



# THE *Birches*

## Community Matters

**NEWSLETTER FOR KINGSTHORN, MUCH BIRCH  
LITTLE BIRCH, ACONBURY & WORMELOW**

First published 1977 **May2021**

### A note from the Editorial Team.

What a joy to hear of our local activities, businesses and services starting to reopen in May.

With fingers crossed we may all be back to a normal way of life fairly soon. And please let us know of all events or activities. Which you would like to report. Let the Editor know.

Derek Scrivens has also given us good news of Margaret who is making good progress and is now back at home

*Best wishes to all  
Editor*

#### **Parish Walk**

Walks are back again!

**Sunday 23 May at 1.45pm.**

Meeting at **Little Birch Village**

**Hall** and walking down to

Athelstans Wood, towards Little Dewchurch and finishing back at the hall. A moderate walk with some stiles, farm

tracks, lanes and woodland paths.

**5 miles** approx

All welcome!

*Angela Middleton*

*Voluntary Footpath Officer*

[ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ajbmiddleton@hotmail.co.uk)



### Much Birch Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2031

#### Planning for the Future

A referendum will be held on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May to decide on the question below:

**'Do you want Herefordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Birch to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'**

### **The Birches Camera Club**

#### **and Photography Group....**

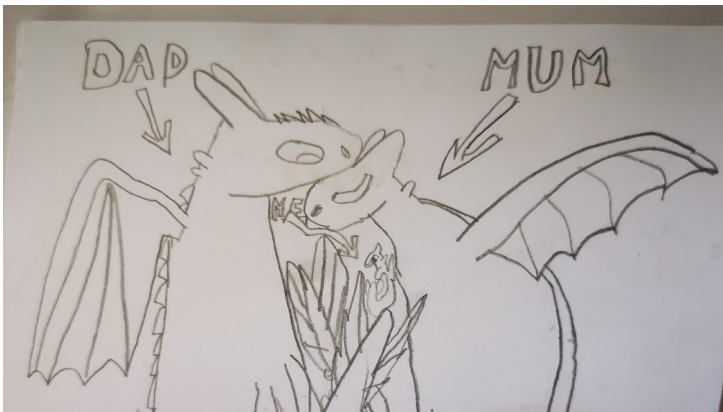


Have been at it again this month and their photographs keep appearing randomly across this edition!

For further information about the group please contact....

*Sally Nichol at [sally.nichol@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.nichol@btinternet.com)*

.....  
*The Editor's Granddaughter, 7 year old Phoebe O'Neill has also sent some NEW dragon pictures which tend to crop up from time to time too.*



## Much Birch Surgery

### Vaccination of adult household contacts of severely immunosuppressed individuals

The government has recently updated its guidance for any adults who live with a severely immunosuppressed person in their household.

The advice applies to adult household contacts who are 16 years and above with whom you “expect to share living accommodation on most days.... and therefore, for whom continuing close contact is unavoidable.”

Household contacts will need to provide valid proof of address, which should match the address of the immunosuppressed person, to provide evidence of eligibility for vaccination.

Members of ‘bubbles’ that do not live with an immunosuppressed person for the majority of the week (frequent visitors and other non-carers who might visit the house often but not for the majority of the week, including overnight stays) are not eligible.

### Covid Vaccination Progress

Rapid progress is being made with the Covid Vaccine delivery. The NHS are now inviting patients from age 45. The practice is not vaccinating patients under the age of 50, patients should book their appointment through the online booking service [Book a coronavirus vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) or by calling 119.

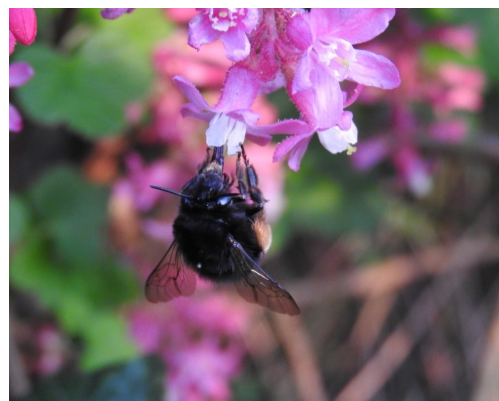
If you are aged over 50 and have not received contact either directly from the Practice, or by letter or text from the NHS please go online [Book a coronavirus vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) or call 119.

