

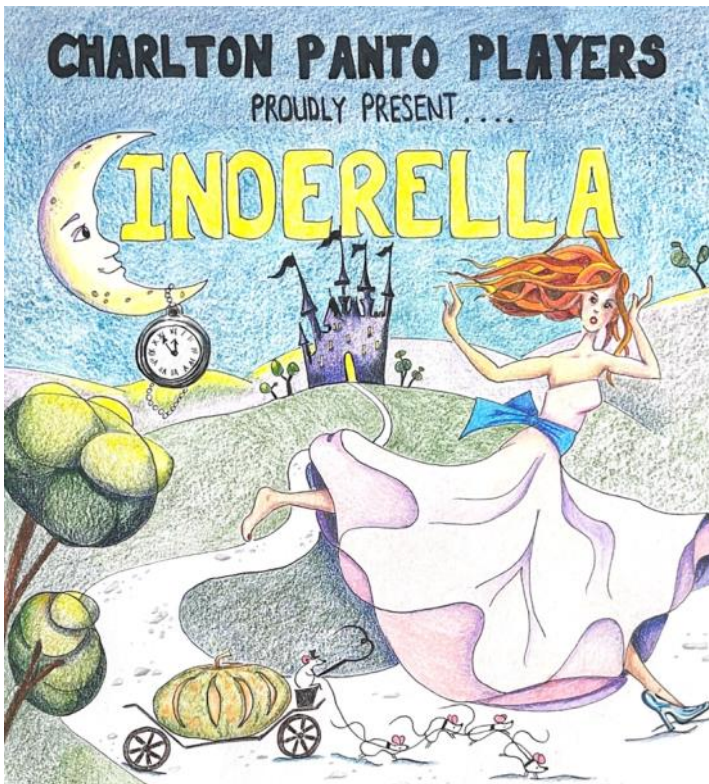
CHARLTON LINK

Village News for the People of Newbottle & Charlton

ISSUE 430 FEBRUARY 2025

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Charlton Link Editor: Julia Rands, juliarands@hotmail.com

Have you already seen your first chocolate Easter egg of 2025? A friend claims to have spotted some in a supermarket between Christmas and New Year. I only hope that these eggs had a very long 'sell by date', because Easter is late this year.

Ash Wednesday, the day that marks the start of Lent, is not until 5th March. Consequently we have a whole month from the traditional end of the Christmas and Epiphany festivities at Candlemas on 2nd February until our preparations for Easter begin.

Is this just 'dead time'? Will we spend February kicking our heels waiting for March, and Lent, to begin? All time is a precious gift from God, and because Christians believe that God is love, we also believe that all the time we are given can be used for our benefit.

Jesus spent thirty years in relative obscurity from the time of His birth until the beginning of His public ministry. We know little about those years except that He lived with His earthly family, and He prayed. The detailed accounts of His three short years of ministry, until His death, resurrection and ascension, suggest that the prayers of the preceding 30 years had not been simply a way filling time, they were essential preparation for the tumultuous events that would follow.

No time spent with God in prayer is wasted time. We may not immediately perceive what God is doing in and through our prayers, because His timescales are often not our own, but as we look back we can often see that the good changes in our lives have deep roots that grew over a long time.

February will not be 'dead time' in the church's calendar this year. It will be a blessing to have time to prepare for Lent. Like the natural world in winter, it may appear to be a time of stasis, when nothing is growing, but if we give a little of each week to God in prayer we can be sure that we will be growing spiritually through His work in our lives.

Prayer is both spoken and unsaid. It includes our requests and questions to God, but also simply time spent in silence in His presence. Our beautiful church is open everyday for this purpose, and you are welcome to visit it at any time, and especially to join us for our services. The details are printed below.

