The Birches

Community Matters Newsletter – September Edition

SEPTEMBER 2026

Kingsthorne, Much Birch, Little Birch, Aconbury & Wormelow

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Solar Eclipse

These photos of the recent solar eclipse were expertly taken from Warren Lane in Kingsthorne on 12th August
Photo credit: Graham Hotchen.

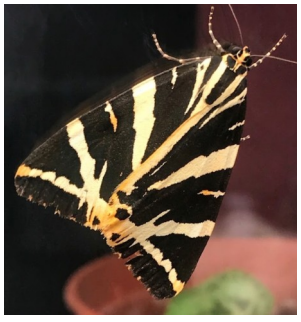
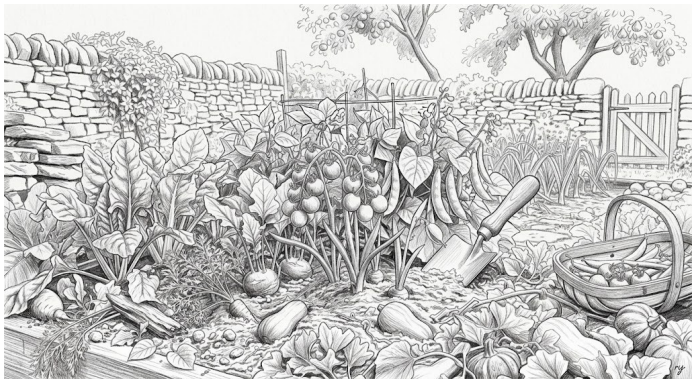


Photo credit: Derek Scrivens

This is a Jersey Tiger Moth which was found sun bathing on a local window pane. Usually found along the south coast of England they are beginning to appear further north.
They fly both by day and night between July and September. During warm sunny spells, they are frequently spotted visiting garden flowers like buddleia or resting on house windows and foliage.

The Birches Newsletter is also available online at www.birches.news

Jobs for the garden in September



What a couple of months! July and August have seen records broken again. Take a look at our gardens and the fields at present. I started my September 2022 article with the last three sentences and here we are in the same state with June added to it. We all crave for warm summers but have had it with a vengeance. Walking on grass creates the same sound as walking on a gravel path. Flowers, shrubs and vegetables look very sorry for themselves and in respect of vegetables it goes without saying that shortages and inferior quality will be evident this autumn and winter. With reducing daylight hours and cooler temperatures very little can be planted to compensate. If, as suggested, this type of weather is going to become the norm, we may have to think about different sowing/planting regimes from those that we are accustomed to. I read recently that it has been suggested that it might be worth reverting back to growing heritage vegetables as opposed to the F1 varieties, as they may be more resilient. Who knows?

- Clean greenhouse and cold frame glass.
- Plant new perennials towards the end of the month.
- Water greenhouse plants in the morning now so plants don't spend all night sitting in cold water.
- Move house plants to a lighter position and reduce watering.
- Bulbs – Daffodil, Scilla, Crocus and Hyacinths can be planted in borders and pots.
- Reseed patches of bare lawn.
- Keep dead heading flowers
- Harvest Apples and Pears – store unblemished fruits, with stalk intact in single layers, not touching, in a cool, dark, frost free and well ventilated location.
- Plant Autumn onion sets.
- Sow small quantities of salad leaves and Radishes.
- Consider Tomato Chutney to use up the green fruits. They can also be stored in boxes in a cool location and brought out to ripen as required.
- If you are lucky enough to have visits from Hedgehogs, put out a little dog or cat food.
- Clean nesting boxes, line with straw or wood shavings and rehang them.
- Put a net over ponds to prevent leaves falling in.

Derek Scrivens

Gardening Club News

Cream teas in the garden
Club members enjoyed tasty scones with cream and jam on a warm summer day on 29th July in the lovely setting of a members' garden. Thanks go to the organisers for setting everything up for the day.

Coming up:
We're looking forward to the **Annual Show on Saturday 5th September in Little Birch Village Hall.** See the front page for further details and the July edition for the Show Programme/

Our monthly events are free to members: £5 for non-members. Refreshments served from 7.00pm.
Usually the talk starts at 7.30pm.

