



All Saints, Little Casterton



St Peter & St Paul, Great Casterton

Four Churches



Together



All Saints, Pickworth



St Peter's Tickencote

NOVEMBER
2025

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER

Day	Time	Activity	Place
2	9.00am	Holy Communion	Little Casterton
2	10.30am	Holy Communion	Great Casterton
5	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
5	10.30am	Coffee, Cakes & Chat	Church Hall
6	9.00am	Parish Breakfast	Garden Centre
6	7.00pm	House Group	Harvard
7	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
7	2.30pm	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
9	10.30am	Remembrance Service	Great Casterton
11	9.30am	Open the Book	Primary School
12	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
12	10.30am	Coffee, Cakes & Chat	Church Hall
14	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
14	2.30pm	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
15	12 noon	Saturday Lunchtime Live - The Eleven	Great Casterton
16	9.00am	Holy Communion	Little Casterton
16	10.30am	Safeguarding Communion	Great Casterton
19	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
19	10.30am	Coffee, Cakes & Chat	Church Hall
19	2.00pm	Great Casterton PCC meeting	Church Hall
20	7.00pm	House Group	Harvard
21	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
21	2.30pm	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
22	6.00pm	Quingo Quiz	Church Hall
23	9.00am	Holy Communion	Pickworth
23	10.30am	Morning Praise	Great Casterton
24	2.00pm	Book Group	Sue Stretton's House
25	7.30pm	Parson's Pint	The Crown
26	10.00am	Celtic Prayers	Church Hall
26	10.15am	Coffee, Cakes & Chat	Church Hall
28	10.00am	Toddler Group	Church Hall
28	2.30pm	Warm Spaces	Church Hall
29	12 noon	Wedding of Elaine and Robert	Tickencote
30	10.30am	Advent Benefice Communion	Little Casterton

FOUR CHURCHES NEWS NOVEMBER 2025

Hi and welcome officially to the season of autumn with the clock change behind us now just a few days ago. As I wandered round the parishes in the last few weeks, I hear the same question being asked from the people I meet. "Is it true that you are retiring" and the answer is sadly a firm "yes I am".

I will shortly hit the ripe old age when the policy of the good old Church of England declares that I must step back from active ministry for a period of at least six months. That period of time starts on the 8th February 2025. The second question usually takes the form "How shall we manage without you" and the answer to that is "very well indeed". For I am not the first vicar, nor will I be the last, to take retirement. In many places church continue in the capable hands of others and many also thrive in that vacancy.

In the meantime all our churchwardens are well underway in the development of a new parish profile which will be used to attract the next priest in charge. While moves are also afoot to secure the services of priests with a permit to officiate who will maintain regular Sunday services until the next official priest is appointed. So, fear not. Things are happening, fast.

Yes, there will be challenges, yes, I will miss you all desperately and my last Sunday service on 1st February 2026 is going to be a rollercoaster of emotion for all of us.

I may be leaving but our Lord continues the work through others and in many cases calls the most unlikely into his service. So watch out, he may be calling on you and if he does your response must always be "Hear I am, use me".

Until then our pattern of services remains virtually unchanged through to the end of the year. November continues to be a month of remembering. Firstly our All Saints and All Souls Service on 2nd November reflects on family and friends who are no longer with us but whose spirit lives on in our hearts. Candles will be lit and names will be read out at our morning Communion service. The second Sunday on the 9th November sees another set of names read out as we remember the fallen in two world wars and numerous other more recent conflicts around the globe.

Remembering can be painful but I believe it is also essential. If we can't remember those who have shaped our character down through the decades, then we are indeed a lost people.

As Christians we remember Jesus every day of the year. The person who by his unselfish sacrifice paid the price for all our sins. Remember him and his ministry among us this November and especially in the run up to his birth celebrations in just a few weeks'

*God Bless
Revd Don*

CONFIRMATION

Bishop Debbie will be coming to Great Casterton Church on Sunday 11th January 2026 to confirm several candidates.

If you or anyone you know, would also like to be confirmed by the Bishop on this date please Revd. Don as soon as possible.



SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2025

Once a year the Church of England sets aside a Sunday to focus on safeguarding. This year it will be 16th November and the theme will be **Action Speaks Louder**.

So, if you want to know what safeguarding is and how we do it all year round (not just on a Sunday once a year) then please come on **16th November** at **10.30** to **Great Casterton Church** and join us at our Sunday service where we will be focussing on this important subject.

All welcome!

Remember, Remember...

That is, of course, the beginning of the children's rhyme about the gunpowder plot of 1605.

But Remember is a very good summing up word for the month itself. November brings us a season of remembering. All Saints followed by All Souls as we remember those who have gone before us. The Saints of old whose lives inspire us in our Christian journey and the local, maybe only known to us, souls who have walked with us in faith.

Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day call us to remember the horrors of war so that in remembering we might avoid such actions as lead to these tragedies.

November also marks the end of the Church year and as with every time of ending and beginning we remember what has been and we look to what will be. The church year ends with the Sunday before Advent when we remember what is important to us. We keep it as the feast of Christ the King remembering that it is in Jesus Christ that all things are held together, that it is Jesus who the saints follow and it is the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, laying down his life for us, that inspired those who lay down their life for peace.

That Sunday is also often known as 'Stir up Sunday' from the collect rather than from the Christmas pudding and cake stirring in the kitchen! The Book of Common prayer Collect leads us to pray "Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

So in this month of November I pray that we will remember...

Those who lived faithful Christian lives (and do so too), those who we love and see no longer (cherishing our loved ones now), those who sacrifice for peace (and commit ourselves to work for peace) and finally Jesus Christ, God who left the glory of heaven to be one of us.

In our remembering may we be inspired to action, to be stirred up, faithful Christian people known for the fruit of Good Works. Amen.



The Venerable Alison Booker
Archdeacon of Oakham

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Forthcoming events update

Saturday Live:

November 15th 'The Eleven' - A Ladies Barber Shop Group.

Social Events:

Saturday Nov 22nd - Quingo Quiz – £10pp - BYO alcohol - light refreshments provided.

Saturday Dec 13th - Christmas Raffle and Coffee Morning with Anna singing Christmas music. 10.30-12.00.
Raffle drawn at this event at about 11.30am.

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"Blog unto others as you would have them blog unto you.
Spam not, lest ye be spammed! Though I surf through the
valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no virus..."

O IS FOR OWL

The Tawny Owl is probably our most familiar owl with children growing up learning that tawny owls say tu-wit-tu-woo. This is actually not the call of one bird but a duet between male and female. The female starts with a harsh 'kee-vik' which is then followed by the male with a deeper 'woo- hoooo'. As with much bird song, these calls attract a mate, reinforce an existing pair bond and also warn off other owls, communicating that this is an occupied territory.

In the autumn and early winter you may hear a lot of owls calls. The duetting call maybe from an established pair in a territory, from a single owl who has lost its mate and is seeking to attract a new one or as a deterrent to other owls telling them to leave. Autumn is the time when the young, recently fledged birds, are noisily driven from their natal territory by their parents. Each existing territory they pass through will elicit much calling shrieking and hooting. This is a dangerous time for the young owls and many will die driven from hunting grounds by resident birds before they reach their first year. Once they do find a suitable territory, which is likely to be only a few kilometres from their place of birth, they may remain in it all year round for the rest of their lives. Making them one of our most sedentary birds once a young finds a territory they will call to attract a mate so the duetting starts again. Owls pair for life reinforcing their pair bonds with their calls. So listen out for the tawny owls and think of the two birds duetting together.

TREES IN WINTER

When leaves fall and trees stand bare against the winter sky, identifying them might seem like a challenge. But it is actually one of the most rewarding times to really get to know our trees. Take a look at the buds. Winter buds are tiny clues waiting to be noticed, look at the colour, shape and also whether they are opposite each other on the twig or alternate giving a zigzag pattern.

Ash: look for black buds that contrast sharply with grey stems. Buds are often in threes at the end of the twig one at the end and two just below, opposite each other.

Sycamore: buds are also opposite each other and like ash they're often in threes at the end of the twig these buds are a strong green colour.

Oak: has clusters of pinkish rounded buds.

