



Ermington

Parish Magazine

April 2025

Parish Diary

Event	Time	Place
Store & More open	Mon-Sat 10 – 4, Sun 10 – 1	
The Hub	See pages 4 and 5	
Ivybridge Mobile Library	9.40 – 10.10 a.m. Tuesdays 15 Apr, 20 May	Fawns Close
Pub quizzes	Sundays 6 Apr, 4 May	Crooked Spire

The date of the next Parish Council meeting is on the Parish Council website - <https://www.ermingtonparish.com/>

St Peter and St Paul Ermington

CHURCH SERVICES – April 2025

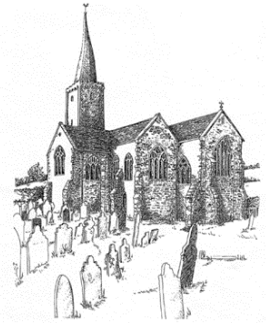
6th - 11am Holy Communion

13th - 11am Morning Service with Local Worship Leaders

20th - EASTER DAY Holy Communion

27th – 11am Family Service with Local Worship Leaders

NB the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting will be held in Church on Sunday 6 April at 12 noon.



HOLY WEEK SERVICES – at Diptford Church

Compline on 14th, 15th, & 16th at 7pm

Maundy Thursday - 17th at 7pm Holy Communion.

The Church Building is open every day for visitors and those seeking a quiet reflective space for private prayer.

Thanks to Mr & Mrs P Daniels

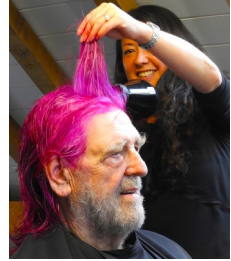
For more information, please go to the website:
www.threeriversmissioncommunity.org.uk

From the Editor

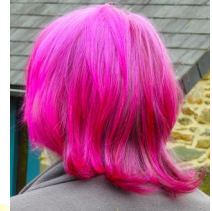
Hello Everyone,

The Great Event of last month was the hair dressing of Big Pete. In order to raise money for Margaret McMillan Nurseries and Marie Curie, he was persuaded by Andrew Savery to wear his long hair rather differently, for a week or so.

The work began in Row Kessell's salon at Fernham Barn. With loving care, Row dyed his hair a tasteful pink, and then blow-dried it into gorgeous waves.



Later, in the pub, Sam began to braid it, plaiting tiny tufts of hair, and fixing them with plastic clips.



This was a slow process, and after an



hour or so she was joined by Natalie, Claire, and



Lynne. Even together they spent another hour slaving over Peter's hair.

The result was wild. Will he survive like this for a week? We shall see.

All the best,

Adam



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Activities in The Hub

Situated conveniently in our community shop, The Hub is a perfect space for hosting classes, clubs, and various other group activities.

To find out more and make a booking, please call: 01548 831111 or email communityshop.ermington@gmail.com.

Weekly activities are listed under What's On, on the website: www.ermington-shop.com

Hub activities: 7 - 13 April

Monday

9.30 - 10.30 am Beginner's Yoga with Cait.

6.45 - 7.45 pm Yoga with Cait.

8.00 - 9.30 pm Ukulele group.

Tuesday

2.30 - 3.30 pm Men's Yoga with Cait.

Wednesday

10.00 - 12.00 pm Art Class with Christine Pascoe.

Thursday

2.00 - 4.00 pm Spinning group.

6.30 - 9.30 pm Ermington Ladies group.

Friday

9.30 - 10.30 am Pilates Core Strength workshop with Karen.

Sunday

7.00 - 10.00 am Cycling club.



Please Help Ermington Church

Just letting you know that Ermington Church is now registered with **easyfundraising**, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 8,000 retailers will donate to us when you use **easyfundraising** to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself, and at the same price you would pay if purchasing direct.

These donations really mount up, and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE, and takes only a moment. There are no catches for you, and it is straightforward.

To sign up, go to our **easyfundraising** page at:

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ermington-church/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=gs-email1

Select 'Sign up and support this cause'

Provide your email address, password, and name.

Continue to add the Donation reminder. If this does not work, Return to the **easyfundraising** – Ermington home page, select the 'Extension' box and then the 'Get' box for each browser you normally use (e.g. Google Chrome) (see 3 below). That is all that is required from you.

Or you can get to the church's **easyfundraising** page by using this QR code:



EGG HUNT
EASTER MONDAY
PLAYIING FIELD 11 AM

When you next shop on line, there are three ways of doing so:

Go to the Ermington Church **easyfundraising** website and either select a brand name or a category.

Download the **easyfundraising** App on to your phone (it is free) and use the app as for 1 above.

If you do neither of the above but you have loaded the 'Browser extension' known as the 'Donation Reminder', when you select a brand, but not via the **easyfundraising** website, then a drop-down donation reminder will appear. Click on the 'click to get a donation' reminder, and follow the further easy instructions. You will be shopping using the brand but via the **easyfundraising** website, thereby ensuring Ermington Church receives the donation from the brand. This is probably the most effective method, as it involves the least memory and initiative.

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The Crooked Spire Shannon Selby

Your local community village pub, The Crooked Spire, is the heart of the village; a place for everyone to come and enjoy a drink and feel welcome, as soon as you walk through the doors. We have had the addition of our new pizza kitchen, where you can enjoy freshly made pizza and sides Tuesday through to Saturday 5:30 - 9 pm. Either eat in or call up to place an order for collection. With daily specials, there is something for everyone in the family to enjoy, whether you are gluten free, veggie, or vegan.

If you have a celebration or want to organize a group



gathering, we would be more than happy to accommodate you.

Either call us, or drop a message on Facebook.

At The Crooked Spire we are a community-based and led pub, and we want everyone to be able to come in and feel like they are in their home away from home. Whether you are just stopping by for one drink or a few more, we want the pub

to stay here for many many years to come, and now more than ever we want you to use it before you lose it. Support your local village pub today and it will be here for the future.

We look forward to seeing all old and new faces walk through the doors.

Thank you for supporting your local village pub; we need you to use it so you don't lose it.



Monday-
Thursday 5-
11pm
Friday-
Saturday 4-
12pm
Sunday 4:30-
10:30pm
Kitchen open
Tuesday-
Saturday 5:30-
9pm

What's New at the Store? Nicky Scutt

If you haven't been to the store for a while, probably the first change you will notice is the smart new aprons our volunteers are wearing. Our old grey ones were beginning to look very tired, with the logo disappearing in parts as a result of regular washing.

Rose and I were in the shop discussing repurposing the old aprons into shopping bags, when poor Maggie walked in. Before she knew what was happening, she was walking out of the shop with an armful of old grey aprons and a regular appointment with her sewing machine!

