

# The New Times

The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes



Find out what is happening in our churches and communities



It's Good Friday and pilgrims return to the Holy Mountain



and it's Spring and fresh flowers return to our churches

## Services and Events in May 2026

### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Easter 5**

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

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

*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 Noon-12.30pm.*

### **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May**

2.00pm **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.** The Annual Plant Sale.

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May**

Safeguarding Training at the **Church of St Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey.**

### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May. Easter 6**

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.** (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.*

### **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May Ascension Day**

5.00pm **St Bridget's Church, Llansantffraed NP7 9BA.**

Children's Kite service for Ascension Day.

7pm **Church of St Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey.**

Special Eucharist Service for Ascension day.

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May. Easter 7**

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.*

### **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May.**

1.00pm. A spring wedding at **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.**

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May. Whitsunday/Pentecost**

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 finishes.*

### **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May**

12.30pm. A spring wedding at **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny**

### **Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May. Trinity Sunday**

6.00pm. **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.** A Joint Service.

### **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June**

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley.** Taize Service

## Good Shepherd Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 2026.

How apposite in this rural community of ours that, at this time of the year on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, we come together to commemorate Jesus as the "Good Shepherd".

The service included the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
He leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the  
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art  
with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the  
presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my  
head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the  
house of the Lord for ever.

(King James version)

In her sermon Revd Heidi explored the second reading from the gospel of St John, chapter 10, verses 1-10 emphasising the role of Jesus as the source of protection, salvation and spiritual nourishment, providing security against false leaders ('thieves and robbers'). Without doubt, a thought provoking yet reassuring service.

## News from the Four Churches St. Cadoc's, Penrhos

It was a beautiful spring morning, a magical day at a magical time of the year. The sun was shining, the hedgerows were cloaked in their full glory and the countryside presented a variegation of greens. I decided to walk to church and as I ambled from Pentre-High House and turned left onto Penrhos Road, I heard the beautiful sound of one of the church bells. It was Richard 'tanging' the bell which he later explained refers to the way in which the bell is rung to create a resonant and sharp sound. This led us onto a conversation over coffee after the service about the bells in the church. This is what I now know about the bells at St Cadoc's.

There are 4 bells in the tower -

The oldest (probably 15th century) was recast in 1904 and bears the inscription  
SANCTA MARGARETA

The next bell is inscribed

FEAR GOD HONOUR THE KING ANNO 1623. I.P.

The next bell is inscribed

SAMUAL WATKINS GENT WILLIAM MORGAN GENT CHURCH WARDENS I.P. 1672

The fourth bell was dedicated to former vicar William Feetham.

*If anyone has any further information about the bells at any of our four parish churches, I would love to share it in this parish newsletter. Sue sue.raynor@icloud.com*

## Community events at St Cadoc's.

St Cadoc's is a small but perfectly formed church which recognises its importance as a centre for community life in this rural area. The new news is that

### Yoga has come to St Cadoc's!

Ajar is now teaching yoga in the church on Thursdays at 6pm. Everyone of all abilities and mobilities is very welcome. The cost for 6 sessions (which can be spread over a number of weeks) is £60 or £10 per session or one off sessions for £15.

### Drop Inns

The Drop Inns continue and are normally at the last Friday of each month at 7.00pm. These are jolly get togethers where we bring our own drinks, nibbles and witty repartee. Sometimes we even have a Quiz! Contact Pip at [piprumsey2001@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:piprumsey2001@yahoo.co.uk) if you would like notification of events at St Cadoc's.

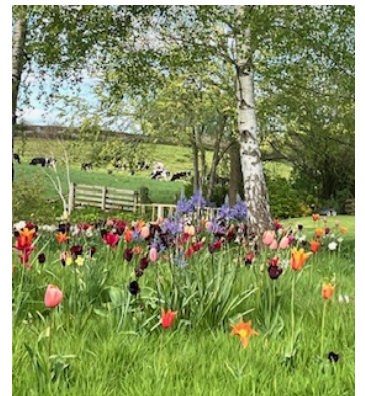
### Community Council

Whitecastle Community Council held its April meeting in the Church. This is the first time such a meeting has been held in the church and members of the council were delighted with the warm welcome and the new facilities. The council will meet again in Penrhos Church on 16 June at 7pm.

## Raising funds for St Cadoc's and St James the Elder. National Gardens Scheme : NGS Open Garden at Longhouse Farm

How lucky were we? The weather was fine and dandy for the Open Garden at Longhouse Farm, Penrhos, on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April. The garden looked absolutely stunning, especially the tulips and blossom. A lot of hard work to be sure.

