

Shirenewton Parish Magazine



**December 2024/
January 2025**

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WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



We marked Remembrance Sunday, as usual, with a short service at the Shirenewton War Memorial which many of our community attended along with a large contingent from the 1st Shirenewton Scout Group who paraded to the Memorial from the Recreation Hall. The names of our Fallen were read out, poppy wreathes laid and the Last Post and Reveille sounded.

This was followed by a greatly appreciated, and at times very moving, All Age Service in church led by our vicar Zoe. It was lovely to see our church full, the congregation numbered over 90. The Scouts presented their colours and two of them read poems.

Thank you to everyone who came along, you made this Remembrance Sunday very special. Our particular thanks go to Reverend Zoe Pimentel; Group Scout Leader Darren Share; Mark Baldwin, Trumpeter; Glynis MacDonald for tolling the bell; Wendy Montague for the delicious refreshments; and our organist Karen Millar, who wrote an organ piece dedicated to the people of Gaza.

Jane Smith-Haddon
For Shirenewton LCC





This dramatic and moving memorial was erected for Remembrance Sunday in St Arvan's church.
It was designed and built by Jonathan Jenkins.

Shirenewton Light Party



SHIRENEWTON LIGHT PARTY by Revd Zoe Pimentel

Halloween can be a controversial time of year, particularly for Christians, believe it or not. Of course its origins are Christian in the sense that October 31st is "All Hallows Eve", hallow meaning holy, and the 1st of November being "All Saints Day" – so the 31st October simply marked the night before a major Christian festival that celebrated our most holy role models, the saints.

There are some people who do not agree with the glorification of violence that sometimes accompanies costume choices at Halloween; other Christians take offence at the seeming worship of devils, witches, and other figures that can have an association with the occult.

However, there are also Christians out there who love Halloween. Barney and I had an American curate (trainee vicar) that we trained in Coventry, and she would dress up her whole family (usually in Disney themed outfits) and take them trick or treating, as well as filling up her house supplies of sweets, as the night provided an incredible opportunity for community and neighbourliness that is often neglected the rest of the year. We loved her positive attitude, her warmth towards her neighbours and the welcome she gave all the children who called at her door.

There are yet other Christians who try and reach a compromise, by taking part in Halloween but just not participating in any of the more controversial costumes or themes, and also offering an alternative and a safe place to children and families who may also feel a bit uncomfortable about the gore and horror/scares sometimes associated with the festival.

And it was with this in mind that we ran something called a 'Light Party' – celebrating all the positive things that bring light in the darkness - in the church rooms on Sunday 3rd November, at the end of the Half Term holiday. The party featured pumpkin carving, biscuit decorating, some party games and ended with handing out glowsticks and LED light-up balloons, and having a little disco together.

We had a wonderful time and it was a joy to offer this all for free to our local community, with grateful thanks to the Shirenewton café church volunteer team, who baked the cakes and biscuits, bought the glowsticks, provided endless teas and coffees on the night and made all our guests feel welcome.

Photos (see opposite page) used with permission.



Shirenewton Light Party

Eileen O' Dwyer

Private Carer/Home help
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Timetable from 1 September 2024

via Chepstow Community Hospital, Shirenewton, Earlswood, Gaerllwyd,
Llangwm, Gwernesney, Coleg Gwent, Croesyceiliog

Monday to Friday except Bank Holiday Mondays

	Sch	HOL
Cwmbran Bus Station [Stand H]	0712	0712
Croesyceiliog Edloglan Square	0717	0717
Pontypool Town Hall	0725	0725
Pontypool Park Road	0726	0726
Pontypool opp Town Hall	0727	0727
Little Mill Pont-y-pia	0734	0734
Usk Coleg Gwent Main Road	0741	0741
Usk Twyn Square	0747	0747
Llangwm Bridge Inn Road	0755	0755
Earlswood West End	0803	0803
Shirenewton Road Junction	0813	0813
Chepstow Community Hospital Main Road	---	0820
Chepstow Comprehensive School	0820	0820
Chepstow Bus Station	0825	0824
	1034	1312
	1519	1811

Saturdays

0712	0922	1200	---	1700
0717	0927	1205	---	1705
0725	0935	1213	1420	1713
0726	0936	1214	1421	1714
0727	0937	1215	1422	1715
0734	0944	1222	1429	1722
0741	0951	1229	1436	1730
0747	0957	1235	1442	1736
0755	1005	1243	1450	1744
0803	1013	1251	1458	1752
0813	1023	1301	1508	1800
0820	1030	1308	1515	1807
---	---	---	---	---
0824	1034	1312	1519	1811

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays Sorry, there is no Sunday service on route 63

These timetables are updated for 1 September 2024 and show changes to assist college students

Monday to Friday except Bank Holiday Mondays

	0805	1040	1320	Sch	HOL
Chepstow Bus Station	---	---	---	1525	1526 1820
Chepstow Comprehensive School	---	---	---	1530	---
Chepstow Community Hospital Main Road	0809	1044	1324	---	1530 1824
Shirenewton Road Junction	0817	1051	1331	1537	1537 1831
Earlswood West End	0825	1059	1339	1545	1545 1839
Llangwm Bridge Inn Road	0834	1108	1348	1554	1554 1848
Usk Twyn Square	0843	1117	1357	1603	1603 1857
Usk Coleg Gwent Main Road	0848	1122	1402	1609	1609 1901
Little Mill Bridge	0855	1129	1409	1616	1616 1908
Pontypool Town Hall	0903	1138	1418	1625	1625 1916
Pontypool Park Road	0904	1139	1421	1626	1626 1917
Pontypool opp Town Hall	0905	1140	---	1627	1627 1918
Croesycellio Edloglan Square	0913	1147	---	1635	1635 1925
Cwmbran Bus Station	0917	1151	---	1639	1639 1929

Sch Operates on schooldays only**Hol** Operates school holidays only

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays

Sorry, there is no Sunday service on route 63

Saturdays

0805	1040	1320	1526	1820
---	---	---	---	---
0809	1044	1324	1530	1824
0817	1051	1331	1537	1831
0825	1059	1339	1545	1839
0834	1108	1348	1554	1848
0843	1117	1357	1603	1857
0848	1122	1402	1609	1901
0855	1129	1409	1616	1908
0903	1138	1418	1625	1916
0904	1139	1421	1626	1917
0905	1140	---	1627	1918
0913	1147	---	1635	1925
0917	1151	---	1639	1929



SHIRENEWTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Extracts from the minutes of the monthly meeting held on 4th November 2024.

Planning applications considered

DM/2024/01266 – Double story side extension – High Trees, Red House Lane, Shirenewton

High Trees is a 3-bedroom detached house next to Longmeads (which Councillors may recall in connection with the diversion of the footpath leaving the rear of recreation field). The proposal is to replace the existing ground floor dining room addition with a larger footprint 2 storey extension, wrapping around the rear of the kitchen, to provide an enlarged kitchen/diner with patio doors, utility and study on the ground floor and an additional en suite bedroom above under a gable roof. The extension would increase the volume and footprint of the house, but no calculations are given. A very rough estimate would suggest a volume increase in the order of 50-60%, the footprint less so. The roof would be grey interlocking tiles, white rendered walls and grey finish windows and doors. Although the increase in size of the house suggests additional traffic usage of Red House Lane which is a private road, the ownership of the road appears from the site plan to be with the property.

The house stands in a substantial plot. No windows are shown facing Longmeads so it is unlikely that the neighbours' privacy would be affected.

Councillors may wish to consider whether the proposal represents overdevelopment of the existing house.

The council unanimously voted for no objection

DM/2024/01269 – Retention and improvement of boundary wall. Hillside house, Usk Rd, Earlswood

Councillors may recall this project originally was to seek planning consent for a blockwork wall adjacent to the Usk Road near

Penderyn Farm. Subsequent amendments have been sought by the applicant as to the wall's roadside finish. Wooden boarding was proposed and revised, and now the applicant seeks permission for a random course natural stone surface with a concrete stone capping.

Councillors may wish to consider whether there are any highway concerns (none are raised by MCC Highways).

