



The New Times



The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes



Services And Events December 2025 & January 2026

Welcome to this bumper edition of The New Times, covering the period of December 2025 and January 2026, including Christmas services and events.

Sunday 7th December, Advent 2

9.30am St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.
(Morning Prayer)

11.00am St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny. (Holy Communion)

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. Refreshments served from 11.45am-12.30pm.

Sunday 14th December Advent 3

9.30am St. Cadoc's, Penrhos.

Refreshments will be served after the service. Open to all.

11.00am St. Mabli's, Llanvapley
(Holy Communion)

This service is followed by refreshments and everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes.

5.00pm. St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny
Carol Service

Followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Friday 19th December

6.00pm St. Cadoc's, Penrhos
Carol Service.

Mulled wine & mince pies will be served after the service at High House Barn.

Sunday 21st December Advent 4

4.00pm St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.
Carol Service

6.00pm. St. Mabli's, Llanvapley
Carol Service.

This service is followed by festive refreshment. The collection will go to St Bridget's at Skenfrith to support the church following the floods

Monday 22nd December

5.30pm. St Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny
Stars and Carols Service

With hot chocolate, mulled wine, gingerbread and mince pies.

Wednesday 24th December

Christmas Eve. Advent ends.

4.00pm St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.
Christingle Service.

Wednesday 25th December

Christmas Day

9.30am St Cadoc's. Penrhos
Christmas Service

10.00am St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.
Christmas Communion.

10.00am St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.
Christmas Communion.

There are no services on Sunday 28th December.

Services and Events in January 2026.

Sunday 4th January

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.** (Morning Prayer)

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.** (Holy Communion)

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. Refreshments served from 11.45am-12.30pm.

Sunday 11th January

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos.**

Refreshments will be served after the service. Open to all.

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley.** (Holy Communion)

This service is followed by refreshments and everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes.

Sunday 18th January

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.** (Holy Communion)

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.** (Morning Prayer)

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. Refreshments served from 11.45am-12.30pm.

Sunday 25th January

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos.**

Refreshments will be served after the service. Open to all.

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley.** (Morning Prayer)

This service is followed by refreshments and everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes

There is Quiet Day being held in Ty Mawr Convent on Saturday 6th December beginning at 9.30 am and ending at 4pm. It will be led by Revd. Jeremy Harris.

You are asked to bring your own lunch, and a donation for Ty Mawr Convent.

Anyone interested in attending please contact Rev David Roberts on:

dcryyf@gmail.com

Also on Sunday 7th December at 4pm in St. Mary's Church Usk, there will be an Archdeacon's Visitation. During this service the Bishop would like to celebrate and give thanks for the work and dedication of all church officers. Whether you're a churchwarden, church secretary, treasurer, safe-guarding officer, organist, MAC member, TNT compiler, or someone who supports us week by week in prayer and love, you are most welcome to come along.

News from the Four Churches.

Remembrance Day Services

Our churches marked Remembrance Day with services at St Cadoc's, Penrhos, followed by a joint service at St Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.

The services were, as always, reflective and thoughtful, especially poignant when the names of the fallen from this quiet rural community were read out.

St Cadoc's, Penrhos

Remembrance Day Service



The Remembrance Day Service at Penrhos was very well attended, with parishioners gathering at the lychgate to pay their respects and observe the two minutes silence. The service was led by Rev Heidi Prince assisted by Philippa Rumsey and the wreath was laid by Mr Richard Cleaves. The service continued in the church with readings, prayers and hymns and was followed by coffee and a friendly catch-up.

Drop Inn

The next Drop Inn at St Cadoc's will be on 16th January at 7.00pm. What better way to beat the January blues than to gather in a lovely place with convivial folk from around and about? Bring a drink and some nibbles and relax with friends and neighbours.

Christmas is a Comin'!

The Carol Service at St Cadoc's, Penrhos, is on Friday 19th December at 6.00pm followed by mulled wine and mince pies at High House.

Everyone is very welcome to join us at the church for a traditional Carol service where we will focus on the meaning of Christmas through the singing of carols and readings. If you can't get to the service please just come along to High House for a very special Christmas gathering in front of a roaring fire.

On Christmas Day the service will be taken by Philippa Rumsey.