Here is one of the many bags she has made. After the first five or so bags, she did ask how many aprons there were; we had to admit that there are about thirty. Bit by bit she is womanfully making them into bags and then taking them up to the shop where they are being sold almost as soon as they arrive.



So for £5.00 you can purchase a limited-edition bag, and do your shopping here knowing you are supporting the store and recycling. Huge thanks to Maggie for all the time and effort she is putting into these. She is an absolute star. The other unsung hero in this story is Barbara (Granny) Jones who knits soft toys for sale to raise funds for the Store. Last year she raised about £500. We have used this money to purchase the new aprons. Thank you both, you wonderful women.

The photo opposite stars Ashley and Imogen showing off the new aprons and the new bags, but also pointing out some of the new stock we have got in for Mothers Day and Easter. There are some retro sweeties, biscuits, and chocolates in presentation packaging, ideal for small presents.



We have also just started stocking beautiful beef produced by Cows in Clover, a local farm in South Brent. We are starting small with mince, shin, and other less-expensive cuts. Please come and try it and tell us what you think. We have been told that it is delicious. If you like it, you can order directly from us and support this local business and your community store at the same time. Very shortly, we will also be stocking pork products from another local farm so come and see for yourselves.

Meanwhile, Chris has been doing a sterling job, making sure the gallery and shelves are filled with beautifully handcrafted items from local producers. Not only does this make the cafe area look beautiful, they make excellent gifts for friends and family. So before you go on line, come to the store, have a coffee and a proper look at all the craft and art. You will have a far more enjoyable and sensually satisfying experience.

Our little cafe continues to offer great light bites and coffee at very reasonable prices. It's a great inclusive space where people always comment on how friendly and welcoming it is.

The cafe also provides take-aways; so if you need something to go, give us a ring and order what you want, and we will have it ready for you.

We are continuing to try and encourage clubs and groups to use the Hub. It is good for the Shop and Cafe having the hub in use, but most of all it's a great space. Where else can you go and get coffee served to you while you are in your workshop? Please do your bit to promote this part of the business. The more income we can generate from this arm of the community business, the more we will be able to improve our offers to our community and others.

Finally, all you newbies in the parish, come and be a part of this wonderful community venture by buying shares in this Community Benefit Society. One share of £20.00 will make you a member. You will be kept informed on the progress and will have voting rights at the annual members' meeting. You can become a member of the management committee, or play all sorts of other roles to keep this business profitable and healthy. It is important that as people move away or die, we keep a strong membership. We will be hosting some shared coffee mornings, but in the meantime, if you would like to join, just ask at the shop and we will gladly enrol you.

Obviously, we have to keep the business healthy and profitable so that it survives, but every bit as important to us is ensuring that all our customers leave feeling better than they came in.

One final note.... A huge Thank you to the anonymous benefactor or benefactors, who paid for all of the volunteers and contributors to the Store to have a party at the Crooked Spire. This was a wonderful and generous gesture. We all give up a lot of time for this Community venture, and we do so willingly, but it really is nice when it's recognised and rewarded.

Thank you from us all.

Flete Estate Farming

A talk by John Mildmay-White

John Mildmay-White read Mechanical Engineering at University and then worked abroad for a time. Before he returned to the Estate in 2016, his father Anthony had been running an organic farm of 900 acres with beef, sheep, and vegetables. John reduced the land he was to farm to 300 acres.



The remainder he left to be farmed by tenants.

He realized that to farm 300 acres organically would not be viable, and he therefore stopped trying. Also, because he had not had formal training at Agricultural College, he was free to explore his own methods of farming. He has a beef herd fed on four grasses and eleven herbal lays. He does not feed concentrates to his herd and he uses no pesticides or herbicides.

He learnt about the 3 P's of sustainability being People, Profit, and Planet:

Sustainability – the Impact Trio

- People
- Planet
- Profit

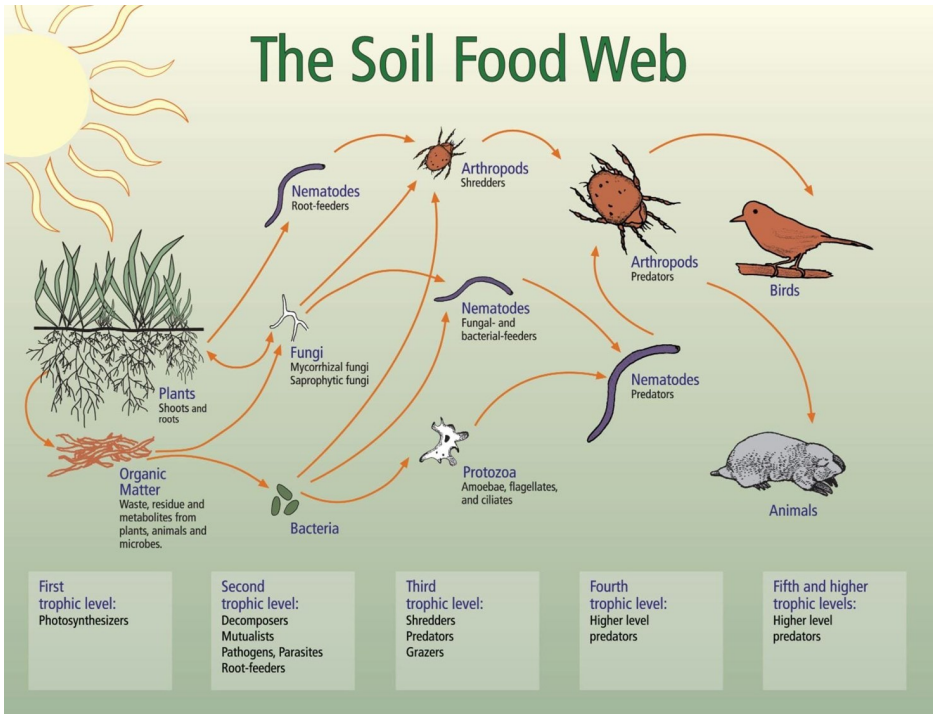
5 Principles of RegenAg

1. Minimising soil disturbance
2. Maximising biodiversity
3. Keeping soil covered
4. Maintain a living root
5. Integrate livestock

Holistic Management Loop

- Plan
- Monitor
- Control
- Replan

He wanted a low-cost operation with minimum capital expenditure on buildings and machinery. His cattle are outside for 365 days a year, and the narrow lanes on his Estate are unsuitable for today's large agricultural machinery.



The Soil Food Web shows what healthy soil consists of, with healthy plants, variable length roots, organic matter, fungi, bacteria, nematodes, protozoa, arthropods, and birds and animals etc. He has a fascination with the fertility and structure of the soil.

He has no employees; he farms it all on his own. He has local contractors, when he needs them, who are very reliable. He has no interest in expensive machinery that lies dormant for much of the year. He is making a profit, which is steadily increasing to the level that he is looking for.

