

Aymestrey Matters



*W*inter 2025



Parish Notice Board



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 21st December 6.00pm- Aymestrey Festivity @ Riverside Inn

Friday 2nd January 10.00 for 10.30am- New Year Walk from Parish Hall

Saturday 3rd January 7.00pm- Christmas & Epiphany Concert. @ Parish Hall

Thursday 8th January 2.00pm- Whist Drive @ Parish Hall

Saturday 17th January 6.30pm- Aymestrey Village Wassail

Wednesday 27th January 7.30pm- AGM @ Parish Hall

Friday 20th February 7.00pm- Curry Night @ Parish Hall

Saturday 21st February 10.00am- A.P.Commons Association AGM @ Parish Hall

FUN QUIZ



2nd Friday in the
Month
In the Parish Hall
8pm

Bring your pals or
come along and meet
new friends



Parish Council

Meetings held in the
Parish Hall
7.00pm

4th Wednesday in the
month
(except Dec & Aug)

ALL Parishioners are
welcome to attend



"Tea / Coffee at the Hall"

*Come and join us for the
weekly social event.*

*Meet new people, have a
chat, all parishioners
welcome.
Every Tuesday*

10.30am to 11.30ish



**Carpet Bowls
Monday
Evenings
@ Parish Hall
7pm
All Welcome**

AYMESTREY PARISH HALL

A.G.M.

WEDS 27th JAN @ 7.30pm
ALL WELCOME

Please come along and share any
ideas you might have especially for
events you would like to see
at the Hall in 2026.

FILM NIGHTS

3rd Friday in the
Month

Meet at the Hall 7pm
for Supper with Film
starting at 7.30pm

See Back Cover for details
of coming features

EDITORS' PAGE

Christmas is coming, 'tis the season to be jolly. Certainly is, looking at most of the articles we have been sent this time especially the events and celebrations to be held in our villages. But this brings us to a question.

Does Aymestrey punch above it's weight?

That's certainly been said on a number of occasions and by quite a few people.

Certainly Aymestrey is a large parish but has few inhabitants spread out around the area, many rather isolated or in small hamlets. Yet when you look at the events and happenings throughout the year as well as in this Christmas, New Year season it becomes apparent that as a parish, small in population as we are, the number and diversity of those events is impressive.

From the following pages we can see mentions of fetes and bonfires, fayres and sales, gatherings and pastimes and even new celebrations such as the Wassail on 17th January, the 'Old Twelfth Night' where you can sample the Wassail Drink and the Wassail Ceremony. That's got to be worth supporting.

We would also like to express our thanks to all contributors and distributors, regular and occasional, not forgetting Imogen Davis for her charming front covers throughout year and take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Dee & Martyn

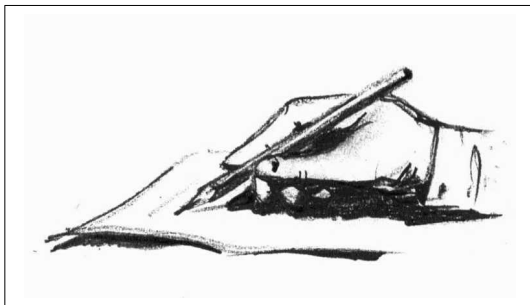
***Please forward all articles, photos, notices and letters to
editor@aymestrey.org***



Well done all!.



Hall 'Christmas decorating'
team Dec 2nd



Parish Council

Parish Council doings and extracts from the Clerk's postbag.

News from the Parish Council...

Following the resignations reported in September, two new members, Councillor Dan Hurcomb and Councillor Doug Murrie, have been co-opted and welcomed to the Parish Council. One vacancy remains, please get in touch if you are interested in applying.

Flooding

To help address local flooding concerns, the Parish has received a limited supply of AQUA-SAC® S.O.S. from Herefordshire Council. A list of households that may benefit from their use is being drawn up. If your property is at risk of flooding from any source, please contact the clerk for further details. The sacs will be issued directly to householders, so they are available when needed and further information about the sacs, designed as an alternative to sandbags, is available from the clerk.

Notice Boards

Additional Parish notice boards will soon be in place to help keep everyone informed. A brand-new board, to be located at the Parish Hall, is on order and will be installed on the fence by the entrance. Thanks are due to the Parish Hall Committee for suggesting and agreeing to this. The Lengthsman will install a second board at Mortimers Cross, ensuring residents can easily access Council information and updates. Other areas of the Parish which already have boards are Covenhope, Yatton and Leinthall Earls.

Garden Waste

Residents can now sign up for Garden Waste collections – please see the information below from Herefordshire Council. If you have already registered but have not received a response, please remember to check your junk mail folder!

Subscribe to our new garden waste service. You cut. We collect. Nature composts.

Imagine more time to enjoy your garden - not just work in it. With our new fortnightly garden waste collection service, starting in March 2026, you can spend less time transporting waste and more time relaxing in your outdoor space.

Our year-round service (excluding just two weeks at Christmas) will collect your garden waste directly from your property and deliver it for composting at a local facility.

Subscriptions will open on 22 October 2025, so sign up soon to ensure you're ready for collections to start on 30 March 2026.

Residents are able to sign up to the service over the phone, using the 01432 260000 (General customer services) or 01432 260 051 (Waste management customer service line) to do so. One of our customer service team will guide the resident through the sign up process and complete everything needed during the call.

Or sign up on line: my.herefordshire.gov.uk under services, garden waste

Why subscribe?

It's better for you (and the planet):

No more plastic sacks. Say goodbye to single-use green bags and hello to a cleaner, greener solution

Effortless and affordable. Just £60 a year, that is just £2.40 per collection.

We bring the bin. A spacious 240-litre brown bin delivered to your door - or 4 x 60 litre reusable sacks if your property is not suitable for a bin

Compost made local. Your garden waste becomes Herefordshire soil improver

No more trips to the recycling centre. Save time, fuel, and hassle

Flexible for all gardens. Share a bin with neighbours or get extra bins if you need them

Moving house? Take your subscription with you - no extra charge

Finance

The Budget and Precept for 2026/27 were agreed at the November meeting. The Precept has been set at £15,477.00, representing a 10% rise on this year. Based on the current 2025/26 Tax Base (with the updated figure expected shortly), a Band D property will pay approximately £8 more next year.

Councillors agreed funding for:

- Printing costs for **Aymestrey Matters** (also supported by the Parish Hall and the Parochial Church Council),
- Lengthsman and Public Rights of Way maintenance,
- Contributions to Parish events such as the Fete and Bonfire & Fireworks,
- Churchyard upkeep,
- The Good Neighbour Scheme,
- The Commons Association,
- Maintenance and potential replacement of defibrillators,
- A contribution towards an award for a pupil at Wigmore School.

