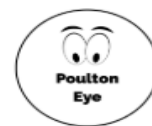


# THE POULTON EYE



COMMUNITY - NEWS - INFORMATION



## In this month's Edition:

**Mindsong - music therapy  
for people living with  
dementia**

**New Season, New  
Opportunities at Poulton  
Cricket Club**

**Brimstone Butterflies**

**April in the Garden**

**Tough Times on the Farm**

## Welcome to the April 2025 edition of the Poulton Eye

This Easter will see us saying goodbye to our vicar of 13 years, John Swanton, as he retires. He has been a mainstay of our community and will be much missed. Poulton PCC (Parochial Church Council) will be joining with the other villages under John's care to recruit a replacement, but it may take some time - and the new incumbent has some big boots to fill!

As is so often the case, it's a time of mixed emotions, but the primary one is to reflect on how John has supported us through good times and bad, and to thank him for his caring but practical help.

Of course, we hope that John and Nicola will finally get to enjoy life together in their new home. CS Lewis wrote "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." Whatever that goal is, John, we hope you meet it; and that you keep dreaming!

Please do join us at the Easter Day Service here in Poulton, where we will be giving John a big send-off!

Please feel free to contact us with comments or contributions. Our deadline is 15th of April.

Rosie and Lizzy - [poultoneye@gmail.com](mailto:poultoneye@gmail.com)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE RECTORY & CHURCH DATES FOR APRIL

### Dear Friends

This is my last letter as Team Rector of the South Cotswolds and to the parishes in 'The Ampneys Group'. The past thirteen and a half years have flown by.

One of the privileges of a parish priest is to be invited to share in the joys and sorrows of other people's lives. Over the past 13 years I have shared with many of you the joys of a new baby, the excitement of preparing for a wedding, the sorrows of illness or the death of someone very dear to you, and the anxieties and perplexities of all the troubles and disappointments that weave themselves into the fabric of our lives. It has meant a great deal to me to be able to share the tears and the laughter, and to contribute in some way to the eventual outcome of these major incidents in life.

I can also look back with some satisfaction at our joint achievements in maintaining and improving our wonderful historic church buildings. Roofing works at Ampney Crucis, Driffield, Ampney St Mary and currently at Ampney St Peter churches. Conservation repairs to windows at Driffield, Harnhill and Ampney Crucis. Works to ancient table-top tombs at Ampney St Mary and Ampney Crucis. A churchyard extension at Down Ampney, which will serve the parish well for the next century. New stained-glass windows commissioned for Poulton and Down Ampney. Installation of a loo and kitchenette at Poulton. Restoration of the Victorian organs at Ampney Crucis and later this year at Down Ampney. Many thanks to everyone who has helped make all this happen.



Being involved with our local Church of England schools at Ampney Crucis and Down Ampney has been great fun and 'Collective Worship' in our schools has been a highlight of my week. It has been wonderful to see these small village schools prosper and go from strength to strength.

One of the great strengths of the Church of England is that it is first and foremost a grassroots movement where 'local' – the parish – is the building block. If you want your local church to remain open and viable, I would ask you to support it in whatever way you can. Thank you to all who serve on our Parochial Church Councils and serve as PCC Officers – it would be impossible to do the job of Rector/Vicar without you.

Eastertide is a time of new hope, new life, and new opportunity – may this be so for our parishes locally.

So it remains only for me to wish you all God's blessing and to thank you for your friendship and support over the past 13 years.

Yours as ever - John

The Rectory, Ampney Crucis, Cirencester, GL7 5RY | 01285 851309 | [ampneyrector@gmail.com](mailto:ampneyrector@gmail.com) | [www.ampneychurches.info](http://www.ampneychurches.info)

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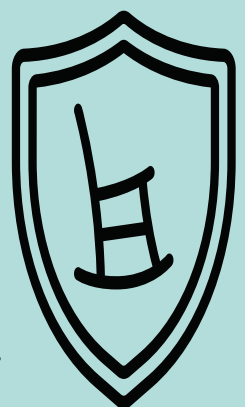
## CHURCH SERVICES FOR APRIL & MAY

<b>Sunday 6th April</b> <i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>	8am 10am 10am 6pm	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Word and Worship Evensong	Ampney Crucis Down Ampney Harnhill Ampney St Mary
<b>Sunday 13th April</b> <i>Palm Sunday</i>	8am 10am 10am	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Word & Worship	Poulton Driffield Harnhill
<b>Wednesday 16th April</b> <i>Wednesday of Holy Week</i>	8.30pm	Compline	Harnhill
<b>Thursday 17th April</b> <i>Maundy Thursday</i>	6pm	Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar	Ampney St Mary
<b>Friday 18th April</b> <i>Good Friday</i>	10am 2pm	At The Foot of the Cross The Last Hour	Down Ampney Ampney Crucis
<b>Sunday 20th April</b> <i>Easter Day</i>	10am	Easter Communion	Poulton
<b>Sunday 27th April</b> <i>2nd Sunday of Easter</i>	10am	Parish Communion	Ampney Crucis
<b>Sunday 4th May</b> <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am 6pm	Parish Communion Word & Worship Evensong	Down Ampney Harnhill Ampney St Mary
<b>Sunday 11th May</b> <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Driffield Harnhill
<b>Sunday 18th May</b> <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Ampney Crucis Harnhill
<b>Sunday 25th May</b> <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Poulton Harnhill

Thank  
you!

John and Nicola  
&

We wish you a Happy Retirement



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**SJP Approved 19/02/2025**

SJPI5322a\_DS BI (10/24)

# DOWN ON THE FARM

**The arrival of spring should bring relief to farmers, but for Poulton Fields and Charles Horton, the season has started with a heavy dose of uncertainty.** The latest tuberculosis (TB) test on his herd returned three inconclusive results, meaning that in 60 to 90 days, those animals will need to be retested. If any of them test positive again, or even remain inconclusive, the farm will be shut down for cattle movement restrictions.

For a farm that has been clear for five years, this is a serious blow. It doesn't immediately impact Charles' ability to operate - he has no pressing need to move cattle right now - but it does limit future options. Finished cattle can still be sent directly to slaughter, but no sales to other farms can take place, meaning decisions about livestock movements are effectively on hold until autumn at the earliest.

