

the **Bridge**

September 2026



Come together for
Bridport's Arts Centre

A community magazine for Bridport supported by churches in the town

THE PARISH OF BRIDPORT

Team Rector see page 7

Interim Team Rector

The Revd Cally Burch Day off Friday
cally@parishofbridport.org / 07746 561144

Associate Priests

The Revd Lorna Johnson (until 6 September)
lorna@parishofbridport.org / 341520 / 07501 408221
The Revd John Rees Day off Monday
john@parishofbridport.org / 07340 589375

Permission to officiate

The Revd Janis Moore Day off Wednesday
janis@parishofbridport.org / 425644
The Revd Margaret Preuss-Higham
revmph@gmail.com / 07817 161687

Licensed lay ministers

Graham Purse 423220 Peter Wright 456967

Lay pastoral assistants

Diana Wright, Caroline Cooke, Anne Rees, Jane Trower,
Kathrine O'Brien, Virginia Bowley, Helen Thomas.

*If you cannot get to church and would like home
communion or a visit, please contact Diana (456967).*

Lay worship leaders

Martin Whiting, Anne Rees, James Craddock

Team Administrator Dianne Sinclair

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United Church

Please visit hallbookingonline.com/bridportuc
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Bridport Food Bank

info@bridportfoodbank.org 07443 596096

OTHER CHURCHES IN BRIDPORT

Beacon Church, Priory Lane 456031 office

The Christian Fellowship 458227

St Mary & St Catherine (Roman Catholic)

Father Colin Groombridge / Faith Leborgne (secretary)
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Bridport Quaker Meeting

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*All phone numbers are Bridport (01308) unless
otherwise stated.*

The advertising and copy deadline for the October 2026 issue is 5pm on Monday 7 September

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Bridport Arts Centre campaigns to secure its home

Bridport Arts Centre (BAC) has launched its ‘Come Together’ campaign to bring its building into community ownership.

The charity is inviting people across Bridport and beyond – audiences, artists, performers, families, businesses and supporters – to come together to help it raise £400,000 and secure its historic home for future generations.

“Nearly everyone has their own BAC story,” says BAC Director Claire Tudge. “It might be the first show they saw, the first time they stood on a stage or the night they discovered a band or artist they still love. It might be where their child found their confidence, where a friendship started, or simply somewhere they have always felt welcome. These stories say far more about Bridport Arts Centre than any list of performances or exhibitions ever could; this is why the building, and what happens inside it, matters so much to the town.”

BAC does not, however, own the building itself. In 2020, local businessman Alasdair Warren stepped in to help the charity by buying the freehold during a challenging period. He has now agreed to sell it to BAC.

The Come Together campaign aims to hit its target by the end of December to buy the building and fund urgent repairs and renovations. “Ownership would give us long-term security,” adds Claire, “allowing us to improve access, reduce the building’s environmental impact and protect BAC into the future.”

“This is an ambitious campaign and we cannot do it alone,” says Chris Pike, BAC Chairman. “We need everyone who values the Arts Centre to get behind us, whether that means donating money, introducing us to someone who may be able to help, putting on their own fundraiser or simply sharing their BAC story.”

Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England 2017–26, has praised BAC as an outstanding example

of an arts centre playing a vital role in the life of its town. “[It’s] a place where people of all ages come together to experience excellence in the arts and culture, and where the creativity of the town, the wider region and the next generation is nurtured and celebrated,” he says. “It is essential that the building should be brought into community ownership to protect its future and ensure that BAC can continue to enrich the cultural, social and economic life of Bridport and West Dorset for generations to come.”

Founded more than 50 years ago by the community, for the community, BAC has always been more than just a venue. It is home to Bridport’s From Page to Screen film festival and the internationally renowned Bridport Prize for creative writing. Kit de Waal, writer and honorary patron of the Bridport Prize, has given her support to the Come Together campaign. She says: “With arts centres closing up and down the country and support for writers ever more scarce, the Bridport Prize is bucking the trend, raising money for BAC and continuing its work helping new writers and artists get a foot on the ladder, recognising their work and allowing them to shine. I am delighted to support the campaign to secure this important space for the local and national community and, in doing so, help the Bridport Prize to continue to thrive.”

In 2024, BAC worked in partnership with PJ Harvey and her team to stage an exclusive concert for the local community at Abbotsbury. Popular local cafe F.east opened at the Arts Centre in the same year. The building is also home to BACstage youth theatre, the West Dorset Film Makers Network and Bridport Film Society.

The centre’s stage and gallery bring established artists together with new talent, while young people discover what they can do and audiences of all ages come together through theatre, music, film, comedy and visual art.



CHURCH SERVICES

HC = Holy Communion / BCP = Book of Common Prayer / CC = Contemplative Church / MP = Morning Praise / MPR = Morning Prayer. *Centering Prayer takes place on the second and fourth Wednesdays. For details email carolinepuntismore@gmail.com. Please note: services are subject to occasional change. Find latest info at parishofbridport.org

SEPTEMBER 2026 – see left for an explanation of the abbreviations						
Date	St Mary's Bridport	St Swithun's Allington	Holy Trinity Bothenhampton	Holy Trinity Bradpole	St Mary's Walditch	St John's West Bay
Tues 1				2.30pm HC		
Wed 2	2.30pm HC					
Thurs 3		10am Eucharist				
Sun 6 <i>Creation-tide</i>	8am BCP HC	10am Parish Eucharist 4pm CC (hall)				
Mon 7						10am MPR
Wed 9		2pm Centering Prayer* (hall)				
Thur 10		10am Eucharist 3.30pm Wild & Messy Church				
Sun 13 <i>15th after Trinity</i>	8am BCP HC 11am All Age MP	9.30am Eucharist	11am HC	9.30am MP	11am MPR	11am HC 3pm Battle of Britain service
Mon 14						10am MPR
Thurs 17		10am Eucharist				
Sun 20 <i>16th after Trinity</i>	8am BCP HC 11am Ionian HC	9.30am Eucharist		9.30am HC		
Mon 21						10am MPR
Wed 23		2pm Centering Prayer* (hall)				
Thurs 24		10am Eucharist				
Sat 26						6pm Service of Wholeness & Healing
Sun 27 <i>17th after Trinity</i>	8am BCP HC 11am HC	9.30am Eucharist	11am Matins	9.30am MP	11am HC	11am MP
Mon 28						10am MPR
OCTOBER 2026						
Thurs 1		10am Eucharist				
Sun 4 <i>Harvest</i>	8am BCP HC	4pm CC (hall)		10am Parish service of HC		
Mon 5						10am MPR
Tues 6	7pm Induction of the new rector (see page 7)			2.30pm HC		
Wed 7	2.30pm HC					
Thurs 8		10am Eucharist 3.30pm Wild & Messy Church				

Coffee morning: At St Swithun's, Allington, there is a community coffee morning in the hall on the first Thursday of each month from 9.30 to 11.15am. Free coffee, cakes and snacks plus a raffle in aid of a local charity. All welcome!

A 'new term' feel for us all

Although January is the real beginning of the year – and a time for resolving to make positive life changes – September has always felt to me like the start of something new.



Olivia Daly, Editor

Perhaps it's a lingering feeling from all those

formative years in education; September is the start of the new school year, meaning new stationery, new shoes, and a load of fresh new challenges.

It's timely, then, that September's issue of *The Bridge* is the one in which we're announcing the appointment of a new team rector for the Parish of Bridport. The Revd Canon Becky Roberts (see p7) will be arriving towards the end of this month, with her official institution and induction service on 6 October. It's something we're all looking forward to.

A big change for the parish brings a chance to make some changes to *The Bridge*, too – but first we'd love to hear what you think. Earlier this year I asked for general feedback (and I did get some – thank you) but I'd love to hear some more specific thoughts from our readers. Do we get the balance right, for example, between church and community content? Is our ambitious model of delivering more than 5,500 copies across the town just, well... too much? Would you prefer to receive the magazine online – or not at all? I'm open to constructive criticism, but please bear in mind that *The Bridge* team (including our delivery volunteers) work hard to produce and distribute the magazine. Be kind!

New rector Becky will certainly have some ideas of her own about what we should be doing with the magazine, and I can't wait to talk it through with her. That's what's so great about change – fresh blood brings fresh ideas and a chance to improve in ways we haven't even thought of yet.

Meanwhile, I'm off to start on the October *Bridge*, which will include news about Bridport Literary Festival. We'll be encouraging the community to come along and hear some fascinating authors. After all, opening a fresh book at the first page, and plunging into a whole new world, is another of the pleasures that make life meaningful.

Olivia Daly, Editor

editor@thebridgemagazine.org / 07710 805029

Change: embrace or block?

We inhabit a world of constant change, experiencing it daily; some alterations are so subtle that we hardly notice them.



The Revd Margaret Preuss-Higham

Others, however, have a more significant impact, from the shifting seasons to the various stages of our

lives: everything is in perpetual motion. When we encounter transitions, whether it's relocating or starting a new job, it's easy to feel a sense of unease.

