

Gwennap Parish Newsletter

An Blu Lann-Wennap Derivadow

Autumn/Winter 2020

Delivered with compliments of the Gwennap Parish Council

Issue 51

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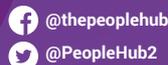
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This support is available as part of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Growth Programme thanks to funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

As this, the strangest of years enters the winter months, I would like to share a few thoughts with you and give you an update on what your Parish Council has been up to since our last newsletter.

The Coronavirus Pandemic has had an enormous impact on our lives, livelihoods and businesses. It has been a difficult time with isolation and social distancing becoming the new norm. However, with all these challenges have come some lovely moments. We have all been reminded how important kindness is and I have been heartened by the kindness of communities towards each other. The first lockdown emphasised to me what an amazing Parish we live in.

The community spirit was heart-warming, and the clap for carers brought our little communities together in a way I had not seen for a very long time. Our busy lives often mean that we rarely get to see each other as often as we would like to. The Thursday community clap and sing along for some, was a lovey way to meet in a socially distanced, but very special way. I personally got to meet some of my neighbours that I had not spoken to before. It has been a strange, but also a very special time in lots of ways.

The opening up of facilities following lockdown brought its challenges for us as a Parish Council. We were very keen to open up the playpark as soon as Government Guidance allowed, which after the sterling efforts of all the Councillors was well received by the community. Lockdown, and the lack of use of the Parish Rooms facilities provided us with a huge amount of work to do to move towards opening up safely. Risk assessments, surveys and maintenance work seemed never ending, but when we are in a position to open up the Parish Rooms, we will be doing so with all the outstanding jobs completed, and the facilities functioning as they should.

The Youth Group have been meeting outside during the summer months and into the Autumn, but sadly the second lockdown has meant that these activities have had to pause for a while.

We hope to resume these soon. Thank you to Cath and her team for providing such great activities for our children on a Friday evening.

We have a shiny new website which now meets accessibility requirements. A massive thank you to Mike Padmore for all his hard work in producing such a great new website for the Parish.

Our new Facebook page has also been created to give our social media presence a more modern feel.

Our Parish Newsletter forms an important part of how we all communicate and let each other know of events and general news. We are asking you all what you would like to see and have in our Parish Newsletter going forward, how often you would like to receive it and in what format.

Please do let us have your thoughts so that we can make sure that future newsletters give us all what we want from this community resource.

The Parish Council has continued to hold our regular monthly meetings. To enable us to protect those of us who were shielding and to meet the lockdown and social distancing requirements, we have held all our meetings virtually, via Zoom initially and more recently MS Teams. We will continue to hold our meeting in this way until further notice. The link to the meeting is posted on our Agenda so that members of the public can join us should they wish to. Our meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, starting with the open session at 7.00pm, where members of the public are welcome to speak.

I would like to say a massive thank you to my fellow Councillors for all their hard work and support this year during what has been a very unusual time for us all. They give their time freely and selflessly and are passionate about the whole Parish in which we live. Thank you too

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS...CONTINUED

to Fiona Barnard for stepping into the breach and supporting us through a difficult period without a Clerk, and during the handover to Kate Mitchell our new Clerk. Welcome Kate to the team.

We have a vacancy for a Parish Councillor. This work is unpaid but can be incredibly rewarding for a community minded individual who is keen to make a positive difference. If you would like to join the team, please e-mail Kate at Clerk@gwennap-parish.net with a brief introduction to yourself, saying why you would like to be a Gwennap Parish Councillor and what is that you bring to the role. The closing date for expressions of interest is 31st December 2020.

Our Armistice Day memorial service was very touching this year. A few joined us at the War



Memorial in Gwennap for a socially distanced mini ceremony of prayer, poem, wreath laying and two minutes silence.

As winter draws in, and we have the festive season to look forward to, I would like to end with heartfelt thanks to our NHS and key workers, and my prayers and kind wishes to all who have been affected by illness and loss during these difficult times.

Sue Patton
Chair of Gwennap Parish Council

Newsletter Survey

If you wish to take part in an online survey regarding future newsletters. Please follow this link... at: <https://bit.ly/35Ewmck>

Alternatively, if you prefer a paper version please contact our Parish Clerk. Thank you. Your feedback would be much appreciated.

Any Parishioners who would prefer to receive the newsletter electronically please contact our Clerk at clerk@gwennap-parish.net

ALLOTMENT PLEA



A growing number of residents of Gwennap parish are enquiring about allotments in our area.