Mental health is also vital to him. He gets immense pleasure from increasing wildlife on the farm and the entire Estate. This wildlife also naturally controls vermin.

There are numerous challenges, but he is always learning in conversations with other like-minded farmers. He has been inspired by the regenerative farming at Knepp.

Planet

- Biodiversity
- Water management
- Carbon sequestration

Profit

- Low capital outlay
- Low overheads
- Capacity for enterprise stacking
- Resilient system
- Public money for public goods

People

- Affordable, healthy food
- Supply Local
- Farm visits
- Collaboration
- Public benefits
- Personal mental health





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Growing Tips Ro Hughes

Gardening is all about our interaction with our natural world, and our imposition on nature of what we would like to see and grow. In our own plots, large or small, we are at the forefront in dealing with the effects of the changing climate and disappearing biodiversity.

We witness the changing weather patterns in our gardening timetable, adapting each year to different conditions, just as much as our native flora and fauna. In addition, our gardens have become ever more important refuges and backup larders for many insects and birds. The variety of flowering plants we grow enhances the naturally available pollen for bees and butterflies, and the diversity of shrubs and trees provide habitat for many insects and birds.

So what we all do, and how we do things collectively, really does have a bigger impact in helping to maintain biodiversity and natural balance. We can choose not to use harmful chemicals, or not to buy peat based compost, choose plants with open flowers for pollinators. We can choose to garden working with nature, not just imposing our designs or low maintenance desires.

Last year for example, was a very 'sluggish' year. Ground beetles are actually one of the main predators for slugs, rather than frogs and hedgehogs, and the beetles need habitat close by. Being tidy and having neat rows of vegetables and tidy flowerbeds removes the habitat, and makes it very easy for the pests to find our precious crops. Restoring the balance improves things all round.

This is none the less an exciting time, seeing the world springing back into life. Why not try mixing up your flowers and vegetables, leaving edges for natural balance, and planting companion flowering plants in and among, both for pollen and predators? Whatever you grow, enjoy the return of the sun and warmth, and make the most of the Spring!

At Ermington Environmental, we believe that everyone has a role to play in protecting the planet, and we're always inspired by the fresh perspectives and boundless imagination of young people. Recently, two young writers from our community, Harriet Taylor and Sienna O'Gara, shared their thoughts on the environment, and the challenges we face today.

These pieces – one reflective and hopeful, the other imaginative and action-packed – give us a glimpse into how children view environmental issues, and how they dream of making a difference. They remind us that even small actions can lead to meaningful change, and that the future is in safe hands if we nurture the passion and creativity of the next generation.

We hope you enjoy these wonderful contributions from two bright young minds and that their words inspire you to take action – no matter how big or small – to protect our planet.

What Does Being Environmental Mean to Me?

By Harriet Taylor, Age 10, Year 6, Ermington Primary School

My name is Harriet, and I'm ten years old. Like many of my friends I worry about the environment, climate change, and where it might lead in the future. For a long time we have known that the climate is changing, and now we see more storms, more fires, more floods, and more droughts than we have experienced before. Habitats are dying and animals and humans are finding it harder to survive. Big changes are happening and even mountains are moving (I read about the Matterhorn mountain in the alps which is on the border of Italy and Switzerland and how the glacier there is melting and how the countries' borders are now moving too).

I want to know how I can help to change things, and want the adults around me to help us change, and for my classmates and other children also to want to change things for the better.



At school we learn about our planet Earth and how it's changing and how we can prevent bad things happening. We learn about the wonderful variety of wildlife, and I want to be able to see these things for real myself – and don't want them to disappear. I want to make sure we save all of this for generations to come too.

Sometimes it seems such a massive problem that it makes me feel sad and a bit overwhelmed. I want grown-ups to talk about the solutions as much as we talk about the problem, and help us develop solutions. I think if together we work really hard, and use our imaginations, we will be able to change the course of climate change.

I feel hopeful when I read about these solutions. I read about researchers finding out that European bison being reintroduced to Romania was having a really good impact. They reduce carbon dioxide by pressing down on soil as they eat, preventing it from being released into our atmosphere. They also boost plant growth by spreading seeds and nutrients in their poo!

Every day we can make choices that count. In our everyday lives, we can: turn off lights when we don't need them, turn off screens when we're not using them, reduce, reuse, and recycle. We never see plastic straws anymore, and now use paper ones or even metal ones, we have created routines for recycling the rubbish from our homes; supermarkets make different packaging and we have more renewable energy rather than burning fossils fuels.

I hope we all keep on trying every day to do our best to improve how we treat the planet. I wish good luck to our future!

EcoSpark the environmental Hero!

By Sienna O'Gara, age 10, year 5, Ermington Primary School

In the little town of Ermington lived a little girl called Ellie Evans. She was ten years old, and loved to play on the swings and ride her bike. One day, Ellie decided to go to the park.

She went to the park by bike, and opened the gate, but she couldn't believe her eyes. The park was filled with rubbish and waste. It smelled terrible, and Ellie nearly fainted. She was made of tougher stuff than that, though. Ellie told everyone and asked for help. She even wrote to her local MP. Ellie didn't know yet, but she was about to organize the litter pick of all time.

Ellie went home. She waited for days and days to see if anyone would clean it up. She waited for a day, but nothing happened. She waited for a week, but nothing happened. After a month, Ellie decided to take action. All she needed now, all she needed was a litter packer, a lot of bags, and a superhero name. Ellie Evans would become EcoSpark!

EcoSpark took her litter picker to the park. She was just about to start picking when she saw some spray paint. This was the mark of Pollutara. EcoSpark was devastated! Pollutara was a supervillain from the city, who used litter to show her power over the natural world. Another pile of litter fell from the sky. **'Pollutara, I know you're up there!'** yelled EcoSpark.

When somebody from the village saw that little Ellie was brave enough to take on Pollutara all by herself, they came to help. Before she knew it, the whole village of Ermington had come to help. And together, they defeated Pollutara. It was just because little Ellie Evans was brave enough.

Ellie definitely couldn't have been able to do it by herself. It was because everyone's efforts that they got it done. Ellie will continue to help, but this time she really needs your help. All you need to do is pick up a litter picker and think of a superhero name. If you do that, you could be the new EcoSpark.



A Note from Ermington Environmental

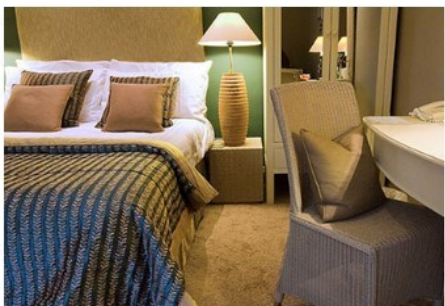
Both Harriet and Sienna remind us of something vital: environmental change starts with individuals, grows with teamwork, and thrives with creativity. Whether through everyday actions, like Harriet describes, or by imagining yourself as a superhero like Sienna's EcoSpark, we all have the ability to make a difference.

