

Shirenewton Parish Magazine



May 2026

Price £1:50



PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST

Our Financial Planners are highly qualified and have the experience to help you with:

▶ Pensions and Retirement Planning	
▶ Savings and Investments	
▶ Inheritance Tax Planning	
▶ Mortgages	
▶ Insurance and Protection	

The value of pensions and investments can fall as well as rise, you may get back less than you invested.

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage.

The Financial Conduct Authority do not regulate Inheritance Tax Planning.

Equity Release will reduce the value of your estate and can affect your eligibility for means tested benefits.



Please contact us for a free initial consultation on:

Mobile: 07979 157259

Chepstow office: 01291 626373 | Abergavenny office: 01873 854488

E: joshlewis@thinkpositive.co.uk | www.iam-financial-advice.co.uk

IAM Financial Planning Limited is an Appointed Representative of Quilter Financial Planning Solutions Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

SERVICES AT SHIRENEWTON CHURCH IN APRIL

Sunday 3 rd May	10.00	Morning Praise with Hymns
Sunday 10 th May	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 17 th May	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns Followed by the Annual Congregation meeting in Church Room
Sunday 24 th May	10.00	Eucharist with Hymns
Sunday 31 st May	10.00	NO SERVICE IN SHIRENEWTON CHURCH: MA wide Service for TRINITY SUNDAY, St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow, followed by a Bring and Share Brunch

All are welcome to join us and enjoy refreshments in the church rooms
after Sunday morning service

Information of all services at eleven local churches that make up the Severn-Wye Ministry Area is at www.severnwyema.co.uk

EDITING THE SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE

NO ONE HAS COME FORWARD YET! THIS IS URGENT FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS MAGAZINE AS AN IMPORTANT VILLAGE COMMUNICATION PLATFORM

Sadly, I will be giving up editing the parish magazine after the July/August edition. I gave notice to the LCC last September that the decision by Microsoft to cease all support for Publisher (even to the extent of no longer allowing access to historic files) has informed this decision. I looked at the recommended replacement software, tried to make it work for me, and failed miserably. Microsoft, of course, recommend using Word and PowerPoint, but that is too time-consuming as a solution (I did this for another magazine some years ago which ran to about a quarter of the pages that we have).

The LCC is looking for a volunteer to take on or share the editorship, so please let me know if you are interested. Using the current software it takes me about three to four days maximum a month to edit and shape the magazine into pdf format so it is ready for the printer. There is about another half day a month involved in chasing advertisers for their annual payments. But you also get to communicate with interesting contributors, speak to the advertisers, and meet a whole new range of people in the villages of Shirenewton, Mynyddbach, Earlswood, Newchurch and beyond.

Bill Clark parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com

SAINTS CHURCH UPDATE

Saints is the name of a new Anglican church based in Chepstow. We currently run a Lego church, a "mini-saints" toddler church, and a community tots and toddlers stay and play group at St. Christopher's Church in Bulwark, all thanks to our fantastic Children's Worker Clare.

We also started up a "Puddings and Bible Study" night at St. Christophers every Sunday evening from 7:00-8:30pm, with study series including the "I am" sayings of Jesus in John's Gospel, working our way through Luke's gospel and Acts, and more recently the "Shema prayer" in the Old Testament.

We began offering a youth focused element to these meetings, and were soon running a separate Youth Bible Study with games, challenges and craft activities after our communal puddings and sung worship time with the adults finished.

Most recently, we have extended our youth offering to yet another separate group, for under 11s. So we now gather as one church family on a Sunday night to enjoy puddings and fellowship, then we split into three groups – adults, 11-18s, and under 11s.

But the most recent update is, due to the growth we have experienced, we have now moved venues, and instead of meeting on a Sunday night at St. Christophers, we now meet at St. Mary's Priory in Chepstow, a spectacular building steeped in both history and prayer. Anyone is welcome to join us on Sunday nights, 7:00-8:30pm, now at St. Marys.

As a church community we aim to be inclusive. This means being LGBT friendly, and also our leadership being trained in understanding Additional Learning Needs such as Autism and other Neurodiverse conditions.

Moving forward, our Children's worker is hoping to start a monthly after school sensory club in Bulwark, for children with additional learning needs. If this is an area of community support that you would be interested in volunteering in, please get in touch! Clare will be running training sessions on how to safely work with children who have these additional needs, and even if you're just happy to serve drinks, it would be a great help to us as we set up a new team. If you're interested, please get in touch! Please contact me on 07754 306229

Blessings

Zoe



Oakfield Veg Boxes

Sown and grown using organic methods in Newchurch

Larges boxes £22 and Medium boxes £17

email leighayland@gmail.com

call on 01291 428604/07889 247361

Read more about us on Facebook
@oakfieldgrowers

*This is a fair share scheme where seasonal produce is shared among subscribers.
We guarantee a minimum of 8 items in the medium boxes (suitable for 2-3)
and 10 items in our large boxes*

PARTY IN THE PRIORY! SAT 30TH MAY

2pm-4pm

Free - all
welcome!



- **Bouncy castle**
- **Ball pit**
- **Candy floss**
- **Giant games**

- **Lego corner**
- **Snacks & drinks**

For more info contact
Rev'd Zoe Pimentel
07754 306229
ZoePimentel@churchinwales.org.uk

SUMMER FETE GRAND PRIZE DRAW

Raffle tickets will soon be available for the grand prize draw to be held at the Summer Fete on 13 June. **Don't miss out** on the opportunity to win one of our wonderful prizes, which include:

£100.00 in cash, generous meal vouchers for The Tredegar Arms, The Huntsman Hotel and The Carpenter's Arms, a luxury spirit hamper, a teddy bear, a golf voucher, a butcher's voucher, a cut and blow-dry at local salon, a pet portrait by a local artist, coffee and welsh cakes at Castell Coffi, plus other great prizes.

Please support this important part of our annual fundraising to help maintain our beautiful church and churchyard. Tickets cost just £1.00 each, £5.00 for a book of 5.

If you would like to buy any tickets then please just text me, ring me, email me or just ask me if you see me walking around the village.

Thanks,

Aileen.

07814 451943, 01291 641459, aileendoggett@btinternet.com

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in April:

1. Linda Dobson
2. Simon Lockhart
3. Carol Stoker

Shirenewton Fete will be on
Saturday 13th June 2026
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.



SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Please find extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held 13th April 2026 7.00 pm Shirenewton Recreation Hall

Public Participation 1 x Member of the public

James Rattray discussed a new film from the National Emergency Briefing - a public information initiative to ensure the UK is fully briefed on the climate and nature crisis.

Released on 7th April, the film presents the national implications of climate and nature breakdown - along with credible, positive responses - in a single, accessible account designed for screening in communities across the UK. The film is being shown in local communities and encourages debate and discussion.

Mr Rattray kindly arranged a showing of the (45 minute) film on 8th April at the Church Room, St Thomas Becket Church, Shirenewton. 40 people attended, partaking in a discussion around renewable energy at the end. Mr Rattray explained how he had achieved Net Zero using solar panels and heat pumps and an electric car. Mr Rattray also offered some advice to local residents who may be considering going this route or utilising what they currently have. **Email:** Contact the Clerk who can put you in touch.

If you wish to arrange or attend a showing of the film here is a link - <https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film> for more information.

3 x Items for planning

A. DM/2026/00052 reconsultation Tyna Rhos Usk Road Earlswood New access onto highway. Including driveway to barn and to new future house. Part of the road approx. 75 sq. metres will be in the adjacent field so will need change of use.

Councillors will recall this application for a new access onto the highway, the site plan for which denoted a future house in place of the existing and an enlarged barn. SCC raised the following objections:

1. This application and the proposed applications for a new house and barn extension should be considered simultaneously as the outcome of

those intended applications may require changes to the driveways shown on this application, bearing in mind that no demolition or site clearance work in regard to the proposed new house and barn extension is permissible until consent is granted for them. Were MCC nevertheless minded to grant consent we would request conditions that no development under such consent can proceed until a full planning consent has been granted for a newbuild house and barn extension.

2. No sight lines are shown, it being acknowledged that Usk Road is a category B highway subject only to the statutory limit of 60mph.

3. There is no Green Infrastructure statement nor any newt and other protected species survey, nor any proposal for the removal of the existing entrance driveway, re-hedging the resulting gap on the Usk Road border, nor the remediation and restoration of the land under the existing driveway.

4. The section of driveway outside the red site line should be included within the application site. SCC reserves the right to comment further when the above details are received.

Highways have requested deferral until the following details are supplied:

The existing access is not referenced on the proposed site plan; however, we would request confirmation it is to be stopped up

As a shared agricultural access, the recess should be set back by 6m with appropriate hedge replacement. Gates may stay at the proposed placement.

Details of what visibility splays are achievable must be provided

Details of construction materials and measures to prevent run-off into the public highway provided for consideration. The access apron should be of a tarmac construction to tie into the carriageway.

The Biodiversity officer comments that insufficient ecological information has been submitted with the application to enable the biodiversity impacts of the proposal to be adequately assessed.