Looking forward to seeing you at our meetings
Lesley - Chair of KT & LB Gardening Club

Contact email: **ktlbgardeningclub@gmail.com**

Follow us on:
Facebook.com/kingsthornandlittlebirchgardeningclub
Instagram.com/Kings_thorn_little_birch_gc

Join us at the

Community Café

@ Much Birch Community Hall

Saturday 12 September 2026

10:00 - 12:30

and every 2nd Saturday of the month

10 October

14 November

12 December

For more information or if you are in need of transport contact Lydia on 01981 540323 or socialfabric@hotmail.com

A local group who want to bring people together, strengthen community links and provide relaxed and fun events for all ages.

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arts alive **FLICKS IN THE STICKS** at Much Birch Community Hall

Thursday 17 September - THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2 12

Miranda Priestly is back - and this time, the fashion world isn't the only thing on the brink of a ruthless transformation. Almost 20 years after the iconic *The Devil Wears Prada* defined a generation, the team returns for a sequel.

Miranda finds herself up against Emily Charlton, her former assistant turned rival executive, as they compete for advertising revenue in a world of declining print media, all while Miranda edges closer to retirement.

Tickets £5 (£4 under 18s)

Refreshments including hot dogs and ice cream available from 7pm

Coming up next month...

Thursday 15 October - GLENROTHAN 12A

Tickets available in advance or on the door (cash or card payments accepted) - for further info or to book tickets please email ***muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com or call 01981 540097***

For further information about films and screenings visit www.artsalive.co.uk

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Or text:
07786 203 130

Local Information

Little Birch Parish Councillors

- Cllr Steve Coles
- Cllr Tom Palfrey
- Cllr Chris Atkinson
- Cllr Nick Deacon
- Cllr Kate Dillon

Molly Walters (Parish Council Clerk)
✉ lbpcclerk@gmail.com

🌍 www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org

Footpath Officers

For any queries about footpaths contact:

Little Birch & Aconbury
Chris Fowler
☎ 07931 292998
Email 📠 chrisfowler1@hotmail.co.uk

Much Birch and Kingsthorne:
David Irwin
☎ 07766 135068
Email 📠 david.irwin13@btinternet.com

Photography Group

We're a friendly local group with a common interest in photography.
Come and join us:
Contact Sally Nichol for more information
☎ 07803 032928
sally.nichol@btinternet.com

Table Tennis

Come and join us to play
on the 1st Tuesday of the month!
Little Birch Village Hall 7pm to 9pm
Only £3 which includes refreshments!

Contact
Patricia Kelly
☎ 07890 480576

Little Birch Village Hall Committee

- Lesley Chapman (Chair)
- John Ellis-Braithwaite (Treasurer)
- Cathy Ellis-Braithwaite (Secretary)
- Sarah Jones (Hall bookings)
- Kate Dillon (Parish Council Rep)
- Jane Bolam (Drama group)
- Tonya Barnett (Drama Group)
- Paulette Traynor (Committee member)

The Birches Newsletter Editor:
John Ellis-Braithwaite
Email 📠 editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

Local Social Media Groups

Find out more in these groups:

Facebook

Much Birch Parish Group
Little Birch Parish Group
King's Thorn & Little Birch Gardening Club

Instagram

King's Thorn Little Birch Gardening Club

Art and Craft Space

Have an art and craft afternoon away from the hustle and bustle of life every Thursday
at Little Birch Village Hall!
2pm to 4pm

Bring your WIP or PhD in whatever art and craft you are working on – or start something new!
Only £3 which includes refreshments!
Contact Sally Nichol
☎ 07803 032928
sally.nichol@btinternet.com

Events & Church Services in September

Events:

Praying with Bishop Richard – 9th September

Bishop Richard will be visiting a number of our local churches on Wednesday 9th September as part of his pilgrimage around the Diocese. He will have visited churches around Ludlow and the Golden Valley in previous days and now comes to our area.

If you wish to join Bishop Richard for a short service and time of reflections, then you can meet him at:

St. Matthew's, Marstow, HR9 6AJ at 3.30 p.m.
St Bridget's, Bridstow, HR9 6QB at 4.10 p.m.
St Mary's, Foy, HR9 6QY at 4.50 p.m.
St Michael's, Sollers Hope HR1 4RW at 5.50 p.m.

