer.com – thanks to Jenny's advice! Les Taylor



Photography competition

During May / June Andrew Dawson organised a four parishes photography competition. The theme for the competition was 'New Life'.

All the entries can be seen by following this link

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/w8vdKSDya7AUK6LD8>

The winner of the competition was Mat Burhouse who is pictured with his prize, a £25 John Lewis voucher. Well done Mat! Mat's winning picture of nuthatches featured on the front cover of last month's TNT. In case you didn't see the picture it is reproduced below along with the two runners up.



Thanks go to Clarissa Fonseca for judging the competition. The photos were submitted to the judge without her knowing who had taken them. The standard of entries was so high that it made her job very difficult. Thanks to everyone who took part in the competition and to Andrew for organising it and providing the prize. A full list of entries, including those which were 'Highly Commended' is shown on the next page.

Photo competition results (HC = Highly commended, R = Runner up). Photographs anonymised for judging

	File	Image	Author	Judge's comments
	DSC_0804.jpeg	Pear blossoms	J Mackenzie	
	DSC_0808.jpeg	St Teilo's	J Mackenzie	
HC	DSC_0849.jpeg	Cherry blossoms	J Mackenzie	Good colour and composition. A real feel of spring.
	DSC_0910.jpeg	Calves at Park Farm	J Mackenzie	
	IMG_4607.png	Wood anemone	C Everitt	
	IMG_20200325_170605.jpg	Primroses	H Prince	
	P_20200422-151330	Cowslips	E Latham	
HC	P-20200422_152350	Landscape vista	E Latham	Landscape : a good feel of distance. Used the rule of thirds to make a good composition.
R	Lamb.jpg	Black ewe and lamb	V Howe	Another one to capture 'new life'. Lovely composition. Would have won if the background wasn't blown out.
HC	P4167081 (2).jpg	Bee on purple flower	V Howe	Great composition and contrast. Another tricky one to capture.
HC	Beetle (2).jpg	Beetle on nettle	V Howe	Great captured composition. Would have been higher placed if the whole plant had been in focus to create more of a contrast with the background.
HC	Dandelioin.jpg	Dandelion head and red sky	V Howe	Lovely wacky photo! Loved the idea. Endless possibilities for other photos using this idea.
	DSCN8977 (2) - copy.jpg	Celandine	I Howe	
HC	Foxglove.jpg	Foxglove	I Howe	Great depth of field. Lovely colour. Mesmerising to look at.
HC	Squirrerl.jpg	Squirrel	I Howe	Crisp and distinct. Captured typical squirrel's frozen pose.
	Daisy.jpg	Daisy	I Howe	
	Apple Orchard.jpg	Orchard	A Howe	
	Dandelions.jpg	Dandelions	A Howe	
R	Bee.jpg	Bee on dandelion	A Howe	Good depth and action. Really like the crispness and the detail of the dandelion seed heads. That bee has really got stuck in!
	Dandelion clock.jpg	Dandelion clock	A Howe	
Prize winner	DSC_8382.jpeg	Baby nuthatch	M Burhouse	Fits the criteria to a tee. Lovely subject matter. Captured the moment. A tricky photo to take.
	IMG_5280.jpg	Cornflowers and thrift	A Anthony	
	IMG_20200414_185544 edit.jpg	Ewe and lamb in the sun	G Anthony	

Llantilio Crossenny News

Llantilio Bell Ringers Residents of Llantilio will have noticed how much quieter it has been during lockdown. Part of this is due to the lack of traffic and aircraft noise but it is also because the Llantilio Bell Ringers have been unable to meet up for their twice monthly practice session or play before services. The ringers are, of course, all getting a bit rusty and are eagerly awaiting news about when they start 'clanging' again. Advice about the resumption of ringing has been given to bell ringers in England but this highlights how difficult it will be to ensure ringing is a safe activity. The advice urges ringers to 'Make sure bells can be rung which are 2 metres apart' and 'If you want to ring all your bells, you will either need Perspex screens between bells or additional PPE'. It looks like Llantilio residents will have to wait a bit longer before once again hearing the joyous sound of the church bells!

