



# Shipston Forum



April 2026

## Rights for the river?

The discovery of brook lampreys, a protected species, may help in the campaign to improve the River Stour and prevent overdevelopment. The finding was made during International Rivers Day in March, which started



with a river blessing by Shipston's resident druid Cii (aka Martin Russell). With water levels still high, participants had to keep to the banks as invertebrate samples were collected, but children and grown-ups enjoyed identifying and naming the creatures using special viewing trays. The Misspent Ukes provided the music, despite cold fingers, and the History Society showed how the Stour had powered many watermills in the past.

'The plight of our rivers is very much in the spotlight at last,' says Verity Richardson from Stour Vale Action for the Environment (SAFE), the group that organised the day. 'One direct consequence of the day is that we are now trying to obtain Chartered River status for the Stour, bringing it legal rights.' Read more about River Hope in District Councillor Olivia Hatch's column on page 14.

## New head, new hall

Dan Rushworth has been appointed new head teacher of Shipston High School, starting in September. He brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of leadership, having most recently been vice principal at Chipping Campden School.

A ground-breaking ceremony at the school on 4th March attended by the Mayor Tony Booth (second left) marked the start of construction of the new sports hall – a significant investment for the school that will provide more opportunities for students to take part in a range of sports.



## Boxing clever

Volunteers from Sheldon Bosley Knight estate agents have installed three bat boxes and three bird boxes at Cornmill Meadows. They also planted some more trees, filling gaps in the hedge. The firm encourages voluntary work to give something back to the community.



## Purple4Polio

Have you noticed a splash of purple this spring? Over 8,000 crocuses planted by Shipston Rotary members were blooming around Shipston, on the verges at Halford and on the Green in Newbold as part of the society's Purple4Polio



Campaign. They are just some of the millions of crocuses that were planted throughout Britain to raise awareness of Rotary's campaign to eradicate polio around the world. Why purple? On immunisation day in India every child has their little finger painted purple after they have received their vaccination.

## Museum opens

Shipston Museum will be warmly welcoming visitors back for another season on Easter Saturday and Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April, with three captivating displays.

The Romans in the Stour Valley reveals how our Iron Age ancestors responded when Roman legions arrived nearly 2,000 years ago.

Shipston Tramway: 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorates the pioneering Stratford to Moreton Tramway that connected Shipston to the wider world during the industrial and agricultural revolutions.

Hidden Stories shines a light on remarkable local figures: among them a pioneering lady novelist, a photographer documenting village life, and a brewer.

The Museum is open every weekend plus bank holiday Mondays through to September. More information on the website <https://shipstonmuseum.co.uk/>



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## Mayor's column

The start to this year has been a bit gloomy and difficult for many of us. But I hope that brighter weather will bring more warmth and much needed light into our lives as we approach the summer. With this in mind, I'd like to highlight the good work done by Councillor Hilary Kelly and her merry band of voluntary Shipston in Bloomers who work tirelessly around



our town to keep it looking nice and presentable. They plant trees, flowers, do all sorts of landscaping, and show a real pride as they continue their unsung efforts in their role. Thank you to you all, and if anybody reading this has itchy green fingers and would like to join them then please contact Hilary Kelly who would be delighted to hear from you.

The start to the year also gave us our fair share of water! Rain was relentless and with it came some flooding and disruption. It has, however, highlighted areas that shouldn't be built on! Builders take note. Another unsung team I want to thank are, again, hidden from view, but their essential work protects us and the town from the ongoing risks of flooding. John Dinnie, Mike McCarthy and Brian Cooper, supported by Councillor Vanessa Benjamin-Smith, have been focused on rebuilding our flood defences after the winter and installing further flood prevention measures wherever they are needed. Their group, SAFAG, is widely regarded beyond Shipston as an exemplary and proactive action group that makes a positive and hugely important impact on the community. Thanks, each of you, for the continued support that you give and for protecting our town from future flood risks.

Wishing everyone a very happy and enjoyable Easter period, and I look forward to writing to you again next month.

### TTFN

**Tony Booth**

**Mayor of Shipston**

## News from Shipston Town Council's March meeting

### Blue light update

PC Hammond reported that a number of people have been arrested and charged after a spate of burglaries on country houses in the area. He has been working with Stratford District Council's crime advisers on the problems at the Campden Road layby, where steps will be taken for CCTV to be put in place. There has been graffiti damage to the Sports Club. A shoplifter has been caught and is awaiting court dates.

### SAFAG

Funding was approved for a meeting with South Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Group and for hi-viz vests.

### Environment

The Severn Rivers Trust visited Cornmill Meadows and volunteers from Sheldon Bosley Knight have helped to install bat and bird boxes and plant trees.

### Planning

Conservatory replacement at Elm Road – no representation. Removal of tree on Watery Lane – objection pending more evidence. It was agreed that Barcheston and Willington parishes could consult their members about joining with Shipston's Neighbourhood Plan.

### General purposes

The church wall is to be fixed as soon as possible. Play area inspections will be done now that spring is underway. There was a discussion about possible use for the Twin Chapels. Cllr Booth will put forward a proposal for the next meeting.

### Finance

Approvals were given for the following: MUGA heads of terms; payment to architect firm Hayward Smart for the preparation and submission of building regulations for the youth club (S106 money for youth provision from SDC); new mayors' wooden board; IT broadband and porting; replacement of CCTV and fire alarm at New Clark House; Shipston Awards. Council also gave permission for Shipston Enterprise Hub field to be used for Ibiza Night during the Proms. Social media policy and IT policies were accepted.

### Local Nature Action Plan

Discussions continue on best way to ensure representation on each working group. Options for taking care of Riverside were also discussed.

### Clerk's report

Permission was given for use of Gibbon's Field for Shipston Home Nursing fundraiser, and, subject to a donation, for a private event.

### Councillors' reports

Cllr Howarth to attend Rural Enterprise Hub meeting. He also went to a well-attended talk by the Museum. Cllr Crockett has had discussions over the cemetery extension. Cllr Williams is still pursuing a complaint over the independence of the review into banking carried out by Link organisation. MP Manuela Perteghella is involved in highlighting how the area has become a banking desert. Cllr H Kelly attended the NFU conference on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. She will refer a resident enquiring about taking care of section of verge to the County Council's Adopt-a-Verge scheme. Cllr Booth attended the ground-breaking ceremony for the High School's new sports hall.

### Stratford District Council

Cllr Passingham attended a summit on hospital transport which resulted in ideas for improvement. More discussions are needed on public open spaces for residents of new estates, which has been investigated at District Council level.

### Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Cllr Passingham attended a League of Friends meeting with Adam Carson. There is greater awareness and communication over getting patient referrals for treatment to be held at the Ellen Badger.

### Correction

In the last edition of the Forum, we incorrectly stated that new councillor Dr Vivien Walden was a medical doctor. She is an academic doctor.

## Have an input into our Local Nature Action Plan

This important document, adopted by Shipston Town Council, directly impacts all residents. Its purpose is to encourage collective action to address the ongoing decline in biodiversity, enabling Shipston to achieve a balance between the needs of people and wildlife. The Council is seeking your input to help identify opportunities for increasing this.

We invite you to share your thoughts on changes or improvements you would like to see in your area. Would you prefer more trees or the introduction of wildflowers? Are you interested in collaborating with neighbours to create a hedgehog highway? Could we enhance small corners of the town to be more butterfly-friendly? Perhaps you would like to help identify birds or discover which creatures inhabit our hedgerows? One resident has suggested looking after the grass verge by their house and allowing the wild plants in the verge to flower but keeping the edges tidy so it looks cared for.

Come and find out what the Town Council has in mind, but most importantly say what changes would YOU like undertaken to make Shipston more sustainable.