There are very few positive side effects of the current pandemic but one encouraging move is the increased interest in growing our own food, becoming more self sufficient and supporting local food producers.

Eating local produce is an excellent way of reducing our carbon footprint and helping our local farmers, eating your home grown food is even better.

If there are any Gwennap landowners who would be willing to accommodate budding "Good Life" parishioners by providing an area of land, please contact the Parish Clerk Kate Mitchell on clerk@gwennap-parish.net or by telephone on [07470 211871](tel:07470211871).

No Dig is an attractive way of growing.

It provides a rich soil to grow in, and it's an excellent way to clear a weed-infested growing area. In principle, by avoiding digging you will not be disrupting the soil life. This is the important micro-organisms, fungi and worms, that help feed plant roots.

You will need a large quantity of organic matter. You can use home-made compost, leaf mould, well-rotted manure, green waste compost or even bagged peat-free compost.

Here's how:

To clear a growing area of weeds ie a new allotment, or to create a new bed You will need:

Plenty of organic matter. A sheet of light-excluding material, such as cardboard.

1. The aim is simple - to exclude the light so weeds can't grow. And to cover the soil with a rich organic mulch.
2. First slash down tall weed foliage to ground level. Put it on the compost heap.
3. Lay sheets of light-excluding material (cardboard etc) so the ground is completely covered. We don't recommend plastic unless it can be reused and won't degrade into the soil; nor is carpet a good idea. Modern carpets are treated with chemicals and dyes that can leach poisons onto the soil.
4. Now put a deep layer of organic mulch. Use homemade compost, fully-rotted manure, leaves, straw, grass mowings – or even a mix of them all, so long as it is more than 15 - 20 cms thick.
5. Tread it down firmly. Eventually it will rot down and create a wonderful, friable soil texture which is not only rich but allows weed roots, such as bindweed, to be pulled out easily.

ALLOTMENT PLEA...CONTINUED

6. If you use a horticultural membrane such as mypex, you can put the mulch under, not over, it.
7. Either way, make sure that no light can penetrate down into the soil.
8. In both instances, wait for 6 months at least for the weeds to die down and the soil organisms to do their work. Be patient! It can take up to a year to completely weaken the weeds, especially those with deep and extensive roots like bindweed, dock and bramble. The soil has become so rich and friable that you will be able to pull roots out easily.

For an area that is already cultivated:

1. Apply at least 15 cms or more of an organic, well decomposed mulch to your beds. You don't need to dig beforehand, as soil organisms such as worms will rise to the mulch, eat and digest it, creating a rich and well-textured soil.
2. Firm it down.
3. You can plant or sow direct into the surface compost, just as you would normally. You will find there are less weeds to hoe, they are easy to deal with in the soft surface. The soil beneath is firm but not compacted, as the undisturbed soil organisms develop a honeycomb of small air passages – perfect for plant root penetration.
4. To sow seeds, use a rake to prepare a soft, crumbly tilth on the surface.
5. Use a trowel to remove any weed regrowth through mulches. Annual weeds will die within 2 to 3 months but perennials take longer - often up to a year. Only bind weed and mares tail can survive but they become noticeably weaker. And as the soil becomes more friable and richer, it is easier to pull out the long root systems in bindweed, for instance.
6. Ongoing maintenance involves annual applications of just 5 cms or so of compost or manure. This should be applied ideally in the autumn, when crops are cleared, or in spring on beds where winter crops have been growing.

This is a gardening method that is much kinder on backs! The time to start your “no dig” patch is right now, so let's get busy.

Offers of any land for allotments in our parish will be very much appreciated. Thank you.

Garden Buddies Scheme

There is a “Garden Buddies” scheme throughout the UK who marry up gardeners to folk who need help or advice regarding their garden.

A garden can bring huge enjoyment and sense of purpose to your life but sometimes can get a bit too demanding with the advancing years.

It would be brilliant if Gwennap parishioners who need help could be matched up with willing volunteers.

If you fall into either category, either a struggling gardener or able bodied volunteer with some time to spare, please contact the Parish Clerk Kate Mitchell either by email... clerk@gwennap-Parish.net or by telephone [07470 211871](tel:07470211871).

PARISH CHURCH NEWS



We are very glad to resume Services at last though the format of the Services will be different for a while. Hand sanitisers will be available.