The council unanimously voted for no objection

DM/2024/01325 - Replacement of Porch at 17 Clearview, Shirenewton

The property is a detached house in the hammerhead at Clearview. Currently it has a small porch some 2m wide with street facing and narrow double doors, and a depth of about 1m and flat roof. The proposal is to replace this with a 3m wide porch having two small windows, and a door in one side which will project 2m from the front of the house. The pitched roof will have tiles and rendered walls to match the house.

The house is of modern design and Councillors may consider the porch is in a similar style. The house sits back from road and the new porch is unlikely to impinge on the privacy of neighbouring properties.

The council voted for no objection with 1 abstention

DM/2024/00921 – Amendment to plans - Little Bushes Farm, Chapel Road, Earlswood

Councillors will recall this application which seeks to convert an existing outbuilding (a barn used for agricultural storage) to residential use for a gym, office with facilities and new windows and patio doors to the southern and western elevations. The existing stone walls are to be retained, those front facing, clad with cedar timber and the roof would be corrugated sheets in brown with two new roof lights. There is a slight change in roof pitch and height, however much of the structure stays similar in terms of mass.

MCC's Landscape Officer reported that from a policy perspective LC5 Protection and Enhancement of landscape character highlights that development will be permitted provided it would not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the special character or quality of Monmouthshire's landscape in terms of its visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects. Policy H4 Conversion / Rehabilitation respecting's in the Open Countryside for Residential Use highlights that from a landscape perspective change

needs to respects rural character, is sympathetic to the surrounding landscape and does not have a detrimental impact. The Officer considered from a Landscape and GI perspective that the proposal is acceptable and will not have a detrimental landscape impact as proposed.

Councillors had previously resolved to object to the earlier proposals for the want of further detail on measurements, materials, colour finishes, services and access, but had commented that in the event MCC were minded to grant consent there should be conditions to restrict the barn to use with the bungalow as a single family unit and to remove the general consent for extensions improvements and additional outbuildings without further planning consent.

The latest revised plan shows the bat entrance in the end wall. There are measurements showing a roof ridge height of roughly 4m, the natural stone walls are to remain with the addition of cedar cladding to the front of the barn, the windows and doors to be coloured in anthracite and (as above) brown corrugated sheets for the roof. There is still no comment on Velux windows, which have not been shown on any drawing but in view of the comments of NRW it would appear unlikely any such windows will be permitted.

The council unanimously voted for no objection provided the following are included in the planning approval (if granted):-

1. NRW's conditions as requested in their response dated 08/10/24 and 2. SCC's conditions requested in our response also dated 08/10/24 namely the colour finish of the timber cladding being muted and the use of the barn be restricted to use with the bungalow as a single-family unit and the removal of the general consent for extensions improvements and additional outbuildings without further planning consent.

Earlswood field rental – Several offers to rent have been received it was resolved to pursue them. Clerk to continue with equestrian planning application.

Memorial Path – D Brabon confirmed that she had tidied the area and planted some flowers, Cllrs wished to thank Dorothy for her kind efforts. The Memorial path will be cleaned prior to Remembrance Sunday.

Cllr Vacancy – Clerk to advertise Cllr Vacancy on notice boards and Parish magazine and also to be placed on website.

Memorial Clock – M Penny and B Millar, have initiated a fundraising effort and undertaken investigative works on a voluntary basis.

They have also requested historic information relating to the clock.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Louise Brown reported:

Public Services Scrutiny Committee on the 14th of October 2024

The report discussed dentistry services in Monmouthshire with a concern about NHS dentistry with an invitation from the health board to discuss dentistry questions and to take members questions. If of interest the meeting can be watched at the following link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=260&MIId=5839>

Remuneration Committee on the 22 October 2024

This committee has been set up by the Labour administration to review the salaries of Chief Officers and is attended by 2 Labour Cabinet Members and 1 independent who supports the Labour administration.

The recommendation is for an increase of circa £10K on the present salary level of the Chief Executive phased in over 2 years.

The link to the reports can be found here:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=349&MIId=6304>

This has been reported in the press as follows:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=143&MIId=5742>

County Council meeting on the 24th of October 2024

The **Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)** Deposit Plan stage was discussed at a Full Council meeting last Thursday (24th October 2024). I attended as your local councillor and spoke on behalf of residents and the arguments are still the same in Chepstow even though the focus is now firmly on the proposed development off Moun-ton Road (pages 125-128 of the plan or P155 of the meeting report) rather than Bayfield.

The Plan will now move again to Public Consultation and residents will need to submit/re-submit their views in due course if they want them to be heard.

There is a site being proposed for 26 houses in Shirenewton for Land West of Red Landes which is on the Earlswood Road past the village boundary on the opposite side of the road to the recreation hall. I mentioned the main Sewerage pipe concerns at the Place Scrutiny meeting.

You can find the link to the meeting agenda and relevant documents as well as the you tube which can be watched.
<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?Cid=143&Mid=5742>

This RLDP debate started at 00:30:50 and concludes at 04:01:44.

You can find specific Chepstow contributions at:

Cllr Christopher Edwards – 00:45:43 (St Kingsmark ward)

Cllr Paul Pavia – 01:55:30 (Mount Pleasant ward)

Cllr Louise Brown – 02:02:41 (Shirenewton ward)

The Place Committee scrutiny draft minutes can be found at the bottom of the supporting documents but should have been in the supplementary agenda a point I later corrected to my contribution in the meeting.

A recorded vote was taken at the end of the debate and the recommendations/deposit plan put forward by the Labour/Green administration was passed by 21 votes to 20 votes, with one abstention.

The Chepstow and I voted against the proposed preferred strategy (the Deposit stage) for reasons given in our contributions.

This finalised RLDP Deposit Plan will now go to public consultation before being submitted to Welsh Government for approval.

This is the final round of public consultation on this plan, which the Cabinet Member indicated will start in November. It is anticipated that there will be both online and physical drop-in opportunities to provide your views and feedback.

It is recommended that you **register yourself on the County Council's RLDP database**, so that you will be alerted when that next phase of public consultation starts. You can do that by emailing planningpolicy@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The 6-week consultation will take place between the 4th of November to the 16th of December.

Monmouthshire County Council have indicated that a number of community and stakeholder engagement events ('drop-in sessions') are being held throughout the County during the consultation period, listed below, where local communities can speak to a planning officer about the consultation documents. Two virtual engagement events (Microsoft Teams live events) will also take place during the consultation period, whereby officers will present the Deposit RLDP and respond to questions. Further details of these events can be viewed on the Council's website via the following link as well as the consultation:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/rldp-consultation-2024/>

Venue	Date	Time
Raglan Old Church School Community Centre, Chepstow Road, Raglan	Tuesday 12 th November 2024	2pm – 7pm
Virtual Engagement Event	Wednesday 13 th	2pm –
Abergavenny Market Hall, Cross	Thursday 14 th	2pm – 7pm
Usk Community Hub, Maryport	Monday 18 th	2pm – 7pm
Palmer Centre, High Street,	Thursday 21 st	2pm – 7pm
Shire Hall, Agincourt Square,	Monday 25 th	2pm – 7pm
Magor Baptist Chapel, The Square, Magor	Wednesday 27 th November 2024	2pm – 7pm
Portskewett Recreational Hall,	Friday 29 th No-	2pm – 7pm
Goytre Village Hall, Newton Road, Penperlleni	Monday 2 nd December 2024	2pm – 7pm
Caldicot Town Council Building,	Wednesday 4 th	2pm – 7pm
Virtual Engagement Event	Monday 9 th December 2024	6pm – 7.30pm

MCC is also holding a virtual engagement event for Town and Community Councils on Tuesday 5th November 6pm-7.30pm and would encourage town and community council representatives to attend this session.

However, for your response to be fully recorded, attending a session should be as well as submitting a response to the consultation not instead of doing so.

Cllrs agreed the date of the next meeting as Monday 2nd December 2024 at 7:00pm by public meeting in Shirenewton Recreation Hall or remotely

Find more information in a draft copy of minutes on the Community Council notice boards. Previous, approved minutes of meetings can be found on the Council's website www.shirenewtoncc.org.uk

Contact the Clerk to the Community Council E-mail: shirenewtoncc@gmail.com Mobile: 07410 580961

Vacancy on Shirenewton Community Council

Shirenewton Community Council has a vacancy for a Councillor in the Shirenewton and Mynyddbach ward

If you think you would like to be a Councillor and are over 18 years of age, contact the Clerk by email at shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

What is a Councillor?