A resident has commented that the footprint of the proposed new house looks about the same as the current house but from the elevations the new house will be considerably higher than the current house which seems out of character for the area. The proposed driveways are very wide and appear to be designed for large or simultaneous multiple vehicle access and egress. The barn extension will almost double the size of the current building, which for the size of the plot seems excessive. The current access for Tyna Rhos on to the B4235 although not ideal is located almost mid-way between two bend corners to the north and south of the property. The proposed new access is closer to the south blind corner and access and egress to Hillside House and Gwenyn Developments maybe problematic.

Councillors' attention is drawn to the new plan showing a reduced red lined site, still excluding part of the proposed roadway. More significantly,

the roadway no longer splits in two (one section leading to the proposed house and the other to the barn) but follows route to the barn and now continues to the proposed house which appears to have a larger footprint than previously plus a new building (type and use unspecified) alongside. There is a wide area on the approach to the barn presumably for parking and turning. A wider access from the road and site lines are now shown.

Recommendation: Objection on the grounds that:

The site red line does not encompass all of the land the subject of the application.

A planning application has not been received for the proposed house and barn extension shown on the revised site plan and it has been noted that the size, location and orientation of these has changed from the original plan, as well as the design and route of the proposed roadway. We consider that a coherent application for the whole site instead of piecemeal applications for each individual build is essential. Were MCC nevertheless minded to grant consent we would request conditions that no development under such consent can proceed until a full planning consent has been granted for a newbuild house and barn extension.

The comments of MCC Highways and Biodiversity are supported and SCC awaits copies of the further details are requested.

There are no proposals for remediation and restoration of the land under the existing driveway.

SCC reserves the right to comment further when the above details are received.

Cllrs voted unanimously to Object to this matter

B). DM/2021/01398 Proposed sheep handling unit and amenity building to serve smallholding North Of New Shire Farm Usk Road Earlswood Councillors may recall the original version (although dated from 2021 it only came to SCC a year ago) proposed change of use of land to allow for the siting of a mobile home and installation of ground work and drainage, to provide a mobile dwelling adjacent to existing track and demolish and reconstruct existing shed to be used as Dairy and stable and for storage of relevant farming machinery, to enable the proprietor to manage her land and care for her livestock for local produce and ecology.

At the meeting last April, it was brought to Councillor's attention that the smallholding is accessed via a track from the lane that runs from the Gaerllwyd crossroads to Bully Hole Bottom and consists of 6.8 hectares (16.8 acres) of organic agricultural pastureland and some woodland with a natural spring. There were three sheds that were used for hay and wood storage and shelters for sheep, pigs and horses. It was purchased in October 2018 from Mr and Mrs Lewis who used the farm to graze sheep. It sits in the upper Moun-ton valley and as such is not prominent in the landscape.

That application included a bespoke timber relocatable mobile home (think park home) having 2 bedrooms both ensuite, a kitchen/diner and a utility

room. The footprint is some 13m x 7m; construction is with SuperTherm Insulation in a timber frame and wooden cladding (colour not mentioned) to passive haus standard. The roof is grey metal cladding, and there is to be a package sewage treatment plant. The applicant advises the proposal does not include the gain, loss or change of use of residential units as this is intended to be temporary accommodation. There is no existing accommodation on site.

The field shelter was to be demolished and replaced with Sheep and Dairy Stable with drainage, and a solar panel array installed over. The applicant lives in Chepstow. The purpose of the mobile home was to provide temporary overnight accommodation during busy lambing periods. The proposal was not intended to be taken as an application for a potential dwelling, as the applicant appreciated that the land available to her limits the amount that she is able to physically produce and do on the farm. There is insufficient justification for a full time employee or permanent occupation.

A permanent dwelling such as this in the open countryside would breach MCC planning policy. The applicant sought a temporary consent. Councillors might wish to consider whether it is a necessity to have overnight accommodation when the applicant lives within 20 minutes, although shelter from the elements and sanitary facilities might be. Councillors will also be mindful that a temporary planning consent can accidentally become permanent and that the laying down of a concrete foundation base for the home with no wheels might imply an inappropriate degree of longevity on site.

SCC considered that the application should be refused because the temporary mobile home is in fact a permanent structure and breaches MCC planning policy for building in the open countryside. SCC was not persuaded that the home was justifiable in support of an activity which appears to amount to hobby farming lacking current and future financial viability and employment prospect. Were MCC nevertheless minded to grant consent, SCC requested conditions:

that the permission expires in 5 years from its date at which time the structure is to be removed and the land is to be restored to its original state of pasture

that the mobile home shall not be occupied other than as temporary overnight accommodation and solely in connection with the rearing of sheep on site.

that the external finishes and colours of the mobile home be subject to MCC approval.

Councillors will note the lack of detail in the sheep handling unit now proposed. Construction materials are not specified, nor their external finishes, nor the material for the roof or its colour. The roof is to be a mono-pitch but its height is not specified, and no solar panels are shown. The building will be 20m x 7m (cf the mobile home of 13m x 7m). The sheep section occupies 9m (ie less than half) of the length, with a garage, store,

boot room and bedroom accommodation with ensuite and kitchenette the remainder. No equipment, animal feed and medicine store is shown. No mention is made of the unit being temporary, and the sewage treatment plant that was to have served the mobile home is carried forward. There is already a field shelter for the sheep.

Recommendation : It has come to SCC's attention that a substantial change has been to the application has now been proposed in that (presumably) in lieu of seeking consent for a mobile home the application has been rewritten as a sheep handling unit , but still with accommodation even though there is no update on the lack of viability for a part time worker. SCC restates its objection to the previous proposal to erect a mobile home on site in contravention of MCC planning policy and objects to the current proposal for the same reason, the structure not being solely for the purpose of handling sheep which could be achieved with the existing field shelter. SCC further objects for want of detail as to construction materials and finishes and reserves the right to make further comment when these are provided.

Cllrs voted unanimously to restate their Objection to this matter C). DM/2024/00131 Reserved matters for Eleven Dwellings adjoining Clearview Court to include - access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

Several residents have raised concerns regarding this matter.

It was agreed to contact MCC Planning for clarification regarding the site being advertised for sale with outline planning permission, whilst there has been a reserved matters application, the planning register does not contain all the details and documents required to be submitted and approved by MCC.

SCC request what progress has been made on those details and documents and requests confirm that when this information is available, they are reconsulted.

Cllr C Martin raised DM/2019/01495 Tan House pub as a recent amended site plan has been added to the still current planning matter.

Other items;

Memorial clock repair – Clock semi completed, 1 set of hands remain to be fitted and the 3 other sets are not functioning correctly.

Clerk to contact Clock Company

Traffic events, (speeding etc) Traffic control Meeting with MCC.

Speeding events as discussed in police report, no other incidents reported. Dates for 'Walk and Talk' meeting with MCC agreed.

Monmouthshire RLDP – Hearings - Cllr I Martin confirmed that SLCC would be attending online over the course of 8 days during June/July, the days run 10 – 5pm.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT APRIL 2026

County Councillor Brown advised:

Note that all the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) meetings below can be found and watched on you tube by pressing Your Council at the top of the Monmouthshire County Council website and then press meeting Calendar and adjusting the date and pressing the relevant meeting.

Performance and Overview Committee 10th of March 2026

The above meeting provided details of the Estyn report on educational services in Monmouthshire County Council, the School examination results and school attendance record, and the draft minutes provide the answers to the various questions raised on these reports. On capped 9, Chepstow school pupils perform approximately half a grade better in every subject compared to peers in the family. Capped 9 includes reporting on GCSE's which indicate pupils' outcomes in literacy, numeracy and science. This has been the case for the last 2 years. The overall school's deficit has increased rapidly from around £4 million to £7.5million to 7.6 million. This is not confined to a single school.

The Overall school attendance record in Monmouthshire between the 1st of September 2024 to July 2025 is 92.2%, placing Monmouthshire first in Wales. From that average there was 93.9% attendance in Primary schools compared to 92.7% in Wales and 89.5% in Secondary schools compared to 89.1% in Wales. There was better attendance pre-Covid for 2018-19 of 95.4% in Primary compared to 94.7% in Wales and 95.1% in Secondary compared to 93.8% in Wales. Overall, the LA is performing above the national average in most measures and in the primary phase attendance is returning to pre-pandemic levels. However, overall attendance in secondary schools, particularly e-fsm attendance is not improving rapidly enough.

Place Committee 19th of March 2026

The Place Committee considered a report on the prohibition of driving except for access, Goldwire Lane Monmouth in order to scrutinise the consultation and options regarding Goldwire Lane Monmouth. The proposal was to make permanent a traffic regulation order to prohibit driving along Goldwire Lane. The experimental order was for a period of no longer than 18 months from the date of implementation.

The report came to scrutiny far too late at the 17-month point. The Goldwire Lane campaign had 334 signatures across 2 petitions saying no to restricted access of Goldwire Lane. The reason for the order was to improve pedestrian safety, but it was pointed out that there was a safer route for pedestrians only by a hotel in Monmouth and the request was to explore this option further. The Committee voted to recommend against the order being made permanent by the Chairs casting vote and to explore other options but the decision rests with the Cabinet member.

There was an interesting discussion on Animal welfare and to understand the roles and responsibilities of the council's Animal Welfare team and its relationship with the RSPCA.

Cabinet have subsequently decided to confirm this as a permanent traffic order.