Services for September:

Sunday 6th September (14th Sunday after Trinity)

11.00 a.m. at Little Birch Church – Holy Communion

Sunday 13th September (15th Sunday after Trinity)

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch Church – Holy Communion
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch Church – Morning Worship

Sunday 20th September (16th Sunday after Trinity)

9.15 a.m. at Much Birch Church – Morning Worship
11.00 a.m. at Little Birch Church – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

Sunday 27th September (17th Sunday after Trinity)

9.15 a.m. at Llandinabo Church – Holy Communion in Traditional Language

Special Event at St. Cuthbert's Church, Holme Lacy:
Come and join us for one of our occasional services in this lovely church that is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. On Sunday 20th September we will be holding a service of Choral Evensong at 3.00 p.m. with the Hereford Church Singers and with a visiting band of ringers from Fownhope.

It is a great chance to experience this wonderful church with all its monuments and atmosphere.

An article from Revd. Mark : What has Theology ever done for us?

Hi everyone.

When I was at Theological College just outside Oxford, doing my training to become a minister in the Church of England, I, somewhat speciously asked the above question. There were two types of answer.
Firstly, those who had done theology as their first degree or read up on it more deeply than I were keen to point out that it helps explain the world as it is and as it will become at the end of time. They would talk to great effect about God, his redemptive love for all creation and how it was a logical explanation to all those great questions we struggled with when pondering our place in the universe.
Second, those who had studied at the University of Life (i.e. not Oxbridge), said that it was a useful adjunct to their lived experience of God's love in their lives and so helped them with making sense of the world.
I have to say that I see both points of view. Yes, we need some deep questioning and thinking about God – even if we come to the conclusion that there isn't one – but we also need to reflect on how our lives, in all their messiness and complexity, have some sort of meaning and we are not just screaming into the void.
So, while theology can seem to be some ivory-tower luxury for those who have the time and the intellectual capacity to ponder such things, there is still a place for it in everyday life. I want to point to two examples. The first is from Pope Leo XIV on Artificial Intelligence. Now, whether you agree with the Roman Catholic church or not, this is a great document, reminding us that, no matter how wonderful and enticing the dream of technology is, it is nothing if it doesn't serve the common good. The second is from The Church of England House of Bishops and is called "Hope for All Creation". I am just starting to study it, but so far I am impressed with its thinking regarding the current environmental crisis. And, even if you have no faith, both of these documents offer up a significant challenge to how we live now and how we might live in the future.
So far from theology being relegated to the sidelines, here are two documents worth reading. Not only that, both are free! So download each one, if you want, and have a read and a think!

Magnifica Humanitas: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html

Hope for All Creation:
https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2026-06/hope-for-all-creation-for-web-new.pdf

Revd Mark

Much Birch Parish Council
Details of meeting held on 2/7/26

PARISH MEETING – at the Much Birch Parish Council Meeting held in the Much Birch Community Hall on the 2nd July 2026 from 7.30 pm.

The parish council held their July Parish Council Meeting on Thursday 2nd July 2026. The meeting discussed the ongoing issues with the much needed resurfacing of Tump Lane, where the road was broken up in a large number of places. It was hoped that the surface repairs would be carried out in the near future. There were some ongoing enquiries, being made by the Ward Councillor, concerning the play area in Tump Lane and also the grass cutting contract. The parish council were looking at further improvements to be made to the public rights of way network and would be bidding for grant funding to assist with the projects. There were no further planning applications for consideration within the parish.

The next ordinary Parish Council Meeting of the Much Birch Parish Council will be held on Thursday 3rd September 2026 from 7.30pm at the Much Birch Community Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Details of forthcoming meetings are in the column to the right.

