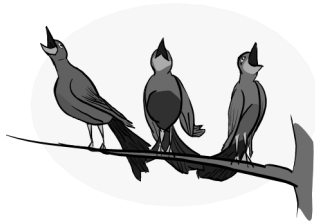


# BIRDSONG

December 2024  
and  
January 2025



BIRDINGBURY  
NEWS  
NO 125



## A Star in the Making

Frankie's story inside

# Birdingbury Parish Council Report

It always feels a bit of a shock to be asked to write a piece for Birdsong that covers Christmas and a new year. Where has this year gone? At least there is snow on the ground as I write this, so it does feel wintry (if not yet Christmassy).

Now that the shorter, colder days have arrived, community activities become more important, especially for those who don't get out as much as in better weather. The Remembrance Service and two minutes silence provided a calm and reflective moment in the village. Thank you to the Church community for the thought that went into this, and to Carmel for reading the names of the fallen. On the social side of things, it is great to see continued support for Club events.

This time last year, Birdingbury was included in a large 'lot' that was put out for tender for installing superfast broadband. The bid was subsequently won by CityFibre and we received an update from them as part of 'Project Gigabit'. This is the Government's programme for gigabit-capable broadband in rural communities. CityFibre have advised that work in our area is 'likely to be in the first half of 2025' and they'll provide details and be available for local briefings at that time. For more information on the general process, visit [cityfibre.com/build](https://cityfibre.com/build). We'll continue to keep you posted.

The Parish Council is responsible for The Hovel (the brick barn in the corner of the Glebe Field). Historically it was used to store equipment for the festival and for Bonfire Night but, to our knowledge, hasn't been used for many years. The fabric of the building needs work so we've agreed that the first step is to clear the content. There is a mixture of 'stuff' including plastic chairs, trestle tables, metal posts, ropes, etc. So, two requests: firstly, if any of the content is yours / your organisation's, can you let me know and plan to remove it? We'd like to give owners first dibs before offering it more widely. Secondly, if you would be interested in taking or helping us clear what remains please let me know?

Finally, a quick update on the Rugby Local Plan which sets out the 10-year employment, infrastructure and housing priorities for the area. It was due to be reviewed earlier this year until the May local elections, when Labour took control of Rugby BC and the process was paused. The new government in Westminster has re-opened the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the targets for regional housebuilding. The latest from RBC is that the revised Plan is due to come out for consultation in March, with a view to completion around May. The Parish Council will stay close to this process, as it sets the context for planning applications in the village and its surrounding areas.

As we are set to see out 2024 and welcome in 2025 may I take the opportunity to wish you and yours a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Guy French, Chair, Birdingbury Parish Council*

# Club Update

## Inside plans

Now the winter weather has most definitely arrived, and having successfully transformed the outside area of the Club over the summer, our thoughts have turned to the interior. We've amassed a small refurb fund from what we had left from the outdoor fund, food vendor and café donations, and a decent sum from the brewery as part of the recent beer changeover. This gives us a fund of a couple of thousand pounds, and we've also got an application into the council for a grant, so keep your fingers crossed.

We're now looking at all the obvious things we need to do and we're busy getting quotes and ideas. We will also go back to what you told us in the surveys. Meanwhile, do let us know what your thoughts are. We obviously won't find something that pleases everyone: we have to be realistic about how far even a few thousand pounds will stretch and we don't want to change it from feeling like 'our Club', but what do you think our priorities should be? Email [birdingburyClub@gmail.com](mailto:birdingburyClub@gmail.com) with your thoughts!

## Volunteers

At the risk of repeating myself, I do have to thank everyone who helps and volunteers again. We now have something like 20 people who regularly help, and even the smallest bit of assistance is valued.

We'd like to recognise this early in the new year and will run an event for all our volunteers: buy them a few drinks and say thanks properly. We'll also use that as an opportunity to let them (and anyone else who's interested) know how their help has changed the Club's outlook over the last 6 months or so. We'll put something out shortly with information on that.

