

December 2025 | Issue 22

Village POST

Connecting Bridekirk, Dovenby, Gilcrux and Tallentire

We know
the area, the people,
the news.
We strive to support
the community and
celebrate the joys of
village life!

Merry Christmas



& Happy New Year

WELCOME TO EDITION 22



From the team at Village Post!

Marjory Thompson Village Post editor
email: editor@villagepost.uk tel: 07836 371035



The festive edition front page picture taken at St Bridget's Bridekirk is of Molly Freeman, aged 5. Molly is the daughter of John Freeman, Vicar of St Aidans.

Village Post is written FOR and BY local residents. It is delivered free through your door six times a year and aims to be the 'Go To' place for local and community information.

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The VP team



EDITOR:
Marjory Thompson



TREASURER:
Emma Williams



SALES:
Silvana Hewitt



**FOUNDER &
TRUSTEE:**
Meredyth Bell MBE



TRUSTEE:
Parish councillor
Roy Stenson



TRUSTEE:
Rev
Roy Annets



**Junior editor and
DOVENBY
REPORTER**
Matthew Chambers

Goodbye city, hello village life!

Marjory and John Thompson are right at home

It comes as a big surprise to me just how much I enjoy coming 'home' to Tallentire.

Over the years I've lived in Glasgow, Toronto, Paris and - for many years - Scotland's capital city Edinburgh. That's where I raised my two girls and enjoyed a fabulous job heading up the communications team at the City of Edinburgh Council.

I just loved life in Edinburgh, living in the best street - a cul de sac just 15 minutes from Princes Street - with street parties and the best neighbours! Festivals, big events, lots of restaurants, fabulous scenery, so much to do!!

I go back there at least once a month to sing with my Scottish choir *Thistle Do Nicely*. Just a small choir of 24 women - but they have sung at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, the Royal Festival Hall in London, performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and recorded at Abbey Road.

But after a few days in the city I find that I need to get back to our lovely wee village. Cities are fabulous but Tallentire is firmly home - so close to the fells and the beach. And I've got my amazing choir down here - *Committed 2 Rock* (see info on page 14.)

I've been coming to Cockermouth for over 20 years to visit friends and that's where I met my husband John. A cross border relationship of over 14 years ended with us getting married and moving to Tallentire six years ago - mostly to be near family in Dearham. Four fabulous grandsons live there - James, Reggie, Rudy and Alfie!

Covid hit quite soon after we moved here and that was a really bonding experience - with neighbours Liz and Grant performing live in their garden for us all to listen to our requests. If I remember right our choice was *Stuck in the Middle With You!* Appropriate. But it has been *Village Post* magazine that has cemented my life here. Over the years as a journalist I've interviewed Rod Stewart, David Cassidy, Cliff Richard, Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela, Princess Diana and many more.

Investigative journalism was a wonderful job. I even spent a week in a secure hospital helping the health board fight the Government's community care plans for people who



Grandson Reggie and John



really needed good institutional care (it worked!) I went to the Falklands to interview one of the greatest humans I've ever met - Major General Sir David Thorne who led the war effort. What stories he had to tell.

Good journalism is something wonderful and makes a real difference. But I must say it's great to be involved in the simplicity that is *Village Post* - to attend pet services at St Bridgets where a guinea pig called Cheeky (pictured right) is blessed by the Vicar. It's wonderful to see our school newshounds come up with their stories. Teddy's dog blog is a joy.



And of course there's the wonderful team I work with:- Meredyth Bell MBE - an inspiration and all round wonderful human being. Silvana Hewitt, chair of the Bridekirk School Governors, who has time for everyone and the kindest heart. Our lovely financier Emma Williams who is a true breath of fresh air and the young 'un in the team. Then there are the two Roys - Rev Roy Anetts and Parish Councillor Roy Stenson, both with invaluable local knowledge and experience.

Together our meetings are not unlike the *Vicar of Dibley*. Hilarious, all over the place, but we get things done in the face of adversity ... 22 editions in all!!!!!!

And it's not only me that loves where we live.

My daughter Sarah is a city girl, but was brought up hillwalking and enjoying the outdoors. She comes down from Edinburgh all the time to do just that and walk her crazy wee dog Ollie who is well known to other dog walkers in the village. Small in stature but big in attitude!

All in all village life is just perfect for our lifestyle and I'd be delighted to hear from you about your story of living in Tallentire, Dovenby, Gilcrux or Bridekirk.

THIS PLACE

How do YOU feel about where you live? You may always have lived here, moved from somewhere else or grown up here, lived elsewhere for many years, then come back home. Think about what you feel about your place, whether it is your house, your village or Cumbria as a whole.

Write to us (in no more than 300 words) about your place, explaining your feelings with pictures if you can!