The total budget is £19,317.71, higher than the Precept. The difference is met through estimated grants, contributions towards printing costs and £1,771.71 from general reserves.

Meetings

All residents are very welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, held on the **4th Wednesday of each month at 7.00pm in the Parish Hall**, except in August and December. Your views and involvement are important.

- December 2025 – No meeting
- 28 January 2026
- 25 February
- 25 March
- 22 April

On behalf of the Parish Council, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2026.

Mrs Maggie Brown, Clerk. clerk@aymestrey.org 07398 222 310



4th Annual Curry Competition 2026



The fourth Aymestrey Curry Competition is being held on Friday 20th February at 7pm in the Parish Hall. For £15 you will have the opportunity to taste and mark ten different curries with rice, nan, poppadoms and condiments.

Following the competition we will be showing the film 'The Naked Gun'

Please let us know if you are coming by phoning Ian on 01568 770816, or emailing webadmin@aymestrey.org or filling in the form on Aymestrey website at www.aymestrey.org/aymestrey-curry-competition as we need to know numbers so the cooks have an idea how many tastings they need to cater for.

If you would like to enter a curry, please contact Ian Banks via email at me@ianbanks.me.

If you do not wish to taste any curries but would like to see the film it is likely to start at around 8pm, however you are welcome to attend earlier if you wish, film only is £6.

Please pay cash on the door and bring your own refreshments.

Film and Food at Aymestrey Parish Hall



Friday – 20th – February

4th Aymestrey Curry Competition

Can you handle the heat?

PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

There is one vacancy on the Parish Council which may now be filled by co-option. Applications are invited.

If you have an active interest in the well-being of your community, you may be just the person needed!

If you would like to be considered, or to know more about being a councillor, please contact Maggie Brown, Parish Clerk on 07398 222 310 or email clerk@aymestrey.org

Mighty Hikes - Macmillan Fundraiser for 2026

Mighty Hikes are an award-winning series of marathon and half marathon hikes, taking place in some of the most beautiful and unspoiled parts of the UK. If you're looking for a fun way to get fit, a memorable day out with friends and family, and a chance to celebrate or remember a loved one, then Mighty Hikes are for you.

And it doesn't matter if you're lacing up your boots for the first or fiftieth time – Macmillan will be there to support you every step of the way!

More information available <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/mighty-hikes>



What is your earliest childhood memory? My Dad grabbing me by the hair as I disappeared between the boat and bank on Norfolk Broads

Do you enjoy travelling and if so, where? Visited almost 40 countries, my favourites being Australia, Borneo and Sri Lanka

What is the most challenging part of your job? Trying to balance the Adult Social Care budget whilst protecting our frailest residents

When and where were you happiest? In 2003 going round the world for a year with my husband Barry in a motorhome

What advice would you give a young person leaving home? Don't be afraid to ask for help

What do you enjoy watching on T.V.? Traitors and Foreign Language detective series

What are you passionate about? Tottenham Hotspur

What do you consider your greatest achievement? Learning to swim at the age of 68

Carole Gandy, our Ward Councillor, was born in Chingford but moved to Hemel Hempstead when she was 10. She married Barry and they had two children and moved to Redditch. She became a councillor in 1990. Carole worked in radiology at Alexandra Hospital. They moved to Herefordshire in 2014 and she became CC in 2015, Cabinet Member ASC in 2023.

What do you consider the most overrated virtue? Patience

What word or phrase do you most overuse? 'Barry where are you?'

What would be your last meal on earth? Shepherd's Pie

What is your favourite piece of music? Bohemian Rhapsody

How would you like to be remembered? That woman who tried to brighten up the world with her colourful glasses and quirky earrings.

What is your most treasured possession? My wedding ring

What is your greatest extravagance? Visiting the Galapagos Islands

How do you best relax? Doing Cross Stitch

What is your most memorable moment? Becoming Leader of Redditch Borough Council

Do you have motto or proverb that you live by? Live every day to the full as it might be your last

MH

Notes From The Marsh

mid-September to mid-Nov 2025

Weather-wise – or otherwise?

Disclaimer – being weather-wise does not mean being witchy (and no, homo non-sapiens, my broomstick does not need maintenance – I'm a pixie, we're self-propelled)

Having got flights of fancy out of the way... on 18th November, a long look at the sky, and a quick look at *nephology* – nothing to do with your sibling's pesky male offspring, but the study or contemplation of clouds. Towering cumulonimbus thunderheads, like cauliflowers or an advancing white snow wall on the horizon; high windy cirrus mare's tails and serene mackerel skies of altocumulus – all picturesque and full of weather information. Cumulonimbus is often described as threatening and can produce heavy snow – (though personally I see sprouts as more threatening than cauliflowers.)

Anyway, no pie up there, just soft but menacing cloud like a cashmere shawl – so, folks, stocking up the larder was in order. Having remarked that a small drop in temperature would herald snow, satisfaction on 19th November on seeing a few frozen flakes in the garden and a light covering of snow on the Long Coppice. A local Red Kite sailed serenely on towards the east, so nothing too bleak for the time being.



However - hardly a blizzard – but are we in for a more Arctic winter? Some would argue that a massive apple crop foretells a bitter season; in fact, the trees had panicked over lack of water earlier on, and produced offspring to make sure of a fruiting future.

Meanwhile, raspberries and blackberries went on providing small sweet desserts through to mid-October – had the Devil forgotten to spit on them this year? A good fruity source of vitamin C but also of garden surprises – mine seem to migrate from year to year, as they can spread underground and pop up in the paddock – where not invited! Nor had I realised that loganberries are a raspberry hybrid. (Interesting to note that Russia is said to grow 23% of total raspberry production – they like woodlands and don't mind the cold.) A bumper crop of quinces too, but they'd all bumped to the ground by early November, nor does quince jelly float my boat!



(And this is what I do with raspberries, apart from freezing them: crush shortbread fingers (mind your own!), add chopped banana, stew raspberries lightly with a teaspoon or so of sugar, pour hot fruit & juice over shortbread, add cream - warm, delicious, mostly local!)

Others might wonder if the arrival of Snowbirds and Redwings suggested that Scandinavia was already too cold to hold them? – sight & sound of a 'chacking' Fieldfare came on 26th October. Forty more went winging along the foot of the Long Coppice on 7th November. A queen Buff-tailed Bumble carried on prospecting in the shrubbery.

