

The New Times

The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes



Services and Events in June 2025

Sunday 1st June.

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 11.55am-12.30pm.

Sunday 8th June.

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

Refreshments will be provided after the service.

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

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes.

Sunday 15th June

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 11.55am-12.30pm.

Sunday 22nd June

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

Refreshments are provided after the service from approximately 10.20am onwards and everyone from the community is very welcome.

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

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finished.

Sunday 29th June

6.00pm. St Teilo's Church **Llantilio Pertholey NP7 6NT.** A joint occasion for the fifth Sunday of the month entitled 'Hymns and Pimms'. Everyone is very welcome.

News from the Four Churches

St. Cadoc's, Penrhos

A memorable day in Monmouthshire

The 17th day of May brought me and my family and friends a mixed day of emotions, sad and happy. I had arranged a memorial service for my dearly loved late wife, Heather Smith, in the beautiful St

Cadoc's church in Penrhos. My late wife and I had regularly attended this church whilst resident in Penrhos.

We were blessed with beautiful sunshine and the Reverend Heidi Prince put on a beautiful service which I know Heather would have been pleased with.

After the service we all retired to the Beaufort Arms in Raglan for a reception.

Heather had passed away in our new home of Geraldine, NZ. A location and home that Heather had chosen.

It was only right that myself and family and friends would also say goodbye to Heather in Monmouthshire, a county and people that Heather loved. As Heather would always say after one of our day trips in Monmouthshire when we lived in Penrhos, all of us present in St Cadoc's Church and the Beaufort Arms had experienced a memorable Monmouthshire day.

Thank you to everyone who helped me to organise the service and reception.

Kind regards, Ron Smith

Open Gardens event at Longhouse Farm

St Cadoc's and St James the Elder were beneficiaries from the teas and cakes sold at the Open Gardens event at Longhouse Farm, Penrhos. Grateful thanks to Martin and Marilyn Anderson for opening up their beautiful gardens and supporting two of our beautiful churches. It is much appreciated and short reports about the occasion are below.

St Cadoc's served Sunday teas

There were 125 through the gates at Longhouse Farm at the Open Gardens event on 4th May, which is a record. The Sunday teas raised just over £600, which is amazing and thanks in large part to all of those who helped on the day (including young Mark and James, all very smart in their 'uniforms'!) and to the array of delicious cakes and scrumptious scones.

St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine

St James' served Saturday teas

Llanvetherine Church were kindly offered the opportunity to prepare and serve teas on Saturday 3rd May at the two-day yellow Garden Scheme opening at Longhouse Farm. The following day Penrhos church carried out the same duty. St James' church were very grateful to Pip Rumsey not only for making the introduction but also for rolling up her sleeves on Saturday and provided a card reader to assist the number of people paying by card only. The event raised a very helpful sum towards the increasingly expensive upkeep of the church.

Andrew Dawson.



Picture showing Pip's mum Verity, Sally, Vicar Heidi, Shirley and David together with the available fare. Pip is busy in the kitchen and Andrew is the photographer.

St. Mabli's, Llanvapley

Church and Churchyard Spring Clean

On Saturday, 3rd May, St Mabli's held its annual Church and Churchyard Spring Clean. The warm weather provided the perfect backdrop as a dedicated team of volunteers gathered, each bringing enthusiasm and a clear sense of purpose. Together, they managed to tidy and greatly improve large

areas of both the church and its grounds. Refreshments were provided as a token of thanks for everyone's hard work, and there was a shared sense of pride in a job well done.



Goodbye to the Horse Chestnut

Llanvapley Churchyard is home to many trees, and their inspection and upkeep is an ongoing task. Following a recent assessment, it was decided to remove the Horse Chestnut tree located in the corner of the churchyard near the Red Hart public house. Although some branches had already been removed, the tree's condition had worsened—its bark was falling away—and it was deemed necessary to take it down for safety reasons.

On Wednesday, 7th May, the tree was expertly felled by Dennis Walker & Son in a smooth and efficient operation. The trunk was cut into blocks, and smaller branches were mulched on-site. Sincere thanks go to Scott Walker for organising the work and to his team for carrying out the task with such professionalism. Many thanks also to Steve and Alex Anthony for helping to clear up the site by removing the blocks.



