ALVESTON MAGAZINE

November/December2026
January 2027
No 562

Newsletter for Alveston Parish, produced by the Churches since 1970







ALVESTON MAGAZINE needs your articles and adverts by the 1st of the month preceding publication.

Send to alvestonmag@gmail.com

Or post to 'Alveston Magazine',

1 Beech Close, Alveston, BS35 3NH.

Your Helmet editor is Diane Barnard (01454 885793) .

Contact David Moss if you are interested in advertising (revsrural@gmail.com).

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Helmet editors or committee.

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Quarter pg	£82.25

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Alveston Magazine Dates 2027

We plan to deliver on or soon after the LAST Tuesdays prior to the months of news. The deadline is the 1st of the previous month.

Edition	Deadline	Delivery
March/April	**Feb 1st**	**Feb 23rd**

All Magazine Distributors and Contributors - please note:-

The printers will now deliver all magazines to St Helen's Church a few days before the last Tuesday of the month. If those who usually receive a box or bag are able, please collect your batch from the church from Sunday services - or from 10.30 - 12.30 on the last Tuesday. Coffee and cake will be available.

We can now be found online for reading and downloading at https://alvestonmag.co.uk/

ALL Contributors - Please send in original art-work and good quality photos and not what has gone via social media or some online storage which compresses the size and will result in poorer quality reproduction. We need it to be at 300dpi. A half page advert needs to be landscape format, and full page 'portrait'.

A MESSAGE FROM SHARON, ONE OF THE METHODIST MINISTERS



As Autumn is fully upon us, we are on the cusp of the season of Remembrance moving in to Advent and Christmas. These are not just themes for the churches in the area but for us all.

We live in uncertain times, perhaps personally, certainly globally. People experience many kinds of pressures.
This Advent the Methodist Church of Great Britain, of which Alveston Methodist Church is a part, encourage us to hear the message of the angel to the frightened shepherds:
'Do not be afraid.. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people'.
This is the theme for 2026. It doesn't assume all those areas of life that scare or concern or worry us will go away. It does suggest we are not alone in our fears. As 'O little town of Bethlehem' suggests as we consider the birth of Jesus in its words: 'the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight'.
As a newbie to Alveston, spending some time with you as a Methodist Minister, I am already sensing the strong community and kindness bond that strengthens us, perhaps helps us when we face difficulties. How important that is- that care and support for one another- the way that this can help us in times we are afraid.
I am also learning about the churches and how they play their part in this- welcoming, listening, walking alongside others.
I look forward to spending more time with you, serving you and also hearing your thoughts, questions and wonderings.

Rev Sharon Lovelock, Alveston Methodist Church

If you enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and delicious cake in good company, then **Community Cuppa** is the place for you on Saturday 21st November and 16th January. We meet in the church hall from 10.30 to 12.00. To add to the fun and laughter, *'Ian's Intriguing Quiz'* will give our brains a good workout!

For all those who are into craft (and those who just like to spend time with those who do, with a cup of tea or coffee) **Craft and Chat** is the place to be on Thursday 19th November, 17th December and 21st January from 2 to 4pm in the church hall. Contact Elaine on 415374 for more details.

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Methodist Church Worship – November, December and January

10.30	1st November	Naomi Sharp
10.30	8th November	Team Ministry – Remembrance Day
10.30	15th November	Rev Sharon Lovelock – Holy Communion
10.30	22nd November	Ken Thomas
10.30	29th November	Rev Dr Simon Edwards
10.30	6th December	Rev Dr Marcus Torchon
10.30	13th December	TBA
10.30	20th December	Team Ministry – Carol Service
10.30	25th December	Pete Jones – Christmas Day
10.30	27th December	TBA
10.30	3rd January	TBA
10.30	10th January	TBA
10.30	17th January	Rev Sharon Lovelock – Café Church
10.30	24th January	TBA

Methodist Church News and Events

Pure Joy!
It was pure joy to see how much fun so many children, parents and grandparents had taking part in the **Golden Boot** competition at the Village Fair back in September. It was great to connect faith, fun and football.

Fifteen people took part in the **Alpha Course** this autumn, and it was pure joy to see them grow in their understanding, knowledge and experience of Jesus. Many tough questions were asked, and many encouraging stories shared. Alpha is such a wonderful way to explore, discover, share and learn together in faith.

It is pure joy to be part of a **growing church**! In the last 3 years, our congregation has grown by almost 50%. And it is not just growing in number, but in many other ways too. Over the last six months, seven have successfully completed the training course to become Worship Leaders. The fresh ideas, creativity and enthusiasm that they are bringing are brilliant.