St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine

Christmas at Llanvetherine.

We are holding a Christmas Bingo evening on Saturday 6th December at 7.30pm. Come and join us for a fun evening with children's games as well as the adult games. This will be at the Llanddewi Skirrid Hall.

The Christmas Service is going to be held on Sunday 21st December at 4pm. If any children would like to join us, they and their relatives will be warmly welcomed to this celebration of the Nativity. Thank you to all the children who have come forward to take part- it's been a wonderful response so far.

January in Llanvetherine.



ST. JAMES CHURCH, LLANVETHERINE No. 01597

Grand New Year Draw

***** 1st Prize - £50.00 *****

other prizes to include:
Chocolates · Biscuits · Whiskey · Wine

Draw to take place at
The Hogs Head Inn, Llanvetherine
on Friday 16th January 2026 at 8pm

Promoter: Vicar & Wardens - Llantilio Group • Reg'd Mon CC pursuant The Gambling Act 2005
(Reg'd Charity No. 1137751) • Printed By: Honeycomb Print Services, Abergavenny (01873) 858047

Tickets £1 - Book £5.00

The Llanvetherine Church Draw is to be held on Friday 16th January at the Hog's Head. This is one of the major fund raisers for our church so anyone who can help in any way please contact David at davidwhjones@btinternet.com

The Church Tower

Most people are aware that the church tower is surrounded by scaffolding to enable our builder to carry out some much-needed pointing as advised in the Quinquennial Report.

Work on the church tower is now well in progress although it seems working with lime mortar never has a good season. Summer months are discouraged owing to too rapid drying conditions. Freezing temperatures damage the structure of the mortar causing it to disintegrate and fall out. Rain washes it out. So we are left with dry, average temperature days which we all know happen all the time these days...

The inside of the tower has also received some attention when the remains of jackdaws surplus nesting material was cleared out. Thank you to our helpers for carrying out such a filthy task that really needed to be done.

Large Wooden Wardrobe

We have a large wooden wardrobe that is surplus to requirements. A donation to the Church Funds would be very welcome for this fine piece, especially in light of the epic repairs to the tower. Please contact David at davidwhjones@btinternet.com if you are interested.



St. Mabli's, Llanvapley

Storm James hits Llanvapley Churchyard

There comes a moment each autumn when the last leaves finally fall, leaving the trees looking bare. For many, it's a sign to slow down and prepare for winter. For James Lowes, however, it's also the signal to head to the churchyard with his trusty leaf blower, ensuring the grounds stay tidy and free from slippery piles of soggy leaves. The Llanvapley Church Committee would like to express its sincere thanks to James for his hard work throughout the year. Thanks are also due to David Lewis, who keeps the grass neatly cut. James takes great pride in caring for the churchyard—and with a leaf blower capable of blasting leaves away at an impressive 200 mph, he makes the job look easy!



Taizé Service

On Monday 3rd November a Taizé service was held at St Mabli's. A Taizé service is a contemplative, meditative form of Christian worship that originated at the ecumenical Taizé Community in France. The service was well attended with many members of churches from across the Ministry Area. Many thanks go to Clarinda Collin for organising the service and for Phil Norman in organising the music and the singing.

Church History

Llanvapley has a special book in which is recorded details of services. I recently noticed that a page in the book had been completed and it was time to turn the page. The book records every single service back to 1963. The book seems to have also been used for church accounts for some reason and there are records from 1898 showing the cost of important church supplies for example:

Communion wine 5 shillings,

Coke for the church stove 8/6,

16 gallons of oil for the lamps 11/0

and 16 shillings to E Nicholas for his work in fire and lamp lighting.



Another Successful Trip for Emma and Christian!

Many people in Llanvapley will remember 27th August 2022 as the day the newlyweds made an exciting journey from the village church to the reception at Chapel Farm, Llanvapley — driving away on a tractor after their wedding ceremony! Since then, Emma and Christian have welcomed their daughter Layla and were excitedly awaiting the arrival of their second child.

Everything was going perfectly... until Emma suddenly announced that things were happening a bit sooner than expected! What followed was a frantic dash down to The Grange, with Christian hoping they'd reach the hospital just in time.

