



# St Mary the Virgin Church, Colton



Church Services		
First Sunday	Holy Communion	11.00 am
Second Sunday	Morning Worship	11.00 am
Third Sunday	Holy Communion	11.00 am
Fourth Sunday	Morning Worship	11.00 am
Fifth Sunday	Service Format will vary	11.00 am
Keep your eyes peeled for details of other services and Special Sunday Afternoon Events		

For all Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and any Pastoral Needs  
please contact Reverend Lynne Dean

<p><b>Resident Priest</b> Reverend Lynne Dean The New Rectory Bellamour Way Colton WS15 3JW 07736 972560 lanternlit@hotmail.com</p>	<p><b>Rector</b> Prebendary Simon Davis The Vicarage Market Place Abbots Bromley WS15 3BP</p>	<p><b>Church Wardens</b> Mrs Rachel Bayliss 24 Moorcroft, Colton, WS15 3ND rachel.bayliss@outlook.com 07792 234720 Mrs Victoria Hawley The Old Rectory, Bellamour Way, Colton, WS15 3JW 07939 003153</p>
<p><b>Messages to the Parochial Church Council : Mrs Katie Brown 07814 729148</b></p>		

## Message from your editor



The front cover photograph this month is courtesy of the history society and it shows the party of villagers planting the daffodil bulbs in 1988. A large group of villagers volunteered to do it and we reap the benefit of their hard work today.

I thought it was very relevant both because of the beautiful display at the moment and the recent volunteers who have planted the snowdrops in memory of Judy and Tony Winter. See photo on page 7.

I wish you all a Happy Easter.

Best wishes *Fiona*

**All Items for inclusion in the NEXT EDITION**

**Must reach the Editor by 15<sup>th</sup> of THIS MONTH**



**coltonparishnews@gmail.com**

**Thank you Fiona O'Brien Editor**

### Colton Community Choir

Invite you to come along and join our group of Jolly singers. A group of enthusiastic amateurs who enjoy singing a variety of music. We meet every Monday at 7pm at St. Marys Church Colton.

Do come and join us.





# Colton Parish Council

The Parish Council meet on the first Wednesday of the month in the Village Hall commencing at 7:30 pm unless advised to the contrary.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and should note their participation is limited to a maximum 20 minutes at the beginning of the meeting when questions and comments from the public are taken

## Parish Council Elected members

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### Chairman

No one elected at Annual meeting.  
Councillors will take turns to chair meetings

### Clerk to the Council

Ms Alison James  
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There's something about Easter that resists being reduced to a single moment.

It begins, of course, in the dark. In the confusion and grief of Good Friday. In the silence of Holy Saturday. In the sense that something precious has been lost, and that the future looks uncertain. If we're honest, that's often where life feels most real. We know what it is to sit with loss. We know what it is to carry disappointment. We know what it is to wonder what comes next. And then, quietly almost unexpectedly Easter morning breaks in. Not with trumpets at first, but with a question: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

It's a question that echoes far beyond the empty tomb. Because Easter is not just about what happened to Jesus then. It's about what God is always doing now. Bringing life where we had given up hope. Calling us forward when we thought the story was over. Gently, surprising us with new beginnings we couldn't have planned.

Sometimes that new life is dramatic. More often, it's subtle. It's found in kindness where there could have been bitterness. In reconciliation where there has been distance. In courage to begin again, even when things feel fragile. Easter doesn't deny the reality of the cross. It doesn't pretend that suffering isn't real.

But it does say quietly, persistently that suffering is not the end of the story. And that is good news.

As I write this, I am also aware that this Easter carries something of a personal turning point, as Rachel, Enid and I prepare to move on from this benefice. That brings its own mixture of gratitude, sadness, and hope. Gratitude for the privilege of sharing life with you in worship and in schools, in fellowship, in moments of joy and moments of loss, in the ordinary rhythms of village life that have meant so much. Sadness at saying goodbye to people and places that have become deeply familiar and dear.

And yet, also, hope. Because the message of Easter reminds me reminds all of us that God is always at work in the moving, the changing, the letting go, and the beginning again. The same God who raised Jesus from the dead is the God who goes ahead of us into whatever comes next.

So, this Easter, whether life feels full of light or still a little shadowed, may you know something of that quiet, steady hope. Life is stronger than death. Love is stronger than fear. God is not finished with us yet.

Wishing you a blessed and joyful Easter.