## Events

And talk of volunteering brings me on nicely to, yes, another opportunity to help! We'd really like to hold at least one largish event each month, on top of the regular food nights, quizzes, etc. This is partly because it generates decent income but mostly because it gives those villagers who wouldn't normally chat or even see each other, the chance to socialise together. That's a good thing, and what the Club is for. To do this we could really do with some people, maybe some of you who can't commit to helping regularly, to run one these? It could be a quiz-based night, a race night, bingo: all ideas welcome. Alongside the existing open mic nights and other regular activities, we may only need half a dozen extra events. We can help, but we need extra brains to run them. If you're up for it, message Alex, Bec or me via the Village Chat WhatsApp group.

*Tony Flint, Club President*



## Utter-Lee Terrifying



We'd just like to share our enjoyment of the recent Halloween event at the Club, which we understand went very well with the young ghouls, ghosties and other characters thoroughly enjoying the evening.

As you can see, the young ones were not the only ones enjoying dressing up! Unlike Lee, Declan didn't bother, not even brushing his hair!

On a serious note, we both really enjoy supporting the youngsters at Halloween and thank the organisers and parent helpers for making the tour around the

village, and to our house, safe and fun for everyone.

We would both add that the children, and parents should be complimented: despite the excitement of the evening. All the youngsters were so polite and grateful for their goodies when they came to our door. They are a credit to the village.

Well done to Chloe and all who helped make the event so successful!

*Declan and Lee Hayden*



## Fangs from Chloe



A monstrous THANK YOU to everyone who joined us for a fang-tastic Halloween at the Club!

Your costumes were so much fun—we hope you had a great time decorating your spooky biscuits and playing wrap the mummy!

A huge thanks to all the villagers who decorated and loaded us up with delicious treats! Our ghostly walk through the village was a wonderful!

We can't wait to summon you all back next year for another night of frightful fun!

Until then... stay spooky!

*Chloe, Olly & Isaac Callan-Foster*



## Frankie Scores a Winner

Frankie has loved playing football since she could walk, always at the park with her friends having a kick about, most of the school holidays and evenings.



From starting at Rugby Town FC aged 5 years old and going on to Rugby Borough Girls and Bourton & Frankton Boys teams, she was asked to a trial for England FA pathways Junior Lionesses after being referred to them by her coach .

When offered a place three years ago, she began her training with England. At one of the training camps for England she was seen by Aston Villa and asked to trial for them. She is now in her third season at Aston Villa Girl's Academy.

Now she's 15, Frankie has just signed her first 2-year contract for Aston Villa Women's Academy and will join their under 21s squad in July 2025. Football is always something she's loved, and this is a dream come true.

Up The Villa!

*Nicky Kerry*

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## Help at Hand ..... in Norfolk?



Here are some pictures we took at the Caister Castle Car collection in Norfolk.

Who would have thought we'd find a piece of Birdingbury there!

It's an RAC patrol box: we believe the family who have the car/vehicle collection bought it at auction but we don't know when.

We think it was originally positioned on the A423 in the lay-by at the top of Shakers Lane.

You can imagine our surprise at finding a piece of Birdingbury that far from home !

*Dawn & Chris Powers*



# October Open Mic Night

Once again, the cream of our village musicians strutted their stuff on the Club stage at our October open mic night, curated by Jo Young. The event took place alongside a private party and so the Club was buzzing and very busy. Despite problems with the mixer desk as we were setting up, we were up and running by 7.30. The standard of music was outstanding and testament to the hard work everyone has put in over the last few years practicing and learning (and, of course, having a lot of fun).



We were able to mix up various combinations of musicians playing a variety of different styles which made for an interesting evening.

I must mention our musical guests for their outstanding contributions, so thank you Dina for your violin playing and original songs, and Annabel (total bias here) for your wonderful voice and confidence.

So, until the next time (early next year) thank you also to Patrick, Sharon, David, Angela, Rob, Andy, Jo, (and me) for the music, and special mention to Ian for the tech assistance (we promise to read the manual before next time!).

And finally, thank you to the Club staff and volunteers for keeping it all flowing smoothly.