Both days were well attended, especially the Sunday, and the refreshments provided by St Cadoc's on Saturday and St James on Sunday were very popular. The funds raised by both churches are absolutely invaluable in maintaining these wonderful places. We are all very grateful to Martin and Merilyn Anderson for allowing us to have the opportunity to raise much needed funds at their splendid open garden. Thank you.



And thank you also to everyone who baked, made tea, served, washed up and cleared up. A great team effort!

## St. Mabli's, Llanvapley

### Good Friday in Llanvapley

In recent years, St Mabli's has quietly become the place where people gather on Good Friday, and this year was no different. The preparations begin without much fuss. Just the notice board placed carefully on the corner of Firs Road and then the gentle work of readying the church itself. Inside, there's a simplicity to everything. No printed service sheets, no elaborate arrangements, just the stillness of the space and the sense that something meaningful is about to unfold. When the service begins, Revd. Heidi leads with a calm, reflective presence, guiding everyone through familiar prayers and the solemn beauty of Good Friday hymns. Voices rise together for "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," filling the church in a way that feels both intimate and profound. At the very start, the large wooden cross is carried slowly to the altar, its weight and presence setting the tone for all that follows. It remains there throughout, a quiet focal point. As the service comes to its close, there is no rush to speak or linger. People simply leave as they came, quietly, thoughtfully, stepping back out into the world, carrying a little of that stillness with them.

### Changing the colours

With Easter triumphantly ticked off the calendar, St Mabli's settled into that quieter, slightly less dramatic stretch of the church year. For most people, this shift passes unnoticed. But for the select few entrusted with preparing the service, it signals a task of immense importance and dignity: changing the colours. Now, you might think this would be straightforward. You would be wrong. At St Mabli's, this sacred duty has developed something of a tradition... of being completely forgotten. So it was that, on the first Sunday after Easter, everything appeared perfectly in order until Revd. Heidi arrived, took one look around, and realised that the church was still firmly dressed for Lent. Instead of the fresh, hopeful green of the post-Easter season, there it all was: a sea of unmistakable, deeply penitential purple. There was a pause. A moment. The kind of moment where everyone silently hopes someone else will fix it. Revd. Heidi, to her credit, handled the situation with admirable grace, gently pointing out the small, but liturgically significant, oversight. The congregation, meanwhile, perfected the ancient art of looking innocent while avoiding eye contact. The service continued, the purple doing its best to blend in and not draw attention to itself. And afterwards, in a flurry of mild embarrassment and hurried determination, the great colour correction was finally carried out. The real mystery, however, lies just inside the vestry. Pinned clearly to the door, impossible to miss unless you are specifically not looking, is an ancient and authoritative notice listing, in no uncertain terms, exactly which colours should be used throughout the year. It has been there for as long as anyone can remember. It will, no doubt, be there next year too. And, if tradition holds, it will be just as effectively ignored. However, there is some good news! Thanks to our dedicated team we didn't forget that now that Lent is over flowers are allowed to return to the church. Well done Flossie!



LITURGICAL COLOURS	
ADVENT	VIOLET
CHRISTMAS to EPIPHANY 1	WHITE
EPIPHANY 2 to QUINGAGESIMA	GREEN
LENT	VIOLET
EASTER DAY to AFTER ASCENSION	WHITE
WHITSUNDAY	RED
TRINITY SUNDAY	WHITE
TRINITY 1 to TRINITY 25	GREEN
SAINT'S DAY	W OR R

### The 'bleeding' yew

Some readers who have visited Pembrokeshire may have visited St Brynach's Church in Nevern. Quite apart from the remarkable history of Christianity surrounding Nevern Church dating back to the 6th Century, the churchyard is also renowned for the "Bleeding Yews" which line the access path to

the front of the Church. One of these is known as the Bleeding Yew. It is not unusual for a tree to produce sap where it may have been damaged but generally such sap dries up quite quickly. The Bleeding Yew seems to produce blood-red sap, with a consistency similar to blood, which can be particularly spectacular in certain lights.

Llanvapley Church has its own ancient yew tree, perhaps not quite as famous as the Bleeding Yew of Nevern, but, as it turns out, not entirely without drama of its own. On the morning of Sunday 12 April, I wandered over to unlock the church ahead of the service, . Having done my duty, I turned to head back and was startled. There, close to the steps, was a striking, deep red patch on one of the yew's branches (the one on the right in this picture). Not just a stain, but something far more unsettling: it seemed to be dripping. The tree, quite unmistakably, appeared to be bleeding. I decided to come back later with my phone to prove I hadn't imagined the whole thing. But when I returned for the service, the scene had changed completely. The red patch had vanished without a trace. No stain, no drip, nothing. During the service, I shared my tale, fully expecting at least a few raised eyebrows. Instead, there was immediate interest and before long a small expedition formed, determined to investigate the tree. We gathered around the yew tree, peering at its branches with great seriousness... and there, at last, was a single piece of evidence: one solitary, deep red droplet clinging on. Yew trees in churchyards have long been wrapped in legend and symbolism, and some believe that such "bleeding" is a sign of sympathy with the crucifixion of Jesus. Whether mystery, miracle, or something more botanical, it certainly added an unexpected touch of intrigue to an otherwise ordinary Sunday morning. If you're tempted to see Llanvapley's bleeding yew for yourself, I'd recommend visiting after a good shower of rain. It seems, whatever the explanation, that the weather may have a hand in coaxing out its more dramatic side..