Neale

## THE WILDFLOWER MEADOW – A NEW ERA

I'm sure many of you know that Colton has it's own nature reserve, a 2.25 acre wildflower meadow which adjoins the village hall playing field. What is less well known, is that the meadow was established nearly 10 years ago under the aegis of a company limited by guarantee called Colton Local Nature Reserve which is also a micro-charity. We have traditionally had between 25 and 30 members each paying £10 a year towards the cost of maintain the meadow – annual mowing; strimming the Staffordshire Way section; removal of fallen trees and the occasional running repairs to fencing, gates etc – which averages around £350 a year. Although this arrangement worked reasonably well, it came at a cost both in terms of time – book-keeping, annual accounts, corporation tax returns, trustee meetings etc -and money, roughly 15% of our income going in Companies House fees.

The meadow was created on land owned by the village hall which is also a charity. To simplify the whole business of running the reserve, the membership of Colton Local Nature Reserve and the trustees of the village hall have unanimously agreed that the company should be wound up and its assets transferred to the village hall where they will be treated as restricted funds, available only for the maintenance of the meadow. Ian Hadridge, one of the directors of the company has joined the Village Hall Management Committee to represent the interests of the meadow. This move, when completed later this year, will eliminate the financial cost of having a separate company and significantly reduce the administrative burden. The reserve will continue to be looked after by the same group of volunteers who do all the work apart from that requiring outside contractors such as the annual mowing, so there will be no visible changes.

The existing members of Colton Local Nature Reserve have agreed to become Friends of the Nature Reserve and to make an annual donation to the village hall of £10 – in effect renewing their subscription. But in order to keep the meadow at it's best for the enjoyment of the residents of Colton for the future, we need to recruit many more Friends. Much of the cost of establishing the reserve came from grants and there is no guarantee that any future expensive maintenance items like renewing the stock proof fencing, will be eligible for grants.

If you have ever enjoyed a walk in the meadow or just like the idea of the parish having its own dedicated space for nature, then please consider becoming a Friend. All you need to do is set up a regular annual payment of £10 using the following account information:

- Sort Code                    30 98 90
- Acc No.                                18540268
- Acc. Name                            The Colton Village Hall – Colton
- Payee reference        CLNR

The trustees of the Village Hall Management Committee guarantee that your subscription will only be used to benefit the meadow.

John Macmillan

Chair, Colton Local Nature Reserve



## Your Community Notice Board



I want to express my thanks to the kind friend (I never got his name) who helped me when I fell while walking up High Street to my house.

I am better but still quite unsteady.

Paul Redmond



Many thanks to Karen and other volunteers for planting an amazing amount of snowdrops in memory of Judy and Tony Winter including a few from Gill and Bevs' wood in Coachman's Walk.

Trish Suffield

## Observations From the Kitchen Window



I cannot imagine that anyone who has met Er Indoors would ever imagine that she was anything other than a real, living, breathing person. It is unbelievable that we have been having huge difficulties with bureaucratic jobsworths having to convince them to put away their box ticking forms and ball point pens and actually to wake up to the evidence before them.

Take one of the problems that 'Er Indoors has been having to cope with recently,' She has held a number of bank accounts with one of the major high street banks for over 60 years. Some of these were converted to Joint Accounts. Now she wanted to open another account in her own name. In order to achieve this, she had to provide personal ID. Despite her 60+years of uninterruptedly holding an account to which she has access via face recognition, her various bank cards and unimpeachable record were unacceptable as evidence for who she was. The fact that she is carrying out internet banking transactions several times per week, and receives regular statements of account, carried absolutely no weight! Even her international transactions counted for nothing. We were incredulous.

Then our solicitor got in on the act. Our solicitor has been conducting our legal affairs for both personal and business activities for over 20 years and we wanted her to act for us on a new property transaction. 'Er Indoors used to supply the senior Partner with enough homemade marmalade to last for a year. Suddenly none of this seemed to count any more. Customer history, relationships and loyalties went out of the window!.

The jobsworths and box tickers insisted that she had to provide a copy of her current passport or driving licence to prove whatever the other readily available data failed to convey. The whole motivation seems to be "Cover My Backside" with total disregard to professional/client relationships. For over half a century 'Er Indoors had been carrying a valid passport and driving licence. However, she allowed her passport to lapse a few years ago because she had had enough of globetrotting. Since she was always such a bad traveller on any means of transport, it came as a great relief that she would never have to venture onto a plane or ship again! So, there was absolutely no incentive to go through the hassle of renewal. As far as her driving licence was concerned, she gave up driving when her eyesight began to deteriorate a couple of years ago and renewal would have become an impossibility. Despite our best endeavours we found that even the most recently expired documents would carry no weight.

