



The Downs and Valley Parishes Magazine No. 38 May 2026



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## May is blooming with community spirit

Join us at the Community Shop & Café for a bumper month of events and plenty of reasons to pop in. Stock up on all your Bank Holiday essentials with us in readiness for the 4th and 25th May. Don't miss Brian Meredith's historical display from 13th May - a perfect excuse to visit the Café for a coffee and a slice of homemade cake.

On 20th May we celebrate our 11th birthday and then it's time to explore the NGS Open Gardens over the weekend of 23rd-24th May. As usual, we'll be offering tea and cake to support the event on Saturday 23rd May.

Our much-loved Book Club, Knit & Natter and Parent & Baby Group will all take place throughout the month as usual.

**Come and say hello – we'd love to see you**



### Opening Hours

#### Shop

Weekdays – 7.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.00am - 5.00pm

Sunday/Bank Holidays - 8.30am - 1.00pm

#### Café

Tuesday to Saturday - 09.30am- 4.30pm

The Old Church, Upper Green, Ilmington CV36 4LE  
Tel: 01608 682838



## An evening of Parisian-flavoured music

**Swing from Paris** are an all-string jazz quartet of violin, guitars and double bass, inspired by the music of the 1930s, '40s and '50s: from the cafés and cabarets of Montmartre to Artie Shaw, Django Reinhardt, Stéphane Grappelli and the master of tango Astor Piazzolla.

## Preston on Stour Village Hall

 **Sat 13 June 2026**       **CV37 8NG**

 **7.30pm – 9.30pm.** Doors and bar open 7pm

**Tickets £18** in advance at [swingfromparis.co.uk](http://swingfromparis.co.uk)

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Tickets



## Service Rota May 2026

May 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
Easter 5		11.00am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>		11.00am Morning Worship	9.30am Morning Worship
10 <sup>th</sup> Easter 6	11.00pm Morning Worship	11.00am Morning Worship & Baptism	9.30am Holy Communion <i>(1662)</i>		11.00am Holy Communion	
17 <sup>th</sup> Easter 7		11.00am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Morning Worship	11.00am Holy Communion
24 <sup>th</sup> Pentecost	4.00pm Evening Worship <i>(1662)</i>	6.00pm Evensong <i>(1662)</i>	11.00am Morning Worship		11.00am Morning Worship & Baptism	
31 <sup>st</sup> Trinity		11.00am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion		11.00am Holy Communion	
<p><b>Please note that there will be only one service a month at St Peter's, Stretton-on-Fosse over the next few months.</b></p>						

**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](mailto:Richard.Cooke.Ilmington@Outlook.com)

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

Hon. Assistant Minister: The Revd Dr Tim Sellar 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)

Paul Clark 07868 526830 (mobile)

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

Stretton-on-Fosse Posts vacant – contact the Rector

Whitchurch Carol Rutter 01789 450795 (landline)

*Richard Cooke, the Rector, writes...*

## **Moving On**

At the recent Parish Annual Meetings I announced that I expect to be leaving my role as Rector of the Downs and Valley Churches early next year. Though nothing is set in stone yet, it is likely that 31 January will be my last active Sunday here, and my resignation take effect in February.

The announcement comes at this stage so that there will be plenty of time to prepare for the process of seeking my successor. The time for goodbyes is not yet!

I shall be retiring, and Barbara and I will be very sad to leave this beautiful area and the many lovely people we have got to know here over what, by next February, will be five years. We came with a sense of call to be part of the process of healing and restoring the parishes, and I hope that in the five years we have been here, we have been able to do that.

We shall only be going up the road to Coventry, so not very far away. In fact, from the top of Ilmington Downs you can see Coventry on a clear day, so if you walk up there you might even be able to wave to us!

## **Ros Wakefield**

You may remember that Ros Wakefield was ordained deacon in early December by Bishop Sophie in St Mary's Ilmington. The deacon's role in the Church of England is usually as a prelude to being ordained priest around a year later. In Ros's case the year has been condensed, so we expect that Bishop Sophie will ordain her as a priest in Coventry Cathedral at 4.00pm on Saturday 27 June, together with other deacons who were ordained last year. This is a public service and always shows off the Cathedral at its best, I think, so anyone who would like to come and support Ros is welcome.