Councillors are elected to represent an individual geographical unit on the council, known as a ward or parish. They are generally elected by the public every five years. Between the elections if a Councillor seat becomes available it can be filled by the Council Co-opting the applicant onto the Council. A seat for Co-option has now become available.

What do Councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. **Decision making** – Through meetings and attending committees with other elected members, councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.
2. **Monitoring** – Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.
3. **Getting involved locally** – As local representatives, councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:
 - Going to meetings of local organisations
 - Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community
 - Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public

How much time does it take up?

Quite often councillors say that their duties occupy them for about an hour a week. Obviously, there are some councillors who spend more time than this – and some less, but in the main, being a community councillor is an enjoyable way of contributing to your community and helping to make it a better place to live and work.

You will be supported in your role and will be expected to undertake training. You should be comfortable working electronically. You should have a positive outlook and a can-do attitude and be willing to work as part of a team. If after reading this notice you are interested in applying, please contact the clerk to the council using the above details.



FOR THE REGISTERS

The funeral of Wendy Siobhan Eyles (28th April 1969 – 31st October 2024) was held at St Thomas á Becket Church on Saturday 16th November 2024. The Reverend Zoe Pimentel officiated.

FRIENDS OF ST PETER'S NEWCHURCH

Diary Dates 2024

15th Dec, 4.30pm Christingle Service St Peter's Church
24th Dec, 4.30pm Christmas Carol Service St Peter's Church
25th Dec, 10am Christmas Day Service St Peter's Church

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE AT EARLSWOOD VALLEY CHAPEL— THE OLDEST METHODIST CHAPEL IN WALES

Built in 1791

Carols at 3 p.m. on Sunday 15th December
Refreshments—tea, coffee, mince pies, sandwiches etc

CAROLS AT HOPE CHAPEL EARLSWOOD

On Sunday 22nd December at 3 p.m.
followed by refreshments

All Are Welcome

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners in November:

1. Roy Raikes-May
2. Clare John
3. Jamie Williamson

VILLAGE CURRY NIGHTS

Hello all, The Village Curry nights are back!

Due to popular demand the village curry nights will be reinstated from September. As a reminder, they happen as follows: The Mens curry night is on the penultimate Thursday evening in the month and the Ladies on the last Thursday evening in the month. So, for September, these dates are Thursday 19th (Mens) and Thursday 26th (Ladies). So, please save the date.

The format is, as always, a simple buffet featuring three different curries, rice and nans, costing £20 per person.

This is a great opportunity to catch up with neighbours and friends and meet others in the village you may ****not**** normally meet. Name badges are provided so you know who you are talking with. Please comment below (or contact us via FB messenger or via our WhatsApp number 07418 046919) to tell us you are coming so we know approximate numbers.

BTW: We, the Sultan, are posting this as David Cornwell who previously organised these nights has handed over the organisation to us!





Takeaway or Eat In

COME AND CHECK OUT OUR WEEKLY MENUS FOR A TASTEBUD TREAT OR TRADITIONAL COMFORT FOOD BY ORDERING A TAKEAWAY OR DINING IN.

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MENU CHOICES ARE ALL SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. REMEMBER TO CHECK OUR FACEBOOK PAGE AS MENUS CHANGE WEEKLY.

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and 10 items in our large boxes*



Introducing

saints chepstow

A new Anglican church at St.Christopher's, Bulwark



Led by Revds **Zoe & Barney Pimentel**, and Children & Families Pioneer **Clare Edwards**, the new church will have an informal style with an emphasis on reaching those under 40.

During the week Saints will be running activities aimed at children and families – a “Lego Church”, a children’s community choir, and a toddler group, with Sunday evenings set aside for more Spiritual input and time together over a meal.

If you are interested in learning more, or would like to volunteer, please get in touch!

saintschepstow@cinw.org.uk



Inclusion and equality are some of our core values as a leadership team. Our aim is for Saints to be LGBTQI+ affirming and to achieve the Autism Friendly award by the National Autistic Society.





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SHIRENEWTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 1090167

Our October talk was entitled 'The Common Place Book of John Gwin' the speaker for the evening was Dr Tony Hopkins. This book has survived for 350 years and now is kept in the Gwent Archives. It records the life of John Gwin, who lived in Llangwm, it records his family's births and deaths, his daily record of planting crops, orchards, including recipes for all sorts of medical/veterinary ailments. An amazing book!

Our November meeting will be a talk entitled 'A Famous Shipwreck', given by Keith Tayton.

We will be visiting the Gwent Archives on Tuesday, 26th November

We have a number of meetings and events over the Christmas period, we will be visiting Itton Church, Naylor Firth will be giving a talk on the Curre Family, combined with mulled wine and mince pies, everyone welcome.

As is our tradition we will be walking up to Grey Hill on Friday, 27th December, to see the sun rise (8.10am) on the Winter Solstice and will be rushing back to the Church Room to have our well deserved breakfast. Everyone welcome for breakfast, even if you did not climb Grey Hill. Please let me know by the 14th December if you would like breakfast.

Dates for your diary

Date 2024

Tues 26th Nov

Tues 10th Dec

Fri 27th Dec

Speaker

Keith Tayton

Dr Naylor Firth

Dr Lyn Davies

Peter Strong

Ned Heywood

Title

A Famous Shipwreck
Itton Church (The Curre
Family)

Winter Solstice walk and 2
breakfast

Chepstow Roman Crossing
Annual Dinner

Potlets to Plaques with the
odd Pub in Between

Our meetings are held at the Church Room, unless otherwise stated, we start at 7.30pm and everyone is welcome.

Our visit to Itton Church will be at 7.00pm

Breakfast will be served at 9.00am on the 27th December, please contact me if you wish to have breakfast.



Walk some of the Turkey off!

Come and climb **Grey Hill**

on **27th December 2024**

to watch the sunrise over the standing stones
followed by a **Community Breakfast** in Shirenewton

You can join the walk, or just come for breakfast
(breakfast tickets must be booked by 15th Dec).

Walkers meet at 7.30am outside the Woodland Tavern,

Llanvair Discoed

Or meet at the standing stones on Grey Hill (sunrise circa 8.10am)

Please dress for the weather and bring a torch. Dogs welcome.

Community Breakfast, all welcome

at 9am on **27th Dec 2024**, in the Church Room

Bacon or Sausage butty,
toast, bottomless tea and coffee

Booking essential for breakfast – limited places available

email brabon66@btinternet.com or call 641376

by 15th December (for bookings and to make payment).

Tickets for breakfast are £5 per head

No charge for children aged 12 and under, but their breakfasts must still be booked

Special dietary requirements can be accommodated if notified at time of booking

Letter from E.I. Jones, dated 16th April 1852.(D 1128)

Quotes the Norton, architect's report:

"The nave roof which is very ancient is now (so) completely decayed in parts that it must be replaced, nor do I think it desirable to use any of the old materials in its reconstruction. The windows in most cases are very ill restored, with wooden mullions in lieu of the ancient stone ones; these require to be entirely renewed.

He (the architect) then goes on to mention the decayed state of the walls and the necessity for repewing - but from the small size of the church and the removal of the unsightly gallery, which blocks up the west window, he is not able to increase materially the number of sittings without adding to the sacred edifice."

Later in the letter: Shirenewton is I am sorry to say the poorest, and the most overburdened with a pauper population in the Chepstow district - the exposed situation and shallow soil afford no encouragement to wealthy occupiers; the rate payers generally are small tenant occupiers, a class quite unable to bear any heavy expenditure. We have two large landed proprietors residing in the parish but from one of them we have no hope of receiving assistance - I do not think he will offer any serious opposition but he will do nothing to forward the work - the other has very munificently given £100 for the new aisle and £50 for repairs.

Letter from William Lawley, of Bryngwyn, dated 20th April 1852.