Surely this wonderful thing called AI could have sorted it all out in no time.

Interestingly there are certain organs of government and bureaucracy which are nowhere near as squeamish as banks and solicitors. Top of the list has to be HMRC. They send out their demands irrespective of whether the recipient is alive or dead, to which many reports in the press will attest. In fact, it is up to the recipient to challenge any inaccuracies, even if the address to which any such document is sent is no longer current. Another notable exception is the Passport Office! The only feasible way we could find to get around the problem of establishing that 'Er Indoors is a real person (they certainly would not take my word for it!) was to apply for a new passport. Surprise, surprise, it was acceptable to provide the most recently expired passport with the application form. We did this through the Post Office rather than attempt to do it ourselves online. 'Er Indoors required a new, official photo and this was provided by the very helpful post mistress. She was clearly no Lord Snowden! The resultant portrait looked more like me than 'Er Indoors!



Anyway, the new application form with expired passport was posted to the passport office with a quoted turn around time of 8 weeks. We thought that this could possibly be achievable having read press reports of applicants being very frustrated about missing flights through long processing times. But we were totally amazed to receive the new passport within ten days in its smart, blue cover!! Whether she would be allowed to travel with such a poor picture is more than doubtful! I wondered if this would be acceptable at Passport Control in Dubai!

When we are not being bombarded by reports and analyses of the goings on in the Middle East, we get the odd coverage of what Artificial Intelligence can do. One of the alleged benefits is that it can take the drudgery out of repetitive and other administrative tasks. I cannot understand why the highly lauded benefits of Artificial Intelligence cannot be focussed on sorting out this particular type of problem we had encountered.

AI seems to have replaced common sense and Native Intelligence for absolutely no benefit to anyone.

Let us hope Jaz will continue to process transactions when he comes to Colton with his Post Office services on a Thursday without demanding ID!!



### COLTON GARDEN & PRODUCE CLUB.

Hello to you all once again. I hope you have all been enjoying the drier weather and taking the chance to catch up with those tasks we have not been able to complete. It was a joy to clear some of the debris accumulated over the damp and blustery winter, accompanied by a pair of inquisitive Robins anxious to see what I had managed to disturb to feed their insatiable appetites. I was also pleased to find a resident Hedgehog nestled under a pile of leaves under a hedgerow – just hope it will help to keep the slug population in check, without having to waste some of my beer to get them drunk!

What a brilliant evening we enjoyed at the March meeting, with an enthralling talk on the life and skills of a Master Thatcher. A 7-year apprenticeship was undertaken by David Wood, which has now been reduced to 4 years by the Guild of Master Craftsmen. It seems strange that, besides the straw and reeds, other materials used in thatching are also obtained from the wild. Those pesky bramble briars that try to trip you up when you are walking through the woods or fields, are used to fix the first layers of straw to some thatched roofs. Not an enviable task removing the thorns from the briars! I will certainly look at thatched roofs very differently, knowing how much material, effort and skill is needed to provide a waterproof covering over a building, which will last for several decades. David also makes some very attractive thatched bird feeding houses at a very reasonable price.

Our meeting in April will start with a short AGM, swiftly followed by a quiz, with Cheese and Wine to keep us in good cheer. Now is the time to renew the annual subscription, which remains unchanged from 2025 at £12 per person for the year. Good value for money for the 10 meetings held each year, so why not come along and join us? Thursday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April at 7.30 pm.

The clocks have gone forward to British summer time, which heralds longer days and hopefully warmer temperatures. The increased light prompts a flurry of activity in the garden as the sun's rays warm the soil and bolster growth activity. For gardeners, this is a busy time of the year with planting, sowing and tending the plots to keep those persistent weeds in check. Fast-growing crops such as lettuce and radish should be sown fortnightly for a continuous harvest through the year, and annual flowers can also be sown in batches for a long season of blooms. Even if you do not have a big garden, wildflowers can be sown in pots and either thinned out when large enough to handle, or the seedlings transferred to a sunny bed or border. The bees, butterflies, houseflies, hoverflies, beetles, moths and wasps all play their part in pollinating our crops and, in return, feed on the nectar the plants produce. The blossom of fruit trees, flowering cherries and currants, willow catkins, flowering currants, grape hyacinths, hellibores and snowdrops all play their part in providing early sources of food. Some even advocate delaying mowing lawns until after the daisies, dandelions, and buttercups have finished



flowering. This is all great for a wildflower meadow, but I am not sure it is such a good idea in our gardens.

