

A Plan for Chitterne's Ailing Trees



A combination of factors is threatening our trees as a nation. In recent years various species-specific diseases, such as Dutch Elm (*Ophiostoma novo-ilmi*) and Ash Die-Back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) have ravaged tree cover all over Europe. Britain, and England especially, has been very badly affected, since our percentage of tree-cover nationally is one of the lowest in Europe at around only 14%. The government, aware of the ecological benefits of trees, is encouraging individual counties to contribute to a national programme to raise the proportion of tree cover to 17%.

Comprehensive survey

Mindful of this, and concerned about the apparent ill-health of many of Chitterne's trees - a large proportion of which are ageing - the Parish Council commissioned a comprehensive survey of tree-health and safety last September and the results are very grave. The scope of the survey included all of the playing field, with special attention to areas of high public usage, such as around the play equipment, the areas around the field, where spectators gather during cricket matches and other events, and the footpaths beside Chitterne Brook (the Cut) and the trees which border the allotment gardens. In all, 121 trees in 7 groups were examined by a qualified tree surgeon, whose report makes difficult reading.

27 trees of varied species are considered dangerous and in need of immediate removal, this includes all our elms, which are either dead already, or very soon will be. A further four trees consisting of Alder, Field Maple, Wild Cherry and Lawson Cypress are also dead, or dying, and should be felled within a year. Work has already commenced. The urgent felling of dead trees does not require permission from Wiltshire Council. We are able to carry out some of this work from our own resources, but some will require the expensive attention of specialist tree surgeons. Such a large-scale removal of tree cover could have a devastating effect in a small village like Chitterne, radical altering its appearance.

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At first glance, and from a distance, Chitterne is a perfect example of a leafy English village. But a recent detailed survey paints a different picture. In fact, Elms and Ash trees comprise the majority of our tree cover. All the Elms are dead; much of the Ash is affected by 'Die-Back' and many of the remaining species were planted so long ago as to be nearing the end of life.

Parish Council Notes

The following matters were discussed and agreed at the January 20th Chitterne Parish Council Meeting:

Parishioner Mr Murray Kent stated that the grass verges alongside the Cut were badly damaged by visitors' parking their cars to attend the Boxing Day Hunt meet. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the R.A. Hunt to insist better traffic management and damage repair measures are used in future.

Mr Kent also suggested that villagers who voluntarily mow the grass verges, should have a service for their mowers paid for by the Council. All agreed with this suggestion. The culverts which drain surface water into the Cut have not been cleared efficiently this year by the Parish Steward. Clerk confirmed that, under the proposed Village Maintenance Plan, they would be regularly inspected and, if necessary, cleared at least once every 3 weeks. A request has been made to clear Back Lane with the County Council road sweeping vehicle.

Councillor John Dillon has resigned in order to give more attention to his duties with the King's Head Pub Group, now that the pub has been purchased by the village. Clerk to advertise vacancy on Petenet and in Chit-Chat.

Permission has been granted and work is in hand for the removal of dead/diseased trees in a number of locations.

Wiltshire Councillor Christopher Newbury has emailed that the meeting to create a new **Unitary Authority** combining Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset was (continued on Page 2)

CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

2 nd February	Holy Communion	Chitterne, 9.00 am; Tilshead, 10.30 am.
9 th February	Holy Communion	Chitterne, 10.30 am
16 th February	Holy Communion	Shrewton 10.30 am.
23 rd February	Holy Communion	Orcheston 10.30 am.

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unpopular with many Parish and Town Councils who have expressed a negative response to the new authority and the Direct election of a Mayor. Wiltshire County Council cabinet is in favour, because the change will be accompanied by greater funding. More information is required.

A draft 2025 Budget was pre-circulated to Councillors and agreed by the meeting. It was noted that while the precept was held at its current level of £11,269, the village is likely to receive an extra £500, because of the new housing on Bidden Lane.

