



THE POULTON EYE



COMMUNITY - NEWS - INFORMATION



Welcome to the May 2025 edition of the Poulton Eye

It's clear from the contents of this month's Poulton Eye that it's all go for spring. The promise of new growth of the bulbs in bloom, blossoms on trees that will become fruits over the summer, getting out the lawn mower for the first mow of the season - all herald spring, with the promise of more to come over the summer.

The cricket season is starting, the Englands meadow has been mown, the birds are back, singing and nesting, and evenings are lighter for longer. All combines to make you feel lighter, fresher and keener.

There has been lots of scientific research looking at how nature can be used to help people to feel better, and get better. Studies have shown that plants give off antibacterial chemicals which benefit human immune systems. Others link listening to the sound of nature with wellbeing, since birdsong/the sound of nature is proven to switch the human nervous system out of "fight and flight" anxiety to a "rest and digest" state. Blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol (stress hormone) levels are proven to go down when we are outside.

The message is: switch off those headphones, soak up your surroundings and enjoy the beauty of the nature all around us.

Please feel free to contact us with comments or contributions. Our deadline for contributions for the June edition is 15th of May.

Rosie and Lizzy
poultoneye@gmail.com

In this month's Edition:

Poulton Pedlars take to the Road

Cricket season starts

Garden Plans for Spring

Spring Birdsong

Church contacts list & service arrangements

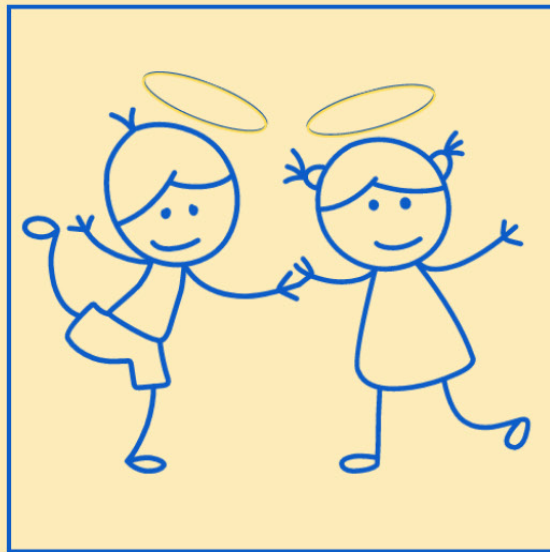
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MESSAGE FROM THE POULTON PCC & CHURCH DATES FOR MAY

The PCC (Parochial Church Council) is the team who support the vicar to manage the church building, the graveyard, church services and maintain records, finances and admin required by the Church of England. When there is a gap between the departure of one vicar and the recruitment and arrival of another, the churchwardens and the PCC also take on responsibility for keeping the church going through the 'interregnum'.

John Swanton will be much missed and, of course, the PCC are not ordained clergy, but as a team we are committed to ensuring that it is "business as usual", and we will maintain our usual 10am communion service on the 4th Sunday of each month here in Poulton. The team are:

Rosie Arkwright rosie.arkwright@icloud.com	Churchwarden	Baptisms and Weddings
Lizzy Roughton pryorlizzy@gmail.com	Churchwarden	Regular Services & Funerals
Kathy Folkestad kafolkestad@gmail.com	Treasurer	Care and support
Caroline Maxwell caroline@doctors.org.uk	Safeguarding Officer	Communications
James Marks jamesmarks27@gmail.com	PCC member	Graveyard and grounds
Jean Nunn	PCC member	
Simon Collyer-Bristow	PCC member	
Nicky Steel	PCC member	

We are extremely lucky that the Reverend Canon Tony Ross, who lives in Ampney Crucis, has committed to lead Poulton's regular 10am Communion service on the 4th Sunday of each month. We are very grateful to Tony, who is going above and beyond in supporting our church and community. We, in turn, will support him during the services so that the arrangement is sustainable.

So, in terms of services, we will be having a monthly Communion as usual. The services will be a little different, led by Tony, supported by PCC members and Lay (non-ordained) Worship Leaders.

Several PCC members are undergoing training before gaining permission to lead non-communion services (services of the word and all-age worship). This means that we will have the option of offering Sunday services where otherwise there may not be one.

For special services, Rosie Arkwright will be the contact for Baptisms and Weddings and Lizzy Roughton/James Marks for Funerals and Burials. Please also contact Rosie or Lizzy if you would like to arrange for prayers to be said for a family member, or for other matters. Kathy Folkestad is known to, and supports, so many of us, and is also a point of contact. Caroline Maxwell is the Safeguarding Officer and James Marks looks after the graveyard and grounds.

Please feel free to contact the team.