The reality is that without change there can be no growth. In other words, improvement is impossible if everything remains static. Yet change isn't always easy, and it can lead us into situations that feel beyond our control. While some changes can be managed, others can be daunting and intimidating.

When change comes up, you often hear phrases like "the good old days," sometimes followed by "we knew where we were then." Reflecting on this, I think about how, in the past, I would have been writing with a quill and ink, illuminated only by candlelight.

I mentioned the concepts of "embracing" and "blocking" change. Do you welcome change, with all its challenges, or do you resist it out of fear of the unknown? Do you find yourself thinking: We have always done it this way, or: It works, so why change it? Which side do you fall on?

The church, over the years, has undergone numerous transformations, including the ordination of women, the appointment of female bishops, and now we have the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Dame Sarah Mullally DBE serving as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Parish of Bridport is preparing to welcome the Revd Canon Becky Roberts as its new rector, while we bid farewell to the Revd Lorna Johnson as she transitions to a new role in Weymouth. Both priests have answered God's call in their lives; significant changes lie ahead for them and for us as a parish.

Regardless of the changes we face, Jesus invites us to embrace something new and better – if we are willing to release the old.

Will you choose to embrace or block change?
The Revd Margaret Preuss-Higham

What's on further afield?

Discover ammonites on the Jurassic Coast

Author, journalist and fossil hunter Jodi Summers from the American Natural History Museum presents 'That's Sedimentary, My Dear Watson: How English Ammonites Changed Everything' at Lyme Regis Museum on Saturday 5 September at 2pm. The talk takes listeners on a journey through the world of one of prehistory's best-known fossils. Tickets are £9.95 for adults and £6.95 for children (including museum entry) at lymeregismuseum.co.uk/event/jodisummers.

Summer fun for a great cause

Weldmar Hospicecare's summer fete is on Saturday 12 September from 11am to 4pm in the grounds of the charity's hospice: Inpatient Unit, Herrington Road, Dorchester DT1 2SL. Entertainment, games, stalls, food, drink and more. Entry £3 (children free). Weldmar supporter Martin Clunes will be there, too, to try his luck at the games and pose for selfies!

Music and tea in Beaminster Parish Church

Professional musicians Peter Nardone and Jonathan Delbridge are giving a concert of piano and organ music in St Mary's Beaminster on Friday 25 September at 3pm. The programme will comprise a number of popular pieces. Tickets on the door are £10 (children free) and there will be tea and cakes. This event is in aid of the Friends of St Mary's Beaminster.

Poet Michael Rosen comes to Salisbury

Join poetry legend Michael Rosen early next year as he presents his new one-man show, *Getting Through It*, at Salisbury Cathedral. The show is a double-bill of monologues exploring themes of grief and mortality. Michael recounts powerful and personal stories, from the death of his son from meningitis at the age of 18 and the immense emotions from that unexpected loss, to the 48 days he spent in intensive care after contracting Covid-19, facing his own mortality after being put into an induced coma. Together, the two pieces are a testimony to the spirit of recovery. Friday 15 January 2027 at 7.15pm. Tickets available now: adult £18, student £12 at tinyurl.com/4c798hdu (links to the cathedral's events booking website).



Experience Christian reflection and prayer at these gatherings

Contemplative Church is an inclusive, meditative, worshipping community that offers a safe space for all to experience silence and the divine presence.

Using a simple practice of meditation, this monthly service also includes some set prayers and a reflection (often a poem or piece of sacred writing).

Services are at 4pm on the first Sunday of the month in St Swithun's Church Hall and usually last for around half an hour, plus refreshments and a chat if you have time. If you'd like to explore this, just come along, or for more details email cally@parishofbridport.org.

The Centering Prayer group is a small gathering of contemplatives who meet in St Swithun's hall twice a month. Meetings are on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 2pm and last about an hour. The group practises silent meditation and *Lectio Divina* – a sacred and personal repeated listening to a biblical text – then members are invited to share their personal response to the reading.

Caz Moore has been part of the group for seven years and is the person to talk to if you'd like to hear more or come and give it a go. You can contact her on 07884 073227 or carolinepuntismoore@gmail.com.

If you are drawn to silence and meditation, or looking for space to practice Christian contemplation with others, do come along.

The Parish of Bridport's new rector is on her way

The clergy and church family across the Parish of Bridport are delighted to announce to the wider community that the Revd Canon Becky Roberts has been appointed Team Rector.

Becky (pictured) grew up in Dorset and moved away for university and a postgraduate teaching qualification, returning to Weymouth to work in care homes and as a chambermaid during her university holidays. She was ordained in 2003 and is currently Vicar of the benefice of Harnham in Salisbury and Rural Dean of Salisbury. Before ordination she worked in teaching, including in Tanzania and Tower Hamlets in London. After training at Queen's Birmingham, she served as a curate in the Chelmsford diocese before spending time in Winchester and Southampton.

She has a passion for young people, schools' work, developing lay leadership and community outreach.

"It was clear at the end of our very thorough appointment process that Becky had all the necessary gifts and skills to take the Bridport Team into its next stage of mission and ministry," says the Rt Revd Karen Gorham, Acting Bishop of Salisbury. "As the parish looks forward to Becky's arrival, I'd like to thank everyone involved in the appointment process, the ministry team and those who have been supporting the parish during the vacancy."

"I am delighted that Becky will be our new rector and I greatly look forward to working with her," says the Revd Cally Burch, Interim Rector. "As Becky takes over the running of the parish, I will be freed up to carry out the community-based creative pioneer role that I was



The Revd Canon Becky Roberts with Thelo

appointed for. This is an exciting new chapter in the life of the Parish of Bridport."

Becky's husband, Neil Turpin, is an ecclesiastical lawyer, and they have a cocker spaniel called Thelo. "Neil and I enjoy travelling to learn about new cultures and food, and camping at jazz and folk festivals," says Becky. "I also enjoy the simple peace found in reading an interesting novel, raising chickens or tasting a decent gin! I'm very much looking forward to moving to Bridport and serving the people of the parish – I've already bought a hat ready for the hat festival!"

Becky's institution and induction service is at 7pm on Tuesday 6 October at St Mary's Church in South Street.

Bridport Food Bank Trustee (volunteer role)

Would you like to use your skills and experience to support local people facing food insecurity?

Bridport Food Bank is seeking a trustee to help provide strategic direction and governance for our food bank currently operating from St Mary's Church, Bridport.

No previous trustee experience is required. Full support and induction will be provided. Fundraising and marketing experience would be an asset but is not essential for the role.

To express an interest or request further information, please email Peter Wright, Chair of Trustees: Peter.Wright@bridportfoodbank.org



Supporting Lorna as she makes an exciting move

The Revd Lorna Johnson is leaving the parish this month to take up her new post as Community Missioner and Parish Priest of Holy Trinity Weymouth. Her last service in Bridport will be the eco-themed parish Eucharist at St Swithun's at 10am on Sunday 6 September.

Lorna will be licensed for her new role on Thursday 17 September. If anyone from Bridport wants to go along to this service, and would like to either offer or find a lift to Weymouth, please contact the parish office (details on p2). Meanwhile, please remember Lorna in your prayers as she prepares for her move.

Children & Youth Cafe

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King's Square DT6 3QE
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Under 12s must be
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Runs alongside a welcoming
café for adults so parents &
carers can come & enjoy
coffee, cake & good company.
Tuckbox for kids. No charge

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Starting Thursday 10th September, 2.30-3.45pm



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DOWN THE LINE TO BRIDPORT

A history talk by Bruce Upton

Sunday 27 September, 3pm to 4.30pm

*The Bridport branch line ran from 1857 to 1975.
What did the line mean for the town and its people?
Come and find out!*

All welcome. Admission £5 on the door (cash/card)
Tea, cake and a raffle during the interval
Proceeds to church funds and Bridport Museum
Extra parking at Amsafe

Obituary: John Collingwood, Town Crier

Farewell to a much-loved voice in Bridport



John Collingwood, who died on 1 July after a short illness, will be remembered by many across Bridport as the familiar figure in scarlet and gold, bell in hand, his voice ringing proudly across the town square.

As Bridport's Town Crier, he became one of the town's best-known and most respected ambassadors, bringing warmth, dignity and enthusiasm to civic occasions while helping to preserve a tradition that has served communities for centuries.

John served in the role from 2015 until 2026, and became an integral part of the town's public life. Whether announcing the opening of the Charter Fair, leading Remembrance ceremonies, welcoming visitors, celebrating community achievements or marking royal occasions, he carried out his duties with pride, professionalism and a genuine love for Bridport.

For many, John's commanding cry became the unmistakable sound of civic celebration. His traditional attire and powerful voice brought colour, pageantry and continuity to every occasion, reminding people of the value of local traditions and shared community spirit. Following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II he stood alongside the mayor in Bucky Doo Square to proclaim the accession of HM King Charles III before leading the traditional three cheers for the new monarch.

