

East Coker Society Newsletter



January 2024

Free Issue No 193

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East Coker Society News

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

This will be the 49th year that East Coker Society has been producing a Quarterly Newsletter (in January, April, July and October) on behalf of all village clubs, societies and organisations. We deliver this by email, post to our website and produce a limited number of printed copies which are made available at Goose Slade Farm Shop, Helyar Arms, St Michael and All Angels' Church, the Village Café and East Coker Hall. Thank you to Lesley Lindsay, Martin and Janet Wells for all their contributions in making this possible.

If you wish to subscribe to our emails, please contact Lesley at l.lindsay@eastcoker.com with your email address. These personal details are not shared with any other party, in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

East Coker Society has arranged to provide replacement noticeboards for the village which are located at the Helyar Arms, the Village Hall, next to the Bus Shelter, Broadacres and the junction of Lower Wraxhill and Wraxhill Road. These are intended for the promotion of East Coker events by village clubs and organisations.

Wishing you all a Very Happy New Year.

Sarah Owen, Secretary, East Coker Society

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Newsletter will be in **April 2024**. Copy, please, to Lesley Lindsay at l.lindsay@eastcoker.com by **Thursday 21 March 2024 or sooner if possible**.

Village Clubs and Organisations

EAST/WEST COKER ROYAL BRITISH LEGION - A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Poppy Appeal 2023

On behalf of the Poppy Appeal team, may I thank our supporters in East Coker for their contribution to the grand total of £5,912, with contributions from the congregation of St Michael's, East Coker School, the East Coker Café, Helyar Arms and Goose Slade Farm. It is worth noting that our door-to-door volunteers around the villages raised almost £2k of the total above. Sometimes a thankless task, but we appreciate the hard work and dedication they put in each year. I hope you will continue to support them next time.

Date for your diary

Special Cheese and Wine Evening at East Coker Hall featuring the Decadettes, Friday 12 April. Further details in the New Year.

Dave Giles, Chairman

THURSDAY BADMINTON

We are looking for some new members to join our friendly Thursday afternoons from 2.00pm for social badminton at East Coker Hall.

Please contact Sally 01935 824238 if you are interested in joining us.

EAST COKER WI

We wish you all a Happy New Year and hope you had a pleasant Christmas with all the presents you hoped you would get.

Our Christmas meal was held at the Royal Oak, Hardington at which all who attended had a pleasant meal and enjoyed the excitement of guessing what the Secret Santa had brought us.

The local WI welcomes new members for monthly get togethers to hear interesting speakers on a variety of different subjects, both educational and amusing. Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month at 7.30pm at East Coker Hall. The talk is given before a refreshment and gossip break and a quick session of announcements. We usually finish by 9.00pm.

A fun competition is held each month, usually having some connection with the speaker's subject. The money raised is sent to the WI head office from where it is distributed to women in deprived countries. They are given the means to raise money themselves to help feed their family; this might be, for example, a hand worked sewing machine to make or mend clothes, or to provide a goat to produce milk for their own consumption or to sell.

Whist Drives are also arranged which are open to anyone. These are held in the Dampier Room of East Coker Hall and start at 7.00pm.

We start our programme in January with a wine tasting with an emphasis on the effect food has on the taste. This will be given by a member of the local wine circle, David Pryor. This is followed in February with a talk by a retired ballroom dancer. Our AGM is held in March which is usually short and sweet and followed by a social evening. April sees us sampling chocolate with a small quiz on what we taste.

Anyone wishing further information, please contact our secretary, Pauline 864439

Diary dates

Thursday 18 January	Whist drive, 7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 25 January	Wine tasting, 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 15 February	Whist drive, 7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 29 February	Rhinestones & Sequins, 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 21 March	Whist Drive, 7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 29 March	AGM and Social, 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thursday 25 April	Chocolate tasting & quiz, 7.30pm	East Coker Hall

Joyce Pryor

EAST COKER WINE CIRCLE

Diary dates

Saturday 13 January 2024 - "Eating In" - with Fine Whines, a two-course meal by Country Plate.
Wednesday 7 February - Craft Beer Tasting by Gyle 59 – 8.00pm
Wednesday 6 March - My life with Alcohol - Simon Murphy – 8.00pm
Wednesday 3 April - Eastern Block wine tasting by Mark Banham – 8.00pm
Wednesday 1 May - Black Cow Vodka by Rachael Goring – 8.00pm

Look forward to seeing you at the bottom of the glass 🍷 .

Sarah Rashley

EAST COKER VILLAGE HALL CHARITABLE TRUST

Built in 1979/1980, one of the largest in the area, with excellent parking and good facilities, the Hall was officially opened in 1981 and is now showing its age. Regular maintenance and repairs as well as various improvements have been carried out over the years. The small committee of dedicated trustees continues to work hard to ensure the Hall is kept up to a good standard.

