

The New Times

April 2023

The parish magazine of the Llantilio Crossenny,
Llanvetherine, Llanvapley and Penrhos Group
within the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area



This Easter you can go to St Cadoc's Church in Penrhos for the Easter Morning service



**and then in the afternoon go next door to the open garden.
*Services in all other parishes are also available!***

From the Vicarage

Well, here we are, almost at the beginning of Holy Week, the most significant and momentous week in the Christian year.

The week starts off with a special service on Palm Sunday at 11 am in Llantilio Crossenny, when Archdeacon Ian Rees will be joining us for worship.

He will be accompanying us throughout Holy Week as we

recall the events of that first Holy Week and remember the trial, crucifixion, and death of Jesus.

There will be a service on every evening of Holy Week, where we will be able to listen to the reflections of Archdeacon Ian in the various churches in our new ministry area. Everyone is most welcome to come along.

We will re-enact the foot-washing on Maundy Thursday in a service at Llandewi Rhydderch church as we think of The Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples.

And on Good Friday at 9am we have our traditional pilgrimage up the Holy Mountain (Skirrid Fawr), where we stop and reflect on Jesus' walk to the cross.

In the evening of Good Friday we have a performance of Stainer's "Crucifixion", which tells so powerfully through music and song, the story of God's eternal love.

Then on Easter Morning – we will be able to join with people all over the world celebrating the glorious news of Christ's Resurrection.

We may be worshipping in small, remote country churches, but there is something wonderful knowing that we do so in communion with Christians all over the world.

If you are unable to come to church and would like to receive the sacrament at home, please do let me know.

Where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He shall be there.

Wishing you all the joys and blessings of Easter.



Heidi

A couple of thoughts on humility:

'As Christians, many of us have been conditioned to believe that we should not think well of ourselves, that being pleased with what we do, or who we are as persons, is a sign of unwarranted vanity. As a result of this, we are conditioned to a very warped understanding of humility, an understanding which involves living under a cloud of negativity so that we only see the things we hate about ourselves. These, if not checked by the love of God, have a way of increasing exponentially over the years.

Even so, Christians have, traditionally speaking, been right about humility. The word humility is rooted in the latin word 'humus', meaning earth or soil. The earth is the medium of growth and gestation. It is also the medium employed by Jesus for healing. He rubs earth and spittle onto the eyes of a blind man. He is strangely angry with a tree that refuses to grow or bear fruit in the earth that it has been planted in, perhaps comparing it to our own false ideas about humility, ideas that suppress creativity and diminish a person falsely in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, so preventing growth which is the full realisation of our God given potential.

Real humility is the hardest of the virtues because it requires that we look at ourselves through God's eyes, that we see ourselves exactly as God sees us.'

Lorraine Cavanagh

Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who, very quietly, and without any fuss, look after our churches. Carpets are vacuumed, candlesticks polished, pews are dusted, altar linen is washed and ironed, flowers are arranged, music is prepared, readings studied, masonry mended, paths swept - to name but a few things that happen behind the scenes.

Our churches are beautifully and lovingly maintained, and I know how much this is appreciated not only by our congregations on a Sunday morning, but also by those people passing through, and wanting a quiet place to pause and reflect, and offer a prayer in the House of God.

So, **thank you** so much to those who care so generously and lovingly for our churches; thank you for your time, your skill, and your generosity.

Heidi

**North Monmouthshire Ministry Area
Holy Week Services led by Archdeacon Ian**

**Where Holy Week worship is being held locally please
support those services.**

Sunday 2nd April – Palm Sunday

11.00am – St. Teilo, Llantilio Crossenny

Holy Eucharist with Palm Ceremonies

Monday 3rd April – Monday in Holy Week

7.00pm – St. Bridget, Llansantfraed

Holy Eucharist

Tuesday 4th April – Tuesday in Holy Week

7.00pm – St. Bridget, Skenfrith

Holy Eucharist

Wednesday 5th April – Wednesday in Holy Week

7.00pm – St. Mabli, Llanvapley

Holy Eucharist

Thursday 6th April – Maundy Thursday

7.00pm – St. David, Llanddewi Rhydderch

Holy Eucharist with foot washing, stripping of the altar and watch

Friday 7th April – Good Friday

9.00am – Skirrid Holy Mountain

Stations of the Cross

2.00pm – St. Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey

Good Friday Liturgy

7pm Llantilio Crossenny Performance of Stainer's "Crucifixion."