John's commitment to Bridport extended well beyond ceremonial duties. He represented the town at civic events across the country and overseas, including visits to Bridport's twin town of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue in Normandy, helping to strengthen the friendship between the two communities. He was also a proud member of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers and enjoyed success at town crying competitions. His honours, including South of England Champion and the Stanley Mansbridge Perpetual Trophy, reflected not only the strength of his voice but also his skill, humour and careful preparation.



Yet John's contribution to public life stretched far beyond civic ceremony. For many years he was one of the leading figures in the Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG), tirelessly campaigning for better services across the region. He understood that good transport was about far more than roads and timetables – it was about giving people access to work, education, healthcare, family and opportunity. He was respected for his detailed knowledge, thoughtful approach and determination to ensure that rural communities were not overlooked. Through WATAG, John worked with transport operators, local authorities, elected representatives and community groups, always making the case that investment in public transport was an investment in people.

Those who knew John best will remember not just the ceremonial figure or the campaigner, but the generous, enthusiastic man behind both roles. He gave his time willingly, encouraged others and supported local organisations whenever he could.

John Collingwood's legacy reaches far beyond the events he announced or the honours he received. He will be remembered with great affection, gratitude and respect. He is succeeded by Jamie Giles and his deputy Bill Davies.



Pictured: John Collingwood in West Bay on Civic Day 2024 (above left) and proclaiming the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023. John also worked to improve transport provision across the region (left)

A visit to Bridport's twin

In the summer, members of the Bridport/St-Vaast-la-Hougue Twinning Association visited the town's French 'twin'. Nigel Amor recalls some highlights of the trip...

During our visit we enjoyed great hospitality, lovely weather, and friendship. We stayed with a generous host and the view from our bedroom window was across the bay towards the fort with the oyster beds in the foreground. In the early morning, I watched the oyster farmers going about their business, tractors moving across the sand, as they gathered the fruits of the sea before the tide came in again.

We enjoyed visiting a beautiful chateau outside Cherbourg on the Friday afternoon and the impressive British Normandy Memorial (*pictured*) at Vers-sur-Mer on Saturday. The market on Saturday morning was a chance to try local produce and buy fish and oysters, vegetables and fruit, flowers, cheese, clothes and leather goods.



A grand dinner greeted us on our return from Arromanches and Vers. There was singing and much bonhomie and joie de vivre – so much so that I have no memory of getting back, only of waking and looking out of the window again the next morning.

Some of us joined locals for mass on the Sunday at L'Église Saint-Vaast, and we sang Psalm 23, The Lord Is My Shepherd, in English for them. The local maire entertained us with a reception in the Hotel de Ville and offered us Champagne and canapés after church. Lunch followed with more homemade food, tasty desserts and drinks.

Our host, Micheline, drove us to beautiful Barfleur on the Sunday afternoon. We had an evening meal at Le Débarcadère by the harbour – a chance to eat and drink some more, meet more people and watch the football.

It was good to spend some time with friends and thanks go to Jonathan Dines, Monique Pasque and the members of the two twinning associations for keeping this *entente cordiale* going.

Get your steps in – deliver some copies of The Bridge!

We're still looking to fill a few gaps in The Bridge's delivery network, so we'd love to recruit some new volunteers.

We are currently looking for people to cover the following areas: West Bay Road (you'd collect your copies from St John's West Bay), East Road (collect from St Mary's Walditch), Wanderwell Farm Lane and Bridport Community Hospital (collect from St Mary's Bridport), and St Swithin's Road and Flaxhayes (collect from St Swithun's, North Allington).

There are 10 issues a year. Please contact me (details on p2) if you can help or for delivery dates.

Olivia Daly, Editor

If you enjoy The Bridge, and would like to make a donation towards our expenses, please visit www.thebridgemagazine.org/donate-to-our-work for a link to our Charities Aid Foundation page. Grateful thanks to those who have already done so.



SEPTEMBER 4TH UNTIL 13TH

**OPENING LAUNCH AT OXENBURY'S YARD FRIDAY 4TH
SHOWDOWN ST MARY'S CHURCH FRIDAY EVE 11TH
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David Hare's 'Via Dolorosa' is coming to Bridport

The Chapel in the Garden is bringing a touring production of David Hare's monologue *Via Dolorosa* to Bridport next month.

The play is Hare's dramatic account of his travels through Israel and Palestine in 1997, from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to Gaza and Ramallah. The Bridport production, on Friday 2 October, will be performed by actor Gary Hay, with 30 local singers weaving songs from Israel and Palestine, plus Taizé chants, into the performance. Jane Silver-Corren, an accomplished and well-known local choir leader, was asked to lead the singing and has chosen the powerful songs and chants.

David Hare refers to his monologue as "dramatic journalism". In it he meets theatre practitioners, politicians, aid workers and settlers on the West Bank whose comments illustrate a fractured society with vivid rhetoric, metaphors and frustration.

Producer Margie Barbour is responsible for bringing the production to Bridport. She explains: "I saw David Hare perform it at the Royal Court in 1998 and it has stayed with me ever since. It was a very powerful experience, and having discovered that Gary is touring the play, I felt we must bring it here.

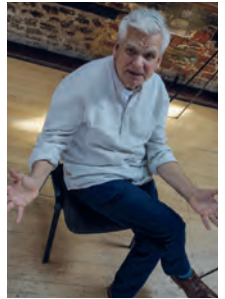
"Although it was written almost 30 years ago, the play provides an insight into the deeply felt emotions of those on all sides of the conflict – vital for anyone seeking to understand the region's complexities. How can art capture those passions and reflect them in a meaningful

way? Here is your answer."



Pictured: The Via Dolorosa ('Way of Suffering') in Jerusalem.

Right: actor Gary Hay



Actor Gary Hay is also directing the play. His performances were a sellout at the recent Edinburgh Festival, gaining five star reviews.

The event is raising funds for Oasis of Peace, a charity that works to advance peace and equality between Jews and Palestinians, and The Chapel in the Garden.

Friday 2 October at 7.30pm in the Chapel in the Garden, 49 East Street, Bridport. Tickets £17 from Bridport Tourist Information Centre: 01308 424901 or bridportandwestbay.co.uk/events/via-dolorosa.



The Parish of Bridport's Come and Sea event at St John's, West Bay, in early August was a wonderful celebration of spiritual creativity.

About 250 visitors got involved in one or more of the activities, both in the church (inset photo) and outside. And after a happy service on Sunday, there was a relaxed and beautifully delivered Churches Together Songs of Praise on the Green (pictured left).

"Feedback from the weekend was excellent, and it's especially encouraging to hear from those we surveyed that they got a lot from it spiritually," says the Revd Cally Burch, Interim Rector. "We seem to have struck the right note with generous, open hospitality and a gentle approach to evangelism – for some visitors, this is becoming a regular, valued part of their annual holiday. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this splendid weekend."

There are more photos and info on page 16.

Bird life: Abbotsbury Swannery is

Abbotsbury Swannery is home to the only managed colony of mute swans in the world.

There are about 600 resident swans and this number more than doubles in the winter when food elsewhere is scarce and birds come from up to 60 miles away to nest and feed. Seeing these beautiful large creatures gathered together at feeding time, or in flight over the 25-acre site, is truly awe inspiring.

The swannery is at the north-western end of the Fleet lagoon, the famous stretch of tidal seawater between Chesil Beach and the mainland, running from Abbotsbury down to Ferry Bridge just above Portland. This water and its banks form the Chesil and Fleet Nature Reserve, which is a protected Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an important area for wildlife thanks to its unique habitat and abundant food sources.

The salinity (saltiness) of the lagoon varies from most salty at the Portland end to fresh water at Abbotsbury, and this is one reason for the swans' presence. "The birds need fresh water for their young, which are known as cygnets," says



Charlie Wheeler, manager of the swannery and warden of the Chesil and Fleet Nature Reserve. "Swans have a desalination gland near their eyes that allows them to 'filter' salt water, but this gland doesn't work effectively until they are about five months old." Additionally, the lagoon's shallow water is full of eelgrass, which the swans like to eat.

Swan management at Abbotsbury dates back to the 14th century and probably further – the earliest written record references William Squillor, the 'keeper of swans' in

1393, when the birds were kept for eating at the nearby Benedictine abbey, which was founded around 1040. "There's an old tale about the Catholic monks eating swans to get round strict rules governing their diet," says Charlie. "No one knows for sure, but whatever the reason, they took advantage of the site's natural attraction for swans and farmed them for their meat." This went on until the dissolution of the monastery in 1539.

Charlie has been 'the boss' at both the swannery and the nature

The view of the Fleet lagoon from Magnolia Walk in Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens



a jewel in our coastline's crown

reserve since 2018, having worked at both sites for many years before that, including during his three-year degree course in animal behaviour and welfare at Kingston Maurward. His team also includes Steve Groves – the only swanherd in the world! – and another permanent staff member, plus six seasonal workers and occasional work experience students.