Services at st. Wennapa Church

1st Sunday 11.00 am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
2nd Sunday. All Age Worship
3rd Sunday. Holy Communion (Common Worship)
4th Sunday Matins (Service of morning prayer)
5th Sunday Holy Communion (Common Worship)

NB. Special Services and times

Sunday 13th December 11.00 am Christingle Service particularly enjoyable for children
Sunday 20th December 11.00 am Service of Nine lessons and Carols
Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve 11.30pm Holy Communion
Friday 25th December Christmas Day 10am Holy Communion

Harvest Celebrations

Social Distancing prevented us from holding our usual Supper and Auction of Produce. Therefore, we appealed for contributions of tinned or packaged offerings for the food bank. We also collected £334 which was donated to Cornish Hospice Care.

We thank all contributors for their generosity.

Gwennap Ladies Guild

We had hoped that we would be able to resume our monthly meetings in the Hall this month but the new restrictions prevent this. We will hope that the new year will bring better news for everyone.

PARISH CHURCH NEWS...CONTINUED

Plans are progressing for the regrouping of the churches in our area, so I wanted to give you an update, particularly if you are reading this as someone who may not be closely involved in the churches. The beauty and uniqueness of the Church of England is that our churches belong to everyone, not simply those who attend.

The churches in the south and east of our area, namely Feock, Devoran and Perranarworthal, are becoming one group called The Riverside Churches, and they will be served by a yet-to-be-appointed parish priest living in Carnon Downs. The other churches at Chacewater, St Day, Carharrack, Gwennap and Stithians will form the other group – the name for this group is not yet decided – and they will be served by a parish priest living at St Day, also yet to be appointed. If you have a good idea about what to call this group please get in touch!

One of the big changes we are preparing for is a move away from a reliance on retired clergy to help us run Sunday services. The pandemic has meant that a number of these faithful priests have decided it's no longer realistic to carry on serving the churches as they did before. This has given us a rather wonderful opportunity to arrange for many more services to be led by lay-leaders in our churches. We are already blessed with a good number of volunteer, trained local worship leaders and licensed local ministers (also known as Readers), but it's fair to say that in recent years some of these leaders have felt under-used, or even overlooked. That is about to be put right. We'll also be on the look-out for new people to be trained for these roles from within our churches.

Elsewhere in Truro Diocese some of these lay-led services end up being the most popular services in their churches, because those who take them have longer between services to plan them, and don't have to rush in and out of churches on a Sunday like clergy often do. So we pray God will bless this new opportunity to bring new insights and encouragement and growth to our churches, as well as new impetus for our churches to serve the communities they're in.

With my prayers and best wishes
Revd Caspar Bush (rural dean)

GWENNAP HORTICULTURE SOCIETY

“ We had a very interesting programme planned for 2020, which included talks and lectures during the winter and autumn months and some lovely garden visits during the spring and summer. Like all other social events all our meetings and visits have been postponed for the foreseeable future.

As soon as we are able I am sure we shall be up and running again. Our Annual General Meeting/Annual Dinner/Meetings/Talks are held at Gwennap Church Hall on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm unless we state otherwise in our programme. We have a competition, a show table where members may display anything horticulturally interesting or special. Members may bring plants to sell or exchange. We also welcome gardening books or magazines, plus any surplus produce and spare seeds.

If you would be interested in joining us when we re-form, please get in touch.

My telephone number is [01872 870320](tel:01872870320). Susan McCrossan Hon. Secretary "

CORNISH LITHIUM

Cornish Lithium finishes research drilling in Gwennap Parish

Cornish Lithium are an innovative lithium exploration company with its technical team based on the University Campus, Penryn. Lithium is a vital component of lithium-ion batteries, such as those that are used in electric vehicles and mobile phones, and demand for the metal is rapidly rising as society moves away from its reliance on fossil fuels.

We have successfully finished our research drilling programme at United Downs having completed two test boreholes. Drilling was to evaluate the possibility of extracting lithium from geothermal waters that naturally circulate in permeable geological structures beneath the ground in Cornwall. So far, we are highly encouraged by the results.

The two boreholes were completed to depths of 1,097 and 827 metres respectively, and fluid samples were taken from both boreholes to test for lithium and other elements. In addition, rock-core was taken for the entire length of the boreholes and digital downhole geophysical surveys were completed. Most of the work was completed by March 2020, but due to COVID-19 lockdown, there was a short pause until June when the final logs were completed, and the rig demobilised.