### Churchyard Clean-up 2026

Members of the village community are invited to come to the churchyard on **Saturday 16 May at 10am.** Please come along with your gardening tools and spend an hour or so helping to make the churchyard tidy. It's not all hard work. There will be a chance to have a chat and to relax with a cup of coffee and maybe a piece of the now legendary "lemon drizzle" cake.



## A Kenyan idyll with medical overtones!

Imagine if you will a fabulous holiday – staying in a remote and luxurious house on a near deserted Indian Ocean beach where swimming in the sea is like getting into a warm bath.

Well, how lucky were we to be there this February when quite suddenly all seven of us were struck down with a rather nasty stomach bug and help, we needed to see a doctor.

To our amazement, the local doctor, David, arrived at the house that same morning with the necessary medication to sort us out, and in the course of conversation invited us to see his local health centre and hospital the following day.



There is no equivalent to the NHS in Kenya, and it was truly humbling to visit Dr David and his team who are looking after some twenty thousand people, almost all of whom live, by our standards, in grinding poverty. Despite this, everyone we met was full of smiles and optimism, and we thought that they seemed to have a deep Christian faith – not least as evidenced by the large number of churches we saw on the roadsides throughout Kenya.

Our photos show some of the very basic healthcare buildings, mostly constructed of breeze blocks with corrugated iron roofs, and we were delighted to make a donation to the hospital's appeal for a new born baby “resuscitaire” unit.

Half a million Kenyan Shillings sounds like a lot of money but in fact it is a shade under £3000 at present rates of exchange, so if any of our churches would like to help with this project please do let me know.

Thomas Lowes, Treasurer, St Mabli's Church Llanvapley  
thomasnlowes@gmail.com





Visitors' books are very common in churches. Both Llanvapley and Llantilio have one and visitors are encouraged to take time to sign it and perhaps leave a message.

It is very interesting to find out who comes to our churches. In January, Llanvapley welcomed Gustavo from Buenos Aires (via Builth Wells) and in February we welcomed some former residents of the village – Andrew and David Rudman who used to live in Trothy Cottage. Their father was a churchwarden and both of them were choir boys in the church at the time when Fr. Adams was the vicar.

In April we had a puzzling visitor by the name of Laurie Driver! (well that's what it looked like). I am not sure what his real name is but it was not a joke as he came as a representative of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to tend the grave of Sejeant C. Williams, Royal Field Artillery who died on 6th January 1918.

## **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny**

### **Meditation update for May**

Meditation continues in the Chancel at Llantilio Crossenny Church on Tuesday mornings from 8.30-9am on the following dates:

#### **May 12th & 19th**

I'm delighted that two members of Llanarth Catholic Church (one for quite a while) have been joining us. It's lovely that it is an ecumenical happening - of course we all have the same roots!



The quiet treasures to be found if we take the time to look - violets outside my door

## **Llantilio Crossenny Church Plant Sale**

### **May the Fourth be with you!**

The fabulous, evergreen and hugely popular **Annual Plant Sale** is almost upon us. It will take place inside the church at St Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny at 2.00pm on Monday 4<sup>h</sup> May, the first May Bank Holiday Monday.

Refreshments are available, with delicious cakes and baked goods for sale, a super raffle and other surprises as well as a wide variety of plants and shrubs.

**Gardeners and Friends:** All donations to the sale are always gratefully received. Just bring them along on the day, anytime between 10.00am and 1.30pm. Plants, big and small are very welcome. If you require plants to be collected, please contact Margaret on 07460656707.

**Or** If you can help set up in the morning from 10.00am or on the stalls, your contribution will be very much appreciated. Please let Margaret know in advance of the day.

Please note, we are going to try the card reader again but please bring cash just in case the signal fails us.



**Proceeds are in aid of church funds.**

**This is a major fundraiser for the church so please come along and support the upkeep of this very special place.**

### **Eco Church Update**



### **St Teilo's Churchyard Working Party News:**

We are delighted to share a small but meaningful step forward in caring for our churchyard in an Eco-friendly way. Apart from the lovely Wyn, who tirelessly chips away at it on a regular basis, our monthly merry band has grown from 2 to 4 willing helpers in April! Thank you to everyone who has been willing to give even an hour of their time to help. It truly matters and will make a difference.

