

Alcester Town Council



Winter Newsletter

Issue 60 December 2020

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

What a difficult and challenging year this has been. All our lives have changed but it is as important as ever to continue to follow government guidelines. We must keep ourselves, family, friends and our community safe and well, and we must protect the wonderful NHS staff who are doing such a brilliant job in very difficult circumstances.

I am sure that you remember that when this virus started to take hold back in the spring my fellow Councillors and volunteers from the community set up the Alcester Community Resilience Support Network. This group is still up and running so if you find yourself needing help, for example with shopping or collecting medication, please join the Facebook page: [Alcester Community Resilience](#) or phone the helpline: 0770 759 8379, or send an email to alcester.response@outlook.com. The Councillors and volunteers have helped many, many residents during this pandemic and I would like to say a big thank you to all of them for the time and hard work they have put in and continue to put in helping the residents of our wonderful town.

During these difficult times we all need things to brighten up our lives. I am sure that during the summer many of you visited the Alcester Positivity Line. A strand of painted rocks laid along the old railway line. The rocks have now been removed and are in storage but will be made into a permanent display for all to enjoy again in the future. Also, in the summer we had the wonderful and colourful hanging baskets in the High Street, and now these have been replaced by the beautiful Christmas lights that twinkle and shine in the High Street. This again shows what a wonderful community spirit we have in our town of Alcester, so a massive thank you to Katie Gillett and Serena Stratford for organising the Alcester Positivity Line, to the Alcester in Bloom committee for the hanging baskets and Alcester Bunting and Lighting Committee for the Christmas lights. We are so lucky to have so many residents who give their time freely to make all these and many other things happen in our town.



Sunday 8 November was Remembrance Sunday, but this year Remembrance weekend was a very different to the one we normally experience. There was no British Legion Remembrance Concert on the Saturday night, there was no Remembrance parade on the Sunday morning, just a small socially distanced gathering of six people on the Church Green for a short service and the laying of wreaths. Although a much reduced service, I am proud to say I was one of those people who was honoured to take part and who found it no less poignant. I want to thank the Church and the British Legion representatives for organising

this and although it was very different this year, we must never forget those that have given their lives for our country.

Now for some much brighter and long-awaited news, Alcester Town Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council have reached agreement in principle, for the Town Council to take a long-term lease on The Hannah Susan Greig Memorial Hall. We hope that both sides will sign the lease in early January. We hope to reopen the iconic building as a community hall and arts venue. The building is in a sorry state and we have a lot of work to do, but I am confident that with the support of the residents of Alcester and the surrounding areas we can make the Greig Hall great again. For more information please see the item on page 8 of this newsletter.

Finally, due to Covid 19 we do not yet know what government guidelines will be in place for Christmas, but whatever they are and wherever you are, Tim and myself would like to wish you, your family and loved ones a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Cllr Gill Forman, Mayor of Alcester

Clerks Corner

ALCESTER CEMETERY- IMPORTANT PLEASE READ

This is an important message from the Town Council in its capacity as the burial authority for Alcester. The cemetery on Birmingham Road has two distinct parts – the left-hand side, accessed through the lychgate, is currently in use and managed by the Town Council. The right-hand side (known as the old cemetery) was transferred to the Town Council in 1990 as a “closed churchyard”.

Although it may appear that there are large empty sections of the current cemetery, our records clearly show that it is almost full and depending on demand, it only has capacity for a few more years.

The Town Council has been looking for alternative sites for a new cemetery but without success. All identified land within the town is either potential building land, too close to a watercourse, or has other existing planning controls.

The church burial registers for the old cemetery are in the possession of the Town Council but there is no associated map identifying who is buried exactly where. Our knowledge of the exact location of burials is limited to the mapping carried out by the Local History Society which identified some grave locations before headstones were cleared.

The Town Council has recently commissioned a ground penetrating radar survey of the old cemetery which identified a section at the rear of the cemetery where there is very little evidence of remains still being present.

The Town Council is currently working on a project which would involve seeking permission from the Ministry of Justice to clear this section of the Cemetery and to rebury any remains found elsewhere in the old cemetery.

We are being advised by an expert exhumation company which is currently working on a similar project in Birmingham in preparation for the construction of HS2. This company has extensive experience and by using them we will ensure that any work will be done in a professional and sensitive manner.

No decisions have yet been taken but the Town Council is fully committed to providing future burial space for residents, if at all possible. The Town Council wishes to seek comments from residents before proceeding further. If you have any comments, please email clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk by 31st December 2020.