Beech: long, narrow and pointed buds, arranged alternately along slender twigs. Both the buds on the twigs or an orangey brown in colour.

Horse chestnut: the easiest buds to identify the well known brown sticky buds.

Take a look at the trunk every tree has its own bark texture and colour which can vary as the tree gets older, so look out for more than one of these listed features.

Silver Birch: pale papery bark that peels off in strips whilst the twigs have a slight purple tinge.

Cherry: look for smooth bark with horizontal lines (called lenticels) and sometimes with a shiny reddish tinge.

Oak: deeply ridged and rugged when old. Other old trees also have ridged bark so remember to look at the silhouette and the buds too.

Beech: smooth pale grey colour for the trunk a major branches with orange brown twigs

Sweet chestnut: when mature sweet chestnut bark is deeply ridged with a diagonal twist to the ridges (the sweet chestnuts in Burghley are a good example)

There are other clues like the silhouette and seeds which can also help. Winter can seem like nature is sleeping but once you start looking there is so much to see. Trees in winter show a quieter, more subtle kind of beauty.

A good resource for identifying trees is the Woodland Trust tree ID app or field guides like Collins Complete British Trees.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025

The Wednesday morning Coffee, Cakes, and Chat group are going out for a Christmas Lunch at The Crown Pub at 12.00 for 12.30 on Wednesday 10th December.

There will be no coffee morning on that day.

There might availability for a few extra persons to join us, so if you'd like to, then please get in touch with Sue Cliffe, or Sue Peacock, or Sally to see if we still have the spare places.

CELTIC PRAYERS OVER CHRISTMAS 2025

There will be NO Celtic Prayers on either Wednesday 24th December, nor on Wednesday 31st December.

HAVE YOU EVER VISITED? WHIPSNADE ZOO AT CHRISTMAS?

Weekends from 22nd November, and then daily between 20th/24th December there are special things afoot at the largest zoo in the UK. Perfect for a family day out during the festive season, children can enjoy letter writing to Santa, learning how Santa trains his reindeer, and even a chance to win some Christmas prizes at some of the festive animal talks. There are over 11,000 animals at Whipsnade Zoo which is part of ZSL (Zoological Society of London) a global conservation charity. And by booking on-line for a small extra charge in addition to entry, you could treat the family to a special Meet Santa ticket.

By car Whipsnade is approximately 1 hour 30 minutes away. Things to enjoy: a "Great Whipsnade Railway", some great adventure playgrounds, food and drink stops, and a good-quality retail shop at the entrance/exit.

MONTHLY LETTER CHALLENGE

Allow yourself 10 minutes to complete the whole challenge. You don't have to finish one list before beginning the next list. Work on all three lists at once if you can. Just finish within the time.

This month's challenge is:

To find between 4 and 6 boys' names, between 5 and 7 girls' names and 6 animals beginning with the letter O.

DECEMBER NIGHT SKY

The full moon will occur mid-month, and the International Space Station will be visible on its passage in the skies above us. Several bright planets like Jupiter and Saturn can be seen early in the evening dark sky, and the Taurid Meteor Shower is a good one to look out for as it peaks mid-month with slow-moving "falling" stars.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November birthdays are associated with two zodiac signs: Scorpio (until Nov. 21) and Sagittarius (from Nov. 22 onwards). Scorpions are known for being passionate, determined, intuitive, and magnetic, while Sagittarians are often described as adventurous, optimistic, and freedom-loving. Both signs can be considered to have a strong sense of justice.

Some notable November birthdays include:

Winston Churchill - 30th November 1874. British Statesman and Prime Minister.

Whoopi Goldberg - 13th November 1955. American actor, comedian and author.

King Charles - 14th November 1948. Monarch

Miley Cyrus - 23rd November 1992. American singer, songwriter and actress

Marie Curie - 7th November 1867. Physicist and chemist, first female Nobel Prize winner

George Eliot - 22nd November 1819. Male pen-name of female English novelist.