The sixteenth saw a flight of about 15 Redwings over north-west slopes.

(Listen for a haunting little 'seep' overhead as they fly

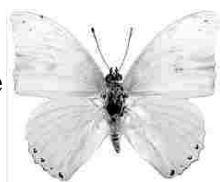


on cold evenings.) Most likely they hope for good pickings in our orchards and woodlands when supplies have been consumed further north.

Is there a mycologist in the house? An interesting cup fungus appeared outside the garage (16th November); a pale creamy colour, looking like a delicate wax shaving, roughly 2 inches across, changing to dull gold after frost. (Surely a *Peziza* – which sounds like a magic spell! - but just possibly *Peziza petersii*, formerly *P. proteana*, which is quite rare in the UK.) Perhaps the layer of fir-tree debris had something to do with it?

The Moth Trap? - further performances may be few and far between, though some hardy but somewhat dowdy types fly through winter – earlier on silvery-grey Novembers and furry black Decembers, then beige Winters into January. A Grey Shoulder-knot appeared in the trap in mid-October, a whitish moth with thin black markings – they hibernate and reappear in March or April – caterpillar food plant is the Oak, so no problems round here.

As for butterflies, a golden-yellow Brimstone visited the patio on 6th October, a lovely sunny day with soft cloud.



Other autumn visitors have included a selection of Caddisflies. As a total Caddisfly amateur with only a useful but limited identification spreadsheet, I find

these wetlanders elegant, slimline and slightly transparent, with several being a splendid orange-russet - but am only sure about the Caperer (*Halesus radiata*) which has a distinctive outlined zigzag towards the end of its wings. Does it caper? - not while in a moth trap! This must be a description of the poor thing fluttering at the end of an angler's fishing-line. Notes on Caddisfly behaviour suggest that they sit still in the sedges during the day (giving them their alternative title of Sedge Flies)– except when there is a hatch or a mating swarm.

They spend up to a year as predatory aquatic larvae before emerging winged and



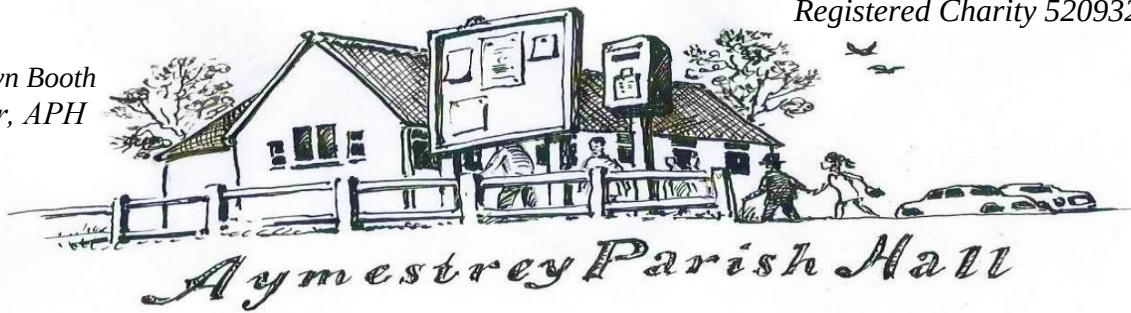
only able to take in liquid; most adults only live for a few days. Either way, they make a good meal for fishes, dragonflies and bats. They have some wonderful names - still hoping to see a Welshman's Button (*eddiwch fi!*) – the button in question being a palp or feeler like a mask over its face – or how about a Grannom (possibly from 'granny') or a Cinnamon Sedge?

On that marsh note, may all your marshmallows be sweet ones and float gently on hot chocolate - tis the season to be jolly, cut holly and generally enjoy a little festive folly.

Fingers crossed for wild geese and tame weather; peace above & below, bingle jells to all!

Susanna Checketts

Martyn Booth
Chair, APH



As I write this, it's early December and the inevitability of Christmas is fast turning into reality. Following tomorrow's coffee morning we will have decorated the Parish Hall, getting it ready for the festive season and all the December events including the Parish Christmas Party and the Christmas Quiz, although by the time you read this these will have passed, successfully I hope!

Looking back at events throughout the year, we have had plenty of brainwork/fun at the Quiz nights, and Film Nights gave us an excellent cross-selection of films served with delicious food. Our Tuesday coffee mornings have been vibrant, one of which was a fund raiser for Macmillan which raised a generous £311. The VE80 Day Celebration in May, although not intended as a fund raiser, was greatly enjoyed by many and raised over £170, which was split between 'Help for Heroes' and 'The British Legion'. Thanks to all who contributed and made donations, including food and cakes, to these. The end of May saw our now regular Plant Sale with strong trade especially for cottage garden plants. In August we again held our Plant and Produce Show showcasing what can be grown despite the hot dry summer.

I must mention and congratulate the Aymestrey Carpet Bowlers, who this year made a clean sweep of the prizes across the North Herefordshire League – they meet at the hall Monday evenings at 7.00pm, all welcome.

The Hall committee, along with the Church, are heavily involved in the organisation of two of the village's larger events, namely the Fete and the Bonfire which were both very successful this year. The lead organiser for both of these is Dan Hurcomb, and I would like to thank him for all his hard work on these important events for the parish, which raise much needed funds for both the Parish Hall and the Church. Also I must thank Mr & Mrs Hurcomb for generously allowing the use of their land, without which these events couldn't take place.

So once the festive season is out of the way, and the decorations put back in their boxes, we can look forward to 2026, we are always looking for new ideas and a good opportunity for this is at our next **A.G.M.** this will take place at the Parish Hall, **Wednesday 21st January at 7.30pm.** We invite everyone to come along and see what's happening and maybe have some input and get involved into the future of your Parish Hall.

... and finally I would like to give a big thank you to everyone who has supported the Hall over the last year, not forgetting the committee --- Bronwyn, Catherine, Dee, Ian, Pauline, Richard, Sam & Steph.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas & a Peaceful New Year

Martyn

AYMESTREY PARISH HALL

Provides excellent facilities for all your events



Children's Parties, Birthdays, Anniversaries,

Wedding, Christening & Wake Receptions,

Meetings & Workshops

Large, welcoming main hall with stage & screen.

Comfortably seats 90 + people at tables.

*Well equipped kitchen with large cooker, two sinks, dishwasher, fridge, freezer,
ample preparation space and serving hatch*

Separate side room

Free Wi-Fi

Very reasonable rates – Tel: 07796 590266

Ode to a Footpath Officer by a Grateful Aymestrey Local

Who walks the footpaths at break of day? Who sees the overgrown and tangled way?