People Scrutiny Committee 31st of March 2026

The People Scrutiny Committee scrutinised how assistive technology is assisting people in living healthy independent lives. Whilst a number of measures were noted to be green in the report, the waiting list for installations and maintenance was marked in red for Q3 of 2025. The report and discussion can be seen in the meeting details, and the meeting can be watched online.

Let's Talk Residents Survey

Between 23 September and 31 October 2025, the council conducted the National Resident Survey for the second time. The goal was to better understand residents' views on living in Monmouthshire, including their experiences in the local area and their opinions on the council's services. Hosted by Data Cymru and published through Let's Talk Monmouthshire, the survey is part of their National Resident Survey, which helps local councils gain insights into their performance and public perception. The council received 1,064 responses.

Whilst the results showed a general satisfaction with the local area and community, the results were less positive about their local council. Only 35% were satisfied with the way the council runs things, only 44% of those who contacted the council were satisfied with how their query was handled and only 43% of respondents trust Monmouthshire County Council.

If you have any questions about the survey, please get in touch with Richard Jones, Performance & Data Insight Manager, at richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

Please note that consultations and the full report on the above survey can be found on the Let's Talk section of the Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) website.

This can be found by typing in Let's Talk in the hourglass search engine for the MCC website.

Police report – SPCO Dave Cordingly introduced himself giving his March report (below) & in addition:

An accident occurring on the 8th April was discussed between a car and motorbike.

The Huntsman also discussed; Police are aware and do have a presence. Confirmed there will be more patrolling in the area.

Discussed several concerns reported by local residents, not all incidents were linked to The Huntsman.

Offered to do more speeding checks in the area. Usk Road & around the Village.

Looking to arrange Bimonthly meetings in the village to enable residents to speak directly regarding any concerns they have.

Keen to attend any local meetings (teas, Scouts, regular social meets) held in local halls so people can get to know him. Local groups to contact the clerk if interested.

Dave has a vast career of full-time policing and is now doing community policing in the area of Shirenewton, Devauden, Mathern and surrounding areas.

Welcome to the March 2026 Edition of the Shirenewton Community Council Report

Crime in Shirenewton:

During the month of March 2026, a total of three incidents were recorded within Shirenewton and the surrounding areas.

Encouragingly, none of these incidents were classified as serious offences, which reflects positively on the safety of our community.

Overall, the area has remained relatively calm and free from significant criminal activity throughout this period.

If you would like any Police representation at any of the Community Council upcoming meetings, please feel free to contact me via email with the relevant dates and details.

I will make every effort to schedule attendance and support these meetings where possible.

Summary of Recent Incidents in the Shirenewton Area During March.

All incidents reported to Gwent Police were assessed as non-serious and were managed effectively by attending officers from both the Police Response teams and the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT).

One incident of indecent exposure was reported, involving a male individual observed walking naked past the Carpenters Arms.

Response officers attended the scene promptly, and the individual was located and apprehended for further investigation.

A number of parking-related concerns were also raised by residents in Shirenewton.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team attended these reports where possible and addressed the issues appropriately, taking action as required.

No additional crimes or incidents of note were recorded throughout the remainder of March.

Continued Plan of Action:

To support ongoing community safety and engagement, the following measures are in place:

Monthly speed monitoring will be conducted in the area to address traffic-related concerns and promote road safety.

Proposed Community Engagement

To further strengthen engagement with residents, I propose holding Police Surgeries every two months. These sessions would provide members of the community with an opportunity to:

- Raise any concerns
- Seek advice
- Speak directly with their local police representative

I will be raising the matter of hosting Police Surgeries at Shirenewton Recreational Hall at the upcoming SCC meeting.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss potential dates and availability, where appropriate.

These initiatives are part of my continued commitment to maintaining a safe and connected community

CLRs thanks SPCO Cordingly for attending.

AOB and ward reports:

CLr I Martin – No issues to report

CLr G Todd – Nothing extra to report

CLr Butterworth: Nothing new to report.

CLr S Todd – Keen to discuss the Survey, deferred till June.

CLr G Mitchel- Discussed traffic loops in place on B4235 near Cottages

CLr C Martin - Discussed several concerns and incidents raised by residents in connection with The Huntsman and confirmed these have been raised with police and noted by those present.

C CLr Brown - Nothing extra to report.

Agreed the date of the next monthly meeting

Councillors agreed the date of the next meeting on **Monday 11th May 2026 at 7.30pm**, by public meeting, in Shirenewton Recreation Hall or remotely via Google meet. (Following on from SCC AGM at 7pm)

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council E-mail:

shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

**ST. PETER'S CHURCH
NEWCHURCH**



LATE SPRING QUIZ

**WE WILL BE HOLDING
ONE OF OUR POPULAR
QUIZZES AT
NEWCHURCH CHURCH
ON FRIDAY 15TH MAY
AT 7.00**

**REFRESHMENTS
AVAILABLE
ADMISSION £5.00**

PROCEEDS TOWARDS CHURCH FUNDS



SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Prof David Collard gave us a talk on '*Alfred Russell Wallace*' the contemporary of Darwin. He spent his early years in Usk and has a bust to commemorate him in the square in Usk.

He seems to have had an unfortunate life, he visited the Amazon to collect specimens for his research and on his return to the U.K. the ship caught fire and destroyed all his hard earned work. He eventually spent time in Malay and made a success of this visit, corresponding with Darwin, comparing notes and ideas. David Collard has published a book on the life of Wallace, an interesting read.

Dates for your Diary

Beating the Bounds	Sunday, 10 th May	Meet at the Church door at 2.00pm
May Archive Meeting	Wednesday, 13 th May	Church Room, 2.00pm-4.00pm
May Meeting	Wednesday, 27 th May	Visit to Llanfyangel-tor-y-Mynyddd (a.m.) Lunch at The Star Llansoy (p.m.)

Our meetings are held at the Church Room, unless otherwise stated, Summer months 7.30pm

Archive meetings start at 2.00pm – 4.00pm and everyone is welcome.

*Shirenewton Local
History Society.*

*Walks in and
around Shirenewton*

**£3.00 Contact
641376**

Six Historical Walks around Shirenewton



Shirenewton Local History Society

SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

*Why not come and walk the
Parish Bounds*

of

Shirenewton

on

Sunday, 10th May 2026

meeting

at

St Thomas a Becket Church

Shirenewton

At 2.00 pm

*Returning to the church for
refreshments.*

Everyone welcome

Further information 'phone 641376

SHIRENEWTON NATURE

Shirenewton and Mynydd-back Meadows is a place where we enjoy nature. The wild flowers and the butterflies in summer are absolutely stunning. In the spring, summer and autumn it is our favourite walk.

Did you know that all the residential gardens in England and Wales combined, are more than three times greater than the two country's national nature reserves? Residential gardens cover roughly 478,000 hectares (452,397 ha in England and 25,633 ha in Wales), while our total National Nature Reserves as of 2025, (224 NNRs in England and 76 in Wales) cover roughly 142,500+ hectares.

Over the last twenty years Britain has lost 60% of its insects, according to Bug Life, who have been counting insect splatter on cars year on year. This has an impact on our nesting birds. Many of our birds, reptiles, amphibians, native plants are in decline, with a growing list on the red alert endangered category.

Does it really matter? Probably not for us older people, as we will be long gone when the consequence of our actions come home to roost. Those who follow, our children and great and great great grandchildren will be the ones who suffer the consequences of us squandering the planet's resources.

Britain is ranked in the bottom 10% of the world for its biodiversity. Wales 51%, England 47%, compared to the 77% global biodiversity average. The planet needs to achieve 90% if it does not fall into an ecological recession. (The Biodiversity Intactness Index was developed by the Natural History Museum, and is used to estimate the percentage of original species, and their abundance in ecosystems.) It is no surprise that so many of the UK's species are hovering on the brink of extinction.

Each and everyone of us can help to make a difference, no matter how small our garden, whether a balcony or larger area. Gardens can be a stepping stone for nature. If we all did one thing for nature; from providing a shelter, bird or hedgehog box, rock or wood pile, a compost heap, a safe a "Hedgehog Highway" 13cm x 13cm (5-inch) gap allowing hedgehogs to pass safely from garden to garden, ground level water point for small mammals and birds. Choosing a native instead of non native plant for your garden. Native plants support our insects and play an important part in our ecosystem. Please don't use chemicals in gardens, they cause so much destruction above as well as below the ground to our insects and local biodiversity.

What we do today determines the state of the planet for future generations. The challenge for all of us, is how do we live on the planet in a sustainable way.

I live at Aysgarth, down the hill from the Tradegar Arm, slightly above the old Tan House, opposite Clear View, the house with large wooden gates and the public foot path through our garden. We are in our own way, trying to create different ecozones for nature. Please use the public foot-path, do stop and look at what is going on. We bought our house knowing it is a public area, it is a safe shortcut to Shirenewton and Mynydd-back Meadows.

James and Kathleen Rattray - 078 2828 6995 jhrattray@gmail.com

THE PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING CHURCH ROOM, SHIRENEWTON

Thank you everyone who came and watched the 45 minute film on the 8th April, at The Church Room, Shirenewton. The film **"The People's Emergency Briefing"**, produced by the UK's top nature, weather and security scientists, we were amongst the first to watch the film, it is being shown to communities across the UK.