Alongside these activities, we will be running our third childrens summer holiday club and joining the other villages in the Ampney churches group to recruit a replacement for John. This may take some time, but rest assured that we will be working hard to find a new vicar for Poulton and the group.

Lizzy Roughton

St Michael and All Angels Poulton
Holy Communion Service
10am Sunday May 25th

Come and Join us for the Service and for Coffee and Biscuits afterwards

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GROUP CHURCH SERVICES FOR MAY

Sunday 4th May <i>3rd Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am 6pm	Parish Communion Word & Worship Evensong	Down Ampney Harnhill Ampney St Mary
Sunday 11th May <i>4th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Driffield Harnhill
Sunday 18th May <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Ampney Crucis Harnhill
Sunday 25th May <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>	10am 10am	Parish Communion Word & Worship	Poulton Harnhill

John Swanton's last service saw a record congregation gathering in St Michael and All Angels on Easter Sunday.



As John himself said, "If I had known that this was how to fill a church with so many people, I'd have done this a long time ago!".



Passport & Travel Updates: What You Need to Know

Last year, we shared details about the upcoming **European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)** - an online application process for travel to the EU, *similar to the ESTA required for entry into the USA*. At the time, ETIAS was expected to launch imminently. However, as often happens with new systems, its introduction has been delayed several times due to setbacks in the rollout of the **Entry/Exit System (EES)**- a digital system set to replace passport stamping.

When Will ETIAS Start?

The latest update from the European Commission confirms that EES is now scheduled to go live in October 2025. Only once this system is running smoothly will ETIAS be introduced, with a revised launch date now expected in late 2026.

For now, there are no additional requirements for UK travellers heading to the EU—but it's always wise to stay informed of any changes.

Passport Validity: Don't Get Caught Out!



Always check your passport is valid for entry to your chosen destination as well as any required documentation/visas, and check in plenty of time

One issue continuing to cause some confusion is passport validity for those heading to **the Schengen area**. The rules have been in place for four years, yet we hear some people are still getting caught out.

Ensure your passport meets the following Schengen entry requirements:

- ✓ **Issue Date:** Your passport must have been issued less than 10 years before the date you arrive. If you renewed your passport before 1 October 2018, it may have an issue date older than 10 years
- ✓ **Expiry Date:** Your passport must be valid for at least 3 months beyond the date you plan to leave the Schengen area
- ✓ **If in doubt check with your travel provider** to confirm your passport and travel documents meet all requirements

⚠ **Important:** You will be denied entry if your passport does not meet the rules of entry

There are several online tools where you can check your passport's validity for travel

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ONE YEAR ON FROM THE VICAR'S RETIREMENT – AS IMAGINED BY PAM VAREY

Report of a meeting of the Parochial Church Councils of Poulton, Ampney Crucis, Ampney St Peter, Ampney St Mary, Down Ampney, Harnhill and Driffeld held at Down Ampney village hall on 11th April 2026

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the state of the benefice since the retirement of Rev Canon John Swanton a year earlier.

Members Present: Churchwardens and PCC members of the above named parishes and twenty-eight members of the public who, through a mix up in the bookings, thought it was bingo night. The meeting was chaired by Col Snodgrass who had recently moved to the area and thought he was volunteering to make the tea.

Concern was expressed that a permanent replacement for John had not been found and the succession of supply vicars had without exception proved unsatisfactory.

Rev Nicholas Browne-Windsor (Just call me Nick the Vic) had literally roared onto the scene by crashing through the church doors on his Harley Davidson. His greeting of 'Yo,dudes' was considered a far cry from 'Dear Beloved Brethren' and his subsequent services bore witness to his individual interpretation of the Book of Common Prayer. His rap version of the Ten Commandments was not well received.

‘ Hey, Bro., come listen to me
Do not commit adultery
Adultery, you know it's a sin.
If you wanna go to Heaven, you won't get in'.

And his insistence that the choir dressed in skimpy costumes, fishnet tights and high heeled stiletto heeled shoes and singing Happy Days are Here Again was no substitute for Awake my soul, and With the Sun, though it was agreed that Tom and Adrian looked surprisingly attractive in their unaccustomed attire. Afterwards they were both propositioned by a short-sighted resident of Driffeld.

Residents of Down Ampney were bemused one morning by the sound of a mullah calling the faithful to prayer from the tower of the church. It transpired that Rev Fothergill, late of HM Prison Pentonville (his claims that he was the prison chaplain were denied by the governor), had let the church to the Swindon Muslims for a substantial fee which had not found its way into the church coffers. Their mosque had been let out to the Jehovah's Witnesses who in turn had let their Kingdom Hall to the Quakers who had lent their Friends Meeting House for the annual conference of the south west region Flat Earth Society.