Saturday 8th April – Easter Eve

7.00pm – St. Michael, Llanfihangel Crucorney

Easter Vigil

Music In Monmouthshire

North Monmouthshire Ministry Area Music

On Saturday 18th March there was an illustrated talk in St Michael's Church, Llanvihangel Crucorney given by Philip Norman on behalf of North Monmouthshire Ministry Area Music. The talk was well attended and greatly enjoyed by the audience who came to find out more about JS Bach and the St Matthew Passion. Here is a report from the concert.

JS Bach: Saint or Sinner?????

I was put on the spot. Whilst I balanced a cup of tea in one hand, a crumbly biscuit in the other, and was eyeing up the cakes that

certainly weren't Lenten in their make-up, I was asked to sum up the music of JS Bach in one sentence. A brief pause, then: "Bach did nothing original, he just used other people's ideas." (Sinner!) I was asked to justify this comment for this magazine.

For those of you who haven't kept abreast of music history since leaving school, or ever, Johann Sebastian Bach, a German composer working within the Lutheran church during the late 17th and early 18th centuries, is considered to be one of the greatest composers of church and non-church music Europe has produced. (Saint!).

Well, some great minds are truly innovative and they come up with concepts and ideas that are initially hard to accept and seem to run contrary to all previous experiences. Newton, for instance, dreamed up differential calculus and revolutionised mathematics. (It was tough on him that Leibnitz was doing exactly the same thing in Germany at the same time.) Einstein, with Relativity, pulled down heaps of scorn on his own head before he was acknowledged to be correct. (Saints!!)

Bach, however, just used the musical concepts and expectations of this time, copied (generically) what others had done, and complained lengthily about his working conditions (Sinner!!)

It's fair to say there's not a work, movement, or section in Bach's music that can't be traced back (conceptually) to what had already been done. His setting of the Passion according to St Matthew is a mish-mash of techniques and styles fetched from across Europe. Snippets of Italian opera, French court music, and German hymns pop up all over the place. (Sinner!!!)

However, the way that he does this has proved to be so unique and imaginative that, three hundred years after he wrote the above named work, performances will be taking places on all continents in the week before Easter, by thousands of choirs. (Saint!!!)

To conclude, some people are prophets of a new age (Newton, Leibnitz, Einstein) and others take what already lies before them and weaves it into something unique. Probably also saints, but with a different approach.

There you are, less than 400 words - and Bach has been trashed, maligned and rehabilitated.

If this is all too simplistic, blame your editor for distracting me from my refreshments.

P Norman

In the Spotlight

In this month's edition of The New Times the spotlight has fallen on a leader of the ministry area. But how well do we really know **Julian Gray** who many of you will have met either in our churches or in Llantilio Pertholey Church where he is the vicar? TNT tried to find out more by putting him 'In the Spotlight'.



What is your role as the leader of the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area? My role as Rector of the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area is to provide oversight for the clergy and congregations of our seventeen churches and five Pastoral Districts. It's early days and there is much to do but in the years that lie ahead. My aim is to work alongside our clergy and the people of our congregations to help build a strong community of faith, fellowship and mutual support across our churches and communities in north eastern Monmouthshire.

What is on your to do list for today? First, there are several emails and a couple of letters that need a response. Then I have three home Communion visits and, finally, this article to finish!

What is your earliest memory? My earliest memory is of being bathed by my Mum in the kitchen sink whilst she chatted to our next-door neighbour, through the open kitchen window! We're talking mid-1960s here, so I would have been about two or two and a half years old. Apparently, it was once widespread practice for small South Walian children to be bathed in kitchen sinks – a kind of local tradition!

What was your first school and where were you brought up? My first school was Griffithstown Infants, and my first teacher was the lovely Mrs. Stone. However, she was more like a much-loved favourite aunt than a teacher! She drove a grey and cream Austin Cambridge, which impressed me greatly! One of my primary school teachers, a lady now in her late nineties, lives in Abergavenny and I take home Communion to her every month. I was brought up in the village of Griffithstown which, for the first ten years of my life, was in the ancient county of Monmouthshire and, if I ruled the world, it would become part of Monmouthshire again!