Who clears the brambles from the gate? Who moves obstructions at quite a rate?

Who mends the steps through the wood? Who checks the bridges and stiles so old?

The record of all the footpath maintenance to the Parish Council must be told.

He works to keep our 18 miles of local footpaths clear so spare him a thought or even a cheer or better still..... buy him a beer!!



Mortimer Medical Practice



News from the Patient Participation Group (PPG)

The dominant happening at the surgery this autumn was the implementation of Total Triage. I haven't had need to try it out yet but would be interested in any feed back, good or bad, that anyone has. My next PPG meeting is on 26th January 2026 so before then would be good.

The surgery are intending to do a proper feed back exercise 6 months after the system went live.

Kingsland now has another consultation room to help with the increasing workload.

The Flu and Covid vaccination clinics seemed to go smoothly this year, again if anyone has any comments on this or suggestions we always welcome feed back. It seemed to help to have volunteers from the PPG, greeting and helping at the door.

Unfortunately the proposed collection box for prescriptions has to be put on hold due to a lack of funding. It will stay as a project for the future.

There have been a few staff changes this autumn:

Dr Calum Bartlett has now retired but will continue to do some locum shifts

Dr Verity Jones (Oloro) left at the end of November

Dr Hemson is back and has increased her hours

There are also 5 locums filling in for holidays and sick leave

The surgery is only closed for the main bank holidays over Christmas but will be closed on the afternoon of 14th January 2026 from midday for training purposes.

Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year

Pauline Hammond

Christmas and New Year Prescription collections (we are closed 25 & 26 Dec 2025 & 01 Jan 2026)

Drop 19 Dec collect 24 Dec	Drop 25 Dec collect 02 Jan	Drop 31 Dec collect 06 Jan
Drop 22 Dec collect 29 Dec	Drop 26 Dec collect 02 Jan	Drop 01 Jan collect 07 Jan
Drop 23 Dec collect 30 Dec	Drop 29 Dec collect 03 Jan	Based on drop off before 2pm
Drop 24 Dec collect 31 Dec	Drop 30 Dec collect 02 Jan	12pm at Orleton on a Tuesday.

★ Christmas Quiz ★

1. In which modern day country was St Nicholas born?
2. In 'A Christmas Carol' what does Scrooge have for his Christmas dinner?
3. Which of Santa's reindeer comes first alphabetically?
4. If you're born on Christmas Day, what's your star sign?
5. What's the opening line to the song 'Winter Wonderland'?
6. Which Supermarket's Christmas T.V. advert shows a family argument?
7. In which direction should you stir mincemeat for good luck?
8. What is the total number of gifts received in the song 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'?
9. Which country is Europe's largest exporter of natural Christmas trees?
10. Who is credited as the inventor of the Christmas cracker?
11. Who wrote the Channel 4 animated story 'The Snowman'?
12. Panettone originated in which country?



Answers on page - 19



CHURCH NOTICE BOARD

SUNDAY 14TH DEC

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE

St Andrew's Church,
Leinthall Earls

@3.30PM



DECORATION of the CHURCH

for CHRISTMAS

Aymestrey Church Friday 19th Dec
at 10am

All contributions of holly and greenery much
appreciated

Christmas Day Services

9.30am Holy Communion

@ St Andrews
Leinthall Earls

11.00 am Holy Communion

@ St John the Baptist and
St Alkmund
Aymestrey

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

@ St John the Baptist
& St Alkmund
AYMESTREY

at 6pm

Saturday 20th December

Followed by the usual mulled wine
and mince pies



PLOUGH SUNDAY

@ Aymestrey Church

11am

Sunday 11th January 2026



'God speed the Plough'

Come and join in this ancient service which
traditionally marks the start of the Farming
Year, to include the traditional Blessing of the
Plough, outside the church.



Twelfth Night Concert

Saturday 3rd January
Aymestrey Parish Hall
at 7pm

Tickets £12
(to inc light refreshments)
available from
Rev Rosie 07720 333383
or Lucinda at
mortimerscrosschurches.com
(in aid of Benefice churches)

Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls Churches

Rev. Rosie; Curate

Wardens: Meg & Stuart

Advent marks the start of our church year. A time of anticipation and preparation to mark the Holy Birth.

At St Andrew's, Leinthall Earls, we have just completed a restoration project on the belfry, porch and floor timbers. Craftsmen from Reynolds Conservation have replaced rafters, lead-work and new stone slates on the belfry and the three areas worked on were last overhauled in 1826, water ingress being the main cause of deterioration.



Our CHRISTINGLE Service at 3.30pm on 14th December will therefore be a very special service this year as it will also celebrate the completion of the restoration work at Leinthall - a part candlelit service echoing to the voices of children as they look towards Christmas and the birth of Jesus.....how very fitting!

Our Christmas celebrations continue with our parish CAROL SERVICE at Aymestrey on Saturday 20th at 6pm, when the bells will ring out and we gather to enjoy a veritable feast of musical items and Christmas readings followed by the traditional mulled wine and mince pies. CHRISTMAS DAY services are the usual 9.30am at Leinthall Earls and 11am at Aymestrey, and then, as a 'grand finale' to Christmas, our amazingly talented 'church choirs and friends' from the Benefice are putting together another musical extravaganza in Aymestrey Parish Hall on Saturday 3rd January, celebrating Christmas and Epiphany - an event definitely not to be missed! (further details elsewhere)

More good news.....! The church team have made great progress in the procedure for selecting a new Rector for the Mortimers Cross Benefice and we are pleased to report from the Bishop that an appointment has been made, and as soon as further details are available, we will be pleased to let you know. In the meantime, our curate, Rev Rosie, Lay Readers and retired clergy are being innovative with activities like Forest Church, as well as maintaining normal patterns of formal worship. Our Remembrance Service, led this year by Lay reader Wendy, was particularly memorable due to a plane, sounding very much like a Spitfire, flying over Aymestrey Church as Ian's trumpet blew the Last Post following the roll of honour called by Vida. This, combined with a moving talk by Kris entitled 'The Witnesses of War' and beautiful singing by Philippa and Helga made for a very moving and unforgettable service.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support during this interregnum and we take the opportunity to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas.