Please join us for a meeting on 21st April at 7pm in Townsend Hall. This will be an opportunity to share your requests or ideas, or to enquire about the actions being taken by the Town Council.

**WORTH KNOWING:** There are two thermal imaging cameras which can be borrowed from the council by residents to find out if and where heat is leaking from your home. Act on Energy can advise on grants to increase the energy efficiency in your home, whether rented or owned. We hope there will be more EV charging points fitted in carparks.



## SAFAG - flood resilience in action

The SAFAG team and volunteers have been inspecting the various interventions (especially leaky dams) on the watercourses in the Ditchford area (Paddle Brook and Brexit/Stretton Brook), all of which feed into Knee Brook, upstream of Shipston.

Some major repairs and upgrades have been identified, and a schedule of works is being prepared in order to obtain a contractor's quote. Work can start once access agreement has been secured with the landowner, although, because of the heavy equipment that will be needed, this is likely to be from late April onwards, when the ground conditions become more favourable.

SAFAG will be hosting a meeting with the South Warwickshire Sustainable Farming Group Under the heading 'Building Water Resilience for Flooding and Drought'. The objective is to consider alternative farming practices and to promote the increased use of nature-based flood mitigation measures (ponds, bunds, wetlands and tree planting). These aim to catch the water where it falls, before it reaches the various watercourses.

Interested in helping out? Contact [brian.cooper@safag.org](mailto:brian.cooper@safag.org)



A large 'off-line' pond



A desilated 'in-line' pond



Dam on Pig Brook



Volunteer Paul Neal inspecting one of the dams on Brexit Brook



Use of netting to prevent ground erosion

## Medical centre news

Starting from 7<sup>th</sup> April, Shipston Medical Centre will be carrying out a long-planned refurbishment of part of its main site at Badger Crescent. During the works, services will continue, but entrances and waiting arrangements may change as it adapts to keep things running safely. The project will help improve clinical facilities, create better space for patient care and support modern ways of working. The practice will do all it can to minimise disruption and keep services running throughout. Please check messages from the practice, follow signage and allow extra time for appointments.



Shipston Medical Centre



### WHICH SITE?

#### MEDICAL CENTRE

- Acute GP appointments
- Some nurse appointments
- Main Reception
- Dispensary





#### ELLEN BADGER

- Routine GP appointments
- Some nurse appointments
- Appointment check-in and booking only

## Swifts are on their way

It won't be long now before the swifts – as well as many other migrant birds – will be arriving to fill the summer skies and bring delight to our ears and hearts.

Starting with small numbers in April, our local swift population usually arrives for breeding in mid-May. Do keep a lookout for them as we welcome them once again to Shipston. During Swift Awareness Week, 26<sup>th</sup> June to 5<sup>th</sup> July, I will once again be leading the always-popular Evening Swift Walk, this year with a difference! Watch out for more details and do come along if you haven't had a chance to enjoy this experience yet.

Let's all be 'Swifties'!

Jacey Jackson



## Repair Café opening

Come and see what can be done to extend the life of your favourite articles. Shipston's new Repair Café will be officially opening on 11<sup>th</sup> April from 10am-2pm at the Ellen Badger. The Repair Café is an opportunity to bring along household items in need of fixing while enjoying a drink and a slice of cake. Run entirely by a dedicated team of volunteers, it aims to reduce waste, share practical skills, and create another friendly space for people to come together. Volunteers have already been recruited – woodworkers, PAT testers, electricians, bike repairers, sewing whizzes and other multi-talented people – but it's not too late to volunteer your talents if you want to do something different in 2026.

## Samaritans seeks listening volunteers

Samaritans is a unique charity dedicated to reducing feelings of isolation and disconnection that can lead to suicide. Its trained volunteers provide a safe, non-judgemental space for anyone in emotional distress or crisis. The free helpline – 116 123 – is available 24 hours a day, every single day of the year.

Volunteering with Samaritans is an opportunity to make a real difference in people's lives while gaining valuable skills and experiences. You don't need to have been through a particular life experience or be from a certain walk of life. We will train, mentor and support you all the way. If you would like to find out more, ask questions and discover more about what would be involved please come along to our next New Volunteer Welcome and Information Evening on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm-8.30pm at Tyler House, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 6TY. Contact 01789 332545 to register attendance or visit <https://www.samaritans.org/branches/stratford-upon-avon/could-i-be-a-stratford-samaritans-volunteer/>



Samaritans – ordinary people, just like you, doing extraordinary things every day.

## Cerebral palsy Try Athletics day

On 17<sup>th</sup> May, Leamington Athletics is holding a Try Athletics day for children 7-14 years of age. Last year's CP Try Athletics Day was a great success, with lots of specialised equipment, physiotherapists and athletic coaches available all day. Booking is via the website: [www.leamingtonathletics.co.uk](http://www.leamingtonathletics.co.uk). Rachel Berney and her team are looking forward to meeting you.



## Ellen Badger is growing community connections



Community spirit is thriving locally, with a number of welcoming initiatives taking place at Ellen Badger Community Hub, all designed to bring people together, offer support, and strengthen connections. These activities are being supported and coordinated by the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

One particularly meaningful initiative is the Bereavement Café, held on the first Tuesday of every month from 11am-1pm. This peer support group offers a warm and understanding space for anyone experiencing grief. Open to all, the café provides the opportunity to talk, listen, and share experiences with others who understand the challenges of loss.

Meanwhile, the Warm Community Hubs continue to grow in popularity, with sessions running on Mondays and Thursdays. Monday gatherings have become especially well attended, reflecting how valuable these spaces are for conversation, companionship, and community support. Alongside the Monday hub sessions, Seated Exercise classes have also proven extremely popular. Due to strong demand, organisers are currently planning an additional class focused on promoting falls prevention, helping residents stay active, confident, and independent. Anyone interested in learning more about these activities can contact Rowena on 01608 691129.

Families with young children also have something to look forward to. The Stour Toy Library is expanding its activities and changing its weekly schedule. From April, a new Stay and Play session will take place every Tuesday from 9.30-11am at Ellen Badger,

alongside the existing Thursday session from 11am-12 noon. Parents and carers can book toys online and collect them from the hospital at any time, but the free Stay and Play sessions offer a wonderful chance for children to explore new toys while families connect with others in a relaxed setting. More information is available online at [borrow.shwp.org.uk](http://borrow.shwp.org.uk), and anyone interested in volunteering can also contact Rowena on 01608 691129.



Another exciting addition to the community calendar is the official launch of the Repair Café – see the separate article on page 4.

Rowena Webb from the Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership said: ‘We’re delighted to see these community initiatives continuing to grow and bring people together. These projects reflect the strength and kindness of our local community. And we’re incredibly grateful to all the volunteers who give their time and energy to make these activities possible.’

Whether you’re looking for conversation, support, or simply a friendly place to spend time, there is something for everyone at Ellen Badger.

### Survey

SHWP are looking for the community’s input on how we proceed with our activities and have created an online survey to help collate this information. Please spend five minutes filling in your thoughts – there’s an opportunity to win a £25 gift voucher as an incentive. <https://app.upshot.org.uk/survey/2cb35da6/11701/08854c6f/>



Paper copies of the survey are available at the Warm Community Hub held on a Monday and Thursday at Ellen Badger Hospital.