The **ultimate source** of pure joy is Jesus, and when we come to understand and accept the limitless love that he has for us, we experience joy like never before. As we approach the day we celebrate his birth, let us keep Jesus at the front and centre of our celebrations. Let us focus on helping those who are struggling in any way, be they on the other side of the street, or the other side of the world. When we do, our joy will be complete, and we'll enjoy Christmas like never before!

Pete Jones 01454 412912

ST HELEN'S CHURCH NEWS – Nov & Dec 2026 & Jan 2027

Our regular Sunday service pattern is:

8am	Holy Communion (weekly)
9am	2nd Sunday Messy Church (Breakfast and crafts for families)
	3rd Sunday Alpha with Breakfast
10.30am	1st and 3rd Sunday's Holy Communion
	2nd and 4th Sunday's All Age Worship

Wednesday 11am Informal Bible Study followed by Holy Communion

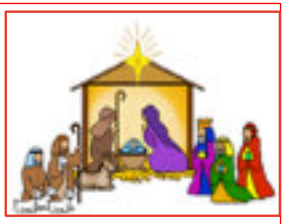
If in doubt just check the church web site: https://www.revsrural.com/alveston/



Not Forgotten – 1st November at 4pm. A service where we come together to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. After a short service we share our memories with tea and cake. If you would like further details then please contact Rev David.

Village Remembrance Service - 8th November at 10.30. Come and join us as we give thanks for all who have given their lives in wars current and past. The service will be held in St Helen's School followed by refreshments in the Church. Please look out for the "notices" that will give details of the road closure times which are needed to enable the parade of uniformed groups.

INVITATION FROM US TO YOU COME AND LET'S CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS TOGETHER



Advent Course	Wednesday's 11am followed by Communion Service
6th December	Advent Carols and readings 4pm
20th December	Village Carol Service 4pm (followed by mince pies and mulled wine)
24th December	Family Crib Service 4pm (dress up and help us tell the Christmas story)
24th December	11.15pm Holy Communion
25th December	10.30am Family Christmas Celebration
3rd January	Epiphany Carols 10.30am

St Helen's Church News

Coffee Cake and Chat – Tuesdays 10.30 to 12 noon weekly,
Our Charities
Nov 3rd Samaritans Purse.
Dec 7th Children's Society

Art Group - continues on Fridays between 10 and 12 noon. Please contact Anne Harrison for further details 07796-227922.

St Helen's Art Group Autumn Exhibition – will be held on 13 & 14th November between 10am and 4pm. There will also be craft stalls and refreshments available.

Operation Christmas Child 2026

Each year we have supported Samaritans Purse, Operation Christmas Child, collecting approximately 150 boxes last year. The children they are given to live in war torn, very deprived areas in our world. The gifts in each shoebox show the child receiving it that someone really cares about them. For more details about the organisation and where the shoeboxes go please see https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child



Our local collecting centre is St Helen's Church which will be open with someone to receive your shoebox Monday to Friday 9th to 13th November, from 10am to 12noon and 2 to 4pm. Please contact Clare Stephens on 07450235013 for more local details. Many thanks.

CHURCH CONTACTS

Alveston Methodist Church

Rev Sharon Lovelock 07887 694355
Rev Dr Simon Edwards 01454 418176

Stewards -
Peter Jones 01454 412912
Pam Jones 01454 412912
Doreen Stears 01454 850453 (Contact steward)

Hall Hire - Peter Jones 01454 412912

St Helen's C of E

www.revsrural.com
Rev David Moss 01454 415190

Licensed Lay Minister -
Tracey Black (And for children's activities) 01454 417660
Tracey.lynne.black@hotmail.co.uk

Church Warden -
Gail Lowe 07949 920851

It's good to talk...

"It was hard but I'm so glad we had that conversation.

Together we planned a proper send off for mum, a whole morning to celebrate her life with the music and poetry she loved. In a peaceful natural setting where our family and friends had plenty of time and space to share stories and memories."

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ST HELEN'S REFURBISHMENT PROJECT

