



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 34 Jan. 2026



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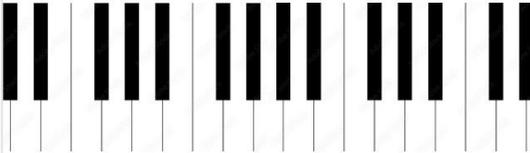
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For more information and a full list of activities, please look at our website www.sosa.u3asite.uk
Come along to one of our monthly meetings which start at 2pm normally on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Townsend Hall, Shipston, or contact Secretary, John Keaves, by e-mail secretary@sosau3acommittee.org to find out more

Service Rota January 2026

Jan 2026	St George's Darlingscott	St Mary's Ilmington	St Mary's Preston-on-Stour	St Peter's Stretton-on-Fosse	St Gregory's Tredington	St Mary's Whitchurch
4th Epiphany Sunday		11.00am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
11th Baptism of Jesus	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>		11.00am Holy Communion	
18th Epiphany 2		11.00am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	
25th Conversion of Paul	4.00pm Evening Worship <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>	11.00am Morning Worship		11.00am Holy Communion	<i>No services until March</i>

Church web-pages - For further information, please search for the Church name and click on the relevant 'A Church Near You' page.
(This is more effective than searching 'A Church Near You' directly.)

Ministers:

Rector: The Revd Canon Dr Richard Cooke 07952 544820 (mobile) or 01608 544821 (landline) or

Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com

Hon. Assistant Curate: The Revd Ros Wakefield 01608 682146 (landline)

Hon. Assistant Minister: The Revd Dr Tim Seller 01608 682244 (landline)

Reader Emeritus: Malcolm Davies 01789 450793 (landline)

Churchwardens:

Tredington Posts vacant – contact the Rector

Darlingscott Doreen McCarroll 01608 682949 (landline)

Ilmington Jane Downie 01608 682720 (landline)

Preston-on-Stour Andrew Holman- West 07712 193773 (mobile)

Stretton-on-Fosse Posts vacant – contact the Rector

Whitchurch Carol Rutter 01789 450795 (landline)

Paul Clark 07868 526830 (mobile)

The Parish Giving Scheme is the best way to support your local church financially.

Rev. Ros Wakefield writes...

A Splash of Words!

Given all the rain we have been experiencing recently, this seems an appropriate title for my first ever written words, as 'Rev. Ros'! That's the affectionate title that others greet me with since my ordination at St. Mary's Church, Ilmington, on Sunday 7 December. My ministry time is split between the Downs and Valley Churches and the local Hospital Chaplaincy. May I share with you a few of my thoughts?

Prior to the ordination service, as clergy were robing-up in the village school, a photograph was taken of them laughing as they walked the wet, windy path towards the church. It was posted on the Hospital Chaplaincy WhatsApp Group, with the caption, 'A Splash of Clergy'! I mention it, simply because it captures the joy of this occasion for us all. For, there can be no ordination without all the good people of our communities, both within and without the church walls.

Of all the precious memories that day, and there were many, the one that touched me the most was the moment during the ordination service, when I turned from facing Bishop Sophie towards the congregation: only to be embraced by a huge wave of warmth and love. So many beaming, joyful faces! The culmination of many 'splashes of love' gathered and reflected in the organisation, the beautifully decorated church, the divine music, specially chosen and played by our wonderful organist, and so, so much more! This love is reciprocated, along with my heart-felt gratitude for all that you are and all that had done to make the day so special. To each and every one of you, thank you!

Finally, a 'splash of hope': Emmanuel, God-with-us, continues to be with us even now, as we begin our journey together into 2026 and beyond. God bless you all!

PS: *A Splash of Words* is the title of a book by Mark Oakley; for those who enjoy and believe in poetry!

From the registers

Ordination of a Deacon:

At St Mary's Ilmington on 7 December, by Sophie, Bishop of Coventry: Rosanna Wakefield, to serve in the Downs & Valley Churches, and the South Warwickshire Hospitals Chaplaincy.

Funerals:

At St Mary's Preston-on-Stour on 8 December, Shirley Clarke, aged 89, followed by burial

At Locke's Funeral Directors' Chapel, Brailles, on 8 December, Gwen Thomlinson, aged 105, followed by cremation
At St Gregory's Tredington on 9 December, Ron Clarke, aged 105, formerly of Tredington, followed by burial

Editor's Note

Happy New Year! The deadline for copy for the February issue is **Saturday 17 January**. Send copy to Susan Brock, Editor, E. s.brock9@btinternet.com, Daisy Cottage, Front St., Ilmington, CV36 4LA. Please note that the limit for editorial articles is 150 words. Enquiries about advertising to Tim Seller: E. Tim.seller@outlook.com.