When were you ordained? I was ordained deacon at St. Woolos Cathedral on 2nd July 1988 by Bishop Clifford Wright. The following year I was ordained priest. The Revd Heidi Prince and I lived next door to each other when we both served as Chaplains at St Woolos. It is so good to have Heidi as a neighbour again!

What can you see outside your kitchen window? I can see the summit of Ysgyryd Fach - the Little Skirrid. I can also see some beautiful Scots Pines, which gives the cul-de-sac where I live its name 'The Pines.' These formed part of the once extensive gardens of Mardy Park.

Do you enjoy gardening? Yes - but only when my wife tells me that I should!!!

What is your favourite food and why? I'm a vegetarian and my favourite food is Burger King's Plant-Based Whopper. I particularly like the way the Ross-on-Wye Burger King team make them - they don't taste quite the same anywhere else!

What is your biggest fear? Failing to turn up to officiate at a baptism, a wedding or a funeral. It's never happened, but there have been a few occasions during the past thirty-five years when I've come pretty close to doing so!

Do you play any musical instruments? Unfortunately, no. I did have violin lessons as a child, but that didn't last long. I would like to be able to play piano and the organ as a way of unwinding and to accompany the hymns at church services when there isn't an organist. I greatly enjoy singing and, I suppose, the human voice is an instrument.

Do you have any pets? Until two days ago I had the most beautiful black Labrador called Crispin. He was incredibly handsome with a lovely, gentle nature. My wife and I have never been without a dog, and we will definitely get another. For the moment, however, we are mourning the absence of our faithful friend and sharing the many treasured memories that we have of him.



Have you ever met anyone famous? I once sat opposite Terry Jones, one of the Monty Python comedy team, on a train journey from Newport to Pontypool. He chatted away to me as if I were an old friend and he was very funny! I knew who he was but, as an extremely shy eighteen-year-old, I didn't have the courage to say so! If mobile phones had existed back then, and had I not been such a painfully shy young man, I may well have had a selfie with Terry Jones to share with you in this article!

If you were offered a drink in a pub what would you choose? I'm quite partial to Orval, a Belgian Trappist beer, so would ask for a glass of that! If the kind soul offering the drink was feeling particularly generous, I would ask for a glass of Laphroaig ten-year-old single malt!

What is your favourite place to eat? Burger King, Ross-on-Wye!

What is your favourite place to go on holiday? Luskentyre in the Outer Hebrides. It's a place of indescribable beauty – white sand, turquoise sea and the wild mountains of the Isle of Harris as a backdrop. The last time I visited Luskentyre with my family we managed to get a boat out to the remote archipelago of St. Kilda.

Are you a fan of any sport? Do you have a favourite sporting moment? If I were being tortured and had to confess to having a favourite sport, I would probably say rugby. I should qualify that by saying that the closest I've ever come to being involved in that particular sport in any meaningful way was when my cousin, Alun Carter, played rugby for Wales and Pontypool in the 1990s. My favourite sporting moment was watching Alun run onto the pitch at Cardiff Arms Park when Wales played (and were defeated by) England in 1991. It was a massive family occasion with lots of beer and junk food on hand.

Do you have any DIY skills? Umm, err, no, not really, other than changing the occasional light bulb or, perhaps, a fuse in a plug. I once attempted to fit a new plastic seat to a friend's loo, but almost ended up smashing the pedestal to smithereens with a hammer!

Do you have a favourite piece of music, and/or a favourite hymn? My favourite piece of music is the *Adagio* from Rachmaninoff's Second Symphony in E Minor. I'm a huge fan of the

70s / 80s rock group ELO with their catchy tunes and great lyrics. My favourite hymn is *Christ Triumphant, ever reigning* written by Michael Saward.

Do you have any amusing stories from times when you were taking a church service? Midnight Mass at St. Woolos Cathedral when a very inebriated gentleman came up for Communion and consumed the entire contents of the chalice that I offered him. On another occasion the Vicar of Hay-on-Wye, Fr. Richard Williams, invited me to preach in his church one Sunday morning and insisted that I should bring my dog, Crispin, with me. There were several other dogs in the congregation that morning and, on hearing my voice from the pulpit, Crispin began to bark – setting off the other dogs that were present. It was all very chaotic!! I should have taken some meaty treats with me to throw at them from the pulpit!