APRIL 2026

**Contact details for activities in Shipston on Stour**

Warm Hub, Toy Library and Bereavement Cafe 01608 691129 [rowena@shwp.org.uk](mailto:rowena@shwp.org.uk)  
 Strictly Fitsteps 07764 496947 [michellefitsteps@gmail.com](mailto:michellefitsteps@gmail.com)  
 Seated and Standing Tai Chi 07808 921899 [juliareeves211@gmail.com](mailto:juliareeves211@gmail.com)  
 Pilates for Beginners 07854 289446 [sueboffing@outlook.com](mailto:sueboffing@outlook.com)

Charity No. 1192236

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1st Week	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Seated Exercise 10:30 or 11:30 Pickleball 1:30 - 3:30	Strictly Fitsteps 10 - 10:45 Bereavement Cafe 11 - 1 Toy Library Stay and play. 9:30 - 11:00	Seated Tai Chi 9:30 Standing Tai Chi 10:30 Indoor Curling 2 - 3	Disordered Eating Drop in Session. 12 - 1 Cooking with Wendy. Booking required	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Toy Library 11 - 12 Annual Membership £5 Eating Disorder Support Group 6 - 7
2nd Week	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Seated Exercise 10:30 or 11:30 Pickleball 1:30 - 3:30	Strictly Fitsteps 10 - 10:45 Toy Library Stay and play. 9:30 - 11:00	Seated Tai Chi 9:30 Standing Tai Chi 10:30 Indoor Curling 2 - 3	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Cooking with Wendy. Booking required	Toy Library 11 - 12 Annual Membership £5 Pilates for Beginners 9:30 - 10:15
3rd Week	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Seated Exercise 10:30 or 11:30 Pickleball 1:30 - 3:30	Strictly Fitsteps 10 - 10:45 Toy Library Stay and play. 9:30 - 11:00	Seated Tai Chi 9:30 Standing Tai Chi 10:30 Indoor Curling 2 - 3	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Frailty Nurse Drop in Sessions	Toy Library 11 - 12 Annual Membership £5 Pilates for Beginners 9:30 - 10:15
4th Week	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Seated Exercise 10:30 or 11:30 Pickleball 1:30 - 3:30	Strictly Fitsteps 10 - 10:45 Toy Library Stay and play. 9:30 - 11:00	Seated Tai Chi 9:30 Standing Tai Chi 10:30 Indoor Curling 2 - 3	Warm Hub 10 - 12 Bereavement support from SHN	Toy Library 11 - 12 Annual Membership £5 Pilates for Beginners 9:30 - 10:15

Venues

Community Wellbeing Hub @ Ellen Badger Hospital CV36 4AX

Townsend Hall. CV36 4AE

Scout Hut. CV36 4EW

KEY  £  Free  Need to book.  Waiting list

## Regular Events

### Monday

**IT Help!:** 10am-12pm Shipston Library (appointment only)

**Story Stomp:** 10am, Shipston Library.

**Shipston Community Warm Hub:** 10am-12pm, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub

**Seated Exercise Class:** 10:30am or 11:30am, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub

**Pickleball:** 1:30pm-3:30pm, Townsend Hall.

**The Stour Toy Library:** 11am-12noon at Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub

**Shipston Duplicate Bridge Club:** 6:50pm for 7pm start. The Church Room, Darlingscote Road, Contact Matthew Hunter - 01608 684499

**Shipston Knitting and Crochet Group:** 7-9pm, Low Furlong

### Tuesday

**Strictly Fitsteps Fab:** 10am, Townsend Hall

**Rhyme Time:** 10.30am, Shipston Library

**Dementia Café:** Shipston Lodge, 10.30am-12pm

**The Stour Toy Library: Stay and Play:** 9.30am-11am, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub. <https://borrow.shwp.org.uk/>



**Age Concern Lunch Club:** Stour Court 12pm. Contact Jill Case 01608 662226

**Baby Time (under 12 months old):** 12:30pm-2pm, Badger Valley Children's Centre, Tileman's Lane. Book via Eventbrite.

**Let's Play for Toddlers:** 1:15pm-2:45pm, Badger Valley Children's Centre, Tileman's Lane. Book via Eventbrite.

**Lego Club:** Shipston Library, 3.30pm

### Wednesday

**Seated Tai Chi:** 9.30am, Scout Hut

**Stour Valley Stitchers:** 10am-1pm, 1st & 3rd Wed, The Hall, Stourton, CV36 5HG

**Standing Tai Chi:** 10.30am, Scout Hut

**GLOSS Coffee Morning:** 11am, The White Horse

**Indoor Curling:** 2pm, Townsend Hall

**U3A weekly scrabble:** 2-4pm at the George Townhouse. Free for all U3A members.

**Shipston Training Band:** 6pm-7pm at the Band Hall, New Street CV36 4QR

**Shipston Town Band:** 7.30pm-9.30pm at the Band Hall, New Street CV36 4QR

### Thursday

**Shipston Community Warm Hub:** Every Thursday 10am-12pm, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing hub

**Community Social Prescriber drop in:** 10am-12pm, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub

**The Stour Toy Library** click and collect 11am-12noon, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub. <https://borrow.shwp.org.uk/>



**Age Concern Lunch Club:** Rainbow Fields 12pm. Contact Christine Grant 07939 595600

**Scrabble Club:** 2pm-4pm, Shipston Library

**Stour Singers:** We rehearse on Thursdays from 7.30-9.30pm at Shipston Primary School. Contact Gayle Burch on 07791 769102

### Friday

**Pilates for Complete Beginners:** 9.30am Townsend Hall

**Walks with a friendly group:** 10am Mill car park. Call Marleen 07456 578467

**Age Concern Lunch Club:** Fortnightly, Rainbow Fields, 12pm. Contact Maryann Dobbin 07779 730774

**Shipston Stitchers:** Every fortnight at The Church Room, Darlingscote Road. Contact Anita Spencer on 01993 832665

**Shipston Knitting and Crochet Group** - Friday afternoons in Mrs. Browns from 2-4.30pm

**Alcoholics Anonymous:** 7.30-9pm, Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub, 28 Stratford Rd, Shipston-on-Stour CV36 4AU, 01865 242373, 0800 9177 650

**Stour Concert Brass:** 7.45pm-9.15pm at the Band Hall, New Street CV36 4QR

### Saturday

**Lego Club:** Shipston Library. From 10am

**Shipston Food Bank:** 10.30am-12pm, St Edmund's Church, Shipston. No referral or voucher needed

## What's On Calendar: April 2026

**1st Shipston on Stour WI:** social evening with an Easter theme. Meetings held every first Wednesday of the month in The Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road Shipston on Stour CV36 4DR at 7pm. For more information contact: Gill Smith – Telephone 07759 232899

**1st & 8th Stour Valley Stitchers:** 10am-1pm, The Hall, Stourton, CV36 5HG. 1st & 3rd Wednesdays

**4th Easter Event for Children:** by Shipston Rotary Club. See ad on page 16

**4th Shipston Town Council Monthly Litter Pick:** All welcome. Meet at New Clark House, West Street at 10am. Equipment and refreshments provided. Children's equipment available

**5th Lego Church:** 10.30am, first Sunday of the month during morning service at St Edmund's. For school age children. Please bring an adult. Contact rector@shipstonchurch.org.