Charlie spends four days of his working week at the swannery, and Wednesdays on the reserve. It's busy: the swannery attracts 50,000 visitors each year, including locals popping in, families on holiday nearby, and passengers disembarking cruise ships at Portland and coming up by coach. The site has displays giving lots of fascinating information, two footpaths leading to the water's edge to see the swans, and a daily 4pm feed that visitors can get involved with. And of course the gift shop and cafe are important attractions, too.

So what about Charlie's work at the Fleet and Chesil Reserve? "My colleague Angela and I manage this eight-mile nature reserve, working to protect and preserve the diverse habitats for future generations," he says. "Part of this is to manage access; unfortunately, when you have a lot of people accessing such a sensitive site, both the wildlife and the habitats can get damaged. The South West Coast Path, which runs parallel to the Fleet, has access points to the foreshores, and when people come onto these areas they can trample vegetation and disturb wildlife such as waders and waterfowl. When this happens frequently, birds will often leave the site as they are having to use too much energy avoiding the



disturbance. We want people to enjoy this wonderful location, but it cannot be at the expense of the fauna, flora and habitats that make it so special. It may seem a small thing, but asking everyone to enjoy the nature reserve from the footpath allows the undisturbed foreshores and wider areas to thrive, meaning there is more to see and enjoy."

The reserve is also a very important site for research, with projects being carried out throughout the year by people from a wide range of scientific fields. "Our role here is to support this work and to advise on the site's nature conservation interests, its sensitivities, health and safety considerations and more," says Charlie. "We also have to ensure the research is justified, and ask for SSSI consent from Natural England."

Back to Abbotsbury Swannery, and what does the future bring? "We're continually aiming to enhance the site and we introduce new elements each year. We are always conscious of the swannery's

history and heritage, so new features mustn't overpower the site's peaceful tranquillity. We also like to engage with children, so we aim to balance the wild, natural world with some interactive activities they can enjoy as part of their visit. Over the past few years, we have collaborated, designed and built the Brambly Hedge interactive family trail; we also have our pedal go-karts in the lower field and our swan-shaped living willow maze, which is very popular with all ages."

Of course, the swans are the real attraction. These beautiful birds have captured the imagination of artists, writers and poets for centuries – not least because they pair up for life, giving us a romantic ideal to dream of – and are sacred in many cultures. We are lucky to have Abbotsbury Swannery on our doorstep, so try and pay the swans a visit before the season ends and see them at their best.

Abbotsbury Swannery is open daily from 10am to 5pm (last entry by 4pm) from mid-March until the end of October, when it closes for the winter.

Standard tickets are £15 for adults and £7.50 for children (under-fives are free) but there are frequent special offers such as £1 entry for children during the summer holidays and in May for seeing the cygnets. There are also season tickets and a special price for combined entry to the swannery and Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens.

Huge thanks to Charlie Wheeler for allowing us to use his beautiful photos with this article.

www.abbotsburyswannery.co.uk
www.wheeler-photography.co.uk

Winter's around the corner... here

At the time of researching this article, writes Annette Shaw, swathes of the UK were looking down the barrel of heat wave number five.

The price of a fan appeared to be up against the FTSE and the lead time for plantation shutters was 12 weeks. Yet, as the poet Keats penned so beautifully in Ode to Autumn: the “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” is hovering.

The original plan for our feature was to celebrate Bridport's retail and service businesses, pop to Burwood's Domestic Appliances in the town and buy a soup maker. We'd then take a culinary peek into a winter wonderland of nutritious, homemade scotch broth, ready in under half an hour. We'll get back to that when the mercury drops. Meanwhile, to maximise quality of life and be ready for any inclement weather, read on... before everyone else has the same ideas.

Aside from basics like getting the boiler serviced and tyre treads checked, **Age UK** offers many helpful tips that cross the generations, such as making sure stairs are well lit. Few places have a shop as good as **Bridport Lighting**, where owner Ann Griffiths is on hand to offer advice about overhead or floor options. Whether it's a shadowy corner or illuminating a cosy chair for reading, she'll have a range of solutions to help keep you safe.

After such intense heat, nobody can be sure of what Mother Nature has in mind for the coming months. One coping strategy is: Be Prepared. On all fronts. **Tina Ross** has 12 years' experience in several areas of health maintenance. “To feel that we're walking or standing with grip and stability aids mobility



Pictured: lovely plantation shutters are a practical and stylish choice

confidence,” she says. “It's all too easy to bury your feet in socks and boots, forgetting to check on a build-up of hard skin, wonky nails, corns and fungal infections.” Tina recommends a simple pedicure every eight weeks to maintain optimum foot health. “People need feet to be proud of!”

Being comfortable needs thought. As a country we're not always up to speed with homes having flexibility in adapting to extremes. One investment worth looking at is stylish planation shutters from



Just Shutters in Dorchester, serving the Bridport area.

Bespoke and expertly fitted, they really do shade against the sun, and by night allow cool air in, minus the moths. Providing an extra layer of insulation in the winter, there's the added bonus of no more dusty drapes or laundry, and there's a favourable lifetime guarantee. There is the initial financial outlay – but consider the offset against utility bills.

As the days shorten, many of us can slide towards the winter blues and again it's so important to stay on top of everyday essentials. Time spent planning a store cupboard with a week's worth of long-life milk, pasta and rice won't go to waste. For anyone struggling to get out, **Bridport Co-op** offers a super-efficient delivery service. Personal choice varies but maybe revisit childhood food such as tinned potatoes. Rumour has it they are having a resurgence, sautéed in an air fryer! Or sliced as part of a



Tina Ross

Pictured: Foot care expert Tina Ross, who trades as Beautina

are some ideas to help you prepare

simple cheese omelette. Likewise, tinned ratatouille is delicious as a side with scrambled eggs.

The neighbouring village of Salway Ash is home to a fish option in the form of *conservas* prepared by multi-award-winning **Sea Sisters**. Products are available at farm shops and online and range from sardines to smoked trout. Cornish Hake with Seaweed Butter and Lemon or flavoured with Rosemary and Capers, folded in linguine, makes an easy yet quality supper. However, beware: cans tend to fly (or should that be swim?) off the shelf at warp speed.

We end where we began – with the weather. And a trip to Groves for a wander and a coffee. The lawns may bounce back but even the *Verbena bonariensis* looks as if it's beyond recovery. For a concise guide/restoration campaign, a handy book is the **The National Trust 2027 Gardener's Almanac** (pictured far right) by Greg Loades. He's written for BBC



Pictured: Bridport Lighting owner Ann Griffiths is very fond of this painting that a friend painted of the shop

Gardener's World and the RHS. Practical and inspiring, an entry for September says, "If you only do one thing... purchase spring bulbs." Well, that plants seeds of optimism! It may have been a year of extremes so far, but the seasons will keep turning with glimpses of hope for next year.

Resource guide

Age UK

ageuk.org.uk/stay-healthy-in-winter

Bridport Lighting

52 South Street / 01308 422318
bridportlighting.co.uk

Just Shutters

For a brochure and a site visit call 01305 230321
justshutters.co.uk

Pictured: Sea Sisters founders Angus Cowen and Charlotte Dawe

Groves Nurseries & Garden Centre

Dorset's award-winning garden centre is home to an amazing restaurant as well as the largest selection of plants in the area.

grovesnurseries.co.uk

The Co-op

Discover the latest deals and offers available at your local Co-op. Home delivery in as little as 60 minutes (enter your postcode to check availability). coop.co.uk

Sea Sisters Cannery

Salway Ash seasisters.co.uk

Tina Ross trading as Beautina

For more information and to book an appointment call 07435 705488.



ST MARY'S Bridport

Parish editor – Peter Wright 456967

Director of music – Tim Linsley

07830 308701

Tower captain – Bob Hardwick

07977 989263

Which word would you choose?

During August, at our parish outreach event in West Bay, those engaging with the calligraphy activity were asked to choose just one word that was important to them. That's not an easy task – perhaps your own response would have been immediate, but for many of us such a question would give cause for reflection.

In those summer days, as the sun beat down, we might have been expected to choose words like 'rain', 'rivers' and 'water' – we often think about our needs in the moment – but other words are more significant to us because they reflect an important truth in our lives.

Our 'Come and Sea' event, now based at St John's, has grown out of a St Mary's initiative to offer free crafting and creating opportunities for families during the school holidays. This year our weekend of activities was blessed with good weather and a range of activities based around the theme of the Holy Spirit.

Visitors could get involved in potato printing, pyrography, calligraphy and making hot air balloons. Younger children played happily in the Tots' Time corner, while outside we offered windmill making, crafting with art straws and, for the more active, target practice with bean bag fish!

It was such a happy weekend, with more than 250 people attending – locals as well as holidaymakers from across the UK and as far away as Germany, Sweden and even Australia. The Rimmer family from a village near Sandhurst delighted in an opportunity to make a return visit and many others left written feedback to suggest they had appreciated our welcome and had really enjoyed the event.

Naomi and her two young sons from Bristol were at the event for over three hours and her chosen word was 'inclusion'. Steve, who volunteered at the event, chose the word 'church' and explained that this is what he thought church should be – working together, worshipping together and offering hospitality and support to the wider community.