"It's frustrating," Charles admits. "You've got this hanging over you until the next test. And if you're stuck with 60-day testing throughout the summer, that's a massive headache."

The testing process, particularly in the summer, is time-consuming and disruptive. Cattle have to be brought into sheds for four days at a time, which is far more manageable in winter, when they're already indoors. But in summer, when the cows are out on pasture, driving them in is a logistical challenge that can cause real problems. "We had one cow race around after getting out of the shed, slip over and break her leg," Charles recalls. "Another lost her calf due to the stress of being herded in. It's not just an inconvenience—it can have real consequences."

## Spring Work Underway

Away from TB worries, work on the farm has ramped up as the weather finally improves. Land preparation, sowing, and fertilising have all been in full swing, with spring barley and durum wheat already planted. "There's a little pause now while we wait for the ground to warm up before we put in peas and phacelia," Charles says.

Meanwhile, slurry has been spread—something that local residents will have noticed! Sheep have been turned out, and lambing is underway with ten lambs born so far. The first ones are being brought in at night for extra protection against the cold but will soon stay out full-time once the grass starts growing. "The frost has slowed the grass down a bit," Charles says. "It'll pick up as soon as the nights get a bit warmer."



## A Farming Industry at a Crossroads

The Farmer's Weekly newspaper is very widely read by the farming community and is a good barometer of what is happening within the farming community. A recent Farmers Weekly survey painted a stark picture of the mood within UK agriculture. The most frequently mentioned word on the wordcloud? Demoralised. Other prominent terms included undervalued, frustrated, unappreciated, stressed, and tired. As a summary of the industry, Charles agrees with the sentiment. "It doesn't necessarily apply to me personally," he says, "but for farming as a whole, yes. There's a real sense of being ignored."

One recent government decision has added to that frustration. Without warning, all environmental grant schemes have been frozen with no warning, leaving many farmers who were depending on them in a difficult position. "The impact is huge. If you're not already in a scheme, you're going to struggle," Charles explains. The Basic Payment Scheme was meant to be replaced with Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) schemes, but as Charles points out, those have now been frozen due to lack of government funding.

"If you were organised enough to get into the scheme early, you're okay for now," he says. "I did, but only after jumping through endless hoops. I had to file a formal complaint against DEFRA and even got my MP involved just to get it sorted." Charles also noted that our MP Roz, was extremely helpful which is good to hear.

While Charles' farm is relatively secure, others are facing a more precarious situation. Some farms and estates have abandoned traditional farming altogether, shifting to environmental schemes where they're paid per acre just to maintain land rather than actively farm it. "It works short-term," Charles says. "You don't need staff—just someone to drill and top the land—but those schemes only last three years. And with government spending shifting towards defence, I wouldn't bet on them surviving long-term."

The Farmers Weekly's survey also highlighted the biggest challenges facing the industry in 2024. Extreme weather topped the list, with 45% citing it as their primary concern—up from 34% in 2023. Government policy came in second (25%), overtaking last year's runner-up concern of rising input costs, which ranked third this year at 20%.





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SJP Approved 13/03/2025

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## DOWN ON THE FARM

Lower output prices, interest rates, mental health, pests, labour supply, and crime also featured in the rankings, painting a picture of an industry under increasing strain.

A further survey question revealed that 18% of UK farmers don't take a single night off in a year. Another 10% only manage one night, while the most common category—30%—get between two and six nights away annually. For dairy farmers in particular, holidays are almost impossible. "If you milk cows, you're completely tied to them," Charles explains. "Every day you're not there, someone else has to do it, and paying for cover is expensive."

For arable farmers, time off is slightly easier to come by, as there are longer periods where work is less demanding.

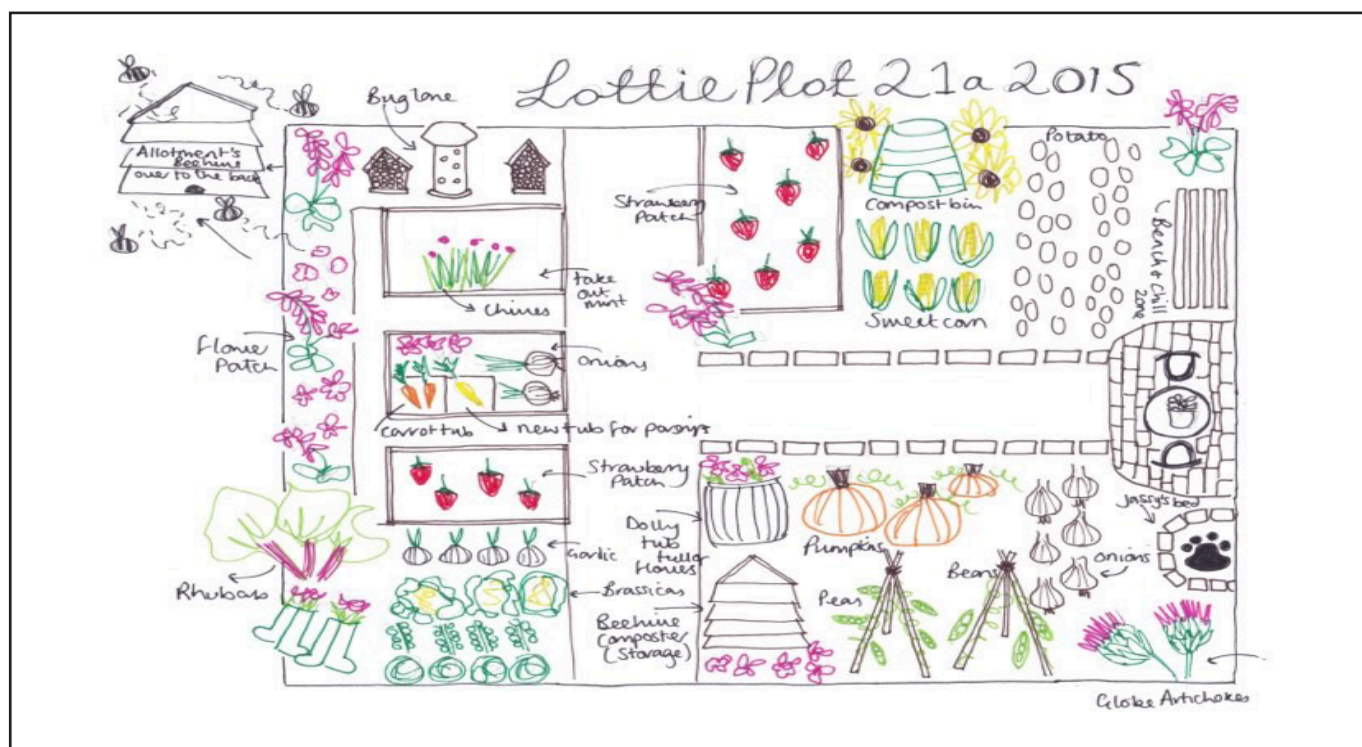
"Our local dairy farmer, Joe, doesn't get away much," Charles says. "But he makes sure to spend time with his son. He's lucky to have parents on the farm who can help out, but for a young couple starting out alone, it's nearly impossible to step away. That's when you get stuck in a rut, and things can spiral."