The installation of replacement main entrance doors, which will improve security, ease of access and improved insulation for users, was expected during Autumn 2023, but there has been a delay. We hope installation will take place in the next couple of months.

Many of you will be aware that the roof is, yet again, causing issues (it leaks!). Options for the repair/replacement of the roof have been under investigation for several months. This has involved inspection by structural engineers, the reports of which have indicated that major work will be required. The Committee is considering the alternatives, all of which entail considerable expense. We are grateful to the organisers of the Village Christmas Lunch for their very generous donation towards funding of the roofing costs.

Many of you will have attended the Christmas Lunch at East Coker Hall and noticed the Christmas decorations. These are put up – and taken down – each year by dedicated members of the ‘Decorating Team’. It takes around 4 hours to decorate the Hall – their efforts are greatly appreciated, and my thanks go to them for the excellent job they do.

Film nights recommenced in October with showings of Empire of Light and The Old Oak. Generally, these evenings are well attended, but increased audience numbers would be much appreciated. We try to show a varied range of films but are somewhat restricted by what Filmflix is able to supply. A small group helps to set up the Hall on the last Wednesday of the month, meeting at the hall at 6.30pm, ready for the doors to open at 7.00pm.

If you are able to assist in setting up, it would be greatly appreciated. It is not onerous, and you would not need to help every month. Either turn up at the hall for 6.30pm to help or contact Helen on 01935 862447.

The Hall is well used by a wide range of groups, clubs and classes, and is run by a committee of trustees. To ensure that the Hall continues to be a valued community facility, the current trustees would welcome new committee members to assist in the running of it. You should be committed and be prepared to take on the responsibilities associated with acting as a trustee.

If you are interested in helping to ensure that the Hall remains a community facility, please make contact via the website email address echbookings@btinternet.com.

We will be happy to discuss what is involved, as well as the responsibilities of acting as a trustee.

Details about the hall, how to book it and to find out what is on, may be found via the hall website <https://eastcokervillagehall.co.uk>.

Lastly, but by no means least, our thanks go to our booking clerk and to our cleaner, both of whom do an excellent job.

With best wishes to you all for 2024.

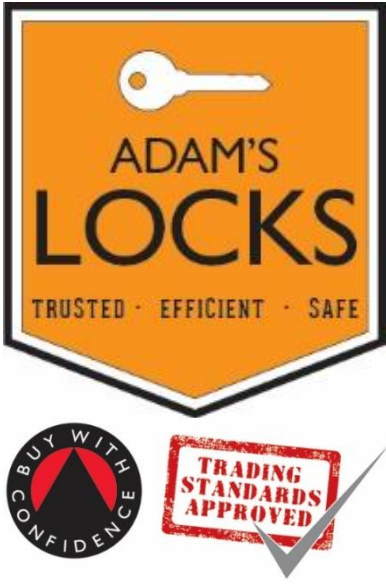
Helen

EAST COKER ANNUAL VILLAGE CHRISTMAS LUNCH – ‘THANK YOU’

A huge ‘thank you’ to all those involved in organising the return of this excellent village event. There are not many villages which benefit from events such as these. It is a great testament to those who originally introduced the Christmas Lunch that it still remains an event to which many people look forward. It was a delight to see so many attending and enjoying the festive meal again.

Having helped in the past, I know full well how much effort goes into arranging the lunch at a time of year when most of us have more than enough to do. Thank you to all of you and best wishes for 2024.

Helen Styles



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EAST COKER GARDENING CLUB

No great improvement to the weather during the last few months as we cope with what seems like almost constant rain. There is still much to do in the garden, and as the New Year begins all the jobs which need doing during January and February will be added to all the outstanding ones!

During the last months of 2023, members enjoyed talks by Brian Hesketh on adapting to climate change (too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet), Christine Skelmersdale who spoke about the wide range of bulbs and plants for winter interest, and by show judge Claire Hart on how to grow to show, in which she explained the best way to grow and present produce for showing.

The AGM was held in October, at which Gill Evans, our chair, gave her annual review. There being no new nominations, the current Committee Members were re-elected:

- Chair: Gill Evans
- Treasurer: Helen Styles
- Committee members: Gill Hoad, Mollie Hoskinson, Linda Mayne

After many years on the committee, Stan Shayler stood down. He was thanked for his contribution to the running of the Club and presented with gardening vouchers.

Narcissus 'Golden Aura' bulbs were distributed at the October meeting, courtesy of the Gardens Group, to be planted up, ready for judging in March/April.

As usual, we ended the year at the December meeting with warm mince pies and mulled wine.

We now look forward to meetings during 2024, when we start the year with a talk on orchids - useful for those who may have received a plant and don't know how to care for it, or for those who have ailing orchids.