Llantilio Church As we look forward to the easing of restrictions from the lockdown that Covid-19 has caused we can now start to tentatively look forward to getting back to a more normal way of life. One of the things that has been so much in evidence during the lockdown has been the way that folks have looked out for each other. Our young people in particular, in each of our four parishes, have been much in evidence helping out those who have been unable to leave their homes through shielding, with shopping, collecting prescriptions and delivering them with a ready smile and kind words to brighten us up. Of course living in our beautiful countryside in Llantilio Crossenny we have been truly blessed, we are able to go outside and enjoy all that nature has to offer, the birdsong is amazing as it's been so peaceful without traffic and aeroplanes. However, we now start to look forward to some normality and of course one of the things I personally look forward to is the reopening of the Church, our last service there was at the beginning of March. We are most grateful to Revd. Andrew Dawson, Revd. Heidi Prince, Revd. Peter Cobb and Revd. Lorraine Cavanagh for providing online resources and I'm sure they have been enjoyed by many and kept our spirits up during this difficult time. I know I am not alone when I say we now look forward to being with our fellow parishioners inside our lovely Churches once more, social distancing of course.

With thoughts of possible reopening, the Church is badly in need of a spring clean and if anyone could spare just an hour of their time it will be greatly appreciated. Please ring me on 01600 780225 for details of proposed cleaning times. Thank you

Elsie Latham



Llanvapley News

In June, Llanvapley residents and many passers by have been entertained by the appearance of scarecrows throughout the village. The scarecrows were all part of a competition which aimed to celebrate and thank the NHS and other key workers. The competition was entitled 'ScareCovid19-Crow' and thanks go to the many scarecrows who seem to have kept the virus at bay in this area! However, there was some uncertainty about which of the scarecrows was likely to be most effective in the fight against COVID-19. Therefore



Llanvapley residents called on the help of NHS staff at Nevill Hall hospital for an expert opinion. Pictured (L to R) are Bethan Freeman, Tanya Williams, Angela Bentley and Mary Smythe. They applied their expert training and years of experience to pick the winning ScareCovid19-Crow, Dr Lorenzo! (pictured) Every entry receiving a medal, (hung around their ScareCovid19-Crow's neck) and all children received bags of Percy Pigs. Dr Lorenzo's talented local designers, Lizzie and Neal from Lingen Cottage, used their



ScareCovid19-Crow winnings to buy 2 bird boxes. The organiser of the competition (Sarah Woodall) commented 'Nothing could have been more pleasing. The competition caused great hilarity in our lovely village in this troubling time of Covid-19. It also addressed feelings of isolation for many and the fact Neal and Lizzie dedicated their prize to bringing new bird life and hope to the village is just wonderful. Much fun was had by all.' Second prize was given to Nicola and Peter from Brookside Cottage and third prize (and the Percy Pigs!) went to Lyris, Seren and Iola from Trothy View.

The **Llanvapley Sports and Social Association** is responsible for the management of the sports pavilion / village hall. The LSSA has seen its income drop during lockdown but still has to pay its bills which includes rates (council tax) to Monmouthshire County Council. The Welsh Government has recently extended its Covid-19 Business Support

Scheme to charities. The LSSA is a registered charity and as such is eligible to apply for a grant under this scheme. A grant application has been made. The deadline for applications is 30th June and the LSSA hopes to hear early in July if its application has been successful.

Excitement levels in Llanvapley were rising throughout May and early June in anticipation of the arrival of some new residents to the village. Here is a report which will explain what all the fuss was about!

Luna had her pups through the night and early morning into 3rd June. They are growing at an incredible rate, even though Luna has now clearly had enough of them and has to be bribed and cajoled into feeding them. My laundry load has not ever been so huge, not even when my two older girls were both in cloth nappies 24/7, but I don't want to fill the land with even more rubbish so we sourced compostable puppy pads for them to use as a toilet area and am washing the bedding and wiping up accidents on the floor! The pups all have homes booked and have all been given names; Nimbus, Darcey Doodle, Nyx, Kenobi, Aelwith, Pip and Buddy. They are destined to live both near and far, from Llanvapley and Skenfrith to the Scottish Highlands and Crete!