Vanessa Lowe, Town Clerk

Alcester Town Council Contacts

Office of the Town Clerk: Tel: 01789 766084

Town Clerk: clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Mayor's Secretary: mayor@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Planning: administration@alcester.gov.uk

Facilities: reception@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Community Care: office@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Health and Well-Being:

info@alcester-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.alcester-tc.gov.uk

BENEFACTIONS BOARD

In Alcester we already have so much to be proud of, from the strength of our community to the wonderful heritage from Roman times onwards which surrounds us. Another historic artefact, housed in St Nicholas Church is now achieving the recognition it deserves, both at home and internationally.

This is the unique Benefactions Board created for the parish and town of Alcester nearly 400 years ago in 1632.

The purpose of the Board was to record the various acts of charity given by various benefactors from 1562 to 1904. These gifts enabled many improvements to the life of the town including the building of alms houses, schools and the town hall, to providing food and money for the poor.

The Board is away being analysed, restored and conserved at the moment while more funds are raised and, to aid this fundraising, Richard Osborne has created a Youtube [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoEFwCFn034&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop) looking at the Board in some detail which we can now make available for everyone to view to see what makes this piece so very special

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoEFwCFn034&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

Do follow the link below to the 17 minute video which I hope you will find fascinating and, of course, if you are able to make a donation towards the work, I would be delighted to hear from you!

David Moulson, Project Leader

COMMUNITY GRANTS

ORGANISATION	GRANT AWARDED £
1. Alcester in Bloom	1500
2. Heart of England Town Criers (Grant donated to Alcester Community Resilience Fund)	400
3. Alcester Town Football Club	1000
4. Alcester Bunting and Lighting Executive	400
6. Alcester Guide and Scout Hall	750
7. Arrow Action Group	550
8. People in Action	300
9. Alcester & Ragley Park Cricket Club	800
10. Malt Mill Residents Association	400
11. Citizens Advice South Warks	1100
Total £	7200

Note: decisions on a number of grant applications have been deferred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They will be reconsidered by the Community Care Committee in early 2021 to establish whether proposed events/activities can proceed at that stage.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Needless to say, this has been a very troubling time for us all. We are now in our second lockdown as Covid cases were starting to rise out of control. It is interesting to note that across the country the majority of infections - 90% - occurred in the home, followed by the workplace. It is a tribute to our hospitality sector that they had very few reported cases.

I am pleased to say that Stratford District and Alcester have the lowest rates in the County- so well done to everyone for following the advice to wash your hands, wear a mask and socially distance.

There have been a few outbreaks in our schools although, with the measures in place, they have been contained.

Council work has carried on, although remotely wherever possible. When the first lockdown occurred both the County and District Councils immediately implemented a 'work from home' policy. This meant that services continued to be delivered as efficiently as was possible under the circumstances. Officers were drafted into other areas such as working with the army for food distribution. This time, however, there will be less need for shielding and food parcels as other provisions are in place.

Not long after the schools returned in September, we started to see a few cases of Covid 19. These were identified quickly and acted upon. In some cases the whole year group had to isolate but there were no significant local outbreaks.

Budgets have been hit hard this year, especially at the District level. Stratford District is the 4th hardest hit area in the country. The current projections are that SDC will lose an estimated £4m of income. This could be covered from our reserves, but reserves can only be spent once and long term solutions are needed. Although SDC received over £37m of Government grant money, the majority has been distributed to local businesses in need of support. This enabled many of those businesses to survive, but unfortunately not all will be able to weather the storm. On a positive note, we are starting to see a number of new businesses starting up and we are looking at ways of supporting them too. County have fared better financially, although they too will be seeing a significant reduction in revenue.

I was concerned to hear reports in the media about the notion of letting the virus 'rip' through society to give the so-called 'herd immunity'. If left unchecked viruses can mutate, as seen with Covid in Denmark, with potentially serious consequences. Although a vaccine will soon be available we cannot yet drop our guard. We have had to learn to live with Covid but we will, as a society, get through this.

I hope that you are and will remain well and healthy. Stay safe.

markcargill@warwickshire.gov.uk or 07988485050

County, District and Town Cllr Mark Cargill



Allotment Judging

This has been a very strange year with nationwide lockdown through spring and early summer but it became apparent to the judges of the annual Alcester allotment competition that the allotment holders had been making the best use of the situation by creating an exceptionally high number of good allotments - giving the judges an even more difficult task of deciding the winners of the competition for 2020.