A Village Maintenance Plan was pre-circulated to Councillors and agreed by the meeting. Ms. Aileen Fenlon is to be invited to be Tree Warden, and it was agreed that as much of the work as possible will be carried out internally to avoid having to engage the services of more expensive outside contractors. Villagers will be invited to contribute to aspects of the scheme, and a meeting will be held shortly with allotment holders to seek their views on the development of the allotment and grazing areas.

Cllrs. Jane Bell and Julia Hendrickse have prepared a response to the **Wiltshire Traffic Plan**. There is a lack of enforcement of the weight limit regulations, and the A390 is inadequate as an alternative route during closures on the A303 and 360. An application for traffic signing has been turned down for no apparent reason and will be re-submitted.

Banking Assets and Finance. A current balance sheet was pre-circulated, showing the healthy state of village finances.

The RoSPA report on village play equipment was of limited value. The Council will continue to carry out our own maintenance. Close inspection of the equipment revealed no current safety hazards, but suggested that the swing seats should be replaced. Cllr Hulton suggested a notice should be displayed at both playing field entrances advising that equipment was used at the users own risk.

There will be a discussion with the **Cricket Club** about the Playing Field mowing contract, in the light of the unserviceability of their mowing equipment.

Date of next meetings. (2025)
Monday March 3, AGM, April 28, (followed by a council meeting), July 8, September 8, November 3.

The meeting closed at 7.47pm.

CHRISTMAS HAMPER RESULTS

Firstly may we say a huge thank you to everyone who bought raffle tickets for the Christmas Hamper in aid of Salisbury Hospice. The final figure raised is not yet known but as soon as it is, we will let you know. Below is the list of winners 1st - Jane Machin, (WI) Green 72, 2nd - Dee Puddy (Shrewton) Green 81, 3rd - Jo Booth (Chitterne) Red 82, Runners up - John Smedley (Chitterne) Red 248, Jackie Bull (WI) Green70 Norman Evans (Sutton Veny) Red 221, Anne White (WI) Green 9.

University Bursary Grants

Applications are now open for our University Bursary grants, supporting young people from Wiltshire and Swindon as they take their first steps into university this year.

Are you about to begin your university journey?

Wiltshire Community Foundation is offering University Bursary grants to support young people in Wiltshire and Swindon with the costs of studying for an undergraduate degree. Each bursary provides £1,600 per year of your course, helping with essential expenses like travel, books, or general living costs. As long as your circumstances remain the same, you'll continue to receive the grant for each academic year of your degree.

Who Can Apply?

To be eligible, you must:
Have parents/guardians (or yourself) claiming at least 2 Means-Tested Benefits or 2 elements of Universal Credit OR be a Looked After Child (in the care of Wiltshire Council or Swindon Borough Council)
Be aged between 17–24 years when you apply
Have lived in Wiltshire or Swindon for at least 2 years (or have your family home there if you're already at university)
Be eligible for funding through Student Finance England.
Be planning to study (or already studying) for your first undergraduate degree at a UK university, college, or institution

Don't Miss Out!

Applications close on 11 April 2025 – apply today by visiting www.wiltshirecf.org.uk/grants-and-support/individuals/university-bursary-one-degree-more

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However, if the operation is properly planned and carried out as restoration rather than simple removal, in the medium to long-term, the village landscape could be dramatically improved. Also, other factors have combined to mitigate the effects of ageing and disease on our treescape.

Timely identification. First, the problem has been identified and addressed early enough to enable us to plan a long-term tree replacement campaign, which will benefit the village for many years to come. Second, the fortuitous acquisition of the allotments and grazing areas presents the opportunity to create a 'tree nursery' which will considerably reduce the cost of tree replacement - and we can take advantage of new, disease-resistant strains of saplings. Even better, there are generous funding schemes which we can apply to, with the support and assistance of Wiltshire Council which make the prospect of re-invigorated tree cover in the village a very realistic one.