Ex- Regimental Sergeant Major Shotover had turned to vicaring, as he called it, after his military career was cut short following that unfortunate misunderstanding involving the regimental goat. The congregation did not appreciate being addressed as 'You 'orrible lot' or being made to stand to attention throughout his sermons and when Miss Blenkinsop of Ampney St Peter began to wobble, he made her do twenty press ups.

Worshippers at Ampney Crucis were bemused to find the silver patten and chalice replaced by a paper plate and plastic beer glass and the brass candlesticks replaced by tea lights in jam jars. When the items appeared on e-bay suspicion was directed to Fingers Malone, who had told the judge he was a reformed character and to prove it he had become a vicar. The missing items were bought back from e-Bay by Brigadier Fortescue of Ampney St Peter who was praised for his public spiritedness. He came across the items whilst looking for a copy of 'Embalming for Pleasure and Profit'.

As each PCC treasurer reported that there was nothing in the bank accounts, suspicions were turned to Rev Lenny the Dip, reformed burglar and pickpocket, who had put all the money on Saucy Sue in the 2.30 at Aintree. The jockey took a wrong turn at Beecher's Brook and was last seen galloping at full speed towards Liverpool city centre. Who'd have thought it? mused the Misses Oglethorpe of Harnhill. Such a friendly young man. Always shaking hands with everyone as we left after the service. Many had found that after said shaking of hands they found themselves devoid of watches, rings and wallets.

After further animated discussion when strong opinions and blows were exchanged and cries of 'Oi, when's the bingo starting?', it was observed that the chairman had quietly left the room, only to re-appear to ask how many took sugar, and disappeared again to put the kettle on. It was suggested that John should be asked to come back. But as he had been seen dancing along the aisle at Tescos pushing a trolley full of bottles of champagne and on another occasion racing through Market Square on a skateboard, on both occasion calling out ' I'm free! I'm Free!', this was thought unlikely.

It was fervently hoped that a permanent replacement would be found soon and it was agreed unanimously that if he or she was half as conscientious, kind, well- organised and dedicated as John then we would all be fortunate indeed.

Pam Varey

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DOWN ON THE FARM

This month we talk to our local farmer, Charles Horton of Poulton Fields Farm, about weather, weeds, calves, and complicated politics in the world of food and farming.

“It’s too dry,” Charles says. “Too dry, but it has let us catch up on all the landwork.” Seeds are in the ground, but now they’re waiting for rain. Some, more delicate seeds, need a drink just to get going. There’s also no point using fertiliser without moisture—it simply evaporates as nitrogen dioxide. “You have to work with the forecast,” he says. “But if the seeds don’t grow soon, they’ll start to go off. They need to get going.”

the local oilseed rape is just beginning to flower, but even that’s looking stressed. “It’s flowering early because of stress—it’s a survival mechanism. It’s the plant’s way of saying: it’s never going to rain, so we’d better get on with making seed. Trouble is, early flowering usually means fewer flowers, and that means reduced yield.”

Still, the dry spell has its upsides. Charles has made good use of the hoe to clear weeds. “If it rains two hours after hoeing, the weeds go back in. But in this weather, they just dry out.” He’s also contending with chilly mornings—three weeks of frost overnight, in fact. “Warm days, but frosts every night—that slows grass growth. The ground’s dry enough for the cattle, but there’s not enough grass yet. You have to keep looking. At some point, it’s better to let them out than keep them in.”

Calving is well underway. “Ten or twelve so far. All healthy. But every single heifer has had a bull calf so far.” He’d prefer a 50/50 split. “More females means more breeding stock. You get a premium for them.”

Charles doesn’t use sexed semen. That’s more common in dairy farming, where farmers want female calves and no bulls. “To use Artificial Insemination properly, you’ve got to bring the cows in, synchronise their cycles, then inseminate—it’s a lot of faff for our system. In dairy, it makes sense. But for us, if you want to calve now, that means getting cows pregnant in July—when they should be chilling out with their calves, not coming into the sheds.”

So what’s the system at Poulton Fields? “We buy the best bull we can afford, chuck it in the field, and hope for the best,” Charles says. “There’s not as much sexed semen in our world as in the dairy world. With beef, if you’ve only got a few cows, AI might make sense—because it saves keeping a bull. But with 40 cows or more, a good bull is better value.”

That pragmatic approach extends to politics, too. Charles’s son, Ed Horton, is currently working as a consultant for Minette Batters, former NFU president, now Baroness Batters working with Government to help farmers. She was brilliant as President, says Charles, but ironically her biggest obstacle now is the NFU itself! Charles feels the new leadership lacks the calibre of the previous team to the detriment of farmers around the UK.