So much for the decorative side of the garden, but what about those plants that will add to our food chain? There is nothing better than homegrown food products, especially if we resist using sprays and chemicals while they are growing. All the following items can be sown outdoors. Artichokes (not one of my favourites), beetroots, broad beans, broccoli, carrots, chard, leeks, lettuce, onions, parsnips, radishes, rocket, salad crops, spinach, spring onions, turnips, and peas, including mangetout and sugarsnaps. You will need plenty of space to grow all of these, so you may need to be selective. Whatever you decide to grow, it is a good idea to sow flowering companions in your vegetable plot, such as marigolds and borage, as their aroma discourages aphids. If you have covered the rhubarb to force it, you will be able to harvest the fabulous pink, tender, sweet growth for a well-deserved treat. Goes well with custard, and, so I am told, it will enhance a lamb joint when it has been poached.

Now is the time to sow seeds for outdoor varieties of chillies, courgettes and tomatoes in pots so they are ready to plant out in May and early June. Meanwhile, we should be transplanting the greenhouse tomatoes into growbags, although I prefer to use large pots filled with the growbag soil. A busy time in the greenhouse as we need to sow runner beans, French beans, cucumbers, courgettes, and sweetcorn in pots. Sweet peas should also be sown in deep pots and protected from any late frosts in the greenhouse or on a sunny windowsill. I have started my sweet peas on damp kitchen roll in a plastic box in a windowsill – they are shooting and ready to plant in some compostable pots, and placed on a tray before planting out when large enough to handle.

Whatever you do, be sure to keep a wary eye out for any late frosts and be ready to cover tender new crops with fleece, straw or cloches. Your crop of raspberries will be improved by mulching the canes with either garden compost, manure, or a high-nitrogen fertiliser such as dried chicken manure pellets. The fuschias will produce a bushier plant if you pinch out the shoot tips and remove any dead wood from last season. Ensure the dahlia tubers are kept warm, and any tubers showing signs of rot are cut out. Any large clumps of tubers can be divided to give you extra plants. See you next month.

*KEEP SMILING – HAPPY GARDENING TO YOU ALL.*

*PETER BRIGHTMAN - 07896521941//01889803678*



For those of you who thought you had seen a fire engine arriving very carefully at the Village Hall on Wednesday evening, you were right! It was Colton WI's meeting and we had arranged a talk from members of Abbots Bromley Fire Service and how interesting and informative that was. Who knew that the old black uniforms had been changed many times over the years to ensure better protection for those fighting fires. Gary Fox demonstrated what was worn for house and building fires, but to tackle grass fires another type of uniform was worn that weighed less.



In addition to tackling fires and assisting at road incidents, home visits to advise on fire safety are also made, and quite a few of us realised we might benefit from such a visit and welcomed the information as to how to arrange one. We also learnt that, should a fire occur, it was now advised not to jump out of a window but to exit by a door if at all possible – very welcome news for some of us!

Most of you will have seen the banner on Pedleys Croft reminding us that March 8 was International Women's Day, and to mark the occasion, members wore purple green and white.



Plans for the September Show include a potato growing contest and an arrangement of sun flowers and potatoes and sunflower seeds were distributed

We were reminded of the curling session on 19 March – an event that is very competitive and lots of fun. No experience necessary.....

As we have done for quite a few years, Easter Eggs were requested from members to donate to Rugeley Food Bank, and what a display it was. Thank you to all that contributed.

March is the meeting when we review the previous 12 months, subscriptions are paid, accounts are distributed for approval, and a new Committee is formed. This year Sue Izon our President retired after 3 years when she had worked tirelessly despite only agreeing initially to be in the “job” for 12 months. So, 2 years after that decision, we have joint Presidents, Polly MacMillan and Janet James. Sue was thanked on behalf of all members and presented with a rose.

It was a busy meeting but we still held our competition which was a bell. This was won by Julie Thorn, who had entered a bell which her grandmother used to keep near during the war to enable her to ring it should she need help during a raid.