What is the secret of a good sermon? Don't preach with your dog present in the congregation! Keep it brief, keep on message, don't patronise the people in front of you and preach to yourself as much as to anyone else. Some humour always helps.

If you were Archbishop or Bishop what changes, if any, would you make? I would stop making changes! I would say 'This is the plan for the next ten years. Let's stick with this plan - tweak it if necessary – but stick with the plan and make it work. I would encourage clergy to visit, to be seen in and be part of the community outside the church building. I would point to my friend and colleague, The Revd. Heidi Prince and say, that's how it should be done! Follow her example, learn from her, and you won't go far wrong!

If you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be? I would tell my younger myself that the priesthood isn't going to be easy. However, it's not the path that you have chosen but, rather, the path that God has chosen for you. He will, therefore, always be with you, even in the most trying and difficult circumstances. I would tell myself to take the priesthood seriously but myself much less so.

Will you be climbing the Skirrid on Good Friday?

Yes but, sadly, without my lovely dog Crispin.

Llantilio Crossenny News

The Plant Sale

Spring is here and the garden is bursting with new growth. Bulbs, buds and beautiful blossom bringing colour back to cheer us up after a long winter. Is it time for a garden spring clean and are there some plants to be divided? If so, can you spare a few pots for the **Annual Llantilio Crossenny Plant Sale**.

It will be held on Monday, May 1st in the car park at Llantilio Crossenny church and will be opened by Rev Heidi at 2.00pm. There will be refreshments of course, a super cake stall, raffle and a great deal of happy chatter. This is always a good get together and if you can help in any way, just let us know. Cakes and plants are really welcome and if necessary, Margaret can collect items the day before.

So a date for your diary, Bank Holiday Monday May 1st. at 2.00pm. Look forward to seeing you all.

Margaret 01873 855207, Elsie 01600 780225



The Plant sale in 2016

Llantilio Crossenny Music Festival invites you to a Musical Afternoon Tea at Treadam Barn on Sunday 23rd April at 4pm where the harpist in residence will entertain along with other musicians whilst the audience enjoy cream teas with scones, sandwiches, cakes and patisseries.

This sponsored event is free of charge, but advanced booking of seats/a table is required on: 07779225921

(for directions please visit Treadam Barn's facebook page)

**2023 Llantilio Crossenny Music Festival takes place
from 23-26 June**

Llantilio Bell Ringers

Llantilio Bell Ringers would like to express their sadness at the news that Jon Hazlewood has recently passed away. Jon was a well respected and well liked member of the bell ringing team. He played a great part in the development of the team and will be greatly missed. One of Jon's many talents was his ability to charm people with his recitations which he would do at the drop of a hat. He would surely have appreciated the following poem.

ASTONISHING JON

Composed on Musselwick Sands, Sunday 26th March 2023

Astonishing Jon is how I will remember him;
How, surely, we will all recall him
Because astonish us he truly did...

First, by taking to sea swimming –
Seriously, not just in for a gasping half-wade and out again
But five, ten, fifteen minutes, maybe more.
And, after starting over summer,
All through autumn, on past the shortest day,
Never stopping over the tough months:
He forged an all-the-year enthusiasm.
So often I met him on the Musselwick path
Wearing that cape and carrying his other kit, to hear
'I think I love this beach the best of all, anywhere ever!'

The second way he astonished us
Was when he came to an evening music session in the chapel
Having told me that afternoon,
'I could do a recitation, I suppose, if people didn't mind.'
We having no idea what to expect,
He knocked us flat that night
With Shakespeare's Richard the Third, then onto Dylan Thomas.
And so, when we were planning that Ukraine concert –
Yes, he would take part, though never on the stage before...
And, come the performance, you'd never have known
For so confidently did he uncork for us
Those vintage scenes from Under Milk Wood.

But now, Jon, you have astonished us again
By suddenly, and so wrongly, leaving this world's stage –
After, we have no doubt, fighting so hard

Against that cruel command to exit.
So wherever you are now, dear and much-missed friend,
May you have your surf-romped beach
There waiting whenever you wish to swim;
And, each time you tread those boards up there,
An audience as attentive and appreciative
As we always, always were.