Measures have already put in place to manage a village maintenance scheme, using our own resources of labour and finance, to remove all the threatened growth in the village, improve the allotment areas and create greater amenity in the village for the enjoyment of residents. More details of this will appear in future issues of Chit-Chat as the scheme progresses, but in the meantime, be assured that the Parish Council will take every opportunity to ensure that Chitterne will have a green and leafy future.

Local Elections, May 1st

On Thursday, 1st of May 2025, elections will take place for 98 Unitary Wiltshire Councillors and across Parish and Town Councils in Wiltshire.

A 'Webinar' will be hosted by Wiltshire Council on 11 February 2025 to give prospective candidates and agents all the information they need ahead of the local elections. It takes place from 6-7pm and will be an opportunity for those considering standing for election and their representatives to hear from the election team directly, including the Returning Officer, and have their questions answered.

People will be on hand to answer any questions and talk through the process of nominating and other key considerations, to ensure that the election is as smooth a process as possible for everyone involved.

To sign up to the Candidates and Agents Webinar: <https://surveys.wiltshire.gov.uk/Interview/f3b56bb6-53fd-4f2b-ad9f-0b2b76f5b05d>.

Electoral areas and boundaries

Some of the electoral areas in Wiltshire will change for these elections. An interactive map of the current and new boundaries can be viewed on wiltshire.gov.uk, on the Wiltshire-Electoral-Boundaries link.

Guidance for Candidates

Candidates considering standing for election are encouraged to read the guidance from the electoral commission associated with the election they wish to stand in. Nomination papers can also be found on the Electoral Commission website: www.electoralcommission.org.uk.



One of the more worrying problems associated with our diseased and ageing trees can be clearly seen above. Power and telecommunications cables are woven through the branches of an old tree, which, while not itself diseased is vulnerable to high winds, and is growing out of the steep bank of the Cut, and therefore insecurely rooted. If that was not enough, This stand of trees is the responsibility of Selwood Housing, complicating the process the Parish Council has to follow to make the tree safe, or indeed, replace it.

CHIT-CHAT NEXT ISSUE

The March issue of Chit-Chat will go to press in the last week of February. All contributions, either hard copy or email to:

Tel: 07914 284324

Or 'over the stable door' at Stable Cottage, 24 Townsend, Chitterne, Warminster, BA12 0LP.

To download Chit-Chat from the village website visit: www.chitterne.com and follow the links.

Following the huge success last year, Heytesbury & Sutton Veny Cricket Club launches its Pre-Season Indoor Programme for 2025, for both Juniors and Adults.

Junior & Youth Cricket: Friday Evenings (Indoor) at Warminster CC Academy BA12 8LH
Under 11 (School years 5 & 6) Mixed Boys & Girls 1700-1800
Under 13 (School years 7 & 8) Mixed Boys & Girls 1800-1900
Under 15 (School years 9,10 & 11) Mixed 1900-2000

All abilities welcome. Our Award winning team of coaches will be on hand to deliver expert coaching and technical tuition. No equipment necessary. Matches start after Easter outdoors. Contact Justin 07876 456260

Seniors Cricket (Men's & Women's) STARTS 6th February for 10 Weeks (Indoor) at Warminster CC Academy BA12 8LH.
Current times are: Thursday 6th, 13th and 20th February 20:00-21:00
Wednesday 26th February 18:00-19:00.
March and April times to be confirmed.

NOT PLAYED IN A FEW YEARS? Come and have a refresh your skills!. We offer both League and Social cricket through the summer.
For more information Contact Justin 07876 456260 Women's Section: Sarah 07736 640674

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

Canon Eleanor Rance and her family have moved into their own home, outside the parish. Eleanor remains in post as Rector of the parish of Salisbury Plain, of which Chitterne is a part. The following information should help you to get in touch should you wish to do so:

For written correspondence directly to Canon Eleanor Rance:

Letters or notes can be left in the vestry of your village church. If you need to post something to my home address please message/email me (see below) and I can share those details with you.