There were about forty of us watching it together. The aim of the film was to bring us all up to date with the impacts of our changing weather. *"The weather we live in today, the climate we live in today, is the least extreme climate we will experience in our lifetimes."* The living systems that regulate our climate are breaking down, the scientists discussed what this could mean to our food supply, our health, our national security, and our nature. Human reaction is to not want to know and bury our heads in the sand, but polls consistently show most of us do want action.

"The evidence is clear - An energy system based on renewables offers countless obvious economic advantages over one that runs on fossil fuels. Most obviously, the input, sun or wind is free forever. Whereas if you buy a barrel of oil, as soon as you burn that you need to buy another one, and the price we pay for it is determined by a cartel of petro-states or subjects to the whim of dictators. We are incredibly lucky as a country to have amazing renewable resources, including a fifth of the world's global offshore wind capacity"

The discussion after the film focused on why we weren't being made aware that renewables was a less expansive alternative to fossil fuels. Each and everyone of us has a role to play in this, it is not just governments and large corporate bodies.

For more information <https://www.nebriefing.org/> James Rattray, Aysgarth, Shirenewton. NP16 6AQ

SHIRENEWTON FETE
(ON SATURDAY 13TH JUNE 2026)

Bottle Stall

COLLECTION DAYS

From 6pm on Tuesday 9th June and Thursday 11th June

teams will be collecting

bottles/cans – wine, spirits, beer, soft drinks etc.

throughout Shirenewton and Mynyddbach for the Fete Bottle Stall.

Please donate generously.

It would help us if you could check that the bottles and cans are within the recommended 'use by' date printed on the bottle or can.

If these dates are not convenient or if you are located in Earlswood or the wider area, please contact shirenewtonfete@gmail.com or call 01291 641 845 (John) to arrange convenient drop/off or collection

CAKE STALL

The legendary Shirenewton Cake Stall needs you! Bakes and makes (cakes, biscuits, bread etc as well as Jams and Preserves). See separate appeal.

BOOK & TOY STALL

We also need donations of Books/DVDs for the book stall, or any usable and complete Toys, Games or Puzzles

PLANT STALL

Donations of plants of all kinds also gratefully received – flowers, vegetables, ground cover – all welcome!

***Please drop off Plants, Books, Toys in the verandah area in front of the Hall
on the morning of Saturday 13th June – between 9.30am and noon.***

Thank you – All contributions greatly appreciated.

SHIRENEWTON FETE

**The Annual Village Summer
Get Together**

Shirenewton Recreation Ground

**Saturday
13th June 2026
1 pm – 5 pm**

**Events, exhibitions, stalls, raffle, food, drink,
and merriment!**

Proceeds help the maintenance of Shirenewton's historic Grade 1 Listed
800 year- old church, and village churchyard.

25 places of world significance within 25 miles of Shirenewton

14. The Clock

17 miles from Shirenewton is a lonely churchyard basking in the sunlight below the slopes of the Bloreng and opposite the Sugar Loaf above Abergavenny. The Bloreng is the first mountain of the South Wales Valleys and beyond it westwards and southwards are the former heavily industrialised valleys of South Wales which were once such a contrast to the gentle hills of Eastern Monmouthshire – the area we call today Monmouthshire but historically Monmouthshire also included half of the industrialised valleys of South Wales.



Bloreng (left) and St Bartholemew's Churchyard, Llanover, near Abergavenny

Between the churchyard wall and the tower of the Church is the grave of Sir Benjamin Hall (1802-1867). His name is known all over the world.



Who was Sir Benjamin Hall MP, later Baron Llanover of Llanover and Abercarn?

Sir Benjamin Hall MP was the son of another Sir Benjamin Hall MP and followed in his father's footsteps as an MP in the House of Commons from 1831-1859 at one time representing Monmouth and later Marylebone.

Benjamin Hall was an enlightened Whig/Liberal politician who had been influenced by the work of Robert Owen at New Lanark in Scotland and the building of decent homes for workers and forward planning to clean up the awful conditions in the industrial cities. He was sympathetic to the Chartists although not to acts of violence and spoke in defence of John Frost at his trial for treason for which Frost was transported to Australia and eventually returned. Hall was an enthusiastic supporter of reviving the Welsh language and an early advocate of abolishing the death penalty.

Benjamin Hall was also an early advocate of proper sanitation in the cities, and he did something about it. He became the country's first Minister for Health. Hall pushed through major reforms in the health field and reforms in the transformation of local government in the mid C19th particularly in London where he helped enable local government to undertake major works to overcome appalling housing and health conditions in London by setting up the Metropolitan Works Committee which eventually became, after his death, the London County Council in 1889. Hall did much good, but why world fame?

Big Ben. At the time of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament in London in the mid C19th Benjamin Hall became Parliament's appointed '*First Commissioner for Works*' responsible for the client side of building the new houses of Parliament which we see today, as do millions of world tourists to London. It is one of the most photographed buildings in the world and, like the Eiffel Tower, one of the most recognised buildings in the world and in particular its Clock Tower. The Great Bell inside the clock tower was named '*Big Ben*' after the *First Commissioner* in charge of the works 'Ben' Benjamin Hall who also happened to be 6' 4" tall and was known by the nick name Big Ben himself. The first bell cracked but was recast, by which time Hall was no longer in charge of the works as he had been elevated to the House of Lords, but the bell, the clock and the tower continued to be called '*Big Ben*'. Officially the bell is *Big Ben* and the tower is the *Elizabeth Tower* but it is generally known as **Big Ben** - and the original '*Big Ben*' is in Llanover Churchyard, 17 miles from Shirenewton!

John Burrows



“

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

ANONYMOUS

GWENT ARCHIVES NEEDS YOU

Gwent Archives is not just concerned with preserving the past but also with documenting the present. It is our duty as a service to ensure that our collections reflect the history of Gwent and the experiences of our communities. But to do this, we need your help.

We are asking you, the people of Gwent, to consider keeping a diary or journal in the coming weeks and months and to deposit it with the archives in the future. They can be recorded as pen-and-paper or digitally. They can include photographs, sketches, or poetry. You may want to record your experiences as audio, rather than handwritten. We want to hear about how current events are impacting on you and your local area, what things are you hearing in the news, how it is affecting people you know?

We have already asked our staff and our volunteers to participate but to truly reflect our history, your history, we need you.

Any questions or queries, please contact enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk. More information on submitting the diaries will follow.



The Cake Stall at the Shirenewton Church Fete - Sat 13th June



Glynis, Gail and Annabel have volunteered to run the Church Fete Cake Stall again this year and we would very much welcome your help! So:

Cookies and slices and muffins,
Breads and biscuits and cake,
Buns and bagels and tiffins,
Please, put on your pinny and bake.

Chutneys, preserves and some pickle.
Make marmalades, jellies and jam,
Or loaves, large, medium or likkle...
Cheese straws and crumbly meringue.

I like a Welsh cake with a pinch of mixed
spice
And I'll try a Swiss Roll if I can.
Melting Moments, I remember were really
quite nice
And I so love a Gingerbread Man.



You can deliver your goodies to me on the Friday
before the fete to The Chantry or you can bring your
delights on the day. Glynis 01291 641 818.

07531 425 006 Glynis.macdonald@btinternet.com

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

I'm writing this on my sister-in-law's dining room table in the heart of SS2 in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.

Malaysia is my kinda country. The food is great, the tiger beer drinkable and the internet is fast. My SIL's internet connection is showing a bandwidth of 110Mbps which is more than double of what I get in Mynyddbach. Technology here is very much mainstream. From the Touch'nGo card (TNG) which covers both motorway tolls and the monorail/public transport system to the QR code payments system (DuitNow QR) used by all the street vendors in the food courts and night markets. Furthermore, Grab (the Malaysian equivalent to Uber) works extremely well.

For those interested, I'm using a eSim on my phone to provide constant 'on the road' fast 5G connectivity. Purchased from Trip.com, a 7-day eSim offering up to 2GB data per day, with single click installation on my Android phone (also available for iPhones) cost the princely sum of £2.85. Works seamlessly. Purchase in advance, when you land simply make your eSim your data sim & turn on roaming on the eSim (making sure roaming is *off* on your UK sim), and you have instant connectivity – no need to go through the hassle of purchasing a local sim. Note: not all phones support eSims so check before you purchase.

My wife & I also spent a week in China, in Yunan province visiting the ancient cities on the Southern Silk Route (aka the Tea Horse Road due the valuable Pu-erh tea which was transported). This was more technically challenging. The tour we were on included a Chinese sim card. 'I bet it does' was my reaction on hearing the news. I'm sure the Chinese government wanted to monitor and control our activity.

I did a fair amount of research before travelling and settled on an eSim (again from Trip.com – this time £4.40 for an 8-day eSim (with 2GB per day) and the Nord VPN (for which I have a subscription anyway). I also took a 'burner' phone (one of my old phones which I'd factory reset) to test the Chinese sim.

As anticipated and expected from my research, the Chinese sim blocked everything Google, Facebook and most other non-Chinese sites such as BBC news, etc. I didn't test email (such as Outlook and Gmail) but understand that would be blocked as well. The eSim and VPN effectively bypassed the 'great firewall' and, other than the speed (mainly 4G rather than 5G), I had full connectivity and access to all my business and personal accounts, etc.