CJ

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree

Last year Mrs. Lauren Hughes suggested that we join in the national event of planting a tree to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We all thought this was a lovely idea, and it was decided to purchase a Rowan tree which would be planted later in the year. Events overtook us, of course, and the Platinum Jubilee Tree has now also become a memorial tree to her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

On a beautiful spring morning we dedicated the tree, donated by Lauren and Chris, and with them was their beautiful young baby Ella-Rose. It was her first time in church, and we were all delighted to see her.

Although dedicated to the late Queen, I think it's also really lovely that the tree will have a special connection with Ella-Rose, as she was born in the year the tree was planted. May they both blossom and flourish in the years ahead.



Llanvapley News

Church events for 2023 – dates for your diary

Churchyard Spring Clean - Saturday 13th May at 10am

Church fundraising evening – Friday 9th June at 6pm in the church.

Strawberry Tea - Sunday 2nd July at 3pm.

Running news

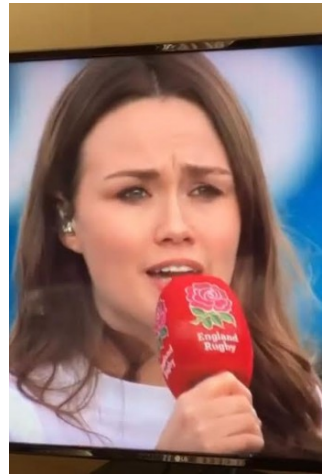
Congratulations to Phil Allsopp who ran in the Newport half-marathon on Sunday 5th March and managed a time of 1 hour 47 minutes. Phil is a regular runner around the lanes and always welcomes a thumbs up and a wide berth from friendly motorists!

Firs Road was particularly busy on Wednesday 15th March at 7pm. Geoff Burrows from Llanddewi Rhydderch had organised an early morning surprise for his regular running partner, Les Taylor, to celebrate his 70th birthday. Les was delighted to see Martin Brown and Rhys Pritchard from Llantilio turn up and Gary White from Coed Morgan. Les was pleased to achieve the best time in the veterans over 70 category despite finishing last! Phil Allsopp was unable to come as he was recovering from a cold and the Newport Half Marathon.



Pitch Perfect

Anyone who watched the European Championship football qualifier match in Napoli between Italy and England will realise how difficult and nerve wracking it is to sing 'God Save the King' before the kick-off of an important match in front of a packed crowd. Alicia Lowes from Llanvapley was asked to sing the national anthem at the women's rugby match between England and Scotland at Newcastle on Saturday 25th March. Alicia did a brilliant job and was pitch perfect. Following her example, the England team were also pitch perfect and scored ten tries in an emphatic win. Final score England 58-7 Scotland.



LSSA News

Coronation Celebration

On Thursday 2nd March the LSSA held a village planning event for the King's Coronation on Saturday 6th May. It was decided to have an event at the pavilion from 2pm to 6pm. The event will be similar to the very successful Jubilee event last summer. There will be an inflatable obstacle course for the kids along with free ice cream. There will also be competitions for all and the unveiling of a new bench to commemorate the event. Everyone is welcome including friends from neighbouring parishes. It is hoped that everyone will support this event so the event will not only be a celebration of the coronation but of Llanvapley itself and its welcoming community.

LSSA Events in April

The LSSA is running free **Yoga sessions**. Contact the LSSA secretary for further details. llanvapleyvillagecommittee@gmail.com

Morning coffee Thursday 13th April at 10.30am.

Calling all cyclists, walkers, members of the village and dog walkers. Why not make Llanvapley your destination and come along and enjoy the coffee morning. Lots of pleasant conversation, cake, coffee and there is even a raffle. £3 per person.

Breakfast club Saturday 15th April 10am – 11am. Come along for tea, coffee, toast and a chat.

LSSA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 26th April 7pm

Visitors from neighbouring parishes are welcome.

Our Churches in Art

Llanvapley Church has often inspired artists. This time it is Denise Holborn from Hampshire. Denise has a special connection with Llanvapley as she was married in the church and her mother still lives in the village.