The judging took place on 14 August, later than usual due to COVID-19. The judging was conducted by the Mayor, Councillor Gill Forman, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor

Kathryn Cargill and the chair of the Community Facilities Committee, Councillor Tim Forman. Unusually, the day that we chose to conduct the judging turned out to be a fine sunny day - unlike previous years!

All four allotment sites, Bleachfield Street North, Bleachfield Street South, School Road and Allimore Lane were judged and individual allotment winners were as follows:

Bleachfield Street North: Mrs R Jones, Plot 24

Bleachfield Street South: Mrs E Pittard, Plot 134

School Road: Mr R Taylor, Plot SR16

Allimore Lane: Mr M Harrington, Plot 212

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the Reg Grummet trophy for overall winner of the best allotment in 2020 is Mr M Harrington, Plot 212 Allimore Lane

Congratulations on an excellent allotment!

Owning an allotment is a great way of keeping fit and healthy and can be a great way to get the whole family involved in a hobby, if you are interested in taking on an allotment of your own, please contact the Town Council at Globe House or ring 01789 766084.

ALCESTER COMMUNITY RESILIENCE



Keeping
Alcester
Talking

We can't do lots of the things we normally would this winter, but we can still talk on the phone. A chat about something we're passionate about, a memory, or the latest thing we watched on the television can help us feel more connected with each other. So, let's stay in touch with our Alcester neighbours on a regular phone call and keep our community talking.

If you would like to find out how you can take part in regular calls with fellow residents, please leave us a message on **07707 598379** or email us at

alcester.response@outlook.com. We'll call you back with all the details and then, when you're ready, we'll pair you up with someone in Alcester who shares similar interests.

This is organised by Alcester Community Resilience, a volunteer group that covers the parishes of Alcester, Kinwarton, Arrow & Weethley and Great Alne.

Fancy learning to fish?

New project starting in the New Year. Coaching in how to fish to be held at Broad Acres Farm.

Unique opportunity to receive tuition from an expert completely free of charge. All equipment and transport provided. Please contact Wendy Sherwood on info@alcester-tc.gov.uk or phone 01789 766084



don't MISS OUT!!



EXTRACTS FROM A SEASONAL SHORT STORY

Originally by Joseph M. Rebecky

Where will I find the perfect Christmas gift?

As a young child I can always remember running down the stairs on Christmas morning and looking around the tree for the biggest box. I always believed that within the biggest box was the most expensive and best gift.

But as time works its magic on the mind and soul of a young man, I soon realised that each and every gift was special, unique, and meaningful.

In fact, presents that I remember most are the gifts that came directly from the heart, such as one of my mother's handmade sweaters or scarves. Christmas truly is not about the gift itself, but rather the thought behind the gift!

But I know the true meaning of Christmas is found in the word "giving." So, this Christmas I promised myself to search and find the most incredible gift.

I spent many days searching the crowded shops and online catalogues, but nothing seemed to stand out. As Christmas quickly approached, I wondered if I would ever find that "perfect" gift. I decided to try the local shopping centres one last time. Maybe I had missed a shop or new products had just hit the shelves. But as I quietly passed from one shop to the next, nothing attracted my eye. Somewhat defeated, I slowly made my way to the shopping centre exit. But before I could reach the doors, I suddenly found that "perfect" gift.

No, this gift was not found in a fancy and expensive department store. It will not be wrapped in pretty Christmas paper and adorned with ribbons and bows. Actually, this gift does not have a receipt and cannot be taken back.

So, where did I find this "perfect" gift and, more importantly, what is it?

I found it in the eyes of an elderly couple holding hands, I heard it in the playful words between a grandfather and grandson, and I saw it in the actions of a proud new mother.

Yes, the gift is LOVE.

For other heart warming stories please see <https://motivateus.com/>

Merry Christmas From Alcester & District Lions Club.... Where kindness matters



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Are you volunteering in your local community during this Covid-19 period?

Are you enjoying helping people in your neighbourhood?

Would you like to use your experience to greater effect?

If the answer to all of the above is YES!!

ALCESTER & DISTRICT LIONS CLUB could be the place for you!!

We are based in Alcester and are recruiting now.

If you would like more information, call the Secretary NOW on 0345 833 2794 and leave a contact number and email address and he will get back to you.