To contact the Rector/parish by phone:
07486 355674

To contact the parish office by email:
parishoffice@salisburyplainbenefice.com

To contact Rev Eleanor by email:
reveleanorrance@gmail.com

For all matters relating to finances for the parish:

Mr S Shepherd, The Treasurer, Salisbury Plain Benefice, The Rookery, Orcheston, Salisbury, SP3 4RP

To subscribe to the weekly newsletter for the parish, which includes services and events: www.salisburyplainbenefice.com, or by email to parishoffice@salisburyplainbenefice.com

Happy Hathi Craft

Fabric. Card. Clay. Repeat.

An Introduction to Indian Block Printing

Saturday 22nd February 2025, 10am-1pm
Chitterne Village Hall, Chitterne, Wiltshire BA12 0LS

As February is the month of love, why not fall in love with something new?

Looking to learn a new craft which is simple and easy to do? Then you'll love Indian Block Printing.

Begin your journey with an introductory workshop, perfect for anyone new to Indian block printing or for those wanting a refresher. Relax and enjoy the experience of hand printing on 100% cotton fabric.

Choose from a variety of contemporary and traditional designs hand-carved in Indian Rosewood by local artisans from Jaipur in India. Learn the various techniques to create something special and unique to you. Print two fabric items from a choice of Tea Towels, set of Napkins, Tote Bags, Drawstring Bags, Cosmetic bags and more. Unleash your creativity. We'll provide the materials – you provide the imagination. **Try it. You'll love it!**

Workshop Fee: £45 per person. All Materials & Refreshments included.

Print. Relax. Repeat. Perfect.
Find your happy place...
www.hathicraft.co.uk

To book a place please go to website or scan QR code.

Sheep with a Mission



Last month we looked at the merits of the rams that would hopefully come from the purebred Suffolk ewes that were grazing down Back Lane. Now we have to look at what ewe would be best to put with the rams.

We have to consider what are the objectives of this ovine union. Assuming that fat lamb production is the desired end result good strong lambs with mothers who have strong mothering instincts and plenty of milk to sustain a multiple birth.

Vigour

The best way to achieve this is by cross breeding a hill ewe with a lowland ram. The hybrid vigour resulting from this produces a ewe whose sire was a Blueface Leicester ram with a pure bred hill ewe. The ram provides profligacy, up to three lambs per pregnancy, good milk production and excellent mothering instincts.

The hill ewe also mothers well but is not so prolific, only producing one lamb to face the harsh conditions of the hills and mountains of the UK. The resulting female progeny from this mating is a Mule thus you can find North Country Mules, Scottish Mules, Cheviot Mules and others. For instance the North Country Mule is a Swaledale ewe crossed with a Blueface Leicester.

The hardiness and geography, or otherwise, of the breeds mean that the lowland sheep farmer is dependant on his replacement stock from the numerous sheep fairs that occur all over the country.

In fact we have one very close to home here. The Wilton Sheep Fair is a long established venue for the purchase of Mule theaves (the term used for a female sheep yet to breed) It is held at least four times a year on the Wilton Estate and with thousands of sheep on hand is a great spectacle and reminder of bygone days.

Back Lane to the Wilton Estate, what a promotion! The next time you are out to a Sunday roast of lamb ask your host if it came from a Mule. You might get a funny look!

Murray Kent

QUIZ & CHEESE NIGHT

The quiz is a great mixture of rounds, not just General Knowledge, eg who sang this song?, Where in the world would you see this? Guess the cheese?

