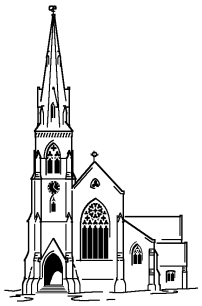
St John's Church

Welcoming - Worshipping - Loving - Growing



Jottings

Autumn Changes

The Autumn is coming. Restrictions are lifting. Opportunities are opening. What does this mean for Sundays at St Johns?

Our Open Air summer series finishes on Sun 5th Sept. The pandemic sort of forced us outside – but this has been a great thing. The services have had a wonderful and free atmosphere and have been a positive witness to the community. So expect more and we'll be back out there next summer for sure!

Then we're having a mini series called 'Lift Your Eyes.' As life opens up we need to look up and be reminded of what God is doing in the world:-

Sun 12th Climate Sunday (building on our *Saying Yes to Life* course) This service will focus on God's amazing creation and how we care for it.

Sun 19th Local Mission What's God doing in Weymouth? We'll be hearing from Street Pastors and others who are engaged in local mission work.

Sun 26th Global Mission. David and Shelley Stokes, our mission partners, recently returned from Argentina, will be sharing with us.

Sun 3rd Oct All Age Harvest Celebration. Followed by a Bring and Share lunch.

Then - we're going to try something new…

Starting on **Sun 10th Oct** we will be holding two weekly Sunday services.

The 9am. This will be a traditional and quieter service – using Anglican liturgy and traditional/familiar hymns and choruses. The service will follow Morning Worship liturgy on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays and Holy Communion on 2nd and 4th Sundays.

The 10.30am. This will be a contemporary and informal service with a greater emphasis on sung worship and times of ministry and groups for children and young people. 3rd Sundays will be a Communion service. Both congregations will follow the same teaching series. Coffee will be served at 10am for both congregations.

These changes reflect the general tone of the feedback shared when we did a worship survey in 2019. The changes also reflect the way in which the church has grown and address how we can more effectively go about meeting the needs of a growing and diverse congregation.

The services will feel different to the 9am and 10.30am services before the Pandemic. We are not going 'back to normal' we are moving forward. These are significant changes. There are many details to work through and I'm anticipating 101 teething problems. So please be prayerful, patient and open as we give this is a go.

The new pattern isn't set in stone forever. We'll give it a go and then review it. So please feel very free to share your own thoughts on how it's all going as the Autumn term progresses.

To make this work we really need your help. Inside you'll see a range of opportunities for you to get involved.

Change brings a mix of emotions and a number of challenges. I urge us to embark on this next part of our journey prayerfully, patiently and honestly with love for God, each other and the world at the very centre!

With love

Tom

To God Be The Glory

Recently at a Sunday morning service, instead of a sermon, Tom gave us the opportunity to share a word of testimony as to what God has been doing in our lives.

Several folk shared and it was great. One of the things it highlighted was how the current blessings we are witnessing in our church are rooted in the faithfulness of God's people over all the years that have gone before (St John's will soon be 170 years old!) This made me stop and consider how true this is and how in my own lifetime I have seen and known so much of God's love and faithfulness in this church.

One of my first memories was of Miss Marjorie Holbrook, a gentle lady, full of the love of Jesus, who, from the 1940's onwards, faithfully led the Sunday School for over 40 years. She never missed a Sunday in all those years. Many hundreds of children must have passed through her hands setting them on firm foundations. Such commitment few could match today!

Then there was St John's Campaigners, a uniformed Christian movement, with their brilliant Chiefs and helpers, who were all members of this church. They served and worked with so many young people of the parish over many years, holding annual summer camps on Dartmoor and the Isle of Wight where many young folk gave their lives to the Lord. I remember their monthly church parade, how they would march with their band from The Mission Hall in Chelmsford Street up to church to present their colours in the morning service. Such a great witness to the community. This is just a couple of examples from early days, I could go on, but space is limited.

Then all the vicars I have known - such different personalities and styles but all Godly men with vision who faithfully preached The Word, had hearts for evangelism and sought to build up and nurture their flock here.

Through these years we have known good times and difficult times, times of renewing and also the fallow times, but always throughout God has been at work through His Holy Spirit, building His Church, His Kingdom, challenging us, encouraging us and moving us on.