For those of you who do not have EU roaming included in your phone

packages, you should investigate eSims for your holidays. For example, for EE pay-monthly customers, EU roaming costs £2.47 a day to use your UK allowance. Alternatively, you can add the "Roam Abroad Pass" for £25/month. Trip.com offers a 14 day, 2GB per day EU eSim package for a *total* of £5.80.

If you are travelling further afield, for example, the USA, the charges from the major telco providers are even more expensive. Trip.com offers a USA eSim (again 14 days and 2GB per day) for £7.11.

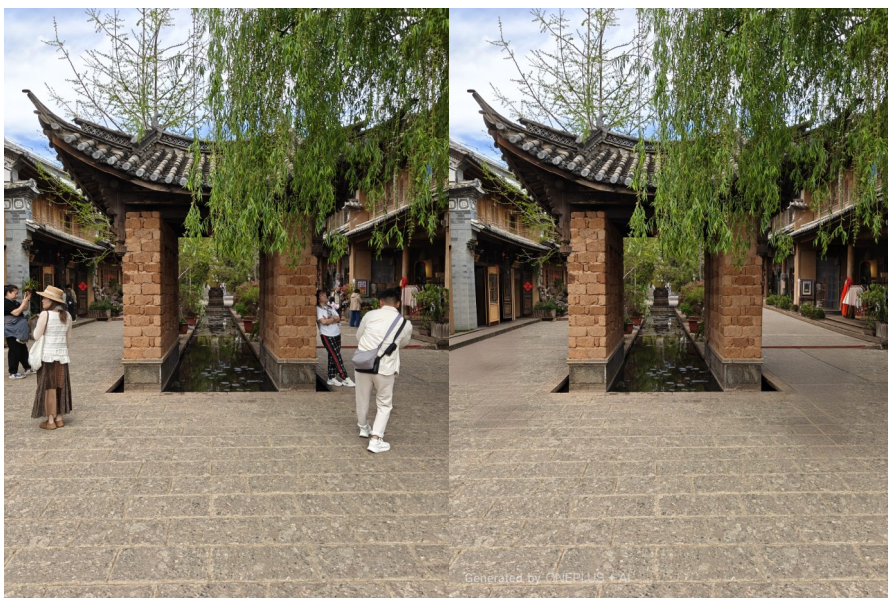
Now, it's true that these sims are 'data only' and don't include voice calls or texts. Note: receiving texts is free. But, how many voice calls are you going to make on your holidays? Most calls are via WhatsApp (which is using the data) and many, many businesses are now using WhatsApp for bookings, etc. There are eSim packages available which include calls and texts, but I question whether they are needed.

What is clear is eSims offer significant savings and, in my experience, they work extremely well. Talking of phones, as we were, the Times has highlighted a case where a 77 year old lady was scammed out of her phone number which allowed the scammer to port her phone number to their own phone and into their control and, using information given by the telco provider, set-up a card in the Apple Pay digital wallet and purchase hundreds of pounds worth of goods.

They achieved this by convincing the phone company to issue them with a PAC code (Port Authorisation Code) which allowed them to transfer the phone number. They seem to have cleared security by knowing the phone number, the name and guessing two digits of a four-digit security code. Apparently, it took them three attempts to guess the two digits but, if the code was easily guessable (for example, a date of birth), this wouldn't be too hard. Arguably, this was an error on behalf of the customer service at the telco provider who shouldn't have given them three attempts, but it seems that it was not joined up and three separate calls were made. Then, having finally passed security, the customer services rep then gave the scammer additional information such as sufficient card details to add it into Apple Pay.

It is therefore important not to have your 4-digit security code as an easily guessable number – Do not use your date of a birthday, anniversary, etc. Also, if you deal with your telco by phone make sure the account has a non-guessable password (in addition to the passcode) or, if using a purely online provider, make sure the good old 2FA (two factor authentication) which I keep banging on about is enabled.

Sticking to the theme of phones this month, but expanding it to include AI, my far eastern trip gave me the opportunity to 'play' with the AI photo editing features built into my phone. Hopefully, Bill will be able to include the two photos I sent him. One is labelled 'original' and one is AI edited. The AI edit has removed all the people in the way in my photo and made it look as if I was all alone at this gate in the ancient town of Lijiang. I did nothing except circle with my finger the items/people I wanted to remove. I've experimented further with more crowded scenes, and it works just as well.



Original

Edited

So, the question is 'what is real'. Both are, ultimately, the same photo I took. I know which I prefer. I think this is a great example of the fact that you simply cannot believe anything anymore. If my phone has this editing in-built, imagine what can be done with photoshop and a more powerful computer, or even with the various industrial strength AI image manipulation technology. The so-called "deepfakes". In many ways, it is very scary.

BTW: I couldn't remember in which of the ancient cities we visited I took this photo. So, I did a google reverse image search. Got an instant answer.

Finally, nothing to do with phones or technology, the Chinese tour we were on ended in Shangri La. It's a bit of a dump to be honest. The city was renamed from Zhongdian in 2001 to attract tourists. The old town burnt down in 2014 and was rebuilt 'in the old style' but lacks character compared with Lijiang and Dali. Its masquerading as something it isn't – a bit like my AI edited photo!

Safe browsing

David Cornwell,

Webmaster

www.shirenewtonchurch.com <<http://www.shirenewtonchurch.com>>



The winners of the Call My Bluff wine-tasting celebrate their victory

EASTER SUNDAY 5th APRIL
VALLEY CHAPEL ANNIVERSARY
with Minister Bethany Willers
at 3 p.m. and refreshments
Also Hope Chapel on 31st May
at 3 p.m. Anniversary



**Stuart
Hammer**

Painter and Decorator
Quality work at sensible prices

07825232517



would you like to
knit & natter
or
crochet & chatter

whether you would like to learn or
have been twiddling yarn for
years, bring your yarn and come
chat with like minded people

**1st and 3rd thursdays
monthly in the Carpenters
Arms at 8pm**



**Holy Communion in
the Welsh language**

Cymraeg



*O ddydd Sadwrn Gorffennaf 12fed ac yn fisol bob ail ddydd
Sadwrn am 9.30 y bore, ymunwch â ni ar gyfer Cymun Bendigaid
yn yr iaith Gymraeg yn eglwys y Santes Fair Cas-gwent.*

**9:30am on the second
Saturday of the month
at St.Mary's Chepstow
Starting on 12th July**

First language Welsh and
Welsh learners, all welcome!
Service sheets will be
bi-lingual. Excellent
opportunity for learners to
practice listening, reading
and speaking skills!

For more info please contact
Zoepimentel@cinw.org.uk



TAKE AWAY
OR DINE IN

TIN SHED &
LOUNGE BAR



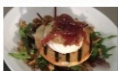
THE HUNTSMAN
HOTEL
CHEPSTOW

SPECIALISTS
FOR 40 YEARS

OUTSIDE
CATERING



MORE THAN JUST A MEAL - IT'S AN EXPERIENCE!



QUALITY CATERING FOR EVERY OCCASION

WEDNESDAY'S DELICIOUS VARIETY

Mid-week cravings satisfied! Explore a rotating selection of chef-inspired dishes.

FRIDAY FISH & CHIPS

The ultimate tradition. Fresh fish, crispy, golden-fried favorites to start your weekend right.

SUNDAY ROASTS & MORE

Take the stress out of Sunday and let us do the cooking.

Join us for a classic Sunday experience. From perfectly slow-roasted meats or vegetarian alternatives, there's something for the whole family.

OUR MENUS CHANGE WEEKLY

Selection varies weekly based on fresh availability. Check Facebook to see what's cooking this week!

EVENTS & OUTSIDE CATERING

Planning a gathering?

We provide professional catering services tailored to your needs:

Celebrations: Anniversaries, Birthday Parties, and Hog Roasts.

Respectful Service: Compassionate catering for Wakes and memorials.

Any Venue: From garden parties to community halls, our Outside Catering team brings the flavour to you.

YOUR FOOD, YOUR WAY

Dine In: Enjoy our friendly atmosphere and fresh-off-the-stove service.

Take Away: Hot, fresh, and ready to go when you are.

Heat at Home: Grab our Cold Options to stock your fridge and enjoy a premium meal on your own schedule.

**“It’s that time of year!
The Tin Shed is open!”**

check our Facebook for updates

You can find us at **USK ROAD, SHIRENEWTON, NP16 6BU**

You can check out our website **HUNTSMANHOTEL.CO.UK**

You can contact us by email **HUNTSMAN.SHIRENEWTON@GMAIL.COM**

You can follow us on Facebook **THE HUNTSMAN HOTEL NEW PAGE**

You can call us **01291 641521 | 07961 522393**

Shirenewton W.I.

A History of Alcohol by Keith Tayton



This may surprise you as a topic for a W.I. talk, but in fact we do enjoy an odd glass of wine at some of our meetings. Also, Keith, in his light hearted talk to Shirenewton W.I., pointed out that originally, brewing was 'women's work'. The brewing of beer, dating from the ancient civilisations of Babylon and Egypt until the Middle Ages, was always done by women and breweries have existed for around 15,000 years. The Sumerian goddess of beer, Ninkasi, was portrayed drinking her beer through a straw. Beer was a vital source of nutrition and trade in the ancient world.