Bethan Foster

Every five years, each of our churches is inspected by an architect appointed by the diocese of Monmouth. On 2nd June, **St Mabli's Church** was inspected by local architect, Stefan Horowskyj, and he has now completed his report which is called a quinquennial report. The quinquennial report is like an MOT test for the building and the churchyard. The building is of course in good condition but Stefan has identified a number of 'advisories' which need to be considered over the next year to five years. Llanvapley Church Parochial Church Council (PCC) hope to meet and discuss the report soon.

CHURCH IN WALES
QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION

ST. MABLI'S CHURCH
LLANVAPLEY

INSPECTED BY:
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Care Trust
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Monmouthshire
NP23 5JZ
Tel No: (01753) 832601
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JUNE 2020

Happy Birthday to **Llanvapley Solar Farm** which celebrated its fourth birthday on 23rd June. The farm generates £192 a day in community benefits!

St Mabli's Church, Llanvapley Lockdown 2020 Garden Competition – the results are in!

For a small village, there are a lot of lovely gardens in Llanvapley, but obviously quite a few “shy gardeners” judging by the relatively small number of entries received in St Mabli's garden competition! Nonetheless the judges were hard pushed to decide on a winner so have awarded joint first prize to Brenda Speake of Firs Road and Ann Jones of St Mabley's Close. Each will receive a bottle of champagne presented with compliments and congratulations from St Mabli's PCC.



As shown in the pictures, the judges commented that Ann's front garden is quite immaculate, with a lawn so good you could play croquet on it, while Brenda's garden has a very nice pond and many hidden features.



The Red Hart's hanging baskets, although neither a garden nor entered in the competition, were noticed and “highly commended” by the judges as a delightful addition to the village.

Tom Lowes



Llanvetherine News

The sky is the limit at White Castle Vineyard.

News has it that we may shortly be welcoming visitors to the vineyard as from 6th July. Preparations have been underway for sometime with COVID-19 advice and guidelines at the forefront and we are ready to open the vineyard gate once again. Covid-19 had changed our business model and online sales have been saviour. However, visitors to the vineyard and cellar door is what we enjoy most.

In last month's edition of TNT we reported the effects of the late frost on May 12th. We are now pleased to say the vines have made a fair

recovery. Second bud burst has certainly been favourable we have lush green vine leaf everywhere, flowering is well underway and fingers crossed the weather ahead of us will be kind for fruit set, we are well on our way.

The sky is the limit to some of our varieties with long shoots following the sun rays, the time will come for nipping the growing shoot out, or we could soon be seen to be growing beanstalks. Once the growing shoot is taken out the vine will flourish and all energy will be taken into the leaves and fruit.

We have a date for your diary Welsh Wine Week July 27th - 2nd August.

Every year Welsh and English vineyards use this week as a platform to promote their wines, generally it's the same week at the end of May. However, this year due to Covid-19, Welsh vineyards have decided to move towards the end of July hoping that surely by then we would be able to welcome you all to our vineyards and share these celebrations. There will be virtual tastings, Instagram Lives and various other things going on. Plans are still in the pipeline, it would be good to keep an eye on our social media presence. You can find us on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter @welshwines or search For White Castle Vineyard. We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Robb & Nicola, Whitecastle Vineyard



Despite the lockdown, farmers still have to plant crops and look after animals. **Sam Beavan from Llanvetherine** has been particularly busy and is featured on the front cover of this month's TNT.

Sam returned from shearing in the South of England at the beginning of June and is now contract shearing in the Scottish Highlands until August. It is a 10 hour drive from here! We are very jealous and proud that he is taking every opportunity offered to improve his skills and follow his dream

to be a professional shearer. In the current climate there are obvious issues with shearers travelling here from overseas and this is creating opportunities for shearers that may not have previously been available, it is a stunning part of the world.