I love this Church. It is a Holy Place with its beautiful stained glass windows and its thick walls soaked with the prayers of God's people over all the years. But I love its people even more. This is my spiritual family and my spiritual home and I feel humbled, blessed and privileged to have worshipped here and served here over many years.

I believe that now, under Tom's leadership, we are witnessing a new phase of blessing, growth and renewal. Many folk have come to join us. I am excited for all that lies ahead and for the continued building of God's kingdom here. I also believe and I know Tom would agree, it is only possible because of the faithful, firm foundations laid by Saints of Old, now in glory, who would rejoice with us and, also with us give the Glory to God.

Tessa de la Mare.

Weymouth Street Pastors

During the first two weeks of partnering with Safe Space, it became apparent that as Street Pastors we were desperately in need of a wheelchair to assist us transporting people safely to "Safe Space" at St Mary's Church. Funded by the Council it is a place of safety for someone feeling vulnerable or unwell.

We quickly realised from social media that SP's working in other towns had a wheelchair as part of their kit. This was then discussed between the SP Co-ordinator and a member of the committee.

Within 20 minutes of this communication, the committee member had a private message from a friend (not in church). This friend wanted to offer the SP's a good quality wheelchair free of charge. The offer was accepted and the wheelchair is now part of our kit.

Isn't God good? He gave us what we needed before we even had to ask!!!!

May I take this opportunity to say thank you so much for your prayers on the evening we attended the New Wine Event before our duty. Please remember us in your prayers particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings as we venture out into the night time economy in Weymouth Town Centre.

Alison Taylor
On behalf of Weymouth Street Pastors

United Breaks Out – New Wine Event held 29 July to 3 August 2021

How wonderful it was to walk into St. John's Church on 6 consecutive evenings with the large screen set before us ready to join with thousands of others in praise, worship and teaching. We really felt that we had attended the event and Holy Spirit moved among us and invigorated us to come back for more! We of course could go back to our homes and to a bed - no camping !!

The preaching on the first evening by Paul Harcourt really spoke of the importance of meeting practical needs and preaching the gospel especially after having had a year filled with uncertainty and fear. How minds may have been affected by the pandemic! Many had been deprived of love and touch and were living with anxiety. They also had no community or corporate worship in churches. We need to be real and that the gospel message of hope assures us we will recover. What we need to do is STAND and the Lord will fight for us - and that is so true.

The person leading had a picture of the recent floods in Germany and how all the mud and silt had stayed in each home when the floods receded. That is what can happen to us in our heart and soul and how we need the rain of living water, that only Jesus brings, to wash us clean and heal us.

There was another picture given later in the week of a pier and the person leading felt that it was for coastal places. We claimed that for our area and prayed and are still praying for revival to come here in Weymouth, Portland and all the towns or villages along the Jurassic Coastline. Please Lord pour out your Spirit and bring revival to our local area.

Alex and Pauline Neels

A Heart of Evangelism Sebastian Stakset

On Day 4 a Swedish man brought his testimony about broken people. He told his story of how he had been brought up feeling unloved by dysfunctional parents and had become a violent gangster/robber and went to prison. He became involved in drugs and more violence. He ended up with mental health issues of paranoia and PTSD. He went through many dark times - a failed marriage leaving a child as he had never been able to love anybody or anything and eventually trying to take his own life twice. On his second attempt he stood on a train station. Just before the train arrived, where he had decided to take his own life, he received a phone call from his brother. "Where are you, I am going to get you the help you need - I am getting you to Rehab," said his brother. That was his first feeling that maybe there was a God as he hadn't heard from his brother for many years.

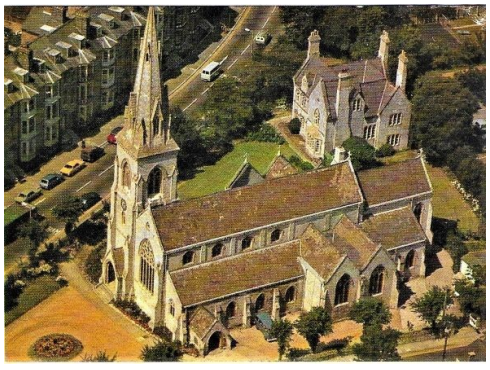
Upon arrival at the Rehab he was handed a copy of *Footprints in the Sand*. He made a vow saying, "If you are real, God, and you help me through this, I will serve you for the rest of my days."