St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

Llantilio Crossenny Church Plant Sale

The **Annual Plant Sale** took place at St Teilo's, on Monday 5th May, the first May Bank holiday Monday. The community supported the event with their usual enthusiasm and we had quite a few

people passing by on the 'B' road who saw the signs and came in to join the fun. The fabulous sum of £1068 was raised for church funds from the sale of plants, teas & cakes, the cake stall and the raffle. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed plants, cakes, raffle prizes and/or their time to make the annual Plant Sale such a success. Thank you also to Pip for racing over with a functioning card reader.



Annual Vestry Meeting

The Vestry meeting was held on 14th May 2025. The weather was warm and sunny so we did not hold the Vestry meeting in the actual vestry but outside the church door. It was a sublime location to discuss and decide upon matters related to the parish including finances, the fabric and upkeep of the church, the churchyard and other matters pertaining to St Teilo's. The appointment of officials also took place.

Reverend Heidi thanked everyone who takes care of the church throughout the year in whatever capacity. Everyone's dedication and effort is very much appreciated and enables this special place to be well looked after and remain a welcoming place of worship for everyone from far and wide.

Readers may be interested to know that the diocese has appointed a knowledgeable professional to conduct quinquennial reviews and this will help the church deal systematically with upkeep matters.

The carpet is due to be replaced imminently and it will be intriguing to see what lies beneath the old one. New altar kneelers have been lovingly made and will be in use very soon.

The church is looking at improving its heating system, especially in the Lady Chapel.

Research into a new sound system in the Lady Chapel is ongoing.

A Day in the Life of Llantilio Crossenny Church Bell Ringers

The Llantilio Crossenny Church Bell Ringers meet weekly for practice and regularly ring for church services and special occasions. This is the story of one such occasion: the wedding of Nathan King and Kate Morgan on 24th May.

Preparing for the Big Day

Preparations began well in advance. Once it was confirmed that our services were requested, we set about assembling a full team of six bell ringers. However, as the date fell on a bank holiday weekend, several of our regulars were unavailable. We reached out to ringers from nearby towers, and thankfully, Viv and Henry from Llantilio Pertholey kindly agreed to join us.



The Wedding Day

On the morning of the wedding, we faced an unexpected setback—one of our top ringers had fallen ill overnight. With little time to spare, an urgent call for a replacement was made, and luckily, a substitute was found. The wedding was scheduled for midday, and the team arrived promptly at 11:15, ready to begin ringing at 11.30. Our standard fee for wedding ringing is £150, and we always strive to provide a joyful and memorable experience for the couple and their guests. Typically, we ring two sets — once as guests arrive and again after the ceremony.

Since the ringing chamber is some distance from the church entrance, we rely on an usher to let us know when the bride arrives. Although we had been told she would be late, at 12.20 the signal finally came, and the bells rang out as the bridal party walked up the steps to the church.

While the ceremony took place, most of the ringers relaxed outside, enjoying some fresh air. When the service concluded, the bride and groom exited the church to the beat of modern dance music. As they emerged, we began our second set of ringing, celebrating their union with a vibrant peal that filled the air as guests mingled and took photographs.



Wrapping Up

Following tradition, the tower captain collected the fee, distributing £20 to each ringer. The remaining £30 was placed into the tower fund to support the ongoing maintenance and repair of the bells. The team was pleased with the day's performance and would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Viv, Henry, and Rebecca for stepping in and making the event a success. It was a joyful occasion, and we were honoured to play our part in such a special celebration.

Eco Church News



Sunday 4th May saw National Dawn Chorus Day arrive on a quiet and cloudy morning, perfect conditions for listening to the 'collective twitterings, tweetings and chirps of wild birds' (Woodland Trust). The robins, blackbirds and at least one very boisterous song thrush began the sequence before the sun rose and was soon joined by an array of other birds including chiffchaffs, green finches, blackcaps and willow warblers. Over 30 species were heard by the four early risers, led by the impressively knowledgeable Ros Jeffries (and aided by the Merlin app, forgive the advertising).

Community News

WHITECASTLE COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS VACANCIES NOW OPEN

The council is looking for passionate and committed residents to shape local services, events, and decisions. No prior experience is required, just a desire to get involved and make a difference.

There are six wards in the community area and there are vacancies in five of them.

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS 19 JUNE

For more information, contact the Clerk to the council:

01600 780376

whitecastlecommunitycouncil@gmail.com

whitecastlecommunitycouncil.co.uk

**BE THE CHANGE WHERE YOU LIVE. JOIN
THE COUNCIL. HELP YOUR COMMUNITY THRIVE.**

Llantilio Crossenny WI

*“The Merrie Month of May,
Tinged with nostalgia and sadness.”*

What a month May was at Llantilio Crossenny WI - a month of remembrance and nostalgia plus a hefty dose of celebration and gratitude.