The following morning, 28 June, we expect that Ros will celebrate communion for the first time at St Gregory's Tredington. Again, all are welcome to what will be a joyous occasion!

## **The Parish Giving Scheme**

The scheme is the best way to support your local church financially. Go to [www.parishgiving.org.uk](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk) and you will be able to locate your parish church and make a donation, either regularly or as a one-off gift, or find the dedicated Church website (see above) and click on the '**Supporting St Mary's/Peter's/Gregory's**' button to make a donation.

## From the Registers

### **Baptisms**

At St Mary's Ilmington on 12 April, Frederick Bridgewater, aged 7 months

At St Mary's Whitchurch on 19 April, Beatrice Bagshaw, aged 10 months

### **Banns of Marriage**

At St Mary's Ilmington on 5, 12, 19 April, Gabriella Lobb and David Spelman of Ilmington (marriage to take place on 9 May); Harriet Plackett and Oscar Mellors, of the parish of St Augustine's Highbury, London (marriage to take place on 16 May).

### **Funerals**

At Oakley Wood Crematorium on 16 April, Christine Warmington, formerly of Ilmington.

### **Interment of ashes**

At St Peter's Stretton-on-Fosse on 26 March, Robert (Michael) White, formerly of Stretton.

## Editor's Note

The deadline for copy for the April issue is **Saturday 16 May**. 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 to Tim Seller: E. [Tim.seller@outlook.com](mailto: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 is a photograph from Paul Bryan of the Traditional Ilmington Morris dancers at Larkstoke at Sunrise on May Day. 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*

### Wanted Hand Tools to Sell in Aid of the RNLI Lifeboats.

Please can I have any surplus hand tools (not power tools), for wood-working, motor maintenance, hobbies or crafts. I am happy to collect if required. Many thanks

*John Plenderleith, Hon. Treasurer, Stratford upon Avon Branch of the RNLI. 01608 664278*

## **WHITCHURCH**

### St Mary's

Anyone who keeps abreast of Church of England news knows how prominently safeguarding issues feature in its training of clergy, and in its engagement with congregations and the wider public. But you may not be aware of how firmly embedded its attention to safeguarding is at parish level. Not only is 'Safeguarding' a permanent item on every PCC agenda, and a Safeguarding Officer appointed for our six parishes

but members of every PCC, no matter what their age or experience, are required to complete on-line safe-guarding training both at 'basic' and 'foundation' level. This training, designed and administered by the Church of England National Safeguarding Team, equips the Church Council 'to engage positively with protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in both a practical and theologically informed way'. We're happy to report that Whitchurch has a 100% return on our training. And that no one scored less than 92% on tested knowledge.  
*Carol Rutter, churchwarden*

## **TREDINGTON WITH BLACKWELL AND DARLINGS SCOTT**

### **What's On in Tredington Community Hall**

#### **Art Group**

This social group of amateur artists meets weekly on **Mondays 10.00am - 12.30pm** (not bank holidays). There is no tuition, but plenty of mutual support and friendly advice. All ages, abilities and media are welcome. Visitors are welcome to drop in to meet us and find out more.

*Barbara Monnington, Hall Trustee*

#### **Craft & Chatter**

The next meetings are at 2pm on **Thursday 4th and Monday 18h May** in the Community Hall. This is a social group, with plenty of conversation, tea & cake, whilst craft is optional. £1 per person, no membership required. For more information contact Vanessa on 07818 599353 or [vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk](mailto:vanessa@tredingtonandblackwellwi.co.uk)

*Vanessa Ward, Hall Trustee*

#### **Tuesday Morning Qigong**

Start your day with balance and energy by joining our weekly 45-minute Qigong class at 8.00 - 8.45am - 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 Trustee*

#### **Community Evening**

On Thursday 14th May at 7pm, Making the Most of Your Weeds, presented by Sarah Head, is an evening dedicated to the surprising potential of these unwanted plants. The evening begins with hot/cold drinks and discounted bar, followed by a demonstration. Everyone will receive a sample from the demonstration to take home - a product not a weed! Admission is £5.00. All are welcome.