He did come through Rehab and talked how darkness/demons must bow to Jesus and when Jesus spoke to demons they begged to go to live in the pigs.

He said it was like he had handed his car keys over and said, "YOU DRIVE JESUS".

He now preaches the gospel regularly in Prisons. His powerful testimony confirmed to me that no matter how bad or how much trouble a person has been in, Jesus and the power of the gospel can radically transform lives with His love.

Pauline Neels



Thought Jottings readers may be interested in this postcard of St John's and even able to date the year. No indication given of date but the photo predates the removal of the round bed in the carpark and also the removal of the concrete walled garage in what is now the top car park.

Frances Childs

We've added a drawing by Robert Smart. Can anyone give a date to this?

Linda and Michael

Christians and the Climate Crisis

A ROCHA UK CEO, Andy Atkins, who also chairs the **Climate Sunday Initiative, said…*" there has never been a more crucial time for UK churches to come together to pray, act locally and speak up nationally on the climate crisis"…***

To understand what we need to pray for, we need to know a bit about what is going on. So what is all this stuff about **IPCC** and **COP26**, carbon emissions, carbon footprint - what's it all about?

The letters **IPCC** stand for **I**ntergovernmental **P**anel on **C**limate **C**hange. It's always good to remember these things in case you find yourself suddenly co-opted onto a quiz team!

What is the IPCC Report? **The IPCC report** is the sixth UN (United Nations)-led report, detailing the science of climate change and future of the Earth. The report, released on 9 August 2021 is written by 230 authors from 65 countries, setting out the current state of the climate and **steps we must take to fight the climate crisis.**

The UN climate negotiations in Glasgow will begin in less than 100 days' time, in November 2021. These negotiations are also known as **COP26**. This stands for **Conference of the Parties** (not rave-ups!) and is the 26th meeting of countries who signed a treaty to commit to what they would do about climate change, back in 1994.

'The Time is Now' declaration calls on the Prime Minister to make policies in this country to ensure that the government is on track to meet its **emission targets**. In other words, to make sure that we call ALL - from large companies to individuals - to **clean up our act in time,** so that the temperature of our planet will not rise to the extent where serious harm can continue, resulting in loss of life and destruction of homes, caused by unpredictable natural disasters, such as wildfires and dangerous heatwaves, storms and floods. Our individual contribution, in terms of how much artificially generated energy we use, is called our **carbon footprint.**

The Season of Creation (1 Sept-4 Oct) comes just before this critical climate summit meeting. This is therefore an appropriate time for **our Climate Sunday Service on 12th September.** At this service we shall be focussing on what we can do both individually and collectively as a church, both prayerfully and practically, to work towards ensuring that we are being the Good Stewards of God's Creation that He intended us to be.

Valerie Collings

Quick Eco-Tip - Helping Birds and other Wildlife in hot weather

Keeping bird baths topped up with fresh water in warmer weather can be a lifesaver. Get your garden birds through a heatwave, when natural supplies, like worms, become scarce, by putting out extra food like black sunflower seeds and other birdseed. Make sure that drinking bowls for dogs and cats are kept clean and topped up with fresh water. You can also help wildlife by creating a make-shift pond, from a washing-up bowl.

Missionary Prayers

Operation Mobilisation

St.John's Church has a long standing connection to the work of **OM** through Ann, a local girl and church member who was drawn to Christian work with OM in India. There she met and married Edwin Braker and together they were involved with OM until their retirement. They are now living in Brussels and are still passionate about the work of OM as well as being active members of a local church.

OM currently has over 1000 people working in over 50 different countries with the aim of reaching those who have not heard the good news of the gospel. Please pray for safety and wisdom for those involved in muslim communities both abroad and here in the UK.

OM also has a ships' ministry relying mainly on volunteers who live and work on the Logos Hope for a specified period of time. At the time of writing the Logos Hope is in the Caribbean and docks for several days in different ports. People are welcomed on board for tours and talks. Christian literature is available in many languages.

Please pray for

- Enough crew members particularly qualified engineers.
- Those who visit the ship that they will be challenged.
- Good relationships with the local churches.
- Sufficient finance for the work to continue – seagoing vessels are expensive to maintain.
- Give thanks for the faithful partnership OM and other missions have with St John's members past and present. Their generous giving and prayers have remained constant even in difficult times. Lives are being changed!