**7th Bereavement Café:** 11am-1pm, Ellen Badger Health & Wellbeing Hub. See ad on page 7

**7th Shipston Library Reading Group:** 2pm-3pm first Tuesday of each month

**7th & 21st 'Dance for Joy' Monthly Circle Dance Group** in Stretton on Fosse 2.30 – 4pm. First and third Tuesday of each month. Dances from around the world – all taught from scratch. Please contact Geri Hunting geraldinehunting@icloud.com or 07968 338848



**11th GLOSS Spring Market:** See ad on page 10

**11th Repair Café:** Official Opening. 10am-2pm, Ellen Badger Health & Wellbeing Hub

**11th Stour Valley Lions Bingo:** See ad on page 16

**13th Town Council Meeting:** 7pm, New Clark House

**14th Stour Valley Lions Club:** Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road, 6.30pm for 7pm start. Second Tuesday of the month

**16th Drop-In Clinic:** For the over 65s. 10am-12pm, Ellen Badger Health & Wellbeing Hub. Every third Thursday

**17th Royal British Legion Social Evening:** The Shipston on Stour Branch gathers for a social event on the third Friday of each month at The Black Horse, starting at 7:30pm. Additionally, every other month, the Branch Committee meets on the third Friday at St Edmund's Church from 6:30pm to 7:30pm, before joining the social gathering. If you are interested in Branch events or enquiring to join the Branch, please contact the Branch Secretary, Alistair Watkins (Ali) on 07786690502 or email ShipstonOnStour.Secretary@rbl.community



**17th Shipston Music Society:** See ad on page 16

**17th Townsend Hall Jazz:** Ray Gelato. Doors/Bar open 7pm for 8pm. Tickets £20 in advance, £25 on the door. From Flower House and online via townsendhall.co.uk. Table reservations of 4 or more phone 07711 562317

**18th Lions Cinema:** The Choral. See ad on page 10

**19th Shipston Tennis Club:** Open Afternoon. See ad on page 10

**21st Annual Town Meeting:** See ad on page 16

**24th St Edmund's Coffee Morning:** See ad on page 7

**28th GLOSS (Great Ladies of Shipston and Surroundings).** A social group for women to have fun and make friends. 7.30pm- 9.30pm at the Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road. The 4th Tuesday of every month (except December). All ladies welcome. Entry £2.

**29th People, Planet, Pint: sustainability drinks:** 6pm, The Horseshoe Pub. Come and hear what is going on in Shipston and see how you can join in to make Shipston more sustainable. 1st 10 drinks are free. Booking essential on Eventbrite.



**29th Shipston Literary Society:** The Path to Publication – experience of the writer's journey. 7.30pm, Community Hall. Tredington. Contact: Alison 07772 202915

**30th Local Quaker Meeting for Worship:** St Edmund's Church, last Thursday in the month at 2.30pm, followed by tea/coffee, biscuits & chat



*Our toy library is a sustainable, inclusive space where families borrow toys instead of buying them - thereby saving money, reducing waste, and making play accessible to all.*

*Annual membership fee of £5.*

**PLAY MORE.  
WASTE LESS.**

<https://borrow.shwp.org.uk/>

Follow us on facebook or instagram.



Charity number:1192236



## Bereavement Café

A support group for people at any stage of bereavement



First Tuesday of every month  
11am - 1pm

7<sup>th</sup> April, 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2<sup>nd</sup> June  
16<sup>th</sup> May - Dying Matters Event

Ellen Badger Community Hub

For further information, email [rowena@shwp.org.uk](mailto:rowena@shwp.org.uk)



# COFFEE MORNING



ALL PROCEEDS TO CHURCH FUNDS

**At St. Edmund's Church  
Shipston on Stour  
Friday 24th April 2026  
10.30 am onwards**



**Saturday mornings  
10.30-12.00**

**St Edmund's Church, Church Street, Shipston**

**We are open to anyone.  
No referral or voucher needed.**

If you need help, get in touch:

☎️ 📞 📧 0738 635 2456  
✉️ [shipstonfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:shipstonfoodbank@gmail.com)

Donations of basic items can be left in the church porch **between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Saturday.** There's also a collection point in the Co-op and Tesco.

For information about our current needs please check on our Facebook page or our website:

📘 [www.facebook.com/ShipstonFoodBank](https://www.facebook.com/ShipstonFoodBank)  
🌐 [www.shipstonfoodbank.org.uk](http://www.shipstonfoodbank.org.uk)

## Focus on Shipston business... Thirst Edition

After visiting a micropub about 25 years ago, David Allsop decided to open one when he retired and he proudly set up his business in Shipston at 46 Church Street, opening on Good Friday 28th March 2018.



David's wife Jeanette was keen that it should appeal to women, and the business model was for it to be like an ongoing beer festival, driven by everchanging ales and beers.

Weekly quiz nights were introduced later in the year with a view to raise money for local causes. Tougher times came during Covid, but David's entrepreneurial skills kicked in and they provided takeaways and home deliveries which really cemented their reputation in and around Shipston as they remotely served a very grateful community.

Then the business really took off. The community quiz night was a runaway success, and to date, Thirst Edition has raised an astonishing sum of over £34,000 through the generous support of the community, helping out various groups and organisations including Shipston Excelsior Football Club, Shipston First Responders, Shipston Food Bank, Shipston Home Nursing, and so many other great causes in our town.

With events including themed evenings, Tap Takeovers (where all ales are from one brewery) and with help and support from Tim

Porter, Thirst Edition is now a recognised venue for live music in the area, with bands, duos, and solo musicians coming from all over the Midlands, the Southwest and even America.

Since opening, Thirst Edition has won many awards including Shakespeare CAMRA 2026 pub for the fourth consecutive year and runner-up in County Pub of the Year. They have a total of eight awards and are supported by enthusiastic staff. David's ethos is that it is not just a bar, it's a community hub.



A visit to this micropub is highly recommended. Great drinks and a local atmosphere that reflects the beating heart of our community. David and Jeanette are fiercely loyal to the community and are proud to be an important part of our Shipston culture. If you are looking for a warm, friendly and very welcoming place to spend an evening, then Thirst Edition is a great choice. Opening hours vary during the week but the website gives you all the information you need. <https://www.thirstedition.co.uk/>



## New housing developments - latest



It has been a busy month for SOS Save our Shipston. With Lichfields threatening to put in the planning application for Fell Mill by the end of March, we had highly productive meetings with our planning consultants and a first session with our barrister which lasted over four hours and included an extensive walk around the Fell Mill site.

We now have a very focused plan which involves commissioning key specialists to write reports on important aspects we will use in our objections. Planning evidence is crucial to make our case effectively and for that we need the right people working with us.

All this highly specialist and legal input costs money, so we have also been stepping up our fundraising efforts. We have raised our targets and will be doing further fundraising drives going forward. If you haven't got your badge yet, they are available for a donation at The Little Bird Shop run by Katie who is an experienced herbalist, at Little Vins, a lovely café for all the family, and from Larks Meadow Farm in Willington at their pop up shop on Saturday mornings. The SOS team can usually be found manning our stall in the Market Square on a Saturday morning.

There are now posters available in thick paper as well as weatherproof versions which you can pick up at the above venues, or you can print your own from the link on the website. Please put them in your windows, on noticeboards or even on gateposts! By now, more banners will have appeared on all the approaches to Shipston, and we will be announcing a sponsored walk around the Fell Mill Site. So keep an eye on social media and our website. If you are on our email list, details will be landing in your inbox very soon.

Once the planning application has been submitted, we will be holding another public meeting and doing an increasing number of face-to-face workshops. Stay tuned, spread the word and get in touch if you have any questions or can assist us in any way.

Save Our Shipston – Protecting Shipston's Future – Together!

 [www.saveourshipston.org](http://www.saveourshipston.org)
 @SaveOurShipston  
 @SaveOurShipston
  Say No to additional 3000+ houses



To donate through  **gofundme** *Scan me with your phone camera!*  
 Please go online and type in the link below:  
 [gofund.me/tall.bear.form](https://gofund.me/tall.bear.form)


**To donate directly:**  
 Bank Name: HSBC  
 Account Name: SaveOurShipston  
 Sort Code: 40-18-57  
 Account Number: 60770736

## Shipston Proms

Thank you for sharing your ideas about what you would like the Proms to feature. Lots of you contacted us and even stopped us in the street to ask if 'Ibiza' would be here for 2026. You bet it is! Yes, back by popular demand is the amazing Ibiza on Stour



Chris Roberts/Widerview Visual Media

dance party, scheduled for Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June at the Hub. One of the highlights of the fortnight, topped only by the 'Last Night' party in the square, and with an impressive cast of DJs, it is thanks to our generous sponsors that we can put on an event of this scale. This is a huge undertaking for a small town such as Shipston, and if anyone would like to offer their services for either setting up or breaking down the event after it has finished then please contact us, an hour two or your time would be greatly appreciated.