*Marilyn Payne, Hall Trustee*

### **Coffee Morning & Plant Sale**

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May 10.30-12.00pm - a social occasion for everyone. Admission is free, with donations appreciated for drinks and biscuits. Proceeds will go to the Community Hall (registered charity 1210320). Donations of plants, seeds, bulbs and gardening equipment would be much appreciated. These can be taken into the hall on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> between 2.00 and 4.00pm.

*Gill Goodlad, Hall Trustee*

### **Next Film Night**

Our next film will be shown on **Friday 5th June**. The bar opens at 7pm, with the film starting at 7.30pm. It is based on the first popular, best-selling book in a series of murder mysteries, released earlier this year, starting at 7.30pm. There will be a short interval with bar and ice creams available. Admission is free - a voluntary donation from non-members is appreciated. For more details of this and future films, or to join our email group or membership contact Gill at [gillgoodlad@hotmail.com](mailto:gillgoodlad@hotmail.com) or text to 07789810877.

*Gill Goodlad, Hall Trustee*

### **Tredington Playground**

Tredington Playground Community Group are a small group of volunteers, supported by the Parish Council and are raising funds to refurbish the Tredington Playground. The playground was last refurbished over 25 years ago and is no longer fit for purpose. If you wish to join this friendly group of volunteers please contact Ian Wilson, Parish Clerk at [tredington.clerk@gmail.com](mailto:tredington.clerk@gmail.com).

Alternatively if you are able to make a donation please go to the Go Fund Me Page:- <https://gofundme/17474947>  
*Beverly Elliott*



## **BLACKWELL**

### **Blackwell Village Hall – Annual General Meeting**

Notice of Annual General Meeting, to be held at the Village Hall, Blackwell, CV36 4PE on Monday 27 April 2026 at 7.30 pm. All are welcome. Blackwell Village Hall is a Charity. Whilst the hall is situated in Blackwell it is for the use of Blackwell, Armscote and Darling-scott villages – please support your village hall – All Welcome.

### **Pop up Pub – The Blackwell Arms**

Please join us for a social gathering and drinks at our Pop-up Pub, The Blackwell Arms, in the Village Hall on the last Friday of the month from 6:45 pm – 9:30 pm. Next event: Friday 24 April 2026

### **Save the Date:**

**Blackwell Village Fete & Fun Dog Show – Sunday 28 June 2026**

*Cathryn Noon*

## **STRETTON ON FOSSE**

### **Cream Teas**

Come and join us for the first Cream Teas afternoon of the summer. June 7th at 3.30pm at the village hall. Donations welcome!  
*Geri Hunting*

## **PRESTON ON STOUR**

### **Preston Village Hall**

**May Day - 2.30pm Monday 4th May** from the Village Hall  
Come and join us for a very special event celebrating our new May Queen. There will be Morris dancing, children's games, a licenced bar, teas and homemade cakes, stalls and more. It is not too late to donate to the white elephant stall, tombola and plant stall. Please bring donations on the day or contact Margaret on [pres-tonbrocks@gmail.com](mailto:pres-tonbrocks@gmail.com) or 01789 450710 for collection.

### **Film Night - 7.30pm Friday 15th May**

Please note - not the last Friday in the month as usual. We will be showing 'Choral'. As World War I rages on, Dr. Henry Guthrie takes over a British choral society that's lost most of its men to the army. The community soon discovers that the best response to the chaos of war is to make beautiful music together.

**PrestFest - from 1pm Saturday 30th May** on the village green  
Bring your friends, chairs and a picnic and enjoy our local musicians perform in this free concert featuring Phat Unicorn, V Five, Donald McCombie and more. If wet we will be in the village hall.