### Looking Ahead

For Charles, the priority remains the day-to-day running of the farm. Lambing will continue, spring crops will establish, and planning for the autumn will begin.

One thing is certain: whether battling TB restrictions, navigating policy changes, or simply making sure lambs get the best start in life, the work never stops.

Rosie Arkwright in conversation with Charles Horton



It seems that the more fast food chains proliferate and the more ultra-processed food sits on our supermarket shelves, we see almost in parallel a growing desire to reconnect with nature and to eat local, sustainable, healthy, real food. And here in Poulton, there is exciting news on this front! One of our allotments has become available and can be taken over immediately! You'll need to be quick, because it won't hang around for long. So if you want the chance to grow your own fruit and veg (and improve your physical and mental health at the same time) then hurry!

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This month, we wanted to focus on Mindsong, a local charity which Poulton has supported recently, from proceeds of the Quiz Night in January. It's always good to know where your money is going, so here's an insight into the work they do. If you'd like to volunteer, details are at the end of the article.

## Unlocking Memories: How Mindsong is Changing Lives Through Music

For many people living with dementia, words fade, faces blur, and the world becomes increasingly difficult to navigate. But music cuts through. It reaches places that conversation cannot, unlocking memories, emotions, and moments of connection that might otherwise be lost. This is the work of Mindsong, a Gloucestershire-based charity using music to transform lives.

Mindsong operates on two fronts. The clinical side, funded by the NHS, provides one-to-one music therapy with trained specialists, helping people in their own homes and care settings. Music can improve everything from movement to recognition, with therapists using rhythm and melody to support essential tasks like dressing or eating. The impact is profound—something as simple as a familiar marching tune can suddenly make sense of an everyday action that had become impossible. A man who had struggled for years to put on his trousers due to cognitive decline could suddenly do so with ease when his wife sang *Onward Christian Soldiers*. The rhythm and familiarity of the tune engaged his brain in a way that verbal instructions alone could not. This is the practical power of music therapy.

Then there's the community side, run by Kate Hicks Beach. A trained opera singer, and known to many of us locally through her 90 strong community choir 'Kate's choir', Kate leads singing groups in care homes and local communities, ensuring that music reaches even those in the later stages of dementia. Her work is built on patience and connection—this is not about performance but participation. The "Together in Song" groups visit care homes weekly or fortnightly, gathering small groups of volunteers to sing with residents, using well-loved songs to spark memories and encourage interaction.

The impact of these sessions is undeniable. One woman, visiting her husband in the care home during a group session, found herself in floods of tears after the group sang *Daisy, Daisy*. Her husband, who had not recognised her for three years, turned to her and spoke about their wedding day. It was a brief but powerful moment—one that demonstrated the way music can bypass some of the confusion dementia brings and reconnect people with their past and their loved ones.



Another extraordinary moment took place on the Willow Ward at the adult mental health unit in Cheltenham. A man, a non-english speaker, who had spent months with his head down, unresponsive, suddenly came to life when the group started singing Elvis and Beatles songs. He joined in, laughing, smiling, and gesturing animatedly—a transformation so striking that one of the staff members noted they had never managed to make eye contact with him before, nor heard him speak.

Kate sees these transformations every day. She describes a moment during an evaluation when a man came up to her and asked, "Are you singing on the inside?" She replied that she thought so. "We can all sing on the outside," he said, "but when I leave here, I'm singing on the inside."

# Justin Rundle

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## Local & Trusted

## Cotswold Friends needs you!

**Cotswold Friends provides Community Transport across Cirencester and needs more Volunteer Drivers.**

Local charity Cotswold Friends has been providing Community Transport to elderly and vulnerable people in the North Cotswolds since 1978 to combat loneliness and isolation.

They began to expand into Cirencester and surrounding areas (from Rencomb to South Cerney, Sapperton to Poulton and many places in between) after the pandemic and have seen the demand for the service grow year on year. Their incredible team of volunteers take clients anywhere they'd like to go; for medical or social appointments – to see family and friends, to the hairdresser, shops, doctors, or the hospital. And they'd love you to get involved.

Becoming a Volunteer Driver is a wonderful way to meet new people, bring a smile to someone's face, get more involved in the community and be part of the inspiring team of Cotswold Friends volunteers with events throughout the year to celebrate one another.

You can give as much or as little time as you have, from a few hours a month to several hours each week – it can be very flexible.

If you'd like to find out more or to apply to become a volunteer, please contact their lovely Volunteer Manager on 01608 697007 or email [volunteering@cotswoldfriends.org](mailto:volunteering@cotswoldfriends.org)

# MINDSONG

The other part of Kate's work at Mindsong focusses on "Sing to Remember". It involves 13 community singing groups, including one online group set up during lockdown, and going strong still, to serve those still living at home with dementia. The goal is to make sure that nobody has to travel more than 20 minutes to attend a session. The waiting list is long, a testament to the demand for these groups. Mindsong is now working on training for chatty cafés, dementia cafés, and community groups, equipping them with the skills and resources needed to run their own singing sessions.