If you're inspired by their words, why not take a moment today to think about how you can contribute to a greener future? Every small step counts—and together, we can create a brighter, cleaner world for generations to come.



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Also found in...

The Michelin Guide, The Good Hotel Guide, Alastair Sawday's 'Special Places,' Signpost Hotel Guide, and The Trenchermans Guide

Ivybridge U3A

Ivybridge U3A is one branch of a nationwide organization. If you would like to meet people of like mind, enjoying the same activities as you, then perhaps you would like to join the U3A. This would give you the opportunity to make new friends with people who share your interests. There are about 40 groups, ranging from Walking on Dartmoor, Learning a foreign language, Singing folk music, and Playing the ukulele. There are groups for Bridge and Scrabble, Singing for pleasure, Local History, and even Wine appreciation. You can find details of the groups if you look on line under Ivybridge U3A.

Ancient civilizations Art for fun Book groups Bridge Canasta
Chair yoga Creative writing Cryptic crosswords Dartmoor history
walking Day trips Drama Etymology Film club Folk club French
improvers Geology German conversation Guitar club
History of modern Britain Litter picking Local history Music
appreciation Natural history Needlecraft Play reading Poetry
appreciation Quiz Science & technology Scrabble Singing for
pleasure Spoon carving Theology, philosophy, and psychology
Understanding dementia Ukulele Wine appreciation

There are also monthly meetings when speakers give talks on various subjects.

All this would cost you just £18 a year.

If you would like to join, either come to one of our monthly meetings, upstairs at the Watermark, on the third Monday of every month, or contact our Membership Secretary, Ritsaert von Oven arvonoven@icloud.com or on 07780 150750.

Ivybridge u3a General Meeting

Monday 14 April, 2.00pm at The Watermark Centre

Guest speaker, Mike Haywood, will talk on *The Mirror, the invention that changed our perception of self forever.*

Mike has a growing reputation as a marine and portrait artist.

Parish Council Report Denis Onley

Two issues have dominated our discussions for the last couple of months.

Firstly, the planning application for a pet cremation business on the Industrial Estate in the village. The Parish Council objected to this because of its proximity to housing, and on environmental grounds. However, South Hams District Council (SHDC) approved the application. We were told there would be conditions applied to ensure it operated only Monday to Fridays, daytimes, and it would be subject to Government licensing and Environmental Health operating standards. Our thanks to Cllr. Robert Owens for representing our views at the Planning Committee.

Secondly, the Devolution White Paper for England has taken up much recent discussion at Devon County Council (DCC) and SHDC. There will be numerous options put to the Government by Plymouth City Council, DCC, and district councils, ranging from Ermington joining Plymouth, to various smaller unitary councils, comprising several district councils, with or without Torbay. The impact the changes will have on our Parish Council is still unclear, and it is likely to be the end of the year before a preferred option is selected by the Government.

Thank you to those who have completed the local Transport Survey in the last magazine, we are now awaiting the results.

We agreed to support the Village Fund request for a contribution towards planters and hanging baskets, easter eggs, and the summer fair, subject to the completion of a grant application form detailing the costs. Also to hold discussions to move towards the annual firework display becoming a free-to-attend event with quieter fireworks, funded by the Parish Council.

Proposals from Ermington Environmental (EE) were discussed: for the Parish Council to purchase the nature area public open space (POS) below The Spires from Barrett's David Wilson Homes (BDW), to reinstate the pathways in the SHDC-owned playing field, and join this to a new nature trail in the POS area. We agreed to find out more about the planning obligations attached to the POS, and discuss the options with EE.

Councillors have agreed to provide a temporary toilet at Ermington playing field/park for the summer.

We heard that the repairs to the clock chiming mechanism (funded by the Parish Council) were completed.

Councillors also agreed to support the South Hams Ramblers proposal for a 'South Hams Way': a 100-mile footpath route around the South Hams. The route will pass along the Erme Valley Trail, using footpaths from Keaton Bridge to Sequers Bridge.

There is currently one vacancy on the Council to bring it to its full membership of ten councillors. We are therefore still seeking to co-opt one new councillor; all are welcome to apply. We are particularly keen to encourage parishioners with a diverse range of backgrounds and skills. If you wish to apply please contact Teresa, our Parish Clerk.

The invited speaker at our ANNUAL PARISH MEETING on Tuesday 6 May 2025 at 7.00 pm will be from the Four Rivers Dementia Alliance.

Please do speak to any councillor with any parish issues, or join our Open Forums at each meeting, or contact us via our website, email, or post.

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

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- Eco-cleaning

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Ermington Store and More

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10-12 NOON



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Denise Ward, Guinness World Record Swimmer

On weekday mornings I go swimming in the pool at Ivybridge Leisure Centre, and chug for ten lengths up and down the slow



lane, along with several regular friends. On most days the fast lane next door is occupied by an amazing woman, who goes there five or six times a week, and swims either two or three miles (that's 128 or 192 lengths). She surges up and down at five times my speed, and does a somersault turn at each end, hardly seeming to draw breath.

Denise Ward was born and raised in Accrington, and (like her brothers) learned to swim when she was three years old. As a teenager, she went swimming before and after school, and joined various squads and clubs. In due course she won several local and national awards.

After studying mathematics and PE at Chester University, she married a naval man, and they came down to Devon to be near Dartmouth Naval College. She became a maths teacher, which meant she could easily get a job if he was moved around.

A fellow swimmer, Lindsey Walke, persuaded her to go and swim in the sea, and at first Denise swam behind, hoping that Lindsey would clear a way through the jellyfish and other hazards. Recently they have swum from Aveton Gifford down the river Avon to Bigbury-on-Sea, and round Burgh Island.

Then came a fantastic opportunity; would she like to take part in a Plymouth Open-Water Swimmers relay swim from Land's End to the Isles of Scilly? That's a distance of some 28 miles, with nasty tides and currents in between. Denise was delighted.



On 19 September 2022, six swimmers congregated in Falmouth at 7 am, loaded their gear on a waiting boat, and sailed round to Land's End. There, at 9 am, Denise, the fastest swimmer of the six, climbed off the boat and swam to shore, heaving herself out

on a rock to prove they had started on land, and getting scratched in the process.

The rules were strict. After starting on land, Denise had to swim for an hour. The next swimmer had to get in the



water, swim round behind Denise, without touching her, and then Denise was allowed to swim to the boat, climb out, and change out of her wet costume into a dry one, ready for her next turn, several hours later.

