Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 369 Wednesday 24th December 2025

Editorial

The year in Birlingham has been another enjoyable one, according to the photographic record featured in this edition. As well as the usual annual events there have been extra highlights such as the New Year Party, the VE Day Street Party, the Music Night and two quizzes. Thank you to all our wonderful photographers in the village for capturing these events.

Almost inevitably, the year has been topped and tailed by flooding of the River Avon and the consequent closure of Eckington Bridge – but we are all used to that by now.

We are now looking forward to a good 2026. Thank you to all those who have contributed to *Birlingham News* this year. We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Festivities at the Swan

by Zoe Haines



Service will be as normal on Wednesday 24th December, serving food and drink at both lunch and in the evening, and we are open for our usual couple of hours of drinks on Christmas Day, 12.00–2.00pm.

We shall then be closed for staff holidays, and reopen for lunch on Wednesday 7th January.

We would both like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your kind company and custom over the past year.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

.Love,

Will, Zoe, Jacob and George

St James' Church



Churchwarden: Adrianne Woodward (Tel. 01386 750936)

The Churchwardens and the PCC would like to wish all of the villagers A Merry Christmas and Happy and Peaceful New Year and extend their thanks to all of the groups that contributed to the smooth running of St James' in the course of 2025.

They include the flower arrangers led by Jayne Mackenzie; the bellringers led by their Tower Captain, Stuart Allen; The Friends of St James' chaired by Andrew Jowett, who provide both finance and practical help; the cleaning groups headed by Pat Chinneck and Denise Nayna; the volunteers in the Churchyard working parties organised by Pat Chinneck and Sue Hayward; and finally the readers and sidesmen and the people who make sure that everyone receives their copy of the Abbey Link.

There are also individuals who deserve a special mention: Nick Baskerville, who opens and closes the church daily; Charlotte Baskerville, our organist; Fran and Steve Cant, who erect and decorate the Christmas tree; and of course our new Churchwarden, Pat Chinneck, who tackles everything with enthusiasm and is the mainstay of the after-service refreshments. Caryl Mills, Val Gilmore, Deborah Frost, Nadia Underwood and Jean Williams are always willing to lend a hand too.

The Carols and Christingles service held on Sunday 21st December was well attended and enjoyed by all. A donation will be sent to the Children's Society from the collection. More details to follow in the Spring Bystander.

Save the Date...

The next page has a poster about the **Candlelight Concert**, which is being held in the church on Saturday 17th January at 7.30pm. (This is not a service but a musical concert to raise funds for St James'.)

Also the **Bulb Sunday Service** will take place on Sunday 22nd February at 3.00pm. More details to follow.

Cuppa & Chat

Wednesday 7th January *by Sue Hermon*



Our Christmas get together was very well supported. Thanks to you all we were very pleased that the raffle raised £106 for Midlands Air Ambulance.

The next Cuppa & Chat will be held on Wednesday 7th January from 3.00pm to 4.30pm in Birlingham Village Hall. Everyone is most welcome to come along. There will be tea, coffee and a selection of cakes and the cost is still only £3.00 per head, which includes a chance to win the mystery prize!

For more information, or to request transport, please contact me on 01386 750096 or email sue.hermon@me.com.

Christmas & New Year Message from the Parish Council Chair

As we gather with family and friends this festive season, I want to acknowledge the warmth and spirit that is Birlingham. From the fun of our village events to the quiet moments of neighbourly kindness, it's these traditions and everyday acts that make Birlingham such a special place to call home.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a peaceful, healthy New Year. Thank you for all you do to keep our community thriving – here's to another year of shared laughter, support, and village life.

Ian Yates

Christmas Message from Revd Claire Lording

Dear Friends,

Christmas is nearly here and no doubt we will all be rushing around! But I wonder if we can perhaps find the time to stop and remember the Christ child laid in a manger, the most perfect gift of love from God, who invites us to lead lives that reflect God's love for all of humanity. What things can we do this Christmas that say "I love you" to the people around us?