"The parish of Shirenewton lies upon a continuation of the same wild hills as Devauden Green which was brought so much into notice by the self denying labours of the good old schoolmaster James Davies. The population is generally of the like scattered and very poor who live in cottages built on generally upon the waste and surrounded by a few pockets of unproductive land which have been claimed by their industry from the surrounding common. It is only in the last 13 or 14 years that a parsonage house has been built and the rectors have residence on the spot, and their efforts to improve the people have been greatly impeded by the want of substance and sufficient accommodation in their parish church. I shall very deeply regret if the present attempts should fail for want of sufficient funds. The necessity of very extensive repairs contemporaneously with the important addition of a north aisle will add greatly to the cost."

One other letter comments that no-one has a living memory of any repairs being undertaken to the church. If this includes recollections from long dead parents, then it would take us back about a century, so it is unlikely that anything had been done since about 1750 at least.

The bells were hung in 1757 - so this would suggest that a restoration was carried out then.

HELP NEEDED

Would you be able to help us maintain one of the oldest buildings in Shirenewton?

We have a small and dedicated group of volunteers, working in pairs, who spend a few hours, three times each year, to keep the Church and the Church Room clean.

Our group has reduced in number during this year, which of course increases the frequency of cleaning for those of us remaining. Therefore, we would all be very grateful to hear from any new volunteers, both pairs and individuals, who feel they would like to contribute to maintaining our church in this way.

Please contact Mark Broughton at
mark_broughton@btopenworld.com

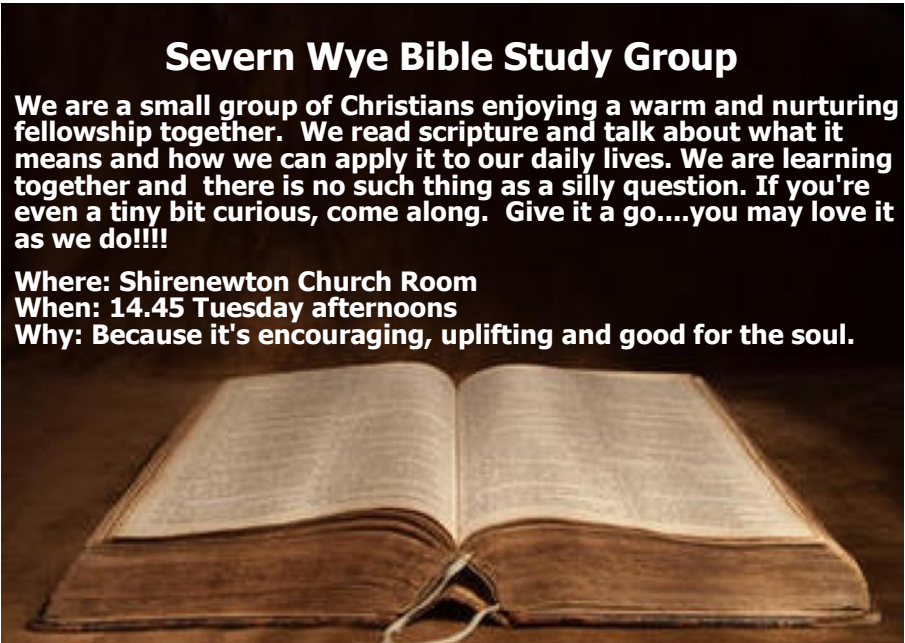
Severn Wye Bible Study Group

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.





Tots and toddlers

Thursday 10 - 11:30
(term time only)

St Christophers Church
Pembroke Road, Bulwark

For pre school children, babies and their carers.
Join us every Thursday from 10 - 11:30 , during term time
for play, crafts, songs, friendship, refreshments, and fun!

Starting January 9th 2025!

Contact: saintschepstow@cinw.org.uk for more info.



SEVERN WYE MINISTRY AREA

BIRTHDAY PARTY SOCIALS!

At **3:30pm** on the following Sundays:

8th September

10th November

12th January



**Free cream tea in one of our homes;
come along to the party closest to
your birthday!**

**Hosted by
David & Catherine Carne
and
Revds Zoe & Barney Pimentel**

**For venue information and to RSVP, please contact Revd Zoe:
severn.wye.MAL@gmail.com / 07754 306229**

Advent Courses



Tuesday Daytime

2.45pm at Collingwood, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeyric

An advent course based on the life of St Francis of Assisi.

Commences on Tuesday 19th November.

Contact Carol Stoker for more information on 07380 992494,
or Hilary Hillier on starvanshchurchnews@btinternet.com

Tuesday evening

7:30pm at St. Christophers, Bulwark

Fr Chris Blanchard will be running a new Meditation course
that will be the second ever to be run in the UK!

All are welcome to either or both of these courses.



Come and join the *Adventure!*
in the Church Room on Sunday 1st December
3:30 – 4:30 pm

All ages welcome!

Food for the journey - top your pizza
***ADVENTure* game & Quiz**
Take home 'journey bags'
Tea, coffee & homemade cake

More information: lem.shirenewton@gmail.com



Carols by Candlelight
with mince pies and hot mulled winter
punch afterwards!

Christmas Eve
4.00 p.m.

Penycaemawr Methodist Chapel
Wentwood

Postcode for the general area NP15 1ND

Start your Christmas with this
wonderful experience of singing carols
in our lovely little country chapel, lit only
by the warm glow of burning candles.
Please come early to avoid disappointment.

Shirenewton W.I. Christmas Crafts



Mid November and for many of us our minds turn to Christmas and all it entails. So, we are very grateful that we have, amongst our members, some very talented 'crafters' who can help us on our way.

Diana Such skilfully showed us how to make these delightful felt woven baskets which can be filled with sweets to make lovely Christmas tree decorations. We all enjoyed a thoroughly sociable well-attended evening and we left the meeting with a real sense of achievement as we took our hand-made decorations home.

We are very grateful to Diana, not only for her time and patience on the evening, but also for her generosity in providing us with all the materials.

Jackie Broughton



Our next meeting will be our Christmas meal on **Wednesday 11th December, 7pm for 7.15 pm at the Huntsman Hotel.**

Our 2025 programme starts on **Thursday 9th January at 7.15pm at Shirenewton Recreation Hall with a talk by Life Coach Lin Marsh titled 'New Year, New You: how a Life Coach can help you achieve this'. The perfect start to 2025.**

Nerys's Natty Nosh



Traditional Christmas Cake Recipe.

This rich, fruity Christmas cake is best made a few weeks ahead, so you can “feed” it with brandy to deepen the flavour.

Ingredients

Cake:

- 225g currants
- 225g sultanas
- 225g raisins
- 175g glace cherries, chopped
- 175g dried apricots, chopped
- 50g ground almonds
- 275g plain flour
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 225g butter or margarine, softened
- 225g dark brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- Zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange
- 1 tbsp black treacle
- 4 tbsp brandy (plus extra for feeding)

Decoration (optional):

- Marzipan
- Royal or fondant icing
- Silver balls or festive decorations

Method

1. Soak the Fruit: Place currants, sultanas, raisins, cherries, and apricots in a bowl. Add 4 tbsp brandy, cover, and leave overnight.
2. Prepare the Tin: Preheat oven to 140°C (fan 120°C). Grease and line a deep 20cm round cake tin with double baking parchment.
3. Mix Dry Ingredients: Combine flour, spices, and almonds in a bowl.
4. Cream Butter and Sugar: Beat until pale and fluffy. Gradually add eggs, then stir in treacle and zest.
5. Combine: Fold in dry ingredients, soaked fruit, and any

remaining brandy.

6. Bake: Spoon mixture into the tin, level the top, and bake for 4-4½ hours. Cover with foil if it browns too quickly.

7. Cool and Feed: Cool in the tin, then remove and poke holes with a skewer. Drizzle with brandy, wrap in parchment and foil.

8. Store and Feed Weekly until ready to decorate.

Decoration (optional):

A few days before Christmas, cover with marzipan, let set, then ice and decorate. My family prefer a cake covered in marzipan and nuts.

Start early for the best flavour!



Christmas chocolate pudding bowl cake.