The format of these sessions is simple but intentional. Groups start with the same song every time—it's a familiar anchor that cuts through confusion. While each group chooses its own setlist, the routine and rhythm provide stability.

Kate and her team have seen remarkable friendships form through these sessions. People living with dementia often connect with each other in ways they don't elsewhere. When someone is diagnosed, they have often been living with the condition for years already, with another decade ahead. These groups provide a space where they can navigate that journey together. Carers, too, find deep support in these communities—one group of partners, who met while attending sessions, became so close that they set up a dementia café in Stow to continue supporting one another.



One of Mindsong's more structured services is Mind Set, a 10-week support programme for those who have recently received a dementia diagnosis. It provides a safe space to process what lies ahead and has proven invaluable to those who take part. While those living with dementia engage in the sessions, their carers often meet separately for coffee—forming their own network of support, which lasts long after the course ends.

Kate reflects on the personal impact of this work. "I used to joke with a friend—come on, stop working, let's just go sing with the old people." But the work is far from trivial. "It's utterly joyful, but also deeply moving. There's a lot of loss, and you get attached to people." She remembers asking one of her favourite participants how he was doing. "I think I'm running out of steam," he said. It was heartbreaking. But in that moment, through song, he was still present. "It doesn't feel like a job," Kate says. "It feels like a lovely thing to do."

Mindsong's work is sustained by volunteers—370 of them across Gloucestershire—who give their time to bring music into care homes and communities. The charity operates on a budget of over £300,000 a year, covering everything from clinical salaries paid by the NHS, to songbooks and resources to volunteer training. They work hard to keep costs low—there's no office, just a team of people dedicated to bringing music into people's lives.



Kate's message to potential volunteers is simple:

"We always need more people. And there's always cake."

If you'd like to join, donate, or access support, you can contact [kate.hicksbeach@mindsong.org.uk](mailto:kate.hicksbeach@mindsong.org.uk) or visit the Mindsong website.





# CHAMBERLAIN WINES

Hello. My name is Mark Chamberlain, and I have lived in Poulton with my family for more than ten years. If we haven't met, you may have seen me walking the dogs around the village!



I am an Independent Wine Merchant. I have almost twenty years' experience in the Wine Trade, including living and working in Saint-Emilion. I have run my own Wine Merchant's business for more than a decade.

I list wines from all over the World, and in a wide range of styles: crisp, dry whites; richer, fuller bodied whites; pale and refreshing Provençal rosés; light, supple reds; full-bodied fruity reds; luscious pudding wines; an array of sparkling wines including some excellent Grower Champagnes; a selection of ports and sherries; classic Clarets, Burgundies, Riojas and Barolos; lots of interesting wines from off the beaten track. In essence, anything that I like and I think represents good quality and good value for its type and origin. I don't list anything I wouldn't drink. And I always try to be amongst the most competitively priced for the wines I list.

I don't have a shop, but I do offer a range of traditional Wine Merchant services – expert advice, naturally; free local home delivery (or I can send wine anywhere in the country using a reliable courier service); glass loan for events; gift boxes. If I don't stock a wine or style you're looking for, I will do my best to find it for you. In short, all you could want from a Wine Merchant, on your doorstep!

As I live in the village, Poulton residents get 10% off the list price of any order.

If you want to see a list of the wines I have currently, join my local email list, or have any other questions, please do get in touch: [mark@chamberlainwines.co.uk](mailto:mark@chamberlainwines.co.uk) or on the mobile, 07894 528 580.

All the best!

# HE PRESSED THE BUTTON...

The Cotswold Writers' Group meet in Down Ampney village hall every Tuesday morning at 10.30. A subject is drawn at random from a hat and we have about half an hour to write something. Then we read our efforts to each other, then have a cup of tea!

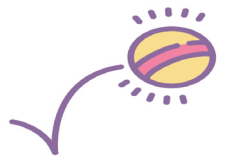
## He Pressed The Button

Miss Fortescue knew that her lessons were not the most exciting in the school. Notes and lesson plans from her teacher training days when chalk and talk was the norm had stood her in good stead for years.

Her pupils were bored out of their skulls but a withering look from Miss F quelled any rebellious thoughts or actions.

She got away with it for years but the new head was ambitious, a new broom sweeping clean. Drag this school into the twenty-first century. No-one must fail. Sports day cancelled because it was unfair on the fat, clinically obese lard-buckets who would be out of breath running a five yards, let alone one hundred metres. And out with prize-giving. Not fair on the bone idle.

He'd get this school noticed and for all the right reasons. Thrusting, go-ahead, then after a couple of years invited to turn around another school. More money, prestige, an OBE for services to education, a knighthood. His thoughts were rudely interrupted by a football hitting his office window.



Miss Fortescue would have to go. She didn't fit in with the image he was trying to create. She could improve things by taking them on an educational visit, something she had always avoided.

He decided that she should take them to the council offices and visit all the departments and learn how a tier of government operated. Miraculously, she got them there without any running off.

They dutifully visited the housing department, found out about refuse collection and recycling projects. Then into the admin department where dozens of inmates, sorry, employees were staring at computer screens.

Little Wayne was fascinated. He loved computers. He often sat up all night playing Death and Destruction and Chainsaw Killers - the more blood and guts, the better. But when he saw that there were no computer games on any of the screens, he became bored.

Then he saw a big, red button. 'What will happen if I press it?' he wondered. No-one was looking. He pressed the button.



Immediately the computers went crazy..

Council tax demands for £2.5 million were sent to every house in the area. Redundancy notices were sent to the Chief Constable, the Town Clerk and the head of Planning.

All traffic lights turned red. The water supply was switched off in every home. Permission for a travellers' site in the mayor's front garden was granted. Every car owner in the town received a parking fine.

All eyes turned to Wayne. A look of pure innocence framed his angelic features as he uttered the words which he would employ in countless situations throughout his life.

'I never done nuffink'

THE POULTON EYE

**Pam Varey**

Page 15

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# POULTON CRICKET CLUB: A NEW SEASON, A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

As the days get longer and the first signs of Spring appear, the excitement for a new cricket season at Poulton Cricket Club is building. Whether you're a seasoned player, an aspiring cricketer, or just someone who enjoys a drink and a chat while watching a match, there's something for everyone at our village club.