Cllr M Bowe



The previous two editions of the Alcester Town Council newsletters- Summer and Autumn are available online on our [website](#) under the News/Community Newsletter tab

Thank you Waitrose!

We would like to say a **big** thank you to Waitrose, Alcester for including the choir in the October "Community Matters" scheme. £333 has been donated by the store for choir funds. Donations like this are important to the choir. We are a charity and in normal times hold concerts at least once a month to help local charities, churches, schools, clubs and associations of all kinds and ask for nothing in return...so thank you Waitrose for helping us to keep up that local support.

Anyone who would like more information on the choir or would be interested in joining us can contact me on 07886 139781 or email me on judithamvc@hotmail.com"

census 2021

Households across England and Wales will soon be asked to take part in a once-in-a-decade survey of housing and population.

Census2021, run by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), aims to give the most accurate estimate of people and households. The information will help decide how everyone from local authorities to charities spend funds and put services in place. This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, housing or new bus routes.

The census has been carried out every ten years since 1801 with the exception of 1941 due to the Second World War.

Early in the new year, households will receive a letter about the census with a unique access allowing them to complete the questionnaire online on their computers, phones or tablets. Paper questionnaires are available on request. Census day is March 21 but households with access codes can take part from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months although all personal records and any detail that would identify an individual will be locked away for 100 years and kept safe for future generations.

For more information visit: census.gov.uk



Newport's School Foundation

Newport's School Foundation was founded in 1582 to assist poor children of Alcester to obtain an education. It founded a school in 1610 and provided financial assistance to students. It became the progenitor of Alcester Grammar School, with the help of the Marquess of Hertford.

Currently the Foundation can offer financial assistance to pupils, or former pupils, of the three secondary schools in Alcester between the ages of 16-25. It can also provide grants to the schools.

The Foundation has a [website](http://www.newportsschoolfoundation.org.uk/) where an application form can be found. Please see <http://www.newportsschoolfoundation.org.uk/>

In the past year, the Foundation has provided six personal grants for a variety of items including travel passes, books, computers etc. It has also provided grants to St. Benedict's to support a mental health project and two grants to the Academy to provide furniture for an external classroom, and ten laptops for digitally deprived students.

Any persons, or schools, eligible for grants are encouraged to apply, particularly in these difficult times; we exist to help.

Professor Cllr Clive Neal-Sturgess, Trustee/Clerk to the Newport's School Foundation



Window from the Mayor's favourite display 2020

WINDOW WANDERLAND

Following the success of the 2020 event, Alcester Town Council in partnership with Alcester Community Trust, are pleased to announce that Window Wanderland 2021 will be extended and take place on the nights from Saturday 16th to Saturday 23rd January 2021. With so many events having to be cancelled due to Covid 19, Window Wanderland is one of the few events that is Coronavirus proof!

Although not a competition as such, our Mayor Cllr Gill Forman will be choosing her favourite display and awarding a small prize.

Whether you want to join in as a Window Maker or be a Wanderer (think Garden Walkabout with lights) all the information is available at our website: <https://www.windowwanderland.com/event/Alcester-2021/>
If you would like further details please contact Councillor Vaughan Blake at vblake.atc@gmail.com

Cllr Vaughan Blake, Chair Business & Tourism Working Group

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD UPDATE

The Alcester H&W Board have met twice using Zoom software since the first lockdown. The members of the Board discussed the pressures and challenges they had experienced but also the innovative ways they found to overcome them- and still provide a meaningful service. One common theme emerging is a concern with the mental health of people who are struggling with lockdown. Some very vulnerable residents are still reluctant to leave the safety of their homes.

Our focus is currently on those people that provide both physical and emotional support - our carers. This has been a particularly difficult time for them as many were unable to even leave home for the regular support sessions that provide welcome relief. As someone said to me, 'we all need a cuddle sometimes'. The [Warwickshire Directory](https://directory.warwickshire.gov.uk/) (<https://directory.warwickshire.gov.uk/>) is a good place to start if you need help. There is more information about Health & Wellbeing during the pandemic on the Town Council web page [COVID-19/ Health & Wellbeing](#). As always our local resilience teams (see earlier article) with their local knowledge have been excellent at providing support to our residents. Please let them know if you are aware of anyone needing help in this way.

Cllr M Cargill, Chair Health & Wellbeing Board

WILL YOU BE ALONE THIS CHRISTMAS DAY?