We continue to occupy our yard on the United Downs Industrial estate and will do for the foreseeable future. Now the drilling is completed, we are evaluating the results and planning the next stages of exploration which will initially include further testing of the fluids we have collected from this programme and more work with the rock-core.

In addition to this work, the UK Government has invested in a collaboration between Geothermal Engineering Limited (“GEL”) and Cornish Lithium through the Getting Building Fund. This investment is part of a £4M package to build a pioneering pilot lithium extraction plant at United Downs. The pilot plant will use Direct Lithium Extraction (DLE) technology to recover lithium from geothermal waters at GEL’s United Downs Deep Geothermal Project on the United Downs Industrial Estate. It will be the first step in testing the feasibility for “net-zero-carbon” lithium production in Cornwall.

For further information about **Cornish Lithium**, please visit www.cornishlithium.com, email info@cornishlithium.com or like Cornish Lithium’s page on Facebook



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CUSGARNE MANOR - UPDATE



I couldn't do this update without talking about Margaret Hocking who died recently. Margaret was born at the Manor and was brought up here. She even lived here after she got married until she moved to her new house at Pulla Cross, aged 29. We spoke regularly and she made me laugh and taught me a huge amount about the Manor. I always told her that every time I saw her I learnt something new.

She told me the names of the fields and the barns, what used to grow there and what animals the family kept.

She described the many jobs she had to do as a child – picking broccoli, churning butter, collecting eggs, feeding pigs, selling apples and honey. She told me about the three orchards around the house and the high wall round the eastern one which her father knocked down and used the stone for hedging. When I asked what the two granite posts were in the middle of the field below I learned that was where the boar was tethered when that field was an orchard. She even told me where Dolly the cart horse was buried!

It was always fascinating when Margaret showed me her mother's photo albums. A couple of the photos were of the greenhouse on the end of the barn by the front garden. It's now just a few sticks of rotten wood but I'll rebuild it eventually. She loved that greenhouse and spent hours in there as a child, and she was very proud of the peach tree in there which produced lots of fruit.

I learnt a lot about the house itself too. The room on the far right which is now a lounge was called the back kitchen where they washed in a tin bath in front of a range. She told me that the fireplace was so big that she could sit in the side of it but then her father bricked it up and put a safe in the wall instead. The deeds to house going back to the 16th century were all kept in that safe and she remembered spreading them out on the table with her mother, and that some of them were written in Old Cornish. Apparently her brother Bryn lodged the deeds with a solicitor; I tried to help her find them but sadly they are untraceable.

The room above the back kitchen was where the Christmas presents were hidden so the children were forbidden from going up there. It's now a bedroom. When she was a child her bedroom was the smallest one in the main house, directly above the front door. When she got married she was given the larger room at the end of the landing which, after she moved out, became the bathroom. All the time Margaret lived at the Manor there were no indoor facilities and everyone used the privy in the garden or a pot at night.

The room next to the back kitchen was the parlour. She was convinced there was a tunnel underneath it and was very disappointed when I told her it was just a couple of loose flagstones. There's a lovely big dresser in the parlour which I've had renovated and she told me that she remembers it being made for that room when she was a child by a local carpenter. It's in exactly the same spot now that it's always been.

It was obviously a musical household. There was an organ in the room to the right of the front door which I think her mother played and a piano in the room to the left. Margaret was a very good pianist and she told me she also played the mandolin. I heard her play recently but her arthritis made it difficult which she found very frustrating.

Margaret always used to say that when she dreamed it was always of the Manor. Her heart was always there and she loved to talk about it. It was a privilege to have known Margaret and I feel very lucky to have been able to spend time with her. A piece of Cusgarne Manor has gone. RIP Margaret.

GARDEN BIRD HEALTH

Feeding our garden birds is a great joy and vital for their survival in cold Winter months. Sadly sometimes they become sick and die due to contagious infections such as trichomonosis.



If you notice any birds that are ‘fluffed up’, lethargic and wiping their beaks frequently it probably shows that they are suffering some type of infection . Unfortunately once birds have the infection they are not treatable and pose a risk to healthy birds.

Finches are particularly susceptible to trichomonosis but it also affects pigeons, sparrows, dunnocks and birds of prey.

If you see any birds showing these symptoms please follow the advice from the RSPB...