One advantage of having a family of contract shearers is that we don't have to pay. At the time of writing it has been reported that the prices being paid for wool this year is down 50% because of low demand for the material due to Covid-19. British Wool have confirmed a sharp drop in the value of last year's clip and have withdrawn this year's advance payment. For farmers this makes wool worthless after the cost of shearing & delivery to the wool depot and we are considering storing ours. Sheep make wool come what may, so if wool demand drops, prices suffer quickly if fleeces go unsold. Sheep have to be shorn to prevent fly strike (maggots) which kills them.

The crazy fact is that the Lord Speaker in the House of Lords sits on the Woolsack, introduced in the 14th century to reflect the economic importance of the wool trade in the UK. There was a time that it was an integral part of the history of Britain and much of the wealth of Britain was founded on wool. At one point, wool became the principal output of UK sheep flocks but its importance began to dwindle at around the time of the industrial revolution. UK sheep are now largely reared for meat and wool is considered a by-product.

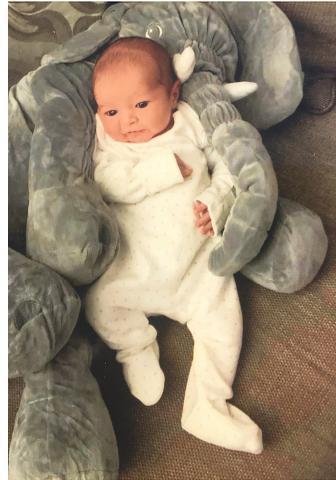
With so many properties - warm in winter and cool in the summer, hypoallergenic, naturally flame resistant, a natural, renewable resource that is 100% biodegradable – what is not to love! Surely there is a place for wool in our environmentally aware population.

I do wonder that we've grown up with it for so long that maybe people have forgotten about it and not realised that wool is something quite special. This needs to change.

Kate Beavan



Well done to the staff of Lanes Garage in Llanvetherine who turned out to show their appreciation of NHS workers at Nevill Hall hospital in June.



Congratulation to Aimee Jones and partner, Chris Phelps, on the christening of their son Oliver Roy Phelps. Also congratulations to Katie Phelps and partner, Anthony Morgan, on the safe arrival of their son Jay Morgan.

Rugby returns to Llanvetherine! As a result of the Covid-19 restrictions on live sport in particular our grandson, who celebrated his 7th birthday recently, has used his birthday presents of rugby posts and corner flags to change his grandparents' lawn into a rugby pitch. It is fondly referred to as the Principality Stadium, Llanvetherine which is causing some concern as he would also like a stand to accommodate all the (Welsh) supporters. Granny is happy with this as long as she can stay in the hospitality lounge.



David Hughes-Jones

Other News

Reply, Forward or Delete? Following advice in the last edition of TNT, I decided to ignore Revd. Heidi's email. Scam messages often come in sheep's clothing!

Rev Heidi Prince <pastor01607@gmail.com>
to me ▾

16:02 (10 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Blessed Day, Having a wonderful day ahead. I need a favour from you please get back to me on here, I'm busy for now so no calls so just respond to my email. Thanks

↶ Reply

➡ Forward

Community Green Energy Advisory Group Community Benefit Grant 2020

Funding is available for community benefit projects in the community council areas of Llanarth Fawr Community Council, Llantilio Crossenny Community Council and Grosmont Fawr Community Council
Applications are invited for this years grant allocation in the above areas
Full details of how to apply, eligibility, sums available etc. can be found on the website www.communitygreenenergy.co.uk

Application forms will available from 1st July 2020 and the deadline for submissions is 31th August 2020

Full details / forms can be obtained from the above website or by applying, in writing, to:-

The Administrator, Community Green Energy Advisory Group, C/O The Old Post Office, Llanarth, Nr Raglan, Usk, NP15 2AU



Thanks to Jane Melia of Llanvapley who has sent in pictures taken at Bryn Deri School. Contact TNT if you can see yourself in these pictures!



