

# CAYNHAM NEWS

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November 2021

Produced and published monthly by Caynham Village Hall.  
If you are organising anything and would like it to be listed here,  
please contact David Faulkner at least one month in advance.

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL AT ST MARY'S CHURCH CAYNHAM

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December  
Church open 10am to 4pm (3pm Sunday)

*Trees decorated on a theme of Christmas Songs*

*Bumper stall full of hand-crafted gifts, decorations and seasonal  
produce*

*Children's art competition*

*Raffle – Tombola – Mince pies – Drinks*

### CONCERT

*Little Hereford Voices*

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Caynham**

**Adults £6 Children £3**

**Tickets from: Jill Bufton (876900) or Christine King (876819)**

*Christingle service 3pm Sunday 5th December*

### Events in November and December (Caynham Village Hall unless noted)

Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	Gardening Society: Victoria Logue 'Gardening with & for wildlife' 7.30pm
Mon 8 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Caynham Book Exchange 10.30am
Weds 10 <sup>th</sup> Nov	WI: AGM and 'Floral ideas' 7.30pm (Ashford Carbonel VH)
Sat 13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Caynham Walkers – details from organiser
Sat/Sun 4/5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christmas Tree Festival St Mary's Church, 10am – 4pm (3pm Sun)
Sat 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Concert, Little Hereford Voices, St Mary's Church 7.30pm
Sun 5 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Christingle service, St Mary's Church 3pm
Weds 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec	WI: Christmas Lunch & Conjuror 12.30pm (Ashford Carbonel VH)
Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Caynham Walkers – details from organiser
Mon 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Caynham Book Exchange 10.30am

COP26 is about to start – let your views be known eg via

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/my-climate-action/>

### The environment and us – part 3: sustainability

“Well, I think the answer lies in the soil”

Those of a certain age may recognise the catchphrase of Arthur Fallowfield (played by Kenneth Williams) in the radio show *Beyond our Ken*. It always got a laugh from the studio audience, but it turns out that Arthur was right all along.

All our food, except that from the sea, depends on the soil to grow crops to feed us or our livestock. After the Second World War the push for more food production led to the widespread replacement of labour-intensive organic farming with the use of chemical treatments (fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides etc) to increase productivity. These were effective – they did what it said on the tin – but unfortunately they did a lot of other things too. Healthy soil is fertile largely because of the wealth of organisms that live in it. If the soil isn't healthy then we're in big trouble. Over time, the liberal use of chemicals has destroyed much of this ecosystem, with knock-on effects on neighbouring watercourses due to run off. Biodiversity has suffered, with dramatic declines in many familiar species.

The soil has another valuable role: global soil resources contain more organic carbon than the world's atmosphere and all of its plants combined. Decaying vegetable matter is stored underground away from the air, so CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed by the plants while they were growing will be removed from the atmosphere as long as the humus formed is not oxidised by bacteria. If the soil is disturbed, eg by digging, this stored matter is exposed and the CO<sub>2</sub> is released. This is one reason for the growing popularity of 'no-till' agriculture and 'no-dig' gardening.

The largest carbon storage per hectare occurs in peatlands. They sequester carbon slowly, but when healthy continue doing so indefinitely. However, over 98% of England's peatlands have been drained and disturbed for grazing, agriculture, forestry planting and peat extraction. They have become a major **source** of greenhouse gas emissions. There is near universal consensus now that peat should be left in the ground. Peatland restoration is seen as a high priority, with over 22% in England under restoration management [Natural England Research Report NERR094, 2021].

In the UK peat extraction is largely for use in compost for the horticultural industry and domestic gardening. This started in the 1930s with the 'John Innes' formulations

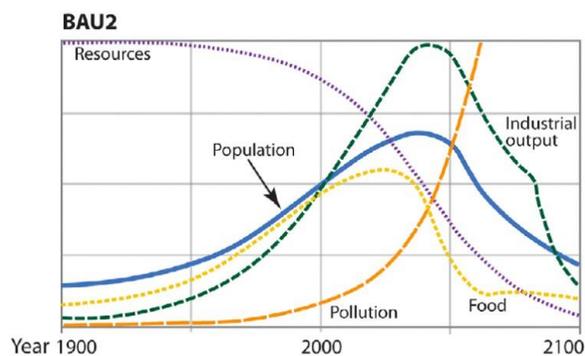
but expanded enormously with the gardening boom in the 1970s. In 2011 a government White Paper proposed a voluntary scheme which would make all amateur potting compost peat-free by 2020 and commercial compost peat-free by 2030. This failed to achieve its target, so this year an 'England Peat Action Plan' was published, promising 'swift progress in phasing out the use of peat in the amateur sector'.

There are various formulations of peat-free compost, each with their own characteristics which will differ from peat-based composts that you may be used to. There is a useful guide from the RHS ([www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=441](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=441)). You can buy peat-free compost from many gardening suppliers but do read the label carefully because most suppliers still stock peat-based composts too: if it doesn't say 'peat-free' then it probably isn't.

