

The Black Mountains Group Benefice

NEWSLETTER

December 2021 & January 2022



St Margaret's



St Clydawg's
Clodock



St Mary's
Craswall



St John's
Newton



St Michael's
Michaelchurch Escley



St Peter & St Beuno
Llanveynoe

The Parishes of Clodock & Longtown with Craswall,
Llanveynoe, St Margaret's, Michaelchurch Escley & Newton

Part of the Abbeydore Deanery
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From the Clergy

A mild and calm November day brought 1,185 refugees across the channel – women, children and men – a number that's similar to the total population served by this parish magazine. It's the highest number of refugees in one day, in a year that has seen 23,500 people making this dangerous journey, with no guarantee of being granted asylum status at their journey's end.

Jon Featonby, the refugee and asylum policy manager at British Red Cross, said in a recent newspaper article: "It is a brutal, life-threatening journey, especially in the worsening winter weather. The immediate priorities must be to save lives and to ensure anyone who makes it to the UK is met with dignity and compassion – dry clothes, medical care, food, clean water and a safe place to sleep."

Within days of these landings, I had the joy of retelling the nativity story with a group of Key Stage 1 children (that's infants in old money) at one of our primary schools; it's very special watching children making this ancient story their own.

This year it's not the cosy familiarity of the story that draws me, but its grittiness. A young, unmarried mother facing potential rejection by her community; a young couple compelled by an occupying army to travel to register for a census; Mary, so close to her due date, travelling in harsh conditions for over a week to reach Bethlehem. In spite of Mary's condition, accommodation is in short supply, so she gives birth in poor surroundings, without the support of family a first-time mother might expect; the couple are visited by strangers who offer both gifts and unsettling insights into the future of their new baby. A threat to those in power from his birth, according to St Matthew's account, Jesus and his parents are forced to leave all that's familiar and journey to Egypt as refugees. How many of those travelling across the channel might recognise part of their own story in the story we love to retell at Christmas?

I wanted to play Mary in the nativity. When other Marys were chosen, an angel was a good compromise (great wings), followed by a king (sparkly costume), a shepherd (less attractive costumes but with the benefit of toy sheep). I never had a desire to be the innkeeper (plain costume, too grumpy) but this year I see this character differently. There's no mention of him (or her) in the gospel account, which gives us permission to use our imaginations. I see a busy and harassed person, delighted their inn is full but most likely counting the days to when their guests will clear off home. A woman about to give birth was the last thing they needed but, in spite of this, the innkeeper shows compassion. Mary and Joseph are found some space, perhaps the innkeeper called the local mid-wife, brought clean water, offered a simple meal and some dignity. I hope that in my Christmas busyness, I might not miss the opportunity to be an innkeeper ...

With blessings this Christmas.

Rev'd Luci

DECEMBER AND JANUARY READINGS

Sunday December 5th

Old Testament	Malachi 3: 1-4
New Testament	Philippians 1: 3-11
Gospel	Luke 3: 1-6, Luke 1: 68-79

Cont'd ...

Sunday December 12th

Old Testament	Zephaniah 3: 14-end
New Testament	Philippians 4: 4-7
Gospel	Luke 3: 7-18

Sunday December 19th

Old Testament	Micah 5: 2 – 5a
New Testament	Hebrews 10: 5-10
Gospel	Luke 1: 39-45 (46-55)

Christmas Eve

Old Testament	Isaiah 52: 7-10
New Testament	Hebrews 1: 1-4 (5-12)
Gospel	John 1: 1-14

Christmas Day

Old Testament	Isaiah 9: 2-7
New Testament	Titus 2: 11-14
Gospel	Luke 2: 1-14 (15-20)

Sunday 26th December

Old Testament	2 Chronicles 24: 20-22
New Testament	Acts 7: 51-end
Gospel	Matthew 10: 17-22

Sunday January 2nd

Old Testament	Isaiah 60: 1-6
New Testament	Ephesians 3: 1-12
Gospel	Matthew 2: 1-13

Sunday January 9th

Old Testament	Isaiah 43: 1-7
New Testament	Acts 8: 14-17
Gospel	Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Sunday January 16th

Old Testament	Isaiah 62: 1-5
New Testament	1 Corinthians 12: 1-11
Gospel	John 2: 1-11

Sunday January 23rd

Old Testament	Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10
New Testament	1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a
Gospel	Luke 4: 14-21

Sunday January 30th

Old Testament	Malachi 3: 1-5
New Testament	Hebrews 2: 14-end
Gospel	Luke 2: 22-40

Deanery Update

As we enter this season of Advent and approach Christmas, there are many services and events being planned throughout the Deanery. For all details of these do keep checking our website. There's a variety of types of services across too many different locations to list here!

Have you heard the word Cluster? Are you wondering what they are and how they might involve you? A cluster is the name for a handful of parishes working together. Some parishes are already operating in this way, for others it's a new step. The idea behind Clusters is to enable people to offer worship, care for one another, and tell the good news of Jesus by sharing practical resources. Clusters ensure that every parish is sustainable by supporting each other in fundraising, maintenance and repairs. Your local church warden will be able to tell you what other communities are in your Cluster and in the New Year, you'll begin to see evidence of how they're working and what they're up to!