Sue Cliffe

SATURDAY 20TH UPDATE

The coffee morning was well attended with lovely homemade cakes to share with coffee and friends. At 11.50am everyone made their way into the church for the Saturday Live Event which on this occasion was a talk by Mike Harrison; an extremely interesting and informative talk about the formation of the Stamford Shakespeare Company and how they obtained Toilethorpe Hall.

Mike has been an actor, producer and director of the Stamford Shakespeare Company since its inception in 1968, when it was founded by Jean Harley), initially to raise money for the creation of Stamford Arts Centre and restoration of the Georgian Theatre in St Mary's Street. Producing plays in the Monastery Gardens of the George Hotel, the company went from strength to strength and after nine years the George Hotel could no longer accommodate the company because of building work.

They were looking for an alternative venue when Toilethorpe Hall came on the market. Derelict and overgrown with brambles after several years of neglect, Jean and the committee found a natural amphitheatre hidden in the grounds and a wooded glade to perform Shakespeare Plays in the open air.

After Domesday, seven generations of Norman landlords occupied the site taking the name de Toilethorpe. The family built a Manor House known as the Old Hall and for 200 years was passed from father to son, followed by the Burton family for another 200 Years up to 1503 when the Browne family took over. William Browne was the builder of Browne's Hospital in Broad Street, one of the best medieval hospitals in England. Further and more detailed Toilethorpe history is available on the internet. Fast forward to 1967, after the estate was broken up into separate lots, the hall and seven acres were sold to a property developer who planned to turn it into a casino. The developer became bankrupt and so Toilethorpe Hall was left for nine years in a near derelict state, enabling the Stamford Shakespeare Company to acquire an amazing property on 1st March 1977.

Grateful thanks to Mike Harrison and to everyone who supported these two events. Over £170 was raised for our church kitchen project.

PRAYER BOARD IN CHURCH

Did you know that every week the names that have been placed on our prayer board in church are prayed out loud on Wednesday mornings?

Please date each prayer that is placed on the board, to help the team keep up with how recently they were placed there.

Thank you

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Priest in Charge	Rev Don McGarrigle	01572 812804
Great Casterton Hall Bookings	Steve Cunningham	01572 510043
Benefice Safeguarding Officer	Carol Maynard	01780 755687.
Newsletter Distribution	Mary Sproson	01780 762933

Churchwardens:

Great Casterton	Geoffrey Archer	07803 423010
	Peter Bryan	07507 299436
Little Casterton	Tony Dolby	01780 766897
Pickworth	Charles Gilman	01780 411017
	Goldie Bardwell	01780 410272

FOR HIRE

Great Casterton Church Hall is available for hire for children's parties and/or other events. For more details contact Steve Cunningham

Email: stephenmichaelcunningham@gmail.com

Phone: 01572 510043 or Mobile: 07810 404748

Church Projects

Moving on from our heating project we are now fund-raising to renew the kitchen in the Church Hall, which is in dire need of being updated to meet current standards. You can help by coming along to and supporting our social events, where all monies raised will go towards church projects, or you can make a one off or regular donation by using our QR code. We are very grateful for any support you can give us.



THAT STILL SMALL VOICE

Choices

We are about two hundred years after Solomon. Ahab is king of the northern half with his domineering wife Jezebel, a keen Baal supporter. The people had again forgotten God in favour of the visible Baal, who is their popular local god of rain and thunder. Elijah, who is the current prophet/preacher, decides to do something about it. He will arrange a test. James, Jesus' brother, tells us that Elijah was a bloke just like us and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain for a bit so he could demonstrate God's power. Who could control the weather and make it rain? Now, Elijah's prayer is answered, and it did not rain for three and a half years and the drought was causing famine. People were concerned. Elijah tells Ahab to gather all the people and the Baal officials together to see if the rain god could do anything to help. A huge crowd gathers on the sea coast together with the 450 Baal officials and Elijah addresses them. He asks the people to judge who is the real god and poses a test. The test is a simple one. They are to prepare a sacrifice on a pile of dry sticks on an altar and then see which deity can answer with fire. No one is allowed to light the fire and the Baal officials are given the first chance to prove that Baal is real.