Charles is also concerned about looming trade deals, particularly with the US. “Chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef—those are real worries. If that’s part of the deal, we won’t even know where the food’s come from. It’ll go into fast food chains and restaurants—places that don’t label it, so the end consumer will have no idea of the provenance.” He points out that the food budget for prisons is just £2.70 per day. “They’re not buying premium local meat.”

Even now, with beef and lamb prices high and farmers finally making money, Charles sees danger ahead. “If unregulated imports are allowed in, it will be a disaster. It’s even worse for arable. Grains and oilseeds are harder to trace. Our crushing mills import palm oil, corn oil, soya oil—all from places with environmental costs. We just grow rapeseed. But if the price rises are too high, buyers switch to imports. They say they don’t want to—but economically, they do.”

UK farmers are held to strict standards—like Red Tractor certification—but once grain goes into a flour mill, it’s mixed with cheap imports which don’t have to meet the same standards. “There are only about five flour mills left in the UK. Why jump through hoops when the system doesn’t back you?”

Charles thinks one of the reasons we are in this position is because of the lack of farmer cooperation. “In France, they sell through co-operatives. Here, we don’t. And when someone sets up a farmer-owned business, it gets bought out. We’ve lost our power.” He points to Asda—originally a farmer-led group: Associated Dairies. “We had the Milk Marketing Board, but Margaret Thatcher scrapped it—calling it a monopoly. It’s been a mess ever since.”

So what’s the future? Charles still hopes for a model more like France’s. “Farmers there have power. Here, we’ve sold out. We need to work together.”

Down on the farm, the calves keep coming, the weather keeps changing, and Charles keeps doing what he’s always done: looking ahead, hoping for rain—and a little common sense in Westminster.

Rosie Arkwright in conversation with Charles Horton



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Looking for something to do on a Bank Holiday? Join like-minded softie cyclists in a tour of the Poulton area, starting from the Falcon Inn around 10.30 am.

Using mainly quiet local country roads, this follows a broadly circular route around the village of about 20 miles in total, which can be abbreviated in many places for a shorter direct return to Poulton.

There are frequent stops at village pubs on route, where one may partake of refreshment and chit-chat with fellow riders. Free maps are available for beginners, but most participants form small groups and potter round together at their own pace, which should be leisurely.

Please note this social ride is undertaken entirely at your own risk and responsibility, and you are free to join or leave the group at any point.

For further information, call Phil Heneghan on 01285 851397, or just turn up on the day.

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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

POULTON CRICKET CLUB – THE NEW SEASON STARTS!

Cricket season starts this May

Thanks to all local villagers who have joined us as social members - we hope you've now received your digital membership cards? Do get in touch if you have any queries... We've also had a recent flurry in new member requests from local children so our coaching team are gearing up to welcome you into the youth squads very soon!!

We would like to give a big shout out to our fabulous local families who have joined our 'Heroes' WhatsApp group to help out around the ground when needed, this is already a huge help!

We also want to say a BIG thank you to PFAC for supporting the purchase of new equipment for local children to use at training and also to Tanners solicitors who have kindly sponsored youth club-wear again this season. This will provide match shirts or training tops to returning local members in our younger age groups - very much appreciated.

We are delighted to build these connections and integrate into the wider community as a priority for us in 2025.



Further to your feedback about use of the car park area, we will do our very best to be flexible during the season but a reminder that this area of Englands is managed by PFAC so any requests or queries need to go via that route rather than directly to Poulton CC. You may have spotted recent activity at Englands as we get things ready for the season and seen that 'Moween' the robot mower is out and about. Please remember that dogs and children can look but not touch please and we'd really appreciate the support of dog owners to clear up after their hounds and keep dogs on leads around the square now that cricket is on the horizon.

Our popular indoor warm up sessions and women's softball winter league have finished (see above photograph following our recent victory against Tetbury CC) ...which means our outdoor season starts 'proper' in early May.

Join us on Friday 2 May for the youth season opener at Englands/Poulton Cricket Club. Peach & Pudding will be on site serving up tasty meals (weekly menu to follow via village WhatsApp group) and you can catch the youth and women's softball teams in training. Our bar will be open for local social members and families. Food, drinks, and a good atmosphere—what more do you need?

League games start this first May bank holiday weekend too with seniors on Saturday and youth on Sunday both with home fixtures. Knead on Wheels will be trialling a stop between 9:45 and 10:45 on Sunday morning, we'd love this to be a weekly visit but this demands a regular customer base so if you'd like this to continue throughout the summer it's important to come down, cheer on the team, and grab a coffee and something sweet on 4th May!!