All your other favourites are back for 2026, including the famous Saturday Pub Trail on 20<sup>th</sup> June, Shipston Town Band on 21<sup>st</sup>, Folk Night on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Open Mic on 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Primary School Concert on 24<sup>th</sup> June, Shipston Introducing (our very own X Factor!) on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>, Songs from the Shows on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. We have over 20 events confirmed to date, with more in the pipeline.

You also requested events you could participate in, so in addition to Shipston Introducing, where local talent competes for a slot on the main stage on the Last Night, and the Open Mic where Barney Porter will sign you up for a session on the Black Horse Garden stage, we also have a new Dance Fusion event. This will take place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at Brailes Village Hall. This event is free, and open to all ages. Our two amazing local dance teachers, Rachel Tame, who runs Zumba sessions on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and Michelle Ashfield who teaches Strictly FitSteps on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays will be guiding you through some fantastic dance moves including, jive, tango, waltz, Latin, reggae, rock, Bhangra, etc. You don't need a partner; this is strictly solo dancing and having fun. Turn up in trainers and comfortable clothing and unleash your inner Fred and Ginger, K-Pop, or Diversity moves. Who knows, you may be inspired to join a regular class.



Chris Roberts/Widerview Visual Media

If you are interested in getting involved or taking part in any events, then please check out our Facebook and Instagram sites and our website for further details [www.shipstonproms.org](http://www.shipstonproms.org)



## Wildlife and dogs: finding a balance

We are privileged to have a designated Local Wildlife Site at Cornmill Meadows, located opposite the cemetery on the A3400. Here, visitors can enjoy peaceful country walks, listen to birds, and see the results of our volunteers' recent efforts.

Cornmill Meadows has become a popular spot for residents to exercise their dogs, and this is welcomed. It is a valuable amenity for both people and their pets. However, it is important to balance dog walking with the needs of our wildlife residents, who depend on Cornmill Meadows as their home. Birds, rabbits, field mice, hedgehogs, shrews, field voles, and grass snakes require a quiet and safe space to nest, feed, and reproduce. Allowing dogs to roam freely through the long grass can disturb ground-nesting birds like skylarks, as well as the other animals.

Intentionally damaging or destroying an active bird's nest, including cutting hedges during the nesting season (from 1st March to 31st August), is illegal. Therefore, we kindly ask that dogs are kept on leads and remain on the mown paths.

Thank you for your understanding. If you would like further information, or to join our group of volunteers, you would be very welcome. Please contact Hilary Kelly at Shipston Town Council.



Volunteers planting new trees amongst the old, laid hedge at Cornmill Meadows

## Brass band hits high note

Shipston Town Band played all the right notes – and in the right order – to come away with second prize at a recent contest. Performing a three-movement test piece Three Haworth Impression, the band beat competition from six other bands from across the country to take home the second place trophy at the



Oxfordshire and District Brass Band Association Winter Contest held in Witney in February. They were beaten by just one point by Worcestershire-based Avonbank Brass Band.

For more information visit: [www.shipstonband.co.uk](http://www.shipstonband.co.uk), email: [info@shipstonband.co.uk](mailto:info@shipstonband.co.uk) or call: 07784 300943.



**S** SHIPSTON  
TENNIS

# OPEN AFTERNOON 2026

2-4PM SUNDAY 19TH APRIL



**FREE TENNIS FOR ALL!**  
New membership discounts throughout April.  
Come along to find out what is on offer.  
Tea, coffee and cake.

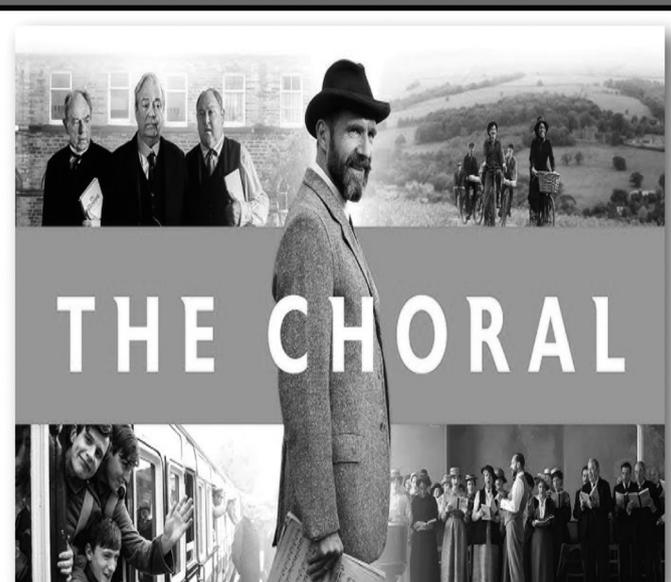
Presented in partnership with  
[rosieclarktenniscoaching.co.uk](http://rosieclarktenniscoaching.co.uk)



**ROSIE CLARK**  
TENNIS COACHING : PLAY YOUR GAME

Shipston Sports Club, London Road, Shipston on Stour, CV36 4EP  
[SHIPSTONTENNIS.CO.UK](http://SHIPSTONTENNIS.CO.UK)

**STOUR VALLEY LIONS CINEMA**



# THE CHORAL

Members of a choral society enlist in World War 1, leaving the choir master to recruit teenagers, they enjoy the singing, but grapple with their impending conscription.  
**Certificate 12A - Drama/Romance/History**

**TOWNSEND HALL**  
**SATURDAY 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 at 7.30pm**  
Tickets on sale from The Flower House,  
Shipston for cash £6.00, or pay on the door,  
Drinks, Chocolate and raffle.



Shipston on Stour and  
District Local History Society

# Shipston Museum

**New for 2026**  
**Romans in The Stour Valley**  
**The Tramway | 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Finding Hidden Stories in the Museum**

[www.shipstonmuseum.co.uk](http://www.shipstonmuseum.co.uk)

Old Clarke House, West Street    Shipston-on-Stour CV36 4EL



# SPRING MARKET

**SHIPSTON ON STOUR**

**Saturday 11th April**  
**12PM - 4PM**  
**The Scout Hut**

Supported by  
**G.L.O.S.S**

*Fun for all the family!*

## Shipston Primary School

### Young Voices

Recently, we finally were able to join with 5,000 other children from across the country to attend the Young Voices concert in Birmingham, our earlier date having been postponed due to the weather. As always, it was amazing to be part of such a wonderful event. The children were a real credit to us, singing with great enthusiasm; I know that the families who attended had a wonderful time, also. Thanks to all the staff who gave up their time to attend the event and to practice during the year and to Mrs Proud for leading Young Voices so well.

### Building work

During half term we had some lovely new fencing put in by the Year 1 classrooms. This has been installed to increase the children's access to continuous provision and to enhance their play-based learning experiences, which are vital for helping them to build on their learning from Reception. The children love being able to learn outdoors and to collaborate with each other. Over the rest of the year we will be developing this area further to make it the best learning space we can. Many, many thanks to one of our local Shipston companies, JPD Fencing, for their kindness and generosity in donating the fencing and installing it for free over half term. We have also, after many years of hard work, finally had new boilers installed.