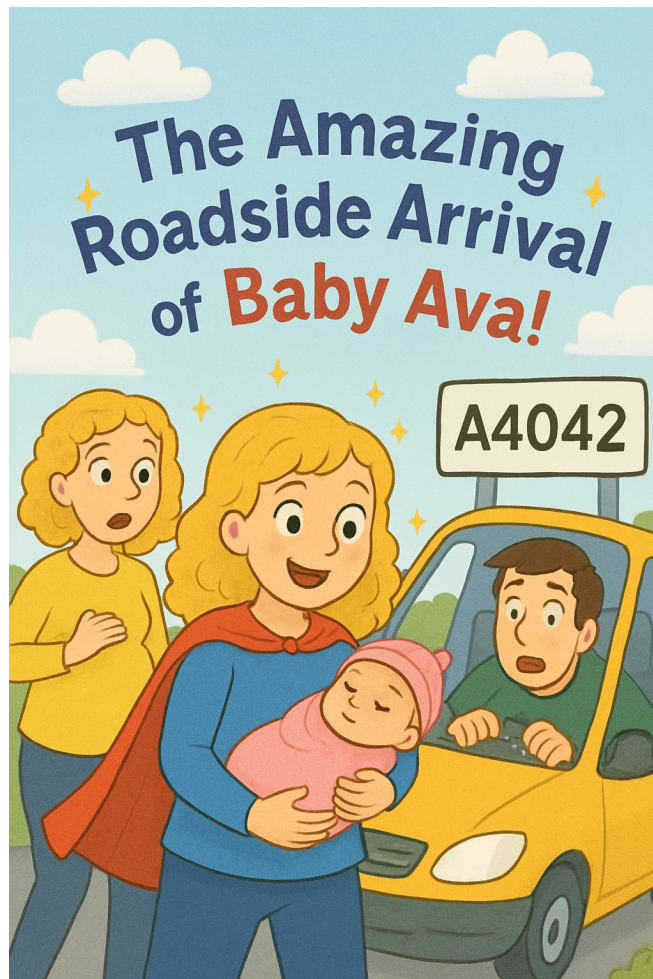
But baby Ava had her own plans. She simply couldn't wait.

Instead, she made her grand entrance while Dad was driving along the A4042!

Here is a photo of Layla and Ava.

Ava was born on 3rd November, and her birth certificate officially records her place of birth as "A4042." She weighed 6lb 7oz and is now doing brilliantly. Layla absolutely adores her little sister and is already proving to be a wonderful helper.

What a story for the family record books, one to tell the grandchildren, or for grandparents to retell with delight and amazement for many years to come! Meanwhile Emma and Christian are probably planning their next exciting journey!



St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

This lovely quiet time of **meditation / silent prayer** in St Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny continues in the Chancel from 8.30am-9am on the following Tuesday mornings:

in December:
2nd, 9th & 16th,

& January:
6th, 13th, 20th & 27th

We start with a short prayer or reading, then silent prayer / meditation, closing with The Grace.

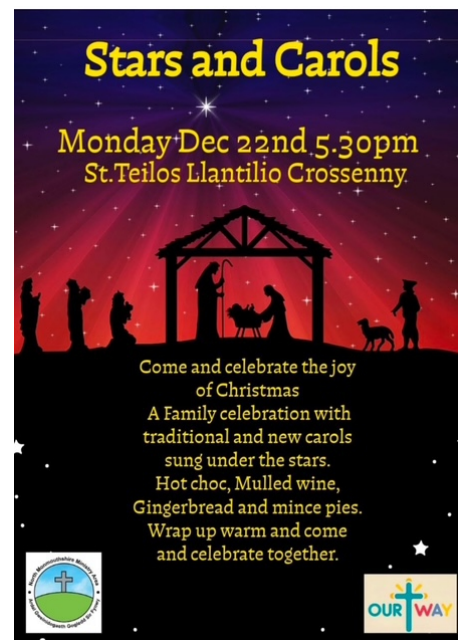
As the weather gets colder, please bring blanket(s) and even a hot water bottle!

Just come, or contact me if you have any questions:

Jenny Goodwin 07891 016768

Stars and Carols Service. Monday 22nd December at 5.30pm at St Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

This promises to be a very special service for all the family as we celebrate Christmas under the stars. Enjoy traditional and new carols in a truly festive spirit. There are lovely hot drinks, gingerbread and mince pies to complete a truly magical evening.