Brewing spread from the Levant area (Eastern Mediterranean) into Greece and onwards into Europe. Surprisingly Britain was slow to get into brewing, the Celts preferring to drink a cider made mainly from crab apples. How we Brits seem to have made up since for this dilatory approach! It is difficult to determine which is the oldest pub in Britain, with several contenders claiming their existence from 10th Century. The oldest pub in Shirenewton is the Carpenters Arms dating from 1650.

Of course, our earliest ancestors would have been consuming naturally produced alcohol from fermented fruit, just as animals and insects do today. Keith showed us a slide of some very drunken elephants who had overindulged on fermenting fruit.

Wine production is mentioned in the bible, in the Old Testament - Noah planted a vineyard after the flood. Archaeological evidence leads us to believe that the first wine was produced in the Georgia / Armenian area, although the Chinese had earlier made fermented beverages from rice, honey and fruit. In Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek and Roman civilisations, wine

became a major industry and has remained through to today. The Europeans took wine production to the New World Countries during the 16th and 17th Centuries.

Madam Clicquot was one woman who made a huge impact on the Champagne industry, which by 19th Century was largely a male only domain. She was a young widow who restored her deceased husband's vineyard and revolutionised the production of champagne, producing the first vintage champagne and building the renowned champagne house, Veuve Clicquot



The first distilled spirits were produced much later than beer and wine, probably not until the 8th or 9th Centuries and were mainly used for medicinal purposes by alchemists or for religious ceremonies. The first whisky was produced in the 15th Century, followed by Gin and Rum in the 17th Centuries.

Keith's talk was as entertaining as ever and wonderfully illustrated. We all thoroughly enjoyed the evening ...and 'no' not a drop of alcohol touched our lips on this occasion, but some very welcome tea, coffee and Welsh cakes.

Our next meeting will be our AGM, followed by a game of Scattergories on **Thursday 14th May** at Shirenewton Recreation Hall at 7.30 p.m. Please note that for the summer months, we shall be starting our meetings at the new time of 7.30p.m. If you would like to know more about Shirenewton W.I., please contact either Angela Gray at angela.deepweir@btopenworld.com or Jane Butterworth at janeb247@gmail.com (641704) or come along to a meeting.

Jackie Broughton




HOME CARE

Eileen O' Dwyer

Private Carer/Home help
07795 689791

Gardening Corner

The weather forecast for the week ahead said we were going to have an unseasonably warm week, with a southerly breeze. I thought this might bring the house martens so up went the ladders and on went the artificial nests for another year. Nothing arrived for a fortnight, then two lonely martens arrived, and took up immediate residence., then for a couple of weeks, they had a very quiet 'honeymoon' period, before one morning the sky was suddenly full of their cousins and all eight nests were fully occupied after which things got nasty. With some later arrivals physically trying to pull the resident birds out of their nests! As yet, there is no sign of any extra nest building going on, so the surplus birds have either moved on, or they are hoping for some wet weather, so that mud gathering is a little easier! We are currently two weeks past the 'cuckoo Sunday' when this annual visitor arrives and the male starts singing. It was a month late last year and we only heard one in the woodland opposite. Hopefully things will improve. Sitting having coffee yesterday, we did notice a greenfinch on our bird feeders, which is the first we have seen for many years. They have been badly affected by disease, so hopefully they are making a comeback. I'd love to be able to identify the different birdsongs, but for now I use an extremely useful App on my phone. It identified at least two green finches in the garden, so hopefully their return is assured. Being bigger than most other birds at the feeders, they can be bullies but guess that is nature for you. There has been no return of the frogs and toads to our ponds, and our fear is that it is now getting too late for any frog spawn this year, and our main slug hunters are not going to be around to help us. This will be a major blow, if things turn back wet in the coming weeks.

In the greenhouses and garden generally, things have moved up several notches and the 'turbo charger' has now kicked in. It is now very much a question of what we do first. With the current fine weather, we have had an extra challenge of actual air frosts for at least the last two nights. Yesterday I was outside briefly at 6 am (only to get the pastries out of the freezer for breakfast I hasten to add!) and there was a heavy dew. By 7 am, when I let the cat in, the temperature had suddenly gone down, and the car windscreens were frozen solid. You often see this at this time of year, just as the sun is rising. There must be a reason for this sudden drop in temperature, but I don't know what it might be other than it is the longest part of the night, until the warming rays touch the ground again. As I tend to start plants off very early in the year (the assistant head gardener always accuses me of being way too early!) it is a case of having to cover over all the tender varieties each night, just in case. In my defence, I try to take advantage of the changing climate, in that winter rains have soaked the ground, and as hot dry spells come along, early established plants establish much more easily, without the need for excessive watering. I'm guessing on balance that the extra heat required to get the seedlings growing is probably outweighs the saving on water, as both are

Continued on page 34



Early potatoes are growing well, with their protective fleece pulled off. Space is filling up!

Continued from page 32

increasingly expensive, but electricity more so. The first early potatoes in the large tunnel are now well established, and it won't be long before the flowers will be forming, and we can dig our first new potatoes. We always look forward to that day. Outside, the other first early potatoes, and our 'blue' potatoes are only just starting to show at the top of the soil, so these will gradually be earthed up as the green shows. I am currently re-potting the tomatoes into five litre pots, and placing bamboo supports into the pots, as they are now around two feet tall and having the first baby tomatoes forming. The cucumbers are even taller and also have the first fruits forming. We have been cutting salad leaves for the last month or more, but these have a very quick turnaround and of course benefit from the extra warmth in the tunnel, as does everything else. With these I have found that the most productive way is to manage on a twelve-week cropping cycle with each crop overlapping by three weeks. The first three weeks is sowing and growing to planting size, the second three weeks is planting out and growing to cutting size, and then you have six weeks of cutting, before the crop has finished and needs replanting. By overlapping the cycles, you are certain of a permanent supply of lovely fresh and tender leaves. The other early planted crops (all under cover of course) are also now getting well established with the courgettes forming fruits, the broad beans are in full flower, and the French beans are now climbing up their support canes. The onion sets, shallots and garlic are now well established and growing fast, and the potted strawberries are either in flower, or have already formed fruits. We can't wait for the first pickings to be ready!

We have been hardening off the less tender vegetable and flowers plants, initially in the tunnels and greenhouses but with no fleece cover, but now we are moving them outside onto the spare beds to fully acclimatise. At the same time, we are working on all of the raised beds to get conditions right for planting out. I tried to grow some green manure crops last year by sowing in the Autumn with winter hardy species. For the second time, this experiment failed miserably. Whether it is the weather, or it is me, I don't know, but at this rate I will have to have a rethink as to what happens next, as I can never seem to create enough compost to use on the soil to help improve fertility and moisture retention. This week will be a full on planting out time for us as we are fast running out of growing on space, and there are more things that need sowing. The current dry weather is allowing us to make good inroads into weeding the flower borders and make them ready for some further planting out. The incessant wet weather over Winter has resulted in several plants dying and rotting away, so these are gradually being replaced with stock plants that we grew last year. We had grown selected varieties (mostly our favourite or most expensive to replace) in the event of us selling up and moving on as we had planned, but as this hasn't happened so far, we have decided to make use of them! As usual, *happy gardening until next month, Steve and Felicity Hunt.*

*Plant & Flower
Donations Needed!*

EARLSWOOD MEMORIAL HALL

FLOWER, PLANT CAKE SALE



Saturday 16th May, 10:30am to 1:30pm

*Why not book a table for £10
and sell your spare plants or
simply come for cake and a chat.*

*for more information contact Becca on
07889 762840 or info@earlnew.com*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MAY

Sunday 10 th 1.00 p.m.	Beating the Bounds Meet at the Church door
Monday 11 th 7.00 p.m.	Shirenewton Community Council meeting Shirenewton Recreation Hall
Wednesday 13 th 2.00 p.m.	Shirenewton History Society Archive meeting Shirenewton Church Room
Thursday 14 th 7.30 p.m.	Shirenewton WI: AGM and Scattergories Shirenewton Recreation Hall
Friday 15 th 7.00 p.m.	Quiz (admission £5) Newchurch Church
Saturday 16 th 10.30 a.m.—1.30 p.m.	Flower, Plant and Cake Sale Earlswood Newchurch West Village Hall
Wednesday 27 th 11.00 a.m.	History Society visit to St Michaels, Llanfangel-for -y-Mynydd, lunch at The Star Inn
Wednesday 27 th 14.00 p.m.	History Society visit to Llansoy Church
Saturday 30 th 2.00—4.00 p.m.	Party in the Priory St Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow
Sunday 31 st 3.00 p.m.	Anniversary service Hope Chapel

JUNE

Wednesday 10 th 2.00 p.m.	Shirenewton History Society Archive meeting Shirenewton Church Room
Saturday 13 th 1.00—5.00 p.m.	Village Fete Recreation Field
Tuesday 30 th tbc	History Society visit to the Transporter Bridge Transporter Bridge

severnwyema.co.uk

Nothing is more of a
Dr Rachel Cross
lonely for her own all her
(DipABRSM, CELTA, LMusTCL,
MISM, BA (Hons), MA, PhD, FHEA)

both itself and friend. And
love. **English tuition from**
secondary school level
husband by all.
to postgraduate
and
music theory, piano and strings
tuition

And it must follow, as the
night the day. Thou canst
07906 195098
rachelcross.co.uk
rachelecross6@gmail.com
not thou be taken for any man.