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GARDENING WITH MEREDYTH

DECEMBER

Please remember the poor birds. I'm feeding them every day. As it's December prevent ponds, water features and bird baths from freezing over. Continue winter digging incorporating organic matter into the soil. Repair lawns, sheds and fences when possible. Prune woody ornamental plants, fruit trees, bushes, ornamental and grape vines. Shake any snow off trees shrubs and hedges. Reduce watering of plants to prevent root rot. Lift and heel in celery and build up brussel sprouts. Finally, spray fruit trees and roses with plant oil winter wash. Ensure garden taps and exposed pipes are well insulated. Bring in winter bulbs for flowering. The above is dedicated to William Hall - Happy Christmas rest!!

In bloom: winter flowering heather, flowering quince, mahonia, winter camellias, hellebores, viburnum tinus.



With thanks to
RHS
Gardening
Year and
Gardeners'
Year
Calendar

JANUARY

Protect vulnerable plants from severe weather. Hoe any germinating weeds. Continue with winter diggings as soil conditions allow. Brush snow off trees, shrubs and hedges. Prune wisteria and any other vigorous climbers. Take hardwood cuttings of trees and shrubs and plant deciduous hedging. Sow summer bedding and sweet peas under cover. Time to look through seed and summer flowering bulb catalogues. Take root cuttings from perennials. Start sowing early vegetables under cover. Chit early potatoes. Continue to plant and winter prune fruit trees and bushes. Force rhubarb. Don't forget to get your lawn mower serviced ready for when you need it.

In bloom: hellebores, Christmas rose, snowdrop, strawberry tree, mimosa, winter jasmine.



Count chemicals, not calories this Christmas

With the surge in ads for highly processed, Christmas party foods I thought this a timely topic for you lovely *Village Post* readers.

Since we cottoned onto calories we've become obsessed with them. I usually tell people to ignore calories, prioritise the goodness that your body needs to be healthy, buy nutrient-dense food and make better food choices.

The part of the food label to pay attention to is the ingredients list.

Best are foods that don't have ingredients, eg a trout, eggs, carrots.

Next best are food products with short lists of things you recognise - things you might have at home eg Longley Farm yoghurts with only yoghurt, fruit and a little sugar.

Worst are food products with huge lists of unpronounceable words. Beware artificial sweeteners, preservatives, stabilisers, emulsifiers, colouring, flavouring, MSG and many more.

Jackie Wilkinson
Village Post
nutritionist



You'd need a chemistry degree to stand a chance!

All this artificial stuff is hard for your body to deal with and uses up your precious vitamins - leaving you short for your health, energy and leaving you tired. To keep you safe your body may just store some safely out of the way in fat cells, causing weight gain. Chemicals can affect your mood too - not helpful if you want a harmonious season of good will.

Artificial drinks can be as bad as artificial foods, including the zero calorie "diet" drinks with their artificial sweeteners that confuse your brain and interfere with appetite control - it's been shown they don't even help with weight loss.

So get out to your farm shop, butcher, green grocer to buy real food. Put on some festive music in the kitchen and do more home cooking.

I wish you all a merry chemical-free Christmas!



Registered charity 500750

Sunday 7th December

1.00 pm – 4.00 pm



A Christmas wreath making work shop in the village hall, the cost is £35.00 per person and includes all materials to make your wreath, tea coffee or a sneaky mulled wine to get us in the festive spirit and some nibbles, you are more than welcome to bring along any personal embellishments you may want to include on your creation Please bring some gardening gloves and secateurs if you have them

And any greenery you may have from your garden

Please let me know if you would like to join us, who wouldn't want to have their own home made wreath to welcome friends, family and Santa!

Helen: 016973 21895 or helj@talktalk.net

Funding from Tallentire Wind Farm has allowed more sports equipment to be enjoyed by local youngsters.

In the past the village has had to borrow these items for Sports Day!

The new equipment includes cone markers, slalom poles for marking lanes, 'stop the ball' net to prevent footballs hitting the back of the hall or going on the roof and three free kick mannequins.

These were a special request from the children of the village.



GILCRUX
ST MARY'S

All are warmly invited to our forthcoming services at St Mary's:

Sunday 14th December, 5pm
Carol Service

Wednesday 24th December, 8pm
Christmas Eve Communion

COMMUNITY CAROL SINGING Gilcrux, Christmas 2025

Back by popular demand!

The Gilcrux Social Fund Committee would like you to join us for the 'Warm Up Session' in St. Mary's Church, Gilcrux at 6pm on Tuesday 25 November.

Or just turn up for the main event!

We will all meet outside The Mason's Arms at 7pm on Wednesday 10 December before singing our way along the Main Street:- East End Cottages, Village Hall, 4 Road Ends, Forelands, Mason's Arms.

Please bring your lanterns or a torch and join us to sing, or come out to listen.

Song sheets provided.

All proceeds to St. Mary's Restoration Fund, Gilcrux.

Children aged under 18 to be accompanied by an adult please.

If you can't make it, don't worry, you can always join in with some of us singing a few Christmas Carols at our December coffee morning.