Like to know more? Write to info.uk@om.org

Dave Moore

London City Mission

I have been interested in the work of LCM for about 30 years plus, probably because I was born and brought up in London.

Dagenham: Every day missionary, Brandon sees many families with problems. There are a lot of broken homes, absent fathers and single parents who are overwhelmed. This is especially the case on the Becontree Estate, the largest of its kind in Europe. Pray for Brandon and the Dagenham Youth Forum.

Hackney: Margaret is typical of many people who Marina Russell, a missionary, has met in the past year. Margaret lost her job during the first Lockdown. In Hackney 28% of families earn less than £13,750 a year. Pray for Marina as she shares the hope of Jesus alongside churches with families who are desperate.

Lambeth: In the past year the South Bank has been a hot spot for youth violence. Further south in Brixton is the home of UK drill music, which has strong connections with gang culture. Pray that missionary Emmanuel Chanda could speak relevantly and lovingly about Jesus to young people tempted by empty promises of gang membership.

Val Newman

Live Streaming: Over 100 new people at each Sunday service!

It's been wonderful to begin worshipping together again after Lockdown. During our August Open Air Services we've seen people in guest houses leaning out of their windows, others standing in doorways, passers by breaking down in tears, others asking questions.

In addition to around 100 church members physically present each week, we have been seeing around 120 views of the service on YouTube. *So the largest part of our "weekly congregation" is now "virtual", and we have doubled in size during lockdown in terms of numbers participating in our services.*

Some watch "live" but most do so hours or days after each service ends. Most visitors are probably only attending 1-3 times a month, so it seems we are ministering to a wider group of maybe 400 people or more, all of whom attend fairly regularly.

21,000 video views in 18 months

Since March 2020 we have logged 21,000 separate video views, totalling over 3500 hours, mainly by people who have had no previous connection to St John's. We now have over 150 subscribers to our channel, all of which are alerted when we upload new things. Many of these have been drawn by the creativity of Tom, Susie and many others over the last few months, in communicating the Gospel in fresh ways, for people of every age.

This is all really encouraging – and a positive impact of Lockdown. It was all a big surprise when we started services online – with sometimes over 300 views a week – and even more a surprise to find over 100 continuing to join us online after Lockdown ended.

Most of our "virtual congregation" are searching for God

Most who join us online are not members of any church but are hungry for spirituality. Many live locally, and are enquirers, wanting to learn more about Jesus, wanting to hear stories of life-changing faith, wanting to learn how to pray. And some of those are now coming onto our website, are reading Jottings, and are using the "chat" button to request prayer or more information about St John's. Some of our new online community have a strong faith already, and a significant number have joined the church over the last few weeks or months.

What does this all mean for us?

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Prayer for Breakthroughs

Let's thank the Lord for this astonishing opportunity to reach so many additional people each week

Let's pray that many will find faith

Let's pray for technical aspects as the streaming team experiment to improve sound and visual quality

Let's pray for Tom, the worship team and all others involved in leading our Sunday mornings as they seek to communicate to virtual as well as physical congregations.

Let's be open to all the Holy Spirit is doing at this exciting time, and to all He is asking of us

Let's pray that as we worship together in the church, those watching at home will be swept up into a powerful sense of the Lord's presence, and will feel included

Welcoming New People

Expect to see more new people turn up on Sundays who may be feeling rather shy and unfamiliar with being in Church – and let's give them a really warm welcome, as well as taking good care of them when the service is over

Let's open our hearts warmly to new families – expect young children to be coming along who may also have no experience of church, who may liven things up somewhat (which can also be stressful for their parents!)

Let's welcome new people into our homes as soon as we can, if we are able to do this – whether for coffee, a meal, or to join in our home groups if they would like to participate. Hospitality is the fastest way for new people to feel part of the church family.

Prayer Hotline - Linked to Website Chat

We are now getting regular requests for prayer, personal support and so on (often local people with no church connections) which can come at any time via the chat button on the website and need more volunteers to help respond to these

Practical Issues on Sundays

Almost all the time, the streaming video is only on the dais, on those leading the service/worship team etc.

If we completely restrict the streaming view to those on the dais, worship team and those leading the meeting etc (and we have experimented with this) it means there is no awareness for those participating virtually of a gathered congregation.

But the sense of a worshipping community is really important for us to convey online, especially as we are so keen for members of our virtual congregation to leave home on Sundays and join us in the church.