Enthusiasm. The preparations are made. The Baal officials start praying to their god in the morning and get quite agitated when nothing happens. By lunchtime their inspiration and enthusiasm is waning a bit, so Elijah goes in to help. He jokes and suggests that Baal may have overslept or is busy somewhere else. He makes fun of them. The one thing enthusiasts can't stand is ridicule. So the Baal lot really goes into overdrive and their dancing becomes even more frenzied. So much so that they cut themselves with knives until the blood flowed. That is true passion. But still nothing happens.

His turn. About tea time Elijah calls a halt and says that it is his turn. First, to make sure there was no possibility of cheating, he gets some people to pour water over his bonfire and sacrifice. They did this three times. Some modern people have assumed this account is a fairy story as how could they get so much water during a drought. These critics seem never to have read the detail that the action was taking place near the sea. So it was sea water that soaked the wood. Then Elijah prays that God would answer him so these people will "know that you are God and that you are turning their hearts back again". Immediately a lightning strike burned up the sacrifice, the wet wood, the stones they had built the altar with and evaporated the puddles of water around.

First result. The watching people are so amazed they fall on their faces. Then they turn on those 450 Baal officials who had been misleading and cheating them for so long and kill them all. Elijah is still on a high and he tells king Ahab and the people to go and have a feast, eat and drink, because it is about to rain. And it will be heavy rain. After a high there is often a low. Elijah goes up the hill behind and prays sending his servant on as a look out. There is nothing to see. God's time is not always our time. Seven times Elijah tells the servant to look again and on the seventh he reports a small cloud out over the sea.

. **Second result.** Elijah orders the relieved Ahab to get back in his chariot and drive to the city fast before the storm. Elijah himself is so excited he pulls up his cloak and runs beside the chariot all the way to Samaria. That's when things begin to go wrong.

Jezebel heard what had happened to the Baal officials that she swears revenge on Elijah and seems to ignore the fact that it was raining and food supplies for the people were now optimistic. She promises that Elijah will be as dead as all the Baal officials by breakfast time tomorrow.

Outcome. Elijah ran for his life. He even left his servant near some houses and walked out alone into the desert, sat down under a tree and prayed that he could die peacefully. Then he went to sleep. He was woken up to find some food and water ready for him. There was enough for a month and he walked on across the desert and hid in a cave. Here conscience and the question of what he was doing hiding, hit him and God gave him a lesson. He sees a storm, but God is not in it. He sees an earthquake, but God is not in it. Then a fire. The same. Finally that still small voice of conscience that asked "what are you doing here Elijah?"

Conclusion. Elijah tries to justify himself. He tells God that he has been very active and loyal, but now he is the only one left who has not bowed down to a Baal. God replies that He has more work for Elijah to do and there are still seven thousand others who have not given in to the Baal temptations. There are several other incidents about Elijah recorded for us culminating in his appearance with Moses to the disciples and Jesus. What are we to learn from this one? Was it right to put God to the test? What place does humour have in Christianity? Do we pray "earnestly"? Would we have looked seven times for an answer to our prayer? Why does James quote Elijah as an ordinary bloke? Do we have ups and downs in our lives? Is that wrong? Were the people wicked to have killed all the Baal prophets? Did Elijah realise that God had lots more big works for him? Was he really a bloke just like us to get such an answer to prayer? Do we listen to that still small voice?

Anon



YELLOW SOCKS AND PORRIDGE

Good Morning from Edinburgh, where I now live in a Care Home, since going into hospital in May. My problem was caused by my right lung muscles packing up, which is why I had felt so tired and washed out. At the end of July, my hospital care ended but I still need care and have to sleep with a mask to push CO2 out of my lungs and O2 in. Not pleasant but it works.

My room is on the 3rd floor so I can see the top of silver birch trees blowing in the wind like frisky young things, while a group of sturdy oak trees look on as if tut-tutting at their behaviour and a group of older ladies gossiping, with crossed arms, wearing pinafores and curlers in their hair.

I can also see the tower of Liberton Church built, I think in 1180, struck by lightning in 1815 and burnt down. It was rebuilt in the modern Gothic style in 1850 and refurbished in 2000. I can hear the church bells on Sunday morning. The tower has large windows and proper battlements with a tower on each corner and small windows ending in a pinnacle, and painted spire with small triangular flanges which look like four rockets waiting for take-off. One of the staff has just taken me out for a walk around and I will ask her sometime if the church is open so I can see inside.