Other rules said they were allowed to wear swimming caps and ear plugs, but not nose clips, and specified that the swimming costumes should be short. All this was monitored by a representative, on the boat, of the British Long-Distance Swimming Association.



The water was rather choppy when Denise first got in, but by the end of the first hour it had improved, and they were treated to a wonderful calm day. The organizer, Neil Brinkworth (with Denise, left), said 'The conditions on the day were unreal; they were the conditions every channel

swimmer dreams of – a slight breeze and a clear silky blue sea, with hardly any waves or swell.'

Each of them swam beside the boat, which ensured they were going in the right direction; that became all the more important in the evening, when it got dark. There was plenty of food on board: from home-made flapjacks to huge tubs of pasta, and the swimmers really needed to keep up their energy levels. This was the first time they had all swum together, but the bonding was excellent; they certainly laughed a lot.

Two of the swimmers were accompanied by dolphins. During her second swim, Lindsey said that after diving under the boat, they came up underneath her and swam beside her, nudging her.



By the time they got near the Scillies, night had fallen. The swimmers then carried two lights, one on their heads and one (flashing) on the back of their swimsuits. This meant that the people on the boat could see where the swimmer was, and also in which direction he or she was swimming. The spotlight on the boat meant that when the

final swimmer, Jacob Roberts, approached the rocks, he could have a chance of avoiding injury when he climbed out.

As he emerged from the water, there was a lot of shouting and cheering. It turned out they had swum the distance in 13 hours, 17 minutes, and 29 seconds, beating the previous record by more than four hours. Prosecco and rum were consumed with enthusiasm.



Andrew Butler (swim verifier from BLDSA), Jacob Roberts, Denise, Mike Goodman, Neil Brinkworth, Amanda Holland, and Lindsey Walke.

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The A3121 Speed Limit

Parishioners may be wondering what the current position is about the proposed reduction of the speed limit on the A3121 from 40mph to 30mph.

The history is that with the help of our County Councillor, Dan Thomas, and following representations made, the Cabinet of the County Council, made up of elected members, approved the reduction in speed. One of the conditions, however, was that certain engineering works would need to be carried out to complete the project. These works referred to signage and other steps that would be needed to alert motorists to the 30mph limit. These works would need to be paid for by the Parish Council

Following this decision, a report was commissioned from Callidus, a company who had dealt with similar reports locally in other parishes. This report resulted in three different engineering proposals being suggested, and your Council hoped to move forward with the first proposal. This was relatively inexpensive compared with the other two, which involved sums which your council considered to be disproportionate.

A meeting was then held with the unelected officers of the County Council who agreed the report was good, but were not prepared to endorse the first proposal suggested, and wanted one of the other expensive proposals to be implemented.

That is where matters stand at the moment, despite our efforts. If we are successful in getting an agreement to proceed on the basis of the first option, the Council will seek the views of Parishioners before committing to any proposal and expense. Your Council considers the first proposal in the Callidus report to be entirely adequate in warning motorists of the 30mph limit.

While we are all fortunate to live in a democracy, the wheels of bureaucracy sometimes move extremely slowly, but your Council will continue to try and resolve matters.

The Silent Threat to Our Ecosystems: Himalayan Balsam

Despite its gentle name, Himalayan balsam is a densely-growing weed with pink and red stems, that suffocates any native grasses and plants in its path. Its seed pods explode when ripe, and can shoot seeds up to seven meters away.

Himalayan balsam requires minimal light, and can grow in various habitats. However, it tends to overshadow other plants, and when it dies back in autumn, it leaves the banks of waterways bare, and vulnerable to erosion.

The widespread presence of Himalayan balsam makes control efforts daunting in many locations. Producing around 800 seeds per plant, it spreads easily from neighbouring land and waterways; so it's no wonder that it dominates so many areas.

Timing of Himalayan balsam growth stages and treatment application												
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Growth stages: approximate - species, weather and altitude dependent												
Primary germination												
Secondary germination												
Seedling plant growth												
Maturity (max. height)												
Flowering												
Seed production												
Die back												
Treatment application – physical												
Cutting & pulling												
Treatment application – biological (host and non-specific)*												
Grazing												

However, it's quite easy to control, using a method called balsam bashing. This means pulling the shallow-rooted plant up, before it flowers in June. This can eradicate the plant from an area within a few years.

Now this is where you, your family, friends, and neighbours come in, helping as individuals, or by volunteering on Balsam Bashing days, which will be announced closer to the time.

The Himalayan Balsam bashing season begins in March and lasts until June, when the plants can be seen to be about to seed. Bashing after this point can be done, but it must be done in a way that will not scatter the seeds. It may be better to leave off bashing at this point, except on organized Bashing Days, when advice will be given.

If you wish to add your name to the list for notification on the results on the Erme from Sequers Bridge to the Sea; for more information; or if you would like to join an organized balsam bash, see bottom of page 38.

So, when you're out walking and you see Balsam, don't be afraid. Follow the guidelines below and get bashing, or you can help us track the spread of this and other invasive species on the Non-Native Species data mapper tool for mapping Balsam on the Erme: <https://innsmapper.org/faq>

How to Remove Himalayan Balsam

You don't need to be a gardening maestro to remove Balsam, nor do you need specialist equipment or a licence; just some good old elbow grease and a love for the great outdoors. Most



landowners are happy for you to remove this invasive species, but you should ensure you don't trespass on any private property, or cause any damage.

Here are our top five tips for a bashing day out

1. As a safety precaution, it is always recommended that you **wear suitable gear that you don't mind getting mucky**. This includes a decent pair of gardening gloves. You will be using your hands a lot. And once your balsam location is mapped, good, tough gloves will help you reach it more easily, clearing any hazards like brambles, litter, and nettles along the way.



2. Uproot: So you've identified your Balsam. Now it's time to clear it. Grab the stem from its lowest point, giving it a sturdy tug. Observe that the plant not only comes out of the ground quite easily, but the root joins it too.

3. Breaking the Root: With the Balsam in your hand, snap the root of the plant just below its lowest 'knobble' point. Doing this will ensure it doesn't re-root itself. This will save you finding yourself in the same place, doing it all over again next year.

4. Pile Up: With each plant you pull up, start to build a pile so that the process of natural degradation can begin. If you are near a public footpath, for the next few months, please make sure that the pile isn't blocking access for passers-by.

5. Return to the site: It's always good to revisit the site after a few weeks to see any signs of re-growth, or areas you may have missed. At this point, you'll notice that the piles of Balsam have dried out and are no longer active. And you'll know you did a good job.

If anyone in Ermington wishes to get involved, please let Ellen Hill know, because EE will be coordinating an Ermington Bashing party: Ellenh12@hotmail.com

Six Inches of Soil

Not the most exciting of titles for a film, you might think, if you have little interest in the land. But if you are of an environmental inclination it is bread-and-butter stuff. We are told we have simply forty harvests left. Yes, we are depleting our soil to such a degree that it is capable of supporting only that number of harvests. Naturally this varies across the world, with some more and others rather less. It should make us all sit up.