## Cricket for all

At Poulton Cricket Club, we take pride in our "cricket for all" ethos, ensuring that players of all ages and abilities feel welcome. Our winter nets are already underway at Farmor's Sports Hall—Seniors train on Sunday evenings, while Youth sessions take place on Friday evenings.

The outdoor season kicks off in early May with a packed fixture list, including:

- Monday & Tuesday: Youth matches
- Wednesday: Senior midweek T20 fixtures
- Thursday: Senior training
- Friday: Youth cricket & Women's softball
- Saturday: Senior league games
- Sunday: Younger youth fixtures & friendly games

Interested in playing? Get in touch via emails below!

## Ways to get involved

If you're not looking to play but still want to support the club, there are plenty of ways to do so:

- Become a social member: For just £10, you'll receive a digital membership card (issued by early May), which means you can buy drinks at the bar (you need to be a member or guest of a member to do so as per our license). Email [poultontreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:poultontreasurer@gmail.com) to sign up.
- Enjoy a home game: Join us on match days to cheer on the teams and soak up the village atmosphere. Knead on Wheels will be serving coffee and tasty pastries on Sunday mornings from 9:45-10:45, starting 4 May.
- Friday night food: Joey from Peach & Pudding will be serving up delicious meals—some may remember his fantastic lockdown meal deliveries! We'll share his weekly menu on the village WhatsApp group.

## Upcoming events

We're also planning some fantastic charity events this summer, with two big, family-friendly gatherings during the season aimed at bringing the cricket community and the village together. More details to follow! Additionally, our **Get Set Day on Saturday 12th April** is a great opportunity to lend a hand as we prepare for the new season. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Please pop by if you are free.

## Supporting the community

Poulton Cricket Club is entirely run by volunteers and is a registered charity. Some of our players are Poulton residents, but others come from the surrounding villages and even Cirencester. Our youth section has a lot of local village children taking part – as you can see in the photo young village resident Eddie F won our Under 9s Rising Star award at the end of 2024!

This year, in addition to raising funds for the club, we will be supporting breast cancer awareness, a cause close to our hearts given its recent impact on our cricketing community.

Stay tuned for updates in the Poulton Eye, the village WhatsApp group, and on the village Facebook page. For more information, visit our website or drop us a message. We'd love to see you at the club this season!

Poulton Cricket Club website: [www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk](http://www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk)

Heather Baker

### Useful contacts for 2025

Heather Baker – Poulton Cricket Club Village link – in the Poulton Village WhatsApp group.

Dave Dunn – Chairman & Lead for Seniors/Facilities/Ground [PoultonChair@gmail.com](mailto:PoultonChair@gmail.com)

Lucy Ireland – Vice Chair & Lead for Youth & Women's cricket [PoultonYouthManager@gmail.com](mailto:PoultonYouthManager@gmail.com) or [PoultonWomen@gmail.com](mailto:PoultonWomen@gmail.com)

Will Bathurst – Treasurer (Membership) [PoultonTreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:PoultonTreasurer@gmail.com)







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### Finding Solutions to Flooding in the South Cotswolds

Flooding poses one of the most pressing challenges for communities across the South Cotswolds. As climate change drives more intense and unpredictable rainfall, with once-in-a-century downpours now happening every few years, many residents now face repeated flooding incidents. This issue is no longer just an occasional inconvenience; for some, it has become a persistent reality that is causing untold stress and suffering – mental, emotional, and financial.

As the MP for South Cotswolds, I have spoken with many residents about the real and lasting impact of flooding on their lives. I have met people forced out of their homes for months, those who have lost income due to road closures, and others whose local services have suffered. At the same time, I have seen the remarkable resilience of our communities - the determination to find solutions, the willingness to take action, and the wealth of local knowledge that too often goes unheard by the public bodies who are supposed to maintain our infrastructure and water services.

That is why I recently hosted two Flooding Summits - one in Wiltshire and one in Gloucestershire - to bring together residents, local councillors, and flood groups. These meetings went beyond discussing the problem. They ensured that the voices of those affected shaped the conversation, that expertise within our communities informed the discussions, and that we focused on practical solutions with real, tangible outcomes.

A key theme from these discussions is the need for greater clarity on responsibility. Many residents feel frustrated as they navigate a maze of different agencies, unsure who to turn to when flooding strikes. They also worry about the decline in routine maintenance of ditches, drains, and waterways. Some have even faced bureaucratic obstacles that prevent them from carrying out basic upkeep themselves. If we want to tackle flooding effectively, national bodies, local authorities, and communities must work together with clear accountability.

Like many residents, I am losing faith that public bodies have the resources to do what needs to be done. Increasingly I believe that communities will need to step up and work together to take the necessary action. My team and I will be looking at how we can empower local communities to help themselves by setting up networks of communication and working parties to clear obstructions in waterways, while not overstepping legal lines.

But we also need to look at the bigger picture. Short-term fixes, such as emergency response measures and drainage improvements, are essential - but we must also develop long-term strategies that address the root causes of flooding. Nature-based solutions, such as wetland restoration, tree planting, better land management, and ensuring that new developments do not worsen the situation, all play a role. By bringing policymakers, experts, and local people together, we can create an approach that does more than react to flooding - it actively reduces risk for future generations.

These summits mark the beginning of a longer journey. The ideas and priorities raised will shape the action I take forward - securing investment, demanding greater accountability, and making sure that we turn discussions into real solutions.

I am also committed to keeping flooding high on Parliament's agenda, and **you can help by signing my petition at [www.rozsavage.uk/campaigns/improve-flood-resilience-in-the-south-cotswolds](http://www.rozsavage.uk/campaigns/improve-flood-resilience-in-the-south-cotswolds).**

If flooding has affected you and you want to share your experiences or ideas, please get in touch ([roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk)).

Your voices will help shape the next steps, and together, we can build a more resilient future for our communities.