With all good wishes,

Father Matthew

Tel. 811364, email: fathermatthew.r@icloud.com

Facebook/St James's Church, Newbottle & Charlton

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY IN CHURCH AT 9.30AM

WEDNESDAY 12th FEBRUARY AT 9.30AM

AN INFORMAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION, AT 7 CARTWRIGHT ROAD,
FOLLOWED BY REFRESHMENTS

ALL ARE WELCOME

Family Easter Bingo Saturday 29th March



We're eggcited to be hosting our Easter themed Family Bingo Night at the Village Hall, with all proceeds raised going towards the Charlton Playing Field Project.

There will be 5 games of bingo with Easter egg prizes.

We hope you'll join us for what will be an egg-citing and egg-cellent night! Tickets available in advance via Ticketsource and on the door. Ticket details will be published on Charlton Chat. Starts 5 p.m.



Quiz night Returns!!!

Rose and Crown : Monday 10th March.

Please email Charltonplayingfields@yahoo.com to register your team.

More fundraising events coming up for The Playing Field in 2025. Keep an eye on Charlton Chat and in The Link for further details.

The Trustees of Charlton Village Hall would like to thank John Silver, Andrew Beadle, Rebecca Jacob and Phil Wolfe for their maintenance efforts on the hall and grounds.

They have all been great at stepping in to repair storm damage and clear brambles, etc.



Community gardening

Following on from last month, I am still wanting to reach out to see if there is any interest in developing a community garden in Charlton? I have had a couple of enquiries but in case you missed last month...

I have moved house and my old vegetable garden behind the Shepherds Huts on Drury Lane is free and so there is a bit of land available. It is a really lovely space and I am open to all ideas about how best to use it as a garden. I would particularly love to see some sort of group or community approach to growing food but can consider an ideas..

Let me know if you have any ideas, or if you know anyone who might be interested.

Alice
alice@forceleapfarm.com



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An advertisement for Charlton Installation Services. The top half features a white light switch with a black plug inserted into it, set against a blue background with a sunburst effect. Below the switch is a list of services. The bottom half shows a close-up of solar panels. At the very bottom, there are four logos: NAPIT, Approved Electrician, TRUST MARK, and REAM.

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An advertisement for Smiths Newsagents. It features a red silhouette logo of a person reading a newspaper. Below the logo is the company name in red. The main text is in black and bold, describing their delivery services. At the bottom, there is an email address in italics.



School Update

'Let all that do be done in Love'

Every person matters; Every moment counts

1 Corinthians 16:14

Each class started their new topics for Spring term 2025.

Oak (Reception) - People who help us

Ash (Year 1 and 2) - Schools in the past

(If any of our older residents would like to come in and share what school was like when they were a child, please contact us - we would be very grateful).

Elm (Year 3 and 4) - Stone Age to Iron Age

Birch (Year 5 and 6) - World War 2.

Ash class will be going to the Black Country Museum this month to see what school was like in 1911 and Birch class will be going to Bletchley Park to learn about ciphers and codes. Photos will be shared next month.

Each term we focus on one of our school Christian values. These form the main themes of our collective worship and children carry out homework tasks linked to this. We strive to support our school community in living and breathing these core values. This half term's value is FORGIVENESS.

We also carried out a day all about Spirituality. This day supported the children about what spirituality is. In its most simple term it is the concept that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves and doesn't necessarily always link to a religion. The children carried out activities linked to four areas of spiritual development - self, others, the world and the beyond.

Finally, we have two updates on Staffing - Mrs Lovesay-Bonham is having a baby and will be going on maternity leave in May and also I got married at the beginning of January. I will now be known in school as Mr Pitts-Smith.

I hope to see many of you during February half term for the village panto.

Wish us luck!

Mr Pitts-Smith, Headteacher





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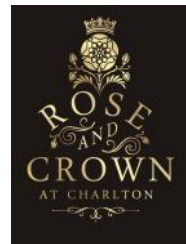
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Valentines Dinner 14 February

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Nature Notes

There's been some rather serious pruning of our apples and pears. We ended up with an enormous pile of prunings which have now been chipped to give us plenty of material to solidify the paths at the bottom of the garden. It has been so wet this winter that we have had water standing in all sorts of places which have never been waterlogged before. The growth on the trees has been enormous because of the wet, with many of the new shoots producing five or six feet of growth just this year. Apples and pears produce fruiting spurs on two-year old growth so most of this year's new growth had to come out in order to keep the trees to a manageable size.