Website: <https://www.muchbirchsurgery.co.uk/website/M81024/files/newsletter.pdf>

Facebook: [Much Birch Surgery Patient Information Page](#)



Two hours ago it was as long after one o'clock in the afternoon as it was before one o'clock in the morning. What time is it now?





**FLICKS IN THE STICKS** at Much Birch Community Hall

**Flicks in the Sticks Update**  
Unfortunately Flicks will not be returning just yet - we plan to return in the new year - watch this space for updates.  
If you have suggestions of films you would like us to screen in the future you can email them to [muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com](mailto:muchbirchflicks@hotmail.com)  
**Much Birch Flicks Team**



### *The Axe & Cleaver Much Birch*

The Axe will be reopening on 17th May for drinks and food served outside and inside.

In the meantime, they continue to provide their takeaway menu which can be found on the Facebook page.

Contact us at 01981 540 203 or on our Facebook page.





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## Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum 6 May 2021

# Please vote!

Following a successful Public Examination Herefordshire Council has published and listed the Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan for the final stage Public Referendum to take place alongside the PCC elections on 6 May 2021.

The **Much Birch NDP** has been developed over 4 years by a steering group made up of residents, along with specialist professional guidance.

The full plan and details of how it was developed, consultations that have taken place and how the vision translated into objectives can be viewed electronically through the Much Birch Parish Council web site at [www.muchbirchparish.org.uk/ndp.html](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk/ndp.html)

The vision set out in the Much Birch NDP plan states that:

**" By 2031 Much Birch will have retained its rural character, whilst incorporating additional housing, improved facilities, safer paths road and highways that local people, both young and old can afford and also enjoy"**

For the plan to proceed, more than 50% of the votes cast need to be in favour which would then mean that the Plan would then be adopted by Herefordshire Council and become part of the Herefordshire Statutory Development Plan and be used to determine future planning applications.

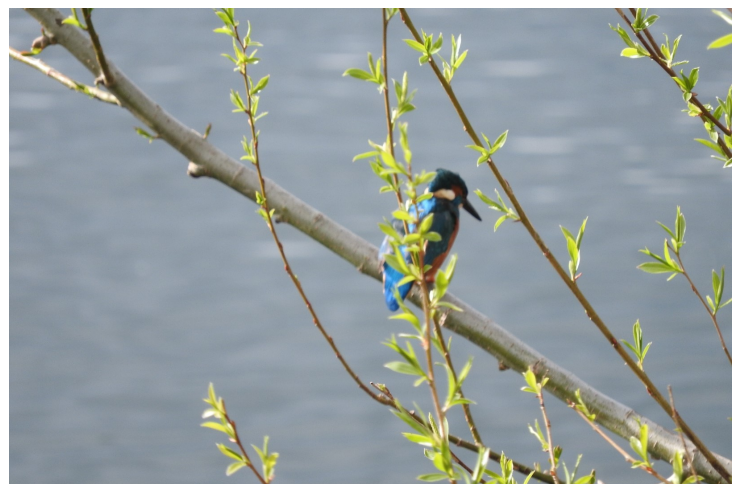
The Referendum will ask:

***'Do you want Herefordshire Council to use the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Birch to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'***

Alison Cook (Chair) Much Birch Parish Council

David Goldsmith (Chair) Much Birch NDP Steering group

## Your vote will count!



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How high would you have to count before you would use the letter A in the English language spelling of a whole number. ?



So, then I said...



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Is happy to announce that HOT and COLD food will be made available for collection, as from

the beginning of APRIL.

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Opening time for collections and full Takeaway Menu TBA ASAP.

Dee Lawley





# Hereford Computer Help



## Tip 4 - May 2021 Please keep a Backup, in fact at least 2 Backups!

The first thing I say to a customer when they ask me to reinstall Windows (other operating systems are available) is: ***“Have you taken a recent backup?”***



Just imagine if something happened to your computer, and you could no longer see any of your photographs, documents, home videos. If the only record of those personal items and files is on the computer that goes wrong, you may find it difficult, if not impossible, to recover them.