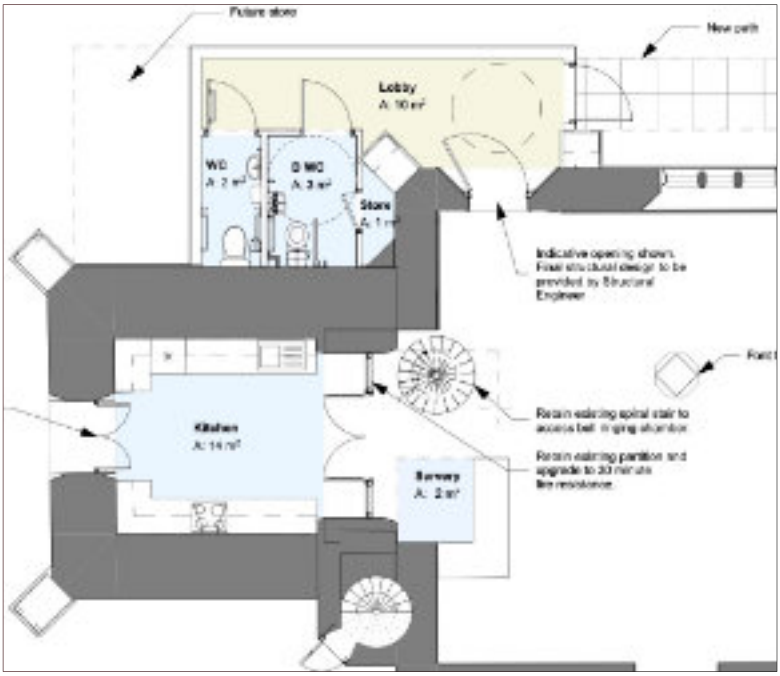
After months of discussions, we have finally got a refurbishment project that ticks all the boxes.

Heritage – We hope to re-open the West Door and restore our ancient bells and bell frame.

Facilities – We hope to build a new washroom and toilet on the Northside.

Upgrade - We hope to upgrade our existing kitchen facilities.

All this comes as a cost of over £100,000. We hope to get some grant funding, but this project will depend on the generosity and faith of the congregation and community. At this stage, we would be grateful for your prayers, support, and anonymous or named pledge of financial support, rather than any immediate donation. Please complete the details below and leave inside Church.



Name:

Email:

Phone:

I would like to pledge my support for the St. Helen's Refurbishment Project. I hope to pledge £ …….

I am a UK Taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid my donation ☐

















The judges have spoken - some competition entries in the Youth Centre at the Alveston Village Fair. And some sights from the field >>












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We have space for more adverts, minimum now ¼ page.

Please see details on the inside front cover









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NEWS FROM the ALVESTON Women's Institute (WI)

Jubilees

September's meeting - David Moss is the Vicar of St Helen's Church in Alveston and well known to many of us. As part of his Sabbatical last year, focusing on learning about the impact of racism and the slave trade, David and his wife Sue and their youngest son travelled to the Caribbean.

After spending time in Antigua they flew in a small, bumpy, propeller plane to the island of Montserrat, where they were warmly welcomed by the local people and over time heard many stories about their lives and history which had an unexpected connection to us all.

After the abolition of slavery in 1834 Joseph Sturge, a committed abolitionist, purchased two plantations on Montserrat to demonstrate that slavery was not necessary for their success. He named these plantations Olveston and Elberton after his birthplace and planted lime trees instead of sugar cane.

In the 1970s & 80s Olveston attracted artists and musicians from all over the world to record at Air Studios, including Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder, The Police, Dire Straits, Rolling Stones & Elton John.

In 1995 & 1997 Montserrat was devastated by a series of eruptions from the previously dormant Soufriere Hills Volcano. This dramatically changed the island and much of the southern half, including its Capital Plymouth, was buried in ash and remains an uninhabitable exclusion zone.

David and family had a wonderful time exploring parts of the island that were accessible. Redcliffe Quay in St. John's, now the Capital City, and Nelson's Dockyard - an atmospheric UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sadly, they were unable to visit Elberton, which is in the exclusion zone. However, Olveston, where the majority of the island's current population now resides, is renowned for its lush tropical environment, including the National Trust Botanical Gardens and the Frangipani Caterpillar.

Slavery's legacy is central to Montserrat's community and must be told, and the story shared by other Caribbean islands is the discussion about reparation which is complex and continues.

Several of the ladies (more than shown here) baked and served at the Alveston Community Fair



The information on the next meetings is on the notices pages in the middle of this magazine.


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THORNBURY U3A COFFEE MORNING – Porch House, Christ the King, Castle Street from 10:30 – 11:30 on Saturday 14th November. Members and Non-members are welcome. Some u3a groups will be represented and will be happy to answer questions. There will also be refreshments. Please do come along to meet other people and have a coffee and chat.

(NB: For members with NO Email address only - The Autumn Newsletter will be available to collect).

For further information visit our website Thornbury u3a or for membership enquiries please email membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk

THORNBURY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON



The switch-on is taking place on Saturday 21 November from 2pm - 8pm. The switch-on is at 6pm by the pump. There will be a community market and also a Love Thornbury vendors market including christmas gifts, crafts, food and drink. The event is being opened by Panache Steel Band and further entertainment from Songbirds Choir, Thornbury Musical Theatre Group and also local children's dance groups.