And as the New Year comes in, we can also think about how we use our time all year round. We can reflect on how much time we properly give for ourselves and how much time we give to others in some kind of service. And we can think about whether we want to make any changes this year.

Time is such a precious gift, let's do all we can to use ours well!

I hope everyone has a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

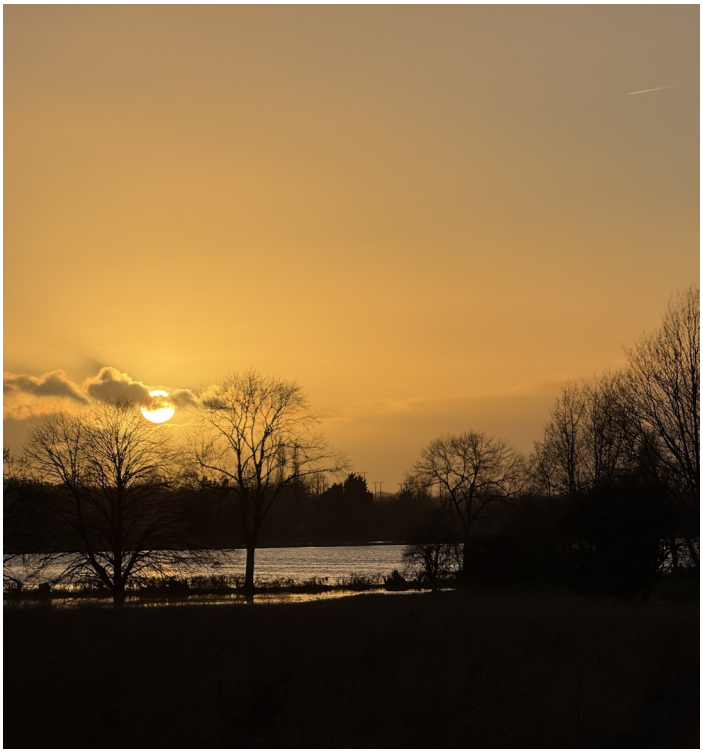
Claire



Sunrise and sunsets in Birlingham as the winter solstice approached



Sunrise as seen from the Row, 18th December
(Photo: Neil Lightbody)



Sunset over Asham Meadow, 19th December
(Photo: Peter Luff)

Sunset at Eckington Bridge, 20th December *(Photo: Nikki Hollier)*



Christmas Message from Cllr Adrian Hardman

I would like to wish you all a good Christmas and a successful New Year.

I tend to find myself at this time of year having a pause and a reflection on the past year. Remembering those who are not with us at the table this Christmas; the endless heat wave in the summer; the close election; and supporting Birlingham volunteers with grant funding. I wonder how we will progress on the flooding at Eckington Bridge, in Lower End, and get the speed down in the village.

I then look forward to the hopes and challenges for next year: my new grandchild; two others starting school; improving services and getting the Council back on track if it reorganises; ensuring the County Pension fund is in rude health following the changes planned for March; Irish terrier puppies; finding the Derby winner; and re-establishing the wife's bees after the wasp attacks.

So much to do, so have a joyful time and a rest with family and friends; I will.

Adrian Hardman,
County Councillor

Packing peanuts

What should you do with those packing 'peanuts' that come tumbling out of your Christmas presents on Thursdays?

If they are white polystyrene peanuts, sadly they have to go in your black recycling bags. However, most peanuts these days are made out of corn starch, like those pictured below.



The two types of peanut are easy to identify. The polystyrene packing is firm and floats in water. The corn-starch variety will spring back into shape if squeezed; if you put them in water, they will quickly turn to mush.

These corn-starch peanuts can be recycled in your food waste bin (not in your mixed recycling).

Christmas Bin Collections

Dates for bin collections in Birlingham over the Christmas period are as follows:

- **Green bins**: Tuesday 30th December (replacing Monday 29th December) plus any number of clear recycling sacks placed next to the bin
- **Brown bins**: Tuesday 30th December (replacing Monday 29th December)
- **Black bins**: Tuesday 6th January (replacing Monday 5th January) – plus up to two extra black refuse sacks placed next to the bin

Clear recycling sacks are available from Pershore Civic Centre but any clear sacks can be used.