This Christmas will be very different for many of our residents so we want to bring some dinner and cheer to those who will be alone on Christmas Day

To register please call us:
07414 851644
or email:
alcester-ccd@hotmail.com

This service is for residents of Alcester

organised by
ALCESTER COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER



Alcester Christmas appeal

2020 has been a difficult year.

For some families, Christmas will be a time of stress and hardship.

This year, Alcester Minster are raising money to provide families in need with a voucher which they can use to buy food or a gift for their children.

100% of your donation would go to those who need it.

To donate or find our more please contact Beth Clarke

Beth.clarke@coventry.anglican.org

Let's help one another this Christmas



Get Nifty in the Kitchen with our Cook and Eat Your Tea Project



Our first four-week cookery course for teenagers was hailed a success with nine young people attending every Wednesday for a couple of hours to learn how to cook a simple nutritious meal and pudding and then sit down to eat this together. Everything is cooked from scratch, so participants learn something new each time they make a meal. The focus is on using fresh ingredients and local businesses have been generous in their donations, with Hillers donating fresh fruit and vegetables and a local butcher donating the fresh meat.

The project is aimed at supporting different groups of people, such as families, over 60's, cooking for one, etc, and will run from September 2020 until July 2021 during term times at the Depot (Eric Payne Community Centre) from 4:30pm until 6:30pm every Wednesday. Please get in touch with Wendy Sherwood, Alcester Town Council for more information.

WE WANT YOU TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE GREIG MEMORIAL HALL

After a long and difficult year the Town Council is pleased to share some great news which will mean a lot to many.

We can at last envisage the doors of the Hannah Susan Greig Memorial Hall being reopened. The Hall has been closed for nine years now and the prospect of it opening its doors again is exhilarating. This is down to a colossal community effort, led by The Friends of the Greig Hall and Alcester Town Council.

With the Greig Lifestyles building (gym) having been refurbished and reopened in the summer the focus is now firmly on reopening our remarkable Hall. Assuming that the Town Council signs a lease with the District Council, the New Year will see the formation of a new Community Group. The Group, which will include local residents, will handle the refurbishment, reopening and future management of the Hall. With this in mind, we ask anyone wishing to become involved in this exciting new era for the Hall to contact The Town Council or The Friends of the Greig Hall to register their interest.

Members of the Friends of the Greig Hall, who form a significant part of the Greig Working Group (established in 2018), have already raised substantial funds towards the refurbishment project proving there is great community support.

The Working Group have consulted widely, including with organisations who have successfully undertaken similar community projects elsewhere. This concluded with the completion of a feasibility study, setting out its vision for the Hall and an action plan. Town Councillors and community volunteers are eager and very excited about sharing these ideas with all residents and once the lease is agreed this will be communicated widely.

Ultimately success depends on our collective determination to make it work. This is where you come in: do you have ideas, skills and/ or enthusiasm to get involved? Contact the Town Council or the Friends of the Greig Hall to join our efforts. If you have knowledge of project management, procurement, building surveying, fundraising, promotion, legal, hospitality or event organisation, or if you just have a little time for general volunteering, we are keen to hear from you. Keep a lookout on the Town Council website, Social Media, leaflets and other publications for details of public meetings that we will be hosting, virtually if necessary, in the New Year.

Contact Details: Email: thegreighall@outlook.com

Facebook: @friendsofthegreighall

Cllr Andrew Foster and Sheilagh Goode (Friends of the Greig Hall)



ALCESTER POPPY APPEAL

Like many things in the town this year, our Poppy Appeal was affected by COVID-19 government guidelines. We were unable to collect in Waitrose and we were not allowed to carry out any face to face collections. It also restricted the amount of poppy boxes that could be distributed- resulting in only about a fifth of our usual amount being distributed.

Nevertheless, the community has rallied to the cause. We have seen many impressive poppy displays around the town in windows and gardens of schools, businesses and private homes. Fields of poppies were created by Alcester Academy, the Scouts and St Nicholas School. The Academy alone raising over one thousand pounds for the appeal!

Lots of other great work has been carried out by our collectors and supporters and we hope to be able to start counting the money raised over the next few weeks in a Covid Secure environment. Thank you to everyone involved, especially those who have donated. The Poppy Appeal year doesn't finish until September 2021, so if you would like to donate or have an idea on how to raise further money contact David Malin.