Leave bird baths empty until no further sightings of sick or dead wild birds occur.

Temporarily stop feeding for a minimum of 2 to 4 weeks in order to encourage birds to disperse, thereby minimising the chances of new birds becoming infected at the feeding station.

Only re-introduce feeding when you are no longer seeing birds with signs of ill health:

Gradually reintroduce food to your bird tables and/or hanging feeders, whilst closely monitoring for further signs of ill health.

It may also be advisable to avoid encouraging finches to congregate in large numbers and share food and water sources in the period following an outbreak when food is gradually being reintroduced, particularly if this falls during the peak season of finch trichomonosis (June-September). This may be achieved by offering a variety of food types, and limiting the volume of foods that attract large numbers of finches (e.g. limit the volume of mixed seed, sunflower seed hearts provided).

If you see further birds with signs of ill health, once again stop feeding.

It is important that all your neighbours stop feeding the local birds to eradicate the infection as quickly as possible.



To avoid harm to our precious garden birds we should keep our feeding stations as clean as possible.

Clean and disinfect feeders/ feeding sites regularly. Suitable disinfectants that can be used include a weak solution of domestic bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and other specially-designed commercial products . Always rinse thoroughly and air-dry feeders before re-use. Brushes and cleaning equipment for bird feeders, tables and baths should not be used for other purposes and should not be brought into the house, but be kept and used outside and away from food preparation areas.

Wear rubber gloves when cleaning feeders and thoroughly wash hands and forearms afterwards with soap and water, especially before eating or drinking. Avoid handling sick or dead birds directly. For instance, use disposable gloves or pick the bird up through an inverted plastic bag.

The effort of keeping good hygiene is a small price to pay for the huge enjoyment of seeing healthy bright eyed birds in our gardens. There is nothing more rewarding than watching chicks being fed by their dotting parents come Spring time.

Bees

“Don’t panic Mr Mainwaring”

“Why not?” There is nothing like a good panic.

Whilst there is much in the news and media in general about this important genre I thought to add my penny’s worth if and when you come across bees in a swarm. It will soon be that time of year when bees are getting active. Yes spring. Let’s think about that now.



The honey bee is feral as they are insects and have been around an awful lot longer than us mortals. Putting them in hives has not domesticated them one little bit. They, a livestock, are entitled to vital care and protection most notably provided by the Bee Keeper. These gentlefolk house the colonies in homes better made than most houses. They are fed when hungry, cleaned, treated against horrid diseases, pests and in return, in the good years, a little of their surplus honey is fed to the starving bee keeper, his numerous offspring, grandchildren, the Cornish Arms and so forth. In return for this kindness and care the colony does a runner, swarms and this is where you come in.

Be alert in the spring, watch and listen through to the early summer. A swarmed colony can return to the wild but the concern is they will pick up disease which could wipe them out or spread this to other hives. Let me explain or you can skip to the last paragraph.

Inside the hive the colony is run by the girls not the boys. Cruel but true. Not even the queen. She might think she is in charge a bit like our Prime Minister but it’s the workers who are. It’s them who create the size of cell into which the queen lays her eggs; boys or girls. It’s the workers who tend the hive and fly out to forage. The boys or drones only duty is to fly out to gather in a mystical boys club somewhere where, once in a while, a virgin queen will come in and the fastest boys get to meet her but oh so briefly as they are dead before they hit the ground. Life is so cruel. She then returns possibly to the old hive but not always and starts off a new colony possibly never venturing out again for up to four years, the maximum she lives for.

Before then in the old hive there has been a change. The workers, for whatever reason, decided it was time to generate a new queen or two or three..... Possibly due to a lack of space, the old queen waning or has died. Her power over the hive is from pheromones she secretes. When that slackens the natives get restless. They start putting royal jelly to new eggs, extending that cell for the new queen as she is bigger than the rest. When ready the cell is sealed. Job done so half the colony promptly takes flight with the old queen amongst them. So this could be 25-30,000 bees leaving in a hurry. You have a swarm. Sounding ferocious but little pussy cats really. ALERT This is the point of the message. When you see or hear a swarm that is the time to do something other than panic. Just don’t ring me!

Plant nice things outside for the bees please this winter and spring.

Gregory Leach

WILDFLOWERS



The Parish Council are passionate about environmental issues. The sad decline in our mammal and insect population is a huge concern not just for the UK but globally. We rely so much on our food production from pollinating insects that this must be addressed by each and every one of us.