### School Council

School Council recently organised and held a fair in aid of the National Deaf Children's Society, a charity which directly supports children in our school. Many thanks to everyone who came and supported the event after school, the parents who gave up their time to help the School Council children create cakes, biscuits

and other prizes and games at home, Mrs Labbett for leading School Council this year and, of course, to all the children on School Council for their great efforts. They should be very proud of themselves as they raised a wonderful £426.34. Extra well done to Dolcie and Belle who raised additional funds for the charity in their own time out of school. We are very proud of you.

### World Book Day

We have had a fantastic week celebrating World Book Day. On Friday, Reception and Year 1 made trips to the town library to take part in activities with a local storyteller. Meanwhile, back in school, all of the other year groups took part in various activities to promote the love of reading, from battling book characters to creating their reading journey using paper chains.

On top of that, we have had our 'Design a Book Cover' competition that had well over 50 fantastic entries and the winners should be very proud of themselves. We also hope you have enjoyed the opportunity to join us in class for Share a Story week. It has been a lot of fun. Please continue to encourage your children to read and enjoy books with you on a daily basis. Reading is a truly invaluable skill in their learning journey.

Congratulations to our 'Design a Book Cover' winners:

Reception: Isla (Ducklings)

Year 1: Louis (Wrens)

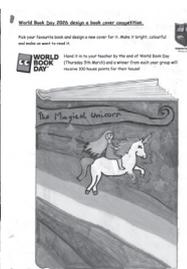
Year 2: Daisy (Kingfishers)

Year 3: Amelia (Kestrels)

Year 4: Albert (Falcons)

Year 5: Ryan (Swans)

Year 6: Beatrix (Pelicans)



## Shipston High School

It's been a wonderfully busy and exciting month at Shipston High School, filled with activity across every corner of our community. From key staff appointments shaping the future of our leadership team to a series of successful primary events, enrichment opportunities and important milestones for our students, there has been plenty to celebrate. As always, the energy and enthusiasm of our students, staff and wider community have been at the heart of everything we've achieved.

We were delighted to welcome pupils from our local primary schools for a fantastic series of taster sessions, giving young learners a glimpse of life at our vibrant community school. Most recently, students took part in an energetic Boccia workshop, which was extremely well attended and received brilliant feedback from primary staff, pupils and parents alike. These events continue to strengthen the relationships within our local education community, and we look forward to hosting many more in the months ahead.

Another highlight was our ground-breaking ceremony on 4th March, marking the start of construction on our brand-new sports hall. This exciting development represents a significant investment in our school's facilities and will provide fantastic opportunities for students for years to come.

Students from Years 8–10 also enjoyed an inspiring visit to the Careers in Sport event at Edgbaston Cricket Ground on Friday 27th February, where they explored the wide range of pathways available within the sports industry, from professional performance to analytics and everything in between. They took part in a variety of interactive workshops, including designing their own sport and developing creative ways to encourage participation, activities that strengthened their teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills while offering insight into how the sports sector operates behind the scenes. Students also had the chance to speak with representatives from universities and national sporting bodies such

as the Lawn Tennis Association, gaining valuable information about routes into sport-related careers. Their behaviour and engagement throughout the day were exceptional, and they represented the school with real maturity and enthusiasm.

We are also pleased to announce an important development in our leadership team. After receiving a strong field of applicants and completing a rigorous selection process, Shipston High School has appointed Mr Dan Rushworth as our new Head Teacher from September. Joining us from Chipping Campden School, where he has most recently served as Vice Principal, Mr Rushworth brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of impactful leadership. His commitment to fostering an environment where both students and staff can thrive aligns perfectly with our values, and we are confident he will guide Shipston High into an exciting new chapter.



Meanwhile, our Year 11 students have made a strong start to the mock exam season, approaching this important stage with maturity and determination. Several have already completed the practical component of their Drama GCSE, showcasing impressive creativity, confidence and commitment. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and wish them every success as they continue their mock examinations in the weeks ahead.

Our Year 11s have an inspiring visit to look forward to the National Apprenticeship Show, offering a valuable opportunity to explore future career pathways and connect with employers from a wide range of industries. We look forward to sharing more highlights as these events unfold and continuing to celebrate the achievements of our students throughout the term.

## Probus

### 'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered' by Julia Phillips

What would come to mind if you were given a picture of an old woman, dressed in black, riding on a broomstick and accompanied by a black cat? Most people would immediately think: witch. Julia Phillips has spent much of her academic career delving into the history of our fascination with witches and entertained Probus members and guests with a fully illustrated presentation tracing our changing perceptions of female witches.

In England, the practice of witchcraft started during pagan times, when both men and women were respected as knowledgeable healers. By the tenth century it seems some women believed they could fly, leading to an association between witches and the devil. The Catholic Church sought to eliminate such pagan and heretical practices, and many women were condemned to death.

By the 19th century witches were popularised in children's books; *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and Andrew Lang's works on folklore implanted the idea of wicked old women. In the 20th century, films like *Snow White* depicted the evil Queen transforming into a witch, turning once-beautiful women into old hags.

The 1940s saw Hollywood change tack. *I Married a Witch* (1942) and *Bell, Book and Candle* (1959) showed a more glamorous representation of female witches; Disney's *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* was distinctly humorous. Pop music and video games then embraced the enchanting and mysterious nature of witches. The 1990s continued this change in attitude; Terry Pratchett includes numerous witch characters in his tales, generally glamorous and sophisticated.

Today, interest in white witches and pagan witchcraft is thriving on social media, associated once again with healing. Modern pagan witchcraft is revisiting pre-Christian traditions connecting people with nature, emphasising personal growth and extends to all genders. The wheel has come full circle!

Could Probus appeal to you? Then give us a try as our guest. Guests enjoy a free lunch and no initial commitment to join, entirely your choice! Please contact Tony Joint on 07711 310272 or email: [tonyjoint73@hotmail.com](mailto:tonyjoint73@hotmail.com) for further details.



## Shipston Tennis Club

Shipston Tennis Club is holding an Open Day session on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> April from 2-4pm. We will have coaches and club members present to welcome prospective players – both adults and children – and show you round to see what is on offer. There will be membership discounts for new members signing up throughout April.

Come along and find out more!

Email: [membership@shipstontennis.co.uk](mailto:membership@shipstontennis.co.uk)



## Shipston Rotary

It was a pleasure for President Fay Ivens to induct Allan Jones as a member of Shipston Rotary at a recent meeting. Allan was proposed by David Dawkins and our newest members Mike Raines and Mark Barnes read the Objects of Rotary and the 4 Way Test, before he was warmly welcomed by Club members. Allan lives in Tredington and has previously been a member of Coventry Rotary Club.



## Women's Institute

In March the Branch heard Anne Harrison talk about her life in the care system. Anne's mother was one of the Windrush generation who came to the UK to train as a nurse.

She became pregnant, gave birth and placed Anne with a foster mother, who handed her over to the state system when she was three months old. Anne found a loving family until the age of seven when the family decided to emigrate to Australia, where the government would not accept black children. Anne was placed in a children's home in Rugby where she stayed until she was 17. Besides being the only black child, Anne was the only one who never had visitors. She kept in touch with her foster family in Australia, but correspondence was censored, as she found out much later - a letter she wrote about her unhappiness was never sent. The system cared for children as best it could, but could never replace a family. Anne was fed and clothed and received a good education, but no one knew of the special needs of a black child, for example how to care for her hair.

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN



Anne became a police cadet, and in time the first black policewoman in Warwickshire. Some years earlier, her social worker had traced her mother and found that she had a brother, who also had been abandoned. Anne made contact, and her mother's first letter contained the chilling words: Call me Auntie. Anne had problems locating her file which she should have received on leaving care, but eventually in 2019 it came to light and her many questions could be answered. Anne is in regular contact with her mother, who is now very frail, and also her brother. Her story is one of strength and resilience. She took advantage of those opportunities that were offered and built a successful, useful and happy life.