Our team of four Rural Pioneer Priests (Cate, Luci, Mark and Simon) continue to work on their particular areas of mission. Do pray for the initiatives that are developing which include communities in growing villages, Grow Strong group for young people, the Golden Valley Pilgrim Way and those coming to our churches, perhaps for the first time, for Life Events.

If you couldn't go along to speak with Bishop Richard at the listening event at Esleyside Hall recently there are a couple more opportunities to do this in December, the closest being **Wednesday 8th December** at The Bishop's Palace, Hereford. See <https://hereford.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/strategy-reboot/> for more details

Best wishes and thanks to you for all the support given to all our churches and their communities throughout the year in so many ways, and we look forward, with hope, to 2022.

*Anne Lloyd Deanery Mission Coordinator
01981 620145 / abbeydoremc@gmail.com*

NEW RURAL PIONEER PRIEST

In October, a new Rural Pioneer Priest, Rev Cate Thomson, joined the Deanery team. Here's a note from her:

My name is Caitlin (though feel welcome to call me Cate!) and I am 31 years old – I was born in Oxfordshire but grew up in a market town in Cumbria. I've lived in a lot of places over the years, and I enjoy getting to know new people and areas.

Most of my time before ordination was spent studying (my background is English and Applied Linguistics), but I had a brief stint teaching English as a second language in a Hong Kong Kindergarten. In my free time I enjoy reading, creative pursuits (music, drawing & crafts), and playing board games with friends. I especially enjoy sci-fi and fantasy novels and movies. I look forward to meeting you. *Rev Cate*

REVD. NICHOLAS LOWTON AND THE KAMILI TRUST

Nicholas' favourite charity is the Kamili Trust in Kenya, which provides mental health and other medical care to those in need. He asked that the charity be the recipient of any funds raised towards a farewell gift. The impressive total of £1420 came via the collection plate at his final service in Clodock church and the online donations page. Well done and thank you to all who contributed.

The BMG Churchwardens

Thanks

THANK YOU, FROM NICHOLAS

I had hoped to be able to include this in an earlier edition of the Newsletter, but The Kamili Organisation had anted to include a note of thanks for the donations offered them at my final service, and it proved ingeniously complicated for the funds to reach them. Anyway they now have, and my good friend Melanie Blake, who set up the organisation in 2009 has sent me this note to thank all of you for the gift to the organisation of £1420:

On behalf of Kamili Organisation, I would like to send my heartfelt thanks for the extremely generous donation. In these difficult times we are humbled when people think of those suffering with Mental Health issues on the other side of the world. Your donation will ensure that Kamili's outreach clinics in the counties all over Kenya will continue to

provide quality accessible mental health services to people in very remote areas.

From the team, our patients, the carers.

Thank you all and God bless you, may you stay safe and well.

Melanie Blake MBE

There are many other thanks I need to add. Thank you first of all to everyone who turned up to that final service: it was very moving to see so many of you there. It was also really kind of so any of you to provide so much food and drink. Delicious!

I have also been very touched by the many letters, cards, emails, phone calls and conversations I have had: you have been unnecessarily kind, but they have meant a huge amount to me.

At the moment, I am taking a break from all active ministry until after Christmas. This is giving me the chance to gain a clearer idea of what I would like to do in the future. My licensing as Public Preacher means that I will be able to operate wherever I am asked, except, of course, here. It is the understandable and sensible rule that no priest operates in parishes which he or she used to serve in.

Anyway, much of my attention of late has been focused on the garden, which brings me to my final 'thank you' for the rose bush given to me by you to mark my retirement. It has – to date - escaped the depredations of my randomly rose-pruning puppy (Baldwin, since you ask.)*Nicholas Lowton*

CLODOCK CHURCH THANK YOU

A big thank you to everyone who helped with the beautiful flower arrangements for Nicholas' farewell service.

Also many thanks to all who helped decorate the church for the harvest festival and at other times throughout the year.

We have been gradually reintroducing the flower rota and I will prepare a new one which will start in January. If there is anyone who would like to join the rota, once or twice a year, please let me know. *Maggie Collins*

FROM SHEILA WATKINS

I cannot put into words my gratitude for the offers of help and support that have so kindly been offered to me at this difficult time. Your kindness and thoughtfulness has helped me enormously to come to terms with what has happened. I am overwhelmed by all your love and friendship.

CLODOCK CHURCHYARD

A huge thank you to the hardworking souls, from Clodock and other parishes who helped out at the workday, and throughout the autumn, that made huge steps toward improving and maintaining the environment of the churchyard. Many hands make light work: Acts 20:35 *I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

Nick Vaughan

CLODOCK GRAVEYARD

Another huge debt of gratitude to the group of volunteers who have helped in the regular maintenance of Clodock Graveyard throughout the summer, caring for all the graves of those departed ensuring that the burial ground is kept beautiful, accessible and linked to the communities of Clodock, Longtown and Craswall. It is a substantial

commitment on their part: Deuteronomy 11:12 *A land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.*

When tending family graves, please help us to take care of the churchyard by taking home with you any wreaths or flower wrappings and other removable items that are no longer required. We are unable to provide facilities for this purpose. Do not leave plastic wrapper, glass jars or plastics in the graveyard or compost area.