**Dr Roz Savage, MP for South Cotswolds**  
[roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk)





# **COTSWOLD FARM GARDENS OPEN WEEKEND**

**31st May & 1st June  
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## APRIL IN THE GARDEN

I may have discovered the holy grail of horticulture - a completely harmless way of stopping slugs and snails in their slimy tracks when it comes to pots of seedlings. They've been called the gardener's public enemy number one. For something that moves so slowly, it's astonishing how fast the greedy gastropods can eat. They have a particularly voracious appetite for tender baby shoots, and must be queuing up, napkins around their clammy little necks, as we bring trays of young plants from under cover to harden off before planting out.

The final straw for me came a few seasons back when I discovered that every last stem of my early sowings had been munched overnight - cabbage, cosmos, lettuce, spinach, kale, scented stocks and marigolds. All that remained were a few sad headless stalks poking through the compost. Still, you can't let a bug(ger) get you down. I've experimented with copper tape, crushed eggshells, sharp grit, coffee grinds and wool pellets - all no match for a pest with its tentacled eyes on a prize. And natural slug pellets might make a last supper, but possibly not before they've enjoyed a salad starter. Salt, however, is to slugs and snails as water is to the Wicked Witch of the West. It is also toxic to plants, so my answer is to build an island surrounded by a briny moat. Good luck to any slug taking a dip in that. One sniff and they tend to turn tail and run... well, creep. Here's how to do it:

- Find a large greenhouse tray, or similar, and sprinkle salt over the base. Add enough water to create a shallow puddle, then stand a mesh tray upside down in the brine, making a platform for your pots and trays. It needs to be sufficiently high above the brine so that roots can't dip in. The plastic mesh trays used for fruit and veg at Cirencester market and the Organic Farm Shop on the Burford Road are ideal and they are often happy to donate them for re-use.
- 
- Before setting out the pots, make sure there are no slug or snail stowaways in your compost or underneath your containers and site the moat away from overhanging branches and nearby walls so the little bugs can't abseil in. You might need to top up the tray with water during dry periods or add more salt if the brine becomes diluted after rain.



The next protect-and-survive challenge will come when it is time to plant out. Young plants that have been toughened up by the hardening off process (more of that next month) are slightly less appealing to gastropod gourmets, as are any with red or aromatic leaves which they find bitter and tend to avoid. I'm thinking of trying a barrier of bran sprinkled around vulnerable plants outside in the beds and borders this year. Apparently it is ambrosia to slugs and snails and they gorge on it becoming, er, sluggish. Easy pickings for birds and other predators and no harm to the ecosystem.

What are your best tactics again slugs and snails? Please share your tips by emailing [poultoneye@gmail.com](mailto:poultoneye@gmail.com). Thank you to those who responded to last month's column - especially Sue, who has been gardening in Poulton for years using the no-dig method and finds it both successful and easy.

**Tulips** are one of the glories of April, with satiny petals in glowing Technicolor. Each year it is a joy to look at the joyous combinations in front gardens around the village. It only takes a few days of sun to transform them from bud to bloom. They grow so fast you can almost hear their squeaky stems creaking as they reach for the sky.



### To do in April:

- Keep on top of weeds - hoeing will dispatch most seedlings. Perennials like dandelions, docks & brambles generally need digging out. I put these toughies in the green bin in case they revive on the compost heap.
- Direct sow hardy annual flowers, herbs and vegetables outside - broad beans, carrots, cosmos, parsley, peas, potatoes, strawberries, sunflowers, sweet peas, wildflowers.
- Prick out seedlings sown under cover last month.
- Protect newly planted young plants and fruit blossom if it looks like there may be a frost - it can wipe them out in a few hours.
- Sow tender vegetables under cover - courgettes and squash, sweetcorn and outdoor tomatoes.
- Make new herbaceous perennial plants by taking basal cuttings from, eg asters, dahlias, phlox. Divide congested clumps to promote healthy growth and better flowering.
- Put in supports for peonies and other perennials before they grow too tall.
- Prune fig trees, hydrangeas, buddleas and hardy fuchsias. Cut back spring flowering shrubs once the blossom has faded and give them a dose of plant food.
- Lawns - sow new lawns and reseed bare patches, scratching up the soil surface to help the seeds establish.
- Continue deadheading spring bulbs for stronger flowering next year.

## A HISTORY OF POULTON - HIDDEN GEMS IN THE COTSWOLDS

Robin Shuckburgh – The Cotswold Explorer – has made a short video of a recent visit to Poulton. It's a short video, but worth watching!



<https://www.youtube.com/@TheCotswoldExplorer>

[thecotswoldexplorer.co.uk](http://thecotswoldexplorer.co.uk)

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### Brilliant Brimstones- a surprising duet in our gardens by day and night

Seeing the first Brimstone butterfly fluttering around looking for the first primrose or willow flower is one of the delights of spring which lift the spirits after the winter gloom.

The adults overwinter, hidden in cracks in old walls or deep within masses of ivy. They do not hibernate but remain potentially active and will fly if the weather warms. I saw one this January, lured out by a warm day. The males appear first and are the more brilliantly coloured, bright yellow with several reddish dots as shown below. He stands out clearly as he flutters around looking for a mate. The female by contrast is much less conspicuous, having a paler yellowy green upper side and pale green on the underside. The colouring and leaf like outline of the wing when at rest, offers perfect camouflage against the leaves where she lays her eggs. The wings on both sexes have tiny orange spots in the centre, examples of what is called distractive colouring, believed to confuse predators as the dots do not follow the body outline. The wings also have a veiny texture, again, similar to the leaves of a tree hence camouflaging them. The eyes are dark brown, almost black, and its antennae are long and feathery.



The scientific name *Gonepteryx rhamni* comes from the Greek words *gonia* (angle) and *pterux* (wing) and from its caterpillars' preference for buckthorn, the Latin word for which is *rhamni*. The common name "brimstone" comes from the Old English word *brynstān*, which means "burn-stone" and is an old-fashioned term for sulphur, a chemical element that burns fiercely and is used in matches. Some people think that the word 'butterfly' originates from the yellow colour of male Brimstones but there are also medieval folk tales that say witches turn into a butterfly and flutter around milk and butter to steal it.