*Steve Edgar*



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## Twitterings

Our condolences to the family of Anne Carroll, who passed away suddenly in November. John, Becky, Elizabeth and Tim: we are thinking of you all.

A little bird tells us that a brief history of St Leonard's church is in the pipeline, with plans to make it available in the church for a small optional donation. More information to come!

Welcome to Jan and Guy Martin who have moved into Hillcrest.

There's coffee and a raffle on offer at the St Leonard's Christmas workshop in the morning of 14 December!

Sad goodbyes to Mac and Benson – faithful friends to their families and the village.

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# **‘The gin and tonic has saved more Englishmen’s lives, and minds, than all the doctors in the Empire’** **Winston Churchill**

That was the spirit (!) with which nearly forty hardy souls embarked upon a ‘Gin Experience’ at the Club on 16 November.



Hosted by Dave, from the Warwickshire Gin Company, we started off with a sharpener, in the form of a welcome drink, and then worked our way through six gins and one spiced rum (mainly neat, in shot glasses), interspersed with whichever had been our favourite gin from the previous two (are you still with me?) as a gin and tonic.

We also learned a lot as we went on, from how Dave had started the business, through the process of gin-making itself, to why London Dry Gin became a thing.

Needless to say, it was a great evening, with the volume of noise of our side of the Club rising as the night went on, even threatening to match that from the rugby supporters in the lounge.

Who ever knew that gins could vary so much? But they did, from the very dry and almost sharp (Kingmaker) to the softly cinnamon, nutmeg flavour (I think that was the Philosopher’s Daughter but don’t quote me on it.).



We also received recommendations on accompanying Fever Tree tonics and fruit to float in it as we went.

To round the evening off, there was 10% off on all purchases. I think it’s fair to say that Dave had prepared his crowd well by then and so it seemed like an irresistible offer. We certainly set off back up the hill with a couple of bottles (Leamington on Parade and the aforementioned Kingmaker– delicious!)

Many thanks to Becs and Alex for organising an excellent evening–which I didn’t even regret the next day...!

*Sara Kendell*

# Community Café

Join us any Tuesday between 10.30 and 12.00 in the Club for cakes, coffee and chatter! Our last Community Café for the year will take place on Tuesday 17 December when we will be getting prepared for Christmas with festive bakes, Christmas tunes and some singing, hopefully led by a local choir. The Café will then take a break for the festivities and return on Tuesday 14 January at 10.30am.

By the end of this year, we will have donated the grand sum of **£2024** to a variety of charities (and the Birdingbury Club refurbishment fund) chosen by our lovely volunteers, including:

- The Disasters Emergency Appeal for the Middle East
- Teenage Cancer Trust
- Fare Share
- Guide Posts
- Save the Children
- Water Aid
- World Food Programme
- Young Minds Matter
- Nerve Tumours UK
- Warwickshire Young Carers
- Rugby Foodbank



Since our first cafe in January 2023, we have donated over £4000 to different charities; a magnificent achievement made possible by the generosity of our volunteer helpers, bakers and customers. Thank you all. We will see you in 2025!

*Karen Armbrister and Jean Foroughi*

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## St Leonard's Church Christmas Raffle

We will be selling raffle tickets (£1 each) in the week leading up to our wreath making workshop, particularly at the Community Café and Swap Shop.

Prizes include a wonderful Christmas Hamper, kindly donated by members of the PCC, plus one or two other bottle shaped prizes! If you'd like to buy tickets, please get in touch.

*Karen Armbrister (07919 594559) and Dick Withington (07788 842236)*

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# Christine Mary Wells

22 March 1944 – 10 November 2024

Our Mum was a Birdingbury girl. She was the first daughter of Ernest and Violet Cleaver and was born at Gate Cottage, Main Street Birdingbury. Her grandparents lived at Mill House Farm, Stockton Road and there were aunts and uncles in Back Lane, The Old Stone Cottage, Long Itchington Road, Holly Cottage, Main Street and more.....