Much Birch Parish Council

Councillors

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AW, email: thecooks@wyenet.co.uk Tel. 01981 540703
Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch HR2 8AX email: roisinburge@hotmail.com Tel. 01981 540724
Cllr Chris Pickering-Grey 4 Court Farm Barns, Much Birch HR2 8HT email:chris@pickering-grey.uk Tel. 07712 813218
Cllr Michael Agyeman Little Willow, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorne, Hereford, HR2 8AU email: magyeman92@gmail.com Tel. 01981 540840
Cllr David Irwin email: David.Irwin13@btinternet.com Tel. 07766 135068
Cllr Steve Turner The Underhills, Hollybush Lane, Much Birch, Hereford, HR2 8HX, Tel. 07768 206296 email:turnersofcrossways@btinternet.com

Parish Council Clerk: Mrs Alison Wright email: muchbirchclerk@gmail.com
Much Birch Footpath Officer:
email: MBfootpaths@btinternet.com
Tel. 07766 135068

Dates for the forthcoming meetings:

03/09/26, 01/10/26, 05/11/26, 03/12/26
All are in Much Birch Community Hall from 7.30pm.

Full minutes of the meetings can be found on the Parish Council website: **www.muchbirchparish.org.uk**
You can also find us on X (formerly known as Twitter) at https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC and Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish

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Summer Turns the Corner in The Birches

There is a subtle shift in the air across The Birches as late August has arrived. The long, sun-baked afternoons are gradually yielding to crisp, misty mornings over the Wye Valley, signalling that early autumn is just around the corner. This season's backdrop, however, has been remarkably dry. Herefordshire has experienced one of its driest summers in recent memory, following a historic July that delivered less than 10% of our usual rainfall. The parched soils have left local pasture baked brown and garden beds thirsty, making any passing shower a welcome sight. Yet out along the parish lanes, nature remains remarkably resilient. Deep-rooted hedgerows are bursting with wild fruit—heavy clusters of blackberries, elderberries, and bright red rosehips line the tracks toward Aconbury Hill. Swallows and house martins are gathering in growing numbers, holding noisy family summits before their long journey south. It's a rewarding, transitional time in our corner of the county—a brief window to enjoy the tail-end of summer while watching the landscape quietly gather itself for the seasonal turn.

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For further information please contact the **Secretary Sylvia Jones** on **01981 540980** or email : **mbchsec@gmail.com** or visit the website: **www.muchbirchcommunityhall.org**

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SHORT MAT BOWLING AT LITTLE DEWCHURCH

We will start playing our indoor short mat bowls at Little Dewchurch Village Hall again on Thursday September 3rd at 7 pm. and every Thursday thereafter. Sessions are 2 hours long with a break for tea and biscuits and cost £5. The first three weeks are free to see if potential new members enjoy the game.

Bowls is a nice, friendly game, a way of gently exercising and there are no age limits, young and old can all play well.

For further information contact John Caton, 01981540415 or just come on the night, everybody is welcome.

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Contact Sarah Jones on 07947 222 650
Email: littlebirchvh@gmail.com
Website: www.birches.news/lbvh

Coffee & Books at LB Village Hall

Held in the morning of the first Thursday and third Saturday of the month

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Book of the month for September

This month I would like to highlight an author rather than an individual book i.e. Joanna Trollope. She died last December and I was inspired to re-read some of her books.

In the past she has been unfavourably compared with her famous ancestor Antony Trollope and her novels have been described as "Aga sagas". Terence Blacker who coined the phrase, admitted a decade later that he "felt terribly" for lumbering Trollope with the phrase which seemed to stick.

However, when I re-read three of her books : A Village Affair, A Passionate Man, and The Rector's Wife I was struck by how good they were. She really understands human nature and how people relate to one another. Her characters are so believable and you really care what happens to them.

So even if you have read them before, have another go. I'm sure you will enjoy them.