Christingle Service. Christmas Eve, 4.00pm at St Teilo's Llantilio Crossenny

All children (and their families of course) are invited to take part in the wonderful traditional Christingle Service at St Teilo's.

A Christingle is a symbolic object and a celebration that represents the birth of Christ and the light of the world. A Christingle is usually an orange decorated with a red ribbon, sweets or dried fruit and a candle on top.

Any children who would like to be involved should contact Lauren on 07971607157.



Community News

In the Spotlight

For this edition of In the Spotlight, we are pleased to welcome **Marianne Piper** to our pages.

Marianne is the Volunteer Co-ordinator for Monmouth, Usk and Raglan and is based at the Bridges Centre in Monmouth.

Bridges Centre is a Monmouth based charity which provides a range of activities, services and support to people of all ages and backgrounds from the local community.

Unfortunately, Bridges was inundated by flooding on the night of the 14th/15th November due to the aftermath of Storm Claudia.

As mentioned earlier in this edition, Skenfrith was also badly damaged as the effects of five inches of rain falling in five hours sent the river Monnow hurtling downstream from its source in the Black Mountains. Many areas of north Monmouthshire were impacted by severe flooding and our hearts go out to everybody who was been affected.

I believe that you are also a resident of Monmouth, Marianne. Is that correct?

I am - I live about a mile from the centre but fortunately I wasn't affected by the flooding. Sadly, one of my colleagues had her home and her workplace flooded.

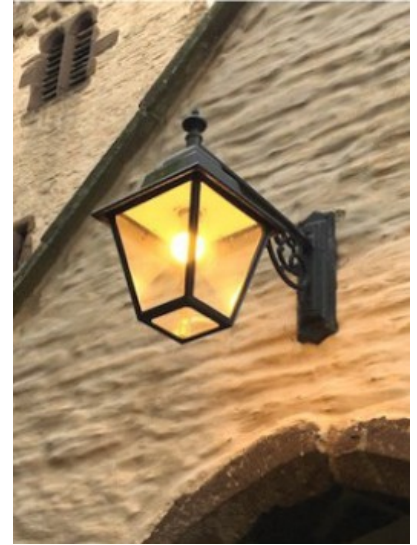
What is your role at the Bridges Centre?

My role is to recruit, train and look after volunteers across the area. I currently look after about 220 volunteers from teenagers to those in their nineties. The volunteers are involved in a huge variety of different roles and I try to find something that each volunteer will enjoy and that will also fit in with their current commitments. Some volunteers are involved a few days every week, other just every now and again, but whatever people do, they are hugely appreciated!

Describe the scene at Bridges after the flooding caused by Storm Claudia.

For most of the Saturday after the storm we couldn't even get to the centre as the water was too deep and it was too dangerous. When we did manage to gain entry into the building it was utterly heartbreaking.

Everywhere had been submerged in thigh-deep filthy water. Furniture had been swept around and blocked doorways, everything was covered in thick red slimy silt and the smell of damp and dirt was overwhelming.



What happened in the week after the flooding?

The main thing that happened was that the people and community in and around Monmouth were simply wonderful! We were overwhelmed with people offering help and as soon as we were allowed in the building, I started to manage the volunteer response. Over a few days we had over 60 volunteers helping with clearing and cleaning the centre again. We also had people arrive with hot lunches, cake and cleaning equipment and multiple local businesses and organisations "lent" us staff to help.

What can our readers to do help?

We do have a fundraising page and if anyone wanted to contribute that would be incredibly kind. If you search "Total Giving Bridges Flood Relief Appeal" you should find us. If people are on Facebook, it would be great if they could "follow" us to keep up to date with how everything is going and learn about our plans. We can be found by searching Bridges Centre and/or Volunteering for Wellbeing.

If anyone wants to volunteer in the future, please do contact me to find out more and when we reopen, please come and visit us!

How are you relaxing during this very difficult period?

I am lucky to have a fabulous husband who has met me at the end of each day with a big hug and a hot meal! And my two wonderful daughters have rung regularly for a chat and they always make me laugh! And my daft dog is great for greeting me with wags and excitement and getting me out into the countryside for a bit of fresh air and a leg stretch!