We are grateful to the Ilmington Show Committee for a grant towards the magazine's publishing costs.

This month's cover image marks the ordination of Ros Wakefield as deacon on 7 December at St Mary's Ilmington. If you have a piece of art work or a photo you would like to share don't hesitate to send it in to me. It should be portrait shape so it fits on the cover and a jpg or PDF file makes my life easier!

Susan Brock, Editor

Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2025 Armscote, Blackwell, Darlingscott and Ilmington

On behalf of the Royal British Legion, I would like to thank everyone that kindly donated to this year's appeal, the collection raised £2187.94p. I would also like to express my special thanks to everyone that kindly helped with the collection, your assistance is greatly appreciated.

David Larner

TREDINGTON WITH BLACKWELL AND DARLINGSOTT

Newbold and Tredington C of E Primary School

Happy New Year! After a festive and relaxing break, it has been wonderful having the children back in school. It is always a pleasure hearing about their Christmas holidays, news and achievements. This term, the children are having their very own friendship disco and some of our Key Stage 2 children are busy preparing a special assembly, as part of their 'Warwickshire Wildlife' project. The children are eager to share their ideas of how to make their school ground more eco-friendly and they have thought of some brilliant initiatives to enable wildlife to feel safer. These include more bird boxes, growing more plants and flowers and developing the use of the school pond. They are very excited about this project and have shown excellent team work.

Tredington & District Garden Club

There's no meeting in December. Our next meeting will be the annual lunch on Thursday 15th January at The Lion. Members will be contacted about the lunch by email.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

Marian White, Chair

Village Lunch Sunday 18 January, 2026 at 1.00 in the Community Hall

We are celebrating the New Year with a village lunch in the Community Hall to which everyone in Tredington and nearby is invited. Don't worry about the weather outside, the hall will be nice and warm. Bev Webb will be cooking a roast joint with all the vegetables and we will be providing the puddings, cheese and biscuits and coffee. Bring your own wine but soft drinks and water will be available. In order for us to give numbers to Bev, please sign your name on the list on the table just inside the church. Let us know if you would like a vegetarian option or need a lift. Any profit left over after we have paid for the catering and the use of the hall, will be given to a local Dementia charity. Please be generous. Enquiries Marilyn Payne 07802 644833, Jenny Plenderleith 01608 664278, Sarah Taylor 01608 662782.

Jenny Plenderleith

Tuesday Morning Qigong

Start your day with balance and energy by joining our 45-minute Qigong class at 8.00am—perfect for those heading to work. This class is designed to suit all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned practitioners, and is accessible to everyone, with seated exercises available for those who prefer them. £7 per person (cash/card on the day or via <https://breath-therapy.uk/events>.)

Gill Goodlad, Hall Secretary & Trustee

Tredington & Blackwell WI

The next meeting will be at 1.00pm in the Community Hall on Thursday 8th January. We begin with lunch, followed by our speaker, Kat Weatherill taking about "Becoming Mother Goose". All women are welcome (Guests £5)

Craft & Chatter

With no meeting on New Years Day, we next meet at 2pm on Monday 19th January in the Community Hall Bring a craft project if you wish, and join us for social conversation, tea and cake. £1.00 per person, no membership required. For more information contact Vanessa on 07818 599353

Vanessa Ward, WI Secretary/Hall Trustee

WI Community Film

The next film will be screened in the Community Hall on Friday 6th February. It is a legal drama concerning consent for medical treatment. Doors open at 7pm with bar, the film begins at 7.30 with a short interval for drinks and ice creams. Free admission (donations welcome from @hotmail.com or text 07789 810877)

WI Community Film

The next film is on Friday 12th December in the Community Hall. It is a warm-hearted "modern festive classic" about the unexpected consequences of a transatlantic house swap over Christmas. Doors open at 7pm with bar, the film begins at 7.30 with a short interval for drinks and ice creams. Free admission (donations welcome from non-members). For enquiries or to book places contact Gill at gillgoodlad@hotmial.com or text 07789 810877
Gill Goodlad, Hall Trustee

For information about more regular events at Tredington Community Hall:

see the monthly programme displayed on the notice board or visit www.tredington-community-hall.org

St George Darlingscott

This is an end of year's thank you for all the help that we have received. Darlingscott is very fortunate in having a number of people who are willing to help with the church: decorating for special services, flower arranging and also refreshments for the Carol, etc. and Remembrance Sunday. Thank you all for the help.
Doreen McCarroll. Churchwarden

STRETTON ON FOSSE

Stretton Parish Charity

Many of you will be aware of this Charity, but for the benefit of those that aren't, small annual payments are currently issued under the following categories, depending on available funds:

'Winter Fuel Payment' – an annual payment is made in December to anyone over 65, who have been resident in the Parish for 3 years or more. **Also**, to households with at least one pre-school aged child.