For further information contact Karen on 07709935833.

NEWS FROM GILCRUX & DISTRICT SOCIAL FUND

Our monthly coffee mornings continue to be very popular and well-attended. Around 50 people enjoyed coffee, cakes and good conversation at our October event.

You are warmly invited to join us for future coffee mornings at The Mason's Arms, Gilcrux where Hal and Andy will have the log fire burning and the kettle hot. Our volunteers will be waiting to greet you with cake and a smile - next one is Thursday 18 December. Sorry, no coffee morning in January but back again on Thursday February 19.

Drop-in between 10am and noon.

For more information, contact Elaine on 07784620321.



Spooky Halloween in Gilcrux with the East End Crew!



Gilcrux Village Hall & Educational Trust

Christmas Lottery 2025



Raising funds for St Mary's our beautiful parish church
£10.00 per ticket with 50% going to St Mary's and 50% in the prize fund

The winners will be drawn on 21st December during our mince pies and mulled wine event

The more tickets sold the higher the prize fund!

You can pop your entry through my door, Manor Barn, with your name and address or Catherine at the Post Office will also collect



"Be in it to win it"



Governor chat

Hello again. Another busy term with so much to do! We've had seasonal celebrations, such as Harvest Festival and now the lead up to Christmas, especially P5 with their preparations for the famous Panto run by the indefatigable and ever-inventive Mrs Taylor.

There are new developments too, such as the FIDS sessions (see the article on page 9) which enables all pupils to have a voice as they take part in the discussion, planning and sharing of the group's ideas. Another focus is for pupils to develop more resilience, independence and initiative. This starts with the littlest ones knowing how to fasten their shoes and coats by themselves, relying less on adults to help. A small start but it will help them so much.

As you can see, school is not just about learning what's in the curriculum but about every child's personal development, as stated in our school vision:

"At Bridekirk Dovenby School, we nourish the uniqueness of our community. Rooted in love, a rich and diverse curriculum enables all to flourish and grow. Confident and secure, our children reach out, ready to embrace the seasons of life in all its fullness."

Silvana Hewitt
Chair of Governors



Harvest Festival is for when all the crops the farmers have spent months on are finally ready for picking. Although the crops have been harvested, plants will grow again next year to give us more delicious fruit and veg. To celebrate the harvest, our school went down to the church and every class took part in learning a harvest song. Some of the songs were "Put It In A Pot" by P2, "Shotgun" and "Beautiful Things" by P5, "Thank You For Everything" by P4, "Cauliflower Fluffy" by P4 and "I Want To Be A Farmer" by P1. The items donated will go to the Foodbank.

Mrs Fish said: "Each class sang beautifully and Rev Roy's service was engaging for everyone."

by Olivia



Magicians and Circus Day!

Primary 4 are studying two books related to magic and the circus. To enrich the English curriculum, we had a magician in school who entertained us all with his tricks.

The whole school got to watch his show.

Then P4 got to practise their circus skills in a workshop. We are excellent at plate spinning now!



A class interview by Imogen

I thought I would like to see how the younger pupils are doing so I went in to interview some of the children. This is what they told me:

Gilbert (6)

In a bakery in 1666 a baker left his oven on - it set on fire. It was huge. We made a display of houses on fire.

Emilie (6)

In Maths we are adding and subtracting up to 100. Part whole models and number bonds!

Axel (5)

In Maths we are adding and subtracting up to 10.

Lottie (6)

In Phonics we do Fred talk and spell out longer sentences.

Maggie (6)

We do PSHE/Jigsaw and we are learning that it is OK to be different. We have to put our name on the Jigsaw charter and Miss Rigg teaches it.

Olivia (4)

We have carpet time and we listen to Mrs Smith. We have reading time and we all read our own books. At Cool Time we all get to play with our friends. All of us play with our buddies. My buddy is Olivia.



School newshounds for 2025-2026!



Harriet, Nieve, Olivia, Max, Anna and Imogen

Great news about an ex pupil

Champagne corks popped recently for Jack Long - former BDS pupil, motorcycle racer and son of Jill Long, our Office Administrator.

Jack, from Eaglesfield, has achieved a fantastic result this season by finishing on the top step of the podium in the Supermono GB British Championship.

Throughout his childhood, he competed extensively in off-road racing, making the jump to circuit racing in 2024.

He was spotted later that year by a race team who approached him to ride for them in the 2025

Championship Series.

The team had no expectations of Jack's performance in his first year at that level but he has far exceeded that by achieving the National Championship for the team.

Jack's plans for next year are to contest the series once again and to further develop his skills with the ambition to progress to a higher level.



**Well done,
Jack!
We'll be
following
your
career!**

Cake sale for an excellent cause



Some of us P4 girls organised a cake sale to raise money for a new battery for a defibrillator.

We went round to all the classes and did a powerpoint.

The cakes were sold in P4s classroom and cost £1 each and everyone could get one cake each.