Llanvapley and District Gardening Club Christmas Plants

For many people, Christmas is a time for decorating trees, hanging up wreaths and kissing under the mistletoe. Plants are everywhere at Christmas. But have you ever wondered where these botanical traditions come from, why certain plants are associated with the festive season and do these plants have anything else to offer us? Our December meeting on Wednesday 3rd at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion could give you some answers. Marion Stainton is giving us a talk explaining the traditions, origins and symbolism of these Christmas plants and will also explore some of their other uses and properties. Everyone is most welcome to come along, there is a guest fee of £5. We now have our 2026 programme available with a varied selection of garden topics and speakers.

If you are interested, please come along to any of our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion or for further information contact marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk

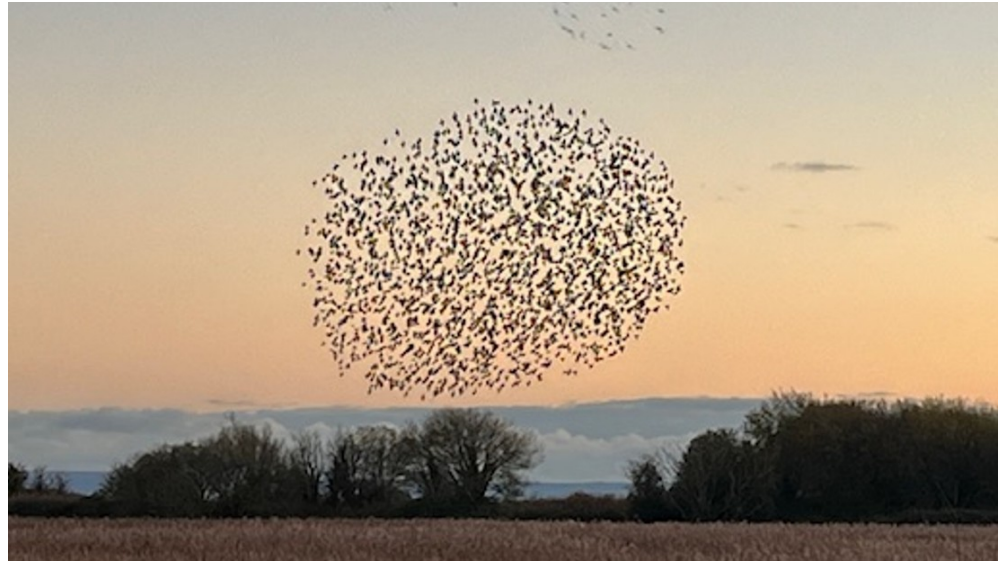
Annual fees are £20 single and £35 joint membership.
Please note that there is not a meeting in January.

Llantilio Crossenny WI news and events.

As the clocks go back and the dark nights of late autumn herald a change in the weather, some would be tempted to hunker down indoors. But not the women of Llantilio Crossenny Women's Institute!

November was another busy month for us. Apart from various impromptu social gatherings and the Llanvapley Quiz Night, the Choir has been practicing for the Gwent Federation of WIs (GFWI) Carol Service on 6th December. It is to be held at St Peter's church in Goytre at 2.00pm and everyone is welcome. We will also be singing at the St Teilo's Carol Service on Sunday 14th December at 5.00pm.

A group of us plus a welcome guest visited the Newport Wetlands to witness the amazing murmuration of starlings. Our visit began with an informative talk about starlings and what we don't know about that seemingly plain bird can now be written on a postage stamp. We then stepped outside and



walked through a beautiful late afternoon to see the dusk display. There was a marsh harrier and a sparrow hawk lurking for their supper so the hundreds of starlings whooshed in and settled quickly in the reed beds. We all agreed that it was a wonderful afternoon's entertainment and vowed to visit again soon.



Our monthly meeting explored the topic of 'Aromatherapy, Stress and Relaxation' with Jan Baker. We certainly learned a lot in a short space of time including:

- 'Aromatherapy aims to maintain the body in rest and digest mode';
- 'Essential oils work by balancing the body'
- 'Lavender and mandarin are good for reducing stress';
- 'Oregano is the strongest oil';

'Lavender is a native plant and therefore a good all-round oil'

'Bergamot and clary sage are good for mood boosting'

'Eucalyptus and Tea Tree shift mucus'.