LIFE SAVING DEFIBRILLATOR



DEFIBRILLATOR LOCATIONS

(Cabinets do not require codes, they are unlocked although they have a key pad)

- Carpenters Arms (on the Usk road)
- Huntsman Hotel (on the Usk road)
- Recreation Hall (Shirenewton village)
- The Tredegar Arms (The Square, centre of Shirenewton)
- Great House Farm complex (off Old Road), Earlswood (north)
[repair.decrease.fussy]
- Earlswood Hall (Earlswood)
- Shirenewton School

THE FASTEST GROWING SPORT IN THE WORLD HAS ARRIVED IN CWMBRAN!

ANY AGE . ANY FITNESS LEVEL . NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED . FUN GUARANTEED



A MIXTURE OF TENNIS AND SQUASH,
PADEL IS THE SECOND MOST POPULAR
SPORT IN THE WORLD TO FOOTBALL.

PLAYED IN DOUBLES, PADEL IS GREAT FOR
SOCIALISING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

FIND US AT THE WELSH PADEL CENTRE, WOODLAND ROAD SPORTS & SOCIAL CENTRE, CWMBRAN, NP44 2DZ

Wyefield Windows and Doors Ltd

- Composite Doors
- Misted Glass Replacement
- Upvc Windows & Doors
- Window & Door Repairs
- Aluminium Windows & Doors
- uPVC Fascia Soffit & Guttering



01600 717717
01633 495095



info@wyefieldwindowsanddoors.co.uk

SINCE 1861

TREDEGAR ARMS

SHIRENEWTON



Now Open
Wednesday to Sunday
12pm to 11pm
tredegararms.com
01291 783600



Within all the doom and gloom there are many active individuals who are contributing to efforts to bring about a fairer, kinder, and more sustainable world. So many examples – protecting wildlife, cleaning up the environment, supporting charities, purchasing ethically, contributing to community cohesion (– come on all you tech savvy people – this magazine needs a new editor!!)

I have tried to spread the word about companies that have worked to attain B corps status where their overall ethical status is regularly reassessed (similarly with Fairtrade certification eg of Chepstow which is a Fairtrade town). There are more than 10,000 B Corps in 103 countries. Certification as a B Corp signals that the company is committed to respect business practices that benefit people and planet, not just shareholders.

I was very encouraged to read that B Corps were advertising in the breaks of Channel 4's Taskmaster programs. Apparently initially people assumed B Corp status focused primarily on environmental issues, but also reinforcing the social impact helped develop people's understanding. As a result many people said that they were more likely to consider B corps when making a purchase. The B Corps involved saw a 10% sales uplift.

Companies note that their employees are more committed and motivated, with higher levels of innovation and market leadership. There was increased customer loyalty. So it was a win win!

It is so easy to be overwhelmed by all the bad news! It is vital for one's sanity to focus and work, really work for the positive – wherever it can be found! (As I used to say to my school pupils 'Eat chocolate and Save the World! As long as it's Fairtrade!!')

Here are some B corps you might know Guardian Media Group, Finisterre, Patagonia, Danone (big surprise for me – huge successful company), Tony's Chocolonely, Cheeky Panda, Ecover, FatFace, Divine, Cafedirect, Body Shop (yes, still!, but belongs to Aurea Group). Also another shout-out for the lovely B corps jeweller who came to the Repair Café at Upcycle : Anna McLoughlin.

Interestingly enough Oxfam Fair Trade (in Belgium) is a certified B Corp, specialising in FT food and drinks, but Oxfam generally is registered as a non-profit organisation or charity. By the way Oxfam Chepstow needs volunteers! – this could be your positive step!

Meanwhile do make some FT purchases (from some supermarkets, Oxfam or Ethical Superstore (my supplier). An easy way to effect really positive change!

STARGAZING



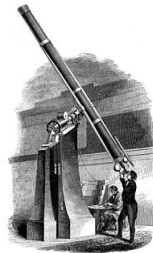
The seven stars of the Plough lie overhead in mid-evening. Its classical name is Ursa Major, the Great Bear. In mythology, Callisto, attendant to the goddess Juno was considered more beautiful than her mistress. To protect her from her jealous mistress, Jupiter turned Callisto into a bear. Unfortunately, Callisto's son tried to kill the bear whilst he was out hunting, so Jupiter placed the bear in the sky.

The two stars furthest from the handle of the Plough are called the Pointers. Tracing a connecting line from the Pointers leads to Polaris, the North Star. Polaris is called the North Star because it is the closest easily visible star to the point in the sky about which the star patterns rotate. This point changes very gradually with time. In fact, over thousands of years, other stars have been the North Star.

The stars appear fixed with respect to each other, but over long periods of time the star patterns change. The pattern of stars we call the Plough looked very different many years ago and will look very different in the distant future.

The bright planet Jupiter lies in the constellation Gemini to the west and is above the horizon from sunset until about midnight. Venus is visible in the west after sunset.

The Moon is full on 1st and 31st May. Many cultures refer to May's full moon as the flower moon thanks to the abundant blooming that occurs as spring gets going properly.





WIZARDECO

MAKE YOUR HOME WARMER FOR WINTER.



Find out if your home qualifies for the government backed grant.

Energy-saving upgrades:



Solar
Panels



Loft
Insulation



Wall
Insulation



Smart
Thermostats



Heating
Upgrade



Battery
Storage



Who can qualify?

- ⚡ Low household income
- ⚡ Health conditions
- ⚡ Receiving benefits

WIZARDECO.COM

INFO@WIZARDECO.COM

01633 846 910

Hanbury Garage, Caerleon, Newport, NP18 1AA

YOUR LOCAL TRUSTED INSTALLER

THE
BATHROOM
SHOWROOM

AT

CITY
PLUMBING

Check out
our fantastic
new product
displays.
Get inspired
today!

YOUR PERFECT BATHROOM IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

AT THE SCHOOL TRADING ESTATE IN CHEPSTOW

From taps to tiles, cloakrooms to family bathrooms,
and lighting to heating, we have it all.

Unit 1, The School Trading Estate, Chepstow,
Monmouthshire NP16 5PH

T: 01291 630643 M: 07469 402233

Book your appointment today!

By phone 01291 630643 or online at www.bathrooms.com



Trade &
Public
welcome



Free 3D
design
& planning



Free Tile
sampling
service

www.bathrooms.com

NEW ADVERTISING RATES TO ADVERTISE IN THIS MAGAZINE

CONTACT Bill Clark: 01291 641783; parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com

The editor reserves the right to print free content and free advertisements in black and white and at the size the page layout requires

New Advertising Rates for Commercial organisations with effect from 1st September 2025

12 months 10 issues

Quarter Page £65

Half Page £120

Full page £400

Advertising Rates for Commercial Organisations that support the Church and the local community

12 months 10 issues

Quarter Page £65

Half Page £120

Full page £200

Advertising for Local and Charity organisations is free.

Severn Wye Bible Study Group

We are a small group of Christians enjoying a warm and nurturing fellowship together. We read scripture and talk about what it means and how we can apply it to our daily lives. We are learning together and there is no such thing as a silly question. If you're even a tiny bit curious, come along. Give it a go....you may love it as we do!!!!

Where: Shirenewton Church Room

When: 14.45 Tuesday afternoons

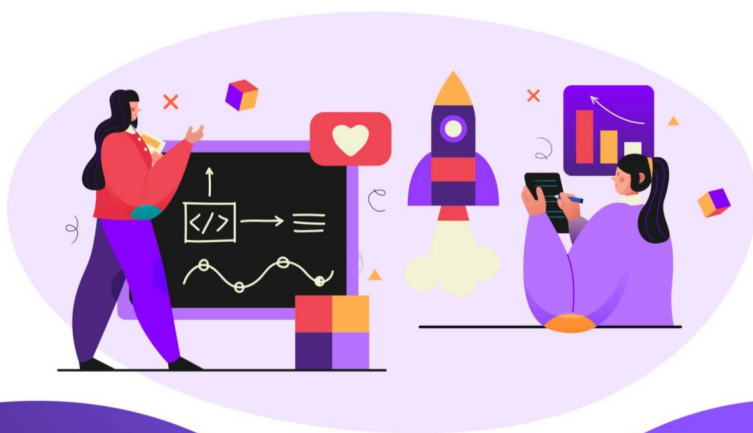
Why: Because it's encouraging, uplifting and good for the soul.



SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL PLAY OUR LOTTERY



- Tickets cost just £1 a week
- The easy way to help us raise funds
- Local cash prizes every week



BUY TICKETS:

Go to: www.yourschoollottery.co.uk

And search for: Shirenewton



GambleAware 18+

S&B Newspaper Home Delivery Service

First month FREE DELIVERY for new customers!

Various payment options available

1-7 DAYS A WEEK

DELIVERIES OF MORNING PAPERS

PLUS ALL MAGAZINES

So, relax and have your newspapers delivered

Phone:- Reg on 01633 411117 or

Steve on 07971 061495



The **MONMOUTHSHIRE** Window Company

T: 01291 630063

www.monmouthshirewindows.com

- Continually investing in the latest products.
- Highest standard of product installations.
- Showrooms across Monmouthshire & in Newport.
- FENSA Registered.
- High quality PVC & Aluminium products.
- Over 20 years of experience.