St Mary's Church will be maintaining its outward-looking focus this month as we again welcome Becca and her quilts as part of the Bridport Quilt WalkAbout event from 4 to 13 September. This includes a vintage



Pictured: a few of the 250 people who got involved in the parish 'Come and Sea' outreach event at St John's in August

fashion show on Friday 11 September and sustainable fashion show on Saturday 12 September – do add these dates to your diaries!

Our Come and Sea calligraphy group chose 'joy', 'kindness', 'love' and 'hope' as some of their special words, as well as 'family', 'nature', 'sea' and 'friends'. As we move into autumn, we hope everyone will have the opportunity to celebrate these things, and value them as God's gifts to us here and now.

Lesley Hill

Covid-19 made an impact in many ways, and a lot of our regular donors haven't been able to support the church as they once did. If you can make a donation, whatever you can give, you'll be helping to maintain our beautiful church and its ministry in the heart of Bridport.



Bridport Town Council CENTRAL WARD

Contact 01308 456722
enquiries@bridport-tc.gov.uk

Take a stroll around Riverside Gardens

Riverside Gardens, managed by the town council, are one of Bridport's most attractive public open spaces, offering a peaceful retreat just a short walk from the bustling town centre. The attractive gardens are beside the River Asker and provide a setting for enjoying exercise and relaxation in nature throughout the year. The combination of riverside scenery, open grassland and wildlife habitats makes this an important part of the town's green infrastructure.

The gardens are popular with walkers, dog owners, cyclists and families seeking a quiet place to unwind. Well-maintained footpaths meander through the site, linking different parts of Bridport while offering attractive views of the river and surrounding landscape. Benches provide ideal spots to pause and appreciate the changing seasons, from spring wildflowers to the rich autumn colours reflected in the water.

One of the most distinctive features of Riverside Gardens is the collection of contemporary sculptures. As a key location on the Bridport Sculpture Trail, the gardens display a number of life-sized works by local sculptor Greta Berlin, including Fish Boy, Lost Identity, Rock Woman, Ox Woman, Wolf, Man Child, Pod and Woman. These striking pieces add an imaginative



element to a riverside walk, blending art with nature and inviting visitors to pause and reflect. The sculpture trail, which also includes works by other local artists across Bridport's green spaces, celebrates the town's thriving artistic community and encourages people to explore its parks and open spaces.

Wildlife plays a significant role in the appeal of Riverside Gardens. The River Brit supports a variety of birds, insects and aquatic life, while mature trees and grassland create valuable habitats for pollinators and small mammals. The gardens themselves are an important haven for local biodiversity.

Riverside Gardens enrich the character of Bridport, offering a place where nature, culture and community come together in the heart of the town.

Sculpture Trail and Green Walks leaflets are available from the Tourist Information Centre in hard copy or to download from links at www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/sculpture-trail.

Amy Stephenson

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton

Parish editor – Barbara Ffooks 423122
Children & youth worker –
Jean Mitchell 422127
Director of music – vacancy

From the parish editor

On a very warm and sunny afternoon at the end of June, the residents of Bothenhampton were invited into the gardens of people wishing to share their passion of creating a wonderful space around their home. Nine gardens were on show and over 100 visitors enjoyed walking around them. The gardens were very different, varying in size and style, and displaying plants both

familiar and others much less so. When visitors felt in need of a sit down, cream teas were offered in the village hall. This was a very successful afternoon, and thanks go to all those who opened their gardens and to everyone helping in the village hall.

The Bothenhampton Flower Show was held annually for many years, but by 2019 interest had dwindled and the show was shelved for a while. However, it was decided to hold a summer village show of produce and baking in August this year, and it was very well supported. There was an impressive array of flowers and vegetables, showing exhibitors' dedication in keeping their plants well watered during the summer's drought conditions. The cakes, chutneys and jams were of high quality and many were available for the auction at the end of the show. Proceeds went to the village hall.

After the intense heat of the summer, September arrives with thoughts of autumn. The Old Churchyard →

HOLY TRINITY Bothenhampton continued...

has a tidy-up twice a year, in spring and autumn, and we very much appreciate all the help given by people in the village. The next working party is arranged for Saturday 3 October at 2pm. Please bring some garden tools and gloves if you have them.

Our coffee mornings in Holy Trinity at the beginning of every month continue to be very popular. The generosity of friends and neighbours who meet together makes a considerable contribution to church expenses, and many thanks are due to those who support the church in this way. The next coffee morning is on Saturday 5 September, 10am till 12 noon. There are delicious homemade cakes for sale, and very often seasonal produce too. The following coffee morning will be on Saturday 3 October.

After the mini summer break, our film evenings start again on Saturday 26 September. This is a very convenient way of seeing up-to-date films on a big screen in the company of others, and supporting the village hall at the same time.

Barbara Ffooks

Garden working party

Saturday 3 October at 2pm

The Old Churchyard

Please help us tidy these lovely grounds. Bring your own gardening gloves and tools to edge memorial stones, weed and strim uncut and overgrown areas, and cut dead wood. Work areas will be allocated on arrival according to ability and tools brought.



FILM NIGHT in Bothenhampton Village Hall

Saturday 26 September

Doors open 7pm, film starts at 7.30pm

Admission £5 • Refreshments available

For film details and to be added to the mailing list, please email Nick Child: lcnc2413@outlook.com

ST MARY'S Walditch

Parish editor –

James Craddock 458725

walditchbridgejsc@outlook.com

Verger – Pat Stapleton 456421

A tranquil space for contemplation

Like many rural churchyards, the grounds of St Mary's Walditch provide a sanctuary that supports biodiversity and maintains wildlife habitats that otherwise could be threatened by development. The land preserves a cultural Christian heritage, creating a sense of history through its monuments and a feeling of belonging through the generations of residents lying there.

Our churchyard is a living thing, a sanctuary for wildlife – including the creatures using it as a 'wildlife corridor' to other areas. Foliage provides nutrients

while mosses and lichens create places for insects to feed and reproduce. It is also chemical- and pollution-free with a relative lack of human activity, making it a quiet, peaceful haven for animals and birds.

Edmund Burke, the 18th-century statesman and philosopher, wrote: "I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country churchyard than in the tomb of the Capulets." This sums up the appeal of our churchyard.

Sadly our dedicated volunteers are now dwindling in number and we are looking for more people to help. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer helper in the churchyard, please contact me and I will pass your details on to the organiser of the group. Huge thanks to all the volunteers for their efforts over many years in maintaining the churchyard's excellent condition.

James Craddock, village editor

Pictured: Walditch churchyard looks lovely throughout the year



Bridport Town Council BOTHENHAMPTON & WALDITCH WARD

Ward clerk – Jo Hughes
bandw.ward@bridport-tc.gov.uk

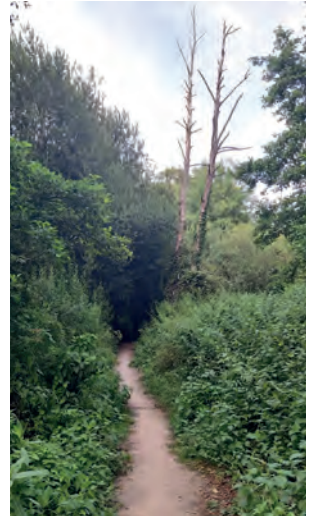
The ward clerk writes...

Vegetation overgrowth was one of the main topics that residents raised at our July ward meeting. Concerns were expressed about roadside growth at the Firch Lane junction with the A35, where visibility had been reduced, and Spinners Lane, which had become difficult to access. Residents also highlighted the footpaths at Jellyfields Nature Reserve (*pictured*), where overgrown vegetation had narrowed access in places, making it difficult for prams, wheelchairs and those with reduced mobility to visit the reserve. We have reported these issues to the relevant authority for attention, although immediate action cannot always be guaranteed because the grounds maintenance teams work within planned cutting schedules and face a high number of competing demands.

Residents can report local issues themselves online at fixmystreet.com. Enter a postcode or place name (or select the location on the map), place the pin exactly where the problem is, add a short description and, if possible, upload photos before submitting the report. You will then receive an email confirmation; simply click the link to complete the process. FixMyStreet will pass the report to the organisation responsible for addressing the issue.

Heavy and speeding traffic through Walditch and Bothenhampton remains a key concern, particularly during the busy summer holiday period when some

**Pictured: an overgrown
footpath at Jellyfields
Nature Reserve**



drivers are believed to be using the village roads as a cut-through to avoid the A35. Residents asked whether 'access only' or 'no through road' signs could be considered, but Dorset Council's Road Safety Team has said we will need to wait for the outcome of the 20mph proposals for each village. If the 20mph scheme is implemented in both villages, the impact on traffic and road safety will then be reviewed.

The consultation phase for the five-year management plan for Slades Green and Green Lane has now closed. Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond. The results are currently being analysed and will be published once available.