There was a variety of cakes and we also sold marshmallows and biscuits.

We wanted to raise this money because the defibrillator is very important and can save lives.

A thank you goes out to the girls and anyone else who baked. They raised a whopping £226 which will cover the cost of our new defibrillator battery. Special thanks to the family in P1 who very generously donated £100!!



This is a new activity to replace the School Council. The children have been put into four groups of all ages so that each child has the chance to make a contribution. It also helps the older children learn leadership skills.

In the first session the children split into their team point groups to take part in a FIDS activity. Each team are ambassadors for a different theme; Global - Green, Community - Yellow, Happy - Red, Digital - Blue.

The children were asked to feel from their hearts about something that bothers them and that they would like to see changed - in school, their community or in the world.

They were then asked to imagine what it would look like if this problem were solved. They had to work together to brainstorm and imagine a solution. For example ... plastic waste ... no cling film ... buy wax wrappers!

Watch this space to find out what each group will do over the year to make a change!

Cockermouth U3A Fit n' Active

Even the most accomplished actors get stage fright and “dry”(forget lines)!

When Cockermouth drama group Fit n' Active was formed 10 years ago it's members were - well - fit n' active and 10 years younger!!

Recently concerns about learning and remembering lines have challenged us to rethink how we can continue to perform.

In our group we have several talented script writers who produce short often funny sketches for us to perform in local halls or small theatres.

And we have found a solution to our conundrum because recently we have had some success performing those scripts as radio plays!

To celebrate the club's 10th anniversary, member Jim Samson has written an outline for a play we hope to perform in February which will require several additional interwoven sketches.

This is an opportunity for new script writers and



performers to join us ... and no line learning required! So if you fancy treading the boards and joining our friendly group we meet each Thursday 10am-12 noon at Quakers Rooms, Cockermouth. Just turn up or contact secretary Sue Morrell at sue123morrell@gmail.com

Needing funds for our community?

Bridekirk Parish Council, representing the villages of Dovenby, Tallentire and Bridekirk, suggest that more could be done to achieve greater levels of funding from the Tallentire Wind Farm Benefit Fund.

This fund has existed now for 12 years and supplied benefit to all four local parishes of Gilcrux, Blindcrake, Plumbland, and Bridekirk - amounting in total to almost £600,000.

The monies continue to be allocated from the wind turbine developer R.E.S. and are administered through the Cumbria Community Foundation at approximately £30,000 pa.

Bridekirk Parish, despite having the largest populace of the other communities, lags behind the others considerably in achieving funding. The Parish Council is appealing for more applications to go forward from needy groups or individuals who can justify funding projects or alternatively raise ideas and proposals which others may help to promote.

For example, we hear from parishioners going freezing cold during church services in winter. Why not apply?

WHO CAN APPLY?

A voluntary or community group or a local partnership which benefit the parish.

WHAT WILL IT SUPPORT?

Projects which support the community address health and well-being and improve the lives of people.

HOW MUCH IS AVAILABLE?

The maximum grant is £10,000. In exceptional circumstances a greater sum may be awarded if the project shows a wide community benefit.

**Please send responses c/o The Editor.
email: editor@villagepost.uk**

Remembering Stephen



It is with great sadness that my husband Stephen Valentine lost his fight with cancer on October 21 at West Cumberland Hospital. His funeral took place on 30 October with cremation at Distington.

My thanks go to the Co-op Funeral services at Maryport for being able to arrange the funeral so quickly so that all the family could be together and to Hundith Hill Hotel for providing a great venue for family and friends to gather after.

You may have seen Stephen walking our Cocker Spaniel and I know that he enjoyed his chats with those that he met on his walks with Olly.

We moved to Tallentire in September 2013 from Essex and I have many lovely memories to look back on and know that Stephen loved his time here. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those fellow dog walkers for their kind messages and neighbours for their support at this very difficult time.

Janet Valentine

MEREDYTH meets **Tony Harrison**

How often do you get someone as important in your life as your butcher!

It started off with me living in Papcastle, newly married and clueless. Peter Wilson drove the butcher's van through the village and also taught me how to cook meat.

So I naturally followed him to Cockermouth and when his business was bought by Tony Harrison I moved to him and never looked back! The best sausages in the world and my family have been devoted fans ever since. Tony was born in Carlisle Maternity and he was brought up in Kirkbride, living in the Old Station House.

His father worked in the local slaughterhouse. Never afraid of work, Tony did the milk round and is supremely proud of the fact he could jump off the moving milk float holding four pint bottles of milk to put on doorsteps (his father could hold five!).

When he was nine his father bought the butcher's in Wigton - specialising in sausages, burgers and other meats.

By now 13 years old he was getting paid and saved his money. In 1988 his father bought Relph's butchers in Cockermouth. His father was one of nine children and his grandfather one of 19 - so lots of family to support!

The family also owned a farm in Crosscanonby, which was sold to buy a small holding near Glencogo.