Her first school days were at Leamington Hastings, and she went on to start her working life as a trainee seamstress at the age of 15, catching the train from Birdingbury station to Rugby every day.

At 15 she also met our Dad, Derek Wells, at the local youth club. They were married 23 February 1963 in the snow at St Leonard's church, with a reception at Birdingbury Club. Their first home together was in Church Street, Marton, then they moved on to High-town, Princethorpe and later, as a family, to Hill, Leamington Hastings. After down-sizing, they spent 12 happy years together in Long Lawford before our Dad died in 2018.



Sadly, this is where our Mum passed away after a two-year battle with cancer. In the last eight weeks she was at home surrounded by her family and cared for by her sister, Annette, local District Nurses, and the wonderful Myton at Home team. We already miss her so very much but know that she is thankfully at peace now alongside our Dad, where they will be gardening and crafting together.

In her memory, I will be raising money for Myton by taking part in a Sky Dive on 22 March 2025 (our Mum's birthday). Your support to raise money for this charity would be greatly appreciated. Please visit my Just Giving Page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/karen-thomas-1731955375558> Thank you.

*Karen Thomas*

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## Mobile Library

6 December 10 January 7 February

13.40 to 14.00

Outside the Club

## Remembrance Day Memories of Aden

I was posted to Aden for two years, from September 1963 to September 1965. Within a few months of my arriving there, the terrorist activity increased, and I was moved 'up country'. I reported to the armoury to wait for transport, where a sub-machine gun was put in my hands, followed by a magazine of live rounds. Refresher weapon training was 'Don't put the mag on. If it's on, don't put one up the spout. If you've got one up the spout, **Don't Ever Fire First!**'.

6 Field Park Squadron RE were resurfacing the road to Dhala. This is a town on the route to Mecca which all Muslims must visit once in their lifetime. This route was needed by the Insurgents, and once a week or so they would put a few rounds through the roof of a tent just to let us know they were there.

I had my live mag. on a few times, but I never fired back.

I had my 21st birthday in Al Anad and one of the officers bought me a shoebox size block of ice. It was placed on top of a dustbin of canned beer so that night's limit of two beers were served cold!

My last few months were spent with 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards. Since Colledge is at the start of the alphabet, I was bumped off my flight home for a casualty - an evacuation-a stretcher takes up 3 seats. However, I only had to wait 5 days before flying home on one of the first VC 10 planes.

Several months later I received the medals I wear on Remembrance Sunday through the post - I never did get a Medal Parade!

As you look at my medals, the ribbon on the right is my Long Service and Good Conduct medal, awarded for 15 years unblemished service. The paler middle one is for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus 1970, which was just a six months tour. On the left is the General Service Medal awarded for 28 continuous days in an active service zone. The bars denote where this took place - my three are for Radfan, South Arabia and Northern Ireland.

I also undertook two four-month tours of duty, one in Derry and one in Cookstown

Incidentally, my medals have my army number, rank and name engraved round the edge.

*Pip Colledge*



## To The Royal Albert Hall

On Saturday, 9 November I had the honour of representing The Royal British Legion Galanos House at the Royal Albert Hall, London for the Festival of Remembrance Service.



I will try to convey to you a day that was emotionally overwhelming.

We took the train from Leamington to London. We had business class, everywhere was busy with standing room only, which surprised me.

Next, a taxi to the lunch venue through Hyde Park, past the Serpentine.

We enjoyed an excellent meal with a convivial atmosphere. The restaurant was full of people also going to the service with many medals being proudly worn.



Then it was a short distance to the Royal Albert Hall. The Lucas brothers began the building in 1881, a building of beauty inside and out, with tier upon tier rising to five levels.

We settled in our box for two hours of splendour.

All the armed forces were represented: marching bands, drums, bugles, singing – it all flowed seamlessly together, their stories told in words and graphics over many years, old and young.

People from so many different countries were thanking the fallen, the survivors and everyone who helped in many ways from all walks of life.

The atmosphere was warm with pride as the poppies gently floated down to cover us all.

Then it was time for our return train journey, tired and happy. Trains, taxis, restaurant, train station—all were so helpful.