Make sure that your bins are out by 7.00am as collections may be earlier than usual.

Wychavon District Council's guide to what can and cannot go in your green recycling bin over Christmas was included in the last edition of *Birlingham News* (No. 368).

The bin collection calendar for 2026 is shown opposite. Birlingham bins are collected on Mondays (except Christmas and New Year).

More information on Wychavon waste and recycling in general is available at:

https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/



Avian Flu

The following message relating to bird flu was published by Wychavon District Council on 22nd December.

Wychavon · Follow
6h ·

⚠️ Update on wild birds and Avian Flu in Evesham
We've had some swans and geese found unwell or dead along the River Avon in Evesham this week, including in Abbey Park, Crown Meadow, Workman Gardens and Corporation Meadow. Avian Flu may be the cause, so we're monitoring the situation carefully.

We know some people have tried to help by moving or handling the birds, but please don't touch or pick up any sick or dead wild birds. This helps protect both people and other wildlife.

If you find a bird that is injured, unwell or has died, please report it to our Parks Team:
📞 01386 565570
📧 parks.email@wychavon.gov.uk
(The Parks inbox and phoneline are monitored 9 am – 5 pm, Monday to Friday, apart from Christmas Day and Boxing Day.)

To help us respond quickly, please tell us the exact location of the bird. If you can, use What3Words (https://bit.ly/4pT7Ueq) to provide a precise three-word location by tapping the spot on the map in the app or on the website.

We will then notify Defra and arrange for safe removal. You can also report dead wild birds directly to Defra online at https://bit.ly/3Y880CA or by calling 03459 33 55 77 (option 7).

Read more: https://bit.ly/4j6v91M

#Wychavon #Evesham #AvianFlu #WildlifeUpdate #CommunitySafety #PublicHealth #BirdFluAwareness #StayInformed #ProtectWildlife

BIRLINGHAM 2025

The Year in Pictures

January







(Above) *New Year celebrations at Birlingham Village Hall*
(Photo: Ken Fitch)

(Right & below) *Village Quiz, 18th January*
(Photos: Chris Hermon & Jessica Dormer)





More flooding in Lower End, 7th January *(Photo: Peter Luff)*

February



Snowdrops in the churchyard a few days before the Snowdrop Teas began *(Photo: Nikki Hollier)*



The Bulb Sunday service, 9th February *(Photo: Nick Baskerville)*



Julia Luff's snowdrop cake



Spring flowers in the churchyard, 27th February
(Photo: Nikki Hollier)

March

Sunset over the Malverns, 15th March (Photo: Nikki Hollier)



Blossom at Birlingham Sporting Gun Club, 24th March

(Photo: Peter Luff)



April

Hawthorn blossom in Gullifords Meadow, Nafford, 7th April (Photo: June Hiden)





Spring swans relaxing, 4th April (Photo: Nikki Hollier)



Virgin hot air balloon on its way to landing near Swans Neck, 11th April (Photo: Peter Luff)

VE Day Street Party, 5th May

(Photos: Brian Chinneck & Ian Yates







Basil Barke and Carole Sugg's cake
(Photo: Brian Chinneck)



Sunset in Upper End, looking towards Besford, 10th May
(Photo: Jim Smith)



Bretforton Morris Dancers at the Swan Inn, 16th May *(Photo: Diana Grimston)*



The Red Arrows over Birlingham, 30th May *(Photo: Steve Conder)*



(Above) Work is finished at Nafford Lock: repairs to the lock chamber and smart new walkways around the top, including good new footholds to push the gates, 29th May (Photo: Peter Luff)

June

(Below) A perfect summer's day, looking across towards Great Comberton, 17th June (Photo: Julia Luff)



July

Gulls in Lower End, 3rd July (Photo: Chris Reynard)



August



Swan's Neck mooring, 2nd August (Photo: Julia Luff)



Harvest viewed from Berwick Lane, 3rd August (Photo: Peter Luff)