Next month we have Andrew French giving a talk on the Beatles. What great music that era produced and am sure many of us will travel down memory lane. An invite has been sent to Kingstone WI and there will be 6 of their members attending, always good to open up our meetings to other WI members, and we are looking forward to welcoming them to our meeting. The date is 8 April, and the meeting starts at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, so, if any of you ladies would like to attend, then you are welcome to do so.

## **Colton History Society February Meeting.**

### **Oulton Abbey. Speaker Chris Westwood.**

Chris started by saying that Oulton Abbey lies close to Caverswall Castle near Stoke. It was originally built as a private residence for a local solicitor Thomas Dent in 1720. It was then sold to John Jowell, a brewer from Stone who sold it in 1835 to the Duke of Sutherland of Trentham. By the late 1840's it was in use as a private asylum. Finally in 1853 it was sold to a group of Benedictine nuns whose mother house was in Ghent in Belgium.

There had been a tradition in England going back to the time of Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>. for daughters of wealthy Catholic families to set up nunneries on the continent where it was safe to do so. (England had become a protestant country by then). A nunnery that had been set up in Ghent attracted English girls. To be accepted they had to take a sum of money known as the "Piece" to give to the convent. Many often died soon after joining the convents because conditions in these convents was not always good. The wealthy girls were called "Nuns" and the poorer ones were called "Sisters". They would frequently send nuns out to open convents in other places. In 1789 the Austrian emperor had issued an order to say that any people living in religious houses should be killed. The convent in Ghent was attacked and set on fire and the nuns fled to France. Soon after, during the revolution in France, they were attacked again and this time they fled to England.

To practice Catholicism was still illegal in England so the nuns were spread around to live with families who practiced their Catholic faith in secret. Soon they were able to convert a house into a church but still could not practice their faith openly. They wore ordinary clothes when they went out. They set up a school in the house. In 1829 the Catholic Relief Act made it possible for Catholics to practice their faith openly again. Soon after the Nuns were able to purchase Caverswall Castle for a convent with gifts from local Catholic families and they also were able to build a Catholic church in the village. They eventually decided to move again and in 1853 found a suitable place in nearby Oulton. They immediately set about building a church and appointed Pugin's son as the architect. They also set up a school in the convent. The famous author Tolkein gave some of his books to the convent because one of his friends' daughters had been taught by the nuns there. Eventually when the school closed it became a care home. The original house was knocked down and a new care home built next to the original Pugin church. All of the nuns were buried in the cemetery attached.

**There will be a meeting of Colton History Society on April 22nd 2026 at 7.30pm. The talk will be given by Bob Marsh on Beaudesert.**

## A message from your Parish Council

Below is a summary of the key areas that the Parish Council has been working on this financial year and will continue to pursue on your behalf:

- Keep the pressure on Staffs County Council to resolve flooding issues, particularly on Hollow Lane and Bellamour Way, with further works planned this spring.
- Also keep pressurising SCC Highways for better maintenance of roads in the parish, especially Newlands Lane and Stoneyford Lane.
- Continue to grit High Street and various side streets when weather conditions require.
- Contribute to cost of printing parish magazine and pay for delivery
- Organised and contributed financially to the Colton Festival 2025, with assistance from parish volunteers and kind donations from Staffordshire CC/County Councillor Janet Higgins and Colton Parish Lands Trust. The possibility of organising another Festival this year is under discussion.
- Fallen trees removed when urgent issues arise
- Continue to work with local county councillors and police regarding speeding on B5013 Admaston Road and investigating other speeding concerns in Colton

We invite feedback from Parishioners on anything else you would like the Parish Council to undertake on your behalf. Some things may not be within its powers but the Council will do what it can.

Please join us on Wednesday 1st April between 7.15pm and 7.45pm at the Village Hall to share your feedback and ideas. Alternatively, contact a councillor or email the Clerk at [colton.pc@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:colton.pc@hotmail.co.uk)

(This follows the format introduced last year, replacing the previous formal Parish Assembly evening)

From Colton Parish Council

**SUMMARY OF COLTON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH (Full minutes will be available at [www.coltonpc.org.uk](http://www.coltonpc.org.uk) after approval at the April meeting)**

1. Public participation – Parishioner reported that Highways had acknowledged the yew hedge on Bellamour Way is a hazard and had passed it onto their contractors to deal with. However, they did not consider it high priority so action is not expected soon. Parishioner also asked for an update on speed warning sign on Bellamour Way, as still strongly believes that some cars are speeding significantly. PC said it is still waiting for the development of an electronic device to go on a lamppost to collect speed data. It is not a speed warning sign.