I have travelled the world and experienced many wonders. The Royal Albert Hall was an exceptional experience. To have taken part was an honour.

*Josie Price*

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## Irresistible Spring Choices

Fancy trying something new? Look no further than Rugby's independent Percival Guildhouse, which has added a wealth of new courses to its regular adult education offering from January.

Booking is open now for anyone interested in Eat Well, Live Well – a timely post-Christmas-indulgence choice. This starts on 9 January, with another in late February. Also new are courses in Tai Chi, Chair Yoga, Shibori Resist Dyeing and Clay Head Sculpture, and beginners' courses in French, Italian and Spanish plus Modern Calligraphy. For full details of all courses, start dates and times, please phone 01788 542467 or visit [www.percival-guildhouse.co.uk](http://www.percival-guildhouse.co.uk)

*Clare Turnbull*

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## December and January Watchouts for Dogs

Over the festive season, remember to take precautions and ensure that foods which are toxic for dogs are kept out of reach. These include dried fruits like raisins, sultanas, currants; anything containing dried fruits, such as mince pie, Christmas cake or pudding. Grapes are also toxic to dogs. A recent study published in the Journal of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care identified that tartaric acid, a substance in grapes, dried fruit and sold in a powder form as cream of tartar, is the culprit. Cream of tartar may be used as a raising agent or an ingredient in homemade playdough. Symptoms can vary from one dog to another – for further information visit this link [Grape, raisin, currant and sultana poisoning in dogs - PDSA](#)

What should you do if your dog swallows something toxic... or inedible?

We recently had to rush to the vet after our furry friend snatched a discarded sock and decided it was better to swallow it whole rather than surrender it. We called the vet then bundled the offending doggo into the car. After a short journey we reached the vet, who explained that they would attempt to extract the sock by inducing vomiting. First, a small bowl of food was offered, in case that alone would do the trick. This was not successful, so the second line of treatment was a vomit-inducing injection. Within 10 minutes the sock made a reappearance, to the relief of everyone present. The effects of the injection are unpleasant but short-lived and preferable to the 'wait and see' approach which may result in your dog requiring surgery or suffering from kidney failure. The veterinary nurse explained to me that dogs very commonly swallow small articles of clothing, and she has helped two dogs who swallowed a tie and a dressing gown cord.

Stay safe and have a great Christmas! As always, observe the Countryside Code when out walking your dog.

*Dogsbody*

# Christmas in Birdingbury

## **Living Crib: 2.30pm Sunday 8 December, Bondon Farm Birdingbury**

Join us for a festive afternoon of carols and live nativity scenes. Experience the authentic nativity story in a unique setting surrounded by farm animals and sing traditional carols as we witness the story of the nativity come to life.

Refreshments will include a hog roast: there is no charge but a retiring donation for the work of The Farming Community Network and the Draycote and Leam Valley Benefices would be appreciated. Warm clothing, wellies and torches are advised!

Spaces are limited so please pre-book using this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/farm-nativity-carols-tickets-1076451438229>



## **Carols at the Club: 6.30pm Saturday 21 December, Birdingbury Club**

You're invited, with your friends, family and neighbours to our annual Community Carols and Readings at Birdingbury Club. Hopefully this will be held outside but will be indoors if it's too wet or cold. Seating will be available for those who need it.

Our short service will be suitable for all ages with well-known carols, the Christmas story and some other seasonal offerings. If you'd like to read something, then let Karen know (07919 594559).

Mulled wine and light refreshments will be available from 5.30pm and the Club will be open afterwards for additional drinks and friendly chat.

## **Carols on the Doorstep: meet at the Club 7.00 pm, Monday 23 December**

Join the church carol singers who will be visiting homes around the village on Monday 23 December, between 7 and 8pm. Principally, we will be singing for those who find it difficult to get out of their homes, or anyone who has had a tough year and would welcome a visit. If you would like a personal visit, send Dick a WhatsApp message on the number below and he will fit you in.