Business continued after tea break. A recruitment drive in the old Bank, High Street will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> May. A fundraising garden party will be held on 6<sup>th</sup> June, and the national WI AGM will again be virtual. The next meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April in the Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road, will be a social evening.

Here is our programme for 2026. May: Dr Alison Foster: Toxic Trees, Poisonous Perennials and Wicked Weeds • June: Jackie Allen: Packing the Ultimate Capsule Suitcase • July: Social evening – Oh I do like to be beside the seaside! • September: Adam Wood: True Crime Tales • October: Clare Shivlock: Warwickshire Willow • November: AGM and The Work of the Heart of England's Carer's Trust • December: Christmas Party. More talks planned until March 2027!

## Stour Valley Lions

Dates for your diary:

- Lions Film Nights, Townsend Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 8<sup>th</sup> May, 5<sup>th</sup> June: 7pm for 7.30pm show
- 11<sup>th</sup> April - Lions Bingo Night at the Townsend Hall
- 17<sup>th</sup> May - Duck Race (a joint event with our friends from Fish & Frolics, funds to be split between the Youth Club and Fish & Frolics.)
- 6<sup>th</sup> June – Book Sale at the Scout Hut



We are always looking for new members, so if you are interested to come and join us or help with events please send an email to [enquiries@stourvalleylions.club](mailto:enquiries@stourvalleylions.club) or call us on 0345 833 2835. We meet at the Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Rd, Shipston on Stour, 6.30 for 7pm, second Tuesday of the month.

## Astronomical Society

The star of the show for April is Venus, as Adrian Wakeham writes in his monthly notes.

Venus is easy to find. It's the really bright star in the west, the second brightest object in the night sky, only behind the moon. It is called the Evening Star as it can be seen before full darkness, before any other star at dusk. On the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, it lies close to a very new (thin crescent) moon. Close by is the star cluster, the Pleiades (also known as the Seven Sisters).

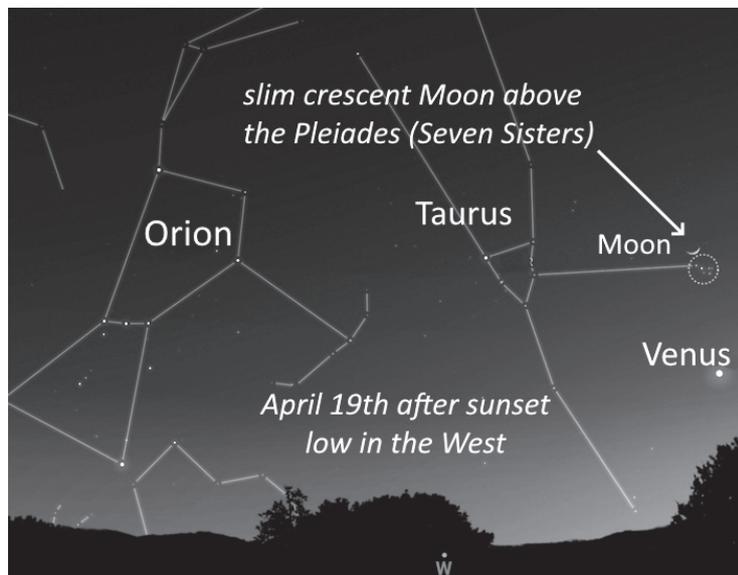


Photo Credit: Julia Waller (our club secretary)

Venus is the planet that gets closest to Earth (a mere 40 million km or 25 million miles) and was also known as Earth's Twin. Come the age of space exploration, Venus changed from a warmer version of earth to a hell-like place. It has a carbon dioxide atmosphere with sulphuric acid rain and a volcanic surface! An atmosphere which is 90 times denser than Earth's, it is the hottest planet in the solar system at 460 degrees Celsius. Its day, at 243 Earth days, is longer than its year, at 225 Earth days, and it rotates in the opposite direction (clockwise) to most bodies in the solar system. It is not a nice place for humans to visit!

The Stratford-upon-Avon Astronomical Society meets every first and third Tuesday at 8pm (doors open at 7.30pm) at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more. The first Tuesday is a Club Night; in April that will be on 7<sup>th</sup> April, and the speaker on the third Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> April, will be Mike Frost from the British Astronomical Association, with a talk called 'Who's Who in the Moon'. Please note that the speakers usually start quite promptly at 8pm.

For more details go to the website <http://www.astro.org.uk>



or contact the Chair, John Waller [john.waller@astro.org.uk](mailto:john.waller@astro.org.uk) or on 07703 192188.



## New Shipston Link bus

A brand new Shipston Link minibus will soon be appearing in Shipston and surrounding area. The Link has been part of the town's success story since its formation 40 years ago, serving both the town and surrounding villages. Run entirely by unpaid volunteers, including of course the drivers, a few new ones are needed. If you are retired and/or can spare a morning or afternoon occasionally, please contact Richard Adams on [richardadams5@hotmail.com](mailto:richardadams5@hotmail.com) or 07961 452182.



## County Council

At the Food Forum, we are looking at food security and availability across the county. The rising price of oil due to war in the Middle East is certainly having a swift effect on people already struggling. I am writing just before I go off to the foodbank this morning and I know that with petrol prices up, we will be seeing more people for whom this is the last financial straw. It was impressive to hear about other pantry and foodbank projects. There are some incredible innovations and incredibly hard work. Watch this space for the upcoming strategy!

Next week at another full council meeting we will be adopting the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Director of Public Health's report. The latter is all about tech and young people. Whilst it doesn't come naturally to me to regulate too much, the genie we have let out of the bottle with being constantly online needs to be tamed! The Health and Wellbeing strategy sets the direction for living better and healthier lives. Addressing loneliness and isolation in rural areas is particularly key.

This segues into one of the biggest items you contact me about: transport. In practical terms, you need a car when you live in a rural area like this, but not everyone can manage it. So we rely on public transport. I had hoped that Indie Go would improve things, but it appears that we need the 'plus' part of the service to actually make it work for us. In other patches, the ability to ride on demand has been implemented, but sadly not here – yet. I am not letting it lie. Added to this I am keen to work with lift-sharing schemes. There are apps about and these are another part of how we tackle our travel needs. I am also pleased that you can get an Uber if you need one (though not cheap). SEND parents

## District Council

Is A River Alive? This is the title of a book by Robert Macfarlane, whose book talk marked the beginning of The Gathering, a District-wide river festival run by River Hope in March. After attending many of the wonderful events, the highlight being the Stour's very own river blessing, I would say the answer is a resounding yes, the river **is** alive. Channel 4's *Dirty Business* provided the backdrop for this festival, and pollution, and what we're doing to our rivers, was of course very much the theme running through most of the events. Whilst we continue to battle with the water companies, there are some things that were highlighted that we can do now to help the situation.

1. The 3 Ps (poo, pee, and paper) are the **ONLY** things that should go into the toilet. In one of the films shown, Mark Barrow's *Flow of Life*, we get to see what is under the surface of our rivers. The scene I can't forget is of various different sanitary products and condoms floating elegantly along the riverbed. No wipe is flushable, whatever it says on the packet.
2. Stopping our pets being part of the problem: one flea treatment has enough harmful chemicals to kill 60 million bees. It's a real dilemma; we want to look after our pets, but we don't want to be the cause of leaching chemicals into our environment. Anything with Fipronil is a major cause for concern, even stroking your pet weeks after a spot-on treatment, then washing your hands, means harmful chemicals enter the water. Dogs that have been treated shouldn't enter the river. We can be more prescriptive rather than preventative in our treatment of fleas and worms; at the moment, reduction in use seems to be the best solution.
3. If you're not connected to the mains sewerage system, make sure you're not part of the problem. Anyone living outside a town or village most likely has their own septic tank or

are getting together. I have offered to help out, but I suspect they all know a lot more than I do. I am here as a shoulder to lean on and a mouthpiece to shout (sums me up I think).