Llanvapley Walking Group

There was a great turnout for the exciting March 'away day' visit to the neighbouring village of Llantilio Crossenny, where we walked along part of Offa's Dyke, through the orchards and back along the path next to the River Trothy. One highlight was seeing the ancient oak and imagining all the history and changes it had lived through.



The April walk will be on Saturday 1st at 10.30 meeting at Llanvapley Pavilion where car parking is available. We will be having another trip, this time car-sharing up to White Castle car park for a walk taking in the amazing views and lovely scenery. So if you would rather meet us at the start point, we will aim to be there about 10.45.

Hope you can join us. All welcome - including well-behaved dogs, of course. To be on our mailing list, drop me a line at llanvapleywalkinggroup@gmail.com

Phil Allsopp



**Llanvapley celebrates the
Coronation of His Majesty The King
Saturday 6th May 2pm – 6pm
at the pavilion**



Lots of fun for all the family and your friends!

You are invited to bring along a picnic or you may like to join others in enjoying fish and chips!

A marquee will be available to provide cover.

The event will include the following :

Outdoor games, an inflatable assault course and free ice cream for the children

A coronation themed cake competition

A competition for the best decorated house with a prize.

A special coronation village bench will be unveiled.

Timetable of events

2pm Formal opening and welcome.

2.30 – 3.00 Judging of the cake competition.

3.00 – 3.30 Judging of the best decorated house competition.

4.00 Fish and chips arrive.

5.00 Unveiling of the bench.

Important

If you want to treat yourself to Mardy Traditional Fish and Chips you will need to send in your order to Neal Smith **07792 489494** by the 1st May
Large portion for £10.50, a regular portion for £9.00 and a Child/Senior portion for £5.00.

If you wish to take part in the best decorated house competition then please send photographs of your house / garden to the LSSA secretary

llanvapleyvillagecommittee@gmail.com

All entries will be displayed on the big screen to help the judges to decide the winner.

Penrhos News

Opening On Easter Sunday The Old Vicarage At Penrhos

Despite the wind and rain, the gardens are blooming and the Open Garden season is already under way. The Old Vicarage at Penrhos plans to open for the National Garden Scheme on Easter Sunday, April 9th, from 2 to 5pm.

The garden is lovely all year round but especially in spring with a rich variety of trees, shrubs and spring bulbs. Judging by what is already blooming, there should be lots to see.

Light refreshments will be offered. And there will be 'Hartley's Garden Plants', all grown by him, for sale.

Georgina Herrmann



Llantilio Crossenny WI News

On the 11th March Gwent Federation of W.I.s held their Competitions Day at Usk Memorial Hall. The theme this year was "All Things Bright and Beautiful". Llantilio Crossenny entered and we came 2nd, mainly due to Margaret Parry (pictured), who was the main organiser. She demonstrated her skills in craft, flower arranging and cake making and was helped by Daphne Watkins who made the preserve. The photos show the finished result and Margaret. We feel thankful and proud of them for their hard work and talent.



Unfortunately our March meeting had to be cancelled because of the snow. We were looking forward to welcoming Mike Dunsbee from Friends of the Lower Wye, who is working with others to try to identify and solve the pollution problems in the River Wye. It is a subject of great importance to the W.I. nationally and is one of the resolutions for this year's Conference. We are hoping to rearrange Mike's presentation later in the year.



Our next meeting on Wednesday 12th April will give us the chance to hear about an inspirational local man. Helen Trevor Davies will be telling us about her grandfather who amongst other things had the first dog for a blind person. Llantilio Crossenny WI is certainly living up to the National Federation motto 'Inspiring Women'. Do come along, as guests are always welcome. We meet at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion.

We were all very sad for our much loved President Lin Morris, whose husband Leighton died on 15th March. Then in the early hours of 18th March Lin herself was rushed into hospital with colitis. She is recovering slowly and we are keeping her in our prayers and thoughts. *Jan Currie*

The Garden in April

I gave myself a treat yesterday and went to Wyncliffe Court near Chepstow for a couple of gardening lectures. The first one was given by Val Bourne who writes for the Telegraph and Amateur Gardening amongst other publications and she has also written several books. Her latest is 'The Living Jigsaw' in which she talks about the decline in our insect population and how our gardens are extremely important in giving sanctuary to our flora and fauna which is in steep decline. She has got me thinking, not a damascene moment as I have sort of been following her principles anyway, but her philosophy of putting up with the pests as well as the garden friends had not struck me before.