A Sunday morning at Nafford Lock, 10th August
(Photo: Ann Maxwell)



Horse rescue at Lower End, 20th August

September

Moon rising over Bredon Hill, 4th September *(Photo: Nikki Hollier)*





David Kew with Rosanna Reynard, winner of the Harold Herbert Cup for Decorative/Cactus Dahlia at the Flower & Produce Show, 6th September *(Photo: Kris Mills)*



Footpath by Asham Meadow after tree clear-out *(Photo: Amy Purcell)*



Autumn equinox in Birlingham, 22nd September *(Photo: Peter Luff)*



Not a medieval scene but autumnal early-morning pickers in Lower End on 24th September *(Photo: Julia Luff)*

October



New 20mph signs in Upper End



Still afternoon in Birlingham: The wind pump stands idle while a hot-air balloon wafts by, 22nd October

(Photo: Peter Luff)

Music Night at the Village Hall, 8th November *(Photo: Sue Hermon)*





The farm replanting 120 of the 350 trees at Swans Neck during Storm Claudia, 17th November

December



After recent heavy rains, floods return to Eckington Bridge, 20th December

(Photo: Nikki Hollier)



Carols and Christingles service, 21st December *(Photo: Brian Chinneck)*

Letters to the Editors

We welcome brief letters to the Editors on any subject relating to Birlingham. The Editors reserve the right to shorten letters and we cannot guarantee that all letters will be printed.

Please send letters to:

news@birlingham.org

Thank you

Thank you to all those who have contributed to *Birlingham News* this year.

In particular, thank you to our regular contributors, who keep us up to date with news and events in the village: Sue Hermon, Caryl Mills, Adrianne Woodward and Ian Yates.

Thanks also to those who regularly keep us supplied with topical photographs for the online edition: Nick Baskerville, Paul Burton, Brian Chinneck, Steve Conder, Ken Fitch, Chris Hermon, Sue Hermon, June Hiden, Nikki Hollier, Julia Luff, Peter Luff, Jayne Mackenzie, Ann Maxwell, Chris Reynard and Ian Yates, plus others who have sent us occasional photos.

Finally, thank you to the many people who have made other contributions to *Birlingham News* over the last twelve months.



One corner of the new fence at Swan's Neck was moved back from the common land earlier in the year. Recently (thanks to the efforts of Ian Yates and Birlingham Parish Council) the Avon Navigation Trust has removed the large sign that dominated the area. A large part of the river bank that was formerly open to the public is now freely available again, so it is well worth a walk down to the river over Christmas.

Planning Applications

The following planning application has been received by Wychavon District Council:

The Row, Lower End: Re-roofing of outbuildings, to include insertion of ridge beam and additional internal brick gables (Case No. W/25/02611/LB). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 12th January.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at:

https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/25/02611/LB

Personal Ads

Personal adverts should consist of a maximum of 100 words, and will be included in a single issue of Birlingham News. Please note that advertisement text will be published exactly as received. Personal ads should be sent to news@birlingham.org no later than the Monday before publication. Birlingham News is published on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Dates for your diary

December	
Thu 25	Christmas Day Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church
January	
Wed 7	Swan Inn reopens
Wed 7	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sat 17	Candlelight Concert, 7.30pm, St James' Church
Wed 21	Birlingham Parish Council, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Thu 22	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
February	
Wed 4	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Thu 19	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 22	Bulb Sunday Service, 3.00pm, St James' Church

Birlingham News online is available at www.birlingham.org. Details of future editions will be emailed to subscribers of *Birlingham News*. These emails are available to residents of Birlingham, their families and friends. If you know anyone who would like to receive these emails, or have any comments or items for inclusion in either the email or online edition of *Birlingham News*, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please write to news@birlingham.org.

Birlingham News online is open to any organisation or business within the parish to promote events. Inclusion of an event does not imply that Birlingham Jubilee Committee supports either the event or the views of the organisation promoting it.

The copy date for the next edition is Monday 12th January (for publication on Wednesday 14th January). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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