Meg and Stuart
Church Wardens

WILDLIFE IN THE MARCHES

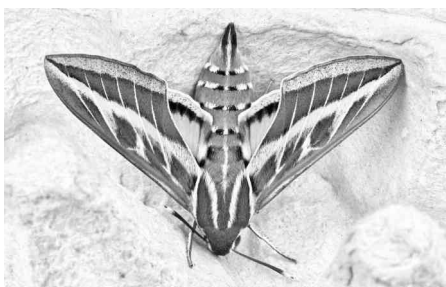


Much Ado about Mothing

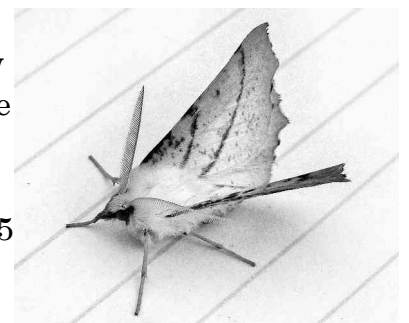
You may have read my article on birds in the last issue of Aymestrey Matters – this time it's moths! I've come as a late convert to 'mothing'. A lot of my birder friends have been doing this for a while now and to be honest whenever they started wittering on about moths I used to stop listening, but eventually they wore me down, so two years ago, I thought I'd give it a try in my North Herefordshire garden. Unlike their showy day-flying relatives, the butterflies, moths can go largely unnoticed (other than when they happen to fly into the house in the summer). The vast majority of Britain's 2600 species (yes 2600!) moths only fly at night, which is a disadvantage, but the one thing that makes their study relatively easy is that a large number of them have a mad love affair with bright lights. Nobody's really sure why this is but the fact that they do means with a small outlay (around £200) for an actinic light trap you can catch them overnight and study them in the morning in the daylight. The trap consists of a plastic box with Perspex lids underneath a bright bulb. Under the bulb there is a gap for the moths to fly into where they hide out overnight in egg boxes until the trap is opened in the morning, they're counted and identified and then – let go.

So far, I have found 236 different species in my garden. Some of the moths are around for a large part of the year, some for just a few weeks, there are species that are out in the spring, many in the summer, fewer in the autumn but a few hardy species (for example the aptly named Winter Moth, November Moth and December Moth) even come out in the winter months. There are even species that fly over here from the continent! 2023 and 2024 were not brilliant years as it happens – lots of rain... The ideal night for mothing is warm, humid (but not raining), windless and moonless and there was precious little of these conditions in the first two years but 2025 has been hot and dry and provided excellent nights for mothing.

What are the highlights so far? I can't possibly go through all of the cool moths I've found but of the commoner moths Canary-shouldered Thorn (pictured left) has to be the cutest – like one of those little yellow Easter chicks you got to put on cakes years back. Frosted Orange looks lovely. Merveille du Jour (a delightful mint green moth found in October) has the loveliest name. The scarcest moth I've come up with is a V-moth (the first record in Herefordshire for 45 years!). The most spectacular has been Striped Hawk Moth



(pictured right) – a migrant from southern Europe which blew me away when I found it in an eggbox in the trap this year. The most intriguing, Hedge Rustic, a declining species which I found on two dates near Adley Moor (is there an isolated breeding colony of this scarce and threatened moth on Adley Moor Common?)



What I have really enjoyed though is taking the trap around to other people's gardens. I loved the queue of children waiting to have a Poplar Hawk-moth and Elephant Hawk-moth put on their hands at Leintwardine School (yes moths are really placid and are OK with being handled within reason). I loved the 65 species we found on a bioblitz at Wheatstone, Leintwardine in the summer. And I loved the invites from everyone who asked me to invade their gardens for the past couple of years. It's great fun, highly addictive and a fabulous insight into our hidden wildlife. I'm happy to bring the trap round to anyone's garden in Aymestrey next year – just let me know!

Mike Wheeler

Ed: Mike runs the Leintwardine Wildlife Group, they have regular talks and events throughout the year; their Facebook group gives details plus information of sightings in the area.

Aymestrey is the home of a regional garden group affiliated to The Cottage Garden Society.

We have garden trips or meetings once a month (which generally also include tea and cake), the group is very friendly and we are member lead, currently in our area our coordinator is Rosemary Trapp.



Joining the group costs £15 a year which gets you 4 magazines a year, which are published nationwide and the option to join in with the seed bank, where members donate seeds for other members to apply for, on a postage cost only basis. This is a lovely way to try new and sometimes unusual varieties for little outlay.

The society also exhibits at some of the RHS shows the nearest to here being Birmingham, Gardeners Live and at Malvern spring show. Volunteers are welcome to help man the stands and get free entry to the show. There is plenty of time to enjoy the show before or after your shift.

If this sounds like your thing you can check out the web site at www.thecgs.org.uk or contact Rosemary on - rosemary.trapp@icloud.com

There are several members locally already in the group most of whom attend the Tuesday coffee morning in the hall so we are always available there for a chat.

Mortimer Ward

Carole Gandy



Well the rain came at last, but at the time of writing, it is still relatively warm for the time of year and the colours of the trees have been spectacular.

Across the County we are still working hard to get as much tarmac down as possible before the really cold weather arrives. It would be really helpful if you have a drain outside your home, which is covered in leaves, if you just cleared them and the surrounding area as this may help to prevent flooding this winter. It is a small thing but if everyone did so then it could make a huge difference.

You will have read that Herefordshire Council is expecting the multi year settlement from the Government to be poor. This is due to the fact that the Government does not recognise rural deprivation and believes we are all relatively well off and live in big houses. Nothing could be further from the truth, but despite our protests they have made it clear that the more urban authorities will receive the most money. This is compounded by the fact that they have estimated a band D property will be paying £2,200 council tax, when in fact in Herefordshire it is about £1,900. They have also given us no choice by assuming that council tax will rise by 4.99%.

As the Cabinet Member for Adults Social Care, Health & Wellbeing, which is a demand led service, it is very difficult to forecast our spend for 26/27 but we are looking at every line of our budget to try to save money,

Anyway enough of the depressing stuff. The Baton of Hope came to Hereford in October and this was to highlight suicide prevention. This was NOT a depressing event exactly the opposite, with about 60 baton bearers carrying the baton across Hereford. It started with a tractor procession from the Livestock Market and ended at the Town Hall, stopping on its way at colleges, schools, community centres, the cathedral and voluntary sector organisations. There were choirs, bands, children singing and all in all it was a wonderful day. Those that took part were enthralled by it and have agreed to keep in touch to support each other. There is an amazing video on the Herefordshire Council website which captures the spirit of the day.

The beginning of November was Occupational Therapy week where we displayed technical aids that can help those who are finding it more difficult to get around the house, may be less steady on their legs or just want something they can use in an emergency to call for aid. I would urge you to take advantage of this technology as soon as you begin to feel you need it, delaying it may mean that you need more intrusive care.