Please ensure you comply with the Diocesan churchyard regulations that are displayed in the churchyard and porch paying particular heed of the type of container and ‘flowers’ that should be used. We thank you for your co-operation.

Nick Vaughan

FROM DIANA ROBINSON

I would like to thank all my friends in the Longtown area especially the Longtown W.I. for all their kindness and support during the last difficult year or so. Without any family nearby, you have been truly wonderful.


I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Healthy 2022.

BENEFICE SONGS OF PRAISE 31ST OCTOBER

Many thanks to all those in the community who contributed to the successful Songs of Praise, it was a lovely opportunity to sing and hear a variety of hymns that have a special meaning or memories for the individuals who chose to share. It was great to hear the Black Hill Voices ring around Clodock church once again.

Nick Vaughan

Forthcoming events



Longtown Library
now open,
Every first Wednesday of the month
2.30 - 4.30 pm
Swap books, tea and chat!

Next open on 1st December



**Community
Coffee Morning**
Longtown Primary
School PTA
Friday 3 December
08:30-10:30
Longtown Village Hall
Open to everyone!

ALAW AT THE ESCLEYSIDE HALL, MICHAELCHURCH HR2 0PT – Saturday, 4th December, 2021 7.30pm
Courtesy of ARTS ALIVE, don't miss this long-awaited evening of LIVE MUSIC from the fabulous “Welsh Super Group” **ALAW**. Oli, Dylan and Nia have a shared passion for the traditional music of Wales. With fiddle, guitar, and Nia's exceptional voice, we are promised an evening of

“stirring songs” and “driving jigs” maybe with a contemporary edge.

Tickets available through ARTS ALIVE or phone 01981 510116.

NB. Flicks in the Sticks will recommence in 2022. Keep Wednesday **19th January** 7.30pm free for **“KNIVES OUT”** starring Daniel Craig.

LONGTOWN THURSDAY CLUB

Our final event of 2021, will be our **Christmas Lunch** on the **9th December**, which, this year, we have unfortunately had to restrict to members.

Our first meeting of 2022 will be on **Thursday 3rd March**, when we hope to return to a normal programme of meetings and outings. In the meantime, we should like to thank everyone for their help in coming through the last two years, and wish all readers a peaceful and restorative Christmas and New Year.

Hazel Pugh and Pauline Jones

TEA SET

The Tea Set continues to meet regularly on the third Wednesday of every month in Newton Church room, 2.30 - 5.00. All are welcome to pop in for a chat over tea and cake. Do mark up your calendars for next year!

However this December there is a change: we will be open on **Tuesday December 14th**, 2.30 - 5.00 as always and at Newton Church room. Please note this change of date and come along for a festive afternoon, greet and see your friends, and meet newcomers.

Elizabeth May

YOUNG FARMERS CLUB

At the moment, most of our attention is focused on our annual pantomime **“Treasure Island”**, which will be presented on the **17th and 18th December** at **Longtown Village Hall**, Covid permitting.

October held a lot of activity for Craswall YFC including New Members Evening, Hereford Cattle Judging, Live and Carcass, NFYFC's 90th Anniversary, Llanthony Show's Hedging and stone walling Comp at Tyn-y-berth and lastly our Spooky Farm walk.

On to November, Craswall YFC were invited by Marcus Lloyd and family to attend a Bonfire, Fireworks and Clay Pidgeon shoot, with many a comment about how well it went.

Friday 12th November, HFYFC held their “Junior Quiz” we sent three full teams with a member to spare, who teamed up with Ledbury YFC. *Phil Powell, CYFC Secretary*
phillip_blackhill@live.co.uk / 07468 411649



Family Carol Service
Thursday 23rd December 3pm
St Margaret's Church
A short, informal carol service.
Followed by hot chocolate/mulled wine and mince pies.
Everyone welcome!

The Parish Church of St Peter and St Beuno
in Llanveynoe

is delighted to invite you all to a service of

Christingle



At the church on Christmas Eve, Friday 24th December.

There'll be a Christingle candle for every child (and for anybody who would like one).

To warm your cockles on this festive eve we'll be glad to serve you

a Mulled Wine or a Hot Spiced Apple Juice from
4.30pm.

The service will begin at 5 o'clock

And many of us are looking forward to
Carols at the Castle afterwards.

CAROLS AT THE CASTLE

5.30pm on Christmas Eve at Longtown Castle.

Come and enjoy Christmas carols in the spectacular setting of Longtown Castle. Lights, music, mulled wine, seasonal refreshment and the opportunity to join in and sing carols on Christmas Eve.

Children, please make a lantern and bring it along. Father Christmas is always very busy on Christmas Eve but we hope that Frosty the Snowman will join us. We have asked one of his helpers to bring a collection bucket for mums and dads to contribute towards building schools in Uganda.

See you there – don't forget the lantern.

VITAL SPARK CONCERT

Wednesday 29th December at 7pm in Clodock Church.

Each year Vital Spark, a group of West Gallery Singers mainly from the Malvern area willingly travel to Clodock to present a short concert of old English carols from Clodock's rare West Gallery.