### What should you Backup?

The data that you **really must backup**, to recover from a computer disaster, should include:

Your photographs and videos – these are often irreplaceable

Your documents, letters, notes, spreadsheets that you have created on your computer

Your downloads. For example, you may have a book, a file or a newsletter that is no longer available online.

It might be a PDF (Portable Document Format, often used to easily distribute documents, magazines, newsletters!)

As *most* applications and programs can be downloaded again from the internet, or reinstalled using the installation media, (DVDs, CDs, USB sticks), then you may not need to back them up.

### Where should you backup?

External Drive – can be purchased for around £50, widely available

Cloud Backup - a **copy** of your important data, as suggested above, on a reliable computer system, connected to the Internet. Some Cloud services are just **storage** services; if you are **ONLY** storing there, it is not necessarily backed up!

USB sticks – better than nothing, but can be prone to failure

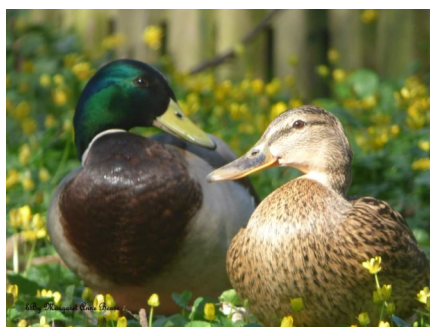
Print outs – there’s a lot to be said for good old paper copies!



### “If it’s only in one place, it’s not backed-up.”

For help with Backups & more, please call Mark Giles, Hereford Computer Help, on 01432 268883

Online: <https://herefordcomputerhelp.co.uk> Email: [mark@herefordcomputerhelp.com](mailto:mark@herefordcomputerhelp.com)



# Little Birch Village Hall Renovations

**Bob, Peter and many others are  
doing a fantastic job renovating  
Little Birch Village Hall**



Morning All,  
Quick update from this weeks activities and photos.  
Hand sanitizers fitted.  
2 tip runs done and I've managed to get rid of nearly all the rubbish. Saved on a skip.  
Tim has started plastering the back small room.  
Chris Atkinson has also been helping, and nearly all of kitchen tiled now.  
Wall and base units fitted. Oven installed and wired in.  
Heater installed, I just need to wire it in.  
Last wall units made up ready to fit to window wall once its tiled.

Chris has a friend who is a carpenter who is coming to fit the worktops on Tuesday. There may be a small charge for this, which I will get against invoice if needed.

Once worktops in then all the crockery etc can be moved back in freeing up bulk of the hall.

To do still

Finish plastering.  
Worktops and install sinks and hob, connect taps etc.  
Fit doors and plinth and cornice  
Tile window wall  
Hang doors and skirting and architrave to doors.  
Paint floor, walls and ceilings in back area.  
Make cabinet around electric meters.  
Install recycled cabinets in small room and carpet it.  
Tidy hall.  
Clothes etc all need sorting.  
Curtains up.

*If you have a few spare hours and are interested in helping your community facility to be reopened later in 2021 looking much smarter then please get in touch with Bob Barnett on 540898.*



*If you are interested in the role of the committee then please contact our Chair;*

*Ben Roberts on  
07702 760789*







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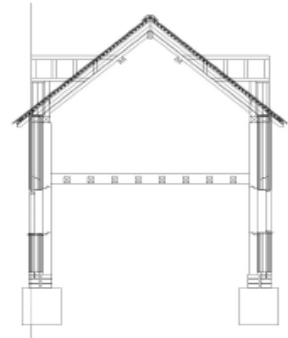
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# Little Birch Parish Council

Your Little Birch Parish Councillors are:

<b>Cllr Peter Rees</b>	Chair
<b>Cllr Janet Gwinnett</b>	Vice Chair
<b>Cllr Kate Dillon</b>	
<b>Cllr Michael Davies</b>	
<b>Cllr Kate Robbins</b>	
<b>Angela Middleton</b>	Volunteer Footpath Officer
<b>Sophie Glover</b>	Clerk      01432 617306

For updates and notifications of future meetings please check out the website – [www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org](http://www.littlebirchparishcouncil.org).

lbpcclerk@gmail.com

Please send copy for the June 2021 Newsletter to [editorial@birchesnews.org.uk](mailto:editorial@birchesnews.org.uk) or written contributions to Liz Hall at Walmere, Wrigglebrook, Kingsthorpe HR2 8AW. —by 18th May please.