This gentle approach to gardening helps support wildlife, encourages biodiversity, and honours the natural beauty of this sacred space.

If you have ever thought about joining, it's only an hour at most, and many hands make light work. You would be very welcome – **1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month (weather permitting) from 9.30am**

### **May & June: A Living Churchyard, A Living Hope**

May and June bring a quiet transformation—not only across the wider countryside, but right here within our own churchyard.

What might once have looked “untidy” begins to reveal itself as something richer. By allowing small areas to grow a little more freely, we are starting to see the fruits of an eco-friendly approach.

In May, the churchyard edges soften with cow parsley, buttercups, and daisies, while longer grass shelters insects and pollinators beginning their busy season. This ties beautifully with the spirit of **No Mow May**—a reminder that sometimes doing less allows creation to do more.

Then, as May turns toward June, a familiar and much-loved visitor returns—the Common Swift.

They arrive from thousands of miles away, from Africa, and suddenly our skies are alive with their movement and sound. If you stand quietly in the churchyard on a warm evening, you will see them racing overhead in what are often called “screaming parties”—their high, wild calls echoing around the church tower. Many swifts return year after year to nest in the same small spaces in old buildings, and our own church plays a part in their story.

By June, the churchyard is no longer simply green—it is alive. Foxgloves rise, honeysuckle scents the air, and bees move steadily from flower to flower. Birds are feeding their young, and as the light lingers into the evening, bats begin their quiet, graceful flight.

There is a gentle teaching in all of this:

- In May, we see **hope**—new life emerging, fragile yet full of promise

- In June, we see **trust**—that life, when given space, knows how to flourish

Our small efforts—to leave a patch unmown, to welcome volunteers, to notice rather than tidy away—are part of something much bigger. We are not just maintaining a space; we are participating in a living, breathing creation.

And perhaps the swifts say it best. They come, they fill the sky with life, and they leave again all too soon. Their presence is brief, but it changes how we see the season.

May is a beautiful time of the year because the churchyard isn’t just something we tend—it becomes a place of arrival, nesting, and song. By keeping areas, a little wilder and full of insects, you’re quietly supporting these remarkable aviators who have travelled thousands of miles to be here.

So, whether you come to tend, to visit, to volunteer, or simply to sit for a moment, you are invited to notice what is quietly unfolding here. In this place, life is not only remembered—it is continually renewed.

Our churchyard can become a little haven for returning migratory birds—many of them arriving from Africa and southern Europe to breed here in the UK.

Here are some you might be lucky enough to see or hear:

**Song-filled visitors:**

- **Common Swift** – Arriving in early May, often seen screaming high overhead, rarely landing except to nest.

- **Swallow** – Graceful, low-flying birds with forked tails, often around open spaces and churchyards.
- **Common House Martin** – Small, sociable birds nesting under eaves, darting through the air catching insects.

#### **Hedgerow and tree singers:**

- **Common Chiffchaff** – One of the first to arrive, with its familiar “chiff-chaff” call echoing through trees.
- **Willow Warbler** – A softer, more melodic song drifting through hedges and young trees.
- **Blackcap** – Often called the “northern nightingale” for its rich, fluting song.

#### **Secretive summer visitors:**

- **Common Whitethroat** – A lively little bird, often seen perched on brambles or shrubs.
- **Common Redstart** – A striking bird with an orange-red tail, sometimes found around old trees and in churchyards.

Early mornings around International Dawn Chorus Day are filled with birdsong, a layered and joyful offering that asks nothing of us but our attention. To pause and listen is, perhaps, its own form of prayer.

### **The Gift of the Dawn Chorus**

On the first Sunday of May, we are invited into a moment that asks very little of us yet offers so much in return—**International Dawn Chorus Day** (this year, Sunday 3rd May).

Before the world fully wakes, while the light is still tender and blue, and the day has not yet gathered its demands, the birds begin to sing. Not cautiously, but wholeheartedly. Their song rises into the silence—not to impress, not to achieve, but simply because singing is inherent to them.

At this hour, different voices emerge and overlap, each with its own character. The robin is often among the first, it’s clear, liquid notes breaking the darkness. Soon after, the blackbird’s rich, fluting song carries across gardens and hedgerows, joined by the bright, intricate phrases of the song thrush. Even the smallest birds, like the wren, fill the air with surprisingly powerful bursts of sound. What may seem like a simple chorus is, in truth, a living tapestry of many distinct voices, each taking its place in the morning.

If we allow ourselves to pause and listen, something within us also begins to soften. The restless mind quietens. The pull of “what I should be doing” loosens its grip. For a few moments, we are no longer striving—we are simply present.