A success of sorts with mould and damp in people's homes. I am using the AHSCOSC (the health committee I chair) to investigate the health implications of mould and ask landlords to come to committee to be asked about progress. I am not happy to hear about painting over mould, not with anti-mould paint, but ordinary magnolia. So to those who live with this, I am using the biggest stick I have to highlight what's going on and push for change.

My word of the week this week is absurd. Radio 4 provided it in a Kafkaesque story of false arrest, and I was captivated that the absurdity of the bureaucracy that came to the fore: policies piled on strategies and yet more policies. Carefully worked through policies which are contradicted by others leads to a mess and sclerotic progress. The absurdity of the tangle of rules we find ourselves constrained by reminds me again that I set out to cut through the red tape. I might finally be finding my way to unwind a little of it.

Come and see me, email or ring. But please, if you ring would you leave a message including your phone number and name? Sometimes I am in a not-spot with the phone and it just does not pick up the number. Rural life eh?

### Jo Barker

County Councillor, Shipston Division

077489 68712 | [jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk)



sewerage treatment plant, which means you have to comply to some binding rules. These include emptying it at least once a year and keeping it in good working order so you're not causing pollution!



On a more positive note, the River Stour is very much alive. We are starting to record invertebrates in the river at Shipston, and the lampreys are a good sign of river health, although of course numbers have plummeted in the last few decades.

The general message from The Gathering is that rivers are living systems, not just resources. The growing River Rights movement seeks to protect them by recognising their legal personhood, like how corporations can have a distinct legal status. So the next step for the Stour is to draw up a Charter giving it the right to be free from pollution and the right to regenerate and be restored. Get in touch if you're interested in taking this forward. Find out about River Hope here: <https://www.riverhope.org.uk/>



District Councillors now have monthly clinics with Orbit, so do bring to our attention any outstanding issues you have with them. Since October last year, Awaab's law has been in place. This says landlords have to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed timeframes.

And a reminder, for those that are struggling with the current wave of price hikes, there is help. This is the cost of living support line; 0800 408 1449

### Olivia Hatch

District Councillor, Shipston North

07973 846605 | [olivia.hatch@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:olivia.hatch@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



## Your town councillors



### Tony Booth, Mayor

*General Purposes and Communications Working Group Chair*

e: [tony.booth@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:tony.booth@shipstontowncouncil.org)



### Richard Walters, Deputy Mayor

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### Ian Cooper

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### Paul Tesh

*Planning Committee Chair*

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### Jo Barker

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### Hilary Kelly

*Environmental Working Group Chair*

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### Chris Howarth

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### Michelle Kelly

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### John Williams

e: [john.williams@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:john.williams@shipstontowncouncil.org)



### Steve Crockett

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### Vanessa Benjamin-Smith

*SAFAG Chair*

e: [vanessa.benjamin-smith@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:vanessa.benjamin-smith@shipstontowncouncil.org)



### Vivien Walden

e: [vivien.walden@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:vivien.walden@shipstontowncouncil.org)

## Useful contacts

Community Links Transport	01789 264491
Shipston Library:	0300 5558171
- 24/7 renewal line	01926 499273
Highways customer services	01926 412515
Severn Trent Emergency Line:	0800 7834444
Shipston Volunteer Transport Scheme (VASA)	01789 262889
Shipston Leisure Centre	01608 662354
Shipston Medical Centre	01608 661845
- Out of hours	111
Shipston Link (local transport)	01386 593446
Shipston Recycling Centre	01926 412593
Stratford District Council	01789 267575
Townsend Hall	07514 704057
Warwickshire County Council	01926 410410
UCHW Hospital	024 7696 4000
Warwick Hospital	01926 495321
Samaritans	116 123
<b>Local police (non emergency)</b>	<b>101</b>
Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood:	
PC1508 Sid Hammond – 07967 303185	
PCSO Katie Brooks – 07870 978973	

### Local police (non emergency)

Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood:  
PC1508 Sid Hammond – 07967 303185  
PCSO Katie Brooks – 07870 978973

### Churches of Shipston:

Stour Valley Baptist	01608 664876
Our Lady & St Michael	01608 685259
St Edmund's	07951 064778
Methodist Church	01295 257193

### Shipston-on-Stour Town Council

New Clark House, West Street, Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 4HD

### General Enquiries

t: 01608 662180 e: [enquiries@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:enquiries@shipstontowncouncil.org)



### Town Clerks

e: [clerk@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:clerk@shipstontowncouncil.org)



### County Council Contact:

#### Councillor Jo Barker

t: 07748 968712 e: [jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk)



### District Council Contacts:



#### Dave Passingham (Shipston South)

e: [dave.passingham@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:dave.passingham@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



#### Olivia Hatch (Shipston North)

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t: 07973 846605



## Something exciting to share?

If you have a story that's relevant to Shipston residents, please contact the editor, Laura Parker, by email: [forum@shipstononline.org](mailto:forum@shipstononline.org) or, if you don't have email access, on 07989 530069



To request posts on the council's Facebook page, contact [enquiries@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:enquiries@shipstontowncouncil.org)

### Forum copy deadline:

#### Second Monday of the month

- but the sooner you can notify the editor of a potential story the better.

The Shipston Forum is produced monthly by the Town Council.

While every effort is made to ensure information is accurate, the Town Council and its contractors do not accept responsibility for material submitted by readers or third parties and does not endorse any organisation or event publicised. Contributions may be edited to fit available space.

Stour Valley Lions bring you  
an evening of



# Prize Bingo!

## Saturday 11th April

at the Townsend Hall, Shipston

**Great prizes! Tea, Coffee, Cake!**

**Raffle! Bar**

*Just come on down!* **Doors open at 6.00pm**  
*No booking required!* **Eyes Down at 7.30pm**

Stour Valley Lions. Reg Charity: 1191826



### Aspects of Elgar:

in search of what makes Elgar unique

An illustrated talk by Stuart Freed, Chairman of the Elgar Society

Friday 17th April, 7.30pm  
Methodist Church, 52 New Street,  
Shipston-on-Stour



Tickets £10 on the door  
or in advance from E.H. Spencer  
Free entry to Shipston Music Society members  
New members always welcome  
Information: ph 01608 662998

Registered Charity No: 1146459 (England)  
www.shipstonmusic.org.uk




Easter Bonnet Competitions Under 5's & Over 5's

Rotary Club of Shipston on Stour

## Easter Event for Children

A FUN MORNING WITH LOTS TO DO

Tea, coffee and cake for mums, dads, and grannies

**EASTER COMPETITIONS**

- Cuckoo in the Nest  
*Farms from Past Office & Morrisons Daily*
- Easter Bonnet Parade at 11.30am
- Ice an Easter Biscuit
- Fantastic Easter Egg Raffle
- Plant a Sunflower
- Make an Easter Card
- Easter Prizes for the winners

**EASTER FUN AT THE SCOUT HUT SATURDAY 4th April 10.00 - 12 noon**



# ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

## AT THE TOWNSEND HALL

### TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 2026 AT 7PM

The Annual Town Meeting is a meeting for all local government electors of the Town. It is not a meeting of the Town Council.

Anyone may attend and registered electors of the town may speak during the meeting.

Local organisations and community groups are invited to attend and report on their activities during the past year and their future plans

### YOUR TOWN. YOUR VOICE. YOUR FUTURE.

For further information please contact Shipston Town Clerk on [clerk@shipstontowncouncil.org](mailto:clerk@shipstontowncouncil.org) or phone on 01608 662180.