David Malin, Secretary, Royal British Legion Alcester Branch

ALCESTER REMEMBERS



*Mike Gittus, BEM JP, Chair Alcester Branch
RBL & High Bailiff, Cllr David Henderson*



*Alcester Male Voice Choir, Tony Bradley
accompanied by Judith Land and Aland Wood*

This year has been a true challenge for the community of Alcester and the long term effects of the virus will most likely be with us for years to come.

The men and women serving our nation overseas have had the added concern of being separated from their families whilst contending with their missions of peace around the world.

The Royal British Legion gives those families national support where needed both at home and abroad. As a town we have continued to be supportive of our military personnel. With the community's help, the Alcester Branch of the Royal British Legion has been able to provide funding towards the safekeeping of our most elderly and vulnerable at Galanos House, a local veterans care home.

'Tommy', our Centenary Mascot was badly damaged due to a falling tree in the early autumn. Hopefully he will be replaced shortly in his rightful position, standing guard on our Centenary Field.

Lastly on a brighter note we can look forward to the 100 year anniversary of both our War Memorial Cross and our RBL Branch. Hopefully we will be able to mark the occasion with a suitable event next year.

*Mike Gittus, BEM JP
Chair, Alcester Branch of The Royal British Legion*

ALCESTER MINSTER CHURCHES...



Alcester Minster Churches continue to be open for private prayer on selective days as advertised in the the weekly Newsletter. The only difference is that at the moment, Sambourne Church will be open on a Wednesday by request only. Contact the Administrator if you require information about opening times at a specific Minster church.

Weekly on-line services can be found on the Welcome page of the Alcester Minster Churches website www.alcesterminster.org

A Christmas on-line service will also be available on the Alcester Minster website.

When services resume, all churches will reintroduce services but attendance will continue to be limited for each church depending on numbers who can safely be included to allow for social distancing. Anyone who wishes to attend must reserve a place through the Administrator before 1 pm on the Friday prior to the service. Contact details: email: administrator@alcesterminster.org or telephone: 0784 028 4294

Beth Clarke, the Alcester Minster Churches Children and Family Worker has been very busy since September. She has established weekly on-line collective worship for the four primary schools in the area and a bi-monthly 'Messy Church in a Bag' with lots of activities that families can do together at home every other month.

These events are advertised on Alcester Minster social media accounts: Facebook: www.facebook.com/AlcesterMinster and on Twitter: www.twitter.com/AlcesterMinster. You can also contact Beth for more details Beth.Clarke@Coventry.Anglican.org

- A 'new baby and parent group' will be starting soon. Email: Beth.Clarke@Coventry.Anglican.org for more details.
- **During Advent, Beth would like to invite families to look out for ANGELS around the town, which they can take home and put on their Christmas tree.**
- As well as taking part in the Minster Christmas service, Beth and Julie Lindsay, a Lay Minister in Alcester Minster, are planning a 'Drive-in' Crib Service on Christmas Eve. More details will be available through the Minster social media nearer the time.
- There will also be a 'Christmas Hamper Scheme', similar to the 'frozen food' scheme over the summer months. Again for more information contact Beth.Clarke@Coventry.Anglican.org

PLANNING MATTERS

Over the last few months and since the last Newsletter, the Planning Committee has had to modify its operation. We have held a number of virtual meetings interspersed with email communications. Applications of significance were:

The Swan Hotel- Change of Use. A Holding Objection was made by the Committee as a number of technical issues needed to be resolved; subsequently the application has been withdrawn.

Garages on Hertford Road. An application was made for four houses on the site, the Committee objected on a number of grounds, and the ward member also objected. The application went to the West Area Planning Committee of Stratford District Council on 4 November. The hearing gave permission for the development with an additional condition that the height of the houses be reduced to prevent overbearing.

Garages on Alauna Avenue. A variation to the application was made to change the provision of power to the site. A Holding Objection was made as the details of the changes were not clear.

Land North of Allimore Lane (northern parcel). The developers had filed a variation to the Outline planning application to change the type and size of some houses on the site; an objection was made. At a virtual meeting between the developers and the Planning Committee the proposals were extensively discussed. Following the meeting, the Committee unanimously removed their objection.

Prof Cllr Clive Neal-Sturgess (Chair)



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH ALCESTER

Please be aware of the following Covid-19 scams

Telephone scammer calls claiming to be calling from Test and Trace and says you need to take a test for Covid-19 as you may have been in contact with an infected person. You are asked to give an address and bank details to send you the kit. **Genuine tests are free** and this is therefore a scam.

