Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 373 Wednesday 25th February 2026

Editorial

This edition features two ancient crafts that are still alive in Birlingham.

First there is the rethatching of the Swan Inn, a technique that has been followed for hundreds of years and has changed little in that time (apart from the obvious addition of scaffolding!)

Then there is the invitation to try your hand at bell ringing. This is another activity that has not altered in the last 350 years; the bells are still rung in the same way and the ringing 'methods' would be identical to those practised in the seventeenth century. The bells themselves are also largely the same, three dating back to 1685, with one from 1748 and the two newest ones added in 1980. So it is well worth a visit to the ringing chamber even if only to see the bellringers in action.

A seventeenth-century resident of Birlingham transported to today might be surprised by many things they encountered but there would be some sights and sounds with which they would be very familiar.

Cuppa & Chat

Wednesday 4th March *by Sue Hermon*



The next Cuppa & Chat will be held on Wednesday 4th March 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.

St James' Church



Churchwardens: Pat Chinneck & Adrianne Woodward (Tel. 01386 750936)

* There are no church services at St James' in **March**.
* The Fairtrade Coffee Morning will be held on **Sunday 8th March** at 11.00am in the church. Fairtrade coffee and biscuits on arrival. Short talk about Fairtrade by Hilary Fowler, who will be selling coffee, tea, biscuits, chocolate and other foodstuffs from around the world; cards and notecards; and Easter items.
* **Sunday 5th April**: Easter Day Holy Communion, 10.30am



Flooding over Asham Meadow, 14th February

(Photo: June Hiden)



The Avon shows no indication of obeying the no littering sign, 23rd February

(Photo: Peter Luff)



Birlingham Flower and Produce Show needs you!

For those of you unfamiliar with the Flower and Produce Show, it is a very special annual event held here in the village. It is an opportunity to show off green fingers, baking skills and artistic talents. It's also a great event for villagers to get together, catch up and enjoy each other's company.

Behind the scenes, there is a small team of volunteers representing the committee that enables the show to happen. The roles are not taxing and very flexible. We meet twice a year as a group and make ourselves available around the first Saturday of September when the show is held.

Without the committee, the show won't go on and we are currently looking for people to join us. If you are interested in becoming a member or simply curious about the show, please contact Sue Hayward on 07766 318901.

Music Night

Saturday 30th May

by Chris Hermon

By popular request, the Music Night with Mel and Him will be returning to the Village Hall on Saturday 30th May.

Tickets at £10 each will be on sale nearer the time.

The event was a complete sell-out last year and raised £800 for the Village Hall, and it is expected tickets will go quickly.



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FAIRTRADE
COFFEE MORNING

SUNDAY 8 MARCH
1100
ST JAMES' CHURCH, BIRLINGHAM

FAIRTRADE COFFEE
AND BISCUITS ON ARRIVAL

SHORT TALK ABOUT FAIRTRADE
BY HILARY FOWLER

CARDS AND NOTECARDS

EASTER ITEMS

COFFEE, TEA, BISCUITS,
CHOCOLATE AND FOODSTUFFS
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

COME ALONG
AND TREAT YOURSELF

CASH AND CHEQUES
FOR PURCHASES ONLY

WE ARE A
FAIRTRADE
COMMUNITY

HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO RING CHURCH BELLS?

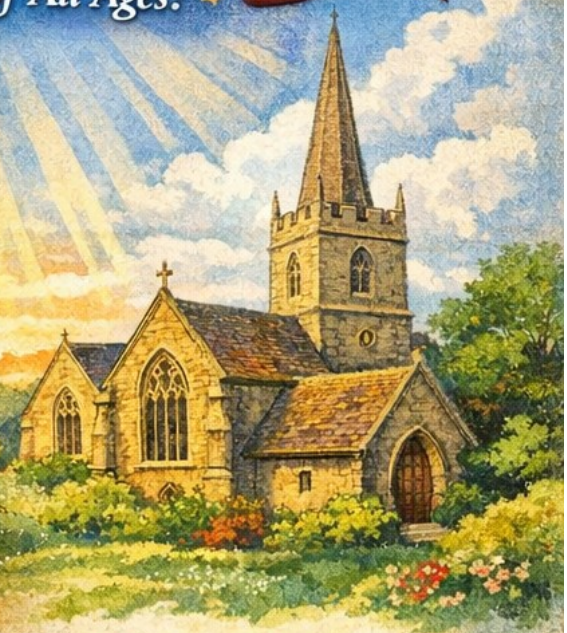
ST JAMES THE GREAT

Join the Bell Ringers of All Ages!