EASTWOOD GARDENERS' CLUB will welcome Verity Prior on Tuesday November 10th, starting at 7.30pm at Turnberrie's in Thornbury.

Verity will give a demonstration of Wreath Making. Visitors are welcome.

In December, the meeting is for members only, and there are no meetings in January and February

CRUK QUIZ

It's Quiz time again! The Fish & Chip Quiz Night is back on **28th November** at Manorbrook Primary School, 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start.

Bring your own drinks, we will provide glasses. There will be a raffle and all money will go to Cancer Research UK.

Tickets are £16.50 per person (including fish and chips). Pay on the door on the night, but please let us know you're coming. Call Gill on 07866 580608. We are often full on the night, so book early please.

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Almondsbury Primary School

Christmas Fayre

Friday 4th December 2026, between 6pm and 8pm.

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THORNBURY
Art Club

November:- Every Tuesday - Thornbury Art Club, Tuesday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30 pm. Tel. 01454 414433
Every Thursday - Thornbury Art Club, Thursday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30pm. Tel.07776271010

Outdoor Sketching Group – November 14th

Tuesday 24 th November Club Night. No demonstration for this month. Our November Club Night and early Christmas event is going to be extra fun this year, involving us in a 1940's themed Murder Mystery. Members only as spaces limited. (7.00 – 9.30pm, SMCH)

December:– No activities

January:- Every Tuesday - Thornbury Art Club, Tuesday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30 pm. Tel. 01454 414433
Every Thursday - Thornbury Art Club, Thursday Painting Studio Group, SMCH, 1.30-4.30pm. Tel.07776271010. **No Sketching Event in January**

www.thornburyartclub.co.uk www.facebook.com/ThornburyArtClub
or email publicrelations.tac@gmail.com

(SMCH – St Mary's Church Hall, Eastbury Rd, Thornbury, BS35 1DR, 1.30 -4.30pm)

January 26th . 7.15 - 9.30pm.Club Night - Local professional artist and tutor **Paul Weaver** will demonstrate a landscape in watercolour. Part way through the demo, we will have a short break for free tea, coffee, and biscuits. This will give us an opportunity to chat with members, visitors and the artist. Come and join us to learn, socialise, and enjoy an evening of art, whether you're just starting out or looking to refine your skills. If you're interested in joining the Club, our membership secretary, Pat will be on the door to give you more information, or else contact us as above.

Members free, non-members very welcome - £6 on the door, cash or card





NOTICE BOARD

The following groups and organisations meet regularly

St Helen's Pre-school Little Stars at St Helen's School: Mon-Fri 8:50-15:30
Pilates, Zumba and other fitness classes - contact Sam on 07977632003
Amateur Radio Club, Chantry: Wed 7:30pm (secretary 07765892447)
Thornbury Chamber Players: Methodist Church: fortnightly Thurs 7:45-9:45
Sharon Phillips School of Dancing, contact 07989652780
Climate Action Thornbury & Surroundings see www.sustainablethornbury.org
St Helen's Church Coffee, Cake and Chat 10.30am to 12.00pm every Tuesday.
St Helen's Church Art Group – Fridays 10am-12 noon, all abilities welcome.
Further information please contact Anne Harrison on 01454 885532.
Thornbury Orchestra Wednesdays 7:45 – 9:45, St Helen's Church.
www.thornburyorchestra.org.uk
Scouting:- Beavers Thursdays from 5.30pm - 6.30pm
Cubs Tuesdays from 6pm - 7.30pm
Scouts Fridays from 6:30pm to 8pm

Please Note Do pass on annual programmes and details of future events to Alvestonmag@gmail.com. (Deadline is 1st of the month preceding publication - see the inside of the front cover)

There is now a **Veterans Breakfast** meeting on 2nd Saturdays of the month in Tesoro Lounge on the High Street. Breakfast for anyone ever in HM forces and their family and supporters, 9-11am.

ALVESTON COMMUNITY EVENTS

Please like and follow us on Facebook
www.alvestoncommunityevents.co.uk

4@4 Monthly Concerts -
A relaxed monthly programme of music, reflection and community, '4th' Sundays at St Helen's Church at 4pm

22 Nov Musick in the Ayre
(Lute and voices)
20th Dec Community carols -
(no 4@4 in Dec)
24 Jan Nota Bene -
a cappella ensemble
Chris (Chris@cheesetoasties.com)

CORRECTION - The Thornbury & District Branch of the Royal British Legion meets on the last Sunday of every month at 12 noon in The Wheatsheaf pub