Apps and text messages

Fraudsters are sending scam messages claiming you are being fined for leaving the house. These criminals use spoofing technology to send texts and emails impersonating organisations that you know and trust. If you receive an unexpected text or email asking for personal or financial details do not click on the links or attachments, and don't respond to any messages that ask for your personal or financial details.

Fake news: Fraudsters purporting to be from HMRC offer a tax refund and ask for your personal and financial details. The emails display the HMRC logo making it look genuine.

Door crime: Impersonating Police officers, Red Cross workers and health authorities etc as well as unknown people offering to help with shopping as an excuse to enter your home. Always ask for ID before letting someone into your home.

Emails: Never click on a link in an email offering a refund of taxes, utilities or similar. If you are in any way unsure as to who sent you an email, do not open. Visit official websites instead.

Key protection advice

STOP: Taking a moment to think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE: Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT: Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen victim to a scam and report it to Action Fraud (details below). Forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk
Seek advice from Friends Against Scams at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/

Communicating with the Police:

Emergencies dial **999**

The Police Non Emergency number: 101 To be used to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response. 101 to your local Police. Calls cost 15p per call (landlines and mobiles).



Alcester South Safer Neighbourhood Team dial 101 or 01789 444815/444816

Please feel free to contact the team direct by email:

alcestersouth.snt@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

SGT 1284 Angus Eagles - angus.eagles@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

PC 1672 Beat Manager Rob Davies - robert.davies4@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 6327 Carolyn Davis - carolyn.davis1@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 6111 Gary Johnson-Jones

gary.johnson-jones@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

PCSO 6336 Mark Lucas - mark.lucas@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk (Covers North & south areas)

Online reporting services are also available on our website - <https://www.warwickshire.police.uk/>

Alcester Office - 01789 444816

Twitter- [@AlcesterCops](https://twitter.com/AlcesterCops)

Facebook- [Alcester Police](https://www.facebook.com/AlcesterPolice)

Instagram- [southwarwickshiresnts](https://www.instagram.com/southwarwickshiresnts)

Facebook- [Warwickshire Police](https://www.facebook.com/WarwickshirePolice)

Call **Crimestoppers** anonymously with information about crime on 0800 555 111. Crimestoppers is a charity who will pass on information to police without revealing any details of the caller.

Contact Warwick Trading Standards on 01926 414040 to report a rogue trader. For general advice on scams and rogue traders contact 0845 4040 506.

Action Fraud Report a Fraud or Cyber Crime to 0300 123 2040

Alcester is a relatively crime free area. We work together to keep it that way

Town Council Meetings

In line with government legislation, Full Council meetings are being held remotely (via Zoom software). Committee meetings have been cancelled with the the exception of the Planning Committee who are reviewing planning applications by Zoom and email meetings.

Agendas are published online at: www.alcester-tc.gov.uk three days before each meeting.


















Members of the public are welcome to attend Council meetings via Zoom and are given time at the start of the meetings to speak. Draft and approved Minutes from meetings can also be found on the Town Council website.

The Alcester Town Council Facebook page is another source of information regarding council matters:

www.facebook.com/alcester Please click "like" and share with your friends.

We're also on Twitter: www.twitter.com/AlcesterTown

Town Councillor's Contact Details

Alcester West Ward	Alcester Oversley Ward (contd)
 <p>Mark Cargill 07988 485050</p>	 <p>Gill Forman (Mayor) 01789 763828</p>
 <p>Laura Pusey 07928 327923</p>	 <p>Tim Forman 01789 763828</p>
 <p>Emma Randle randle.atc@gmail.com</p>	 <p>Andrew Foster 01789 766708</p>
 <p>Clive Neal-Sturgess 01789 764416</p>	 <p>Keith Greenaway 01789 766818</p>
 <p>Erick Wilson 01789 764366</p>	 <p>Mat Hempell 07939 797582</p>
Alcester Oversley Ward	
 <p>Vaughan Blake 01789 764128</p>	 <p>David Henderson 01789 765271</p>
 <p>Mike Bowe 07775 500993</p>	 <p>Kathryn Soares 07551 311528</p>
 <p>Kirsten Forbes 07810 522920</p>	
Oversley Green Ward	
<p>Delivered by LL logo and printed by PSW logo</p> <p>on behalf of Alcester Town Council</p> 	 <p>Kathryn Cargill (Deputy Mayor) 07745 608567</p>