This will be a step back in time to that of Thomas Hardy. Vital Spark will sing and accompany their programme by candle-light. Mulled wine and seasonal refreshment will be provided. The concert is free, but there will be a retiring collection for the schools Bob Burson builds and supports in Uganda.

LONGTOWN WASSAIL

Sad news: Normally the traditional Longtown Wassail takes place in early January. It is with great regret that again it has had to be cancelled for reasons beyond our control. Here's hoping for next year.

Bob Burson

Local Newsround

LONGTOWN & DISTRICT WI

At our meeting on November 9th we welcomed Penny Platts, the archivist for the Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes. Penny brought along some fascinating material from the archives, and spoke to us about the best way to preserve our WI documents and other items safely for future reference. Her talk was interesting as well as useful

and we asked Penny lots of questions about how we can improve our current archiving system. We all enjoyed hearing how much detective work is involved in determining the locations and dates of unmarked photographs from WI functions in the past.

Libby Davis

MICHAELCHURCH ESCLEY PRIMARY AND PRE SCHOOL

Christmas is fast approaching and this is, as I'm sure you are aware, an incredibly exciting time in primary schools with so much to look forward to. Our youngest children in Squirrel Class will be visiting Father Christmas again at the Madley Environmental Centre. Mr Crocker will be gathering our school Christmas tree with a small group of lucky children, then there is Christmas Decoration Day, the panto at the Courtyard, our delicious school Christmas dinner (with a visit from a white bearded gentleman to follow) and, most excitingly, the return of our Walking Nativity in Michaelchurch to look forward to as well. Last year's nativity could not go ahead because of Covid restrictions. This year, we will be asking everyone who attends to wear a face mask and for all adults and high school pupils attending to have negative lateral flow tests before coming along.

Swimming this term has been a huge success. Because of the closure of swimming pools due to Covid, the majority of children had either done very little or no swimming at all for nearly 2 years. We therefore took the decision to have two of our full-time teachers fully trained as swimming teachers and lifeguards. Consequently, we're able to take groups to the Riverside International Caravan and Leisure Park, Bronllys and make use of their excellent facilities. The groups of children we've taken so far have made excellent progress and we look forward to continuing these sessions in the Spring when the pool re-opens.

Covid has also had a huge impact on children's general physical activity levels and whilst rural children have, on the whole, fared better than children living in urban areas, they have still missed out on organized sporting activities during the past 18 months or so. We have been very keen therefore, to take advantage of as many sporting opportunities as possible for our children. Oak Class children have participated in hockey and football tournaments and all of Sapling Class participated in a small-schools football tournament too. On top of this, Year 6 spent the day in Hereford completing their Bikeability training with the fantastic BikeRight team. Lovely though it is to have a school where the only traffic is just an occasional tractor or cyclist going past the front playground, there are not really sufficient challenges, especially when it comes to dealing with traffic and road junctions, in Michaelchurch. We therefore decided to transport the children, and Mr Crocker, to Hereford so that they could complete their training in a proper, urban environment. Not only did they have a great time, they learnt a tremendous amount which will help them stay safe when they venture out onto the roads.

It's currently time to apply for a primary school place for September 2022. The online application process is open on the Herefordshire website, so if your child was born between 1st Sept 2017 and 31st Aug 2018 you need to make sure you complete this before 15th January 2022. If you're interested in sending your child to our lovely school (!), you're very welcome to contact us for a chat and a visit. We'd love to see you.

On another note, we're still looking for a school governor. If you feel you would like to play a part in the governance of our thriving, friendly rural school, please contact us by email, admin@michaelchurch-escleyp.hereford.sch.uk or call 01981 510208.

To finish, I would just like to wish everyone in our community a very merry Christmas and a happy new year from all of us at Michaelchurch Esclay Primary and Pre-School.

Louise Crocker, Headteacher



20 Years Serving the Community

On 17th December 2021 Hopes of Longtown will celebrate 20 years in business, serving the small community of Longtown.

When the village shop in Longtown closed Christine Hope, backed by her parents and now Business partners Jenny and Philip Hope, developed Hopes of Longtown on the family farm in 2001. Christine saw an opportunity for a vibrant village store which could serve its local community in a variety of ways.

Hopes of Longtown is more than just a village shop: not only do they stock a range of high-quality local produce, gifts and essentials, but they also provide support to local people. They act as a local food bank and offer a refill service allowing people to shop in an environmentally friendly way. More recently they have developed a Covid secure shopping environment to suit their customers differing needs, going the extra mile by offering an individual appointment service, popular at Christmas, allowing customers to shop at their leisure without feeling pressured. The Post Office, which opened at Hopes of Longtown in 2003 is an essential service for this rural community. It provides a much needed banking service at a time when an increasing number of banks are closing their doors in rural towns.

Just a stone's throw from the Welsh border, Hopes of Longtown utilises the vast number of small businesses that exist locally, stocking wonderful produce and gifts. #ShopLocal30 was the brainchild of Christine, who wanted to put local produce at the centre of the shopping basket. It is Christine's way of contributing to the local economy. By encouraging customers to shop locally, jobs in the area can be sustained and maybe even new ones created. Produce from within 30 miles of the shop is signposted, so that customers can easily see which products come from the local area.