Our next ward meeting will be on Thursday 1 October from 11am to 12 noon at Bothenhampton Village Hall. All ward residents are warmly invited to attend these informal, friendly meetings, where they can speak with their ward councillors and the ward clerk, share local concerns and hear updates on matters affecting the community. Meanwhile, to keep up to date with ward news, follow our Facebook page, Bothenhampton & Walditch Ward Partnership, or visit the ward page on the town council website.

Jo Hughes

HOLY TRINITY Bradpole

Parish editor –

Douglas Baldwin 424232

douglas.baldwin@seaside20.plus.com

Bell enquiries – Wendy Carnell 420716

htbrabells@parishofbridport.org

**For pastoral or personal issues, please
contact the Revd Janis Moore 425644
(Wednesday is her day off)**

The Friends of Holy Trinity

In June The Friends held their annual general meeting for the year ended 31 March, at which Martin Whiting, Wendy Carnell and Sheena Tomkins were re-elected as chair, secretary and treasurer respectively. In his report, Martin detailed the various very successful fundraising activities, including the Red Kyte Band with their golden oldies; Bridport Big Band, who played music for everyone with their swing, trad jazz, Latin, modern classics and pop; and social fundraisers such as a quiz with fish and chips, and an afternoon tea. The annual accounts, which had been scrutinised by an independent examiner and submitted to the Charity →

HOLY TRINITY Bradpole continued...

Commission, were presented by Sheena, and included comments by the examiner who said that, reflecting the broader economic conditions, the value of investments had decreased, but had been offset by increased investment income. Sheena also reported on the very successful 100 Club, which gives 50% of its proceeds to The Friends. There were 64 members of The Friends, of whom 23 were life members.

The Revd Janis Moore gave a vote of thanks to the committee, and the president, Jill Kelley, made a small presentation to Martin, Wendy and Sheena.

Membership of The Friends is open to everyone – you don't need to be a church member, and the annual fee is £6.

Afternoon tea

The Friends invite you to tea on Thursday 17 September from 2.30 to 4pm. Do join us for savoury and sweet treats and plenty of cake. Everyone is welcome and you don't need to book.

Village lunch club

Lunch at the Haddon House Hotel will be on Tuesday 8 September at 12.30pm. If you haven't already booked, please give Jean Hutchings a ring on 427697. There is plenty of parking space at the hotel.

The club is open to anyone from the village and their friends so do contact Jean if you would like to have a reasonably priced lunch and a good chat!

Other groups

The Mothers' Union will meet at 2.30pm on Tuesday 15 September and the Knitting Group on Thursdays 3 and 17 September. Please contact Daphne King (427552) for more information.



Left to right: Steve, John and Gary prepare the church for Tots@Ten each week

The Friends of Holy Trinity present...

BRIDPORT BROADSIDES SHANTY CREW

Saturday 3 October at 7pm

Holy Trinity Bradpole



Tickets £15

Finger buffet included

Drinks by donation

Raffle

To book, email

thefriendshbt@gmail.com

or phone 01308 420716

Tots@Ten

Many thanks to the volunteers who make Tots@Ten such an enjoyable experience for the children and their carers. Three stalwarts – Steve, John and Gary, pictured below left – enter the church early and take all the toys and paraphernalia down from the attic storage and return later to put it all back. Many thanks to them for doing this vital part of the work.

Pre-school children are welcome to join others, with parents and carers, normally every Wednesday at 10am in the church during term time. The seats are pushed to the side so there is a lot of space and toys to play with. Refreshments are served for the children and adults. There is no charge. The autumn term begins on Wednesday 9 September.

Bradpole Buzz Group

The team will meet from 2 to 4pm on Wednesdays 9 and 30 September, and on Saturday 19 September. Do join them to help with planting, offers of wild plants and seeds from your garden, or just suggestions and general support.

For more info, email bradpolebuzz@gmail.com or phone Rose Van den Akker on 425756.

Bradpole Forster Village Hall

The main hall is available for hire by local community groups and for private events and is fully accessible with facilities for disabled people. Hall bookings can be made online at www.hallbookingonline.com/bradpole, where you'll also find details and photos of the facilities.

Bridport Town Council BRADPOLE WARD

Ward clerk – Sandy Goldsmith

07944 523084

bradpole.ward@bridport-tc.gov.uk

The ward clerk writes...

As this issue of The Bridge went to press, we were still suffering from the effects of this summer's heat waves and had hardly any rain in our area for weeks. I remind you that no barbecues or fires are permitted on land owned by Bridport Town Council in our ward or any other ward until further notice. This includes allotments, play areas and green open spaces.

The issues raised at our community engagement event in the Co-op on 20 June included problems related to traffic speed. Residents asked for more parking enforcement and more speed signage, as some are confused about the speeds they can do along certain roads in Bridport.

The public consultation over our application for a 20mph speed limit ended on 17 July. All the responses are being carefully reviewed by Dorset Council (DC) and we should know by the end of this month whether the application will progress to the next stage.

After careful consideration of several options, councillors agreed that an application should be submitted for a short extension of the double yellow lines on the south side of Jessopp Avenue near the bridge. An application has been submitted to DC.

As always, I encourage you to report any issues to DC via their online portal, but if you aren't sure who is



Pictured: Roney the elephant visited Bradpole for a fundraising event

responsible for your problem you can also report street-related issues to Fix My Street (www.fixmystreet.com) who will then send your report to the correct council. This could include such things as street lighting, public toilets, street cleaning and many more issues

Finally, Roney the elephant (pictured above) made his way to a charity fundraiser in Bradpole. Dawn Rogers and her team of friends held an afternoon tea and grand raffle in aid of three breast cancer charities. They raised £3,750, which will be divided equally between the organisations. Well done, Dawn!

You can keep up to date with all the latest ward news on our Facebook page, Bradpole Ward Matters. Please email me at bradpole.ward@bridport-tc.gov.uk if you want to get in touch about anything in the ward.

Sandy Goldsmith

ST SWITHUN'S Allington

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Summer events – and looking ahead

Welcome back! I hope you have enjoyed the long hot, dry summer.

In St Swithun's we celebrated our patronal festival on 12 July, the closest Sunday to St Swithun's Day (15 July). This year there was no rain on St Swithun's Day and, as you read this, I'm sure it will have remained dry for the following 40 days, as the well-known rhyme promises.

The following Saturday, 18 July, we hosted a very successful cream tea. We were very grateful to Bridport Mayor Cllr Jonathan Bourbon and his wife, Janice, for coming along to open the event. As well as the delicious cream tea, there were lots of activities for children and adults to enjoy. Rose Harvey won the adults' fancy dress competition with her Maid Marian costume. The money raised went to church funds.

Over the last few years, the team at St Swithun's

ST SWITHUN'S Allington continued...

have been working on the Eco Church awards. The church received the Bronze award a while ago and is now preparing to apply for the Silver award. A lot of hard work goes into achieving the high standards necessary to qualify: as a church and community we have had to look at every aspect of church life and how we could improve our green credentials, for example in recycling and leaving wild areas in the churchyard. Messy Church and our young helpers are crucial to this work – we couldn't do it without them! At St Swithun's we need to include the environment, and the mission of inter-generational worship throughout the Parish of Bridport, in our prayers and our thoughts.

Next year at St Swithun's we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the church building. We are thinking about celebrating with a weekend of shows and activities, although this is very much in the planning stage. We are entering into the second phase of the church's renovations and hope it is all finished in time.

As we celebrate 200 years of St Swithun's, it is interesting to look at how the land in this area was used before the houses and factories were built. Allington is mentioned in the Domesday Book under the name of Adelington, consisting of pastoral lands, a manor and other houses. The names of the farms were Allington and Home Farm, with some records also referring to Flaxhayes Farm. People were allowed to work strips of land to grow flax for the mills producing rope and nets. Bridport became famous for these products,

Pictured: Bridport Mayor Cllr Jonathan Bourbon and his wife, Janice, opened the cream tea at St Swithun's in July



which were exported all around the world. Recently Flax Forward, a community-led project, has been encouraging people to plant a patch of flax to celebrate Bridport's flax-growing heritage, while exploring the potential of this locally grown natural material in a sustainable future.

After this long hot summer, we give a thought to the farmers who still farm the land around Allington. May their harvest be safely gathered in and next year's harvest be plentiful and abundant.

On 27 September from 3 to 4.30pm, Bruce Upton will give a talk at St Swithun's on how the rail line coming to Bridport sped up the growth of the town, improving job opportunities, increasing the population and leading to increasing wealth and prosperity.

To find out more about Eco Church or Flax Forward, visit www.ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk or www.wessexca.co.uk/flax-forward-project.

Caroline Cooke

Bridport Town Council WEST & ALLINGTON WARD

Ward clerk – Amy Stephenson
bridportwest.ward@bridport-tc.gov.uk



The ward clerk writes...

Our last ward meeting was in July and although fewer people came along than before, we did talk about a variety of issues. Potholes and problem drain covers are a regular theme. Quite often, Dorset Council (DC) staff mark these with white paint and although there can be a delay between the painting and action, please be assured that they are on DC's list of repairs and monitoring. The list is long, but they do get through it!