Ingredients

For the Chocolate Cake:

- 200g caster sugar
- 200g self-raising flour
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 200g unsalted butter, softened
- 50g cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

- 60ml milk (if needed, to adjust consistency)

For the Chocolate Buttercream:

- 100g unsalted butter, softened
- 200g icing sugar
- 30g cocoa powder
- 2-3 tbsp milk
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

To Decorate:

- 1 large bag of Maltesers (about 150-200g)

Method

1. Preheat your oven to 160°C (fan) or 180°C (conventional).

2. Grease a pudding basin (about 1.5-2 litre capacity) with butter and line the bottom with a round of baking paper.

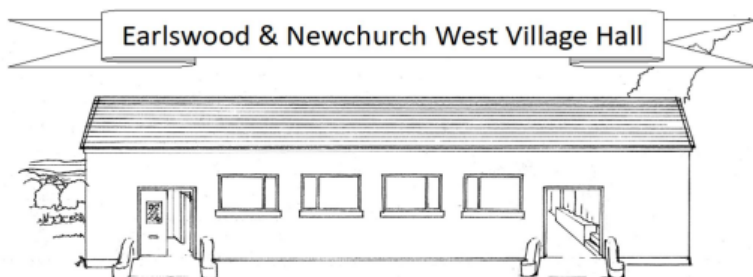
3. In a large bowl, cream together the softened butter and caster sugar until pale and fluffy.

4. Gradually add the beaten eggs. Add the vanilla extract.
5. Sift in the flour, cocoa powder, and baking powder, then gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet mixture until just combined. If the batter seems too thick, add a little milk to reach a soft dropping consistency.
6. Spoon the batter into the prepared pudding basin and level the top.
7. Bake in the middle of the oven for 1 hour, or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. If the top starts to brown too quickly, cover it with a piece of foil.
8. Allow the cake to cool in the basin for about 15 minutes, then turn it out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
9. **Make the Chocolate Buttercream**
In a mixing bowl, beat the softened butter until smooth. Sift in the icing sugar and cocoa powder, then add the vanilla extract. Mix well.
Gradually add milk, a tablespoon at a time, until the buttercream is smooth and spreadable.
10. **Decorate the Cake**
Once the cake is completely cool, spread a generous layer of chocolate buttercream over the top and sides.
Press Maltesers into the buttercream, arranging them to cover the entire surface, or create a pattern if you prefer.

As I share my final recipe with you, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the lovely comments and support you've given me. I wish you a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with happiness and delicious memories.

Gyda cariad Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd dda.





Xmas Quiz

Saturday 14th DECEMBER

Bring your own team or get to know some of your neighbours. Prizes for the best team and best Christmas jumper!

- ❖ Tickets £10
- ❖ Includes curry dinner*
- ❖ Bring your own drinks (glasses provided!)
- ❖ Doors open at 6.30pm, food served from 7pm

Box Office: 07889 762 840 / 07855 301 806
booking@earlnew.com

* Dietary needs? No problem, just let us know.

Upcoming Events

2025

Saturday 10th May

Plant and cake sale

Visit www.earlnew.com for more information about the Hall & facilities.
We have a mailing list! Email booking@earlnew.com to join!



An evening of traditional Christmas music

**By
Lena and Ceri Duettists**



**With special guest star
Mal Pope**



**St Peter's Church, St Pierre
Wednesday 11th December 2024
7pm**

Tickets £10 to include a glass of wine or soft drink

From

**Merran Higgins
01291 689646**

Lena and Ceri

And on the door



CHRISTMAS Craft Market

*Saturday 30th November
Earlswood & Newchurch West Hall*

10.30 - 2.30

Free Entry - Plenty of parking (NP16 6AW)

*Start your Christmas shopping early, come and see
our craft stalls.*

*Children can write & post their letters to Santa in our
North Pole Post Box (free)*

*Have a chat over a cup of Tea, coffee or hot chocolate
and a piece of cake.*

To book a stall Phone 07889 762840

SHIRENEWTON TOWER NEWS

The ringers rang the bells half-muffled on Remembrance Sunday. To achieve this effect the clapper of each bell has a large leather pad (muffle) attached to one side to cover the point at which the clapper strikes the sound bow of the bell. For full circle ringing the bell rotates from the inverted position (mouth facing skyward) through 360° at which point the clapper strikes the bell, which is then followed by the bell back-rotating to achieve its original position when again the bell strikes. These are the two strokes of the bell known as hand-stroke and back-stroke. The leather pad is attached to muffle the backstroke, thus the ringing results in first an open (normal) note from each bell which is then followed by a muffled note, giving an echo effect. The only other time half-muffled ringing is practised is at the funeral of dignitaries when specifically requested, and at the end of each year just before midnight on 31st December – to mourn the passing of the year. The muffles are then removed at midnight and open ringing occurs to celebrate and welcome the New Year. There is a debate (amongst ringers) as to whether full -muffled ringing should ever occur. One view is that this is only practised on the death of the monarch. This indeed did occur on the death of Queen Elizabeth II, although the heaviest bell (tenor) was only half muffled as was the request.

As many of you will know the memorial clock housed in the church is not functioning normally. We managed to get 2 of the 4 faces operational (East and North faces – as these are visible from the Memorial Tablet) but the clock striking mechanism is not currently functioning. So Glynis volunteered to ring the tenor bell 11 times at precisely 11.00am. This is not as simple as it might sound as the normal position to “park” a ringing bell is at hand-stroke and to strike 11 (odd number) would require parking at backstroke – a more difficult manoeuvre. So prior to 11.00am the tenor bell was “parked” (what ringers call “set”) at backstroke, thus at the 11th strike the bell would be at the normal hand-stroke position for setting. Thus the strike of 11 was achieved (not 13 luckily!).

There will be some additional ringing around Christmas and New Year with the bell ropes and ringers positioned in the nave of the church in full view and not out of sight in the ringing room in the tower. So if you wish to experience the sound of half-muffled ringing then come to Shirenewton church on 31st December around 11.30 pm to see the old year rung out and the New Year rung in un-muffled.

Mike Penney (Tower Captain).

December 2024



Shirenewton Church in the snow on 19th November
contrasted with Shirenewton in the rain
(see next pages)





Above and opposite page
Rain and flooding in Shirenewton on 24th November

To advertise in this magazine contact

Bill Clark: 01291 641783; parishmagshirenewton@gmail.com

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free advertisements in black and white

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Full page £100; £150 for a designated page

Half Page £50

Quarter Page £25

LEARNING TO MEDITATE

STARTS
Tues 26 November
7.30pm



WITH CANON REV
CHRIS BLANCHARD

A free four week course at
St Christophers Church, Bulwark
contact: frchris2@icloud.com

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

AT

**ST PETER'S
NEWCHURCH**

CAROL SERVICE 15TH DEC 4.30

FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS

CAROLS AROUND CHRISTMAS TREE

24TH DEC. 4.30 PM

FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS



COMMUNION SERVICE

25TH DEC 10.00AM



HAPPY CHRISTMAS



Advent Fair

In the Church Room

Sunday 1st December

11:00 - 12:00

Hand crafted Christmas goodies

Cakes, Biscuits, Mincemeat, Jams,
Jellies and Marmalades

And of course, a raffle

Coffee and mince pies.

And it's a cash-only bash.

**The money raised will go to
'Médecins sans Frontières'**



**Carols Around the Village
Christmas Tree**
With the Chepstow Town Band!

Sunday 8th December at 6.30

'The Sultan' Car Park.

The Cash Collection will go to

'Médecins sans Frontières'

Bring a torch. And some gloves.

A warm hat. And loud voices!