Crucial to the success of Hopes of Longtown is its staff, a passionate team of people who value their community. During the recent pandemic the team went above and beyond for their customers, supporting them in whatever way they could, ranging from a quick chat, to taking their orders over the phone and delivering them in person on the same day. Hopes Of Longtown has acquired many awards and accolades over the years, but Christine prefers to measure success by how happy her customers are. She never stands still, always looking for new ways to add value and offer something more to her customers.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, there won't be a birthday party, but rather some small gestures to celebrate 20 years in serving a rural community.

Christine, Jenny and Philip agree, 'We're over the moon to reach this milestone! We've come a long way and couldn't have done it without the support of the local community, and members of the family coming to our rescue'.

VOWCHURCH & DISTRICT GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Paul Mason has decided to resign from the Parish Council and his position as Chair. The Parish Council would like to thank him for his work over the years particularly in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. At the September meeting Ms Elizabeth May was elected as the new Chair. The Parish Council also co-opted Mr Graeme Deas at the October meeting to fill the Vowchurch vacancy left by Paul Mason.

The local police would like to encourage everybody to sign up for a new initiative 'Neighbourhood Matters' which is a community messaging service launched by West Mercia Police. It enables residents, businesses and community groups across Herefordshire to find out about what is happening in their local community. Visit www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk to sign up.

As winter is now upon us, landowners are reminded of their responsibilities under Riparian Ownership in keeping roadside ditches clear. This helps immensely with drainage and keeping the roads clear of water.

Coronavirus is not going away and with flu and other seasonal illnesses already prevalent, it is more important than ever, that people continue to follow the advice to help protect themselves and others.

Please wear masks in crowded areas, continue to wash hands with soap and water and have good ventilation in the home and work place. Test regularly, even if you don't have symptoms and take up the offer of a Covid vaccination, along with your booster if you haven't already done so. You can download a summary of the impact of Covid-19 in Herefordshire at:

<https://understanding.herefordshire.gov.uk/health/covid-19-summary>

Linda Cowles, Parish Clerk
01544 321906 / vowchurchparishclerk@hotmail.com

VOWCHURCH VILLAGE HALL

Christmas Lights will be switched on at 6.30pm on Thursday December 9th followed by mulled wine, mince pies and the village pub.

The Village Pub Thursday December 9th from 7pm at Vowchurch Hall.

Vowchurch Christmas Market Saturday December 18, 10am - 12 noon at Vowchurch Hall.

VAT50 November winners were: Robbie Prior (£50) and the Craddock family (£20).

Pilates at Vowchurch Hall, Tuesdays from 6pm. Contact hannahmthomas@hotmail.com

Bowls Wednesdays, 7 - 9 pm, Vowchurch Hall.

Tai ji Tuesdays 10-11 am at Vowchurch Hall. Contact Jane Fleet janefleet88@gmail.com

Vowchurch Hall is available for parties, weddings and events as well as meetings and presentations at very reasonable rates. Enquiries to Jane Wheatley on 01981 550791, www.vowchurchturnastonehall.co.uk

UPDATE FROM LONGTOWN OUTDOOR LEARNING TRUST

The centre team were delighted to welcome back schools, children's homes, charities, youth groups and families to the centre throughout the summer months. Initial fears about the post-lockdown 'appetite' of many schools quickly subsided as residential bookings came in thick and fast. It soon became apparent that we would need additional manpower to keep pace with demand. Despite successful apprentice recruitment, the recruitment environment for other staff was (and remains) challenging. Matt Freer, our Chair of Trustees, suggested we made an appeal to the local community for help to enable us to get through our busiest time. We are indebted to the local community volunteers who volunteered their time to assist with the huge task of washing up for up to 120 people twice a day!

The centre's Coronavirus operating procedures kept pace with the DfE's expectations for schools throughout this period. Measures such as lateral flow testing for staff, additional cleaning routines for accommodation and equipment, quarantine routines for some equipment, additional ventilation in minibuses and face mask wearing in buses / certain rooms (and caves!) became commonplace.

One of the June weeks was the busiest the centre has ever experienced with an unprecedented number of children, schools and representative counties all having the opportunity to experience the great outdoors. Although there were many pressure points on our systems (staffing, resources, catering) a fantastic team effort ensured the success of the summer programmes.

The centre's Bell Tents and campground really proved their worth, not only providing surge capacity for accommodation but a more affordable means for many children to have their first experience of the great outdoors. They also proved very popular with local children at two different Adventure Club camps. The summer holidays not only provided the opportunity for us to offer our Bell Tents to hire for family camp groups from across the UK but also a chance to work with a diverse and inspirational range of groups including the Ellen McArthur Cancer Trust, Jamie's Farm and the Hope charity. We also ran holiday activities for 30 local children and over 50 children funded by Herefordshire Council's Holiday Activities and Food programme, ensuring that the children had a range of healthy activities and a healthy meal each day.