Other mentions included areas that needed weeding or grass cutting, etc. It isn't always obvious who owns certain areas or who is responsible for maintaining

Pictured: Edible Bridport's allotment has produce for the community to pick and use



them. There is a very handy tool on DC's website that helps you find this information so you can report issues to the relevant organisation. It is called Dorset Explorer and also shows local geographical and environmental data including public rights of way, highways, aerial photography and much more.

Magna have been undertaking repairs to walls that we have reported as damaged in Skilling (near the shop) and at Dibdin View. You can email Magna directly at contactus@magna.org.uk.

We were sad to see that someone had stolen the water trough from Edible Garden's allotment (*pictured below left*) near St Cecilia's allotments in July. Edible

Garden is a community-led project that creates free, organic vegetables and herb gardens across the town. The produce is free for the public to pick and use. So it was a massive blow that something undertaken by the community, for the community, was targeted like this. They have also suffered from vandalism. If you witness any antisocial behaviour in this area or any other, please report it by calling 101.

Our next ward meeting is on Tuesday 6 October at 6.30pm in St Swithun's Church Hall. As always, it is open to all ward residents but please contact me in the meantime if you have any concerns or queries.

Amy Stephenson

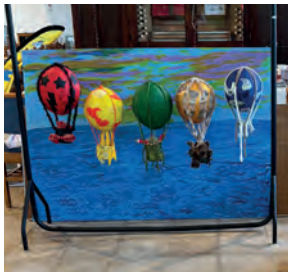
ST JOHN'S West Bay

Parish editor – Sue Pollock
07903 558568
Chapel warden –
Rosemary Russell 423013

News from St John's

Regular Sunday services are held at 11am at St John's. See the services table on page 4 for more information. We also have Morning Prayer every Monday at 10am and the Wholeness and Healing service on the fourth Saturday of the month, still at the summer time of 6pm.

The 'Come and Sea' event at the beginning of August was very successful despite the obvious competing attractions of the beach and funfair. A lot of hard work went into the event and the hot air balloon activity (*pictured*)



was especially popular. Naturally, the parish incurs expenses in running events like this, so if you'd like to help, donations are very welcome via the parish website: www.parishofbridport.org/donate.

West Bay WI

The newly renamed 'Chatterbox' session (formerly Knit & Natter) will be on Wednesday 2 September, 10am–12 noon. At the meeting on Wednesday 9 September, 2.30–4.30pm, Kevin Little will bring us 'Animal Tales', stories of his encounters with creatures feathered and furry.

If you are interested in joining this small, friendly group, please contact Alison Ridge on 01308 897293 or

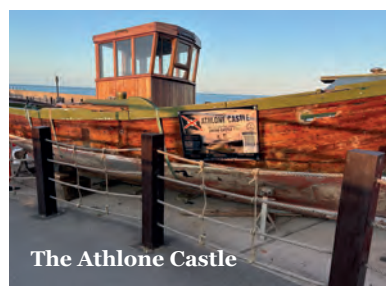
Maggie Hooper on 07720 056310. New members are always welcome.

Round and about the Bay

July and August are West Bay's really busy time and this year was no exception. What was exceptional, though, was the extreme heat that 2026 brought us all. I struggled to cope – how did I ever stand the heat of the Middle East many years ago? – and can only assume that like so much it must be an age thing! Hard to imagine that back in July 2012 we saw flooding in the campsite and West Bay Road; it's climate change for sure. The arrival of the campers and the funfair got the season into full swing, and the campsite was full to overflowing for West Bay Weekend.

Despite the heat I still enjoyed early morning walks around the Bay and considered just how lucky we are to live here. I was amazed to discover that a record of the harbour appears in the Domesday Book of 1086. It wasn't until the 18th century that the two piers were constructed but over the years these were damaged by storms before finally in 2001 the redevelopment and strengthening of the harbour started, ensuring its long-term survival. Does anyone remember the little beach in the harbour that gave the area a safe and sheltered spot to enjoy? There were complaints about stones being thrown and damaging boats, however, so in 1968 the area was dredged to allow space for fishing boats.

It was sad to see one of our well-loved boats, the



The Athlone Castle

Athlone Castle (*pictured*) sinking just outside the harbour but hopefully funding can be raised and she can be made seaworthy again. ➔

ST JOHN'S West Bay continued...

The new black hut (*pictured right*) on the East Pier is a great improvement on the old one, which I am afraid was falling to pieces. I am sure the sea swimmers will be very grateful for the new facility, particularly on a cold January morning.

Also this summer we had racing for three classes of powered craft – jet skis, powerboats and inflatables, followed by the annual RNLI raft race. The raft race definitely has a very different type of boat, and the various outfits worn for the race may cause a few eyebrows to be raised, but it helps raise money to keep the lifeboats running.

Sue Pollock



The new black hut at West Bay offers shelter and a changing area

Bridport Town Council WEST BAY WARD

Ward clerk – Amy Stephenson
enquiries@bridport-tc.gov.uk

The ward clerk writes...

As we move from another busy summer into the quieter autumn months, thanks go to everyone who has helped make West Bay such a welcoming and special place.

As always, the weekly West Bay Car Boot Sale, held every Sunday, has been well attended overall. The car boot sale has become a popular fixture in the West Bay calendar and provides a great opportunity to pick up a bargain while supporting a thriving community event. If you haven't had the chance to visit or take part yet, there's still time, as the car boot sale will continue every Sunday until 25 October.



Pictured: just a small selection of the goodies available at this year's summer market, held in the Salt House and on Fisherman's Green



Another successful summer initiative has been the Wednesday summer market, held in The Salt House and on Fisherman's Green. The market has showcased a wonderful variety of local crafts, gifts, produce and more, creating a vibrant atmosphere for residents and visitors. We'd like to thank all the traders and everyone who supported the market throughout the summer, with the final event taking place on 2 September.

Our last ward meeting, held in June, was well attended, with almost 20 residents joining us alongside representatives from the Bridport Neighbourhood Policing Team. It was encouraging to hear that the local policing team has expanded from two officers to four and that tackling antisocial behaviour and dangerous driving in West Bay and Bridport remains one of their priorities. The police officers explained that they are using a range of measures, including increased patrols, unmarked vehicles, etc., and are also working in partnership with Dorset Council to find effective solutions. They ask that residents continue reporting incidents to them, as every report helps build the evidence needed to secure further resources and action.

Residents also received an update on the West Bay–Bridport Shuttle Bus, which has continued to operate throughout the summer. The service remains in place while longer-term arrangements are being finalised, and we hope to have more news in the coming months.

Thank you to everyone who attended the June meeting and shared their views. Our next meeting is on 16 September at 6.30pm at The Salt House. Ward meetings are an excellent opportunity to hear local updates, raise concerns, ask questions and help shape the priorities for our community.

As always, if there is anything you'd like to discuss before then, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Amy Stephenson

Bridport UNITED CHURCH

Minister – The Revd Jane Wilson
01308 341159

Church secretary – Jane Clinton
bucchurchsec@gmail.com

Church bookings – visit
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or email lettingsbuc@gmail.com

Too busy to rest?

I realise that in September a new term and all sorts of activities start up again, so rest is probably not the foremost thing in our minds; perhaps, however, that's exactly why it might be good to talk about it.

We find a pattern of work and rest in the Bible. We have the picture of God resting after six 'days' of creative activity; we hear of the instruction to keep a Sabbath day of rest once a week; there were seven festivals each year, most of which, among other things, involved rest; the land also enjoyed a rest every seven years; and after every 7x7 years came a year of Jubilee, a year to restore things and people.

How do you think of the Sabbath, if you think of it at all? An old fashioned set of restrictions, the day to go to church, the busiest day of the week, a gift, irrelevant in today's world? Is the Sabbath something that forms part of our pattern of life? Does it have to be a Sunday? I don't think it does.

So what is Sabbath rest? Do we need it? How do we fit it in among all the other commitments and calls on our lives? Have we really got time for it?

Again, perhaps that's exactly why we need the Sabbath, and why it was given as part of the structure of life in Bible times. Sabbath, I think, is a gift. It offers us a time when we can put aside most of the 'chores' that fill the other days of the week, and instead do things that rest and restore our bodies, minds – and, of course, our souls.

What that looks like will be different for each of us; no one size fits all. Maybe we can start by asking ourselves what can I set aside on my Sabbath, and how might I put myself in a 'place' where I can be refreshed.

Busy, 24/7 living was not what was intended for us, but we seem to find ourselves obliged to live like that. God has offered us a different way. What might that look like? Will we try it? Will we encourage and enable others to do the same? What are your thoughts?

Here is a Sabbath Blessing written by Pete Greig of the 24/7 Prayer movement: "May this day bring Sabbath rest to my heart and my home. May God's



image in me be restored, and my imagination in God be re-storied. May the gravity of material things be lightened, and the relativity of time slow down. May I know grace to embrace my own finite smallness in the arms of God's infinite greatness. May God's Word feed me and His Spirit lead me into the week and into the life to come."