Programme for the first four months of 2024:

Thursday 11 January	Growing Orchids - Howard Burnett including a 'doctors' clinic for your ailing orchids
Thursday 8 February	NT Lytes Cary - The history of the NT garden - Sam Hickmott – Head Gardener
Thursday 14 March	Gertrude Jekyll: plants and designs David Usher
Thursday 11 April	Somerset-The Moorland Way Peter Triggs
Saturday 11 May	Spring plant sale - East Coker Hall at 10.00am

We try to provide a varied programme during the year. We are always happy to welcome visitors and new members. In the meantime, if you would like to know more, do please phone (01935 862447). We are a friendly lot – why not join us for an enjoyable, sociable evening? You do not need to be good at gardening; talks cover a wide variety of subjects.

The annual subscription is currently £20, with subs of £2 per meeting. Visitors £5. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, commencing at 7.30pm in East Coker Hall, Halves Lane, East Coker unless otherwise indicated.

For further information, please contact Helen Styles 01935 862447. There is a page on the East Coker Hall website for the Gardening Club. If you have access to the web, please do go to <http://eastcokervillagehall.co.uk/> and look at the Gardening Club page. In the meantime, if you would like to know more, do please phone (01935 862447).

Helen

EAST COKER FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW

The New Year has come round again, and it is time to think about the annual Show. Work has commenced on the schedule, which should be finalised in February. The various sections remain, for the most part, the same as in the past, with some amendments to the individual classes.

Get ready to – sow and grow, cook, and bake, arrange, sew and make, look and click, ferment and brew – and **show!** For the child – children, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, brothers, sisters, cousins, friends – get them making, baking, arranging, sowing and growing.

To encourage you to consider entering this year, here are the sections, with some of the classes noted, so that you may make a start:

Vegetables & Fruit – get sowing and growing! Much the same as in previous years (carrots, tomatoes, and courgettes).

Flowers - again, much the same as in previous years.

Floral Art – we would very much like to see more entries in these classes and will therefore be simplifying the titles.

Homecraft – we know you can cook, bake and preserve – after all, we all have to eat – so give it a go.

Arts & Crafts – again, we know many of you have nimble fingers and can sew, embroider, and knit, paint and sketch, and make wondrous, beautiful things.

Photography – this has always been very well supported. For 2024, you could enter any, or all, of the following - A photograph taken by young person up to 16 years of age.

Farms and Farming - Forests or Trees.

Patterns or Textures – Reflections.

Close ups.

A group of 4 photographs representing 'East Coker', each 15.25 cm x 10cm (6in x 4in max) on one mount not exceeding 63.5cm x 30.5cms (15in x 12in)..

Children's classes - we would love to welcome more children to the Show, so please encourage them to enter. We always endeavour to make the classes interesting, not too difficult, and inexpensive to make. Classes are for children aged 5 years and under, 6 to 9 years, and 10 to 14 years. Children may, if they wish, enter any of the other classes in addition to the children's classes.

Wine Classes - entry in these has been poor over the last few years and you will see some changes when the 2024 schedule is printed and distributed, for example, a homemade cordial, homemade wine, homemade spirit, all to be made from foraged or home-grown produce.

Even if you haven't entered before, please have a go. It is fun and rewarding. Help will be available on the day to show you where, and how, to place your entries.

We look forward to receiving your entries and to welcoming you to the show at East Coker Hall on Saturday 17 August. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us, 01935 862447.

With best wishes for 2024.

Helen

EAST COKER POETRY GROUP

Tuesday 30 January 2024 - Paul Simon

"A Poet and a one-man Band" is how Paul Simon describes himself. Heather Murphy with June, Joyce and Jill are presenting an evening of this prolific poet and songwriter's work.

At the Village Café - 7.30pm.

Tuesday 27 February 2024 - Open Meeting - plus discussion poem

Bring some poems to read on any subject, either your own or by other poets. Poems might be well known, humorous, topical or whatever you feel will interest the group.

For a change, there will also be a poem to 'discuss' and look into in a bit more depth. These evenings are always interesting and often produce poetic surprises.

At the Village Café - 7.30pm

May 2024 will bring 20 years of the East Coker Poetry Group

I would like to thank everyone who has supported the poetry group over the last year and indeed over the last 20 years.

In September, Sue McKerracher, who started our group in May 2004 with a 'Desert Island Poems' meeting, returned to visit East Coker and we were delighted to welcome her as a special guest at our 'poetic dinner' that month. To celebrate our 20th Anniversary in 2024, a special 'Desert Island Poems' meeting is planned on Tuesday 28 May with actor Denis Lill.

Sue's 'model' for the Group has continued, we are open to anyone: we do not have a membership charge; we see poetry as something to enjoy and delight in.