SOME EVENTS HAPPENING IN NOVEMBER

Mon 2nd 7:30 -Alveston Gardens Association - Diana White talking about Gardens season by season - JH
Tue 3rd 2pm - Northavon Dolls House Club - Jenny Parfitt 07833 316861 - AMH
Mon 9th 7:30 - Alveston WI - Annual Meeting & Christmas sales - JH
Thursday 19th 2-4 - Craft n Chat - Elaine, 01454 415374 - AMH
Wed 25th 7.30 - Alveston Local History Society - John Nevil Maskelyne, Gloucestershire's Master of Magic and Mystery - Andrew Meller - AMC

SOME EVENTS HAPPENING IN DECEMBER

Tue 1st 2pm - Northavon Dolls House Club - Jenny Parfitt 07833 316861 - AMH
Mon 7th 7:30 - Alveston Gardens Association - Duncan Coombs - Yunman, a climatic sandwich - JH
Mon 14th 7:30 - Alveston WI - CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS
Thursday 17th 2-4pm - Craft n Chat - Elaine, 01454 415374 - AMH

SOME EVENTS HAPPENING IN JANUARY

Mon 4th 7:30 - Alveston Gardens Association - JH
Tue 5th 2pm - Northavon Dolls House Club - Jenny Parfitt 07833 316861 - AMH
Mon 11th 7:30 - Alveston WI - Godsell Cheesemakers - Liz Godsell - JH
Thursday 21st 2-4pm - Craft n Chat - Elaine, 01454 415374 - AMH
Wed 27th 7.30 - Alveston Local History Society - Sir George White on John Knapp (1767 - 1845) The Alveston Naturalist. Copies of his book will be on sale - based on his research. Everybody welcome - AMC. Visitors welcome £5 at the door.

AMC = Alveston Methodist Church; AMH = Alveston Methodist Hall; JH = Jubilee Hall; SMCH = St Mary's Church Hall, Thornbury.

BUZY BEEZ
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1st Thursday 10am-12 noon
3rd Tuesday 1-3 pm
at The Ship Inn, Alveston.

Contact Lynne 07710 956733
Or Vicky 07837 875126
No need to book

Alveston Local History Society

NOVEMBER 25TH @7:30 IN THE ALVESTON METHODIST CHURCH

John Nevil Maskelyne, Gloucestershire's Master of Magic and Mystery - by Andrew Meller

Visitors welcome £5 at the door.

St Helen's Art Group Autumn Exhibition – will be held on 13 & 14th November between 10am and 4pm.
There will also be craft stalls and refreshments available.

Welcome to The Armstrong!

We were recently delighted to hear that alongside Sanderson Weatherall, the building surveyors for our renovation, we are a finalist in the Insider SouthWest Property Awards 2026! Our venue has been shortlisted for the Sustainable and Social Impact Award. This category highlights "*projects that have shown a strong commitment to making a significant, positive social impact on their local community and area*". The award ceremony is in early October so watch this space to see how we fared.

Since opening in April our lovely venue has had many people pass through the doors to attend an event, watch a film, listen (and dance) to a great variety of music or just enjoy a drink in our delightful Foyer Bar. If you haven't yet set foot over the threshold, we have some good news! You can now pop in between 10am and 12pm on Wednesday and Thursday when one of our friendly and knowledgeable stewards will give you a tour, answer any questions you may have and provide you with information on booking a show or hiring our venue.

October is full of enticing events and activities, starting on October 3rd with the hilarious and critically acclaimed Pantaloon Theatre Company who will be bringing their blockbuster show **The (Almost) Complete History of Britain** to The Armstrong. They take you on a breathless race through the entire history of Britain in under two hours.

Following on the heels of earlier successful Armstrong Sessions in the gorgeous Foyer Bar, on Sunday 11th at 7pm, **Piano Mike** will be performing hits from Billy Joel, Elton John and other classic favourites. Joining him will be solo vocalist **Gina Rose** who will offer hits through the decades, including ABBA, Fleetwood Mac and Shania Twain - do join in - extra mics will be available!

It's into the Strictly season so put on your dancing shoes for the **Autumn Tea Dance** on October 14th, held in the Cossham Hall from 2pm. Local dance callers, Belinda and Peter will take you through yours steps in a warm and welcoming atmosphere with other dance enthusiasts.

As for half term activities, look no further than The Armstrong for amazing family entertainment for all ages.

For full details and how to buy tickets for these events and many others in October such as weekly Line Dancing sessions and The Thornbury Clothes Swap on October 9th, visit our website.

… And we have some very exciting events planned for **November,** including two connected with significant November anniversaries. On November 10th, the multi-talented Peter Gill brings his one-man historical play, ***Meet Tommy Atkins***, in which he explores the life of a British soldier through World War I and beyond. Then on Remembrance Sunday (November 8th), The Armstrong, in collaboration with the British Legion and Thornbury & District Museum, will offer hospitality and a warm welcome to those involved in Remembrance Day events. National Theatre Live returns on November 19th with the much- acclaimed ***Golden Boy***, a searing revival of Clifford Odets' knockout American classic which has received many accolades. It is such a wonderful opportunity to see great theatre in a local venue at a fraction of the London ticket prices.