The centre was very fortunate to be able to harness some of the Government's recovery funding to attract three new apprentices to join our team for the coming year. We have been joined by Giles from Bradford, Emma from Bristol and Michael from St. Albans. They have quickly immersed themselves in our busy Autumn programme.

Despite alarmingly low bookings initially, this Autumn has seen an unprecedented number of new residential bookings including bookings from schools in Oxfordshire, Monmouthshire, London and Cardiff. We have also hosted the regular monthly sessions of the Abbey Dore Deanery Grow Strong project for local young people, a number of Scout groups and the Limbpower charity Family weekend. This inspirational weekend for family members with limb deficiencies was a huge success for all concerned. We were thrilled to hear that one of the Limbpower ambassadors who

had attended a previous Longtown weekend had just returned from Tokyo with a Paralympic swimming Silver medal!

We are also currently working with primary schools in Garway, Kingstone, Llanvihangel Crucorney and Longtown and run after school clubs in at least one school every evening. These clubs remain very popular but plans are now being made for the Spring term so do check the centre website www.longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk to find out whether there are still any vacancies for the club at your school. We have also increased the day time P.E. sessions we do with local schools and are currently delivering weekly kayaking and rock climbing sessions for Longtown Primary and Hidelow Grange School pupils. It is exciting to think that some Olympians and Paralympians of the future may be taking their first steps in two outdoor sports whilst at the centre.


As a result of the expansion of bookings we are now recruiting to fill a number of posts in preparation for a busy year in 2022. The posts on offer are Catering assistant, Domestic assistant, Activity instructor and Outdoor Learning Tutor. Flexible employment hours are possible for all posts which will be considered on both an employed and freelance basis. Further information and application packs for all posts are available on the Trust's website. www.longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk

We are also interested in securing some local accommodation in the Spring for one or two staff on a 'rent-a-room' basis. Accommodation would ideally be within walking / cycling distance of the centre and would also provide access to a kitchen and bathroom. If you have suitable accommodation available we would love to hear from you, please do get in touch.

Mike Fawcett, Director

mike@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk, 01873 860225

Concerts for Craswall



All good things must come to an end, even a wonderfully successful return. Thank you everyone who helped make 2021 such an enjoyable and welcome return to live music.

To our many Friends both new and returning we thank you again for all your support. As we announced our concert with The Eusebius Quartet in July, we were all unsure how people would feel about meeting face to face again. The musicians were delighted to be performing to a "real live" audience again and we were overwhelmed by the number of people who turned out to support them and us.

Another full house followed for guitarist Ross Morris in August when the glorious summer weather enabled us to enjoy this young musicians' talents followed by pizzas from neighbouring Chapel House Farm.

The season concluded in October with The Magnard Ensemble – a quintet of amazingly talented young wind musicians. A truly magnificent concert which surpassed all expectations.

As a charity, the additional financial and support in kind that many have again offered this year, makes a huge difference. Thank you everyone!

And finally to the many, many volunteers in the wider Community who helped with the organisation of our

concerts; feeding musicians; decorating the Churches; and parking our audiences, thank you.

We wish everyone a very safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Details of our 2022 concerts now online at

www.concertsforcraswall.org

*The Trustees, Concerts for Craswall
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The hall is now open again for bookings.

We have a few things happening in the hall over the next few months

Why not come for Gentle Dance exercise with Abbie Mason 10.30am -11.15 am and 11.30am-12.30 am Starting Thursday 2nd September . She is also running a dance exercise class in the evenings from Thursday 7th October. Please look out for posters.

Day Centre is open again every Monday morning for Tea, Coffee and a chat 10am - 12pm.

Peterchurch Village Hall is a community building, run by a small committee of dedicated trustees. It is the ideal venue for local events, and is available for hire from £10 an hour.

As well as hosting many a birthday party, the hall has a few regular user groups:

- Parish Council every 3rd Tuesday of the month
- W.I. Which started again in October

We always welcome new groups!

If you wish to hire the hall or have any other inquiries, please call any of these numbers:

The Booking Secretary (Sarah) - 07774 457887

The Chairman (Brendan) - (01981) 550 482

The Hall - (01981) 551 162

Please leave a message if you are unable to reach anyone on the numbers above.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Hall committee.

GOLDEN VALLEY DAY CENTRE

I am sorry that I missed last month but I did have a good excuse . Luckily it was a quiet month through September and October have also been relatively quiet.

Unfortunately we had some sad news with the passing of one of our original members Mrs Sybil Jones. She had recently been staying in the Weir Nursing home. Many of you will remember Sybil as the wife of our Primary school headmaster during the 70's and 80's (I certainly do). I remember them taking us on camping trips to the Devil's Bridge area where we swam in rivers and climbed rock faces a long time before Health and Safety. She was also the leader of the Scouts in Hay on Wye and the custodian of the local history paperwork after her husband John passed away.

Cont'd ...

In her later years she volunteered at the Hospice shop in Hay with Kath Gaze. Our condolences go to her family Adrian, Penny, Gareth and Nick.

We held our usual Remembrance Day meeting many thanks to Bob Murrin for kindly coming once again.

Feel free to drop in on a Monday between 10am and 12pm you will be guaranteed a warm welcome.