I hope that these principles will continue.

email info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk

website www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk will carry details of meetings when they are confirmed

Tuesday 31 October - The Uncompetition


Best wishes,
David Cloke

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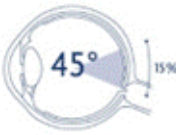
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FILM NIGHTS AT EAST COKER HALL 2024

Our film nights in early 2024

Wednesday 31 January – The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (2023)

Harold hears that an old friend, Queenie, is very ill and writes her a letter. Then it becomes important to take the letter to her so on the spurs of the moment, he sets out from Devon to walk to see her, in Berwick upon Tweed.

Starring Jim Broadbent and Penelope Wilton with Linda Bassett and Earl Cave. The Guardian review said: *'This politely unassuming little film builds into a wrenching examination of grief, guilt and eventual closure'*.



Wednesday 28 February – The Great Escaper (2023)

Michael Caine plays Bernard Jordan in this film about a D-day veteran who escapes his care home to attend the 70th anniversary of the landings in France. Glenda Jackson also stars in this, her last film.

The Guardian review said: *'Caine and Jackson are a great double-act, despite being apart for much of the film, and the film imagines an interesting and poignant rapport between Bernard and an elderly ex-RAF officer on the ferry, sympathetically played by John Standing, who is heading for Normandy while crucified by a secret guilt'*.

Films are shown at East Coker Hall on the last Wednesday of the month. Doors open at 7.00pm **(6.30pm if you can come and help us to set it up - please!)**.

Tea and coffee available from 7.00pm. Films start at 7.30pm.

Entry is £7 per person and no booking is necessary. We are looking forward to your support – these films are shown for the whole village to enjoy, and we need to cover our costs. Please come along and support us if you would like this to continue.

Thank you.

Gill Evans

Young People

EAST COKER SCOUT GROUP

The Scouts had a busy end of the year. First, achieving second place out of 38 teams at the County Challenge event at Huish Woods. This event is based around 11 activity bases, and tests each team in terms of teamwork, scout knowledge and thinking on their feet. A 10-mile District Day Hike based around South Petherton provided plenty of opportunity to practice map reading, a cooking evening made quesadillas and scotch pancakes and then we finished the term with a skittles evening at the Duke of York pub.



The Cubs, Scouts and Explorers all supported the village Remembrance Parade at St Michael's Church.

Faye ran an evening for both the Beavers and Cubs based on South Korea and the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ). This was supported by Charlie and Emily and shows the younger sections what they could experience when their turn comes to attend a WSJ. Faye has now completed her Young Leader training and is waiting for it to be awarded – she is an excellent young scout leader.

The Cubs tried Christmas Crafts and learned about Christmas around the world. And went off to the Pantomime at Westlands to see Cinderella, with a couple of Cubs managing to get on stage.

The Beavers have had a great first term with new leader Weasel (Stu). They've made rangoli for Diwali, put up tents and tried indoor archery.

Unfortunately, Glen stood down as our Explorer leader at the end of the year. He has been a superb leader with our Cubs, Scouts and Explorers for 8 years and we thank him for all his time and support. Our Explorer Young Leaders continue to provide superb support within each section – Faye (beavers/cubs), Emily (cubs) and Charlie (scouts).



All our sections have an additional blanket badge to target this year. This is a special badge to reward scouts who achieve 24 different outdoor activities; getting as muddy as possible could be a popular choice.



International opportunities are highlights for anyone within scouting. Faye and Charlie have now signed up for Roverway 2024 – this will be held in July/August in Norway and involves an exploration phase, a main camp experience in Stavanger and then two days after the event in Copenhagen. We are waiting for confirmation of further details of this event.

The Annual Village Quiz will be held on Saturday 16 March – with an earlier start time of 7.00pm; see the separate Newsletter article below.

We now have a 1st East Coker Scout Group Facebook page – find us, like us and see what we get up to.

Thank you for all your support.

David Webber, Group Scout Leader eastcokerscouts@gmail.com

18th Annual East Coker Village Quiz

It's quiz time again and we are looking forward to seeing you all for this year's Annual Village Quiz on Saturday 16 March starting at 7.00pm (arrival from 6.30pm). Please note earlier start time. The process for entering a Team is as follows:

1. We will be sending emails directly to the previous teams we have on our list to see if you wish to enter this year. Team captains; please email eastcokerscouts@gmail.com by the end of Saturday 17 February if you wish to enter a team. Just as a reminder, teams can be up to 6 quizzers strong.
2. On Sunday 18 February, we will let you know if you have a spot. If we have too many entries, we will draw names out of a hat. Any extra teams will go on the waiting list, and we will let you know if anyone drops out.
3. For those teams that have a place, payment and food choices need to be returned to us by Saturday 2 March.