It is common sense of course. If you want ladybirds, you have to have aphids for them to eat, similarly if you want Thrushes, you must let them have a few snails, the same is slugs for the hedgehogs and lots of insects for the birds and beetles. You also must make sure you have plenty of scented flowers early in the year for the bumble bees who need to feed after a cold winter, so snowdrops, crocus, daffodils and other early flowering bulbs, scented early flowering shrubs like witchhazel, winterflowering honeysuckle, and sarcococca are essential foods, along with primroses, cowslips and pulmonaria. Hellebores are pretty important too but I am afraid those with fancy double flowers are a no go, as are the camellias like Donation that are flowering everywhere now. (Ours pictured looks terrific!). That does not mean you cannot have them, but you must have a balance. Similarly you need plenty of cornflowers and eryngiums in the summer to keep the bumble bees happy, and then lots of compositae plants like Echinacea, Michaelmas daisies, rudbeckia, and umbelliferae like yarrows and dare I say it, grasses in the autumn for the birds to stock up on before the winter. Apparently a hawthorne hedge supports 49 different species whereas a laurel hedge is scarcely in double figures. The other advice was not to 'Put the garden to bed' as I usually do in the autumn to give the plants a rest. Of course the birds love scratching around the bases of the ghosts of a productive herbaceous border looking for seeds and other goodies. Perhaps one could do a bit of both? The other tip was to cram the flower border with lots of different plants to let the beetles scuttle around in the undergrowth, a very neat border with lots of bare soil is not what you are trying to achieve. So put away your systemic insecticides and slug pellets and give the insects and birds a chance. You may be in for a big surprise.

Calon Llanarth

When would groups ranging from Alzheimer's to Yoga unite?

A cross section of interest groups came together on March 23rd for two workshops at Llanarth Village Hall run by the Village Alive Trust, with support from Community Action Network.

The aim was to get feedback on the Trust's project to bring the closed St Teilo's Church at Llanarth back into community use. It closed ten years ago and was put up for sale in 2019.

Post Covid the Trust has developed the project with a view to the Grade II* listed building becoming a community well being centre, with bell ringing training school and flexible spaces for various activities. It is hoped that a café would enable regular drop-in access and an income stream.



Dozens of invitations were emailed out to groups including MIND, cycling, bee keeping, local history, councillors, GAVO, walking groups, Welsh societies, council clerks, therapists and Alzheimer's Society among others.

Despite apologies from groups wanting to know more, but unable to attend on the day, the workshops attracted a variety of people willing to engage and offer ideas, feedback and support.

The day was introduced by Vivienne Morgan Jones, the Trust's treasurer and the workshops were led by Chris Jones, of Chris Jones Regeneration, who specialises in place making. Chris is acting as a critical friend to the Trust in helping to coordinate the project before grant bids.

Ashley Morgan, of Monmouthshire County Council's communities and social department who is the lead for community spaces in this area, is also assisting the project.

Illustrations created by Eric Evans, Trust member, and brainstorming sessions hosted by Trust vice president Edward Holland, Chris Jones and Chris Fleming-Jones and refreshments provided by Pat Griffiths and Pam Watkins, helped towards a fruitful day when ideas were exchanged and new bonds created. Watch this space!



Spring has arrived and it is wonderful to see daffodils popping up everywhere, including the ones along the hedgerow and in front of the Pavilion which were planted by Gardening Club members last autumn. Bulbs are not just for spring and at our March meeting we enjoyed a very interesting, informative talk from Rob Evans, Pheasant Acre Gardens, who showed slides of many different summer flowering bulbs which can give a brilliant display during the summer months and can be included in your borders or planted in pots.

At our next meeting on 5th April we have Alison Cooper who lives locally and is giving a presentation on her favourite plants. She is a contemporary botanical artist who also writes a gardening article every month.

Our meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Pavilion and everyone is most welcome. Guests £5. For further details contact Marion on marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk



A letter to the editor

In the March edition Cllr. Ian Chandler discussed speed limits in rural areas. In the article he said *"The council's focus at the moment is rolling out the 20mph limits in built-up areas, but when that is complete later this year we could be pushing for more 30mph and 40mph limits instead of the 60mph limits in force along most of our country lanes. What do you think?"*

Tom Lowes, a Llanvapley resident, replied in a letter to the editor.