We would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Notices and Advertisements



Vacancies

Catering Assistant

To assist children with the preparation of their packed lunches, Longtown Outdoor Learning Centre is looking for an enthusiastic catering assistant to work with us on Tuesday to Friday mornings. The ideal candidate will have some catering experience and a current food hygiene certificate.

As the Catering Assistant you will be responsible for:

- Assisting with the preparation and serving of lunches and occasional other meals by prior arrangement
- Ensuring that the kitchen and service areas are clean and tidy
- Ensuring health and safety regulations are followed and recorded
- Maintaining stock levels and placing stock orders
- General cleanliness of all food areas and catering equipment

Successful applicants will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check and provide two satisfactory references. 16 hours per week between 9.15am and 12.15pm Tuesdays to Fridays. Exact times to be agreed with the suitable candidate. Occasional weekend cover may be required at times with prior notice. Pay £9.50/hr and paid holidays. Enquiries for freelance work also welcome, rates negotiable. If you would like to apply or require any further information, please contact Rebecca on 01873 860225 or email rebecca@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk

Domestic Assistant – Mornings

Longtown Outdoor Learning Centre is looking for a domestic assistant to join our small team. Duties will include washing up after breakfast, servicing dining rooms, common rooms, public areas, visitor bedrooms, bathroom and toilet facilities. Successful applicants will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check and provide two satisfactory references. 16 hours per week Mondays to Fridays. Exact times to be agreed with the suitable candidate but a usual start time of 9.15am will be essential. Occasional weekend cover may be required at times with prior notice provided. Pay £9.50/hr and paid holidays. Enquiries for freelance work also welcome, rates negotiable. If you would like to apply or require any further information, please contact Rebecca on 01873 860225 or email rebecca@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk

Accommodation Wanted:

Longtown Outdoor Learning Centre is seeking rooms to let within walking or cycling distance of the village for our increasing staff team. Ideally from February 2022 for a minimum period of 6 months. Our team members will need furnished, or part furnished single bedrooms with access to a kitchen and bathroom. Rent/room rates must include the supply of utilities – water, heat and light. Typically employed full time Monday to Friday, occupants will mostly inhabit rooms during the evenings, overnight and weekends when no work commitment is necessary. Each of our employees are DBS checked and undergo a vigorous referencing process. If you can help or are interested in hosting a member of the team please contact Mike Fawcett on 01873 860225 or email mike@longtownoutdoorlearning.co.uk

1 DAY FOOTPATH CLOSURE

The permissive footpath across Lewis Gilbert and Thomas George Charity land between Cayo Ford and the downstream footbridge will be closed on **11th January 2022 for one day only.**

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Or contact Sophia: Tel: 01873 860358

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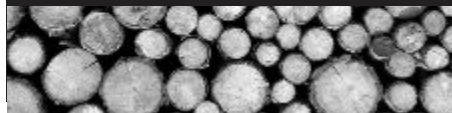
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Crucial to our success has been our wonderful staff over the years, a passionate team who value their community and YOU our tip top customers popping in to purchase a daily paper or a weekly shop via telephone.

Christmas orders

As I type this we are still waiting for prices of some meats, next time you visit please pick up your copy for return by Saturday 4th December at 4pm. If you want us to send you a Google link or a PDF version of the form please email us info@hopesoflongtown.co.uk

Book the Hopes to yourself

After the success of last year, again we can pop on Michael Buble. You can try Black Mountain botanicals tipples or hot chocolate. Enjoy the entire shop to browse local produce, unique crafts and gifts in a safe, relaxed environment with no time pressure. Slow Festive Shopping at it's best on Wednesday evenings or Sunday afternoons.

If you fancy it buy it

Due to being one of the unlucky businesses whose energy supplier has gone into administration our energy costs day rates have jumped from 12p to 27p a unit. So we have switched off our spare chillers and freezers.

For our 20th year we will be celebrating one of our fab Herefordshire producers/suppliers every month. Starting with Willy's Apple Cider Vinegar in January, check out it's health benefits using 'the mother' making a great start to 2022

Want to join our Hopes team? Please look out for new opportunities or ask Christine the next time you see her.

LONGTOWN POST OFFICE

Saturday 9am ~ 11am & Monday to Friday 10.30am ~ 3.30pm

Christmas Stamps available at the Post Office

One 4 all gift cards available now, they can be spent at many high street shops and restaurants, perfect for tricky grandchildren, spa treatments for parents and meals out for grandparents.

Top up your mobile phone at Longtown Post Office, so you can have those important chats and texts with those you care for (plus if you need a new SIM card, just ask).

Pay your bills at our Post Office If an invoice has a barcode on it, it is likely it can be paid at the Post Office when you want, using cash, card or cheque (except Welsh Water). Keep track and you can **pay your council tax, BT, Water, nPower**, at the Post Office on a day you choose.