Finally Barry and I look forward to attending the Aymestrey Carol Concert which is always a highlight of our calendar.

(Aymestrey Carole Service – Saturday 20th December at 6pm - Ed)

Secret Six



Use each letter in the grid once to answer the Christmas related clues

G N R E A N
E O I G R S
I B D N I R
K A Z E R I
E G A R H A
A O E L N R

A citrus fruit

— — — — —

A fir

— — — — —

A nut

— — — — —

A spice

— — — — —

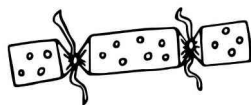
A mincemeat ingredient

— — — — —

An evergreen genus

— — — — —

Answers on page-25



Christmas Quiz Answers

1. Turkey.

2. Gruel.

3. Blitzen.

4. Capricorn.

5. Sleigh bells ring, are you listening?

6. Tesco.

7. Clockwise.

8. 364

9. Denmark.

10. Tom Smith.

11. Raymond Briggs.

12. Italy



Avian Flu and Our Feathered Friends

I am sure that many of you, like me, put out bird feeders and have a bird table and take great pleasure in watching the multitude of birds that flock to the nuts and seeds, especially in winter.

However, with the recent outbreak of Avian Flu, I am sure many of you will be concerned about feeding our songbirds and other feathered friends

The current advice is that, if the birds visiting your garden or backyard look healthy and are feeding normally then it is very unlikely that there is a problem. In an updated statement, if your local (or national) authorities have issued a warning, or if you see any sick, dying or dead birds around your feeders, then you should stop feeding immediately and report the cases to the authorities. Call the Defra helpline at 03459335577

Then you should wait for at least two weeks before you begin providing food again, and only if you are absolutely sure that the disease is no longer present – again, check with the authorities if you are at all concerned.

It is imperative to keep the feeders and feeding areas clean, in order to prevent disease. The whole point is to give them something nutritious and tasty to eat, and perhaps somewhere to bathe.

Neglecting your bird table and containers can be really harmful to the birds. This is because they can become unhygienic if dirt, bird droppings and excess food are left to collect. All of these can combine to make the table a hotbed of germs and bacteria. If birds are exposed to this kind of environment, they can fall seriously ill. Bird droppings can also be a hazard as they can transmit disease, especially when mixed with food and water. Another risk comes in the form of left-over food; excess food left and allowed to go mouldy or tainted with bird droppings. Food that has dropped from a bird table to the



ground definitely helps ground feeders but left there for days can attract some uninvited visitors, such as rats; these can

bring their own unwanted diseases that are harmful to both birds and humans.

So weekly, dispose of any food or seeds from the table, use a stiff brush to remove any debris or droppings from the table. Using a mild, animal safe disinfectant clean both outside and inside the table. Once cleaned, rinse the table thoroughly with water. Allow to dry, (overnight if it's a wooden table and not raining!) to prevent mould and mildew from forming. Treating the table with a water-based preservative helps to protect them.

Give the bird feeders a good clean out, using a bottle brush, immerse the feeders in a bucket of mild disinfectant for 30 minutes or so and if you have a dishwasher finish them off on a quick wash cycle or rinse thoroughly. Particular care should be taken with feeders that have trays underneath and they should be checked daily.

If you have water containers in your garden, it's important to check these daily as they are at risk of being contaminated by droppings and they do need regular cleaning.

In winter cold spells, bird cake and fat balls are a good addition to peanuts and sunflower seeds because of their high fat content. You can also feed kitchen scraps such as fat and suet, mild grated cheese, cooked potatoes, pastry and dried fruit. Avoid too much food containing salt.

Feed peanuts in a mesh feeder to avoid choking, fat balls and cake in appropriate grids and seed ideally in a special seed dispenser. It is also important to space your containers to lessen cross contamination.

N.B. if you buy fat balls in nets, take them out! Birds can catch their claws and beaks in them, causing serious damage.

M.H.

1914 – A Christmas Football Fixture

The Great War or World War One as it is now more commonly known, began in the summer of 1914.

The story goes, that on Christmas Day 1914 a football match took place between the German and British troops who were engaged in trench warfare.

It all began on Christmas Eve, when some British soldiers heard the Germans singing carols across at their emplacement, where they had set Christmas trees up on the parapets. They began calling to each other and instead of the usual insults one German, is said, to have called, 'Tomorrow you no shoot, we no shoot', and eventually this led to an unofficial truce for the following day – Christmas Day.

In the morning the troops climbed out of their trenches and met on 'no man's land' where they shared food, cigarettes and exchanged gifts, eventually this led to the now legendary impromptu game of football.



The soldiers also used this truce as an opportunity to repair trenches and dugouts and to bury the bodies of fallen comrades.

Although the break in fighting wasn't widespread across the whole of the Western Front, in some places it lasted a few days. It finally ended when the generals ordered the artillery, and then the troops to open fire, much to the dismay of many of the soldiers, creating animosity towards their own command.

This fraternising was frowned upon by the high command of both sides, who believed it could undermine the troops 'fighting spirit', and so it didn't really happen again, except in a few isolated instances, (although not at Christmas). These truces were called 'Live and Let Live', when during a lull in the fighting there were opportunities to bury the dead and repair trenches.

MB

New Year's Walk

Walk off the Christmas pudding and the excesses of New Year.
A social walk with refreshments on return.

Meet at the Parish Hall 10.00 a.m.
for a 10.30am start
Friday 2nd January

The walk is about 5 miles; not too strenuous.

All Welcome - don't forget your Dog



This is a free community event

Aymestrey Parish Hall 100 Club

Following the success of last years 100 Club the Committee are planning to run another monthly draw from March to December 2026.

Cost of £10 per year per number, for the chance to win prizes of £30 and £10 per month. The draw takes place the second Tuesday of the month at Coffee Morning.

Numbers will be available at Coffee Mornings or from Steph- 07496 180332 or Dee 07432 621260 during January and February.

All proceeds go to the upkeep of the Hall.