Watch out for AAG's presentation of Michael Lunts' show, ***Tongue in Cheek*** *w*hen Gilbert and Sullivan meet Tom Lehrer (what a combination!) and also for Jigsaw's ***Spud and Sparkle Quiz Night*** on 21st November which promises to be a fun evening of food, quizzing, laughter and community spirit. Our regular ***Comedy Night*** returns on Friday 27th November with a festive vibe and free mulled wine!

December will be a wealth of Christmas festivity, including a wreath making workshop, the return of the fabulous Bristol Concert Wind Band, a Christmas concert from the fabulous Songbirds, a children's Christmas show, ***Mrs Claus List*** and for the first time, a New Year's Eve Party featuring the amazing ***Ride the Edge*** band.

For more details, go to our website **www.thearmstrong.co.uk/whats-on** and look out for more information in the local press, Thornbury Radio and social media.



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CONTACT US

If you'd like to talk about your community, share an idea or discuss any of these topics further, please get in touch:

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You can also find Elizabeth (Village Agent) or me at various community events across the Severn Vale area.

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First of all, we have some vacant plots, so if you're interested in an allotment do contact Graham Smith, clerk of the Parish Council - clerk@alvestonpc.co.uk If you would like more information about the allotments before applying please contact alveston.allotments@gmail.com

Autumn Equinox

I was a bit stuck what to write about this time. Its Autumn. Collect and save seed (covered that), compost stuff (covered that), cover ground (covered - ha!- that as well.) Harvest stuff, prepare for next year, take advantage of any nice weather. Erm.....

Meteorological autumn begins on the 1st September and ends on 30th November. The astronomical autumn begins with the autumn equinox when the sun shines directly on the equator and day and night are of nearly equal length.

So the equinoxes happen twice a year, when the sun crosses the equator. The Spring Equinox is about 20th March and the Autumn Equinox is about 22nd September. Wherever you are on the planet the equinoxes occur at the same moment. This year the Autumn or September Equinox was on 23rd September 01:06 BST. That was when the sun crossed the equator from north to south.

At this point day and night are nearly of equal length. The true equal day/equal night actually happens a few days later and is called the equilux. Equinox means "equal night" in Latin. Equilux means "equal light", also in Latin. The difference is due to atmospheric refraction and how you define sunrise and sunset. If they were defined as the moment the centre of the sun passes the horizon, then the Equinox day and night would be 12 hours long but sunrise and sunset are defined as the exact moment the upper edge of the Sun's disk touches the horizon which isn't quite the same.

Interesting factoid:
The Equinox are the only time when the sun actually rises in the East. Due to the earth's tilt, in the summer, the sun rises in the north-east, and in the winter it rises in the south-east.

Now, after the equinox, the nights are longer than the days (booo!) As the days get shorter I stop popping down the allotment in the evenings and go on the weekends and maybe an hour after work if there's time. It'll just be weekends once the clocks go back.

Sorry this article isn't really about growing stuff. I just thought it was interesting - cue Michael Caine "not a lot of people know that."

Happy Growing anyway, Alison

A Community Coming Together – Alveston's Defibrillator Project

Back in April we asked the people of Alveston for help.

Our two village defibrillators, at Jubilee Hall and Thornbury Cricket Club, had been in service for around 14 years and were reaching the end of their useful life. We launched our GoFundMe appeal on **25 April 2026**, hoping to raise enough to replace the ageing equipment and keep this vital community service available.

We could not have anticipated how generously people would respond.

Residents from across Alveston donated what they could, with some incredibly generous contributions. The appeal also reached local businesses, organisations and community groups, with support from **Berkeley Vale Motors, MLG UK Ltd, Thornbury Running Club, Alveston Parish Council, the Emily Pontin Trust and Thornbury Round Table**.

As a result, we have been able to replace the AED at **Jubilee Hall** and ensure the remaining village AED is also in good working order.

The generosity has also allowed us to plan for **two additional AEDs in Alveston**.

Two new locations

The proposed locations are:

- **Down Road Play Area**
- **Junction of Wolfridge Ride and Bridle Way**

These locations will provide much better coverage across the village and give more residents access to potentially life-saving equipment when every minute matters.

We worked with National Grid, who looked at the areas we had identified as suitable for additional AED coverage and helped us establish specific locations which would provide good coverage while keeping connection and installation costs as low as possible.

This is important because every pound raised has come from our community and supporters, and we want to make sure it goes as far as possible.