In this space, the dawn chorus can feel like more than birdsong. It becomes a gentle call back to what is essential. A reminder that life is not only something to be managed or endured, but something to be simply received and enjoyed.

Scripture tells us that creation is always speaking of God—often in ways that do not require words. And perhaps this is one of those ways. In the layered voices of the morning, there is a quiet expression of praise, of trust, of beginning again.

You might choose to mark this day by rising a little earlier, stepping outside, or simply sitting by an open window. The chorus is usually at its fullest from about half an hour before sunrise, when the light is just beginning to return. No effort is needed beyond listening. No expectation beyond being there.

And as the birds greet the new day, perhaps we, too, can meet it differently—not rushed or burdened, but open, attentive, and gently aware of the presence that holds all things together.

[This is a lovely link to the Dawn Chorus identifying the birds you are likely to hear:](#)

# Ministry Area News

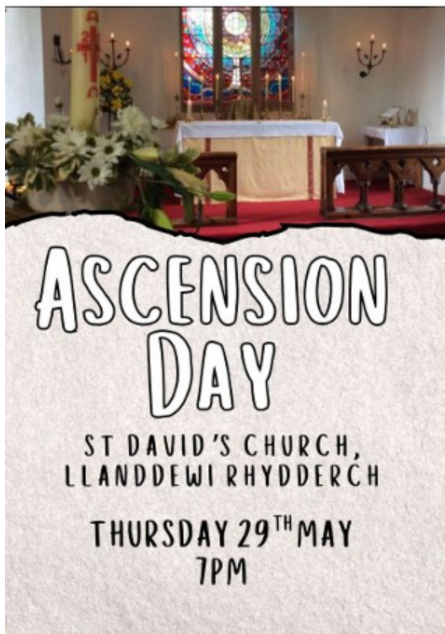
## The Walk up the Holy Mountain.

Good Friday, April 3rd, dawned glumly. From a distance the familiar shape of the Skirrid was obstructed from view by low fog and scudding cloud. The sky glowered down at the brave souls who gathered in the Skirrid car park at 9.00am, ready for the ascent. The mood was meditative as the group made their spiritual pilgrimage up through the mist to Ysgryd Fawr. The solemnity of the Stations of the Cross enabled deep reflection of the path of Jesus from Pilate's house to Calvary.

At the top, there was a sense of peaceful camaraderie as well as some relief that it hadn't poured with rain.



## Ministry Area Events



### Safeguarding Training

Saturday 9th May 10am-11am (Module A)  
11am-1pm (Module B) St Teilo's, Llantilio Pertholey: We are holding Safeguarding for both Module A and Module B for treasurers, wardens, secretaries, trustees, children's workers and any role in a position of responsibility. You should have been contacted separately if your training is due for renewal but do get in touch if you are unsure.

**SAFEGUARD TRAINING**

Essential Module A and B training for all wardens, treasurers, secretaries, trustees and worship leaders.

**Saturday 9th May**  
Module A 10:00-10:45  
Module B 11:00-1:00

**St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Pertholey**

**BOOK YOUR PLACE** To book your place or check if your training needs renewing, please email: [maryheading.nmma@outlook.com](mailto:maryheading.nmma@outlook.com)

## Community News

### Llanvapley and District Gardening Club News - May



# LLANVAPLEY & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

Meeting 7pm first Wednesday every month

At Llanvapley Pavilion, NP7 8SN

We're all busy in our gardens at this time of the year. The blossoms all around are just beautiful with so many different wild flowers growing in the hedgerows are a joy to see. The Gardening Club are holding a Summer Flower and Produce Show on Saturday 22nd August at Llanvapley Pavilion at 2pm.

Everyone is welcome to enter produce, floral arrangements, art, crafts and baking, there are many categories to suit everyone including children. The programme can be found at the bottom of the newsletter. This month at the Gardening Club Paul Green from Green Leaves Nursery will be giving a presentation on Plants of the Season. Paul will be bringing along plants to show and talk through various characteristics and how we can use them in our gardens, he will also have some plants to sell. Everyone is welcome to come along with a guest fee of £5. The meeting is on Wednesday 6th May at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion. Any queries please contact [marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk)



*Anyone recognise this garden?*

**Llanvapley Sports Pavilion & Village Hall (LSSA)**

**Chatty Crafters - the next meeting for the CC is Monday 18th May at 10.30 at the Pavilion.**

# **What's on at the Pavilion Llanvapley April/May 2025**

**Thursday 23rd April 7pm- 9.30pm**

Quiz Night with Fish & Chips from Frydays Fish Bar

Food orders by Wednesday 22nd April 2pm

**Saturday 25th April 7pm-9.30pm**

Film Night - EPIC Elvis Presley in Concert!