Keep an eye on the Poulton Cricket Club website (www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk) for all fixtures, match updates and news about our upcoming charity fundraising events, fear not, we'll give you a nudge on the socials too - see you all soon down at Englands!

www.poultoncricketclub.co.uk

Lucy Ireland , Poulton Youth Manager

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
Will Bathurst – Treasurer (Membership) PoultonTreasurer@gmail.com
Lucy Ireland – Vice Chair & Lead for Youth & Women's cricket PoultonYouthManager@gmail.com
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PFAC (Playing Field and Allotment Charity)

Have you been down to the meadow just beyond the cricket pitch recently?

No? Well, Spring is upon us and the hedgerows are full of life down in England's Meadow, made even more beautiful by the Blackthorn blossom in full bloom.

There are rabbits aplenty and dogs are welcome, free to run off the lead on the meadow... but please remember to walk your dog on a lead on the playing field area, and to pick up dog poop (and place in the bin by Englands main gate), especially now that the the Cricket season is set to start.



We will be flailing the meadow grass a few times this year and cutting footpaths through the meadow to help walkers further enjoy the landscape. It's a nature lesson for children, right here on your doorstep. So do come and enjoy this beautiful area and enjoy this Springtime weather.

Englands playing field, allotments and meadow trustees can be contacted by email at pfac trustees@gmail.com

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POULTON PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT



Poulton Manor was believed to have been built in 1680, although there was a building on the site before the current house was erected.

Little is known about who had it built: Poulton itself was a part of Wiltshire until 1844 and records about the village generally and the house are hard to find.

It has been very little altered since it was built (although modernised for life today, of course), and its Grade I listing ensures that original features, such as panelling and wig cupboards, will be preserved.

It is thought that it might have been designed by John Paget or Peter Mills, who were appointed as surveyors to London after the Great Fire of 1666. In the 1930s, the house was bought by the Cartwrights, who rescued it from a state of disrepair before selling it some years later. That another family of Cartwrights live there now is a complete coincidence!

Inside the layout is simple. The impressive staircase, which is to the rear of the house, is the original one. On the stairs and in the stone flagged hall, you can see where centuries of footsteps have worn away the surface. Each floor has two large rooms at the front and two at the back, which means that nearly all the rooms are dual aspect and the house is flooded with light.

We feel very lucky to live in such a beautiful house, and particularly because Poulton itself is so friendly and such a good place to live.

Robin and Vicky Cartwright



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Spring Has Sprung: How We Can Help Nature Thrive

Spring has finally arrived - the days are longer, the air is warmer, and the trees are bursting into life. Near my home, the woods are full of the scent of wild garlic, and I don't recall ever seeing such a magnificent carpet of primroses – nature is limitless in its capacity to surprise and delight.

Speaking of surprises, I got back from Westminster last week to find my fireplace full of twigs, moss, and other nesting materials. While I'm grateful to the local jackdaws for providing me with kindling free of charge, I can't help wondering how they haven't yet noticed that their nest-building efforts keep disappearing down my chimney.

While we're enjoying the lighter evenings and the fresh energy this season brings, it's also a crucial time to think about how we can support the wildlife around us – even the jackdaws.



I recently heard that one of the best things we can do for nature right now is to let a small part of our garden grow wild. It might sound simple - just leave a corner of your outdoor space untouched - but the benefits can be huge. By allowing plants to grow naturally, we create a haven for butterflies, bees, and other pollinators that are essential for a thriving ecosystem. If you don't have a garden, you can still help - leaving wildflowers to flourish in window boxes or joining local rewilding projects can make a real difference too.

Giving nature the space and freedom to restore itself is something I'm passionate about. It's not just about big conservation projects; it's about the small actions we can take in our daily lives.

Beyond our individual efforts, there's also an opportunity to look at how we manage green spaces in our towns and villages. I've been fortunate to meet local farmers, landowners, and community groups who are already doing fantastic work in restoring habitats and protecting biodiversity, like the Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Wildlife Trusts, Cotswold Lakes Trust, Poulton Fields Farm, Kemble Community Garden, Fruitful Malmesbury, and the rewilding project at Elmore Court. With the right support, we can create more spaces where nature and people can thrive together.

Rewilding and protecting our natural spaces go hand in hand with tackling the climate and nature crisis. That's why I chose the Climate & Nature Bill for my Private Members Bill earlier this year. I believe in ensuring our natural world isn't just protected but actively regenerated. Although the Bill didn't progress, I am working to support our flora and fauna here in the South Cotswolds, and I'll be sharing updates on progress.