'Moving to secondary school' – a one off payment made in July to all children moving from year 6 to year 7 to help with costs such as uniform.

'Moving to second year of University Education' – a one off payment made to those who have completed their first year at university and plan to continue onto a second year.

'Hardship Payment' – 'for the relief of distress and sickness' by personal application to the trustees or brought to the attention of the trustees.

'Individual Educational Grants' – on personal application to the trustees.

'Community Organisations' – considered on application for projects that will benefit the community of Stretton Parish.

If you would like to get in touch with the trustees about any of these payments, please drop a note of your contact details into the post box on the wall at the entrance to the Village Hall.

Paul Robinson

Stretton's Soup Lunches

The lunches will restart on Jan 14th and will continue fortnightly until Easter. Come and choose from 3 homemade soups, at least one of which will always be vegetarian with rolls and butter. Tea or coffee and biscuits (and sometimes cake!) to follow. Donations welcome. All dates: Jan 14th & 28th; Feb 11th & 25th; March 11th & 25th. If you need a lift to and from the village hall, please contact Geri in advance on 07968 338848.
Geri Hunting

PRESTON ON STOUR

Preston Village Hall

Margaret Brocklehurst

Film Night - 7.30pm on Friday 30th January

Our new year will kick off with 'The Roses'. Life seems easy for picture-perfect couple Theo and Ivy: successful careers, a loving marriage, great kids. However, a tinderbox of fierce competition and hidden resentment make for dark comedy. Starring Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch. Looking forward to seeing you.

The Preston Quiz - 7.30 for 8.00pm start on 7th February.

Hosted as usual by our quizmaster, Mick Jennings. Teams of four - please book early to avoid disappointment! There will be a plate of delicious nibbles provided at half time, bring your own liquid refreshments. Bookings to Margaret or Mick. 01789 450710 or 450797 or E: prestonbrocks@gmail.com

Art Exhibition - 10 am - 4 pm on Saturday 21st February

There will be an exhibition of paintings, prints and collages by Pat Bates in aid of the Alzheimer society. All works on display are also available to take in return for a donation.
More details next month.

ILMINGTON

A New Year's Resolution

Love where you live! That's the slogan for the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign and where better to start than our village. Two whole wheelbarrows of litter have been picked up on the verges of Featherbed Lane between the turn to Compton Scorpion and the Shipston T-junction in the last 4 weeks and every month prior to that. It can't be our lovely friends and neighbours who do this but let's get the message out there. Do not throw your drinks cans, food wrappings, plastic bottles out of the car window. If you're out walking, take a bag and pick up what you see. In both cases TAKE THE RUBBISH HOME AND BIN IT!
Disappointed of Ilmington

Ilmington C of E Primary School

Autumn term ended with some lovely Christmas celebrations. We enjoyed the infant nativity production, "Knock Knock" in St Mary's Church where the children sang and acted beautifully. This was followed by our Christmas jumper day where the children wore an amazing variety of knitwear and enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner. The PTA made it a special time by providing crackers and gifts for all the children. We finished the term with a beautiful carol service where our Year 6 children helped lead us in worship. January looks like being a busy and enjoyable month with our annual trip to the pantomime in Chipping Norton to see "Beauty and the Beast". Later in the month, our Keystage 2 children will be performing their play, "Ali Barber and the Bongo Bandits". They have been hard at work practising their acting, dancing, singing and jokes. We're sure it will be an exceptional time!

Paul Crouch, Headteacher

Help Is at Hand If you are Supporting a Dementia and Alzheimer's Sufferer

My job is to support carers whose loved ones are suffering from life-limiting conditions such as Dementia and Alzheimer's and other conditions by signposting them to Services in the Community - Benefits - Professional and Charitable organisations which can help. And I can also assist with completing forms such as applications for Blue Badges etc.

I'm **at Ilmington Community Café on the last Friday of each month from 2.00-4.00**. The next date will be on Friday 30th January 2026. There are also Carer's Cafés at the VASA office at 3 Arden Street in Stratford-upon-Avon on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, and at Wellesbourne Village Hall on the 3rd Monday of each month from 10.30-12.00 and are free of charge. It is an absolute privilege to help people to find the right support to stay well, Independent and above all "Connected".

VASA is a long-established charity providing a lifeline to many through community transport with volunteer drivers, wheelchair loans and activities. If you are interested in becoming a VASA Volunteer email volunteer@vasa.org.uk or phone 01789 777990 and Select Option 4,

Angela J. Chick, VASA Community Connector

The Ilmington Circulation

To keep up with Ilmington events and issues between monthly magazines have a look at the online newsletter produced by the 20:20 group at www.ilmington2020vision.co.uk or subscribe by emailing info@ilmington2020vision.co.uk.