WI News

Although the WI is still unable to have monthly meetings, Marion Ashton continues to provide us with wonderful quizzes to keep our brains active. We thank her and Jan Currie for sending these out to members.

We also have the wonderful opportunity to take part in Denman WI college courses on line. Each week there are about six courses at the minimal cost of £5. These include craft, cooking, yoga and talks. This is an amazing chance for us to take part with experts. These courses would normally be very expensive but excellent, of course.

Members have been doing many varied things during the lockdown. Lin, with much help, has been continuing with story sacks for Blackmarsden Special School. Kath Powell has made some lovely sacks. The school is very pleased to receive these. Anyone who is bored can contact Lin to be involved!



Margaret Parry is working hard on her wonderful gold embroidery work for the church, even as her wrist continues to heal.

We still need ideas for our own WI banner. Come on you wonderful crafters! Let's have a design competition. Many of you did so well with our wonderful wall-hanging in St Telio's Church. We can do it again! Let us show the Gwent Federation how crafty we really are next year, when we celebrate our founder starting our Federation too. Maybe the banner could pay tribute to Lady Ada?

Well, we have had to say good-bye to Dame Vera Lynn. But her songs still ring true. Some say we sang 'We'll Meet Again' once too often! But how appropriate it is now. Even our patriot Her Majesty referred to it in her speech of encouragement, during the present crisis. That spirit was certainly something for us to emulate at the moment.

I hope most of our members have been able to complete the Covid 19 mental health survey. It is so important for the NHS to assess what is needed now during this lockdown and the after effects too. This initiative was led by Dr. Chris O'Connor, Janet's son and Divisional Director for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities. He is a dedicated, hard working person and has greatly appreciated all responses. These will be collated and hopefully provide help to deliver the services needed.

Hopefully, all our members are able to support each other. If you are missing support you can contact Lin. But please stay positive and aim for the light at the end of the tunnel. Remember there is always sunshine after the rain!

The Garden in July

I cannot believe we are nearly into July. This is the time of year when everything bursts into flower and if it is too hot, it seems to go in a flash.

Like many of you I have varieties of Philadelphus, Weigela, Physocarpus, Syringa, Deutzia, and Spirea that are already over. You may leave them alone, but all of them benefit from a good pruning after they have flowered to keep them vigorous and flowering well.

Get yourself a really sharp pair of secateurs and pruning loppers and possibly a pruning saw. Then get on your knees and count how many stems are coming up from the base of the shrub. Now get your pruning kit and cut or saw out a third of the oldest stems. These will be the thickest of the lot and may well have lots of branches so take care pulling them out, possibly cutting crossing branches and pulling it out bit by bit. By doing this, you will be giving the plant air and room to breathe and you will be surprised how much better it will flower the following year. If you really want to be kind you can give each shrub a bit of compost with a handful of bonemeal and rake it in. If you have a shrub that is over ten years old that has never been pruned, you will be amazed how it will suddenly come back to life with reinforced vigour. The pictures on the right show the result of pruning our Philadelphus – before and after.

While you have got your secateurs out, cut back those flowering geraniums and aquilegias that are over for a fresh flush of growth, also keep dead heading penstemons, roses, erysimums and even the finished flowering stems of euphorbia myrsinites, but be careful of that poisonous milky fluid. If you leave them, you will find babies everywhere.

On the vegetable and soft fruit front, keep picking peas, broad beans and spinach. I have even got some courgettes that are ready to eat. Don't let them get bigger than 5 inches, otherwise they will start to taste of water and also stop producing fruit. We have had a bumper crop of loganberries this year and they make the most delicious jam and also freeze well.

So, no time for sitting back with a glass of wine in the evening, get out there and keep busy.



Services in July

All of our services have been cancelled and all of our churches are closed

You can keep in touch with what is happening in our church communities
via our website www.llantiliogroup.info

Our website has the latest news, links to online resources for worship
as well as information about all our churches.

We are also on Twitter [@LLantilioG](https://twitter.com/LLantilioG)

*Contributions for the August issue of TNT by 20th July 2020
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