Ever the entrepreneur, Tony then bought a pub for 45K - Ye Olde Greyhound Inn in Bromfield - and he lived above it for a while. For the shop he continued to buy all local meat - beef, pork, lamb - from a radius of 20 miles and used Frank Bird for chickens. Fish comes from Bells, Carlisle and flour from Silloth. His speciality is lamb henry and steak pie

His father, who is 78, still runs the Wigton shop with Tony's brother - a daily 5.50am start!

Tony married Liz 30 years ago and they celebrated this year by going to Venice. Liz already had two girls - so Tony was effectively their father and he and Liz have a boy and a girl too. So as well as four children they now have eight grandchildren.

Never one for the easy life, Tony then bought a house (bank managers were rather more sympathetic then) and Liz worked long hours doing the accounts - also running the Stockman pub and all the cooking as well cleaning and looking after her mother-in-law's house - an absolutely awesome lady.

So, to the future? Liz, who does all the baking, is



expanding to puddings - sticky toffee, cheesecake and pavlovas - all gluten free.

Over the years the family never had much time for holidays. Now, however, the pub is only open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and is now a restaurant. Recently they held a bingo night with free pie and peas, 52 attended! £10 raffle tickets were sold with all profit going to the Church. They are doing another in a few weeks 'Choral night for Christmas'.

Tony's shop is presently enjoying selling seasonal food: turkeys, chicken, duck, geese, beef, pork, lamb, pigs in blankets (gluten-free), stuffing - all the trimmings - as well as Ferrero Rocher brownies. Order by 30 November!

Incredibly Tony has many hobbies. He won a downhill skiing cup when he was 16 and has skied all his life and took daughter, son-in-law and three grandchildren to the snow to teach them to ski also.

Another love is horses. His first race horse Marcadam won five races but developed a sore leg, got cholic and sadly died. His second horse Frightened Rabbit won six races but is now retired aged 12, waiting for a good home. His new horse Fast as Wind can only race on non-workdays and remains to be reported on!

Exhausted admiration is the only way to describe one's reaction to Tony Harrison. We had much laughter and his sense of humour is great.

Reporting what he saw on a recent safari to Saudi Arabia, Tony's first comment was 'lots of sand dunes'! He also found camel riding a challenge.

This is a man whose likes a challenge, but it has to be an enjoyable challenge. Tony - I applaud and salute you.



DR SAM RIGBY AESTHETICS & LASER CLINIC

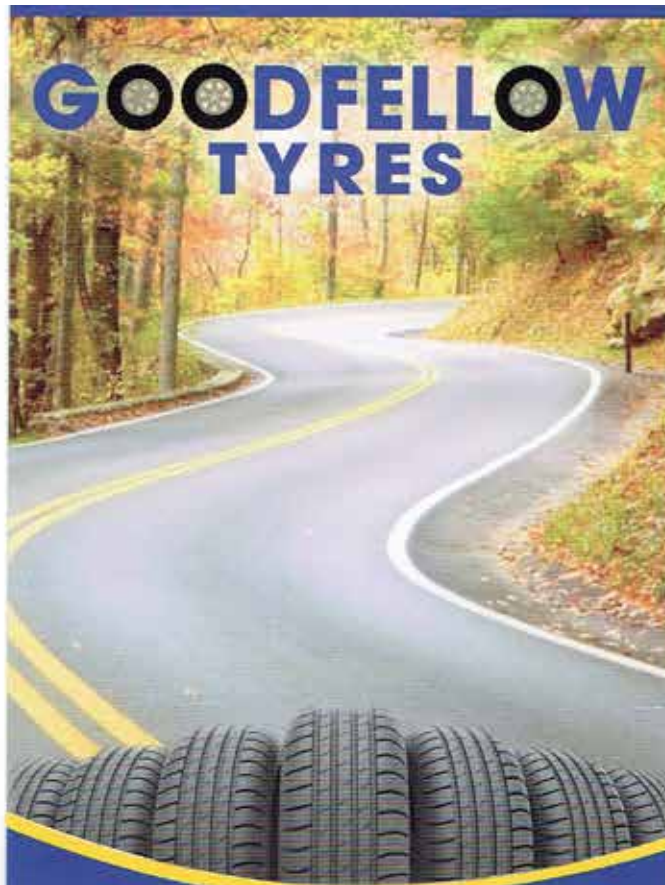
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Home grown cooking with Annette

Cumberland sausage roast

ANNETTE GIBBONS is well known for her wonderful cooking. A former Cumbria Woman of the Year, she hosted her own Border TV series "Home Grown". Annette has taught nutrition and cooking, run her own cookery school and organised 'Cumbria on a Plate' gourmet tours.

There's a lovely smell of Christmas cake cooking in the kitchen as I type.

In an effort to get ahead I managed to do a virtual "family stir" over the internet with the grandchildren further afield making their first Christmas wishes.