**Friday 1st May 6.30pm-9.30pm**

Pop-up-Bar. Meet & relax with Friends and Neighbours

**Saturday 2nd May 10.30am**

Llanvapley Walking Group. Meet at the Pavilion for a Sociable Walk

**Wednesday 6th May 7pm-9.30pm**

Llanvapley & District Gardening Club

**Thursday 7th May 7am-10pm**

Polling Station for Welsh Parliament elections @ Pavilion

No ID required!

**Wednesday 13th May 7pm-9pm**

WI Monthly Meeting. New members welcome

**Thursday 21st May 10.30am**

Coffee Morning £3 plus £1 raffle

**Thursday 28th May 7pm-9.30pm**

Cornhole Games Night with fish & chips from Frydays fish bar

**Saturday 30th May 7pm-9.30pm**

Film Night with pop up bar

## **Llantilio Crossenny WI**

Our April meeting was also our AGM so we commenced with the business required by the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) Constitution and Rules.

The Treasurer's Report demonstrated the importance to our group of grants received this year from Whitecastle Community Council and the Community Green Energy Fund. Without these grants it would be difficult to function effectively.

We also reviewed the year gone and it's evident what a vibrant and sociable lot we are.

We have taken part in many National Federation (NFWI) campaigns and events including: Bystanders Can be Lifesavers, No More Violence Against Women and Dental Health Matters. We have voted at NFWI level for the annual resolution and changes to the constitution as well as taken part in the NFWI Lottery and the Standing with Giants Poppy Appeal.

Our own WI has enjoyed a varied program of meetings, outings and a multitude of social events, mainly involving eating, and having fun together. The Report stated 'We have enjoyed a program that was designed by the Committee to appeal to the broad church of interests within our group and reflect the ethos of the WI movement. This past year we have fandangoed to Flamenco, hip-hopped with the Sassy Steps Showstoppers; we've learnt about the murmuring birds and the Bees; smelt the aromatherapy oils and the winter foliage (with Jan); connected music to our brains; sung our hearts out in private and public (Granni Grease is already a legend of our times and we sang lovely at the Gwent Carol concert); we've been out to coffees, lunches, picnics and teas; we've sunned ourselves on the beach at Langland Bay and in Jackie's garden; we've competed in Co-operatives and quizzes and treasure hunts. In fact, what haven't we done!?"

Our review of the year was dedicated to Elsie and Jan, our dearly loved members but sadly departed members.

Margaret Parry presented her first report as President where she spoke warmly of the companionship and supportive nature of our WI. Margaret thanked every single member for their contributions and for making Llantilio Crossenny WI such a special group of women.

The Committee for 2026/6 was elected: Keiko, Margaret, Sue; Yevheniia, Jackie, Verity and Sheryl. Margaret Parry was then unanimously elected as the President of Llantilio Crossenny WI for 2026/7. Everyone clapped and cheered!

Following the business of the evening we rattled on through forthcoming events and Verity gave a verbal report of the NFWI Training Day for Federation and WI Champions that she attended in respect of the White Ribbon Campaign (Violence Against Women).

The date of our next meeting is: Wednesday 13th May where we will enjoy a Jewelry Making Workshop with Chris Champness. Everyone will leave with a piece of their own handmade jewelry. Materials are provided and will cost between £2 and £2.50pp. If any of our readers would like to join the Llantilio Crossenny WI, please don't hesitate to contact Sue (Secretary) at [sue.raynor@icloud.com](mailto:sue.raynor@icloud.com).

You are cordially invited to join us on the 13th May at 7.00pm, Llanvapley Pavilion. No charge but a contribution to refreshments and a raffle ticket purchase would be welcome.

## In the Spotlight

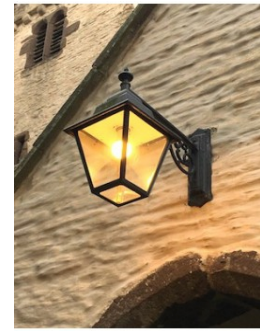
In this month's edition of The New Times the spotlight has fallen on a well know person in the Llanvapley community. But how well do we really know **Lynda Caster**? TNT decided it would ask her a few questions to find out more!

### **How long have you lived in Llanvapley and where did you live before moving to the village?**

I picked up the keys to Sunnybank in February 2019 having moved from Angmering village in West Sussex.

### **Were you familiar with the area before moving here?**

My son Kevin lives in Chepstow so I was familiar with the area, having visited many of the surrounding beauty spots entertaining my grandson Finlay for two weeks of his school holiday. Due to hiccup in the sale of my Sussex house I stayed with my son for six months before buying Sunnybank. I had seen the property but not viewed it as I wasn't in a position to buy but luckily they also had buyers pulling out and just as my house sold again Sunnybank was back on the market. Kevin was on holiday when I did eventually visit Llanvapley for the first time for a viewing. I put in my offer immediately. When Kev came back and said, what have you been doing, I said "oh I bought a house!"