Melanie Buckland

September services at Bridport United Church:

Sunday 6	10.30am	Morning Worship
		Richard Lownsborough
	4pm	Soul Space
Sunday 13	10.30am	Morning Worship with
		Holy Communion
		The Revd Jane Wilson
Sunday 20	10.30am	Morning Worship:
		Colin Farrant
Sunday 27	10.30am	Harvest Festival
		The Revd Jane Wilson
		followed by a
		shared lunch

Regular events

Mondays	9.30–11am	Little Lambs toddlers group (term time only)
Wednesdays	9.30–10am	Prayer meeting in church
	10am–noon	Coffee morning in the hall
	12.30pm	Lunch Club (4th only)
Thursdays	2.30–4pm	Friendship Club (3rd only)
	3.30–5.30pm	Messy Church (4th only)
Saturdays	10am–noon	Coffee morning in the hall
	9–11.30am	Big Breakfast in the hall (1st only)

For more details of our services and other events, please visit our website www.buc.cool or our Facebook page.

We have a number of rooms available for hire. For more information or to make a booking, please visit hallbookingonline.com/bridportuc or email us at bucletttings@gmail.com.

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Parish priest – Fr Colin Groombridge
colin.groombridge@predtr.org.uk
 Secretary – Faith Leborgne
bridport@predtr.org.uk
 Phone 07544 595633

New shoes and a new pencil case!

Every September, thousands of our children return to school for the start of a new school year. With shiny shoes, new pencil cases and brand new exercise books (which in our day had to be covered in wallpaper!) it's a time of fresh hope and optimism. The first page of any exercise book always showed the best of what we could do: beautifully presented, best handwriting and full of effort. It was only as the weeks and months went past that things would begin to deteriorate, our perfect exercise book would begin to look messy, and our shiny shoes show signs of the rough and tumble of life.

Our lives can be very much like those exercise books or shiny shoes. We so often have plans to do better, eat better and be better people, only for our determination to fade a little and our standards slip. But we should never give upon our determination to do better. In God we have a loving father, who accepts us as we are, is always willing to forgive us when we get things wrong and full of joy when we try to start again.

In Matthew 18:21–22, Peter asks Jesus if he should forgive his brother up to seven times. Jesus replies to forgive not just seven times, but seventy times seven (or seventy-seven times, depending on the translation), meaning forgiveness should have no limit. God celebrates every time we start again and His forgiveness is unconditional. So this September, let's start again



while praying for all those children who begin a new school year.

Deacon Mark Brown

Activities at our Bridport church

During the autumn and winter months, a group of us meet each Tuesday evening from 6 to 7pm at the Catholic Church in Victoria Grove to pray in silence for peace before the blessed sacrament. There is an open invitation to anyone who would like to join us for either part or the whole of this time.

On Sunday 27 September we will have our harvest lunch. This is a real celebration of the many different cultures from which our congregation come, with each person bringing food from their country of origin. Last year we had almost 20 countries represented!

If you are interested in finding out a little more about the Catholic Faith, do contact Father Colin via the parish office (contact details above).

Sunday Mass is at 10am at the Roman Catholic church in Victoria Grove and is streamed online at www.bridportcatholics.org.uk and the Bridport Catholic Parish Facebook page.

For updates about Sunday and weekday Mass, see the weekly newsletter on the website or look for updates on Facebook.

BEACON CHURCH Priory Lane, Bridport

Church office 456031
office@beaconchurchbridport.co.uk
www.beaconchurchbridport.co.uk

The Community Kitchen at the Beacon Church is open Wednesday and Friday every week from 10.30am to 2pm.

Please feel free to drop in for a chat and a meal. If you'd like to volunteer at the Community Kitchen, please email (see details, left). Or you can help financially: a monthly donation is particularly useful as it helps us to budget, but we hugely appreciate any donations, no matter how small. Our bank details are as follows: Sort code: 08-92-99 / account number: 65773479 / reference: Kitchen

We meet on Sundays from 10am for prayer, worship and coffee (the service starts at 10.30am).

We also meet for prayer on Thursdays from 5 to 6pm. We run Sparklers (for children up to 11) and Youth (for 11- to 18-year-olds) three Sundays a month, with an all-age service and fellowship once a month as a whole church family. All our children and youth provision is led by DBS-checked leaders.

On the first Wednesday of the month we have our Messy Church, where there is food, craft, games and a bible story. Come along with your children and have a time to relax, play and eat.

Women Together @ Beacon is on Thursdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm in the church (on the last Thursday in the month this is held at Coffee#1 in East Street). Come along for a drink and chat. There are also craft opportunities at this group.

Wherever you are at with your own faith, you are always welcome to come and join us. We pray you can find a home from home with us at Beacon.



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www.bridportchristianfellowship.org

We are a member church of the UK Evangelical Alliance and an Ichthus Link Church.

We meet every Sunday at 10.30am for worship and Bible teaching, and at other times during the week.

We seek to bless the community of Bridport with the Good News of Jesus; you would be most welcome to join us on Sundays or at any of our other meetings during the week.

Our normal weekly meetings are as follows but can change during festivals such as Christmas and Easter. Please see our website for more information.

Mondays: Meals outreach project for those who find themselves in difficult times. Weekly discipleship group meets at 5.30pm.

Tuesdays: House groups meet at 2–3pm, 2.30–4pm and 7.30–9.30pm.

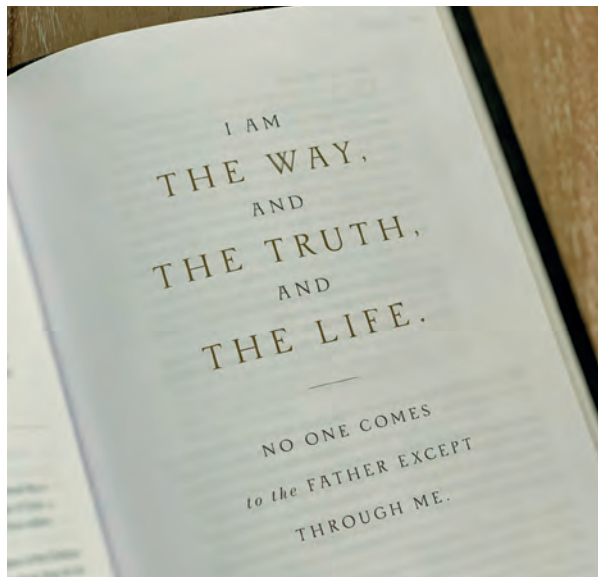
Wednesdays: House groups meet at 10.30am–12 noon and at 7–8pm.

Saturdays: From 10.30am to 12 noon we have our 'Pray: Chat' coffee bar with free refreshments.

Sundays: 10.30am–12 noon is our weekly service. Once a month we have a meal after the service.



BRIDPORT
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Bridport QUAKER MEETING

The Meeting House

97 South Street

Correspondent – Jeni Edwards
538105 / jeni.edwards69@gmail.com

The web of creation joins us with all things

Late summer is the time of year when the garden (pictured) behind the Meeting House on South Street is at its colourful best – I hope you got the chance to come and have a look.

“All species and the Earth itself have interdependent roles within Creation. Humankind is not the species to whom all others are subservient, but one among many. All parts, all issues, are inextricably intertwined. Indeed the web of creation could be described as of three-ply thread: wherever we touch it we affect justice and peace and the health of all everywhere. So all our testimonies, all our Quaker work, all our Quaker lives are part of one process, of striving towards a flourishing, just and peaceful Creation – the Kingdom of God.” (Quaker Faith and Practice no. 25.04) This was written in 1994 by Audrey Urry, a member of Bridport Meeting.

Meeting is held at the Meeting House on South Street at 10.30am for an hour on Sunday mornings and



10.30am for half an hour on Wednesday mornings. All are welcome.

The Quaker website at www.bridportquakers.org contains all the information you need to book a room for an event or to find out more about us.

Jeni Edwards

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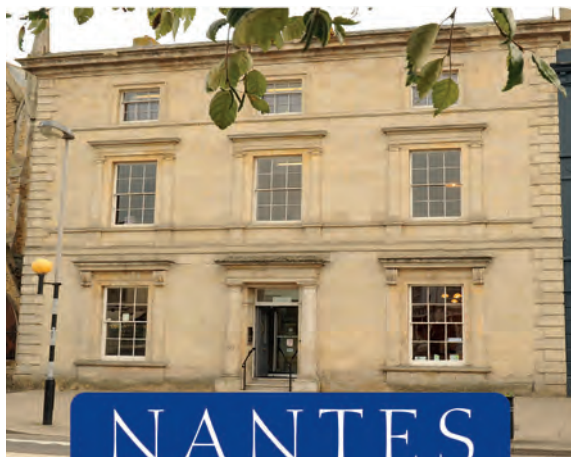
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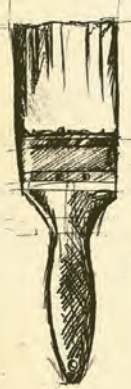


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