The film is about how precious our topsoil is for producing crops. Since the Second World War, the priority of governments has been to require farmers to produce sufficient food for the people. They believed that chemical fertilizers would increase crop yields, and herbicides and insecticides would kill weeds and insects that reduce the crops.

The film, by contrast, was about Regenerative Farming. In theory this allows the soil, water, nutrients, and natural assets to regenerate themselves, as opposed to the traditional approach which depletes these natural resources. We saw a variety of farmers who practised this on different sizes and types of farms. It was plain-speaking, and generally the younger generation wanted to challenge the methods of older ones. This regenerative method is about minimal soil disturbance (shallow ploughing if at all), keeping the soil covered with vegetation, maintaining living roots in the soil, maximizing varieties of plants, and including livestock.

We heard from farmer Nick Toms how he farms at Westlake. He was once organic, but found the Soil Association conditions too prescriptive. Nonetheless he avoids chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides as much as possible, as do Harry Pinsent and John Mildmay-White.

Many interesting points were aired in discussion after the film. Some focused on food, rather than the soil, but for those who do not farm or have gardens this is an important topic. The UK eats the highest consumption of ready-made meals in Europe. Some are healthy with good quality ingredients, but many have all sorts of additives, which enhance taste at the expense of nutritional value. Guy Singh-Watson (Riverford) is funding Henry Dimbleby's project to go into Devon Primary Schools to educate children about food and cooking. Hopefully this will foster an interest they will never lose.

We talked about Supermarkets' domination of farmers. The film showed one farmer doing her best to sell produce at a market.

I was asked what books there were on this subject. There is a book which goes with the film at £25 – a bit expensive. I have bought one called *Healing the Land* by Jake Fiennes, who is the Environmental Advisor on Lord Leicester's Estate at Holkham in Norfolk, which covers a mere 25,000 acres. This book is just under £16. It is fascinating how he is introducing Regenerative Farming to the Estate. There is also the book *Dirt to Soil* by Gabe Brown (£16).

Although not mentioned at the evening, the great Charles Darwin had a long-standing fascination with earthworms. He wrote 'It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world as have these lowly organized creatures.' The great gardener and writer Christopher Lloyd agreed, and by his reckoning the earthworm is number one. 'Wherever earthworms plough, people thrive. When worms perish, societies collapse.'

A startling fact is that the 2004 survey of worms in the kitchen garden at Down House, Darwin's home for much of his life, found a little over 700 worms per square metre. That equates to seven million worms per hectare (approx 2 ½ acres) with a total weight of 2 ½ tonnes. The weight of worms in organic farm soils may easily exceed the weight of the farmers' livestock.

Finally some notes from Nick Toms. Farmland area in the UK is now the smallest in 40 years. This breaks down as :-

- ~ cropped area down 15.8 per cent
- ~ cereal area down 26.2 per cent
- ~ potato area down 41.2 per cent
- ~ other horticultural area down 45.6 per cent
- ~ livestock down 14.2 per cent
- ~ uncropped arable land up 600 per cent (Much uncropped arable land is due to farmers joining environmental schemes.)
- ~ woodland area doubling to 400,000 hectares
- ~ since 2010, 14,000 hectares of farmland have been lost to development.

It has been suggested that arable farmers make up 85 per cent of those taking land out of food production.

Belated thanks to everyone who brought delicious food on the night. We can be pleased that we know the value of good food and home cooking.

Thanks to Ermington Environmental and Modwag for helping to put on this first joint venture. Particularly Steve Deeming for organizing the excellent film, and to Ellen Hill for the publicity. It was exciting to see 35 people, which was a great response.

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VACANCY		

Ermington Parish Council

One Vacancy



As a Parish Councillor you can become a voice for our community and represent the interests of Ermington Parish. The main requirements are enthusiasm and determination. There are plenty of training opportunities which are paid for by the Parish Council.

Parish council meetings normally take place on the first Tuesday of each month (except August) at 7.30 pm in the Reading Rooms. You may think that you are too busy to spare the time, but even the busiest people can usually attend a monthly meeting and it's fine if you have to miss the occasional one.

There are only a few rules to stand for election. You must:

- be at least 18 years of age
- be a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of the European Union
- be a registered elector of Ermington Parish; or during the whole of the last 12 months occupied land or other premises in Ermington Parish (as owner or tenant); or during the last 12 months your principal or only place of work has been in Ermington Parish; or you have lived in Ermington Parish for the whole of the last 12 months or within 3 miles of it.

If you have any questions the Parish Clerk can be contacted by email - ermingtonparishclerk@gmail.com or telephone 01752 893691, or Chair of Ermington Parish Council, Denis Onley—denis.onley.epc@gmail.com.

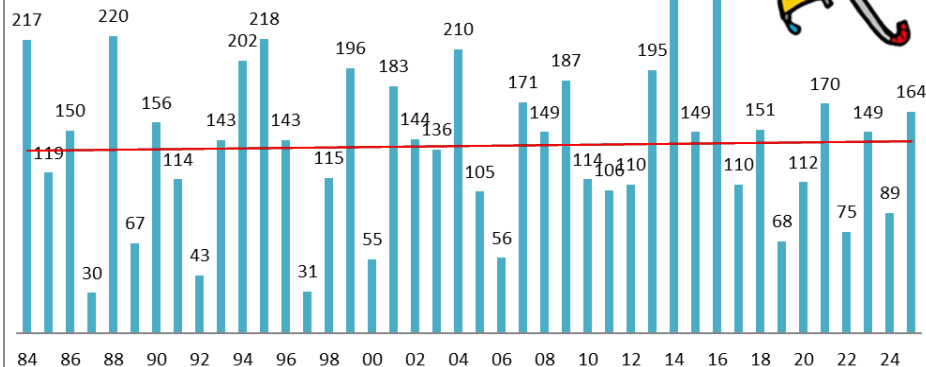
Ermington Parish Council's Co-Option Policy can be viewed on the parish council website at <https://www.ermingtonparish.com/council-documents/>. If you would like a printed copy of the Co-Option Policy, please contact the Parish Clerk by email ermingtonparishclerk@gmail.com or telephone 01752 893691.

Application forms to be submitted to the Parish Clerk by noon on 1 April 2025.