Saturday 8th March 7pm – 10pm Village Hall

BAR & PRIZES

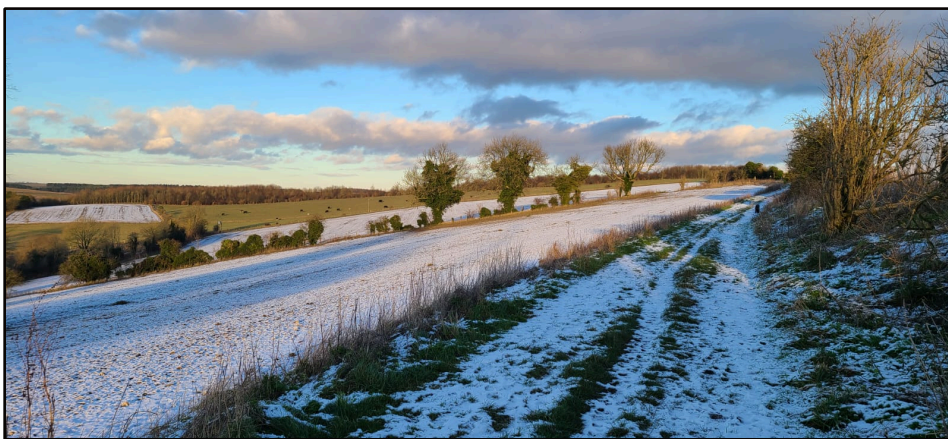
Tickets £8.50 per person

Up to 6 per table

(if there aren't 6 of you, never mind, as you can join another small team)

To book your place email lucas112@outlook.com

by Saturday 1st March, tickets also on sale at February Breakfast Club.



We really enjoyed Pam Kent's picture of Salisbury Plain in its winter clothes, although it was a bit of a "blink and you'll miss it" affair. Our mild winter weather has taken rather a vicious turn since then!

SAVE THE DATES

Below are the events for the year, organised by the Village Hall. Further details will be published in Chit Chat, nearer the dates of each event, so keep your eyes peeled! We are hoping that somewhere in this list is something that would appeal to you, or there is an event which you feel you would like to help with.

I know we keep banging on about the need to raise money but it's a cold fact that before we even open the doors, we need to find £3,000, which is an awful lot of money. As Trustees we are looking into other ways of raising money but this is a start and it's fun and who knows, if you come along, you may even enjoy yourselves!

MARCH Saturday 1st Breakfast Club Tuesday 4th Pancake Day Saturday 8th Quiz & Cheese Night
APRIL Saturday 5th Breakfast Club Saturday 26th Car Wash
MAY Saturday 3rd Breakfast Club Thursday 8th VE Day Celebrations w/end of 17th & 18th Village Hall Refreshing
JUNE Saturday 7th Breakfast Club
JULY Saturday 5th Breakfast Club Saturday 19th Village Party
AUGUST Saturday 2nd Breakfast Club Saturday 16th Imber Bus Day
SEPTEMBER Saturday 6th Breakfast Club
OCTOBER Saturday 4th Breakfast Club Saturday 4th Octoberfest
NOVEMBER Sunday 2nd Fireworks Saturday 8th Breakfast Club
DECEMBER Saturday 6th Breakfast Club



Christian Relief
Education Skills
and Sustainability

CRESScharity no: 1141343

CRESS LUNCH

Thursday 27th February 2025

12.00noon for 12.30pm

Chitterne Village Hall, Chitterne, BA120LS

Guest Speaker:

Olivia Jones, CRESSAgricultural Adviser

Two Course Lunch

£7.50per head

Ticketsavailable from Sarah Gooch

email: mafaho@btinternet.com or tel: 01985850893

Pleaseadvise any dietary requirements



thank you

BACSpayments can be made to:
Chitterne Church Account
Account Number: 07142594
Sort Code: 30-99-13

CRESSsupportSouthSudanese Refugees who are encamped in Northern Uganda

The Kings Head is Taking Shape

Many thanks to all of you who were able to join us for what was mostly a clear out of 'stuff'. The garage at the back of the garden is now full, waiting for onward movement to the recycling centre. More thanks to those who have already taken a few car-loads. The plan to extend the slate flooring in the main bar has morphed into replacing the entire floor on that side due to some rotten joists. Ollie and team have cracked on and we should be back on track next week; the upside of the work was the uncovering of the original brick fire place, which is much easier on the eye. We are compiling a photo album of the work as we go so that you can see the before and after. Work on the tenant's kitchen has also started. The intention will be to host another community work day on Sat 1 Feb and then every Saturday, work dependant until we open, which we expect to do in early April.

Richard Hendrickse