While national policies play a role, I firmly believe that real change happens when communities come together. Whether it's rewilding a corner of your garden, getting involved in local conservation projects, or sharing ideas on how we can better care for our environment, every action adds up.

Spring is a time of renewal and growth, and it's a reminder that when given the chance, nature has an incredible ability to bounce back. Let's do what we can to help it flourish - not just for ourselves, but for future generations.

Dr Roz Savage, MP for South Cotswolds
roz.savage.mp@parliament.uk



POULTON DEFIBRILLATOR DETAILS

THE YELLOW DEFIBRILLATOR BOX IS LOCATED ON THE OUTSIDE WALL OF THE VILLAGE HALL, ON THE PUB SIDE

THE CODE IS **C159X**

or PHONE 999 AND THEY WILL GIVE YOU THE CODE

COTSWOLD FARM GARDENS OPEN WEEKEND

**31st May & 1st June
2pm - 5pm**

In aid of The National Gardens Scheme

**Entrance £7.50 - Children Free
Plant Stall
Tea, Coffee, Cakes**

**DUNTISBORNE ABBOTS GL7 7JS
01285 821837
www.cotswoldfarmgardens.org.uk**



MAY IN THE GARDEN

“Everything expands in May - light, day length, warmth and above all the sensation of being truly, richly alive. Spring grows up to become summer. The birds all come home - swallow, swift, martin, cuckoo and flycatcher. But above all the world becomes that intense, luminous green that is suggested increasingly throughout April and lost to a steadier, heavier maturity by mid-June. But in May, everything shines from within.” *Monty Don, writing in The Guardian.*

Monty's lyrical prose pepped me up while writing about the merry, merry month of May. Outside an icy breeze was buffeting the tulips and scattering cherry blossom petals like confetti. You've probably noticed the trees are flowering spectacularly around Poulton this year, promising a cornucopia of apples, pears, plums and cherries. A late frost could literally nip them in the bud, and hamper fruiting for a whole year, although the trees themselves are tough and will bounce back.

But kinder weather definitely lies ahead, so it is time to harden off plants raised under cover or bought from the garden centre to enable them to flourish all summer.

Soft baby plants need toughening up before going out in the big wide world or they risk suffering transplant shock. After the warm, still humidity of the nursery, a sudden change in conditions - temperature variations, hours of daylight, a boisterous drying wind and bright sun - can check growth.

Hardening off allows them to acclimatise. In a perfect world you would move plants raised on a windowsill or a heated greenhouse to a cold frame or a shady spot in an unheated greenhouse, protecting them with fleece overnight and gradually increasing ventilation with the passing days.

Alternatively, put them on a tray and tuck them under a double thickness of fleece, setting them outside in a sheltered position away from wind and strong sunlight and bringing the tray back in for the first few nights. Gradually increase exposure over the next 10-20 days until you can let them camp outside under the stars.

Half hardy annuals like cosmos and sweet peas can normally be planted out from early May, but it is wise to protect more tender plants until all chance of frost has passed. Ideally night-time temperatures should be over 12°C before tender plants are planted out.

I'm late hardening off this year, hanging back because of April's chilly nights, and so some of my plants outgrew their little containers. I've moved them on into biodegradable fibre pots that can go straight into the ground, avoiding disturbing the roots twice. DIY pots made from cardboard loo rolls or newspaper would also do the job, as admirably demonstrated at last month's meeting of Poulton's new Gardening Club.

If a sudden cold snap is forecast, as sometimes happens in May, a blanket of thick garden fleece or an old net curtain will keep the ground temperature underneath about 2C higher. It may not be practical to protect big fruit trees, but if frost is threatened, fruit grown against walls and fences or bush-grown should be covered with fleece to protect blossom and baby fruitlets until at least two weeks after flowering.



To do in May

- Sow hardy annuals direct where they are to flower.
- Plant out tender perennials - eg pelargoniums, argyranthemums, verbenas - once there is no risk of frost. Ditto dahlias & chrysanthemums
- Give herbaceous perennials the Chelsea Chop for longer summer flowering. Leave 1/3 unchopped, cut another third back by 1/3 and cut the final third back by 2/3.
- Cut back perennial herbs such as chives and marjoram to the ground to encourage new tender growth.
- Cut away untidy allium leaves - it doesn't affect the bulb.
- Tie in sweet peas and nip off tendrils for stronger and straighter stems.
- Divide & move grasses, primroses and aquatics
- Cut back matted specimens of early flowering clematis as soon as they finish flowering, before new growth which will carry next year's buds.
- Sow biennials - foxgloves, honesty, wallflowers.
- Protect soft fruit eg strawberries and raspberries with netting against rabbits and deer but make sure pollinating insects can reach the flowers.
- Keep your eyes peeled for pests and diseases like lily beetle, sawfly larvae and powdery mildew.