Unlike our existing AEDs, neither new location has a suitable building. This means we need purpose-built cabinets, bespoke supporting stands and new electricity supplies connected to the public network.

We therefore need permission from **South Gloucestershire Council**, followed by the necessary work with National Grid to connect the sites.

National Grid have been extremely supportive of our plans and we are very grateful for their help and guidance.

We have also been fortunate to receive support from **SDR Fabrications in Coalpit Heath**, who have offered to manufacture the two bespoke AED stands at a significantly reduced cost. SDR Fabrications have previously supported **Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)** and are keen to help make AEDs more readily available in local communities.

Supporting The Street

The project has also encouraged others to take action.

The Street, a small road on the outskirts of Alveston, has been raising its own funds to provide an AED for local residents. The Alveston Defibrillator Group has been pleased to support their fundraising through our GoFundMe page.

The project has also received significant support from the **Plymouth Brethren**, who have made a substantial donation towards the AED, including **paying for the installation and providing the land on which it will be located**.

It is a wonderful example of people recognising a need within their own community and coming together to do something about it.

One final push

Installing AEDs on the public network is considerably more expensive than installing one on an existing building. The electrical connections and associated groundworks form a significant part of the cost.

We have already raised a significant amount, but estimate we need **around another £3,000** to complete the two new Alveston installations.

We are exploring additional grant funding, including potential support from the **British Heart Foundation** and South Gloucestershire Council's grants team.

As we write this update on **8 September**, we are awaiting the necessary permissions from South Gloucestershire Council. Once these are received, we can move forward with National Grid and arrange for the electrical works to be scheduled.

We would like to say a **very sincere thank you** to everyone who has donated, sponsored us, offered their services, provided advice or supported our appeal.

What started as an appeal to replace two ageing defibrillators has grown into a wider community effort to improve AED coverage across Alveston and the surrounding area.

Our GoFundMe appeal remains open for anyone who would like to help us with the final push:

https://gofund.me/29c46638f

Every contribution, large or small, will help us get closer to installing the two additional AEDs and making Alveston an even safer place for everyone.

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ACTION ARTS GROUP

Octopus Drama Group's pantomime '**Finding Dopey**' will be performed in Christ the King Hall in Castle Street, Thornbury from 13th to 16th January 2027.

Snow White and the Prince have finally returned from their long, fairytale honeymoon. The dwarfs are eager for embraces, tales of far-off wonders, and perhaps a glimpse of the souvenirs tucked in Snow White's bag. However, somewhere between their cosy cottage and the Castle the dwarfs realise Dopey is missing. Soon a merry little team gathers, ready to follow clues and chat with quirky characters as they venture through the forest on a quest to find their favourite dwarf. Their mission is simple: bring Dopey home safe and smiling.

There will be 5 performances: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 7.30pm and Saturday at 11am and 2.30pm.

Tickets go on general sale on Saturday 5th December at 9am at Rosie & Rex gift shop, 32 High Street, Thornbury. Tickets £10 for adults and £8 for children under 18 can be purchased Monday to Saturday 9am – 4.30pm.

Alveston Local History Society - Gloucester and the Atlantic Slave Trade Presented by Tony Conder (23rd September 2026)

"Though liberty is a sweet thing to such as are born free, yet to those who never knew the sweets of it, slavery perhaps may not be so irksome". (George Whitefield, born Gloucester 1714).

George Whitefield was an Anglican priest and evangelist who travelled across the Atlantic many times to preach. He studied at Oxford with John Wesley and together they helped start the Methodist movement.

Slavery in Britain dates to Roman times, then under Norman rule this was gradually changed to "serfdom". Richard Jobson, an English explorer led an expedition up the Gambia River in West Africa to seek Gold in 1620. He famously refused an offer of slaves.

Edward Colston 1636-1721 was a major investor and eventual leader of the Royal African Company. His company's ships made dozens of voyages carrying about 500,000 captive men, women, and children from West Africa to the Americas and Caribbean. In Scotland there were thousands of collier slaves, often with small children. In 1799 an Act of Parliament freed all colliers from a "state of bondage or slavery".

There was opposition against the abolition of the slave trade by MP's, bishops, wealthy merchants, and West Indies traders. The British Government paid £20 million in compensation to the slave owners, not the slaves, following the Slavery Abolition Act 1833. This was equal to 40% of the Treasury's annual spending then and was funded by taxpayers until 2015.

There were 5 phases of the Slave trade.

Phase 1 – 1550-1660 The Privateers Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake worked in early maritime trading and raiding against Spanish holdings.

In May 1552 Captain Thomas Wyndham sets sail for the Barbary coast from Bristol, bringing back sugar, dates and almonds.