Planning ahead really does help, especially at Christmas. My two recipes for this issue of *Village Post* may help you.

The Cumberland Sausage roast has all a meal's ingredients in one tray. The sausage can be substituted with haloumi or tofu slices.

Perfect for a day in the Christmas holidays when a little prep beforehand makes life easier with time to enjoy the people around you.

Take a quick look around the fridge veg drawer and use what's colourful and tasty that needs not to be wasted.

In my version I sliced onion, carrot, butternut squash, celery, potatoes, pepper, fennel, apple and garlic, topped them with both spicy Cumberland sausage and a gluten free one.

I sploshed over a little balsamic vinegar



which enriched the finished gravy.

I cooked the roasting tin in a preheated oven No. 4 180 degrees for 25 minutes, gave it a stir and turned the sausages followed by another 25 minutes.

Haloumi or tofu will take less time to cook, add it only before the second 25 minutes. Serve directly at the table.



Another main course dish (above) can be made completely in advance. It's very impressive to place on a table and delicious to eat.

Make about ten or 12 thin pancakes which can be frozen well beforehand. Make a herby white sauce, a chunky tomato sauce and some softened vegetables. Use whatever your family likes. Layer up the pancakes and alternate the fillings. I used chorizo in the tomato sauce and garlic mushrooms for the vegetables and spinach with the white sauce. I topped the last pancake with finely grated parmesan cheese and baked the whole thing in a medium oven for half an hour until the top was crispy and it was warm right through. Great to serve with a green salad.

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Marjory Thompson and Denise Wickham from Tallentire are both keen members of this fabulous choir which has just moved from Keswick to Cockermouth for weekly practice. It's great fun and a lively social life. You will be made very welcome!

Committed 2 Rock Community Choir

at
**Kirkgate Arts Centre
Cockermouth!!**

Every Tuesday 6.pm - 7.30 pm

Now rehearsing for Theatre by the Lake show June 5&6

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Rev Roy's ramblings

Well, here we are again, another new year 2026. I hope this letter finds you well and ready for a fresh start.

At the end of last year's final letter, I wrote ... So, let's bid farewell to 2024 and make 2025 a year that you can look back on and smile. Well, did you? Did you make new happy memories or was it not such a good year?

As I look back on the past year, I'm so grateful for all the memories I've made, for the laughter I've shared with family and friends. I feel happy in the way we have been able to support each other through the good and not so good times. I feel truly blessed that I have met so many amazing people and I thank them all for making the last 12 months a remarkable time, especially in April when I celebrated my 70th birthday with friends and family.

Now, here's to another year of adventures and making unforgettable memories. For those of you who have not had such a good year I can only hope and pray that 2026 will be a happier and more fulfilling year for you. I wish you all a bright New Year and a fond farewell to the old,



Rev Roy with the aptly named rambling rector rose

to the things that are yet to come and to the memories that you hold in your hearts and the memories you will make this coming year.

May this new year bring you abundant joy and success in all your endeavours. I wish you all a peaceful and a Happy New Year!

Reverend Roy



Celebrate a simpler and greener Christmas

As Advent begins, let us reflect on the story behind Christmas. The humble birth of a child in a stable, a profound reminder of simplicity.

This season, let's reflect on the story that we wish our actions and choices to tell.

Scan the QR code for an interesting article by A Rocha UK on journeying towards a zero-waste Christmas.

May our hearts and our celebrations align with the simplicity and beauty of the Christmas story.

Christmas is almost certainly the hardest time of the year for this, so there is no judgement here if you don't manage a zero-waste Christmas!

But we can aim for as-low-waste-as-possible Christmas! Here are some ideas:

Gifts

Non-physical gifts – gifts of time, vouchers to be redeemed, experiences are all good ways to reduce waste. Be more proactive in giving and asking to receive non-physical gifts - goes a long way towards reducing waste and not ending up with unwanted gifts!

Sustainably-produced gifts locally-produced foods and drinks, especially that come in sustainable or recyclable packaging are a great way to support local businesses and reduce waste. Bamboo and fairly-traded socks, clothing or other gifts can hopefully fit all budgets. A great tip is to check brands on the Ethical Consumer website. Or perhaps even make your own gifts!

Gift ideas

Magazine subscriptions - the Ethical Consumer offers the option of online subscription only as well.

Voucher for a meal to a local restaurant.

Voucher for a tea/coffee and cake with the person you give it to.

Cinema membership.

Wrapping

Anyone who has gone round with the rubbish bag after present-opening-time knows how much waste wrapping gets generated! Use materials that have been used before and can be used again. If you do want to use wrapping paper, if possible, buy recycled paper and avoid shiny or glitter paper as this can't be recycled.

Food

For many people, food is one of the most wonderful things during the Christmas season. Special treats, sharing meals with family and friends and making family recipes. Lots of us go overboard on food but you could make a conscious effort to reduce what you buy and avoid waste.