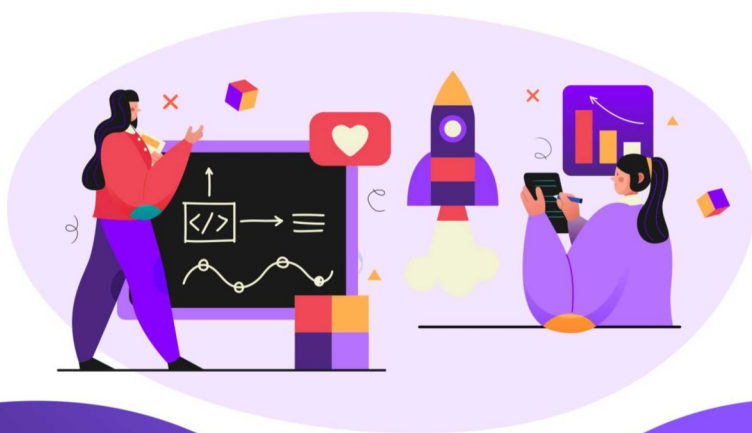
*And if it's raining we will head up to
the candle-lit church.*



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+



Chepstow Choral Society

Musical Director – Graham Bull

CCS is affiliated to Ty Cerdd – Music Centre Wales and Making Music – The National Federation of Music Societies. Registered charity no. 1127098

TY CERDD
MUSIC CENTRE WALES

CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2024

**at CHEPSTOW LEISURE CENTRE
ARTS HALL**

**WEDNESDAY 11th DECEMBER,/
7.00pm**

A mix of sacred and secular items –much-loved carols, seasonal readings, and popular Christmas choral music, sacred and secular, and including the choruses from Handel's "Messiah" Part 1.

Light refreshments including glass of wine/soft drinks and mince pies will be included at the conclusion of the concert.

Tickets £10, u/18s, students free) are available from Chepstow Bookshop, choir members - visit our website for further information. www.chepstowchoralsociety.org.uk

CHRISTMAS MUSIC WITH YOUR LOCAL CHORAL SOCIETY!

Gardening Corner

I sit here writing this early in the morning – which is not unusual for me. It is still pitch-black outside. No one else is about – anywhere - and the only company I have is Harvey, our cat, who was very pleased to see the downstairs lights come on, so that he could get in out of the 'weather'. The very cold weather we have been experiencing will hopefully have had some impact on the slug numbers, but as I write this, storm Bert is blowing a gale and depositing endless rain outside. So, things are back to mild and wet. It was a noisy night, and I fear for what damage many will be experiencing in or around their homes. The one thing we really dread, but Barn Farm sits between 600 and 700 feet above sea level, so we hope that this will not be a problem. Having said that, I've just come back to recommencing this page, as we have both been out for the last two hours clearing all our drains out as leaves were making a good job of blocking them. We don't know when the cottage was built, but probably two centuries ago at least. I always thought to dig up the old historical maps for the area to see if I could find out how long it has been here, but I have never had the time. They clearly knew what they were doing when they selected a site, as it is on the east side of a valley, that is protected by Wentwood forest to the west, and higher ground further east. We moved here when the famous 1988/9 storms hit and we were in a mobile home at the time. Fortuitously we chose to pitch it at the bottom of our ground, behind a hedge. The home rocked to and fro all night long, but I had driven stakes into the ground and tied it to them, so we stayed upright thank goodness. We didn't get a lot of sleep though! The original owners took their water from a line of springs. We did have the benefit of a mains tap in the old cottage, but nothing else. Being south to south westerly facing it tends to be warmer than our neighbours the opposite side of the valley. This is easily seen when we do get snow, as it disappears 'our side of the valley' so much quicker than theirs. We do have a stream alongside us, but a field away and some 80 feet lower than us. Fortunately, flooding is not an obvious problem for us. We find it difficult to understand why planners today, seem so relaxed about allowing endless new housing developments to be built on low lying ground, often old water meadow areas. The resulting

floods are inevitable. As recent news has shown us, very few countries seem safe from the ever-increasing impacts of global warming.

Garden wise, there is certainly very little to be done outside, and this is unlikely to change this side of Christmas. Activity is therefore restricted to continuing with the general clearing and tidying up activities in the greenhouses and tunnels. The frosts 'sorted out' the last of the summer crops so these now need clearing up. We will then try to sterilize the greenhouses and tunnels the best we can. They are too big to use smoke bombs or similar treatment. Instead, we rely on watering footpaths with a watering can full of Jeys fluid – an old tried and tested method – then spraying the sides with the same mixture. Jeys used to be based on coal tar oil, but this was banned for use by amateur gardeners many years ago. It doesn't work as well as it did, but as with many treatments that were effective, the EU banned them many years ago. I get why, but it means that we now have a never-ending fight against the numerous pests and diseases, which want to enjoy our produce. The bigger tunnel will now effectively be put to bed until around March time, when the first planting will be done. This is usually the garlic and shallots, followed by early calabrese and cauliflowers. There may also be a wigwam of sweet peas, for a really early crop of scented blooms for the flower arranger in the house. The assistant head gardener has had a good week in the flower arranging department this weekend, entering three exhibits into the WI Autumn/Christmas County 'show' in Usk. It had to be staged in the teeth of storm Bert, with each exhibit covered up for the journey from the car to inside the Usk Memorial Hall. The excitement after the results were known was lovely to see with two first places, including the cup for best arrangement in the show. This reminded us how important it is to have access to decorative and scented foliage in the garden and this is the one thing I wished I had thought more of when we first created a garden here. We do have some nice scented conifers and a few shrubs, but not enough. I also wished we had planted more useful species on the land where we have our orchard and bees, We love making our own elderflower cordial, which we do every year, but always sourced from the hedgerows. I wish we had planted some named varieties for bigger and more scented

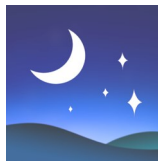
flower heads, as well as some of the purple / pink flowered varieties to give a more rose tinged cordial – or even champagne! One of the comments from the show judge was the excellent condition of the foliage, which proves that good quality foliage can make all the difference.

The next work outside is likely to start with the annual pruning of all of our roses. This usually starts in January and continues into March. At the same time as pruning, we try to remove any rose leaves that are lying on the ground, as these harbour black spot disease, and as such will readily infect the new leaves when these start to grow in the spring. Rainfall splashes onto the leaves carrying the disease spores at the same time, landing on the new leaves and re-infecting them. Everything (leaves and cuttings) will head for the bonfire, as composting will only help to spread the disease further. Last year was not good for our roses as the continual rain prevented me spraying against this disease. So, they generally suffered badly. We noted that a couple of new varieties we have planted in recent years and which are meant to be disease resistant were proving to be just that, so if we buy any more, we will look for these. An English Rose from David Austin named Roald Dahl (after the author) has proved particularly good. Very healthy, strong growing and a perpetual flowerer during the season if dead headed on a regular basis. What more could you ask for. If it remains too wet to work on the ground, I am intending to start splitting some of our more desirable plants in the flower borders such as agapanthus, alstroemerias, Astringias, hellebores and geraniums. These will then be potted on into individual pots for replanting out in the gaps which will surely result due to the continuing wet weather.

We wish you and all your families a great Christmas, Hopefully, you will meet up and enjoy a sunny (if cold) walk during the holiday period. *Happy gardening until next year, Steve and Felicity Hunt.*



STARGAZING



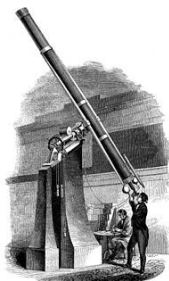
Orion the Hunter, many people's favourite constellation lies to the south-east. Four bright stars represent his shoulders and legs whilst a further three form his belt. Orion demonstrates different types of stars. If you look at Orion's belt it is possible to see a well-defined sword hanging from it. In the middle of the sword there is a slightly odd- looking star – it seems smudged to the naked eye. This is the Great Orion Nebula, a vast cloud of gas and dust that is lit up by stars within the cloud. The nebula is a stellar nursery – new stars are forming inside it as the dust clumps together. Rigel the star forming the hunter's left foot is the brightest star in the constellation. It is a blue supergiant that will pass its supergiant stage soon (on an astronomical timescale), either collapsing in the case of a supernova or shedding its outer layers and turning into a white dwarf. Betelgeuse, the star at Orion's left shoulder is a massive red supergiant star nearing the end of its life. When it explodes it will even be visible during the day.

The W-shape of Cassiopeia lies to the north-west, whilst the seven stars forming the Plough can be seen in the northeast.

The very bright planet Jupiter can be seen above the constellation of Orion and is joined by the Full Moon on 14th December. Slightly yellow Saturn can be seen in the south-west and is close to the Moon on the 9th. Orange Mars is in the east and is just below the Moon on the 17th.

21st December is the Winter Solstice, our shortest day, often called mid-winter.