**Swing from Paris— 7.30pm Saturday 13th June** An evening of Parisian-flavoured music, with quartet Swing from Paris, an all-string jazz quartet of violin, guitars and double bass, inspired by the music of the 1930s, '40s and '50s: from the cafés and cabarets of Montmartre to Artie Shaw, Django Reinhardt, Stéphane Grappelli and the master of tango Astor Piazzolla. Tickets from [swingfromparis.co.uk](http://swingfromparis.co.uk), £18 in advance, £20 on the door. EARLY BIRD tickets at £16 until 30 May. Under 18s £10 (must be accompanied by an adult). Doors and bar open 7pm. Performance 7.30pm - 9.30pm (including 20 min interval).  
*Margaret Brocklehurst*

### **Open Garden - Atherstone House, Atherstone on Stour** **June 7th, 2-5.30pm**

First time opened to the public, beautiful mid-size garden on the edge of the River Stour. Refreshments. Admission £4, proceeds to Friends of Stratford Hospital and Guide Dogs UK.  
*Camilla West*

# ILMINGTON

## The Ilmington Directory 2027-8

Produced by Ilmington 20:20 Vision, the Ilmington Directory is a handy little compendium of contact details for everything local, from Tai Chi to B&B to schools and sewage! We are collating information for the new edition to be published in the autumn. If you live in Ilmington or its surrounds, then we need to hear from you so that we can update our Telephone and Street Directory. Does your entry need altering? Are you new to the village? Are you happy for your details to be included? (We hope so, but we need to know either way)

To complete our easy form online **simply click through** from our weekly **Ilmington circulation email**. Not receiving this? **To register, email** [info@ilmington2020vision.co.uk](mailto:info@ilmington2020vision.co.uk). **Or complete a form at the Community Shop.**

Proceeds from the sale of the Directory go to Warwickshire Air Ambulance. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Wendy Lewis Edwards, Ilmington 2020 Vision*

## Screen-on-the-Green: Marty Supreme (15)

On Friday 29th May we are showing Marty Supreme ("spectacular" - *The Guardian*; "compelling" - *The Daily Mail*), starring Timothée Chalamet as the highly ambitious table-tennis wunderkind, Marty, bent on hustling his way to the top. Nominated for nine Oscars, this 1950s-set comedy-drama also sees Gwyneth Paltrow in a "knockout" (*The Times*) return to the screen, playing the socialite and ex-Hollywood actress with whom Marty embarks on a passionate affair. Doors open 7pm for a 7.30pm start at Ilmington Village Hall. Tickets £4 (£2.50 for under-18s) from the Village Shop or on the door. Licensed bar, interval ice-creams and raffle available (cash only please).

*Lis Ribbans, Ilmington Cinema Group*

## Ilmington Village Hall: Three Plays in One Evening

Three unique and diverse comedies from theatre of the absurd to heartfelt connections appearing on 2 May 2026. All plays are written and directed by Tysoe-based Benjamin Keyser. Starring Christine Cherry, Dave Candy and Charlotte Ledger. **WARNING** : Shows contain adult humour. Pigeon Syndrome (35 minutes); In the Beans (30 minutes); Mop and Bucket (25 minutes). Benjamin is very excited to be taking *Pigeon Syndrome* to the Edinburgh Fringe this year. Please do come along to support the show and help make it possible. Tickets can be bought directly for £12 by emailing [BroadlySpeakingProductions@gmail.com](mailto:BroadlySpeakingProductions@gmail.com) or

from Ilmington Village Shop for £15. Pigeon Syndrome won the Overall Winning Production at Avon Association of Drama Short Play Festival 2026, the best original play, the best actor, and the Adjudicator's Awards. At the Birmingham's Festival of Acting and Musical Entertainment, the 3 plays won 5 awards in the One-Act category.  
*Bryan Clifford, Chair*

**Ilmington Shop and Cafe**  
**Ilmington Community Shop & Café News**

The shop will be open on Bank Holiday Monday 4th May, 8.30am–1pm.

We're delighted to celebrate our **11th Anniversary** on Tuesday 20th May — a wonderful milestone for our community!

**The 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> May sees Ilmington Open Gardens weekend** in conjunction with the National Gardens Scheme. To support the event coffee, tea and cakes will be served in the café on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> from 12pm. We need around 40 homemade cakes. If you bake and could help then please do come and see us. We provide all the ingredients and you provide the expertise! On Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> teas and cakes will be served in the village hall by the Shipston Home Nursing team.