Dress warmly, carols sheets will be provided and bring a torch or lantern. Donations for Hope4 in Rugby would be welcome. For more details contact Dick Withington on 07788 842236

## **Christmas Day Service: 11.00am Wednesday 25 December, St Leonard's Church**

We will gather at 11.00am on Christmas Day for our all age, informal service, which will last around 45 minutes. Chocolate treats for all!

## Anyone for Lunch at Bourton?

On every third Tuesday of the month, at 12.30, Bourton and Draycote Community Trust host a two course fixed menu, home cooked lunch in the Village Hall in Bourton.

It is designed to encourage villagers to get together locally and socialise and I can confirm the food is delicious and the company delightful. (As an example, the November meal was crispy cheese topped cottage pie with braised sweetheart cabbage and peas, followed by apple strudel and custard.) A charge of £6.00 per person is payable on the day in cash.

If you are interested in participating, Christmas means some disruption to the schedule so please text Jeni Neal on 07866 751598 for further information and to book. Details are on the Frankton and Bourton Facebook page and the date will also be posted in the Village Chat. Numbers are capped, and you will need to reserve a place and get there early!



Bon appetit!

*Carmel de Nahlik*

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## Swap Shop



We continue to meet every Saturday at 10.30 in the Birbury; it's good to get together when the weather has been so horrible! It was standing room only the other week when there were over 20 of us chatting and eating cake.

Saturday 14 December is the only week this year when **we will not be meeting**, instead we will be joining our friends at St. Leonard's.

Everyone is welcome on a Saturday to call in for a few minutes or longer...

*Di Turner and Jenny Hawes*

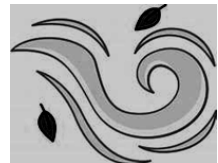
BIRDSONGBIRDSONGBIRDSONG

Birdingbury snows

But Bert comes to spoil the fun

Weather to go out?

*Thin Jethro Laskey*



## The Club is Open Now

Keys fumbled, gas turned on, alarm turned off,  
Switch banks tried and thrown, lamps are poking gloom,  
All alone he stands ready for the throng,  
But no-one comes; while space and silence grow.

Unbroken ranks of gleaming taps and glass,  
Hidden trusses impatient shrug and creak,  
Dark outside weeps and seeps against the door,  
Silent echoes of long dead children sigh.

Lights go sweeping past, neon bright and fast,  
A car, make and shape unseen, slowing down,  
Stopping, waits for room to go up Main Street,  
Or turning down Back Lane, without a glance.

Long past lessons and cries of childish glee,  
Jock, forever tending dark ales of yore,  
Fridges, whirr or rest by some hand unseen,  
Secret past fills time and space while he waits.

A car sweeps in and parks around the back.  
Fainter world recedes, watchful of today.  
What will come when silence falls back and waits?  
Jolly voices, laughter bright, louder come.

Beer is poured, old friends and new are greeted,  
The games begin, and chatter fills the air,  
The walls themselves animate the happy throng,  
As they announce, 'The Club is Open Now.'

*Thin Jethro Laskey*

## Regular Events

There's always lots more going on and details can change at short notice.  
Keep your eye on Village Chat WhatsApp group and Birdingbury Club Facebook page.

When to eat	What to eat
Friday 6 December from 5.30pm	Village Kitchen Mexican Freshly made in our Birdingbury kitchen
Saturday 14 December from 5.30	Pizza Van Wood fired pizzas made to order
Thursday 19 December from 4.30pm	Chippy Van Club open from 4.30pm
Friday 20 December from 5.30pm	Tapas Zampa Authentic Spanish Tapas made to order
Friday 3 January from 5.30pm	Village Kitchen Curry Freshly made in our Birdingbury kitchen
Friday 10 January from 5.30pm	Bad Boys Burgers Mouthwatering burgers and fries
Thursday 16 January from 4.30pm	Chippy Van Club open from 4.30pm
Friday 24 January from 5.30pm	Village Kitchen Mexican Freshly made in our Birdingbury kitchen



Birdsong Editor:                      Lesley Fleming  
     Moonrakers, Back Lane Tel 632508  
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