We started our WI activities in May at the VE Day event at Llanvapley Pavilion. Llantilio Crossenny WI members turned out in force to make their contribution to the marking of Victory in Europe Day, a celebration of peace, in conjunction with the Llanvapley Sports and Social Association (LSSA) and the Llanvapley Gardening Club. Delicious cakes were baked and sold, the refreshments stall was run like clockwork and the Choir sang melodiously to the crowd. It should be noted that many of us enjoyed the group sing-song, the hokey-cokey and the Conga, all of which rounded off a lovely and fitting community gathering. Thanks to Gobion Fawr Community Council, who part funded the event.

The next date in the diary was our monthly meeting and Annual General Meeting (AGM) 14th May. This was always going to be a special occasion as our President, Lin Morris, had previously announced her intention to stand down after 12 years in office. The formal part of the evening included Lin's valedictory report as President in which she reflected upon her twelve years as President. The predominant theme of Lin's report was one of gratitude for the friendship and support that is the warp and weft of our WI. Many good times were remembered by Lin along with the more serious aspects of being a WI member such as the annual campaigns run nationally.

Following the election of a Committee, a new President had to be elected. Mary Clarke, Chair of Gwent Federation (GFWI), was present to oversee the process and Margaret Parry was elected to much applause. Lin handed over the President's badge and sash and we all agreed when she said that our WI is in very good hands as we go forward.

A fish and chip supper was enjoyed and then the farewell to Lin got underway. A group photograph was taken outside as the light was fading and then we came indoors to formally thank Lin for everything that she has achieved as President. Mary Clarke spoke warmly about Lin's work with the WI both with the Gwent Federation and the National Federation (NFWI). A bouquet, card and voucher was then presented by one of her oldest WI friends, Jan Currie, who made an emotional and touching speech. We then had a toast to Lin, made by our new President, accompanied by a fantastic cake baked and expertly decorated by Marion Ashton. Three cheers loudly rang out. We rounded off the evening with one of Lin's favourite songs, Edelweiss, and quite a few tears and hugs.

What Lin didn't know was that this was only Act One in a Two-Act celebration. On the afternoon of the 21st May we held a surprise Tea Party for Lin. Amazingly Lin did not suspect a thing and said that she had never been thrown a surprise party in her life! The mood was jolly and emotional as we reminisced and enjoyed afternoon tea. Daphne Watkins presented Lin with a stunning album of pictures and events from our archives, made by Sheryl Westoby. The Choir sang a specially adapted rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' which told of some of Lin's highlights as President. Everyone joined in the Llantilio Crossenny version of 'Sweet Caroline' – 'Lin, President'. A wonderful afternoon was had by all.



Our next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 11th June at 7.00pm at Llanvapley Pavilion. We are journeying to southern Spain to learn about all things Flamenco. Let's hope we have a warm evening to add to the mood created by the unique music and dancing of Andalusia.

Whitecastle Community Council News

Meeting Summary of the council meeting on 8th May 2025 Venue: Hogs Head, Treadam

The latest meeting of the Community Council took place on 8th May with councillors Biggs, Lewis, and Graham present, alongside the Clerk and County Cllr. Ian Chandler. Apologies were received from Cllr. Hughes and Astill-Parsons.

Traffic Calming in Newcastle

Cllr. Graham updated the council on the installation of wooden gateway features at village entrances to slow traffic. The council expressed gratitude to a local business for its support.

Concerns Raised About County Council Forum

The council criticised Monmouthshire County Council's "Let's Talk" Forum for a lack of community consultation and an inadequate registration process. Cllr. Chandler raised these concerns at County Hall.

Defibrillator Programme Expands

Village Life now oversees 11 defibrillators with two new units added. A pilot project for Community Bleed Kits was proposed, and repainting of post box-housed units is planned. Plans to purchase an additional defibrillator are under way.

Community Engagement

The Quilting Group successfully held a public event in March, showcasing their BioTapestry project. Local groups were informed about available heritage and grant funding opportunities.

Planning Applications Discussed

- **Awen Barns, Llanvetherine** – Supported for its green infrastructure improvements.
- **Park Cottage, Llantilio Crossenny** – Solar panel installation noted, with further consultation to be made with the local church committee.

Highways Issues

Poor lane conditions and slow updates to service requests were noted. A road safety repair near Penrhos is pending structural works. The council followed up on speed limit changes proposed for The Hendre and the B4233.