Joke: Sirius, the dog star, is moving closer to Earth at a rate of nine miles per second. This means someday we could be in Sirius trouble!



Amazon Smile may be gone but you can still support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions with Easyfundraising!

We have some important news regarding the Amazon Smile program. Unfortunately, Amazon has discontinued this program, which means that we can no longer receive donations through it. However, we have some good news too! You can still continue to support Chepstow and Caldicot Lions by signing up for Easyfundraising. By doing this, you can help us raise funds for our community projects and initiatives, without any extra cost to you.

All you have to do is sign up through our Easyfundraising page at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/chepstowandcaldicotlions> and shop online as you normally would. The retailers you shop with will then make a donation to us, at no extra cost to you. It's as simple as that!

So, if you want to continue supporting our cause, please consider signing up for Easyfundraising today. Your support means the world to us, and together we can make a real difference in our community. Thank you!

The graphic features a man with a beard and dark hair, smiling as he looks at a smartphone. He is holding a credit card in his other hand. Behind him is a large yellow semi-circle. The background is a light cream color. At the bottom, there is a dark teal banner with the Easyfundraising logo and text.

easyfundraising
turns your online shopping
into everyday magic

Support us

 **easyfundraising** You shop, brands donate to us

Home Group



Sharing Life and Faith Together

Every Thursday @ 7.30pm

Please contact

Kevin & Cath Higgs for details.

01291 624026

chepstowpriory@gmail.com

Christmas Wreath Making Workshop 8th November 2024



A great evening was had by all at the Rec Hall making a fabulous sustainable wreath with Rebecca from Greenbeeblooms. Prosecco & nibbles were enjoyed & then after the demonstration wreathmaking began in earnest! Everyone made a fabulous wreath to take home & enjoy over the festive season – all were different expressing everyone's personality & creativity. An enjoyable evening that may well be an annual event!



🎄 Youth Christmas Market 2024 🎄

Some pictures of our talented youngsters at our first Youth Christmas Market. A great evening was had by all! Thank you to all who helped out & to all who came along to support the event & of course a big thank you to our fabulous stallholders!



Pictures & write up of the Christmas Market to follow, but a big thank you to everyone that helped out & attended on such a dreadful day. Well done Shirenewton & surrounding areas for braving Storm Bert to get to us to shop, enjoy a pit stop at our café, partake in a warming mulled wine, or just to meet up with friends & neighbours to socialise!

Welcome to Our Candle Lit
'Christmas Praise' Service

in Shirenewton Church
Sunday 15th December
at 10 o'clock



It's a light service with poems,
readings and the latest
'Recollections',



And plenty of carol singing for all!
With angelic top-sop descants.
There will be a cash collection for
'Médecins sans Frontières'

Mince pies and coffee afterwards
in the Church Room



**Come and join our
Walkabout Christingle!
on Christmas Eve
Tuesday 24th December.
Between 4 and 5 pm**



**What a lovely way to start Christmas!
Make your own Christingle as you walk the
path to Bethlehem.
Meet the kings in Shirenewton Church Room
and collect your orange.
Talk to the Shepherds in the Church porch
and pick up your candle.
See the angels under The Chantry veranda
and choose your sweets and your sheep.
And finally visit Mary and Joseph and the
baby Jesus in the garage, watched over by
two lovely real donkeys! Ahhh!**



Cash Collection to The Children's Society

www.shirenewtonchurch.com

As many of my avid readers know, I regularly reference a tech news source called The Register (www.theregister.com). The daily news item email includes articles ranging from the frivolous to the insanely technical and it is always worth glancing over the headlines prior to a deeper read if appropriate. One news item the other day caught my attention. I've given you a brief summary below but if you want to read it in its entirety visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdhetbp3>

The title is in many ways a sufficient summary: "O2's AI granny knits tall tales to waste scam callers' time".

It seems that the clever techies at O2 have created a virtual AI 'granny' designed to waste scammers time. Furthermore, they have infiltrated the phone number which AI Granny answers onto online 'mugs lists' used by scammers. The mugs lists are cold-call lists scammers expect to be susceptible to their patter and generally available on the dark web. So, the scammer calls AI Granny. AI Granny answers 24/7 and is, apparently, prone to long rambling stories about her family and talks at length about her passion for knitting. In between these ramblings she does enough to keep the scammers thinking they've found perfect prey with AI Granny offering false personal information, including made-up bank details.

Apparently, AI Granny can keep scammers talking for up to 40 minutes. That is a record I've never managed as, after about 10 minutes of wasting their time, I get bored and ask them whether their mother knows that they scam people for a living. This generally results in them hanging up but, frequently, not before they've questioned my parental background in no uncertain terms! When they swear at me, I take that as a win



There was an article in The Times recently which noted that the so called "poisoning" of search results was on the increase. Initially identified in 2020, the aim is to bypass the search engines security mechanisms by providing websites which answer obscure questions which they hope won't attract the attention of the Google spam fighting systems. So, if you ever see a Google message which says something like "there aren't very many good answers for this" and then a couple of either 'sponsored' websites (i.e. paid for advertising) or even a couple of organic results be wary, very wary. If in doubt, use Google's Safe Browsing Site Status tool which allows you to enter specific site URLs and check their status. To find the tool just search for it.

Another recent Times article highlighted a report from UCL and others which raised privacy concerns regarding automatic content recognition (ACR). The UCL summary of the article is here: <https://tinyurl.com/4z96duf7> and covers much the same ground as the Times article.

However, in summary, the claim is that modern Smart TVs are constantly taking snapshots of your screen (i.e. what you are watching) with up to 48,000 snap shots per second. A digital 'fingerprint' of the screenshots is then cross-referenced against databases to create profiles of viewers. This, among other things, allows advertisers to work out whether people are responding to adverts. For example, if you see an advert for band X on your TV and then visit the website, they can assume you are responding to the advert. According to one of the report's co-authors, it also explains why you may see non-related ads. She explained "I don't watch basketball, but I constantly have advertisements for basketball shoes because my partner is constantly watching NBA on television and other devices."

Tracking information to a particular household is fairly easy via your public IP address. If you want to know the IP address you are broadcasting simply type 'what is my IP' into Google. It is apparently possible to opt-out of this ACR data collection but is very difficult as it requires users to opt-out of several advertising and tracking settings with multiple clicks under different sub-settings.

The paper this reporting is based on was called "Watching TV with the second party" and was published in ACM Internet Measurement Conference (IMC) 2024. Apparently, the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) will be issuing new guidance new year. I have to say that this was a big surprise to me. I had no idea that my smart TVs were reporting on my watching habits to advertisers. I have to say, most of the time, I completely ignore the adverts and use my phone to check email. I doubt they report that.

Finally, remember that I'd mentioned NVIDIA in the last couple of articles? Well as www.gizmodo.com so eloquently put it: Move aside $2^{82,589,933}-1$, there's a new prime juggernaut in town. That's right: A researcher and former NVIDIA employee has found $2^{136,279,841}-1$, the largest known prime number, which clears the former record-holder by over 16 million digits. The computer was found using a NVIDIA A100 and confirmed using a NVIDIA H100.

I'm not sure that this new discovery has any material relevance on our lives but it made me smile!

continued on next page...