Our volunteers are ready to support you by helping with everyday tasks such as:



- Fetching prescriptions
- Occasional lifts to the doctors or hospital
- Shopping and running errands, such as posting a letter
- Practical tasks around the house such as hanging a picture or changing a light bulb
- Help with forms or letters
- Help with a computer
- Calling for a chat

If you need a volunteer then please call us

07942 257541

Aymestrey Parish Commons Association



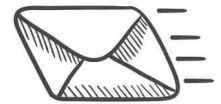
AGM
Sat 21st February
@
10.00am
In the Parish Hall

All Welcome

**"Giving access while caring for
Nature and Biodiversity"**



PARISH NATTERS & POST BOX



On Tuesday 14th
October we held a
Coffee Morning at the
Parish Hall to raise
funds for Macmillan
Cancer Support. This

national organisation offers free, confidential
support to people living with cancer and their
loved ones. Caring locally Macmillan Cancer
Support is based at Hereford County Hospital in
the Macmillan Renton Unit. Tel: 01432
355444. More information is available via
www.macmillan.org.uk.

Our Coffee Morning was well attended and
included a fabulous raffle plus a wonderful
selection of cakes to go with the hot drinks. The
amount raised by generous donations was
£311.00. Thank you so much for supporting this
event.

SD

Autumn Fayre 2025

Once again everyone pulled together to
make this autumnal fund raising event
a success! Although we didn't seem to
have as many people through the door
we still managed to raise £800 for
Aymestrey and Leinthall Earls
churches and it really couldn't have
happened without the unfailing
support from everyone involved. Thank
you all for your donations of cakes,
bottles, bric-a-brac and raffle prizes
not to mention those of you who also
kindly gave up your Saturday to help.

Alexia

Aymestrey Bonfire 2025

A great success this year and it
just keeps getting bigger and
better, the weather was
extremely kind too. Estimated
attendance of over 900 kept
everyone involved very busy
especially around the
refreshment tent. With an
impressive bonfire blazing away
and spectacular firework display
it was an evening to remember!

DB

Storm Claudia - 'Close Call'

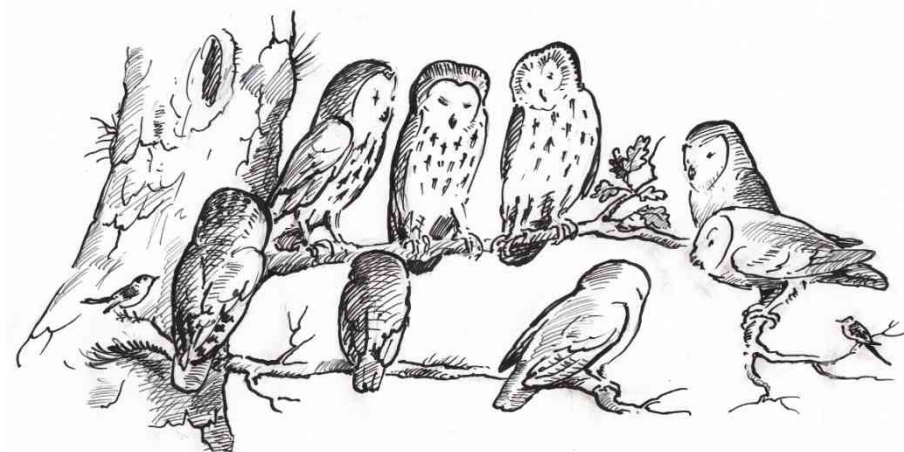
Following the storm on 14th
November we reprint a post on
'All Things Aymestry' by Rob
Crampton

*"Think the village dodged a
bullet with the weather
yesterday but big thanks
go to Josh and Dan Hurcomb for
spotting and clearing the Ash
that threatened to block the
bridge last night!"*

*Letters, notices and events are most welcome, please send to
editor@aymestrey.org*

PARISH PEOPLE

Here are some details for people in the parish you might need to contact



PARISH COUNCIL

Chair

Alison Archer
hello@alisonarcher.co.uk

Clerk

Maggie Brown
clerk@aymestrey.org
Tel: 07398 222 310

Members

Helen Hamilton 01568 709155 - Dan Hurcomb hurcombdc@gmail.com
John Probert 01568 708484 - Domenica Dunne 07966103698
Eleanor Waldron - Doug Murrie (contact both via clerk)

Special Responsibilities

Lengthsman: Yatton Farm Services Footpaths: Dave Dunn 01568 770224
Tree Warden: Richard Hammond rjhammond500@btinternet.com
MMP Patient Rep: Pauline Hammond pauline.hammond500@btinternet.com 01568 708044.

Ward Councillor

Carole Gandy 01568 780583 carole.gandy@herefordshire.gov.uk

PARISH HALL

Chair: Martyn Booth 07748604215
Bookings Secretary: Pauline Hammond 01568 708044 or 07796590266

CHURCH

Reverend Rosie Roberts revd.rosie@mortimerscrosschurches.co.uk 07720 333383
Churchwardens: Meg Thorpe 07943046450. Stuart Hutchings 01547 540511, 07961117050

AYMESTREY MATTERS

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Aymestrey Website: www.aymestrey.org Ian Banks 01568 770816 webadmin@aymestrey.org

Thoughts from a Retired Gardener

Jim Logan

Twilight on a clear evening in late November; I'm following my usual routine to close in the ducks, then the laying hens. It will be a cold night and the ducks are compliant, happy to get into the shed out of the northerly breeze. The hens have already gone to roost, the grass and leaf litter underfoot is slightly crisp as the frost sets in.

My eyesight is becoming secondary to hearing in this colourless time of day, everything around me is in shades of grey, (probably more than fifty). On the ditch bank the old apple tree is hanging on to its fruit tenaciously, they glow yellow-gold in daylight, pale baubles in this subdued light, quite festive, and next to the apple a Hawthorn 'decorated' with two bantam cocks and a hen roosting out.

As I stand silently there are occasional rustles and murmurs from my hens as they settle down. In the hedge the mice will be stirring into nocturnal activity. In an hour or so there will be a steady drizzle of Haw debris from these tall Hawthorns as wood mice nibble the berries to get at seed kernels.

The calm is shattered by the excited raucous calls of a pair of Magpies in the Ivy clad Poplar trees just beyond our boundary.



In that moment the reason for their clamour breaks cover from the Ivy and silently lands in the Oak tree in our hedge, a Tawny owl.

I saw only a hint of movement as it passed in front of me. The Magpies are yelling from the Hawthorn above my head now. The phantom hoots to assert himself and his mate kerwits a reply from further into the Poplars. The Magpies screech in triumph and all becomes quiet again. I see or hear the owls most evenings, I wonder if Magpies are too big and feisty to be preyed upon by Tawny owls, they certainly didn't want to tolerate this owl near to their evening roost.



Overhead an aircraft drones, flying south its lights flashing rhythmically and to the north east above my Scots pine Mars is rising twinkling red in the cold emptiness of space. I see them and watch with the same mild interest that the Owls and the Magpies have of my presence on their 'patch'.