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 or on the mobile, 07894 528 580.

All the best!

NATURE NOTES

The Tuneful Trio

Poulton is blessed with wonderful bird song, never better than in the spring. Three tiny birds, the **Chiffchaff**, the **Blackcap** and the **Robin** are right now providing a beautiful dawn chorus in Ashbrook Lane.

The Robin is easily recognised by all because of both its bright red breast, but also because the male is not at all shy around humans. He sings from the same prominent spot all year round, defending his territory. The song is loud and tuneful, starting with high notes of long duration followed by descending pitch of increasing speed. Unlike the thrush it does not repeat itself during the song which is of short duration.



The other two birds are quite shy and really difficult to see as they dodge about in the bushes and trees picking insects off the leaves. The Blackcap rarely exposes itself on a prominent branch like the Robin does though occasionally the Chiffchaff will. One big advantage of early spring is the lack of leaves, making it possible to see what are otherwise very hard to spot LBGs (little brown jobs).

In early March I was delighted to hear and see a group of Blackcaps in the hedgerow of Ashbrook Lane. (See image above). They were calling to each other, keeping in contact with the group. Their song starts off rather scratchy but then develops into a sweet warble, said to resemble the melodious notes of a speeded up blackbird. They have been called the "northern nightingale" on account of the quality of their song, which they repeat numerous times.

This group have disappeared and most likely were a migrating party from colder climes, who were overwintering in Gloucestershire. However, the good news is that right now there is a Blackcap singing at my bedroom window, waking me in the early morning with a beautiful tune. There was one there last summer so this might be a descendant or even the same one. The migrants are mostly from Spain, Portugal or North Africa where most of our summer Blackcaps overwinter. However, seeing them in summer is hard as they are tiny. The male has brownish grey wings with a black cap and grey underparts, hence well disguised if one is looking up amongst the trees. The female by contrast has a reddish brown cap and buff underparts.

The final bird of the tuneful trio is the Chiffchaff. It is one of the smallest of our birds, weighing around 8 grammes (approximately the weight of 2 teaspoons of sugar). It has greenish-brown wings and head with a short pale eye stripe, off-white underparts and dark legs (see left from RSPB).



It is very similar to a willow warbler, another summer visitor, but can be easily distinguished by its song which is the onomatopoeic "chiif-chaff" sound repeated several times. Another distinguishing feature, if you can see them, is they constantly twitch their tail feathers to maintain their balance as they take insects and eggs from the underside of leaves. The tail twitching also can help them keep together when in a feeding party.

The Chiffchaff is an insectivore so must leave the UK when winter approaches, usually migrating to the Mediterranean and Middle East - but , like the Blackcap, is now tending to stay later and arrive earlier and may even over winter in southern parts of England, especially in warmer town environments where they can still find insects and spiders to eat.

Certainly this year we have had Chiffchaffs since early March. They like hedges and open woodlands, nesting low down near the ground hidden in brambles or dense hedging. The male usually arrives first and finds a territory which he defends waiting until the females arrive to choose a mate. Soon after, the females build the nest which is dome shaped with a side entrance made of dried grass and twigs and lined with feathers plucked from the female's breast. She lays 4-5 eggs which she alone incubates for about 2 weeks until they hatch. She then feeds the young until they fledge which usually takes another 2 weeks. If conditions are favourable they may raise 2 broods. They have a short life span of only around 2 years while the Robin and Blackcap live slightly longer with a life span that ranges from 2-5 years.

The Blackcap's nesting habits are very similar to the Chiffchaff except both sexes share the incubation and the feeding of the young with various insects, caterpillars and spiders. One of the reasons Blackcaps can overwinter in the UK is that come the autumn they can survive eating berries and seeds. They can also eat sunflower hearts from birdfeeders. Apparently they are particularly fond of mistletoe berries so they should be happy in Gloucestershire, as it is the epicentre for mistletoe in the UK. Another bit of good news is that climate change does not seem to be adversely affecting these three beauties, whose numbers are stable and the Chiffchaff and Blackcap are tending to increase their range.

Robin Spiller



Poulton Hill
VINEYARD

SUMMER EVENTS

**Launching
Friday
30th May
5pm - 9pm**

**Every Friday
Evening Until Mid
September**



Our Summer Open Vineyard Events Are Back! Every Friday Evening 5-9pm May - September

Come and enjoy Poulton Hill wine and bubbles by the glass or bottle and treat yourself to some tasty bites from our local caterers. The evening will commence at 5pm until 9pm rain or shine! Children and well behaved dogs on leads are welcome. Please bring your family, friends and neighbours.