In the last 80 years an astonishing 97% of our wildflower habitat in the UK has disappeared from the countryside. This has left bumblebees and other insects with little to feed upon.

This is largely due to intensification of agriculture, increased use of pesticides, climate change and pest and disease in wild pollinators.

The good news is that gardens, verges, school playing fields, parks and churchyards can all become havens for insects. Indeed, any space, even the smallest garden or window box can help boost insect numbers.

If you have noticed unkempt areas in the Parish it will no doubt, be a deliberate insect friendly area. However, certain verges are kept in control for traffic safety reasons.

So, if you fancy doing your best for nature's regeneration by boosting our insect population.....you will find the following advice very concise and helpful.

Let's get our Parish buzzing !!!

ESTABLISHING WILDFLOWERS

Using Seeds...

Select the area: Wildflowers prefer a poor soil with low nutrients. Avoid ground which has been heavily fertilised in the past.

Clear the area: If the area has been overgrown with weeds it is important to reduce the number of weed seeds in the soil. It may be necessary to allow time for the first flush of weeds to germinate and then treat with an organic weed killer before sowing any seed.

Once the weeds have been removed, try not to disturb the soil as this may bring further seeds to the surface.

Prepare the soil: Create a seed bed by raking and breaking up any large clumps of soil ready for sowing your wildflowers.

Sowing times: Seed can be sown any time from mid-March until late October. The ideal time is autumn, but avoid periods of extreme heat during the summer months.

Sowing rates: Sow 80/20 mixtures at 5g/Sqm and 100% mixtures at 3g/Sqm.

WILDFLOWERS...CONTINUED

Sowing: To assist sowing it is advisable to mix the wildflower seed with a carrier (dry sand or compost). This will help in distributing the seed evenly over a large area. The seed is best distributed using a pedestrian or hand held spreader to provide an even distribution. After applying, the seed can be lightly rolled in to ensure good contact with the soil.

Establishment times: If sowing an 80/20 mix, grasses will appear within 14-21 days. The wildflowers will vary depending on species, some may take only a few weeks, while others can take several months.

Cornfield Annuals: Annuals will flower the same year if sown during the spring or the previous autumn.

Perennials: Perennial species will establish during the first year of sowing and flower during the second year.

MAINTAINING WILDFLOWERS

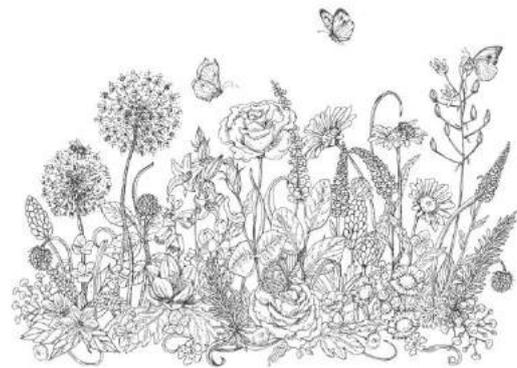
Spring maintenance: The grasses will start to grow before the wildflowers, so a spring cut in April down to 7.5cm will reduce competition from the grasses. Remove all grass cuttings to avoid adding fertility back to the soil.

If any unwanted weed species emerge these will need removing either by hand or by carefully spot treating with an organic weed killer. Weeds are more likely to show in the first year of sowing.

Autumn maintenance: Towards the end of the summer (August to September) most flowers will begin to die back, this is the time to make a "hay cut". The area will want cutting down to around 7.5cm with the cuttings being left to dry on the surface for up to a week, this will allow the cut flowers to shed their seed. The cuttings can then be raked up and removed.

If there are annuals present it is important that their seed is returned to the soil to allow them to regenerate again the following spring. To achieve this, the area will need vigorously raking or for larger areas harrowing. This will break the surface and allow the annual seed to make contact with the soil.

For further reading "The Garden Jungle" by Dave Goulson



LONELINESS IN THE TIME OF A PANDEMIC

Loneliness is a long dark cold tunnel, made much worse in this tragedy of a pandemic.

Many people are feeling isolated and fearful as the Winter approaches.

Even people with families can feel incredibly alone, not wishing to worry, or in their minds, “be a burden” to already busy and overstretched sons and daughters.

It doesn't have to be this dark place, help can be just within your grasp. There are ways to exit this tunnel and feel hope and joy again.