Christmas walks

This might be a tradition for you at Christmas already - lovely to do with friends and family, whether in an urban or rural setting. Also a great way walk off some of that Christmas food.



<https://arocha.org.uk/journeying-towards-a-zero-waste-christmas/>



ST. BRIDGET'S, BRIDEKIRK

People of hope and love

Services at St. Bridget's Church
Children's Church will be available
during the 11am services.

Waiting for Christmas

Christmas will soon be here. As the days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, I find myself looking forward to those cherished moments that mark the season in our villages.

Each year, I'm drawn to the gentle stillness of our Church, dimly lit for the Carol Service, a place where peace settles in, cloaked only in candlelight. There's a comforting feeling as we gather to sing Carols, waiting together for Christmas to come.

Then in contrast, the Christmas Eve Crib Service brings a joyful chaos, children's laughter, the anticipation of gifts and the excitement that fills the air.

For me, these services encompass the true meaning of the Christmas season - the quiet waiting and the joyful celebration. We wait for Christ to come, and what joy is ours knowing that Christ did indeed come and walked amongst us.

What joy will be ours when he comes again.

I wonder how you celebrate Christmas. Have you been planning for months, making sure everything is ready for family and friends as they visit? Or do you prefer to let the season unfold gently, savouring each moment as it comes?

As we prepare for the Big Day, let's remember that, yes, Christmas is a time of hope and joy, but it may not always be easy for everyone. Some may find this season challenging, whether through loss, loneliness, or worries that weigh heavy. So, let's reach out with kindness, share a smile, and offer a helping hand where we can. May your preparations be filled with peace, your celebrations with joy and your hearts with the true spirit of Christmas. Have a wonderful Christmas and every blessing for the coming New Year.

Revd Christina

Find us on:-

Facebook

www.facebook.com/stbridgetsbridekirk

Instagram

www.instagram.com/stbridgetsbridekirk/

email

bridekirk_church@grasmoormc.church

December

7: Holy Communion (11am)
14: Morning Worship (11am)
14: Carol Service (6.30pm)
21: Holy Communion (11am)
24: Christmas Eve Crib Service joint service with St. Aidan's (3pm)
24: Christmas Eucharist, Service of Holy Communion (8pm)
28: Joint Service at All Saints Church in Cockermouth (10am)

January

4: Holy Communion (11am)
11: Morning Worship (11am)
18: Holy Communion (11am)
25: Morning Worship (11am)

BRIDEKIRK FRIENDSHIP GROUP



St Bridget's Church room, Bridekirk

10:30 - 12:00



We offer a warm and friendly place for people who are in need of friendship to meet others for a chat over a cup of tea, coffee and home baked cakes each Monday morning.

Why not drop in anytime in the morning, for as long or as little time as you feel comfortable. You will always find a warm welcome from our volunteers.

£3 per person

EVERY MONDAY MORNING
(EXCEPT BANK HOLIDAYS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

bridekirk_church@grasmoormc.church
0785 8074 133

Are you feeling lonely or isolated?
Why not come along and meet the team. We love to meet new people.



BORN IS THE KING

Christmas at St. Aidan's

Celebrate Christmas with
St. Aidan's at our services
for all ages.

30
NOV

Christingle 3pm

*A family favourite to celebrate Christmas
@ St. Bridget's Bridekirk*

14
DEC

Family Carols 3pm

*Carols and the Christmas story for all ages
@ Bothel Village Hall*

24
DEC

Crib Service 3pm

*Dress as your favourite nativity character
@ St. Bridget's Bridekirk*

25
DEC

Christmas Celebration 10am

*Join us for our Christmas Day service
@ St. Bridget's Bridekirk*

Regular 3PM service on 7th and 21st December



Find out all of the details:

www.staidanscumbria.org/christmas

JESUS USE MY POTENTIAL

Bible fun, friendship and prayer for school years 7-13

Christ Church Rooms Cockermouth

7 - 8:30pm

Upcoming Dates:

14th December: Christmas party

Sunday 11th & 25th January 2026

For our program and parental permission form visit:
cockermouthareachurches.church/jump/

Go straight there:



or email us on jumpyouthgroup@gmail.com

Baby & Toddler Club



ST. BRIDGET'S, BRIDEKIRK
People of hope and love

You're
Invited!

Date - Starting - Thursday 8th December

Time - 1-3pm. Every week

Place - St Bridget's Church, Bridekirk.

Toys &
Refreshments
provided

Please bring your
own travel
mug/lid



EVERYONE WELCOME

An opportunity to share time and a chat with other families whilst
the children play together.



[stbridgetsbridekirk](https://www.instagram.com/stbridgetsbridekirk)



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<https://cockermouthareachurches.church/st-bridgets-bridekirk/>



Join our team!

Perhaps you would like to volunteer
to join our helper rota?