My son and his family go the St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral built in 1874 and completed in 1917, funded by a bequest from two sisters, Barbara and Mary Walker. A choir school was built in 1885 nearby which my 7-year-old granddaughter will attend from September 2026. She has been going to music and singing lessons there since she was five, so knows children and teachers already. She will officially be in the choir this Sunday. It is the first time she will be fully robed, processing up the aisle to the choir stalls.

The service is live streamed, so my son has come in for the last two Sundays, and picked it up on his tablet so I could watch the service. During the summer, the choir has a break and groups of professional singers from the Edinburgh Festival fill in. This week I will hear the choir for the first time. The organist plays a full Voluntary at the end of the service. They do not show the congregation, for Data Protection purposes, just the organist playing. I sit and watch him and wonder why he has a bank of four keyboards and only uses the one second from the bottom. My son says that St Mary's is the only cathedral in Scotland with a full choral service every day.

I am still getting to know my fellow residents and the staff here and they are all very friendly. There are quizzes and Zumba sessions. The staff member who took me out for a walk told me that every Thursday afternoon there is an entertainment of some kind in Liberton Kirk hall, so I might try it next week, if they can arrange to take me round. It will be a way to meet local people.

I am adjusting to a new way of life and a new country so at least it keeps my brain working! I will send more pieces for the newsletter and receive a copy to keep me in touch with life at Great Casterton

And bright yellow socks! Well, whenever I leave my room they put yellow socks on my feet to keep them warm although they are covered with a blanket.

And porridge? It is what I have for breakfast every morning as it is properly made with porridge oats, not instant!

Marjorie Needham

SIBERIAN DOGS AND BUBBLE BATHS

The sun is shining and the and the branches of the silver birch trees I can see from my window are still dancing in the breeze, but here and there the dark green leaves are beginning to turn a light golden yellow so autumn is approaching. I see some beautiful skylscapes from my window. As it faces North the sun does not shine in directly but the light cloud covering there was this morning, when they drew back my curtains, is now breaking up to show some patches of blue sky and some small white fluffy clouds. Some large brown birds are flying by, about the size of a large pigeon, but I do not know what they are. If I find out, I will let you know.

My granddaughter had her first experience of processing up the aisle with the choir yesterday morning as a preparatory chorister, but not joining in with the singing until later in the year when she will become a preparatory choir member. She has to be there by 9.30 for practice etc., for 10.30 Sunday morning service. She will be a full member and attend the choir school full time next September from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm to allow for music and choir practice plus full school lessons. She will sing at Choral Evensong on Tuesdays and Fridays, and Morning Service on Sundays. So quite a heavy schedule.

So what about Siberian dogs? A lad called Powel brings his in on Saturdays. Niw is 18 months old, about Alsatian size with pure white fur. Each hair is 3 – 4 inches long, straight and about as thick as double baby bunting wool, thick and coarse, with short dark fur on his muzzle. His eyes are black with golden glints and he has amazingly long eyelashes like a super model. Powel says this is to stop snowflakes and ice getting stuck in them. Isn't creation wonderful?

Coincidentally, my son has two Siberian Forest cats as his wife has asthma and cannot tolerate cats. The Siberian cats are okay because their saliva does not contain what other cats have, which is what triggers her allergy. They have long white and grey fur and are very cuddly. Another amazing example of creation! Praise the Lord Indeed.

Marjorie Needham

p.s. Think about it!

“Cherish the smiles of passers-by warming the heart”

A quote on my box of tissues from Jan, a volunteer with Mind, the mental health charity.

Note: Marjorie's son has sent me contact details for her, should you wish to drop her a line and his own email address should you wish to send an email, as she is not on-line yet. Just ask and I will pass them on. Mary Sproson



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**We would love to receive contributions for the newsletter from all four
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- To promote healthy ageing and attitudes towards older people, seeking relevant ways to honour old age and if needed, to serve through advocacy, friendship and practical support.