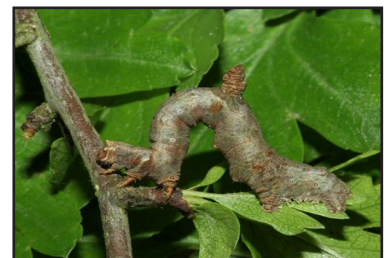
The brimstone butterfly is active during the day in warm conditions and usually flies from late March through June, when it sips nectar and lays eggs, and again from September onwards when the adults emerge and before they seek refuge from the cold. Brimstone butterflies have a very long proboscis compared to other butterflies, which means they can suck up the nectar from plants that other species cannot, including early spring flowers like primroses and pussywillow followed later by bluebells and in midsummer purple and scarlet flowers which are nectar-rich such as teasels, knapweed and thistle. The adults lay eggs May to June and then die. The hatching of the egg and completion of the larval caterpillar stage only takes around 4 weeks with another few weeks to pupate so that the adults emerge around July onwards consequently there are only a few months midsummer when there are no adults flying. This means that Brimstone butterflies live longer than most other butterfly species, with an average lifespan of approximately 13 months.

They can be found in most habitats which harbour the buckthorns, especially wetland areas, and are most common where there are also flowers for the adults to nectar on. It is widespread in the south of England and can be seen in gardens and meadows. While purging buckthorn likes calcareous alkaline soil, alder buckthorn likes wet acidic soils so there are many places they can complete their life cycle. Happily there is a good news story about this beautiful butterfly, since unlike most other butterflies this one is increasing its range and numbers. Detailed studies have shown that its spread is due to the increased availability of the two key host plants, the alder buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and the purging buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) on which it needs to lay its eggs and on which its caterpillar must feed. The plants have spread in Wales and northern England, largely due to humans planting them, as they make good hedges.



Now once it gets dark another Brimstone appears, the Brimstone moth one of which I found in my moth trap in July last year (see image left). This has a rather similar wingspan 30-40mm and flies from April to October. The beautiful yellow colour of its wings are complemented by lovely chestnut brown patches and tiny dots along the trailing edge of the wing. It also sports silver "eyes" on the leading edge. Unlike the butterfly it overwinters as a pupa wrapped in cocoons of silk hidden in a crack in a stone wall. It is less restricted in its choice of food plants which include apple, birch, blackthorn, currant, hawthorn, prunus, rowan, amelanchier and willow.

It is a frequent visitor to gardens but can also be found in woodlands, scrub and grasslands. They start flying at dusk so may be visible without the need to trap. The larva is a truly amazing mimic of a twig as shown in the picture right from the Butterfly conservation website. This has been shown to benefit the insect by delaying predation. Despite this they are an important food source for tits, robins, wrens and blackbirds so we should be grateful that they are abundant in Poulton gardens.





Poulton Hill  
ESTATE

Easter Six Case £99.<sup>99</sup>

Our offer case includes: Arlington Red x 2, Phoenix 2022 x 2,  
Arlington White 2022 x 1, Rosé 2023 x 1



Think Local, Drink Local

Buy online or visit our cellar door to pick up your Easter Six Case.  
For opening times and to purchase our award-winning wines and spirits, please visit:

— [www.poultonhillestate.co.uk](http://www.poultonhillestate.co.uk) —

## FROM THE CELLAR DOOR

### Happy Easter from Poulton Hill Estate!

### Natalie Barker on the signs of new life on the vines, a special Easter offer and anticipation of a summer of fun in the vineyard

Spring is one of our favourite times of year. April is when we start to see life return to the vineyard and it is a month often associated with new starts and youthful hopefulness. Shakespeare, who was born in April, said: "April...hath put a spirit of youth in everything." We are certainly enjoying sitting out in the vineyard watching the buds burst out of the vines, as they wake up from their dormant winter state, heralding the start of the growing season.

April can be a changeable month weather wise, known for its showers and quite warm and sunny days. It can also have some very late frosts and even snow. Our new buds are very delicate, and we must keep a careful eye on the weather as any late frost will impact them. We have paraffin candles, called bougies, on hand to warm the air between the vines and protect these precious buds if freezing weather is predicted.

### Pick up our special Easter Six case offer

April is also when Easter falls, which is a wonderful time for families to get together and perhaps even enjoy a meal outside! Poulton Hill Estate wines are a great choice to accompany your Easter food. To help your celebrations, we have our special offer with our Easter Six case. It has something for every meal over the Easter period. Our Phoenix 2022 has the ideal balance of acidity and fruit that will pair perfectly with your fish on Good Friday. Meanwhile, our Arlington Red is a great match with lamb and beef for your Easter Sunday meal.

Included in the case are two bottles each of the Phoenix and the Arlington Red, a bottle of our award-winning off-dry Arlington White 2022 and a bottle of our Rosé 2023. The Arlington White and the Rosé are ideal easy drinking wines and pair excellently with cheese.

The recommended retail price for this case is £111.98 but you can pick it up for just £99.99 from our website [www.poultonhillestate.co.uk](http://www.poultonhillestate.co.uk) or by visiting us at the Cellar Door in Poulton.

If you wish to give any of Poulton Hill's award-winning wines and spirits as gifts this Easter, you can order online and we will courier them to their destination. Or you can send a gift card that can be used against any of our wines and spirits, or our Tours and Tastings sessions. Visit [www.poultonhill.co.uk](http://www.poultonhill.co.uk).

### Summer Tour and Tasting tickets are now for sale online

Tickets for our summer Tour and Tasting events are now up on the website. The sessions run every Thursday and Saturday throughout the summer until September 13th. Attendees are taken on a relaxed tour around our vineyard and learn a little about our history and the growing of grapes. Following the tour, there is a guided tasting of a selection of our wines at the Cellar Door. The tasting will include one sparkling wine and three still wines. Snacks can be purchased to accompany the tasting. Each session costs £30 per person. Last year we saw many of the tours sell out completely, so make sure you get your tickets in plenty of time.

For more details and to book, visit <https://www.poultonhillestate.co.uk/events/>

We offer private Tour & Tastings by appointment only, please call us to discuss your requirements on 01285 850257.

### The Bulari Bar opens its doors again in May

We are filled with anticipation this month as we are set to launch our Friday Nights at the Bulari Bar in May. Every Friday from mid-May until mid-September we will be opening the vineyard's Bulari Bar and selling our wines by the bottle and the glass, local beers and soft drinks.