Full quiz details, including food choices and payment methods, will be sent out with your confirmation.

So, start revising and we look forward to seeing everyone on the night – the Cockerel Trophy awaits.

Please email if you have any questions.

The Quiz Gopher eastcokerscouts@gmail.com

EAST COKER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Respect, Determination & Courage, Compassion & Collaboration, Independence & Creativity



Happy New Year from everyone at East Coker Primary School!

What a wet few months it has been although that has not stopped the children from enjoying many exciting events and visits.

We have had our annual residential for Year 6, albeit a bit of a wet one as we marched through the woods to build shelters, climbed walls and giant ladders and took part in many team games. For some children this was the first time they had been away from home, and they had a fantastic time. The children's manners were impeccable, and the residential staff were very impressed with their behaviour and attitudes.

The Year 4 children enjoyed a visit to the Bristol Hippodrome for our annual musical theatre event. They saw Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. This year, we will be attending Aladdin the musical, which we are very excited about.

In our 'Once Upon a Time' topic, the children learned about key events in history such as WWII and the first man on the moon. The children have been busy cooking, sewing their own Christmas stockings, working with clay, and painting amazing designs using ink. The Year 5 and Year 6 children created some amazing artwork inspired by artists such as Tim Burton, Felix Steinberger and Michael Basquiat. They have also been learning about Bonfire Night and other festivals such as Diwali.

In addition to these activities, we had our charity days such as Children in Need and Remembrance, and the children and families raised lots of money to support these charities. The children also took part in many sports fixtures and events last term including hockey, motiv8 and sports festivals.

Throughout the term we had visitors in to support our curriculum. We were very excited to have the Royal Navy visit our Year 5 and Year 6 children for a STEM Day (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). The children programmed drones, created special circuits to power model helicopter blades and used computer coding to control mini robotic spheres. We also had a fantastic talk from a local villager, David Holland, who brought in some artefacts and spoke to the children about WWII. We also had visits from the Heritage Centre for our younger children in juniors who found out more about what life was like during WWII.

At the end of the term, we were very busy with our many Christmas events, including our special whole school literacy event which this year was based on Raymond Briggs, The Snowman & Father Christmas. The infants also held two Christmas events. The 'Reception Sing a Long' and the infant nativity show 'Twinkly Nativity'.

The juniors held their Annual Christmas Carol Service at St Michael and All Angels' Church, compered by the children, with support from by Reverend Rod and Toffer. It was a really lovely way to end the term, and we are extremely grateful to be able to use the church. The new heating system was a lovely bonus as well!

Our theme this Spring term is 'Save The Planet', and we have already had a fabulous all-day workshop from Carymoor Environmental Trust, focusing on 'Schools Action Against Waste', and the children have been learning all about food waste. Next week, we have a spectacular science day which is to be delivered by 'Wonderstruck' and includes exploding rockets, fan powered cars and a special competition, all paid for with the money raised by PTFA events.

This term, we are also very excited to be working with Mr Simon Dicker at OSR projects in West Coker who organises the 'Od Arts Festival'. Children have been selected to take part in a number of clay workshops, creating and making clay projects using the kiln, something we cannot do in school. Last year, the work produced was outstanding and was commented on by the Ofsted inspector when they visited in May.

We are also working towards our Spring Concert in March which enables our very talented children to show off their musical prowess. Our theme this year is 'Pop Rock'.

We currently have places available in our current Reception and Year 1 classes should anyone be interested. Previously, we have been oversubscribed, but the fall in birth rate across Somerset has reduced our numbers slightly.

We are also very interested in anyone who wishes to come and support the children in school with their reading, design and technology sessions, such as sewing/cooking and general helping support. If you are interested, you will need to have a DBS which can be done through the school.

Please contact the school office for further information. Contact details can be found on our school website: <https://www.eastcokerschool.co.uk/>.

Our school website is full of information regarding life at East Coker Primary School and our recent Ofsted inspection. Please do visit our website to see what we have been up to. www.eastcokerschool.co.uk.

Jane Hesketh-Williams
Head Teacher

EAST COKER PLAYGROUP. FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK: EAST COKER PRESCHOOL

Happy New Year to everyone!

Thank you to everyone who supported our Winter Fair in November, we raised just over £760. All support is gratefully received, the Playgroup is a charity, and all fundraising is essential. Fundraising will enable the playgroup to maintain and replace the resources that support the children's learning and development.

Children can join us from the age of 2 years. We accept 2-year-old funding, 15-hour Universal Early Years Entitlement, Extended Entitlement 30-hour free childcare, Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers. For more information on support with childcare costs, please visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk the Childcare Choices website which makes it easy to find out what's on offer.