It seems it will take longer for the horticultural industry to make the transition to peat-free. In part, this is because they require a level of consistency in their compost which is claimed to be difficult to guarantee with peat-free formulations. There are also issues raised by the peat extractors, who have to be licensed to do the extraction. These licences typically last for 30 years, following which they must restore the site (to what state isn't clear). They argue that stopping extraction early will mean the licensees leaving the site unrestored and that restoration takes several years. However, restoration work by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has achieved excellent results in less than a year. As is so often the case with vested interests, the extractors case may well be a delaying tactic. But we don't have time for this dissembling.

Almost 50 years ago, the book *The Limits to Growth* predicted that if we continued with 'business as usual' there would be a sustainability crisis in the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century, potentially leading to major economic and social collapse. Recent reviews show that these predictions have proved remarkably accurate so far – and this was before the impact of climate change.

Why were these predictions ignored? The ideas ran counter to conventional economic thinking at the time and were widely derided (although the concept of placing monetary value on nature was gaining credence). Instead, we had Milton



Friedman ("a company's sole responsibility is to its shareholders") and Margaret Thatcher ("there is no such thing as society"). Free markets and privatisation put paid to ideas of sustainability and valuing public goods (in this context, open spaces, fresh air, a healthy environment etc). We were all destined to be addicted to cheap prices and instant gratification. We would all become cynics, knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing, in a throw-away society. Consumerism would be good for you.

We now know that it is very good indeed for some global companies and a few people have become extraordinarily rich. But millions (billions?) more people are suffering, and the planet's environment is being trashed in the pursuit of short-term profit.

However, change is perhaps in the air. Recent legislation has brought back the concept of public goods and a commitment to nature restoration. Heavyweight financial institutions have issued dire warnings about the environmental crisis. A new concept has emerged in the investment market: environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. Fund managers have begun to use their influence to change the culture of companies, for instance by encouraging fossil fuel companies to shift to renewable energy sources. There have been some successes. However, many of these companies are past masters of dissembling and delay and their response may be little more than 'greenwashing' unless they see the environmental crisis as an existential threat to their own well-being. That threat is the loss of credit and drying up of funds, which can come through divestment (which you can encourage via your pension scheme or your investments if you have them) and the increasing reluctance of banks to support environmentally damaging projects. It seems likely that the stick of divestment may be needed as well as the carrot of ESG engagement.

We used to have a very nice jute shopping bag (sustainable), printed with a Cree proverb:

Only when the last tree has died  
and the last river has been poisoned  
and the last fish has been caught  
will you realise you cannot eat money.

(When the bag wore out and we wanted to replace it, the only slogans available were along the lines of "I ♥ Grandma" - because they sold better of course.)

[For an inspiring account of the changes in UK farming practice and alternative approaches, I recommend James Rebanks's book 'English Pastoral' – but please buy it from a local bookshop, not from A\*\*\*\*n. Or borrow it from a library.]

**Contact details** (area code 01584 except where noted)**Caynham Ashford Women's Institute** (<https://sites.google.com/site/caynhamashfordwi/>)

Meets monthly 7.30pm 2nd Wednesday at Caynham or Ashford Carbonell village halls

President	Mrs Christine King	876819	
Secretary	Mrs Jane van Duijvenvoorde	891396	janevanduij@gmail.com
Treasurer	Mrs Ann Morris	831692	

**Caynham & District Gardening Society** (<http://caynhamgardening.blogspot.co.uk>)

Meets monthly 7.30pm 1st Tuesday Caynham Village Hall

Chairman	Mrs Christine King	876819	
Secretary	Mrs Jean Faulkner	879515	jeanmfaulkner@btinternet.com
Treasurer	Mrs Ann Morris	831692	

**Caynham Book Exchange**

Meets monthly 11am 2nd Monday Caynham Village Hall

Contact	Mrs Paula Spencer	875419	
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**Ashford & Caynham Butterflies Pre-school Playgroup**

Every weekday in term time, 9am to 3pm Bishop Hooper CE Primary School

Committee Chair	Ms Julia Harmen		
Leader	Ms Leigh Turner	07779171674	

**Caynham Parish Council** (<http://www.caynhampc.org.uk>)

Meets bimonthly 7pm 1st Monday usually Knowbury Memorial Hall, occasionally Caynham or Clee Hill Village Hall

Caynham Councillor	Mrs Barbara Ashford (Chairman)	874402	
County Councillor	Mr Richard Huffer	891215	richard.huffer@shropshire.gov.uk
Clerk	Mr Eric Williams	874661	cewilliams1@btinternet.com

**Caynham Walking Group**

Meets monthly 2nd Saturday: walks are 4 to 6 miles starting about 10am. For details please contact Catherine Newcombe (891225 or [cathnewcombe@btinternet.com](mailto:cathnewcombe@btinternet.com)).

**Caynham Village Hall Committee** (<http://www.caynham.eclipse.co.uk/vhall.html>)

Chairman	Dr David Faulkner	879515	davidjfaulkner@btinternet.com
Hall Bookings	Mrs Jean Faulkner	879515	jeanmfaulkner@btinternet.com

**St Mary's Church Caynham**

Rector	Revd Lynn Money	831203	ashfordsrector@gmail.com
Churchwardens	Mrs Ann Reid	875519	
	Mr Stephen Ashford	874402	sjashford@hotmail.com

**Friends of Bishop Hooper CE Primary School**

Contact	Mrs Anna Gittins (Headmistress)	831110	
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