2. Discussions with PCC representatives:

a) Possible festive lighting near church – PC had arranged a site meeting with a company who provide lights to SCC. The idea was to find out what might be possible and the potential costs of improved festive lighting and PCC had been invited to attend too. They had looked at dismantling the existing lights and providing lighting on 2 smaller trees nearby, with required cabling etc. Costs were awaited from the company. PCC had been surprised to receive the invitation to the site meeting, as PC had not asked for PCC views beforehand. PCC had already been considering possible developments in lighting for some time and PLT had kindly offered to potentially fund some improvements. It was agreed that 3-way working between PCC, PC and PLT would be most productive.

b) Proposed wild area by church - Following concerns raised that the area may look unkempt, PCC explained its decision to develop a wild area. It was trialled last year and received lots of positive comments. Neat paths are mown through longer grass so that it is clear it is being maintained, whilst encouraging biodiversity. Oak posts are also to be installed along verges near the church to prevent parking there, as that has consistently damaged the verges. PCC are confident this will not detract from the appearance of the area by the church and the entry to the village.

3. Payments – Included additional road gritting in December and January and the donation of £75 towards memorial snowdrops.

4. Planning Matters – Application recently received for Land at Newlands Lane, Stockwell Heath (Malt House Farm) for Demolition of agricultural building and the erection of 4 dwellings. This application is additional to the prior notification application at the same site for Conversion of an agricultural building to form 6 dwellings, though latter had been refused by LDC. Various comments had been made by councillors emphasising the problems with the surface of Newlands Lane and the flooding there, making the additional traffic from the proposed new dwellings impractical. **Clerk** to submit further comments to LDC.

5. Highways, Footpaths and Open Spaces

a) Flooding – It was commented that after 2 periods of heavy rain, Hollow Lane had remained open and flooding by the brook subsided within about 6 hours. A member of SCC's FAIR team had visited 1 of the houses on Bellamour Way which had experienced bad flooding in its garden and cellar. FAIR team

wanted to investigate drainage from the fields, in particular one behind the Village Hall. Videos had been sent to the FAIR team showing water coming up out of a drain and out of the repair on Bellamour Way and these had been passed on to Highways.

- b) Highways maintenance - Stoneyford Lane is still in very poor condition and any repairs done had not lasted or been sufficient. This had been raised previously with County Cllr Janet Higgins and would be pursued.
- c) Roadside foliage on Hollow Lane – Councillors did not think there was any significant overhang and it was certainly not affecting traffic. **Clerk** to contact Highways to check if they would arrange to cut.
- d) Improving the appearance of the parish – **Garren Edwards** to contact workman to repeat tidying of area part way up High Street on right hand side and to possibly clean any moss and dirt off the war memorial.

## 2. Finance and audit

- a) 2025/26 accounts – PC confirmed that the unspent part of the play area budget (about £520) would be put into the earmarked reserve for future play area replacement or development, as in recent years.
- b) Memorial snowdrops to be planted in village – After support from Janet Higgins and parishioner’s pressure, SCC had agreed to remove the verge maintenance requirement from the planting licence. So the licence copies were signed by PC and would be returned to SCC. Parishioner had purchased a large quantity of bulbs and planting was being arranged. PC’s agreed donation of £75 would be paid shortly.

## 3. Other Parish Council matters

- a) Possible Colton Festival – Attendance at public meeting in February had been good, with attendees keen to go ahead and willing to help. However, offers to take responsibility for specific events were still needed and the band that played last time were no longer available on the proposed date. A follow up meeting is to be held on 26 March.
- b) Annual parish assembly – It was agreed that arrangements last year had worked well so would be repeated. There would be an open session for questions and comments before the next PC meeting in April from 7.15pm to 7.45pm, to be advertised in the magazine, on the noticeboard and on Colton Residents Facebook page.

## 4. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April at 7.15pm, consisting of Assembly session then main meeting



## Friendship Club: February Report

Sixteen members were welcomed to our February meeting, along with our Speaker, Andy French.