To provide a greater sense of worshipping community, during worship, the backs of heads/ shoulders of adults in the front half of the centre aisle (in front of sound desk) can sometimes be seen on camera.

In all this, as Tom has pointed out on several Sunday mornings, we want to take great care regarding safeguarding of children, so parents/guardians need to be aware that children going up to the dais to participate in an activity may be visible on camera.

Patrick Dixon

SAVE THE DATE … **Wednesday 13th October** 7.30pm St John's Church (doors open 7pm)

Sharon Tedford

Do join us for an inspiring evening of songs, stories and scriptures from Sharon's latest album and book. Sharon Tedford is originally from Weymouth but is now living in America. She is a Christian musician and author. Her ministry is called 61Things based on Isaiah 61 v 1- 4.

There will be no entry fee but a collection will be taken during the evening. Maybe meet as a home group and invite any friends along. Refreshments will be served.

There will be a bookstall with CDs on sale.

To give an idea of numbers please contact Trudy in the Parish Office - 01305 786043

Summer update from the Fox's

Thinking of you all and hoping those who needed it had some rest and relaxation over the summer.

We are coming to the end of a 5-year project renovating our home. We hope to be completed by the end of September, when Malcolm continues his training as a counsellor.

(5 years ago)

(2021)

The training is very intense, over a two-year period, which will include an agency placement, personal therapy, academic assignments. He will complete it whilst continuing to work 4 days a week and run his online business. He will need your support & prayers.

We have been approved to be foster carers for older dogs which means they don't need to be boarded in rescue kennels. Some people will know, our beloved dog Libby died 2 years ago and this will give us the opportunity to give a dog a home but not restrict our travels.

Old to new Consulting Room

We have been making stock of photo greetings, recycled Christmas cards & silver clay jewellery. This year we are raising funds for St John's renewal project. The pendants cost between £20-£60 without a chain. We also have 18-inch 1.2mm sterling silver snake chains at an additional cost. Cards are £1 each or 6 for £5. If you are looking for a special gift or cards please get in touch.

Pairing up with Florence

Many of you will probably recognise Mum from the many years that she has worshipped, led homegroups, waved flags, arranged flowers and more… at St John's, in fact since 1976 when we moved to Weymouth from Anglesey with Dad's work and started a new life for our family. We have many happy memories of life in Melcombe Avenue being amazed that God placed us all in just the right house for church, schools, the beach for summer evening teas and later the hospital for easy access after Dad's stroke.

I remember visiting St John's when my sisters left St John's School and my own children went through the school system. I became a Christian at the Down to Earth Mission in 19…?

However as life speeds on and God takes us on a new journey through faith and hope He enables us to learn new things about ourselves. My sister, Joanna and I have got to a point now that in Mum's later years, although her health is becoming frail, her faith is strong. In the future it will be difficult for Mum to be an active member of a home group. With this in mind we are wondering if anyone would be able to join up with Mum as a prayer partner or prayer triplet? This would have to be a fairly regular arrangement to work around carers and other callers.

With love to all and thanks for your ongoing prayers and support for us all.

Penny Jelfs

Are all animals beautiful?

I clearly remember singing the hymn 'All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small', many years ago at Sunday School. It was written by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 – 1895), who was an Irish hymn writer and poet. It also refers to flowers, birds, mountains, rivers, the sky, the weather, garden fruits and our ability to marvel at God's wonderful creation.

But what do we mean by beautiful? Surely there are animals that are not beautiful? The dictionary defines beauty/beautiful as 'the quality that gives pleasure to the sight, attractive, having good features', etc.

Referring to wild creatures, it might be stretching it a bit to call slugs, leeches, grotesque creatures of the ocean deep, and maybe bats or spiders as attractive. However this hymn refers to all creatures, the words partly based on John Ch. 1 verse 3 which states that God created all things.

One creature in the garden that has made me cringe in the past is the garden slug, cold and clammy to the touch and a challenge for me to pick up! I know that they are very partial to eating certain plants, especially Hostas and lettuce, but they do provide an important role in eating plant debris, and are an important food source for animals including birds and hedgehogs.