We also learned that oils should be used carefully and are usually mixed with a carrier oil like jojoba or sweet almond (although a few drops can be inhaled through a diffuser). We were grateful for Jan's donation to our raffle of aromatherapy products.

On November 26th some of our members joined other women from around Gwent at the annual 'Light a Candle' service at the Priory Church of St Mary, Usk. The service is held to highlight the national WI campaign against violence towards women (Not in my Name). Along with other WIs in Gwent, Sue and Verity Vater had made a banner on our behalf which Sue then processed through Usk before the church service. 'We were grateful to one of our members, Jan Easement, who took our big boxes of donations to toiletries - they were almost too heavy to carry

Several of our members had also made toiletry bags which were filled with toiletries that we had collected. These bags are made available to women who have sadly had to flee from their home quickly in order to escape domestic violence.

Other members are using the dark nights to get out their crochet hooks and yarn needles to crochet 'Srebrenica Remembrance Flowers'. Welsh WIs have been asked to crochet 8372 flowers in remembrance of the genocide in 1995 and as an act of solidarity to the women who lost all or some of the male members of their family.

Our next meeting is on 10th December, 'A Floristry Surprise!' with the very talented Jan Morgan. Christmas food and drinks will be provided by the Committee. Everyone would be very welcome to join us at 7.00pm. Our annual dinner has been changed to an Annual Sunday lunch and will be held at the King's Arms in Abergavenny in January. If you wish to join us please contact Sue at sue.raynor@icloud.com

Llanvapley Sports Pavilion & Village Hall.

Bore Coffi - Llanvapley Pavilion

Dydd Mawrth y 9 o fis Rhagfyr 10.30 / Tuesday 9th December 10.30

Coffi, te a sgwrs - Llanvapley Pavilion, Llanvapley NP7 8SH

Croeso cynnes i chi gyd (all levels welcome!) Contact: Les Taylor 01600 780376

Quiz Night

The popular quiz night on 20th October gave "The Firs Brigade" an opportunity to step up and share the spotlight in the absence of the "Quizical" team. They jokingly insisted, "We would have won anyway!"—and indeed they did, taking home the chocolates as their prize.

As usual, each participant contributed £1, which goes to the LSSA. This time, the LSSA asked the quiz teams whether they would like the proceeds (and any additional donations) to support Skenfrith Village Hall, which had been devastated by the flooding of the Monnow.

A total of £80 was donated. Angela Hardy from the Skenfrith Village Hall said "Oh my goodness - that is so very thoughtful of you! Whilst our insurance will replace things we now want to work towards being more flood resilient allowing us to recover more quickly next time (and we are all very conscious that there will be a next time!) The next thing on the list is our own dehumidifiers so I'd like to put your donation towards that."

Community Meeting

The LSSA held a meeting in Llanvapley Pavilion on 19 October to discuss the position of Llanvapley in the Gobion Fawr community. The LSSA has repeatedly asked for financial support to enable it to pay business rates, insurance etc. The Community Council has refused. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and vote on a motion *"I support Llanvapley Sports and Social Association in submitting a request to Monmouthshire County Council for a review of the electoral arrangements for the Llanvapley Ward within Gobion Fawr Community Council, as well as any related electoral matters in the wider principal council area. The community would like the current boundaries of Gobion Fawr Community to be reconsidered, with the aim of removing the Llanvapley Ward from the community and transferring Llanvapley into an adjacent community."*

The meeting voted unanimously in favour of the motion. Since then contact has been made with Monmouthshire County Council but it has been decided to wait until the Community Council meeting on 2 December at which the budget for 2026/27 will be set. The meeting on Tuesday is in Llanvapley pavilion. This is a public meeting at which residents can address the council.

Selby Sound Handbell Ringers

The Selby Sound Handbell Ringers have been practicing for Christmas! If you want to hear the dulcet music of the Handbells please join us at St Teilo's Carol Service on December 14th at 5.00pm or at St Peter's Church, Goytre, on 6th December at 2.00pm.

The picture on the right shows Selby Sound in the last century. They are still going strong!