Ilmington 20:20 Vision group

Welcome in 2026!

The Community Shop and Café are ready to welcome you in January and we hope you'll make a resolution to come and see us more more frequently in the New Year.

The Café reopens on Tuesday 6th January, with the first Book Club of 2026 at 2pm. We will be chatting about the best-selling memoir *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, former first lady of the USA. Perhaps you'd like to read it in time for the discussion? Maybe you've already read it? Or could be you'd like to come along for coffee and good company? Everyone is welcome at our friendly community groups! On 28th January from 2pm you have the chance to Knit & Natter @thecafe. On Friday 30th from 2pm it's Coffee & Connect: get advice from Angela of VASA and a hot drink on us. And Parent & Baby group is available every Wednesday morning – call us on 01608 682838 to find out more. It's a whole new year!
Ilmington Community Shop Committee

Wednesday Club RSC Theatre event on 15th January **1pm outside Village Hall**

Happy New Year to you all! How many New Year resolutions have we forgotten already?

Our Christmas lunch was everything we needed to get the festive season off to a good start. Bev Webb cooked a delicious Christmas dinner and the Lower Quinton Choir were in very good voice.

Thank you to everyone for making it such a great occasion.

We start 2026 off with a visit to the Stratford theatre to see the BFG. If you have booked a ticket, then please **meet at the Village Hall on Thursday 15th January at 1 pm** where we will car share. Please bring money for the ticket. There will be no meeting in the village Hall on the Wednesday.

Birthdays start with Bryan Clifford on 4th of this month, followed by David Shell and Jenny Walker who were born on the same day, 22nd January. Happy birthday to you all.

Stay safe!

Carole Clifford Chairperson

Ilmington Village Hall

Best wishes for the New Year from your village hall. You might like to include the following in your wellbeing resolutions:

Tai chi on Monday mornings

Table tennis on alternate Tuesday afternoons and Thursday evenings.

Indoor Kurling on Thursday afternoons

Junior drama on Saturday mornings

We have now installed additional fan heating in the main hall and lounge areas. These are intended to enable rapid warm-up ahead of using the main heating. Hirers can turn these on 15 or so minutes ahead guests arriving to keep their winter events cosy.

Bryan Clifford. Chair, Village Hall Committee

Screen-on-the-Green

On Friday 30th January we are showing "Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale" – the third and final film in this beloved series. The screening also marks the start of Ilmington Screen-on-the-Green's

20th anniversary year. Please join us for this special occasion. Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start at the Village Hall. Tickets £4 from the village shop or on the door. Licensed bar, interval ice-creams and raffle available (cash only please). We are always grateful for donations of raffle prizes, so would be pleased if you'd think of us if you have any new but unwanted gift items. There is a box in the village café to receive them - thank you.
Lis Ribbans, Ilmington Cinema Group

WHITCHURCH

St Mary's Whitchurch

Over the centuries, St Mary's has been a site of excavation as well as worship, the excavation revealing much about the worship that went on there. For instance, when major repairs began in 1864, two floors were discovered beneath the existing one, 'the lowest of very quaint tiles, much worn by the feet of worshippers'. In the nave, digging to install an underground 'warming apparatus' brought 'three stone coffins...to light, one of which, to judge from its position' was 'that of the founder of the church'. Would that be William de la Plaunch, the first rector we can name? In the south wall a recess was revealed, a medieval 'lynchnoscope', a hole in the masonry opening onto the churchyard that gave felons or lepers or those otherwise excluded from church attendance access to confession, communion and alms. And perhaps, at Easter, it allowed them to see the Paschal Candle burning, a *lychnos* being, in Greek, a lamp or light.

Robert Howe



OUTSIDE THE PARISHES

Ladies' Spring Breakfast at the Halford Bridge Inn Looking Forward to 2026!

We've heard from life and faith experiences of very inspiring speakers during 2025; and heard how God has always been present and faithful through life's changing circumstances. We have a Spring date to note in our new diaries!

LORNA CAROLL will join us on **Saturday 14th March 2026** at 9.00 for 9.15am. Lorna comes from Winchcombe and will share with us after a continental breakfast, so please come! The generous Halford Inn hosts make everyone welcome and the coffee flows. The cost is now £9.50 and it's not too early if you would like to reserve a place, meet new people or join with friends. Everyone is very welcome and the breakfast is buffet style and very relaxed. To reserve a place please contact Liz Harvey at ma_harvey@hotmail.com, or text 07914 026451

Liz Harvey

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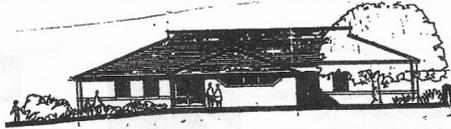
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For more information: strettonvillagehall@strettononfosse.com or contact Izzi on 07850 314161.

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