Churchyard Maintenance

Grass cutting is under way in Llangattock Vibon Avel and Llanvihangel-ystern-llewern churchyards. New signage for dog fouling will replace invalid ones. Wall repair work is delayed to protect nesting birds.

Council Communication & Engagement

Simplified meeting summaries will be created for public noticeboards and magazines. A new

noticeboard for Penrhos is being sourced. The council will advertise vacant councillor positions ahead of a 26th June review meeting.

Financial Matters

Routine payments and the 2024/25 audit were approved. The internal audit was completed, and the annual return signed. Public inspection of accounts begins on 30th June.

Next Meeting

The next council meeting will take place on **10th July 2025** at **Rockfield Barns, Pwll Y Cwm**.

If you'd like to respond to any of the matters raised or are interested in joining the community council, please visit the council website and contact the Clerk.

Website : <https://www.whitecastlecommunitycouncil.co.uk>

Llanvapley Gardening Club News

On Wednesday 4th June at 6pm the gardening club are visiting Blackbrook Manor Gardens at Skenfrith, followed by a cheese platter and bring your own drinks. There is an entry fee of £10 which is payable on the evening. Everyone is most welcome to come. The current owners of Blackbrook have taken 30 years to transform the gardens into the beautiful place they are today.

In July Marion Stainton is coming to Llanvapley Pavilion to give a presentation on Vegetable Legends, this will be on Wednesday 2nd July at 7pm, guests are most welcome with a fee of £5.

On 23rd July a trip is going to Hampton Court Gardens, Herefordshire. A coach will leave the Red Hart car park at 9.30am returning at 5pm. Everyone is welcome to come, there is no charge for the coach and an entry fee of £8.80 to Hampton Court which is payable in advance. The gardens are well worth a visit with so much to see including a beautiful riverside walk. Lunch, coffee, tea and cakes can be purchased in the Orangery or a picnic can be enjoyed in the grounds.

Please contact marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk if you are interested in coming, you do not need to be a gardening club member to come.

Llanvapley Sports Pavilion & Village Hall.(LSSA)

VE Day Celebrations

What a wonderful day we had in Llanvapley to mark VE Day – and it was all made possible thanks to the incredible community spirit that thrives in our village.



A huge thank you to the LSSA, Gardening Club, and the Ladies WI for working together to make this event such a brilliant success.

We are especially grateful to everyone who contributed to the fantastic hampers – and to Paula and Jane, who were relentless in their efforts selling raffle tickets. Thanks to their hard work and your generosity, we raised £350 for BLESMA (a quick note – raffle ticket No. 67 remains unclaimed, so do check your pockets!).

The WI ladies and competition entrants outdid themselves with delicious cakes, raising an additional £47 from sales – thank you to all our talented bakers!

On the plant stall, Paula secured a brilliant deal with Abergavenny Garden Centre, and Marion did a fabulous job pricing and selling, raising a blooming great £95!

Entertainment was top-notch: a wonderful performance from Margaret and the Selby Sound Bell Ringers, followed by the delightful harmonies of the WI Choir. Thanks also go to the Rabble who did two very entertaining sets in the marquee and kept everyone's feet tapping.

Les and Andrew kept the little ones busy with a fun and tricky Treasure Hunt, and yes – 61 ice creams were consumed!

Our beautiful grounds were in perfect shape, thanks to the hard work of Terry and Dai, and we're grateful to the Llanvapley Men's Team for raising the marquee.

We know there are many more of you who helped in ways big and small – and though we may not have named everyone, you know who you are, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

But above all, thank you for turning up, supporting us, and sharing in the fun which included doing the conga at the end of the afternoon!



Quiz Night

The last Quiz Night of the season took place on the 22nd May and was great fun as usual. Les prepared 10 rounds on an eclectic range of subjects to test our knowledge including 'Songs Banned by the BBC', 'Female Sportswomen' and 'Pot luck'. Quizzical emerged triumphantly as the winners at this most enjoyable community event. The Summer season of Cornhole will now commence.

Yoga and Pilates

Yoga and Pilates classes have begun at The Pavilion and are proving to be very popular. It is very beneficial to have face-to-face classes in a group setting and all abilities and capabilities are welcome. See the June programme for details.

Village vs Cricket Club: A Spirited Start to the 2025 Season

After several weeks of sunshine, the weather looked set to change just in time for the annual Village vs Cricket Club match, marking the start of the 2025 season. Fortunately, the rain held off, allowing players and spectators to enjoy a relaxing and entertaining afternoon.