Learn a Skill Like No Other

New Ringers Welcome – All Ages!





NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

Full Training Provided!

You DON'T Need To:

- ✗ Be physically strong
- ✗ Be religious or a regular churchgoer
- ✗ Commit every week

You DO Need To:

- ✓ Climb a ladder
- ✓ Reach the ropes
- ✓ Enjoy a physical activity

What You'll Gain:

- New Friendships
- Traditional Skill
- Support Our Church & Village

PRACTICE EVENINGS

Wednesdays (2nd & 4th of the Month)

COME AND TRY IT!

Contact:

Stuart Allen - Tower Captain

stueallen01@gmail.com

07932 733679



RING FOR TRADITION • RING FOR COMMUNITY • RING FOR FUN

We'd love to welcome you to the tower!



New thatch at the Swan Inn, 17th February

(Photos: Above-Chris Hermon, Below-Nikki Hollier)



Local Government Reorganisation in Worcestershire

We have been asked to publish a letter sent by Cllr Richard Morris, Leader of Wychavon District Council, to parish and town councillors. The letter is reproduced on the following two pages.

There are two options for the county reorganisation, which will come into effect in 2028: a single unitary authority covering the whole county (the option favoured by the existing County Council) or two independent authorities covering North Worcestershire and South Worcestershire (the option preferred by Wychavon and most other district councils).

The Government's consultation on the reorganisation is open to all and you can take part at:

http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-worcestershire

Information about the two options is available at:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/OneWorcestershire%20-%20Proposal.pdf (single authority)

https://www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk (two authorities)

The consultation is open until 26th March 2026.

West Mercia POLICE

Safer Neighbourhood Team Drop-in Sessions

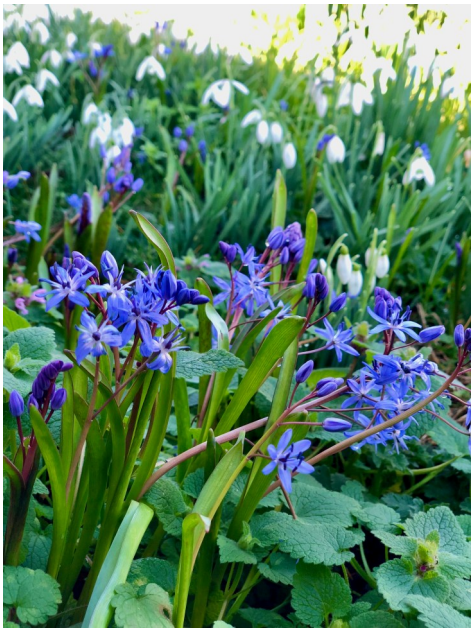
by PCSO 40594 Westwood, Evesham Safer Neighbourhood Team

I'm out in your villages in the coming weeks – come and say hello! As your local PCSO, I'll be holding community drop-ins across the area from 27th February to 4th March. It's a great chance to chat, raise any concerns, get crime-prevention advice or simply stop by for a friendly catch-up. Here's where you can find me:

Friday 27th February:	Flyford Flavel – 09:30, Village Hall Elmley Castle – 11:30, Village Hall Drakes Broughton – 13:30, Village Hall
Saturday 28th February:	Honeybourne – 10:00, Village Hall Broadway – 13:00, outside Nisa
Sunday 1st March:	Harvington – 10:00, Village Hall Whittington – 13:00, Village Hall
Monday 2nd March:	Bredon – 13:00, Village Hall
Tuesday 3rd March:	**Defford – 13:00, Village Hall**
Wednesday 4th March:	Bretforton – 13:00, Village Hall

Everyone's welcome – whether you've got something specific on your mind or just want to introduce yourself. Looking forward to seeing many of you there!