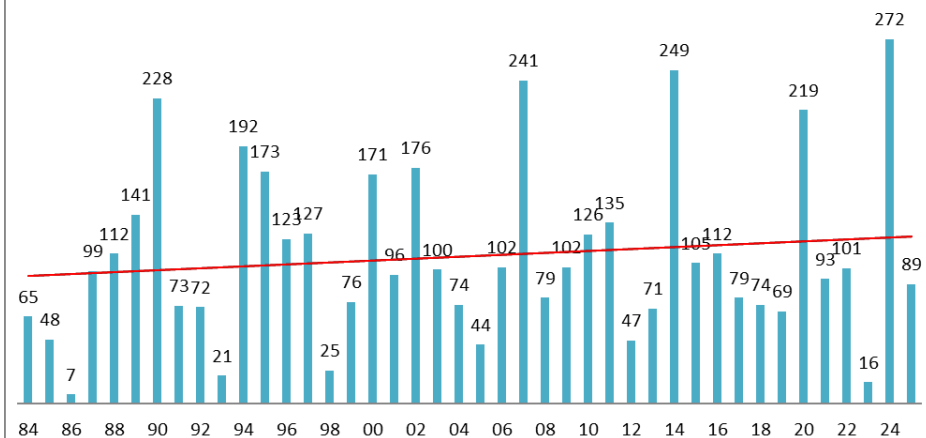
Rainfall Records by Frances Bromfield

Contrary to the 2024 figures, this year it was a wetter January, with 164mm, but a drier February, with just 89mm; though taken together, the two months were average. Half of the January rain fell in the first ten days, with the balance mainly in the last ten days. February started fairly dry with 20mm up to 18 February, then 10mm on 19 February and 53mm over the three days 23-25 February.

Rainfall for January from 1984-2025



Rainfall for February from 1984-2025



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I was very moved by the article written by Jill in last month's magazine. At my age, it's inevitable that I am invited to more and more funerals of friends and family members. Of course there are always people who are able to say a few words about the deceased person, and of course those words are always positive, and I often think, 'What a pity they can't hear this'.

By having the courage to write that article, Jill not only shows her courage, but gives us the remarkable opportunity to take a novel chance to say NOW how we all feel about Jill (and I include Phil in this). I am quite sure that Jill only wanted to share the information with us and never would she expect a response. I thank her for a golden opportunity to 'say a few words' in response to her *Know It All*, and I know that I will be speaking on behalf of so many people who love and respect her.

I have a very pleasant memory of Jill sitting patiently teaching me to overcome my fear of any IT, and learning how to operate the computer, and that was many years ago. Then there is the Community Shop and Hub to which Jill gave so much time, expertise, and encouragement, to make sure that the project got off the ground and had a viable future.

She had Hashers as many of her friends. Several had camper vans and often parked outside our house. Of course they were entitled to park there, but they always had that 'permission', because Phil and Jill would ask us if we minded. Every one of those Hashers had the highest regard for Jill and Phil (isn't it lovely that their names just match perfectly?) and they raved about her ability - and we hadn't even asked for their opinion.

I don't want anyone – especially Jill and Phil – to feel uncomfortable about my response. I think these things are best said when you can hear them, not when it's too late. That goes for us all to take the chance to say something good about and to someone. This, in these social media times, is even more

Essential, as there is so much hate around, but my motto is, always, *Love is the answer*. Thank you Jill for your wonderful article, and many thanks also from so many people for all that you have done to cement a community spirit into Ermington. We are so lucky to have you in amongst us.

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Pizza 9" £12.95 or 2 for £24 All made fresh in house with homemade sauce

Crooked Margarita- fresh tomatoes, mozzarella and fresh basil

The Devonian- Devon ham, fresh pineapple and mozzarella

Dartmoor Veggie Delight- mixed peppers, red onion, olives, mushrooms, fresh tomatoes and mozzarella

West Country Meat Feast- pulled pork, pepperoni, ham, chicken, mixed peppers and mozzarella on BBQ base (tomato base optional)

Spicy Spire- chilli beef, jalapeño peppers, chilli flakes and mozzarella

Create your Own- choice of 3 toppings and mozzarella

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Porky fries- smokey pulled pork and mature cheddar cheese on freshly cooked chips **£7.95**

Parmesan chips- freshly cooked chips tossed in truffle oil and Parmesan **£4.95**

Grecian chips- fresh tomato, black olives and crumbled feta on freshly cooked chips, topped with salsa de pomodoro **£7.95**

The OG's- freshly cooked chips topped with mature cheddar cheese **£4.95**

Loaded nachos- tortilla chips loaded with cheese, salsa de pomodoro and jalapeños Why not add extra toppings (see below) **£4.95**

Extra Toppings £1.50

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Store & More Newsletter

Welcome to the first S&M newsletter of 2025, as we - committee, staff, and volunteers - look forward to another year of serving our community. We are delighted to be approaching our fifth birthday, with the shop, café, and Hub enjoying your continuing loyal support.

We had to take place at 12 noon on Saturday 1 March in the Hub, to raise a glass to cheer the collective efforts of so many willing and committed people in this community venture. Rose has created a wonderful album of images; dating from the very start of the project, when Alistair Hurst so generously gave his time and expertise to the construction and conversion of the old store into the wonderful, diverse, and welcoming space it is now. There are images reminding us of the challenges of Covid, only a week later, and records of many of the other diverse aspects of life in a community shop, café, and Hub.

One of the key features of this seems to be change; and we continue to adapt to what can be a challenging environment, certainly as far as the business side goes.

Committee News: Our dedicated committee members are, like everyone, subject to the vagaries of life, and circumstances outside anyone's control that come along quite randomly. We were sorry to say farewell to our treasurer, Ani Everitt, and secretary, Catherine Rees, and we want to record our appreciation of their efforts on behalf of ES&M. A further committee member, Steve Hitch, is unable to attend regularly through ill health, and we wish him well on his road to recovery. We are delighted though to report that we have been able to recruit new members with the skills and experience needed to drive us forward. Sue Savery is stepping into the Treasurer's position, with Iain Grafton replacing Catherine as Secretary. We also welcome Juli Worms to the committee.

Treasurer's Report: Sue is still in the early days and weeks of her role, which she is combining with her professional business commitments, and also with Ermington Village Fund, on which she volunteers as a committee member (We don't think she sleeps; otherwise how is she finding the time?). She is currently familiarizing herself with this new additional commitment, but is able to assure us that the business finances are stable.

There will no doubt be ways in which we can streamline the business and make it as efficient and cost-effective as possible, even in these challenging times.

Fundraising: We have continued to raise funds to augment the working of the shop, café, and Hub. Barbara Jones continues to knit her funny, quirky characters for sale, with all takings generously donated.

There have been a number of craft workshops, and these have been particularly popular. One of our main events, the Christmas Twilight fair, was very reluctantly cancelled at the last minute thanks to Storm Darragh, and we were very sorry, not just for the loss of revenue, but more importantly to the producers who had worked so hard to prepare, and the many villagers who had been looking forward to this popular event.