Christmas Travel made easy at ours

- Purchase your bus ticket at the post office and avoid the queues
- Pick up your Euro's the same day to keep plans flexible
- Treating a friend travelling with a few notes for treats? Any currency can be ordered with three days notice

For holiday insurance go on line and quote our Post office code of 2056186, this is super helpful to us

Longtown Post Office can scan QR codes to **return your parcels**

Save time, use our Post Office as your bank for personal & business accounts

- Using your bank card you can pay cash into most personal and business bank accounts
- Using a personalised paying in slip you can pay cash into your personal and business bank accounts
- Using a personalised paying in slip and an envelope you can pay cheques into personal and business accounts. We have the paying in envelopes, please ask us for spare ones if you are self isolating and wish to prepare in advance

We are very, very grateful for your continued custom.

Hopes of Longtown – Open seven days a week 01873 860444

www.hopesoflongtown.co.uk / [@HopesofLongtown](https://www.facebook.com/HopesofLongtown) / info@hopesoflongtown.co.uk
join our Facebook group Hopes of Longtown and post community/charity events for free

Like our Hopes of Longtown business page to keep up to date with news

Tag us in your passion for food and community via

Twitter / Instagram / Pinterest / Facebook

DECEMBER AND JANUARY CHURCH SERVICES

5th December	9.30am	Llanveynoe	Morning Worship
9th December	4.00pm	Michaelchurch	Community Carols
12th December	9.30am	Craswall	Holy Communion
	3.00pm	St Margaret's	Evening Prayer
19th December	3.00pm	Newton	Evening Prayer
22nd December	7.00pm	Clodock	Nine Lessons and Carols
23rd December	3.00pm	St Margaret's	Informal Carol Service
24th December	5.00pm	Llanveynoe	Christingle
	9.00pm	Michaelchurch	Bethlehem Midnight Communion

25th December	9.30am	Clodock	Family Communion
26th December	(10.30am)	Enyas Harold	Carols & Communion
	(10.30am)	Bredwardine	Holy Communion
2nd January 2022	9.30am	Craswall	Celtic Morning Prayer
9th January	9.30am	Clodock	Morning Worship
	11am	St Margaret's	Holy Communion
16th January	6pm	Newton	Celtic Evening Prayer
23rd January	9.30am	Michaelchurch	Morning Worship
	9.30am	Llanveynoe	Holy Communion
30th January	9.30am	Clodock	United Service for Candlemas

DECEMBER AND JANUARY DIARY

Wed	01 December	2.30pm - 4.30pm	Longtown Library, with tea and chat. Longtown Village Hall
Fri	03 December	8.30am - 10.30am	Longtown Primary School PTA Community Coffee Morning. Longtown Village Hall
Sat	04 December		Longtown Primary School PTA Craft Fayre, Longtown Village Hall
Sat	04 December	7.30pm	Alaw in concert, Esleyside Hall (courtesy of Arts Reach for Flicks in the Sticks)
Tue	14 December	2.30 - 5.00pm	Tea Set, Newton Church room
Fri	17 December		Craswall Young Farmers Panto, <i>Treasure Island</i> . Longtown Village Hall
Sat	18 December		Craswall Young Farmers Panto, <i>Treasure Island</i> . Longtown Village Hall
Thu	23 December	3.00pm	Family Carol Service, St Margaret's Church
Fri	24 December	4.30 for 5.00pm	Christingle service, Llanveynoe Church
Fri	24 December	5.00pm	Carols at the Castle
Wed	29 December	7.00pm	Vital Spark Concert, Clodock Church
Wed	05 January 2022	2.30pm - 4.30pm	Longtown Library, with tea and chat. Longtown Village Hall
Wed	19 January	7.00 for 7.30pm	Flicks in the Sticks, Esleyside Hall: <i>Knives Out</i> (12)

Village hall contacts

Craswall Hall

Bookings: Janet Watkins 01981 510226
General enq: Christine Cleaton, cleatonfamily@btinternet.com

Esleyside Hall

Rachel Pritchard: 01981 510368
rachel.pritchard86@hotmail.co.uk

Longtown Hall

Mark Ewins, 01873 860829,
bookings@longtownvillagehall.org.uk

Newton Church Room

Mary Powell: 01981 510295, mary.powell37@btinternet.com

Esley & District Sports Pavilion

Kirsty, 01981 510682, esleysportspavilion@gmail.com

**Golden Valley Safer Neighbourhood Team
Peterchurch Police & Fire Hub
Hereford HR2 0RU. 01981 550253**

PC 3687 Jeff Rouse 07870 150972

PCSO 6378 Pete Knight 07773 053 919

Contact: 101 ext 4820 – Email:
goldenvalley.snt@westmercia.pnn.police.uk




**We are back and on the air waves
10.30 - 11.30 each Saturday morning**

With the show being available to listen again at anytime from midday onwards, by logging onto our website.

We are wanting as many voices as possible!!

Please send in via the website

Shoutouts!! For BIRTHDAYS, OCCASSIONS, THANK YOUS, a FAVOURITE TRACK, or your favourite CHRISTMAS song.

Maybe you have written a poem you would like to share on poetry corner

**Send in your community event along with a tune
Community 5 tracks**

Or if you have an interest or hobby that you would like to share with the community OR have an idea for a show we would LOVE to hear from you.

<https://www.blackhillcommunityradio.org.uk>

Get in touch – e.mail admin@blackhillcommunityradio.org.uk

Or Ring Vicki on 01981 240248

Thank you for listening!!