With that it only remains for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Safe Browsing

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Webmaster of www.shirenewtonchurch.com



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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)
- Shirenewton Sultan (The Square, centre of Shirenewton)
- Earlswood Hall (Earlswood)



(House half way between Blethyn Close and the School in Mynyddbach)
Shirenewton School

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER 2024

Sunday 1 st 11.00-12.00 a.m.	Advent Fair Shirenewton Church Room
Sunday 1 st 3.30-4.30 p.m.	ADVENTure Shirenewton Church Room
Monday 2 nd 7.00 p.m.	Shirenewton Community Council meeting Recreation Centre
Tuesday 3 rd 2.45 p.m.	Advent Course Collingwood, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeryic
Tuesday 3 rd 7.30 p.m.	Advent Course St Christopher's Church Bulwark
Sunday 8 th 6.30 p.m.	Carols round the Christmas tree Shirenewton Sultan carpark
Tuesday 10 th 2.45 p.m.	Advent Course Collingwood, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeryic
Tuesday 10 th 7.30 p.m.	Advent Course St Christopher's Church Bulwark
Tuesday 10 th 7.30 p.m.	SLHS—Itton Church, Naylor Firth Itton Church/The Two Rivers
Wednesday 11 th 2 p.m.	SLHS Archive meeting Shirenewton Church Hall
Wednesday 11 th 7.00 p.m.	Chepstow Choral Society concert Chepstow School Arts Hall
Wednesday 11 th 7.00 p.m.	An evening of Traditional Christmas music St Peter's Church, St Pierre
Wednesday 11 th 7.15 p.m.	WI Christmas Meal The Huntsman Hotel
Saturday 14 th 6.30 p.m.	Christmas Quiz Earlswood and Newchurch West Village Hall
Sunday 15 th 10.00 a.m.	Christmas Praise service St Thomas à Becket Church, Shirenewton
Sunday 15 th 4.30 p.m.	Christingle Service St Peter's, Newchurch
Tuesday 17 th 2.45 p.m.	Advent Course Collingwood, Chapel Lane, Pwllmeryic
Tuesday 17 th 7.30 p.m.	Advent Course St Christopher's Church Bulwark

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DECEMBER (continued)

Thursday 19 th 7.30 p.m.	Mens curry night Shirenewton Sultan
Tuesday 24 th 4.00-5.00 p.m.	Walkabout Christingle Shirenewton
Tuesday 24 th 4.30 p.m.	Christmas Carol Service St Peter's, Newchurch
Wednesday 25 th 10.00 a.m.	Christmas Day Service St Peter's, Newchurch
Thursday 26 th 7.30 p.m.	Ladies curry night Shirenewton Sultan
Friday 27 th 7.30 a.m. 9.00 a.m.	Winter Solstice walk up Grey hill Meet in The Woodland Tavern car park followed by breakfast in Shirenewton Church Hall - booking required.
Tuesday 30 th 7.30 p.m.	Ladies curry night Shirenewton Sultan

JANUARY 2025

Monday 9 th 10.00-11.30 a.m.	Tots and Toddlers St Christopher's Church, Bulwark
Monday 9 th 7.15 p.m.	WI talk "New You, New Year" by Lin Marsh Recreation Centre
Sunday 12 th 3.30 p.m.	Birthday party social Contact Zoe on severn.wye.MAL@gmail.com
Thursday 23 rd 7.30 p.m.	Mens curry night Shirenewton Sultan
Tuesday 28 th 7.30 p.m.	SLHS—The Chepstow Roman Crossing Shirenewton Church Hall—Dr Lynne Davies
Thursday 30 rd 7.30 p.m.	Ladies curry night Shirenewton Sultan

severnwyema.co.uk

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AND EVENTS IN THE WYE MINISTRY AREA

St. Mary's Priory Church, Chepstow

Sunday 1st	11:00 AM	Crib Service
Monday 9th	2:00 PM	Priory Dell Christmas service
Tuesday 10 th	6:00 PM	Priory Dell Christmas service
Friday 13th	7:00 PM	Muppet Christmas Carol screening
Saturday 14 th	4:00 PM	Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 15th	11:00 AM	Christingle Service
Tuesday 24th	11:30 PM	Midnight Mass
Wednesday 25th	10:30 AM	Holy Communion (combined with St.Christopher's)

St.Christopher's Church, Bulwark

(Tuesday 26th Nov)	7:30 PM	Advent course
Tuesday 3rd	7:30 PM	Advent course
Tuesday 10th	7:30 PM	Advent course
Sunday 15th	9:30 AM	Blessing of the Crib
Tuesday 17th	7:30 PM	Advent course
Monday 23rd	12:30 PM	Warm space carols
Tuesday 24th	2:00 PM	Christmas Carols

St Peter's Church, St Pierre

Sunday 1st	11:00 AM	St.Davids winter fayre (St.Pierre hotel)
Wednesday 11th	7:00 PM	Carol Concert with Ceri & Lena
Sunday 15th	3:00 PM	Golfers Carol Service
Friday 20th	5:00 PM	Wedding blessing
Saturday 21st	11:00 AM	Wedding
Tuesday 24th	9:00 PM	"Midnight in Bethlehem" service

St. Tewdric's Church, Mathern

Sunday 15th	9:00 AM	Lessons and Carols
Sunday 22nd	3:00 PM	Crib & carol service
Wednesday 25th	9:00 AM	Christmas Eucharist

St. Andoenus Church, Mounton

Friday 6th	7:00 PM	Christmas Concert with Mathern choir
Tuesday 24th	9:00 PM	"Midnight in Bethlehem" service

St. Peter's Church, Newchurch

Sunday 15th	5:30 PM	Christingle Service
Tuesday 24th	4:00 PM	Carol Service
Wednesday 25th	10:00 AM	Holy Eucharist

St Arvan's Church, St Arvans

Friday 20th 6pm Carols around the tree in churchyard
Sunday 22nd 6:00 PM Nine lessons and carols
Tuesday 24th 11:00 PM Midnight Mass
Wednesday 25th 10:00 AM Christmas morning Family Eucharist

St Deiniol's Church, Itton

Wednesday 11th 10:00 AM Shirenewton Nativity Play
Saturday 14th 7:00 PM St Woolos Sinfonia concert
Wednesday 18th 7:00 PM Nine lessons and carols by candlelight
Wednesday 25th 11:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Holy Cross Church, Kilgwrrwg

Sunday 15th 11:30 AM Kilgwrrwg walk & advent service

St. Mary's Church, Penterry

Tuesday 24th 4:30 PM Carols by candlelight (ticket only)

St. James' Church, Devauden

Tuesday 24th 6:30 PM Carol Service ZP
Wednesday 25th 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist with Carols

St. Thomas a Beckett Church, Shirenewton

Sunday 1st 11:00 AM Advent Fair and refreshments
Sunday 8th 6:00 PM Carols around the tree
Monday 16th 6:00 PM Shirenewton Primary School Carol Service
Tuesday 24th 4:00 PM Family Walking Nativity
Tuesday 24th 11:30 PM Midnight Mass with bell ringing beforehand
Wednesday 25th 10:00 AM Christmas Day Eucharist



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Ministry Area Lay Co-Chair	Hilary Hillier	
Ministry Area Treasurer	Kevin Higgs	

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LCC Treasurer	Graham Lambert	01291 641 175
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	John Burrows	01291 641 845
Organists	Karen Millar	01291 650 521
	James Leney	01291 641 271
Tower Captain	Mike Penney	01291 650 653
Saysell Centre Booking	Glynis MacDonald	01291 641 818
Safeguarding Officer	Andrew Baker	01291 641 925
Church Flowers	Maureen Moody	01291 641 524
Parish Magazine Editor	Bill Clark	01291 641 783
200 Club	Aileen Doggett	01291 641 459

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MP/Monmouth CC & Community Council Representatives

Shirenewton Community Council

Clerk: Jan McLagan

shirenewtoncc@gmail.com

Shirenewton and Mynyddbach Ward

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Keith M Dunn OBE	01291 641152	keith.d@shirenewtoncc.org.uk
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Vacancy		

Earlwood and Newchurch Ward

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Andy Williamson	01291 641451	andy.w@shirenewtoncc.org.uk

MCC for Shirenewton

Louise Brown	07598 979719	louisebrown@monmouthshire.gov.uk
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Earlswood Hope Mr Raymond Jeremiah 01291 641726
Earlswood & Newchurch West Memorial Hall
Chairman Becca Allen 07889762840 chair@earlnew.com
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Earlswood Valley Methodist Chapel

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SHIRENEWTON PARISH MAGAZINE EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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Monthly copies are available at the Church.

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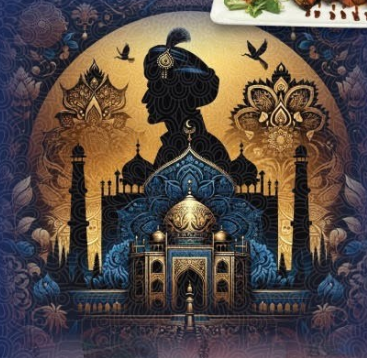
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