We are open during term time at the following session times:

Monday	8.00-9.00	12.00-1.00	3.00-4.00
Tuesday	8.00-9.00	12.00-1.00	3.00-4.00
Wednesday	8.00-9.00	12.00-1.00	3.00-4.00
Thursday	8.00-9.00	12.00-1.00	3.00-4.00
Friday	8.00-9.00	12.00-1.00	3.00-4.00

Children staying for lunch need to bring a packed lunch.

Baby and Toddler Session @ East Coker Playgroup Friday 9:30-11:00 £2/family. We have a playroom full of resources and outdoor space to facilitate playing and learning. Pop along and join us for play and chat.

To find out more information, please visit our Facebook page East Coker Preschool.

For more information and to register your child/children for East Coker Playgroup, please contact us 07503 751133 or email office.ecplaygroup@gmail.com.

Thank you for all your support.

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ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS' CHURCH

Despite being without a full-time rector, the past few months have been busy at St Michael's. The Annual Service of Remembrance on 12 November was, as ever, superbly organised by the Royal British Legion, and was well attended by East Coker Scouts and many villagers. Christmas was celebrated in style. We held a wonderful Candlelit Carol Service, for which the church was beautifully decorated, and on Christmas Day itself welcomed families for a service of holy communion.

Project Beacon, our plans to improve accessibility and use the church space in a more flexible and inclusive way, continues. Any work on a historic church needs a great deal of consultation and specialist surveying, and that important preparatory work continues. However, some early, non-contentious work has been done. We have refurbished the very dilapidated church path. Currently it has a temporary hoggan surface, but that makes it much safer and easier to navigate. More recently we have installed electric under-pew heaters. As well as being much more effective in keeping the congregation cosy, it is the first phase of a full heating refit, allowing us eventually to decommission our smelly, expensive, fossil fuel gobbling oil boiler. The best way to keep up to date with the Project Beacon, and to make suggestions and give feedback, is via the newly set up website www.projectbeacon.info.

The first few months of 2024 include some important milestones in recruiting our new rector. Adverts will have gone out in the middle of January with a closing date for applications of 14 February. We will shortlist soon thereafter and plan to interview candidates in the middle of March. So, you can see that we aren't dragging our feet, and we very much hope to have a new incumbent installed by the early summer of this year.

You are always welcome at St Michael's, whether for some time of quiet reflection, or to join us for a service. Information about services can be found online on the 'A Church Near You' website <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11025>, on the notice boards in the church porch and in the paddock, or via the Benefice Newsletter which is emailed out on a weekly basis.

To get on that distribution, email the PCC Secretary, Christine Vince, on christinevince2@btinternet.com.

We also post news and notices on Facebook – St Michael's Church has a page www.facebook.com/East.Coker.Church which you can like/follow to stay up to date.

If you have any specific questions or concerns, please get in touch with our Churchwarden, Toffer Beattie, whose email is tofferb@gmail.com.

For baptisms, weddings, funerals and pastoral care, contact the Benefice Coordinator, Barbs Hampshire, on 01935 864574 or officecokerridge@gmail.com (office hours Wednesday 9.30am – 4.00pm).

Toffer Beattie, Churchwarden

THE CHAPEL AT EAST COKER HALL

We want to give as many people as possible the opportunity to find out what it means to be a Christian. We will be running the 321 course which is an introduction to Christianity with videos and time for discussion. You can come and just listen or ask us difficult questions as you wish!

Cafe Church is always on the first Sunday of the month, where fresh coffee, croissants and bacon rolls are provided. The 321 course will run for the first four Cafe Churches of 2024. You can sign up for free at 321course.com so if you miss one month, you can catch up in the comfort of your own home.

We meet at East Coker Hall, 11.00am on Sunday mornings. We are always happy to welcome anyone to join us, even if just to see what goes on! Our services are relaxed and informal and always followed by tea and coffee. We have a variety of talks, our own worship band, and a large number of children of all ages in the 'Kids Church'.

On Tuesday mornings in term-time, the Toddler Group runs from 10.30am – 12.00pm. This is aimed at mums, dads, grandparents and child carers and incorporates a café area as well as plenty of play space and equipment.

Check out our website www.eastcokerchapel.com for more information and find us on Facebook for information about upcoming meetings and events.

You can also contact us by email on ec.cf@hotmail.co.uk even if you are just curious about Christianity and perhaps want to meet with someone to learn more.

Tom Whitman

Village News

GOOSE SLADE FARM SHOP

Our Farm Shop is as usual full of delicious food as well as our well stocked meat fridges with our homemade burgers, sausages, steaks and joints from our home-produced animals. Our butchers are always happy to provide the cuts you would like.

We have an array of good home-made delights, made on the premises including our very popular meringue roulades, lemon or lime crunch, varying flavours and sizes of quiches and unusual, tasty traybakes to name but a few.