### **What is living in Llanvapley like? Quiet? Too quiet?**

I commented to the estate agent "it's so quiet" to his credit he did say, well, there is farm traffic. Of course there are times when farmers must make all haste to complete seasonal tasks but I had fallen in love with Sunnybank and Llanvapley and I imagined myself being involved with The Cricket Pavilion. Though my contribution was to be more immersive I think fate intervened to find me my forever home.

### **Are you working at the moment?**

I've been in paid employment of some kind since delivering newspapers age 12 and enjoyed the sense of purpose and personal growth it brings. For that reason I didn't retire till my 70th birthday but the Pavilion has been a substitute passion with side benefits of social connection adding structure and routine to my life which I've always sought.

### **I understand you worked in the retail sector. Have you a funny story you can share with the readers?**

Although I worked at Harrods as a Senior Assistant Buyer, it was the buyers who were "top dogs". So when one of the buyers asked me to fit her for a maternity bra I was chuffed. I measured her in the Lingerie fitting room and stepped out to find the appropriate garment. I was stopped by an elegant couple with a sales enquiry which I hurriedly arranged and not to my usual service standards, just so I could get back to the buyer stranded in the fitting room. However, when apologising for the delay in returning she said "oh that's ok, they told me you were with The King and Queen of Spain!" That's when I learned Royalty trumps Harrods Buyer.

### **You are the Chair of the Llanvapley Sports and Social Association? What is it like dealing with volunteers rather than being the boss?**

As Chair of the LSSA I am mindful that it's not employees or even volunteers I'm working with, its friends and neighbours. In my role as a boss in business I've always had a "light touch" management style. Low intervention giving autonomy, trust and empowerment over

micromanagement. If you are a supportive resource you will be sought out for direction and assistance to the task in hand.

**What was your first memory?**

I had a memory of being in a cot watching my dad climb out the bedroom window. I didn't understand what was happening, but years later my father told me that I was born in a warehouse on Alexandra Docks in Grimsby. There was a pontoon that my dad stepped out onto so he and his brothers could work on projects. They were probably foraging wood.



**Where did you go to school? Do you have any special memories of school?**

My early school years in Grimsby were at St Parade nursery school then infants and although most of my school friends wanted to go to the new comprehensive, I chose to attend Chelmsford secondary modern girls school. I found the small class sizes an advantage, just twelve of us in the final examination year and only three of us taking science.

In my 40s I was managing sales teams of 50+ employees but lacked strategic knowledge to be considered for more senior roles, so I took the decision to go back to learning and enrolled on a Diploma in management program at the Guildhall university in London. At the time I was working for Liberty of London as Sales Manager for Women's and Men's fashions. They supported my ambition and financed the course allowing me day release to attend the University.

**What was your first job and can you remember how much you were paid?**

My first full time job was as Laboratory assistant for Ross Group food in Grimsby. The work involved taking samples from the factory floor and freezer warehouses of products at various points of the manufacturing process and testing for levels of bacteria. My pay was £14 a week. I gave my mother 1/3 of my earnings as housekeeping.

**Have you done a lot of travelling and what is your favourite holiday destination?**

I like arriving at a holiday destination but dislike the process of getting there and package holidays would definitely be off my list. You can't beat the Seychelles and Mauritius for relaxation but Italy tops for culture and history. I do have favourite memories of Rome, Umbria, Tuscany and Portugal. Maybe one day I'll brave the rigours of travel and return to Italy

**Do you have any pets?**

I'm sure anyone who visits the pavilion is aware I have a cat called Banksy. Not everyone will be so familiar with Luna as she is not as adventurous. They are both British short haired tabby cats. Banksy's colour is cream and Luna is silver spot. I'm often asked if they are related but they are not. There's a one year age difference but they both were born in Merthyr which seems a breeding hotspot for Tabby cats

**What do you like to do in your spare time?**

I'm a fair weather gardener purely for the visual benefits. Shallow borders and a sloping bank restrict what can be done so extensive vegetable production is not an option. The majority of my spare time goes to my big passion the pavilion. There is self interest as it is an anchor for my social life. Coffee with friends, watch the latest film, Pilates to protect my core strength and stability. I can do it all if I organise it on my doorstep. Maybe I can't separate free time from the job satisfaction I got in my work life from turning a business around and bringing it to profit.