"I thought that the last part of Ian Chandler's article in March TNT was a blatant piece of Green Party electioneering that needed to be challenged! If enacted it would seriously inconvenience all law abiding people as well as being quite unenforceable to the tiny minority who would ignore it anyway."

Whitecastle Community Council celebrates the King's Coronation

After the success of the Platinum Jubilee Beacon last year we would like to invite you to join us for the King's Coronation celebration beacon. Come along free of charge with your family and friends.

Lauren Hughes



WHITECASTLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
KING'S CORONATION BEACON
THE MOUNT, PENRHOS
SATURDAY 6TH MAY
7PM ONWARDS, READY FOR BEACON LIGHTING AT DUSK
BRING YOUR OWN BBQ/PICNIC/DRINKS
**COME & ENJOY CELEBRATING THIS MOMENTOUS
OCCASION WITH FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS**
CONTACT FOR INFO: whitecastlecommunitycouncil@gmail.com
EVERYONE WELCOME FREE OF CHARGE

Whitecastle Community Council is made up of six wards which are Whitecastle, Penrhos, Llanvihangel-Ystern-Llewern, Llangattock Vibon Avel, Newcastle and Rockfield with St Maughans.



From your County Councillor

The Council's budget for 2023/24 was passed in March at the second attempt after much vigorous debate. Although it is an increase on the budget for this year, the impact of inflation and increased demand for services (particularly social care) mean that it actually represents a significant cut in real terms.

I objected to the first budget proposed by the cabinet as I felt that our most vulnerable members of our community would feel the brunt of the cuts to services. This led to the cabinet withdrawing cuts to the educational psychology team and delaying a million pounds worth of cuts to social care. The below-inflation rise of 5.95% in Council Tax is a compromise, recognising that some residents are struggling with the cost of living crisis while wanting to safeguard services as much as possible.

It is going to be a tough year, so please look out for your neighbours and ensure you and they get the support you are entitled to. Information is on the Council's website or you can phone 01633 644644. You can also contact Citizens Advice on 0800 702 2020.

I will continue to scrutinise the council's spending to ensure that there is no waste and it gives value for money for residents. Unfortunately that hasn't always been the case. More than five years ago, part of the road between Cross Ash and Skenfrith was washed away. The



council rented some 'temporary' traffic lights until it repaired the road. Those lights are still there and I found out that they have cost the council £124,507. The Daily Mail and BBC have covered my story, which will hopefully lead to some rapid action by the council.

As always, please get in touch if you have any concerns that I can help with.

Best wishes, Cllr. Ian Chandler

IanChandler@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01291 448270

Twitter: @Ian_Chandler Facebook: IanChandlerGreen

Church Services in the four parishes this month

Sunday 2nd April

Palm Sunday

11am Llantilio Crossenny
Special Palm Sunday Service
with Archdeacon of Monmouth
Ven. Ian Rees.

Sunday April 16th

Second Sunday of Easter

9.30am Llanvetherine Holy
Communion
11am Llantilio Crossenny
Morning Prayer

Good Friday 7th April

7pm Llantilio Crossenny
Performance of Stainer's
"Crucifixion."

Saturday 22nd April

2.30pm Llantilio Crossenny
Marriage of Miss Alicia Lowes
and Mr. Alex Drysdale Simpson.

Easter Day 9th April

Alleluia! He is Risen!

9.30am Llanvetherine
Easter Communion

9.30am Penrhos
Easter Communion

11am Llanvapley
Easter Communion

11am Llantilio Crossenny
Easter Communion

Sunday 23rd April

Third Sunday of Easter

9.30am Penrhos. Holy
Communion
11am Llanvapley. Morning
Prayer

Sunday 30th April

6pm Evensong Llantilio
Pertholey Church

Monday 1st May

2pm Plant Sale (and cakes
too!) Llantilio Crossenny Church



Llanvetherine Church viewed from the south side

You can find out more about our churches on our website www.llantiliogroup.info
We are also on Twitter @LlantilioG

*Contributions for the May issue of The New Times by 20th April
Please send your emails to tntparishmag@gmail.com or lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com*