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.00am – 5.00pm, 01935 863735 www.thegoosefarm.com.

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The Property Ombudsman

MOBILE LIBRARY

The Mobile Library visits East Coker outside the Helyar Arms on Tuesdays every 4 weeks. The time of visit has changed to 1.50pm – 2.10pm. There is a wide selection of books – fiction, non-fiction, large print, DVDs and audio books for adults and children. The stock is regularly refreshed, and you can order books there or online. To use this valuable service, you must be a member of Somerset Libraries, so remember to bring your membership card. You can join by filling in a membership form with proof of your name and current address, for example, utility bill or a driving licence. The next visits are:

Tuesday 23 January Tuesday 20 February Tuesday 19 March Tuesday 16 April

100 Club

The East Coker Parish Council are planning to modernise the Pavilion at Long Furlong Lane to improve the changing rooms and toilets, improve the usable meeting room space and the kitchen facilities, all with the aim of providing much better recreational facilities for the Parish. Whilst we have monies set aside to get this project underway, we do need to fundraise to aid the delivery of this much-improved facility to the Parish. One such idea we are keen to take forward is the setting up of an East Coker Parish lottery!

This will be in the form of a '100 club' where you are able to buy any number of tickets, at a price of £10 per ticket, to be paid for by a monthly standing order, running for a minimum of 12 months. As the name implies, we are looking for 100 members to join. The winners will be chosen randomly at the monthly ECPC meeting with the winnings being paid directly into your bank account. The prizes will be 1st prize - £120, 2nd prize - £60, 3rd prize - £20.

So, if you are prepared to have a bit of a flutter, in the name of a good cause, please do email Cllr Wintersgill or the Clerk to let them know you are interested, and we will arrange for further details to be sent to you, including all the 100 club rules and regulations. For further information, please contact Sandi Wintersgill sandi@eastcokerparish.com or the Clerk, Jude Heggarty Clerk@eastcokerparish.com.

Christmas Nativity

On 17 December, the village saw its first "Live Christmas Nativity" performed on the Paddock to bring some festive cheer and continue fundraising for the Pavilion Modernisation Project. It was a great success and, for those who attended, we think you will all agree that it was a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon, supporting the village whilst having a lot of fun and laughs. The Parish Council would like to thank all the people (and livestock) who gave up their time to perform, make costumes and contribute to its great success. Any pictures?

East Coker Cemetery

Some of you will know that we are rapidly running out of burial spaces in the Cemetery. We agreed a new policy in November, and this can be viewed on <https://eastcokerparish.com/chapel-cemetery/>.

Two of the biggest changes are that only residents of the Parish or those who have been residents but have moved into residential care homes, can be interred there and plots are no longer available to purchase until needed.

We are aiming to clear some shrubs/unattractive trees to free up valuable space. When this happens, we will be planting selected areas with smaller, prettier native species.

Village signage

It's taken longer than anticipated, but we have now got 3 out of 4 signs in place. There is one left to install on Yeovil Road, but this is in construction and hopefully will be installed over the coming weeks. We hope these will give a warm welcome to anyone entering the village.

Speed indication devices

You will be aware that we, like many villages, have an issue with speeding vehicles. This year will see the introduction of a SID (speed indication device). It will be moved periodically to different locations in the village, which are most problematic. We are currently waiting on Somerset Council to install the posts.

Fix My Street

This is a great app that allows you to report any issues such as potholes, highways issues, fly tipping, blocked footpaths and much, much, more. It is quick and simple to use, and notifications get sent to, and are actioned by, Somerset Council <https://www.fixmystreet.com>.

Parish Council

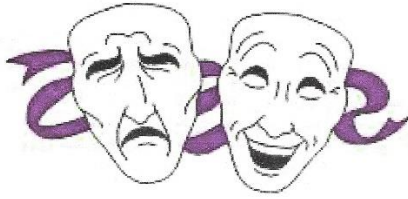
We do still have two Councillor vacancies. If you feel that you could spare a few hours each month, please contact the Clerk, Jude on Clerk@eastcokerparish.com.

Village Ranger

Our ranger, Karen, visits the village every Tuesday. Please contact Cllr B Sugg, 07907 621106 (no calls after 5.00pm or at the weekend please) if you see any jobs which need her attention.

Clerk@eastcokerparish.com

East Coker Players



Would you like to join us?

The East Coker Players are based at The East Coker Hall. We stage an annual PANTO and possibly another show each year.

If you have ever thought of taking up acting, or helping behind the scenes then please get in touch. We would be delighted to give you the details and hopefully welcome you to our merry band of actors and friends.

Please contact Richard on 07899 847261 or email GSalvage3@aol.com

Thank you.