There is a local organisation the Viva Cornwall project which is easily contacted by phone or email.

Contact details.... Heidi Channell on [01872 266992](tel:01872266992). HeidiC@volunteercornwall.org.uk

VIVA WELLBEING, is a project to support all those who want to get more socially connected and less isolated through volunteering in the local community.

The Covid experience has been a mixed experience for many, both positive and negative.

You may have been feeling lonely - this project can help and support you.

The project aims to get you more connected with your local community by encouraging you to volunteer. We can provide you with signposting to local activities or 1:1 support if needed.

You may have enjoyed getting stuck into supporting and helping others through Covid and you would like to continue helping and enabling others - this project can help and support you too.

Support, training and networking is available from Volunteer Cornwall, for those wishing to continue their supporting role in the community, by becoming an VIVA WELLBEING AMBASSADOR. This is a new and exciting opportunity for all those people who have felt real satisfaction in knowing that they have been able to be a vital lifeline to someone else.

Please contact Helen Pearce on [07394562444](tel:07394562444) or helenp@volunteercornwall.org.uk for more info or look on the Volunteer Cornwall Website www.volunteercornwall.org.uk

There is also a nationwide helpline set up by Dame Ester Rantzen called “Silver Line”.

Since our national launch in November 2013, The Silver Line Helpline has received over 2.5 million calls. Over two-thirds of these calls were made overnight or at weekends when no other helpline is available for older people who may be lonely, isolated or confused.

The Silver Line provides three functions to support older people:

- a 24-hour helpline which is available 365 days a year and offers information, signposting, advice, and a place to talk
- a befriending service to combat loneliness
- a means of empowering those who may be suffering abuse and neglect, if appropriate to transfer them to specialist services to protect them from harm.

We now receive around 10,500 calls every week from older people the all over UK, with 53% of callers saying they have literally no-one else to speak to. Over 3,000 volunteer Silver Line Friends are making regular weekly friendship calls to older people, and our Silver Circles offer friendship for older people with shared interests through the chance to socialise by phone in a small group. We rely entirely on voluntary donations to cover the cost of all Silver Line services, and are extremely grateful to all those who have helped us to support thousands of older people, many of whom refer to us as “a lifeline”. Contact phone number... [0800 470 8090](tel:08004708090)

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BATS AT GWENNAP PARISH CHURCH



On Wednesday 12th August we came down to complete a bat survey at the Church, to see what the bats are up to this year.

The weather was perfect, and the Church was as picturesque and beautiful as always, it was a sultry evening, disturbed only by horse flies with a light mizzle in the morning before dawn.

We had a great survey and undertook a dusk survey, immediately followed by a dawn survey with a few hours rest in between. As with previous surveys we identified a maternity roost of Brown Long-eared bats, we had about 12 – 14 in total emerge from, and then re-enter the Church. They appear to be roosting during the day above the Northern transept in the roof, emerging into the Church to fly around about 45 minutes before sunset before then squeezing out of a small gap at the eaves on the northern side of the central roof. They come into the Church before emerging to warm up and “light sample” (checking to see how dark it is outside) and also to socialise, making all sorts of lovely call noises that sound a bit like birds chirping. It’s also when they poo, hence all the droppings scattered around the Church. We are now having a think about how to help with all the mess in a way that means the bats can also use parts of the Church, so watch this space!

Churchyards are incredibly important for wildlife and it is great to see so many congregations realising the benefits and trying to work with nature.

Bats (as with most species) are declining for a number of reasons, but loss of habitat is the main one (which includes loss of availability of prey of course). Nature is such a delicate balance of relationships and unfortunately we as humans are breaking the links. I do think that there are many who are doing their very best to safeguard nature and enhance where we can.

I thought that the long grasses were amazing and there were lots of insects buzzing around. Often it is the natural things that are already there that offer so much, ivy, grasses and wildflowers. Allowing the grasses to flower and seed before cutting is a really good idea and it looks as though parts of the yard have been left this year which is a great start.

A simple way to help is to sow or plant night-scented plants which attract suitable prey such as moths, midges and beetles. It is possible for a single bat to catch several thousand insects during an evening’s hunting. Night scented plants Night Catch-fly, Evening Primrose, Bladder Campion, Red Campion and Soap Wort.

More interesting things about bats

1. Bats aren’t blind

BATS AT GWENNAP PARISH CHURCH... CONTINUED

They can actually see very well. However, at night their ears are more important than their eyes. Bats shout as they fly and the returning echoes give them information about what is ahead of them. It's called echolocation.