Jennifer
~~~

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- Baby: Nursery equipment, medical devices, prams, cots
- Children: School books, sports equipment,
- Young people: Books/tools for school/uni/apprenticeship
- Adults: Mobility aids, emergency repairs,
- Elderly: Physical aids, wheelchairs, replacement white goods

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PILATES with Alison Allan

Seniors Pilates is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall
Mondays 11.15am to 12.15pm

Join Alison Allan for Pilates – sessions are taught as small group classes and as individual 1:1 sessions.
Pilates is a great way to keep your body feeling agile and energised, The movements focus on posture, alignment, core strength balance and flexibility.

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tmw Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing

tmw is at Little Dewchurch Village Hall
Thursdays 10.45am to 11.45pm

Join Alison Allan for Tai Chi movements for well being. A beautifully flowing and carefully selected sequence of movements designed to enhance and promote our physical and emotional wellbeing. The movements, which have origins in Tai Chi, Chi Kung and meditation are simplified and can be performed standing or seated making it accessible to everyone.

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Mel's Musings

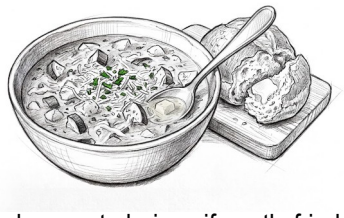
I love this time of year. Why, well mainly because I thoroughly enjoy picking my own produce, eating it and also preparing it for the winter by either drying, freezing or bottling. I particularly enjoy making big trays of Ratatouille from my own onions, courgettes and tomatoes all chopped up, seasoned with salt and pepper and generous dabs of crushed garlic and butter and cooked in the oven for around half an hour or until the courgettes are cooked. I then pack them into individual portion plastic pots I have saved from desserts I have bought, and then freeze for use in the heart of winter as a quick vegetable accompaniment with a meat or fish dish.

I love courgettes and always grow lots, not only to make the above ratatouille but also I grate them and freeze them to put in with all my curries, stews and soup dishes. They make a delicious courgette, cheese and potato soup, which is a favourite and easy to make.

Here's the recipe for courgette, cheese and potato soup:

500g potatoes, peeled and chopped;
2 stock cubes;
1kg courgettes, roughly chopped;
bunch spring onions
100g mature cheese – grated.

Cook potatoes in enough water just to cover, along with the stock cubes, simmer for 5 mins once brought to the boil then add courgettes and cook until nearly tender. Add spring onions, chopped, and cook until all tender (around another 5 mins). Turn off heat and add cheese and then blitz. Add more water, if needed, at this stage and also season to suit taste. Freezes well.



Courgettes are also most glorious if gently fried in butter, when they start to caramelise and taste so very sweet. You can grate them and make courgette bread or courgette cake, a remarkably moorish and moist alternative to carrot cake.

For a change what about **courgette fritters** made from squeezed out, grated courgettes mixed with a basic batter, with some finely chopped onion or spring onion, garlic and salt and pepper. Fry in tablespoon sized portions until crispy on both sides. Finally try courgette and sweetcorn relish or just basic courgette chutney. I am just finishing my very last jar of chutney I made in August 2021, so will have to make some more this year. Anyway, please don't dismiss this wonderful vegetable, just remember to pick it before it get bigger than 6" then it will be in its best condition. No peeling required and will keep in the fridge for at least a week with no deterioration.

Mel

Defibrillator Locations

IN A LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY CALL 999

AEDs are available to use locally in case of sudden cardiac arrest. A defibrillator is an easy to use, medical device that analyses the heart's rhythm and if needed, delivers an electrical shock (defibrillation) to help the heart establish an effective rhythm.

- **Allensmore** Locks Garage
- **Backney** on the garage wall at Market Gardens Cottage
- **Bridstow** on the outside of the village hall
- **Garway** on the wall outside the Garway Moon pub
- **Harewood End** at Harewood End Inn on outside of the pub at the back in the beer garden.
- **Little Birch** on the outside of the village hall
- **Llanwarne** on the wall by steps leading up to the village hall
- **Much Birch** on the outside of the church hall
- **Much Birch Axe & Cleaver** on the side of the pub
- **Much Dewchurch** outside Steiner School, first building after the church
- **Peterstow** at the Yew Tree pub
- **Sellack** on the outside of the parish hall (key code needed)
- **St Weonards** old BT phone box off the A466 between the church and Forge Cottage
- **Wormelow** at the Cricket Club &Carrot & Wine shop
- **Wormelow a**lso at the Tump Inn
- **Wilton** on wall at the BP garage on the roundabout

New defibrillator

A new defibrillator has been installed at The Tump Inn.

Thank you to the locals who raised the money to purchase it at the monthly quizzes and to Graham Dean who fitted it free of charge.

Do you have something of interest to the community which you would like to appear in the next edition of The Birches?

The deadline for the October edition is
Friday 18st September 2026
You can contact the Editor at the following email address:
editorial@birchesnews.org.uk

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