## Jobs for the garden in May

from Derek Scrivens

Keep weeding.

Cuttings can be taken for deciduous shrubs – fuchsia, hydrangea etc.

Spring clean house plants – wipe dust of smooth leaves with a damp cloth and use a soft brush for hairy leaves. Look for scale insects, small waxy blobs, and remove with methylated spirits (or whisky, vodka) on a cotton bud.

Gradually harden off tender and young plants raised under cover.

Containers that have had bulbs growing in them can have the foliage cut off then remove the top 2 or 3 inches of old compost. Replace with fresh compost which has had slow release fertilizer added ready for planting up with begonias, lobelia, petunias etc. when all danger of frost is past.

Draw soil over emerging potatoes to protect from frost; earth them up anyway when large enough.

Sow quick maturing vegetables such as baby carrots, radish, salad leaves and spinach.

Sow runner and French beans, cucumbers, courgettes and squashes.

Thin seedlings when they have their first true leaves.

Keep bird baths clean and topped up with fresh water. Bird food should be free of whole nuts and bulky items. Plant night scented plants such as nicotiana and evening primroses to encourage moths.

When buying plants, single flowers are better than double as a food source for insects.

## Little Birch Parish Facebook Group



Find the latest news, events and business listings all in one place.

You are welcome to promote your local business, advertise a local event or post news or information of interest to the village and surrounding area.

Search for *Little Birch Parish Group* on Facebook

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### Re-Opening Newsletter

We hope that you are all well and looking forward to life returning to normality sometime in the near future.

Those of you who follow us on [Facebook](#) will know that we have been busy upgrading the Hotel during the latest lockdown and have refurbished 5 more Valley View rooms as well as redecorating the bar and restaurant and steam cleaning the carpets. The gardens have also been given a tidy up and a lick of paint added where needed.

It has been a struggle to keep the business viable in the last 12 months but we are delighted to say that we are still here, no staff have been lost and the team are all looking forward to getting stuck in and hosting guests again.

Best wishes & we hope to welcome you back very soon.

Steve, Stef & Deepak

### Activity Breaks

Herefordshire has so many opportunities and activities to offer that we have created a brand new web page with links to some of the most interesting in the area. Within a short drive of the Pilgrim you can canoe the Wye, walk classic country trails, throw axes, make axes, see world beating film sets and be home for in time for a sundowner on the terrace. For full details see our website.

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# PILATES

with Alison Allan

## PILATES ZOOMING AGAIN

Wednesdays 7pm

Due to Covid19 restrictions Pilates is back on Zoom.

In the comfort of your own home you can still get a great workout and you don't even need to leave your front door! Zoom works well. We can see each other clearly and I give teaching instructions so you are still benefiting from my guidance – it's not like following a video.

If you are unsure about how to get started or want to ask any questions, I am happy to help.

Just give me a call!

01432 840491

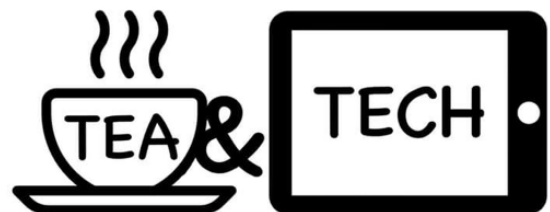
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Pilates with Alison Allan on **Facebook**.

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07739953864

I'm Richard, and I offer IT support around rural Hereford.

I have 25 years' experience of working with technology, supporting a vast range of people, from technophobes to technogeeks!

I aim to specifically support the more senior users within our community, who often appreciate a completely different approach. I won't burden anyone with jargon and will offer only gentle and compassionate support. This can help the user feel more comfortable with tackling technology and lead to a growing confidence.