Free entry. No need to book. Plenty of free parking.



Guest Caterers Every Week!

Cotswold Cookery School will be creating an amazing Paella feast at our 2025 launch event on 30th May. All details and a list of caterers can be found on our website including a special Saturday opening for English Wine Week on the 21st June.

Poulton Hill Estate, Poulton, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5JA

01285 850 257

info@poultonhillestate.co.uk

WHAT3Words: kilowatt.dozen.press

FROM THE CELLAR DOOR

Poulton Hill Estate's Natalie Barker welcomes you to the Friday night Summer openings starting on May 30th

May is the time when we look out into the vineyard and start to see the buds unfurl and the spread of new leaves. The weather is warmer and summer is definitely on the way.

We still have to keep an eye out for late frosts at night, as this can have a devastating impact on the potential harvest later in the year. If the temperatures do drop to freezing, we have a number of paraffin candles, called bougies, that we can place between the rows of vines to warm the air. The term bougie comes from the French for wax candle, which was named after the Algerian city of Béjaïa, known as Bougie. It was this city that was the major exporter of quality beeswax to France, which was used for making candles.

This month also sees the start of our summer Friday Nights at the Bulari Bar, with the launch night on May 30th featuring the Cotswold Cookery School as our guest caterer. They will be serving up delicious plates of the Spanish seafood and rice dish Paella.

The Bulari Bar will be open at the vineyard in Poulton every Friday, from 5pm until 9pm, up until September 26th. We will be serving our award-winning wines by the glass and bottle, Cotswold Lakes Brew Co beers and also a range of soft drinks.

Each week a different guest caterer will be serving food. We are welcoming back many of the favourites from last year, as well as some exciting new food options.

Our special marquee will be going back up to offer shade from the sun or shelter from the rain (we know that the British summer can be unpredictable!). But there will be plenty of seating outside of the cover for those who wish to sit out.

There is no need to book, the Bulari Bar evenings are free to attend, and we have plenty of parking space. Children and dogs are welcome. Bring your friends and family and start your weekend off in style in the beautiful surroundings of our English vineyard.

This summer, we are also opening the Bulari Bar on a few Saturdays, so keep an eye on our newsletter and social media for announcements. Our first special Saturday will be held on Saturday June 21st during English Wine Week, when our guest caterer will be Cotswold Chippy.

All the details of the Bulari Bar openings and the guest caterers can be found on our website. Visit www.poultonhillestate.co.uk

See you at the Cellar Door

In the meantime, our Cellar Door at the vineyard is open Tuesday to Friday from 9am to 4pm and on Saturdays between 11am and 3pm, and we serve wine by the glass or bottle.

On a sunny day, why not pop in with your friends for a quick drink and a chat or have a glass of wine when you stock up for the two bank holidays in May. We have indoor and outdoor seating, both with a view across the vineyard and the beautiful Cotswold countryside beyond.

We also sell our wines at special Cellar Door prices, so you can take advantage of the savings while you are here.

Summer Tour and Tasting sessions start this month

Our summer Tour and Tasting events start at the end of this month on May 31st. The dates are up on the website and are available to book. Some dates last year sold out very quickly, so if you have a day in mind, make sure you get in quick.

Taking one of our wine tours gives you a rare opportunity to not only taste our unique wines and spirits, but also to enjoy the countryside in which the grapes were grown.

Join us for a relaxed tour around our vineyard, where we will take you through our history and the growing of grapes. Then head into our Cellar Door for a guided tasting where you will sample a selection of our wines and learn about our medal-winning spirits. The tasting will include one sparkling wine and three still wines.

Tours start at 11am and last about 1 ½ hours. Summer Tour and Tasting tickets cost £30.

Private tours and tastings are available please contact us at info@poultonhillestate for more details.

Natalie Barker

We look forward to seeing you in May at one, or more of the regular Village Hall occasions:

Film Nights on Tuesday 6th May and Tuesday 20th 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 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 4th May. 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.

VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

BOOKS, BICKIES & BEVERAGES – “BBB”

Saturday 4th May

10.30 to 12.30

All Welcome

pop in for a pot of coffee/tea, browse the books, meet friends & neighbours



Film Nights at Poulton Village Hall

On first & third Tuesdays of every month

Tuesday 6th May & Tuesday 20th May

Contact 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/>



MANY THANKS TO KEITH AND
ISABELLE MCDERMOTT FOR THEIR
CONTINUED FUNDING AND SUPPORT
FOR THE POULTON EYE.

THEY HAVE ONCE MORE ENSURED WE
CAN CREATE AND PRINT THE
MAGAZINE FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS.

WE ARE EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR
THEIR GENEROSITY.



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

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