Phase 2 – Nationalisation 1660-1698 The Royal African Trade Company was founded under King Charles II and the Duke of York. It traded gold, ivory and African slaves, but in the 1680's it went bankrupt.

Judge George Jeffreys visited Bristol in 1685 and found aldermen, merchants and the Mayor of Bristol running a human trafficking ring, kidnapping street children, vagrants, and the poor, forcing them onto ships to be sold in America.

John Cary, 1695, wrote that trafficking of slaves was "the best traffic the Kingdom have".

Phase 3 – Privatisation 1698-1807 The Trade with Africa Act ended the monopoly held by the Royal African Company, opening the transatlantic slave

trade to all private English citizens and independent merchants. This accelerated the scale of the trade particularly benefiting ports like Bristol and Liverpool.

Phase 4 – Abolition of the Slave Trade John Wesley (1703-1791) and Granville Sharp (1735-1813) launched the British movement to abolish the slave trade.

Phase 5 – Abolition and its Aftermath The Codrington family, 1710, bequeathed 2 plantations in Barbados to bring Christian religion to slaves.

John Newton (1725-1807) commanded multiple African slave trips, not thinking it was morally wrong, until in 1748 he survived a violent storm which inspired his Christian faith. He became a curate, and wrote 'Amazing Grace' in 1773.

Pro-slavery traders thought that "slavery takes on the burden of caring for inferior beings". They thought slavery removed people from culture worships – the devil and the practice of witchcraft.

Slaves fought back, constantly trying to break free while bound together trekking to the coast, they did not want to get into the boats and tried to fight back on voyages. Some chose death over bondage.

In the 1750's you could buy a slave for £5 and sell the slave for £50. A Guinea captain was paid £5 a month plus bonus of £260 for a 14 month voyage. At the time a vicar earned £70 per annum and a solicitor £230.

Thomas Thistlewood from Gloucester was a plantation overseer in Jamaica, 1750-1785. He was physically and sexually abusive to the slaves.

William Wilberforce, 1758-1833, a figurehead in Parliament led the campaign to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire, and in 1807 the slave trade was abolished. Joseph Sturge 1793-1859 had campaigned against slavery and led an anti-slavery convention in London June 1840.

Samuel Baker, 1794-1862, from Highnam Court received compensation for slaves and used the wealth to develop Bakers Quay at Gloucester docks. William Berryman, an artist, was active in Jamaica 1808-1816 and drew many sketches of the landscape and daily lives of the slaves. Sarah Clutterbuck of Newark Park and Ann Grant of Prinknash Park were compensated in the 1830's for the loss of slaves.

In the American Civil War (1861-65) the South wanted to keep the slaves. Further information on British slavery can be found on the University College London website. The Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery - https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/

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SILENCE (A short story by Jane Tucker)

The silence was deafening

He stood underneath an endless expanse, a sea of silent stars in the dead of night, wondering where life was going to take him. An Owl flew up toward the glowing golden moon on silent wings. Even the trees were silent, with no wind to ruffle their branches, as they stood like sentinels, outlining the wide expanse of the lake.

The stars slowly disappeared as cloud rolled across the heavens, and large snowflakes began to fall silently to the ground, making intricate patterns on the earth. So very quiet he could almost hear the earth breathing if he listened hard enough, he told himself, as he stood there amongst the silent snowflakes that were now falling thick and fast. The moon had now disappeared, leaving a faint glow through the cloud, just to establish its place should the snow bearing clouds move away.

A lone wolf howled in the distance, echoing around and around amongst the trees and across the lake, shattering the silence with its cry. The man started nervously and felt in his coat pocket for the reassuring hard feel of his revolver, just in case, he thought to himself. The cry had seemed to come from the other side of the lake, so all is well, he thought to himself. The cry came again, but was taken up by a second howl, which sounded nearer this time. Oh no, thought the man, one lone wolf I could deal with, but not a pack of them, glancing around nervously through the falling snow to the tree line, where he thought he saw movement.

Difficult to tell through the falling swirling mass of white snowflakes. He stood very still, peering hard into the distance, and yes he saw two grey shapes moving between the trees. I was not put on this earth to be a feast for wolves, he thought to himself, so he slowly drew the revolver from his pocket, slipped off the safety catch and fired it twice into the air. It echoed around with shocking clarity into the silence of the night.

He counted five wolves as they scattered and ran between the trees toward the safety of the distant mountains. The lone man turned, fervently thanking the Lord for his lucky escape, and made his way back homeward, looking over his shoulder all the while. As he did so it stopped snowing, the cloud moved away, and the full orb of the silver moon appeared once again, lighting his way home, with a beautiful golden sparkly path and no sign of wolves.



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