Crocuses, snowdrops and a patch of Siberian Squill in the churchyard in recent weeks

(Photos: Nikki Hollier)

WYCHAVON Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, Worcs. WR10 1PT
T: 01386 565000 www.wychavon.gov.uk

Our Ref: RJM/ML

9 February 2026

Dear parish and town councillor

I am writing to invite you to take part in the Government's consultation on local government reorganisation in Worcestershire.

Although we put your organisation forward as an official consultee, the Government did not include you on its official list. We believe this decision is wrong.

Wychavon has considered town and parish councils trusted and important partners from our very first day of existence. We highly value the relationship we have built over the years. It's one of the main reasons Wychavon is such a great place to live, work and visit. Your insight matters to us, and we want to ensure your voice is heard during this critical phase of the reorganisation process.

There are two options for reorganisation in Worcestershire:

The first option is **One Worcestershire,** which would create a single unitary council running all services across the county and is backed by Worcestershire County Council and Wyre Forest District Council.

The second option is **Transforming Worcestershire**. This would create a North Worcestershire Council and a **South Worcestershire Council** to run services in their respective parts of the county, with collaboration between the two when beneficial. This option is backed by Bromsgrove District, Malvern Hills District, Redditch Borough, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils.

Under both options, the county council and the six borough, city and district councils will be abolished by 1 April 2028.

We are backing Transforming Worcestershire because we believe it is the only option capable of delivering meaningful and lasting change. It is also the only proposal developed with feedback from residents and partners and is built around what you told us mattered to you.

A key part of our proposal is to deliver genuine transformation of services by shifting them from crisis response to prevention. We also want genuine empowerment of communities by keeping decision-making local, and to drive long-term financial sustainability through this new approach.

The Government is imposing this change on us; we didn't ask for it. However, if we must have change, then we believe it's vital the Government listens to and takes local views on board.

During last summer's Shape Worcestershire engagement, residents and partner organisations sent us a very clear message they supported the two-council option. In fact, of

Councillor Richard Morris
Leader of the Council
Direct Dial: 07860 733460
Email: richard.morris@wychavon.net

those residents who expressed a preference, 62.5% supported the two-council model, along with the overwhelming majority of town and parish councils.

I urge you now to make your voice heard again by taking part in the consultation and sending that message directly to the decision-makers in government. Remember, you can respond both as a town and parish council, as well as in your role as an individual councillor and clerk.

We also ask you to support us in spreading the word about the consultation, using all methods available to you, and encourage residents to have their say.

You can find links to the Government's consultation and how to take part at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-worcestershire. The survey asks you to give your views on both options and to show your preference through comments like strongly disagree/strongly agree. You can also read more about our proposal at www.transformingworcestershire.co.uk.

The deadline for responding to the consultation is 26 March 2026.

Cllr Paul Middlebrough, our Executive Board Member for Local Government Reorganisation, and I are happy to come and present to a town/parish council meeting or provide more information if it helps support your response (demand dependent).

In summary, the government is saying we must change. So, if you want a unitary council that:

- **Transforms public services**
- **Is closer to residents**
- **Works with communities**

then please make sure you complete the survey, saying strongly disagree to One Worcestershire and strongly agree to Transforming Worcestershire (South and North Worcestershire).

This is a seismic moment for the future of our county. Your voice will help shape a decision that will impact Worcestershire for generations to come.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Richard Morris
Leader of Wychavon District Council

Councillor Richard Morris
Leader of the Council
Direct Dial: 07860 733460
Email: richard.morris@wychavon.net

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



Bulb Sunday in the churchyard
23rd February
(Photo: Peter Luff)

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Personal Ads

Bicycle. I have a bicycle that I no longer use and it would be good to get something for it that I could forward onto a charity.

The frame is welded steel , 21-inch (535mm) with 21 gears, so it is an 'all terrain' type of bike, although at present the tyres are 'road style'.

If you are interested, please email: richardldevenish@gmail.com.

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

March	
Wed 4	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 8	Fairtrade Coffee Morning, 11.00am, St James' Church
Wed 18	Birlingham Parish Council, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Thu 19	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
April	
Wed 1	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 5	Easter Day Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church
Thu 16	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall

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 9th March (for publication on Wednesday 11th March). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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