**Describe the view from your kitchen window.**

I flipped the kitchen layout when doing renovations so that I have a three sided view from my kitchen windows. This gives me a view of both sides of my garden and a dual view of The Red Hart pub and The Pavilion

**Do you watch or follow any particular sport?**

I've been lucky to experience most of the top sporting events in their iconic venues, Tennis at Wimbledon, Grand Prix at Silverstone, Ladies day at Epsom, Golf at Wentworth, Rugby at Twickenham and premiere league football. So I like to keep a top level eye on all sports so I'm aware of the sporting landscape. I will occasionally watch a big football or rugby match but it has to be a nail biter. Otherwise I'll flick over and catch the results later.

**How do you keep yourself fit?**

I used to run to keep fit and attend a yoga class in Abergavenny but now we have Katie's Pilates at the Pavilion twice a week I hold the record for attendance having not missed a session in the last year. On Fridays I walk with other Llanvapley ladies about 3-4 miles. I also set aside the time in my diary to walk with Phil Allsopp's walking group which meets the first Saturday of the month at the Pavilion

**Have you ever met anyone famous?**

I suppose the most famous people I met would be Princess Diana and Sarah Ferguson. At Harrods I managed the personal shopping service but my boss looked after the Royals. He asked me to come in early one day at Harrods to help with Princess Diana. She wanted to select some casual wear and he needed me to assist with processing the sale. It was memorable because having concluded the sale she slipped on the floor and landed à la derrière. Sarah Ferguson's sale was equally notable. A customer was fawning over her at the till point but then left just as I was wrapping up her 'hold you up pull you in' lingerie. Sarah said to me, I think we have a problem, and pointed to her feet. I glanced over the till point to see an unattended brief case. It was in the days of IRA bombs so it had to be treated seriously. Luckily Sarah's private protection officer was close by and he came over to deal with it but not before Sarah took a piece of tissue and placed it over her intended purchases. That night on the TV I saw her engagement to Andrew was announced. If you remember, she wore an outfit with a bustle and I knew what was under it!



**What occasion has caused you the most embarrassment?**

I was in the fifth form but I really fancied this chap I saw on my bus journey. He was walking to the local college so when my friend said there was a do at the college I was keen to go with her. I walked in and saw him but as I didn't know my way around and my friend hadn't arrived I dived into the loos. But oh everything looked strange and I realised I was in the gents! Terrified to go out but terrified to stay, I had to brave it in the end but actually no one had noticed. A lesson for life - it's alright to mess up and embarrassment lasts only a moment. Oh yes and check the sign on the loo door!

**If you could invite three famous people to a meal at your house who would they be?**

Probably controversial but I would like to invite Henry VIII as he gave us some beautiful Tudor buildings, Thomas Cromwell as he was a formidable organiser and John Lennon as I just can't get over my childhood love

**What advice would you give to your younger self?** I would advise my younger self to follow your instincts that you are a sound decision maker so it will all be alright.

# Llantilio Crossenny Planter

Whitecastle Community Council have provided us with a beautiful wooden planter ready to put into place at the sign at the entrance to Llantilio Crossenny. Firstly, we need to tidy up the grassy area where it is to go. If anyone would like to help with doing this and choosing plants to go into the planter please let me know. It's going to make a wonderfully colourful entrance to our beautiful village. Whitecastle CC are very kindly also paying for plants to go into the planter, so let's make it a sight to be proud of. Please contact [marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk)

## Whitecastle Community Council News



Whitecastle Community Council  
Cyngor Cymuned Castellgwyn



### Improving Footpaths in Llantilio Crossenny and Penrhos Community Task Day

Thursday 28 May

10:00am Llantilio Crossenny Church Car Park

Join us for a community task day focused on improving local footpaths in Llantilio Crossenny and Penrhos.

The day will be led by Ross Emery, Community Links Officer from the Countryside Access team at Monmouthshire County Council. It will begin with a short briefing, followed by guidance on the tasks and use of equipment.

Volunteers are asked to bring their own PPE, including sturdy boots, weather-appropriate outdoor clothing, and food and drink for the day.

#### What to expect:

- Surveying local footpaths
- Light practical work such as waymarking and minor vegetation clearance
- Working in small groups across 2–3 identified routes (depending on numbers)

This event is organised jointly by Monmouthshire County Council and Whitecastle Community Council. It's a great opportunity to get involved, meet others, and help improve access to our local countryside.

We hope this taster day will spark interest in forming a new **Whitecastle Footpath Maintenance Group**, joining over 30 active groups already making a difference across Monmouthshire.

#### Who can take part?

Everyone in the Whitecastle community is welcome. This is not limited to residents of Llantilio Crossenny and Penrhos. The Community Council has been advised not to encourage residents to bring dogs.



If you would like to attend the task day and/or are interested in joining a future maintenance group, please contact the Clerk to the Council using the email address below. Knowing numbers in advance will help with planning.

Feel free to spread the word. Why not come along with friends or neighbours?

[whitecastlecommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:whitecastlecommunitycouncil@gmail.com)