**Our regular groups @thecafe:**

- **Book Club** – Tuesday 5th May: Our chosen book is *Stoner* by John Edward Williams
- **Mother & Baby** – Every Wednesday at 10am, Use our warm, relaxed café to meet other local parents.
- **Coffee & Connect** – Friday 29th May, with Angela from VASA she will be on hand to offer practical support, including help completing forms (online or paper), finding local groups, accessing grants, wheelchair loans, and carer support.
- **Knit & Natter** – Wednesday 27th May, bring your knitting, crochet, or just yourself — all are welcome for a good natter!

Do come along, support your local shop and café, and enjoy everything your community has to offer. We look forward to seeing you!  
*Ilmington Shop Committee*

**Wednesday Club next meeting on 13th May, meet at 2 pm at the Village Hall**

Tidy Home, Tidy Mind proved to be inspiring as well as interesting. The talk by Caroline Cahit gave many tips and ideas on how to declutter or downsize and although I didn't rush home to make a start, I will remember them when I do get the urge! A big thank you to Caroline who very patiently answered the many questions that were asked afterwards.

Our next meeting will be a continuation of last year's archaeology walk around Ilmington given by Brian Meredith. He will be focusing on Windmill Hill where an Iron Age and Roman farms once stood. Brian will be bringing some artefacts with him and arranging a display in the Village Hall for those who aren't up to hill-climbing, and afterwards, there will be a most welcoming cup of tea and lots of cake! Please think about shoe wear before starting out. We will be charging our normal rates of £3 for members and £5 for others.  
*Carole Clifford, Chairperson*

### **Ilmington Horticultural Society Plant Sale**

Saturday 23rd May 2026, on The Pound (opposite the Village Hall) from 12 noon. Have a break from admiring the village gardens at the National Garden scheme open gardens day and take the chance to stock up your garden with a variety of home-grown herbaceous perennials, shrubs etc.. Proven to 'go' in Ilmington growing conditions. Cash preferred.

*Susan Brock*

## **OUTSIDE THE PARISHES**

### **Shipston Home Nursing – Plant and Produce Sales**

Our fantastic plant and home produce sales return on the weekend of 9th and 10th May with our volunteers setting up tabletop stalls on their driveways. Stalls confirmed so far are: Barcheston, Brailes, Cherington, Ettington, Great Wolford, Idlicote (on 23<sup>rd</sup> May), Kineton, Long Compton, Shipston, Tysoe (tbc), Wellesbourne, Whatcote and Whichford. For further details and locations please visit our website, [www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk/events](http://www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk/events).

*Allison Allen, Fundraising & Communications Coordinator*

### **A LADIES' SUMMER BREAKFAST at the Halford Bridge Inn, on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026**

Please join us for this very friendly and open-to-all continental breakfast, where we can hear our speakers share their various faith journeys with insights and encouragement.

VIVIEN WALDEN will be our July Speaker. Vivien was born and grew up in Zimbabwe, before she left home to travel and to work, spending a year in American before moving to Denmark as a humanitarian aid worker. She has lived in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, and Timor Leste. Vivien currently works for the British Red Cross. 'My Christian journey has not always been straight forward but I believe that has made my faith so much stronger'. Do join us and confirm your breakfast by contacting: Liz Harvey: [ma\\_harvey@hotmail.com](mailto:ma_harvey@hotmail.com) or 07914 026451. Please pay £9.50 on the day.

*Liz Harvey*

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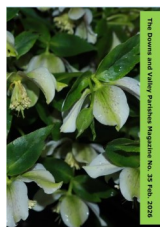
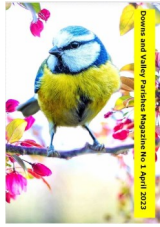
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For more information and a full list of activities, please look at our website [www.sosa.u3asite.uk](http://www.sosa.u3asite.uk)  
Come along to one of our monthly meetings which start at 2pm normally on the 4th Tuesday of every month at the Townsend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

# THE HOWARD ARMS ILMINGTON



## Bar opening times

Monday to Saturday: 11am – 11pm

Sunday: 12pm – 10.30pm

## Food serving times

### Daytime:

Monday to Saturday: 12pm – 2.30pm

### Evening:

Monday to Thursday: 6pm – 9pm

Friday & Saturday: 6pm – 9.30pm

### Sunday & Bank Holidays

12pm – 7.30pm

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