Llanarth Christmas Community Events

to get you feeling festive!

Don't forget...all welcome to attend a Christmas Coffee Morning at Llanarth Village Hall on Saturday, December 13th from 10-12 noon.

Musical entertainment and hot drinks etc. No charge, donations welcomed!

And ...an Evening Concert on Saturday, December 13th from 10-12 noon, tickets £10. Doors open 6.30pm for 7pm. Performing will be Synergy Acappella and Sing With Us Abergavenny, the Tenovus choir. Bar, refreshments and Grand Christmas Draw.

Contact Pat Griffiths 01873 821428 or email pjgriff100@aol.com for Tickets or information. The events are being organised by The Village Alive Trust, Llanarth Village Hall and Llanarth Cricket Club.

Two Christmas Events supporting local churches

Saturday 6th December

Llanddewi Skirrid Village Hall 10am-2pm.

Proceeds going towards St David's Church, Llanddewi Skirrid.

Lots of local crafts, teas, cakes and raffle.

Saturday 6th December

Cross Ash Village Hall 10am-5pm.

Come to support St Mary's Church, Llanfair Green

Santa's Grotto and lots of beautiful gifts

Twelve Days Of Christmas



While many people automatically think of the song, the Twelve Days of Christmas celebrates the days after Christ's birth on December 25th. The twelfth day lands on January 5th and this is the date the magi, or the three kings, were believed to arrive in Bethlehem.

The Twelve Days of Christmas have been celebrated in Europe since before the Middle Ages. Each day celebrates a feast day for a saint.

The Meaning Behind the 12 Days of Christmas

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1st Day: | the birth of Christ |
| 2nd Day: | St. Stephen – the first Christian martyr |
| 3rd Day: | St. John the Apostle – one of Jesus's disciples |
| 4th Day: | The Feast of the Holy of Innocents – the baby boys King Herod killed when trying to find and kill baby Jesus |
| 5th Day: | St. Thomas Becket – Archbishop of Canterbury in the 12th century murdered for challenging the King's authority over the Church |
| 6th Day: | St. Egwin of Worcester – A Benedictine monk |
| 7th Day: | Pope Sylvester I – one of the earliest Popes |
| 8th Day: | Mary, the Mother of Jesus |
| 9th Day: | St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen – two 4th century Christians |
| 10th Day: | Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus – celebrates the naming of Jesus of in the Jewish Temple |
| 11th Day: | St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American saint |
| 12th Day: | St. John Neumann who was the first Bishop in America |

Whitecastle Community Council – Meeting Summary

Whitecastle Community Council met on 13 November at The Hogs Head, Treadam. Councillors reviewed recent correspondence, planning applications, community feedback and updates from Monmouthshire County Council.

The Council noted the success of the October Community Open Evening and expressed thanks to all groups who took part. Work continues on strengthening links with local organisations, responding to MCC's Cultural Strategy consultation, and improving community engagement through the website and social media.

Highways and Rights of Way updates included recent maintenance across the community and upcoming discussions with Footpaths Officers about future improvements. Repairs to the walls at Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern churchyard are now complete, with further boundary work planned.

The Council recommended approval of a planning application at Court Farm following a consultation request from the county council. Financial reports and payments were approved, and councillors began reviewing the draft budget for 2026/27, including support for local groups and maintaining reserve levels.

The Council's updated Biodiversity Report was agreed for submission, with plans to develop new local biodiversity initiatives in 2026. The council is delighted to report that Penrhos now has a Community Council noticeboard which is located adjacent to the Church.



The next meeting will be held on 11 December 2025 at Rockfield Barns, Pwll Y Cwm, Rockfield, Monmouth NP25

Full minutes and further details are available on the Community Council website:
www.whitecastlecommunitycouncil.co.uk

The New Times – How it all happens!

Your compiler for the February and March editions of TNT is Ros Jeffries. If you have any submissions for these editions please send them to Ros at rosjeffries@btinternet.com.

Thank you to all our readers and contributors throughout 2025. Your support and feedback is greatly appreciated. Your TNT team of Les, Ros and Sue wish you all a very happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas and 2026.

Ps if you would like to join our TNT merry band, we would love to have you!

Photographs from anyone in the four parishes are welcomed so please take pictures and send them in to TNT!