Sometimes, the tech issue might be the initial reason for contact and all that's really required is someone to sit patiently and share a cuppa. I can do that too, I'm a great listener!

If you need a friendly chat over a cuppa, whilst I sort out your IT issues, get in touch using the info above.

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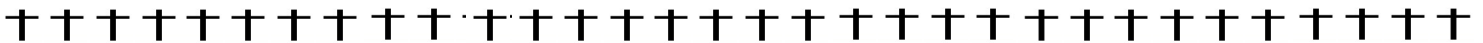
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Hi Everyone,

You may have missed this, what with a worldwide pandemic going on - but the way that the Church registers marriages is changing on 4th May! Yep, that's right. This government, in its wisdom, has decided that we needed to change the way we record weddings tight in the middle of a crisis! Having said that, some of the changes that are coming through are actually very sensible, it is just the timing that sucks.

So what is changing? Well, for a start the clergy won't be issuing wedding certificates anymore. No, that will fall to the couple to go online and register their wedding, fill in all the details etc. Marriage certificates were always a bit of an odd item anyway, they couldn't be used for identification purposes as they don't have a picture on unlike passports or driving licenses. And, just because you have one in your hand doesn't mean it is your wedding that it refers to. But now, as the driving licences and passports, it will all be done online. Also, there will be more witnesses! You can have up to 6, rather than just two, so this allows more people to feel part of the special day. Finally, the mother's names and occupations are also going to be recorded. This will be a boon in years to come when people start tracing family trees, and help build up that picture of where you came from and who you are descended from.



I am actually in favour of all these changes, it is just the timing that sucks! Here we all are, trying to figure out the new way of living, recognising what we have lost, what is precious and needs to be nourished and there is something else for us to worry about! Fear not, though, I am now well trained and up to speed (I think!) for all of you whose weddings were postponed in 2020 and early 2021. Hopefully, it will just be a small but perfectly formed part of your wonderful day!

Stay safe everyone,

Thanks,  
Revd Mark

Revd Mark Johnson  
Rector - Wormelow Hundred Benefice  
&  
Prebend de Bullinghope





**Much Birch Parish Council**  
Parish Clerk Mrs Alison Wright  
Longfield House, Gooses Foot, Kingstone,  
Herefordshire HR2 9NE  
Tel. 01981 250860  
Email: [muchbirchclerk@gmail.com](mailto:muchbirchclerk@gmail.com)

13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**PARISH MEETING** - at the Parish Council Meeting held on the Zoom Platform, during the Covid 19 Virus pandemic, on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 7.30 pm.

The Parish Council heard further updates from the Ward Councillor. Further litter picking had taken place and those who had helped were given a big vote of thanks. The Parish Council said farewell to two parish councillors, these were Cllr Steve Turner and Cllr Veronica Thomas. Thank you to them both for their service to the parish community.

The Much Birch Neighbourhood Development Plan is going to be considered for adoption at a vote to be held on May 6<sup>th</sup> 2021. The vote is in relation to having the plan considered in relation to planning for the parish going forward. All votes will count.

The Parish Council heard that the planning in principle application, number 210025, for land at the South Herefordshire Hunt Kennels, Wormelow, for between 2 and 9 dwellings with package treatment plant, had been rejected by the Planning Authority.

The next meetings of the Parish Council will be held on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 from 7.30pm** - on the Zoom Platform. This will be the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Statutory Meeting (to run concurrently). All are welcome to attend.

**Dates for 2021 Parish Council Meetings are as follows:-** May 6, June 3, July 8, September 2, October 7, November 4 and December 2.

Please see notice boards and website for agendas. As always the public and press are more than welcome to attend on Zoom and will have the opportunity to speak directly to their representatives.