For more information contact us :
bridekirk_church@icloud.com



USEFUL NUMBERS

Medical and Support Services

Cumbria Health on Call (CHOC)	111
NHS Direct	111
Castlegate and Derwent Surgery	01900 705350
West St Health Centre Wigton	01697 320209
West Cumberland Hospital (Whitehaven)	01946 693181
Cumberland Infirmary (Carlisle)	01228 523444
Workington Community Hospital	01900 705000

Dentists

Derwent Dental Care	01900 82 4111
St Helen's Dental	01900 826210
Goodwins Dental Care	01900 823467

Pharmacies

Allisons	01900 822292
Boots (C/mouth)	01900 823160
Boots (Aspatria)	01697 320236

Vets

Millcroft (Cockermouth)	01900 826666
Millcroft (Wigton)	01697 323898

Other

Non Emergency Police	101
Electricity power cut query	105
United Utilities	0345 672 3723
Samaritans	116 123 (free)
Domestic Violence Support	07712 117 986
RSPCA	01946 693585
Age UK (West Cumbria)	01229 779711
Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG)	07852 599794
Citizens' Advice Bureau	01900 604735
Cumberland Council	0300 373 3730
Cockermouth Library	01900 822634
Aspatria Library	07557 499129



Cockermouth Relief in Need

Small one-off grants or loans for people in and around Cockermouth

Do you know someone who needs a little financial help to meet a specific need right now...

...to replace a broken appliance, pay an emergency contractor (such as a locksmith, plumber or electrician), cover the cost of a training course or pay for a long-distance trip?

...for an expense that will not be covered by other providers, such as private landlords, housing associations, social services or the DWP?

If so, please consider letting them know about **Cockermouth Relief in Need**.

Cockermouth Relief in Need was set up to meet the needs of local people. Anyone working in, living in or with strong links to Grasmoor Mission Community is welcome to apply for a grant or a loan. This area is made up of seven church parishes and includes Cockermouth, Bridekirk, Broughton, Brigham, Clifton, Dean, Eaglesfield, Mosser, Lorton, Loweswater and Buttermere.

Application is by letter to the Trustees c/o the GMC office in Cockermouth. If you are thinking of applying, or helping someone else to apply, please contact Jane Charman for a confidential chat first on **01900 824526** or jane.charman@grasmoormc.church

Thank You!

All applications will be kept in strictest confidence.



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By popular demand ...



Teddy's Xmas dog blog

Hello Humans and Doggy Dudes,

"Tinsel" Teddy Edward here, welcoming you all to the Christmas edition of our wonderful *Village Post*.

It only seems five minutes since we all had an absolutely splendid Halloween, with a magnificent array of costumes and decorated houses. So thanks from me and our even smaller half pint humans to everyone for all the efforts they made.

What fun we had, and I just hope no-one was put off by my apparently excessively welcoming barks. All I can say in my defence is that you were seriously scary...

One little thing that I must point out is that there appeared to be a bit of an imbalance that clearly needs to be addressed. Half pint humans struggling along under the weight of huge buckets full of goodies, and your Rover reporter seriously short of tasty treats. Just saying ... look at my wee face in the picture below! Christmas is nearly here, and the run-up of real anticipation and excitement have been gathering pace for weeks and weeks.

I'm sorry to say that I have had to have words with the male version of my pawrents. He was going all Bah Humbug on us and saying it had started far too soon. I had to explain to him that my readers love the entire Festive period, and the best thing for him to do was just chill out and Paws Off.

From the look I got, I fear he may have slightly misheard me, so I have now confirmed the actual phrase I used and cleared up any potential misunderstanding.

As you can see from the photos, I have been barking up many a tree and having a lovely time visiting all manner

of Christmas displays. Santa's little helpers have been so busy getting things ready, and it looks to me that everything is right on track for giving us all the best time ever. I have had my clip-on antlers polished until they gleam and my red



fleecy coat has been cleaned and ironed ready for walks around the Parish to say hello to all my readers and their doggy dudes. Bring it on!

Please feel free to invite me in for a selection of dog treats, biscuits or leftover turkey and I'm sure the pawrents will manage to snaffle the odd mince pie or three while they are waiting outside.

Here's hoping you all have a Christmas to remember, and with a bit of luck we might even get some snow to play in.

The weather forecasters think there may be some, but what they say doesn't usually happen. I just love getting a complete drenching every time we are as far away from the car as its possible to be, when we were promised sunshine.

Happy Christmas everyone, see you next year, and don't forget to scoop the poop.

Love, Teddy Edward



Halloween pictures from our villages ... and Spain!



Jack Robinson makes a scary vampire!



Lilly and Oliver Rayson and spooky friends



Xander Hamilton had an exciting Spanish trick and treating time in Mijas, Andalusia.



Joanna and Grace Litt surely had the biggest pumpkin around!

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A STORM
OR JUST BEEN
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www.andysmanclub.co.uk

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Locally **ANDYSMANCLUB** meets in James Walker & Co in Cockermouth on Mondays at 7pm



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