MONICA'S MEMORIES – ALL CHANGE

Looking back over the last 90+ years, I am overwhelmed at the changes that have taken place. To me, perhaps the most far-reaching are those in the medical field, smallpox and polio have almost been eradicated. Gone are the wards of children paralysed and often in artificial lungs. 24/7 cataract surgery is done in outpatients instead of needing three weeks being nursed flat in a hospital bed, and hip surgery is now done in some cases as day surgery. Antibiotics have saved many lives. Research is well advanced in many other fields. Yeovil Hospital is expanding, and new departments are springing up in a very tight space.

Yeovil itself has changed beyond recognition. When I first came to Yeovil, Larkhill Road was mostly green fields. Just after the war, a few prefab houses were built at the bottom on the left, and although the lifespan was supposed to be 10 years, they were still occupied in 1964. At the top of Larkhill was the Dog Stadium and also a little cottage where I visited an elderly sick lady. She had no water, only a well, no gas or electricity. She cooked on an oil stove and used candles and had no sanitation, but she grew the biggest raspberries I have ever seen!

Another house I was a frequent visitor to was where Queensway is now. It was a haven of peace and the woman's son had fixed a high line from a window to the fence, with many birdfeeders hanging on it, so his mother could watch the birds from her bed. At Houndstone corner was an army training camp used for learner drivers. Now Yeovil is very changed.

Modern technology had developed apace, too fast for me, but bleeps and Satnavs would have made my life a lot easier in those days when I was trying to visit a sick person when perhaps the only address I had was Wood Farm, East Coker! It would have saved me money too as I always felt duty bound to buy a Mars Bar if I went into a local to enquire where Wood Farm was. Changes in transport have enabled me to visit both Australia and New Zealand twice, a 24-hour flight instead of a six week's boat trip.

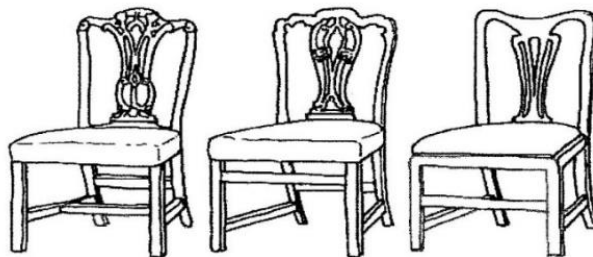
Sadly, due to sight problems and age I have had to sell my beloved 'Yellow Peril' (car). That decision was made in the Autumn and took time and energy. (Has anybody got a use for a bottle of Sal Volatile? I got it in my first aid box purchased when I got a car in 1961 at my mother's insistence!).

No doubt there will be many changes in 2024, hopefully for the better, so all I wish is a Happy, peaceful and healthy New Year to you all

Monica

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**** Please see next page for the Quarterly Diary ****

QUARTERLY VILLAGE DIARY January – April 2024

Thurs 11 Jan	Gardening Club – Growing Orchids	7.00pm – 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Sat 13 Jan	Wine Circle – ‘Eating In’	8.00pm	
Thurs 18 Jan	WI – Whist Drive	7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 23 Jan	Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Thurs 25 Jan	WI – Wine Tasting	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 30 Jan	Poetry – Paul Simon	7.00pm	Village Café
Wed 31 Jan	Film Night – Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry	7.00pm – 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Wed 7 Feb	Wine Circle – Craft Beer Tasting	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 8 Feb	Gardening Club – NT Lytes Cary	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 15 Feb	WI - Whist Drive	7.00am	East Coker Hall
Tues 20 Feb -	Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Tues 27 Feb	Poetry Group - Open Evening	7.00pm	Village Café
Wed 28 Feb	Film Night - The Great Escaper	7.00pm – 7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 29 Feb	WI – Rhinestones etc	7.30pm	East Coker Cafe
Wed 6 March	Wine Circle – My Life with Alcohol	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 14 Mar	Gardening Club - Gertrude Jekyll	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Sat 16 Mar	Scout's Quiz	6.30pm – 7.00pm	East Coker Hall
Tues 19 Mar	Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Thurs 29 Mar	WI - AGM & Social	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Sun 31 Mar	British Summer begins	2.00am	
Wed 3 Apr	Wine Circle – Eastern Bloc Wine Tasting	8.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 11 Apr	Gardening Club – Somerset – Peter Trigg	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Fri 12 Apr	Cheese & Wine Evening & Decadettes	TBA	East Coker Hall
Tues 16 April	Library	1.50pm – 2.10pm	Helyar Arms
Thurs 25 Apr	WI – Chocolate Tasting & Quiz	7.30pm	East Coker Hall
Thursdays	Social Badminton - Sally, Tel 01935 824238	2.00pm	East Coker Hall
Thurs 21 March	Copy for April 2024 Newsletter		