**Your Much Birch Parish Councillors are:-**

Cllr Alison Cook (Chair) Jasmine Cottage, Wrigglebrook Lane, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AW, e mail [thecoops@wyenet.co.uk](mailto:thecoops@wyenet.co.uk) Tel. 01981 540703

Cllr Andrew Crum Anfield House, Barrack Hill, Kingsthorpe, Hereford, HR2 8AX, e mail [a.crum@btinternet.com](mailto:a.crum@btinternet.com)  
Tel. 01981 540002

Cllr Roisin Burge The Old Hall, Barrack Hill, Little Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8AX [roisinburge@hotmail.com](mailto:roisinburge@hotmail.com) Tel. 01981 540724

Cllr David Baldwin The Granary, Much Birch, Herefordshire, HR2 8HS [baldwin79@btinternet.com](mailto:baldwin79@btinternet.com) Tel. 01981 541198

Full minutes of the meetings and information etc. can be found on the Parish Council website following the link found in this summary. [www.muchbirchparish.org.uk](http://www.muchbirchparish.org.uk).

You can also find us on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MuchBirchPC> and Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Much.Birch.Parish>



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ALL ASPECTS OF TREE WORK UNDERTAKEN



## Community Café @ Much Birch Community Hall

We had hoped that the Community Café might be up and running again by now, but here we are in another lockdown so we will have to wait!

In the meantime, if anyone is struggling with shielding or isolating and needs help collecting prescriptions or shopping, please ring Kay on 01981 540666 and she will ask one of us to help.

And if all you need is a chat on the phone, that's fine too!



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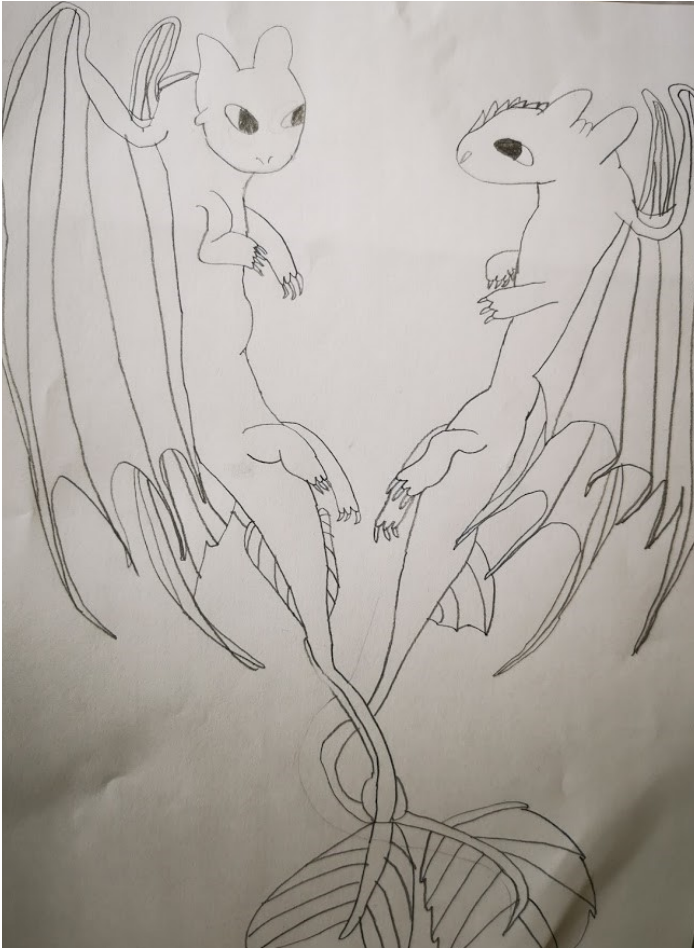
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Good to Go!**

## HEREFORDSHIRE Walking Festival 2021

**We are very happy to announce that the 2021 Herefordshire Walking Festival will be going ahead from Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> June.**

Get your walking boots at the ready... Herefordshire Walking Festival is back!

Herefordshire Walking Festival takes place over 9 days with over 50 walks, all in 1 beautiful county. This year walkers can take part in a variety of walks, including: Duchy Woodland, Orchards, Cider, Hops, Wildlife, River walks, Canary Girls, Suffragettes, Poets, Knife Angel, City walks, Church visits, WW1 Memorial Walks, 20+ mile Challenges, Book Walks & Dragons! ... To name a few and many more.