And so I stand in the cold contemplating the silent flight of owls and the truculent nature of Magpies. The plane has droned on, out of earshot, Mars still twinkles red, beyond Mars space and more space infinite space, easy words to write. The concept of infinite space is impossible for me to comprehend.

Time to go indoors for a cup of tea I think.

Jim

Secret Six Answers:

- | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 Orange | 2 Korean | 3 Brazil |
| 4 Ginger | 5 Raisin | 6 Hedera |



DATES FOR DIARIES

2025/26

When	What	Where
Mondays 7.00pm	Carpet Bowls	PH
Tuesdays 10.30am to 11.45am	Tea/Coffee in the Hall	PH
Thursdays 8.00pm	Sequence Dancing	PH
Thursdays 9.30am to 10.30am and 10.45am to 11.45am	Pilates	PH

December

Sunday 14th 3.30pm	CHRISTINGLE SERVICE	Leinthall Earls
Friday 19th 10.00 am	Decorate Church for Christmas	Aymestrey
Friday 19th 7 for 7.30pm	Film Night	PH
Saturday 20th 6.00pm	Carol Service	Aymestrey
Sunday 21st 6.00pm	Aymestrey Festivity/Get Together	Riverside Aymestrey
Sunday 21st 6.30pm	Benefice Carol Service with Bishop Richard.	Kingsland
Christmas Day 9.30am	Holy Communion CW.	Leinthall Earls
Christmas Day 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Sunday 28th 10.30am	Benefice Service	TBA

January

Friday 2nd 10.00am for 10.30 start	New Year Walk approx 5ml	Meet at PH
Saturday 3rd 7.00pm	Christmas & Epiphany Concert.	PH
Sunday 4th 11.0am.	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Thursday 8th 2.00pm	Whist Drive	PH
Friday 9th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 11th 11.00am	Plough Sunday	Aymestrey
Friday 16th 7 for 7.30pm	Film Night	PH
Saturday 17th 6.30pm	Wassail Event	Meet at PH
Sunday 18th 3.30pm	Evensong	Leinthall Earls
Wednesday 21st 7.30pm	Parish Hall AGM	PH
Sunday 25th 9.30 am	Forest Church	Aymestrey
Wednesday 28th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH

February

Sunday 1st 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Sunday 8th 11.00 am	Morning Prayer	Aymestrey
Friday 13th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 15th 3.30pm	Holy Communion CW	Leinthall Earls
Friday 20th 7.00pm	Curry Night followed by Film	PH
Saturday 21st 10.00am	Aymestrey Parish Commons Association AGM	PH
Sunday 22nd 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey
Wednesday 25th 7.00pm	Parish Council Meeting	PH

March

Sunday 1st 11.00am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Sunday 8th 11.00 am	Holy Communion BCP	Aymestrey
Friday 13th 8.00pm	Fun Quiz Night	PH
Sunday 15th 3.30pm	Mothering Sunday	Leinthall Earls
Friday 20th 7 for 7.30pm	Film Night	PH
Sunday 22nd 9.30am	Forest Church	Aymestrey

AYMESTREY VILLAGE WASSAIL

SATURDAY 17th JANUARY 2026

Meet at the Parish Hall at 6.30pm

TORCHLIT PROCESSION

to the Ancient Orchard
at Aymestrey Mill from 7pm

Bring your...



DRUMS



SAUCEPANS



INSTRUMENTS

Let's make a joyful racket to

WAKE THE TREES!

Mulled Cider ~ Hot Food ~ Music

Wassail Ceremony ~ Singing

Cutting of The Wassail Cake

Kindly supplied by Aymestrey Patisserie



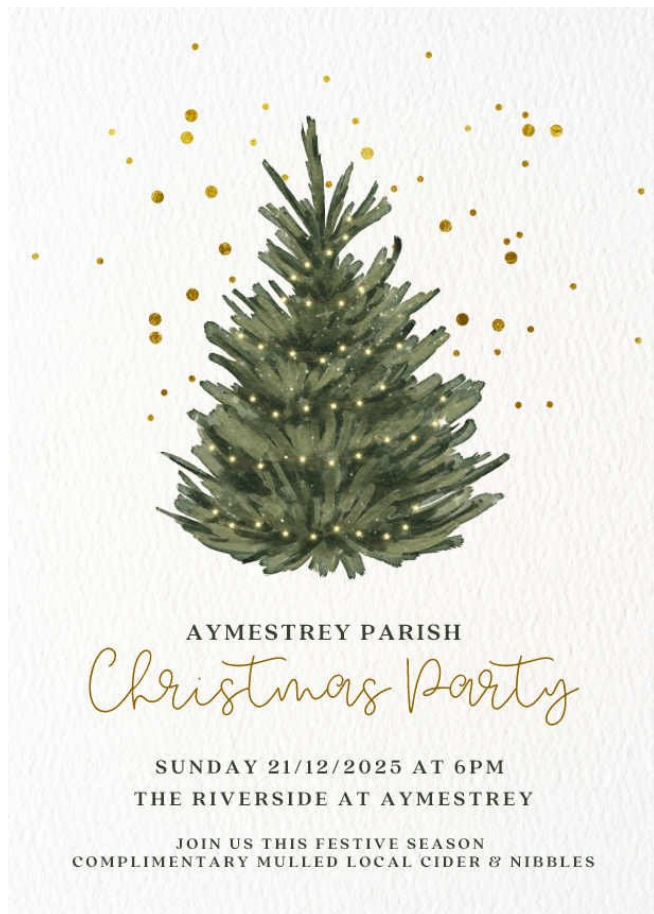
Dress for Winter ~ wrap up warm ~ Sturdy Footwear

Wear feathers for luck

Lanterns and Torches welcome

Tickets £5 (under 16 Free) from wegottickets.com/aymestrey

Fundraising for St John The Baptist & St Alkmund Church,
Aymestrey Parish Hall and more!



Film and Food at Aymestrey Parish Hall

Friday – 19th - December

Food £6 at 7 pm / Film £6 at 7:30 pm

Please let us know if you are coming for food at www.aymestrey.org/food-film or phone 01568 770816

Sausages, mash, peas and onion gravy. Vegetarian option.

Ice cream also available, £1

Please bring your own drinks. Cash only please

Film and Food at Aymestrey Parish Hall

Friday – 16th - January

Food £6 at 7 pm / Film £6 at 7:30 pm

Please let us know if you are coming for food at www.aymestrey.org/food-film or phone 01568 770816

Beef stew, mash, and peas. Vegetarian option.

Ice cream also available, £1