The Cricket Club opened the batting and posted an impressive total of 170—an intimidating target for the village team. However, to the crowd's surprise and delight, the village side rose to the challenge. Led by a determined innings from their captain, Johnny Watler, the team found themselves needing just 20 runs with three overs remaining.

Hopes of an unlikely victory were dashed when Johnny was bowled for 49, narrowly missing out on a well-deserved half-century. The remaining batsmen were unable to keep up the momentum, and the innings came to a close without reaching the target.

A special mention goes to Rodney Powell, who rolled up his sleeves, turned back the clock, and contributed valuable runs—helping the village team post a very respectable score. Many thanks go to Lynda and her team for preparing the sandwiches for tea which were greatly enjoyed by all.

Isca Morris are dancing at The Hogs Head
Wednesday 2nd July at 8pm
Come along, meet the dancers and join in the fun!

Isca Morris have been the local Morris dancing side in the Gwent area since 1976. During the summer, we can be found performing at pubs across Gwent, bringing traditional dance and music to the community.

In addition to our regular pub nights, we also dance at folk festivals, beer festivals, fetes, weddings, wassails, and a wide range of local events — basically anywhere we're welcome, especially if there's a good public house involved!

This year, we're excited to be dancing at The Hogs Head on what we hope will be a lovely summer evening. We're a friendly and welcoming group, so why not gather some friends and come along? Have a chat, enjoy the music, and take in the lively sights and sounds of Morris dancing.

We always dance better with an audience, so your support means a lot. We look forward to seeing you there!



Sunshine, dancing, music and good food at Llanarth VE Day



A short acrobatic display overhead gave the Victory in Europe 80th Anniversary Celebration at Llanarth, near Raglan that extra something on Saturday, May 10th.

Arranged jointly by Llanarth Village Hall and the Village Alive Trust with assistance from Llanarth Cricket Club, the sports and social association and Llanarth Estate, the family event drew an enthusiastic crowd. The hall was decked with bunting and Cathy Clark provided red silk poppy arrangements for the stage.

The free entry community event was given financial support by Monmouthshire Welsh Churches Trust, Llanarth Fawr Community Council and the Richard Hanbury-Tenison Charitable Trust, as well as local donors. The short display of air stunts was kindly arranged by Ben Herbert.

A commemorative limited Lucky Number Programme, designed by Eric Evans, was on sale with a £75 prize donated by 24/7 Plumbing & Heating. The glossy booklet features photos, history and local wartime memories. The random number draw resulted in Joyce Groves winning the cash prize. Some remaining copies, no longer eligible for the prize draw, are still available at a much reduced price of £1 per copy. Contact Pat Griffiths on 01873821418.

A bottle of champagne for her authentic wartime look was won by Olwen Smith, who at 91, had enthusiastically dressed in 1940's style for the afternoon. Farmer's daughter Olwen also contributed her memories to the programme, of living at Clytha Castle during the Second World War when Clytha Park billeted soldiers in a camp.

The Monmouth Lindyhoppers gave the afternoon an energetic buzz; Abergavenny Borough Band entertained with wonderful tunes and Uskulele musicians added a distinctive vibe which was much enjoyed by all. Representing the services were the young Abergavenny ATC Band members, smartly turned out, as well as being entertaining.

Displays of wartime vehicles and tractors were on show thanks to enthusiasts including Richard Purkiss, Ken Watkins, and Cliff Price who travelled from Hay-on-Wye. John Prosser, of Abergavenny motored in to show off his 1936 vintage prized automobile. Kelly Bendon, of PonyPals Therapy, took along two ponies for children to pet.

Tea and cake were on offer, children's craft activities were sponsored by Pam Watkins and overseen by her daughter, Kim Evans. A display about wartime and a small exhibition about the Village Alive Trust's St Teilo's Church project, proved educational to visitors. Some oral history clips recorded by the Trust, over 16 years ago, of local farmers' wartime experiences, were broadcast as background accompaniment.

A tombola and donations helped raise funds for the charity after staging and entertainment costs were met. Hazel Leacock won an appetising jar of sweets after being the nearest to guess how many... 185!

The organisers thank everyone who attended, and those who sponsored, donated, stewarded, worked in the kitchen, or who contributed in any way to make the event a true community celebration. Special thanks are due to the committee made up of Mike and Eileen Powell, Pam Watkins, Vivienne Morgan, Eric Evans, Peter Francis, Ginny Hallett and Pat Griffiths.