It was with great sadness that members were informed of the death of two of our Friendship Club family, Dorothy Bannister and Denis Willbond. A one minute silence was observed in their memory.

Andy French then delivered his talk 'The Man Who Never Was.'

In 1943, British Intelligence agents hatched an elaborate but macabre scheme to convince the Germans that the Allied forces were planning to invade Greece rather than Sicily. The plan, code-named Operation Mincemeat, involved planting forged documents upon a dead body (The Man that Never Was) before setting him adrift in neutral Spanish waters, with the aim of the papers ending up in German hands.

The false intelligence found its way onto Hitler's desk and was believed as Germany ordered tanks divisions, artillery and boats to defend Greece, Sardinia and the Balkans. When Allied troops invaded Sicily on 10 July 1943, the Nazis were caught unawares.

The corpse's identity was not revealed until 1996 when amateur historian Roger Morgan found a recently declassified document that contained his name. The man was called Glyndwr Michael, a homeless man who had died after ingesting rat poison. Glyndwr Michael was transformed into 'Major William Martin,' an officer of the Royal Marines. A life was invented for Major Martin, with items planted in his wallet such as cinema tickets, a receipt for an engagement ring purchased from SJ Phillips of Bond St and other receipts to suggest he was a spendthrift man as well as the forged documents planted upon his body. His body is buried in the Spanish town of Huelva, originally under the name of 'William Martin,' but his correct name has now been added to the tombstone.

The HMS Dasher was an aircraft carrier that sank in the Firth of Clyde on March 27, 1943. The Dasher sank within eight minutes after a massive explosion, killing 379 out of 528 crew members. The Royal Navy did not provide information to the bereaved families, and survivors and rescuers were ordered not to talk about the incident. Only 23 of the dead were given official burials - the rest of the bodies mysteriously disappeared. Evidence suggests that many of the bodies were buried in an unmarked mass grave in Ardrossan. Families of the dead have campaigned for more information about the sinking, and a survey by Drone Scotland found an anomaly that could indicate a mass burial site. It has been suggested by some researchers, that the corpse



used in 'Operation Mincemeat' was actually taken from the HMS Dasher tragedy – most historians reject this claim.

Andy then told us of his family connection to the tale...his Uncle, William Ernest Peter French, was serving on HMS Dasher when it Sunk, he did not survive. Could his Uncle be 'the man that never was'?

The full facts are not yet known relating to this story. Only 20 per cent of official papers have been released with others considered 'not in the public interest.' It is anticipated that more official papers may be released in due course, with the hope of bringing some clarity for those interested parties.

### **Business/Notice:**

We will require the £5 payment for the April Lunch at the March meeting. If you are unable to attend the March meeting, the £5 can be popped through my letterbox (3 Coachman's Walk, Bellamour Way) and if you could put your name on the envelope, that would be helpful for Angela, the Treasurer. Thank you.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th March, at the usual time of 10.30am. The speaker will be Gill Sykes and her topic will be 'The Crime of Being Poor.'

**Karen Hill**  
01889 586 379

# Colton Crafters

At the Village Hall, Colton  
1-3pm alternate Mondays



### 2026 calendar

9 & 23 March  
6 & 20 April  
4 & 18 May  
1, 15 & 29 June  
13 & 27 July  
10 & 24 August  
7 & 21  
September  
5 & 19 October  
2, 16 & 30  
November  
14 December



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meet with  
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and enjoy crafting  
in an informal  
group

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Lynne Dean  
07736972560  
lanterlit@hotmail.com



EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS CONTACTS

Name	Contact No or E-mail	Web site Address
<b>Lichfield District Council</b>		
Customer Services	01543 308000	<a href="https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/">https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/</a>
Out of Hours	01527 406643	<a href="https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/">https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/</a>
Waste and Recycling	0345 002 0022	<a href="https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/recycling-bins-waste">https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/recycling-bins-waste</a>
District Councillor – Keth Vernon	07711758852	
<b>Miscellaneous Numbers</b>		
Age Concern Advice Line	0800 678 1602	<a href="https://www.ageuk.org.uk/">https://www.ageuk.org.uk/</a>
Childline	0800 1111	<a href="https://www.childline.org.uk/">https://www.childline.org.uk/</a>
Citizen advice - Lichfield	0808 278 7977	<a href="https://www.casestaffs.org.uk/">https://www.casestaffs.org.uk/</a>
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111	<a href="https://crimestoppers-uk.org/">https://crimestoppers-uk.org/</a>
Cruise Bereavement Line	0808 808 1677	<a href="https://www.cruse.org.uk/">https://www.cruse.org.uk/</a>
Deer casualty Line	101	<a href="https://www.deeraware.com/report-incident/">https://www.deeraware.com/report-incident/</a>
Domestic Violence	0808 2000 247	<a href="https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/">https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/</a>
Drug/Alcohol Information line	0300 123 1110	<a href="https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Health-wellbeing-and-leisure/Keeping-well-and-staying-healthy/">https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Health-wellbeing-and-leisure/Keeping-well-and-staying-healthy/</a>
Electrical Power Loss	105	National Grid ED (West)
Gas escape	0800 111 999	
Highway repair Hotline	<a href="tel:03001118000">0300 111 8000</a>	<a href="https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/">https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/</a>
NHS Direct	111	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/">https://www.nhs.uk/</a>
Neighbourhood Watch	Back Page	<a href="https://www.staffordshiresmartalert.co.uk/">https://www.staffordshiresmartalert.co.uk/</a>
Relate		<a href="https://www.relate.org.uk/">https://www.relate.org.uk/</a>
Rugeley Library	01889 869063 <a href="mailto:rugeley.library@staffordshire.gov.uk">rugeley.library@staffordshire.gov.uk</a>	
Samaritans	116 123	<a href="https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/">https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/</a>
Social Services	<b>0300 111 8010</b>	<a href="mailto:staffordshirecares@staffordshire.gov.uk">staffordshirecares@staffordshire.gov.uk</a>
Staffordshire County Council	0300 111 8010	<a href="https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/">https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/</a>
Staffordshire County Councillor- Richard Cox	01543 490758 <a href="mailto:Richard.cox@staffordshire.gov.uk">Richard.cox@staffordshire.gov.uk</a>	
South Staffs Water	0800 389 1011	<a href="https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/contact-us/">https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/contact-us/</a>

## Colton Organisation Contacts

<p><b>Colton Local nature reserve</b>          John MacMillan          Tel: 01889 575394          Email:mrjkmac@sky.com</p>	<p><b>Colton Parish Council</b>          Ms Alison James            Tel: 07969266779            Email:colton.pc@hotmail.com</p>
<p><b>Village Hall Bookings</b>          Fiona O'Brien          Tel: 07784497048          Email:booking@coltonvillagehall.co.uk</p> <p><b>Management committee</b>          John MacMillan          Tel: 01889575394          Email:mrjkmac@sky.com</p>	<p><b>Parish Lands Trust</b>          Claire Collier          Tel: 07966637044          Email:clerk.cplt@gmail.com</p>
<p><b>St. Mary's Primary School</b>          Mr Jon Wynn-Head Teacher          Tel: 01889224506          Email:stmarysoffice@tssmat.staffs.sch.uk</p>	<p><b>Colton Community Choir</b>          Ruth Jones          Tel: 01889 570724          Email: ruth46jones@gmail.com</p>
<p><b>Colton Old People's Welfare Committee</b>          Mrs Amanda Pratt          Tel: 07976975960          Email: mandapratt@msn.com</p>	<p><b>Colton Women's Institute</b>          Email:secretarycoltonwi@gmail.com</p>
<p><b>Colton Produce Guild</b>          Mr Peter Brightman (Chairman)          Tel: 07896521941          Email: pd.brightman@hotmail.co.uk</p>	<p><b>Burial Ground Trustee</b>          Ms Alison James            Tel: 07969266779            Email:colton.pc@hotmail.com</p>
<p><b>Colton History Society</b>          Mrs Gill Sykes          Email: gillsykes@btinternat.com</p>	<p><b>Colton Friendship Club</b>          Mrs Karen Hill          01889 586 379</p>



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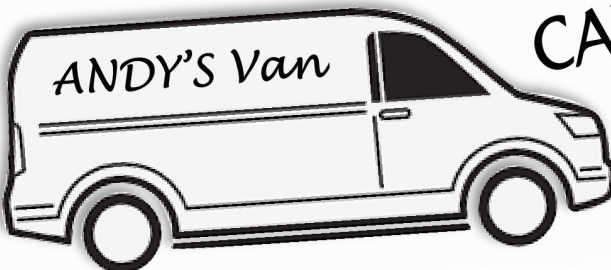
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