Festival Co-ordinator Liz Hill said: *“During lockdown, many have been able to explore new areas on their own doorstep. We would like the festival to encourage more people to continue to find new ‘hidden gem’ walks and join like-minded people at a social distance during this annual event.”*

She continued... *“Our sincere thanks go to all who lead, back-up and work together voluntarily to enable Herefordshire Walking Festival to carry on successfully, as it has done since its inception in 2002 and to Steve and Sue Dennis for their important contribution to its future.”*

Herefordshire Walking Festival offers so much variety for walking, catering for all levels and interests - from 2 mile to 25-mile walks, on different terrains accommodating people with all levels of ability including wheelchair friendly and visually impaired.

The committee work together in partnership with Herefordshire Ramblers and Disabled Ramblers in ensure the festival is accessible for all on one walk or another.

So, if you would like to join us and would like to find out more, please visit the Herefordshire Walking Festival website – [www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk)

Tickets will be available online from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April at [www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.herefordshirewalkingfestival.co.uk)

For further information please contact:  
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t: 07966 378170



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## THE MASONS AT MERRIVALE

As I sit here writing this I think how amazing it is that one beautiful spring day can help you to forget a lot of grim winter ones. It's been a fairly standard winter on the farm. Short dry spells of weather interspersed with very, very wet spells. It can't have been as bad as the winter of 2019-2020 but sometimes it felt like it.

Because we were and still are so short of winter feed and bedding, we managed to keep a bunch of heifers out on stubble turnips and hay until 18<sup>th</sup> December so it was moderately dry up to then. Amusing at times though when we brought one in for A.I. (artificial insemination) that leaving boots behind in the mud was easy to do.

The cows stayed out grazing during the day until late October which helped a little with the feed situation. Throughout the winter though we have been buying in hay, haylage and recently fodder beet to feed the cows. The cows went out to graze in the daytime on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, one day earlier than last year. They were however out day and night on 25<sup>th</sup> March last year, there is no sign of that at the moment as the cold weather is holding back grass growth.

During the frosty and dry spells in February and March Ben has been busy muck spreading and the contractors have been ploughing and irrigating silage ground with slurry. During the last month of dry weather we have drilled peas and barley for wholecrop silage. This has been undersown with grass to produce grazing and silage grass once the peas and barley have been harvested. We have also sown a more drought resistant grazing ley to see how it performs. Another new crop we are trying this year is fodder beet. Local contractors drilled 10 acres 2 weeks ago with the aim of producing more winter feed for the cows. We now, of course, need rain to make all of these crops grow.

We calve cows all year round at Merrivale. If you walk through the farm on the footpath you will no doubt always see calves in the hutches. This winter we have greatly reduced the number of heifer calves born by using sexed semen. This allows us to closely control the number of heifers we have and reduce an oversupply, something that we struggle with when closed down with T.B. as we can't sell any. We can then just provide beef cross calves for sale for other farms to rear on and not produce Friesian bull calves that are not so sought after.

We have had some great news about the installation of a milk vending machine on farm, our grant application has been approved so we finally have the green light to get going. COVID and other factors meant it took the Rural Payments Agency 5 months to give a decision which would normally take 6 weeks but we got there in the end.

There are two parts to the build, the first is putting in a hut that the vending machines will be housed in, together with a parking and turning area for customers on what is currently a paddock. The second part is converting our old milking parlour into a 'white room' where the milk will be pasteurised prior to sale. Work is set to start next month and we are hoping to be up and running in June/July.

The hut won't only be offering milk, Bob and I are all set to plant a good selection of vegetables again which will be sold alongside, together with the Wagyu beef we produce on farm and the wonderful Emily's cakes and bakes. It will be a proper family venture and something we hope will be of great value to you all.

We will be setting up social media accounts to keep you updated so watch this space! In the meantime, if you'd like to see a little more of what we get up to day to day, the grandchildren have recently set up a YouTube channel. It shows our farm through their eyes, the channel is called Farminshire and this is a link to their first video <https://youtu.be/drGyS0WzqGM>

## MERRIVALE ORGANIC BEEF

We have quality beef available direct from our farm in Little Birch to your doorstep.

It is organic grass fed Wagyu Cross beef which has been born and raised at [Merrivale Farm](#).

The Wagyu breed is known for its beautiful marbling which gives a delicious flavour and texture to the meat.