I made an interesting observation recently. I have a bird table, which during the day is frequented by birds great and small, and it is fascinating to watch their various feeding habits. But at night, especially if it is mild and damp, small slugs crawl up the stand of the bird table and feed on the bird food, a climb of about 4 feet. Somehow, they are able to detect the bird food, and as they are mainly nocturnal animals, by the morning they are all gone. I don't think I've ever used slug pellets, and I wouldn't have the heart to use them now.

However, we all like cuddly furry and non-furry animals, wild or domesticated. Wild animals in particular provide a source of fascination, and it is tempting to stroke or cuddle them. Also, we like to get up close and personal with our cameras and binoculars, on safari, boat trips or out walking in the town or countryside. But I would like to make a plea that in the interests of the animals, we need to keep a respectful distance for their benefit.

Although not a Christian as far as I know, the famous naturalist David Attenborough, recently made a 'prophetic' plea, stating that humankind needs to give wildlife more space, and not to disturb or harm wild animals whether on land, in the air, or in the sea.

However, as Christians we have Hope which is part of the Christian faith and it is reassuring to know that God is in ultimate control of what the future will bring.

Mike Lidstone

IRONMAN 70.3 weymouth

Iron Vicar? Rev Tom is raising money for Hope House by taking on the Iron Man 70.3 in Weymouth on Sun 19th Sept 2021. The Iron Man 70.3 involves a 1.2 mile swim. 56 mile bike ride and 13.1mile run. All donations will spur Tom on to cross that finish line!!!

As we develop Hope House into a youth and community centre our most pressing need is to make the building fully accessible. So any money raised will go towards creating a much needed disabled toilet facility on the ground floor.

To give please make an online donation using the following bank details
A/c no. 00032460 Sort code: 40 52 40 Name: Hope House
Please write 'Iron Man' as your payment reference

Or you can give a cheque to :Pete Evans Jones,

The run takes place up and down the sea front – any support on the course (after church of course) will also be very gratefully received!

Thank you

Jobs on Sundays at St John's

*9am & 10.30am weekly services are starting on Sun 10th Oct. To make this work we need **lots** of help. Here are some of the ways you can be involved…*

Welcome Team: This is everyone's job - but we need a team who will take on particular responsibilities… Giving a warm welcome on the door. Helping people to their seats. Staffing a Welcome area - answering questions, sharing info. Looking out for new people. Chatting, smiling, encouraging, welcoming.
To volunteer please contact:
Tom Coopey

Catering Team. Welcome and hospitality are so important – and we all love a cuppa! Could you be on a team who prepare refreshments, serve with a smile, use our state of the art new dishwasher and chase that last empty coffee cup?
To volunteer please contact Sally Horrell

AV Team. We need more people to be able to operate the sound desk and laptop as well as people to set up and operate the live streams of our services. Full training available.
To volunteer please contact
Jos Bailey:

Musicians / Singers. Do you play an instrument? Can you lead worship? Can you sing? It would be great to include more people in our worship group and be able to have a few teams involved.
To volunteer please contact
Pete Evans- Jones.

Prayer Ministry Team Would you be willing to pray with people after our services? Offering prayer ministry is such an important part of our worship and pastoral care. We need good listeners who will pray with faith and sensitivity. Training and support is available.
To volunteer please contact
Diane Blackwell

Readings and Intercessions. Could you be on a rota for doing Bible readings and/or leading our prayers of intercession at Sunday services?
To volunteer please contact
Linda Miles

Kid's Church Could you help out with our Sunday children's groups? We're looking for helpers and leaders to spend time with our amazing kids, have plenty of fun and help them to grow in faith.
Interested? Please contact
Susie Coopey:

Ignite. School year 7+ Our youth group meet on Sundays to chat, laugh, play games, dig into the Bible, pray - and eat toast. Could you help on this team and support our brilliant young people?
Interested? Contact
Elliott Bailey

Mid- week Jobs
Church Cleaning Many hands make light work. The more cleaners we have the less cleaning we have to do! Could you join a cleaning team? Feather dusters provided.
To volunteer please contact
Ruth Clinch

Grounds Do you like working outdoors? Are you a gardener? Good with a mower? Our brilliant grounds team would welcome a few more pairs of hands.
To volunteer please contact
Dave Moore:

Special Congratulations to

Sally and John Horrell

who celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary this month

Next month's issue

Many thanks to all our writers. Please submit articles dates or information to Linda and Michael Miles **before 22nd September.** Articles may be edited. Web editions do not contain phone numbers, addresses, children's birthdays.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the contributors.