We have had a pied wagtail in the garden pecking around underneath the bird feeder, and a neighbour tells us that the pied wagtail visiting his feeder always chases all the other birds away, even though he says there is plenty for all of them.

We spied our local falconer out in the field flying one of his birds the other day. We had been told by another falconer some years ago that her birds, having been retired to their 'mews' while they were moulting, had to be retrained all over again each time – so it was not like a dog which once trained will remember its training (more or less). But our local falconer keeps his birds with him all year round so they don't forget him or their training. We had an interesting conversation about the language of falconry and how some of the technical terms have entered our ordinary speech without us realizing that they are now 'dead metaphors'.

If we refer to someone having been 'hoodwinked': that is from falconry, as the birds have their heads covered with a hood to keep them quiet until they are in the right place to hunt. Many of the words used in falconry came from Norman French as it was an aristocratic pursuit: we use the word 'rouse' to mean awaken, but this was metaphorical at first, from the French word '*ruser*' which described a hawk rising up and shaking out all its feathers. To be 'under someone's thumb' comes from the falconer tightly gripping the jesses (the ties attaching the bird's legs) under his thumb to prevent it flying until released. And to keep the bird even more secure the falconer would keep the jesses 'wrapped around his little finger'. Birds were often 'at the end of their tether' when they couldn't fly any further than their line allowed. We particularly like the origin of 'codger' as in 'old codger'; falcons were carried to hunt on a cadge – a portable perch (hence 'cadging a lift') and these were often carried by old falconers or cadgers/codgers.

At the time of writing the temperature is above freezing but we have had some really cold weather and hard frosts, meaning that the ground was rock hard. It seems amazing that almost as soon as the frost has gone there are the first snowdrops and acornites, not exactly fully out, but definitely showing colour. It won't take much sunshine to have them in full glory. Snowdrops are able to grow through frozen ground because they have hardened leaf tips, and apparently the leaves contain antifreeze proteins which means that they are very slightly warmer than the cold ground and can push through. If the weather is freezing when they are up they can collapse to the ground but miraculously they recover themselves once the temperature rises. We already have hellebores in flower – some of them were showing colour before Christmas.

DMJ
Home Improvements

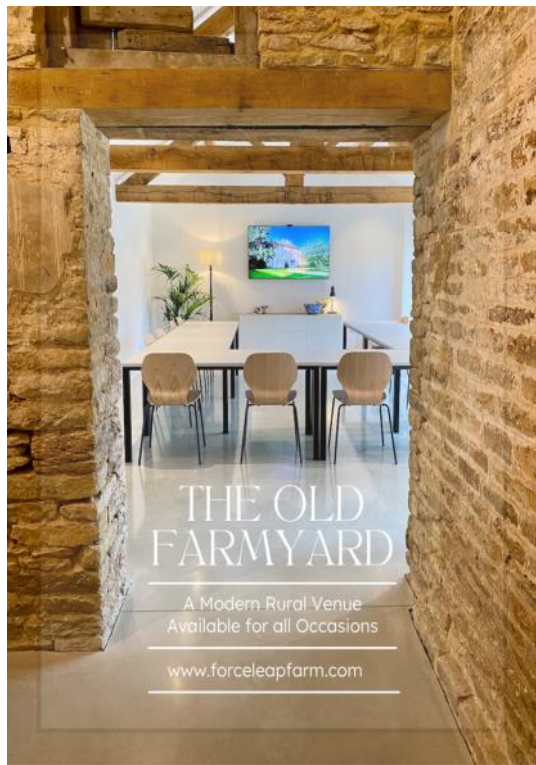
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