Volunteer News; We have a team of nearly 40 dedicated volunteers who fulfill a wide variety of roles; some are front-of-house, and can be seen (and chatted with for as long as you like!) serving in the shop and café. Others work behind the scenes, and we are particularly grateful to Joan and John who kindly open and lock up for the groups operating in the Hub in the evenings.

We also thank Maggie King, who is our resident Mrs Tiggi-Winkle, keeping us supplied with freshly laundered linen for the café. As ever we welcome with open arms anyone willing to help in any capacity. The range of expertise that can be garnered from such a wide pool of helpers is invaluable, and the maxim 'Many hands make light work' has never been so true.

Café: The café continues to be enjoyed by its customers, and is an important component in supporting the shop and business. We offer a variety of tasty light bites, and vary these with the seasons, and availability of produce, in order to provide fresh, wholesome food at affordable prices. All food is prepared to order, and our soups and cakes are all home-made in the local community. Most items have takeaway options for those in a hurry or on the move, and this is becoming increasingly popular.

Arts and Crafts in the Café: Chris Pascoe is co-ordinating and curating high-quality items crafted locally. Producers can rent a shelf in the café area for £20 per quarter. We currently host nine shelf users, with a further two making good use of some of the wall space, and we are operating a waiting list for shelf space. We can offer a range of bespoke craft items such as pottery, glassware, jewellery, and ornaments for that unique gift or treat.

Hub: The Hub is overseen by Chris Pascoe, and we continue to explore ways in which this resource can be maximized. There is a variety of clubs, classes, and workshops, and it is also a popular venue for children's parties and other small gatherings. Bookings can be made by email, or phone 01548 831 111.

When you see the warm and positive environment in which we operate, you might be inspired to offer any time you may have as a volunteer, or even apply to stand on the Management Committee. New members and fresh ideas are most welcome.

On Wednesday 12 March from 4pm in the Crooked Spire we celebrated the work of our incredible volunteers. This event was kindly laid on by the staff and management of the Crooked Spire to show huge appreciation of an amazing team and their hard work and dedication. The event also had the backing of a number of generous residents who wanted to show their appreciation, and was open to all.

Wishing you a happy and prosperous 2025, Nicky, Rose, Sarah, Kathy, Roger, Andrew, Sue, Chris, Iain, Juli, and Steve.



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It's not just about new glasses . . .

For some readers, the notion of booking an appointment at their local Optician is simply a means of obtaining an up-to-date prescription, so they can order the latest trend in glasses. Conversely, for others there's a misguided assumption that such an appointment means they'll be obligated to buy new glasses, even if they don't want them or cannot afford to do so. Result? they avoid visiting an Optician altogether!

Once upon a time, all Opticians were viewed as medical professionals, providing an invaluable healthcare service to the local community.

Then came the retail giants where selling glasses and meeting targets seemed to matter more than healthcare. In recent years, this narrative has become supercharged with adverts and social media posts awash with offers and deals to entice you in for an appointment to get a new prescription, so you'll then purchase new glasses from them.

So, what happened to the healthcare side of visiting an Optician? In truth, it never really went away, it just got squeezed as appointment times got shorter. After all, shorter appointments mean more appointments and more appointments mean more opportunities to sell glasses, right?

And now we have glasses from the internet. No need to leave the comfort of your armchair, simply swipe through the pretty pictures and select a frame, just like you would if buying a new top. Enter all those confusing numbers from your prescription and don't worry too much if it's way out-of-date; no one at the other end really cares! Hey-presto! a few days later a new pair of glasses arrive in the post. Oh, and if you can't see through them or the frame doesn't fit, the online retailer will likely suggest you to go and visit your local Optician to

sort it out! Except they will probably decline to do so as they didn't supply them, which after all, seems quite reasonable.

At this point, the author suspects you're thinking this all sounds a little bitter! After all, many of the big retailers do a pretty good job when it comes to providing glasses, so is it a case of bitterness . . . or is it confusion?

Despite incredible advancements in diagnostic technology like Optical CT Scans, in the understanding of sight threatening eye diseases, in dry eye treatments and in new technologies like Myopia Control, Colorimetry and Orthokeratology, the author is genuinely confused as to why so many people still chose to side-step most of the healthcare aspects for a brief sight test, despite a general understanding of just how vital good vision is.

What price would you put on your eyesight?

If all of this or, even some of this rings true with the reader, then you'll be pleased to know - there is an alternative . . .

As the bigger Optical chains become more retail orientated, so a growing number of smaller independent Opticians are becoming more healthcare oriented; extending the length of their appointments so there's more time to investigate, diagnose and discuss your results, investing in new treatments and eyecare services and, generally slowing things down so that you can enjoy a more relaxed un rushed experience, rather than it feeling like a trip to the cattle market.

So, what should you expect when you choose to visit your local independent Optician? Firstly, expect to be centre of their attention, expect to be asked lots of questions and offered lots of advice. Expect a longer, far more thorough Eye Examination, regardless of whether you are private or NHS.

Expect to be shown your Optical CT scan results, your retinal photographs, field-of-vision results and dry eye assessments.

Expect to have these results fully explained and expect to receive tailored advice and guidance. Naturally you'll probably be asked to pay a little extra, but ask yourself this - what price would you put on your eyesight?

And despite being given a new prescription, it's highly likely that any recommendation to consider new glasses will only be made if your visual acuity results suggest you'll actually be able to see more clearly with them. Maybe it's finally time to give the cattle market a miss and discover a local independent Optician who really cares about your vision . . .

In a future article we hope to enlighten you about why a Qualified Dispensing Optician really is the best person on the planet to help you choose your new glasses . . .

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Plymouth Argyle Rodger Reid

Plymouth Argyle - Relegation Looking Likely

With less than eight matches left to play, Plymouth Argyle find themselves rooted to the foot of the table, and seven points from safety. Support for the team has not diminished – there have continued to be sell-out crowds for home matches, and between 1500 and 2000 at away games.

Home form, however, has deserted the Greens, who have seen losses to Sheffield Wednesday and Derby County. These were games against fellow-struggling sides, and needed wins - or at least draws - to keep hopes alive. Dreams of a revival were raised when the team played away to Portsmouth, another team in



relegation trouble. Argyle took a two-goal lead into the last minutes of the game, had a player sent off, and conceded a goal, but managed to hang on and claim three vital points. But, as mentioned, the following matches didn't go their way, and time is fast running out.

There are big games coming up: away to Watford, and then home to Norwich City; so all is not quite lost, but it will take a big effort and a considerable amount of luck to avoid the drop into League 1.

The manager is upbeat about the team's chances, but there is a distinct lack of confidence in the players. The defence, which had shown signs of improvement, is looking fragile, and one or two players have been missing, as a result of injury or suspension.

The future does not look rosy but, whatever happens, the support will be there for the club. The Green Army have been here before and will be behind their team wherever they end up. Come on you Greens.

Green Army

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