**BIFOLD DOORS • COMPOSITE DOORS • CASEMENT & FLUSH CASEMENT WINDOWS
FRENCH DOORS • SUPALITE TILED ROOF • CONSERVATORIES • SLIDING DOORS**



www.stepwisepodiatry.co.uk info@stepwisepodiatry.co.uk

HPCP Registered Podiatrists

Routine foot care, Diabetic foot checks, Ingrown toenails, Nail Surgery, Verrucas
Sports injury, foot pain and MLS Laser

Clinic locations in Tintern and Chepstow

Unit 4 Library Place, Manor Way, Chepstow, NP16 5HZ
Wye Valley Wellness Centre, Ashweir Lodge, Tintern, NP16 6SE
Home visits available for house bound patients

Let us fix your feet

Call us today for an appointment

Tel: 01291 689917

www.stepwisepodiatry.co.uk info@stepwisepodiatry.co.uk



Trophies
Glass
Plaques
Shields

Cups
Tankards
Medals
Engraving

07770773323 • info@theawardscompany.co.uk
www.theawardscompany.co.uk



THE PERSONAL TRAINING POD



FAT LOSS
SPECIALISTS



NUTRITION
TRACKING



LIFESTYLE
TARGETS



MENTAL
WELL BEING



FUNCTIONAL
MUSCLE



THE UNIQUE PRIVATE STUDIO FOR 1:1 AND SMALL GROUP TRAINING

WWW.PERSONALTRAININGPOD.COM

BENTLEY GREEN FARM, CRICK, MONMOUTHSHIRE, NP26 5UR

Feakes & Co Solicitors



For You and Your Family

- Disputes and Litigation
- Redundancy/Settlement Agreements
- Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney
- Estate and Tax Planning

Chepstow office: 01291 639280

Newport office: 01633 358888

info@feakes-legal.com | www.feakes-legal.com

Senior Services

Pressure washing, Paths, Patios,
Fences, Driveways

Fence painting/Staining

Home Offices/Sheds

Contact Rob

TEL: 07391046450

Reliable, Traditional, Courteous



Daniel & Matthew Haines **LLANVAIR LANDSCAPES**

Grass cutting and strimming, Hedge trimming
NPTC approved Tree Surgery Turfing
Landscaping, Seeding Lawn Care: Spraying
Scarifying, Aerating, Fertilizing. Rough areas
Sprayed and Cleared. Rubbish Removal.
Garden Fences, Patios & Agricultural Fencing.

Fully Insured. Competitive Prices, Free Quotes

Contact: Daniel or Matthew Haines

01633 400548, 07930 893680
07930 893678

A photograph showing a large pile of stacked firewood logs, with the ends of the logs visible, showing various wood textures and colors.

Firewood for Sale

**Barn Stored Seasoned
Logs for Sale**

Contact Daniel or Matthew Haines

Tel.- 01633 400548
07930 893680 or 07930 893678

LOCAL CONTACTS

Severn Wye Ministry Area

Ministry Area Leader	Zoe and Barney Pimentel	severnwyema.co.uk 07754 306229
Team Vicar	Fr Michael Gollop	01291 622 064 frmichaelgollop1@gmail.com
Team Vicar	Reverend Philip Averay	01291 620980 revphilipaveray@gmail.com
Associate Priest	Reverend John Waters	07836 585 250
Ministry Area Leader's Warden	Ros Downes	
Ministry Area People's Warden	David Carne	david-carne@outlook.com 07887 853479
Ministry Area Lay Co-Chair	Hilary Hillier	
Ministry Area Treasurer	Kevin Higgs	

Church of St Thomas à Becket, Shirenewton

Lay Eucharistic Minister	Gilly Lambert	07821 725 690
Church Warden	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459
Church Warden	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
LCC Secretary	John Montague	01291 329 481 jmontyvet@hotmail.co.uk
LCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
LCC Members	Janet Horton	01291 641 783
	James Leney	01291 641 271
	Wendy Montague	01291 329 481
	Sally Saysell	01291 641 369
	John Burrows	01291 641 845
	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641525
Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650 521
	James Leney	01291 641 271
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Will Smith-Haddon	07977 281 147 churchroombooking27@gmail.com
Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
Parish magazine distribution	Jane Smith-Haddon	01291 641 525
200 Club	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459

Ministry Area Council Representative

Wendy Montague 01291 329 481

MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives (as at October 2025)

Shirenewton Community Council

Clerk: Jan McLagan

shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Ward

Philip Butterworth (Chair)	01291 641704	philip.b@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Catherine Martin (Vice Chair)	01291 329610	cathie.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Gary Mitchell	07979 913555	gary.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Sophie Todd	07766 524709	sophie.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Vacancy		

Earlswood and Newchurch Ward

Ian Martin	07467 176977	ian.m@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
Geoff Todd	07855 301806	geoff.t@shirenewtoncc.org.uk

MCC for Shirenewton

Louise Brown	07598 979719	louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
--------------	--------------	--

Member of Parliament

Catherine Ann Fookes	catherine.fookes.mp@parliament.uk
----------------------	--

Member of the Senedd

Peter Fox MS	Peter.Fox@senedd.wales
--------------	--

Police and SPCO Contacts

In an emergency 999;
To report an incident to the Police 111
To contact the Local SPCO Toby Wall [email:Toby.Wall@gwent.police.uk](mailto:Toby.Wall@gwent.police.uk)

Other Local Organisations

Beavers	Julie Hitchcock	01291 650548
Church Fete	John Burrows	shirenewtonfete@gmail.com
Earlswood Hope	Mr Raymond Jeremiah	01291 641726
Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall		
Chairman	Becca Allen	07889762840 chair@earlnew.com
Treasurer	Geoff Todd	07855301806 treasurer@earlnew.com

Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel

The Reverend Gordon Gresswell 07570992890

Gaerllwyd Baptist

Recreation Association

Mrs E Remnant Brooklands, Usk Road NP16 6SA
Beverly Lyndsay 07798 780971
beverlylindsay@btinternet.com

Recreation Hall booking

St Peters Church Newchurch

Beryl Saysell 01291 641637 saysellberyl@gmail.com
Enid Heritage 01291 622708
enidheritage@gmail.com

Shirenewton Local History Society

Dorothy Brabon 01291 641376
brabonnl@hotmail.com

Gwent Wildlife Trust Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Meadows (previously SAMFAL)

01600 740600

Shirenewton Preschool

Shirenewton Primary School

Morgan Baker morgan@shirenewtonpreschool.com
Mr Nick Penn, Head Teacher 01291 641774
shirenewtonprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Shirenewton Toddler Group

Sarah Parker 07971 783434

Shirenewton Tennis Association

Andy Orrell shirenewtontennis@gmail.com

Fairtrade

msm316@gmail.com

Marion McAdam 01291 641316

Womens Institute (WI)

Angela Gray (President)
angela.deepwier@btopenworld.com
Jane Butterworth (Secretary) 01291 641704.

*If you know of any changes or omissions please contact the Editor Bill Clark
Telephone 01291 641783 or email parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com*

JOANNE HUME & SON LTD



Independent Family Funeral Directors

24 Hour Service

- Unattended cremations from £1095
- Male & Female Funeral Directors
- Private Chapel of Rest
- New Memorial Stones & Memorial Renovations
- Pre-paid Funeral Plans
- Free advice & assistance with grants.

ASK US WHAT WE CAN OFFER, COMPARED TO OTHER FUNERAL DIRECTORS.

168-170 Newport Road, Caldicot, Monmouthshire, NP26 4AA

Tel 01291 420972

office@joannehumeandson.co.uk

www.joannehumeandson.co.uk



SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Published: by The Church of St. Thomas à Becket Shirenewton

Editor: Bill Clark 01291 641783 email: parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com

The cost of the Magazine is £1.50 per issue/10 issues for £14.

Copies are delivered free by local distributors to those who have pre-paid.

Monthly copies are available at the Church.

Previous editions of the magazine are available online on the Church website at www.shirenewtonchurch.info.

**To order your regular copy, contact Jane Smith-Haddon
01291 641525/07816 233554 dolly.shirenewton@gmail.com**

The editor reserves the right to print free content and free advertisements in black and white and at a size to fit the pagination of the magazine.

Editorial policy is to print what you provide, space and technology permitting. The views expressed are those of the contributor.

Preferred Document format is an MS Word document attached to an email. Preferred Advert and Photograph format is JPEG attached to an email

Deadlines for the 2026 issues are 9:00 a.m. on:

Monday 25th May for the June issue

Monday 22nd June for the July/August issue

J & B Sewing Machines

Established 1961

www.jbsewing.com



- Domestic & Industrial Sewing Machines
- Servicing & Repairs
- Fabrics & Haberdashery
- Quilting & Creative Sewing Classes
- Coffee Mornings
- Serving South Wales For 58 Years
- **Helpful Friendly Advice!**



Main Dealers for:



J & B House
Curlew Close
Queensway Meadows
Newport
NP19 4SY
Tel: 01633 284646

Unit 4a Gripoly Mills
Sloper Road
Cardiff
CF11 8AA
Tel: 02922 402148