Their shouts are so high in frequency that they're inaudible to us. We use a bat detector to tune in to them. This translates the ultra sound into a frequency that we can hear. Romantically minded male bats serenade females in mating season.

2. Bats won't get caught in your hair

Bats' echolocation is so efficient that they can identify the size and shape of an insect and which way it is going. Your head is bigger than an insect. They're never going to bump into you or get caught in your hair.

3. Bats don't suck blood

Most bats eat insects - including all 18 species found in the UK. Here, they mainly eat moths, flies and spiders.

Most bats weigh no more than a £1 coin and are only as big as your thumb. However, a tiny pipstrelle bat can eat up to 3000 insects a night.

There are more than 1,100 species of bat in the world. Only three of them feed exclusively on blood. These are the vampire family and they live only in south and central America. Vampire bats are not very big, around 8cm long. They have specialised infrared sensors to locate blood vessels close to the skin on sleeping cows. They don't suck blood, but make a little nip in the skin. An anticoagulant in their saliva stops the blood clotting and they lick it up. Vampire bats look after each other. If one of their colony is ill and can't go out to feed, one of the other bats will feed it.

4. Bats help make chocolate

We can thank bats for ridding the evening of midges and mosquitos, but we must also thank them for chocolate. Many plants in the tropics rely on bats for pollination, including cocoa, banana, mango and vanilla. They are also essential pollinators for the agave plant - which is one of the ingredients in tequila. So next time you're sipping a margarita, you know who to thank.

5. We love bats

All bats are legally protected in the UK because they have declined so much and some are rare. Bats are fascinating creatures and a vital part of the ecosystem. We are the single biggest owner of bat roosts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Getting in contact with Gwennap Parish Council

Contact our clerk

email clerk@gwennap-parish.net

phone 07470 211871

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As Christmas is fast approaching I thought I would include two wonderful seasonal recipes. The ice cream makes a great accompaniment to traditional Christmas pudding or a delicious stand-alone dessert with maybe some thin almond or amaretti biscuits or shortbread. The topping is not essential if you're pressed for time but I've included it anyway. The mulled wine is a recipe I was given umpteen years' ago and I've made it every winter since as it is so warming and welcoming when it is freezing outside.

Ice Cream

Whites of 2 lge eggs (size 1 – 2)
175g/6 oz Demerara sugar
6 x 15ml/tbsp water
5ml/1 tsp vanilla essence
3-5 x 15ml/tbsp brandy
450ml / ¾pt whipping cream

Caramelised Almond

Topping
25g/1oz caster sugar
50g/2 oz flaked almonds

Mulled Wine

2 bottles red wine
550ml/1pt water
½ level tsp grated nutmeg
5cm/2" stick cinnamon
6 cloves

225g/8oz granulated sugar
4 lemons – thinly peeled rind
and juice
250ml/½pt Cinzano bianco
1 orange – quartered slices
1 apple – cored and quartered
slices

Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl with the salt until they begin to stand in soft peaks. Dissolve the demerara sugar with the water in a saucepan, stirring over a low heat, then increase the heat and boil fiercely without stirring for 3 minutes. Pour immediately on to the egg whites in a thin stream, whisking all the time with an electric whisk at high speed. Gradually whisk in the vanilla essence and the brandy. Continue whisking until the mixture is fairly thick and looks like a very smooth meringue mixture.

In a separate bowl, whisk the cream until thick, but not too stiff, and then gently but thoroughly fold it into the egg white mixture with a metal spoon. Pour the mixture into a 2 ¾ pint (1.6 litre) freezer-proof serving bowl and freeze for at least 5 hours (or several days if you want) before eating.

For the almond topping, mix the caster sugar with the flaked almonds in a little bowl. Heat a dry frying pan until quite hot, then tip in the sugar and almonds and stir around constantly for only a minute or so until the almonds are golden brown and caramelised. Spoon them out on to a sheet of silicon non-stick baking parchment and dig about as they cool to separate them as much as possible. Before serving the ice cream, sprinkle the almonds all over the top.

Put everything except orange and apple into a large pan and heat slowly until warm. Keep at warm temperature to infuse for 20 minutes. Strain. Return to pan with orange and apple. Serve into glasses using ladle. Make plenty as one glass is just not enough!

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