Each week a local guest caterer will offer food to accompany the drinks.

There will be covered and uncovered seating, all with views over our vineyard and to the Cotswold countryside beyond.

We really enjoyed meeting so many of you last year and really hope that you will come back to share your Friday evenings with us.

There is no admission fee to the vineyard, so please bring your family and friends to wind down after a busy week and relax in our beautiful surroundings.

**Natalie Murphy**

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Our regular events will be taking place in April, namely:

**Film Nights on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April and Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April** – Hall open from 7.30pm, film begins at 8pm. Come early to enjoy a drink from the bar and chat with other film-goers. All welcome, entrance is £4. Join the mailing list at [poultononeandnines@gmail.com](mailto:poultononeandnines@gmail.com) to receive information about each film.

**Weekly Post Office & Pantry** – each Tuesday afternoon, from 1.30 to 3.30pm. Matthew runs an Outreach Post Office, which is a valued local service, offering all usual Post Office postal and banking services, plus he has a range of cards, stationery and small gift items on sale. Alongside, we serve tea & coffee and homemade cakes. Pop in for a cuppa or you can always take a slice of cake away!!

**Village Coffee Morning, known as Books & Bickies, on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April.** Join us for coffee & biscuits on the first Saturday of each month – a great time to meet and make new friends in the village. Browse the selection of pre-loved books (mainly paperbacks) that have been donated, including many Children's books. 50p a book/20p for Children's titles.

For this month only, we'll be open from 10am until 11.30am (see below) – usual time is 10.30 to 12.30.

### **Important Update: April's Books 'n' Bickies**

Please note that the **Books 'n' Bickies** in April will have a slight time change.

For **Saturday, 5th April only,**

**we will be starting earlier at 10:00 AM and finishing at 11:30 AM prompt.**

This timing **only applies to the April event**—we'll be back to our usual schedule in May!

**We look forward to seeing you for a lovely morning of books, bickies, and great company.**

**Thank you for your understanding!  Books 'n' Bickies Team**



## Film Nights at Poulton Village Hall

On first & third Tuesdays of every month

**Tuesday 1st & Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April**

Contact [poultononeandnines@gmail.com](mailto:poultononeandnines@gmail.com) to receive notification about each film.



**Did you know you can now book the Village Hall for you own event using our online system?**

**Check out the Village Hall booking system for all the details, costs and availability**

<https://hallbookingonline.com/poulton/>

# FAREWELL TO REVEREND CANON JOHN SWANTON

After nearly 14 years of service, Reverend Canon John Swanton will be leaving his role as our Vicar. John has given his time, energy, and care to the parish, supporting the community through weddings, funerals, christenings, pastoral visits, services, school events, and church administration. His dedication has been invaluable, and he will be greatly missed.

## John's final service will take place in Poulton on Easter Sunday, 20th April

If you would like to contribute to a leaving present for John, please donate to the PCC account using the details below:

Account Name: PCC | Sort Code: 60-05-41 | Account Number: 04479521  
Reference: John/Leaving

We will ensure that your name is in the card that accompanies his gift.

**Thank you for helping us show our appreciation  
for John's many years of service.**

Poulton Eye Newsletter	<a href="mailto:Poultoneye@gmail.com">Poultoneye@gmail.com</a> Editors: Rosie Arkwright, Lizzy Roughton
Poulton Village Website	<a href="http://www.poultonvillage.co.uk">www.poultonvillage.co.uk</a>
Poulton Facebook Page	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/959278000806216/?multi_permaLinks=4503302606403720">https://www.facebook.com/groups/959278000806216/?multi_permaLinks=4503302606403720</a>
Poulton WhatsApp Group	Please contact Rachel Hutchinson to be added to group; 07557 006623
St Michaels and All Angels Church, Poulton	Vicar: The Rev'd Canon John Swanton 01285 – 851309; <a href="mailto:ampneyrector@gmail.com">ampneyrector@gmail.com</a> Church Wardens: Lizzy Roughton - <a href="mailto:pryorlizzy@gmail.com">pryorlizzy@gmail.com</a> ; <a href="mailto:rosie.arkwright@icloud.com">rosie.arkwright@icloud.com</a>
Village Hall	Available to hire for parties, wedding breakfasts, clubs or meetings - <a href="mailto:poultonvillagehall@gmail.com">poultonvillagehall@gmail.com</a>
Playing Field & Allotment Charity (PFAC)	<a href="mailto:pfactrustees@gmail.com">pfactrustees@gmail.com</a>
Post Office	In the Village Hall. Tuesday 1.30 – 3.30
Parish Council	Chairman: Simon Collyer-Bristow <a href="mailto:scb@crfc.co.uk">scb@crfc.co.uk</a> Clerk: Heather Harris <a href="mailto:poultonclerk@gmail.com">poultonclerk@gmail.com</a>
District Councillor	Lisa Spivey: <a href="mailto:lisaspivey4@gmail.com">lisaspivey4@gmail.com</a>
MP - South Cotswolds Constituency	Dr Roz Savage MP: <a href="mailto:roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk">roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk</a>
Poulton Action Group (solar farm)	<a href="mailto:poultonactiongroup@gmail.com">poultonactiongroup@gmail.com</a> .
Refuse Collections	Food bin weekly Thursday 7am. All other bins & bags on alternate Thursdays.
Poulton Football Club	<a href="http://www.poultonfootballclub.co.uk">www.poultonfootballclub.co.uk</a>
Poulton Cricket Club	Club Secretary: Will Bathurst <a href="mailto:w.m.bathurst@gmail.com">w.m.bathurst@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk/">www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk/</a>
Poulton One and Nines	Films in the village hall every 1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Contact <a href="mailto:poultononeandnines@gmail.com">poultononeandnines@gmail.com</a>
Books Bikkies & Beverages	Village get-together 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month, 10.30 – 12.30 Poulton Village Hall Judith – 01285 851230
The Falcon Inn	<a href="http://www.falconinnpoulton.co.uk">www.falconinnpoulton.co.uk</a> email: <a href="mailto:bookings@falconinnpoulton.co.uk">bookings@falconinnpoulton.co.uk</a> 01285 850878

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